

UNION TRIUMPHS IN COLOMBO PORT

Industrial action in the Sri Lankan port of Colombo — one of the biggest ports in the Southern Asian region — led by the ITF-affiliated Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union (CMU) ended in victory in September.

"It was the most important action in the Port of Colombo since 1968," said CMU General Secretary Bala Tampoe, adding that this was the first major Sri Lankan working class action to end successfully since July 1977.

The CMU members, who numbered 3,000 in Colombo until now, had been taking part in collective action since mid-August.

Workers refused to cover lunch breaks, night shifts and other extraneous duties in response to the port authorities' failure to pay cost-of-living allowances.

These allowances, calculated in line with the Colombo retail price index, had been paid to Sri Lankan workers in the past, in addition to basic wages.

Workers in some other industrial sectors had received such allowances up to date — whilst others had not.

Since the founding of the Sri Lanka Port Authority (SLPA) in 1979, the dockers' cost-of-living increases had been frozen periodically, whilst the current allowance had not been upgraded since 1988.

The CMU notified the Chairman of the SLPA of their demands on August 17. The action would mean no overtime work during meal breaks during day and night shifts.

Dockers also decided to refuse to accept incentive payments made by agents and importers to speed up cargo handling — often achieved by carrying out cargo handling operations without proper equipment, or by overloading trucks used to transport cargoes out of the port.

All 16 thousand workers in Colombo port, irrespective of their trade union membership, decided to join the work stoppages (the three other port unions declared their support for the CMU's demands but refused to be associated with the action).

A CMU delegation and other union representatives met with SLPA officials on August 28. Protesting that government treasury directives disallowed the cost-of-living payments, the SLPA promised to make an alternative offer to the unions within a few days.

But instead, on September first, the SLPA Chairman appointed a committee, asking the CMU's Colombo branch delegation to meet with it. The union responded: not by meeting the committee, but by extending its action in the port — refusing to work night shifts drawn out after 04h00.

"We reminded him of his statement that he would inform us of an alternative

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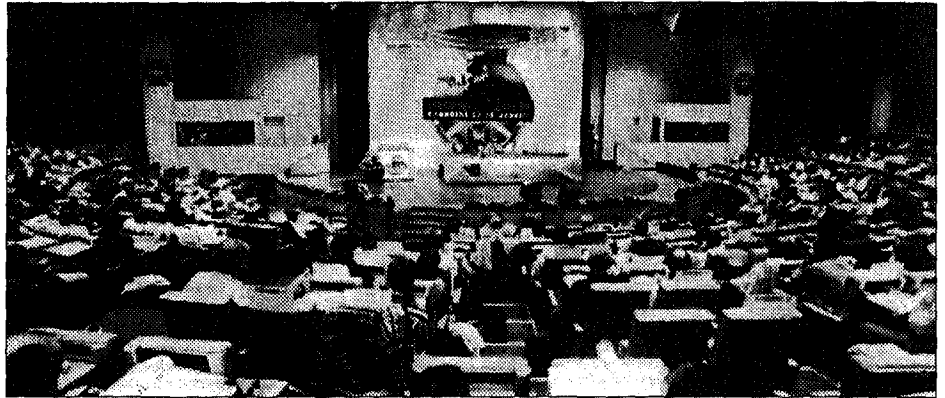
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Swedish Transport Workers' Congress

The three hundred and fifty delegates gathered in Stockholm in late August for the 29th Congress of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union voted unanimously to elect Hans Wahlström as the union's new President.

Wahlström comes to his new post after spending ten demanding years as the union's negotiating secretary, during which time he has honed his many and varied skills.

As the head of a three-man leadership team, Wahlström will be working closely together with union secretary



Sören Sjögren and treasurer Clas Linder who were both re-elected

unanimously by acclamation.

Wahlström old job as negotiating secretary now disappears and the new President will assume overall responsibility for the collective agreements the union is a party to.

In his speech at the opening session, outgoing President Ingvar Åsén fiercely attacked the government's policies and their anti-union bias and pledged the union's support for Sweden's seafarers in their fight against the introduction of the proposed special register.

Addressing the union's Congress as one of the foreign guests, ITF Assistant General Secretary David Cockroft praised the "Swedish model" of social development which the right wing government was now attempting to dismantle.

It was, he said, something to be proud of and to fight for with much in it which could and should be used in building a real social dimension to economic policy worldwide.

The strength and experience of the Swedish unions were urgently needed to strengthen the social dialogue within the different sectors of transport in which the ITF was involved on an almost daily basis, Cockroft added.

"I know that the ITF can count on the full support of the Swedish Transport Workers in the Flag of Convenience campaign," he concluded. "The help your union has given to underpaid and exploited crew members is international solidarity at its clearest and best and there are many thousands of seafarers worldwide who remember well that when they asked for help in a Swedish port, their request did not go unanswered."

... Sri Lankan port action boosts union

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proposal of the SLPA," said Tampoe.

The dispute received top press coverage as cargo-handling operations were affected and the SLPA came under pressure to settle.

The union delegation met the Chairman again on September third. His committee had prepared a profit-sharing proposal, which had already been agreed by the other three unions, the Chairman declared. No concrete figures were mentioned.

"The Chairman then said, to our surprise, that what he had explained to us was a decision of the SLPA, which had been taken with the approval of the treasury that morning. He added that the decision would be announced later to all port workers by an official notice.

"Our representatives then left, having stated that the CMU had not accepted the SLPA decision, and that it remained for the port workers to take a decision," Tampoe said.

Over the next few days all the port workers — including some 4,000 unorganised workers — continued to support the CMU action, despite calls from the other unions to call it off.

A stop-work meeting of all branch members (now numbering 5,000 as workers signed up) was called on September fifth. As the SLPA offer was not a clear basis for ending collective action, the meeting asked the CMU to seek signatures from all port workers mandating the CMU to negotiate with the SLPA on their behalf.

The dockers also resolved to refuse all further overtime work.

With both the port authority and the government under mounting pressure to resolve the dispute, CMU representatives met the government Labour Commissioner twice. The Commissioner told the union that he had been asked by the treasury to seek a resolution of the dispute.

By September twelfth the CMU had 12,513 signatures from workers authorising it to negotiate for them.

This "convinced the government that the port workers were united under CMU leadership despite their membership of other unions or non-membership of any union," Tampoe explained.

On September 15th the dispute was settled. The Labour Commissioner made an offer which complied with all the CMU's demands, and the port workers accepted.

Effective September first 1992, the SLPA will pay all port workers special retroactive allowances, in instalments, to compensate for pay lost since 1979 and during the period August first 1988 to August 31st 1992. In addition workers will receive future cost-of-living allowances calculated on the Colombo retail price index.

"Our membership in the port has more than doubled, and workers in other ports are also joining up" said Tampoe, adding that the victory was a "breakthrough", reaffirming the principle that wages should keep abreast of the ever-rising cost-of-living.

Transport strikes paralyse Greece

Eight thousand bus workers in the Athens metropolitan area have been thrown out of work as Konstantinos Mitsotakis's Conservative government reacted to a two week strike over job cuts by privatising the state-owned bus company.

The bus workers, who were employed by the Urban Transport Company (EAS), wanted the company to drop plans for 1,200 redundancies.

Hungarian unions agree on assets

Hungary's major trade union confederations have reached an understanding on the division of the assets of the old official union federation SZOT.

The delicate issue of union assets dominates trade union politics in most of the former Communist countries — and this arrangement was only reached after some very hard bargaining.

A joint press conference on September 14 announced the deal between the Co-ordination of Autonomous Trade Unions (ASzOK), Intellectuals (ÉSzT), the Democratic League (LIGA), the National Confederation of Hungarian Trades Unions (MSzOSZ), the Federation of Workers' Councils (MOSz) and the Trade Union Co-operation Forum (SZeF). Other unions that didn't participate in the discussions were also included in the agreement.

The unions needed to reach an agreement because of what they all regard as unreasonable government interference. The government has adopted legislation on this issue, which all the unions now call upon them to repeal.

The agreement has been ratified by all the governing bodies of the unions, but a decision from the government is awaited. Should the government refuse, the unions have stated that they will appeal for international solidarity from other trade unions.

An offer by the municipalities served by EAS to take over the running of the loss-making company was swept aside as the government rushed an emergency bill through parliament dissolving EAS and authorising its sale to the private sector.

Strong opposition to the privatisation bill was voiced by the massed ranks of the Greek trade union movement, led by the ICFTU-affiliated General Confederation of Labour (GSEE), while the parliamentary opposition abstained from the vote as a measure of its objection to the enforced sell-off.

Not content with privatising the company from under them, the government has been conducting a campaign of harassment against former EAS workers, whose strike is still solid nearly two months later.

Military personnel have been brought in to act as blacklegs and strikers have been brutally beaten as the police and army have mounted attacks on EAS bus garages. Smoke

bombs have been lobbed at strikers during some of these attacks.

Andreas Kollas, President of the EAS workers' union, was arrested in late August, along with a number of other strikers' leaders.

*Thousands of Greek workers have been staging a series of rolling stoppages over the past two months against the government's austerity programme.

Public transport has been severely disrupted as public sector workers have downed tools in protest at measures that are expected to add a further three per cent to inflation this year, which, at 12 per cent, is already the highest in the European Community.

Telecommunications and public utility workers have also been prominent in the action.

"This is a matter of survival and we will fight to the end," said GSEE President Lambros Kanellopoulos as the strike wave started.

The strikes continue, with neither side showing any sign of backing down.

Dongfang "will return" to China

Sixteen months after he was released from jail on health grounds, Chinese free trade union leader and former railwayman Han Dongfang has finally been given leave to go to the United States for medical treatment.

Accompanied by his wife, Dongfang is now in Hong Kong where he will undergo a preliminary investigation into his health before flying on to the States for intensive treatment for the tuberculosis he contracted while in jail.

Imprisoned for his leading role in the 1989 pro-democracy movement, Dongfang was put in a contagious disease ward after he reported a stomach ailment. It was here that he became infected with TB.

Although the authorities granted him "medical parole" in April 1991, it took the personal intervention of US Secretary of State James Baker before Han and wife were issued with passports and exit visas.

Shortly after he arrived in Hong

Kong Dongfang called a press conference in which he told journalists that he believed China's rulers would be forced eventually to recognise free trade unions. He also backed the current economic reforms, saying that they were the only way to improve the standard of living of Chinese workers.

Dongfang, who is 29, has made it clear that he intends to return to his native country to continue the struggle for democracy once he is restored to health. His parting words to the Beijing authorities were: "Whether you welcome me or not, I will return".



Unions campaign for European railways

ITF European rail unions launched a public awareness campaign this month to challenge Community plans for the railways.

Criticising the limited role envisaged by the EC for the industry, unions in the twelve member states as well as Austria and Switzerland signed a statement which underlines the essential part that national railways play as a public service:

"The European Community seems only to want to give the railways a relatively limited role: that of a high speed mode of transport, of train-load freight and of combined transport," they said.

The unions plan a campaign which will take off on October 27 with work stoppages, rallies, meetings and press conferences.

The unions are demanding more investment and fair competition with other transport modes.

SHAKE-UP DUE IN BRUSSELS

Back from the summer break (it's amazing how the flow of Euro-info dries up over August), the European Commission has been plunged into mild confusion as its members near the end of their four year term.

The current Commissioners' time is up in December, and rumours are intensifying over who will be nominated to run another term, and who will get the key positions.

Karel Van Miert, the Commissioner for transport who recently took over responsibility for the environment following the hasty departure of the well-known green campaigner, Carlo Ripa de Meana, has made it clear that he intends to pursue plans for an energy tax.

We can only speculate about whether a commission reshuffle would mean a division of Van Miert's now considerable responsibilities, but it has been reported that the UK government has been lobbying hard for him to keep the environment post — Van Miert is seen, rightly or wrongly, as more sympathetic than his predecessor to the UK's reluctant position on the issue.

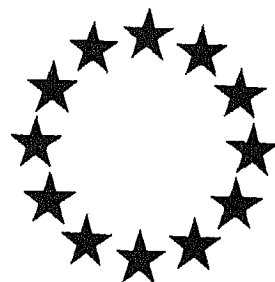
Another key figure, Social Affairs Commissioner Vasso Papandreou, will definitely be leaving her job at the end of the year.

Commission President Jacques Delors (who will almost certainly keep his job) plans to reform the EC bureaucratic machine. It is rumoured that perhaps nine of the existing 23 directorates are for the chop — one of which is fisheries, reputed to be in for a merger with the agriculture directorate.

AIR TICKET RESERVATION CODE

The Commission has adopted a proposal to modify regulations on a code of conduct for computerised reservation systems of air tickets.

Under the proposal, which is designed to ensure harmonisation between airlines and better information for the users of computer reservation



systems, companies using one of these systems will have to communicate their information to any other system that asks for it, airlines with their own systems will be prohibited from using this privileged position against other airlines who use their system, and from discriminating in who they make their information available to.

The proposal removes the distinctions that previously existed between charter flights and regular flights, in line with the provisions of the third package on the liberalisation of air transport.

'Angels' win Thai election

After winning the majority of parliamentary seats in the general election on 13 September, the four pro-democracy parties, already linked in a loose alliance, will now form the next government of Thailand, with the support of another small political party.

The Democrat Party, which defied the military during May's bloody street demonstrations that saw coup leader General Suchinda Kaprayoon ousted from the premiership (see *ITF News*, June/July 1992), made sweeping gains, becoming the largest single party in the House of Representatives.

Democrat Party leader Chuan Leekpai has now forged a formal political alliance with the three other "angel" parties (so named because of their opposition to last February's military coup) — the New Aspiration Party, Palang Dharma or Moral Force (led by Chamlong Srimuang who staged a hunger strike demanding General Suchinda's resignation), and Solidarity.

Chuan has brought in one smaller party — the Social Action party, forming a five-party coalition, with a 26-

seat majority. Social Action was part of a coalition which sided with the military during May's pro-democracy demonstrations. But it wavered when the killings began and is now considered an acceptable partner by the other four.

Chuan, a long-serving MP with previous ministerial experience, was declared Prime Minister when the King of Thailand, who intervened decisively in support of the pro-democracy campaigners, formally opened the new parliament on September 21.

Under Chuan's administration, Thailand is expected to liberalise trade as well as reducing support for the infamous Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and the repressive Burmese military junta.

The election of a government with such strong democratic credentials marks the culmination of the train of events set in motion when the people of Thailand rose up against their military rulers four months ago. While they paid a terrible price in terms of the numbers of lives lost, their sacrifice has not been in vain.

PCB containers unloaded in France

The Australian toxic waste shipment onboard the *MSC Maria Laura* was unloaded in France last month — and the ship is now sailing back to Australia.

The Panamanian Flag of convenience left the port of Fremantle, Australia on July 29 and was the focus of a concerted international campaign by transport workers and environmentalists (see *ITF News*, September 1992).

The campaigners aimed to halt the shipment of 18 tonnes of Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and pesticide waste — part of a massive Australian stockpile — which was destined for incineration in France.

Transport of highly toxic waste such as this breaches international agreements, ITF policy and the public policy of both the Australian and French governments. Developed countries are supposed to abide by the principle of self-management in waste disposal and storage — this kind of “toxic tourism” fundamentally undermines such policies.

Nevertheless, the Western Australian State government secretly arranged incineration at the French state-owned Tredi installation in Saint Vulbas.

When the ship arrived in South Africa on August 12, it was met by ITF Inspector Thulani Dlamini from the Transport and General Workers' Union. Along with environmentalist groups, demonstrations were staged demanding that the waste be shipped back to Australia — but the ship continued its voyage to Europe.

The vessel was supposed to unload its toxic cargo in the port of Le Havre, but was diverted at the last minute to Antwerp in Belgium — arriving on August 31.

The two waste containers were rapidly unloaded — but the ITF-affiliated Belgian Transport Workers' Union (BTB) immediately demanded that the waste be reloaded onto the ship and taken away. Local activists from Greenpeace chained themselves to the containers and painted the hull



Demonstrators greeting the *MSC Maria Laura* in France

of the ship. Dock workers stated they would refuse to operate the locks unless the containers were reloaded.

The shipping agents applied to the Belgian government for a permit to ship the containers by road to France. Permission was denied, the containers re-loaded and the vessel left Antwerp on September first.

She arrived the next day in the English port of Felixstowe where she was met by Greenpeace demonstrators. The ship unloaded a number of containers — but the waste remained on board.

The ship then went to its original destination of Le Havre where the containers were unloaded.

The French Environment Minister Ségolène Royal — who has previously stated that France should not become a “dustbin” for waste — issued a decree banning all importation of PCBs on August 19 (which is why the ship was diverted to Antwerp). Royal denounced the waste import contract that the *MSC Maria Laura* was carrying.

It was announced that the two containers would be the last unloaded and that the contract with Australia was being cancelled. According to reports in the French press on September seventh, the Australian Environment Minister had: “accepted the cancellation” of the contract.

But a massive argument was underway within the French government. Minister of Industry and Foreign Trade Dominique Strauss-Kahn

managed to talk the government into a complete u-turn.

On September eleventh, the two ministers issued a “joint statement” saying that the contract for 700 tonnes of Australian waste (only 18 of which was on this voyage) would go ahead — for reasons of “ecological solidarity”!!!

Apparently, pressure was brought to bear on Royal and the government by a number of prominent business contacts. Strauss-Kahn and friends insisted on preserving France's very profitable toxic treatment factory at Tredi — according to French business daily *Les Echos*, the state-owned firm that runs the incinerator treats 25,000 tonnes of foreign waste a year out of a total of 220,000 tonnes. France imports nearly 600,000 tonnes of waste every year. This business turns a very healthy profit.

Royal had advocated that France send technical expertise to Australia to assist in establishing local waste disposal facilities — but the economic needs of the French waste industry appear to have prevailed.

If the entire Australian stockpile of 700 tonnes is now shipped to France in the same quantities (18 tonnes), there will need to be another 37 voyages — a collision or fire on any one of these trips could release clouds of lethal dioxin gas.

The *MSC Maria Laura* left Le Havre on September fifth, and called in Cape Town on the 20th. She is now bound for Australia again.

Escalating violence against Latin American trade unionists provokes international protests

Violent attacks against Latin American workers and their representatives continue at unacceptable levels.

Significant political change has affected many Latin American countries over the past few years. Some are positive changes: the Pinochet and Stroessner dictatorships in Chile and Paraguay have been toppled, for example.

But such change has been tempered with a degree of serious retrogression. Peruvian workers have recently suffered the suspension of democratic rights following President Fujimori's April coup and in the current climate of escalating violence in Peru, a November return to democracy looks increasingly unlikely.

The ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) 1992 survey of violations of trade union rights comments that the repression of trade unions in Latin America still goes on.

"The only changes are that a lot of it has been privatised, and it is interspersed with regular visits to the polling stations, while the real power remains in the hands of a wealthy élite," the report says.

"Governments that can move with surprising speed to deal with troublesome strikers are stricken with paralysis when it comes to arresting those who murder trade unionists. In many instances, the police and the army are

the ones who are pulling the triggers."

VIOLENCE IN EL SALVADOR

Recent cases of violence include an attack on Gerardo Moscoso, the General Secretary of the El Salvadorian construction workers' union, Federación de la Industria de la Construcción, Similares y Conexas.

On the evening of September 19 Moscoso's car was hit by machine gun fire. He was seriously wounded and hospitalised immediately.

The ITF has written to the El Salvadorean government demanding an investigation into the case.

The incident follows the July assassination of trade union leader, Miguel Angelo Alveranga, by unidentified gunmen. Two days later another official of his union, Ivan Ramirez, was shot dead. Ramirez had received death threats.

It seems that, despite the recent signing of accords between the government and the FLMN, there has been no marked improvement in human or trade union rights in El Salvador.

"Our fellow trade unionists continue to be murdered, while the authorities lightly dismiss these acts as the result of common delinquency, which seems to be increasing at a suspiciously alarming rate," says the ICFTU's regional organisation, Inter-American Regional Organisation of Workers (ORIT).

PERU — TERRORIST ATTACK?

The assassination of teachers' union leader Pedro Orellana has been condemned by the ICFTU and ORIT. Orellana, a leader of one of the Peruvian national centres, CGTP, died after he was shot by masked gunmen on August 27. A colleague was seriously injured in the attack. Terrorist group Sendero Luminoso slogans had been painted on the walls of the men's offices.

Trade unions worldwide have also condemned the attempted abduction on August 27, of Juan Luna, general secretary of the ICFTU-affiliated CTP. The assailants used a gun to try to force Luna into an unmarked car, but he managed to escape.

VENEZUELAN TRADE UNION LEADER SHOT

On September 23 the former President of the Venezuelan national centre, Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela (CTV), Antonio Rios suffered gunshot wounds after being attacked by a couple on a motor cycle.

Rios was attacked on his release from bail—he had voluntarily turned himself over to the courts for investigation following accusations made against him connected with his role as a trade union leader.

It has been reported that the couple who attacked Rios have since been arrested.



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

5-7 October

16 October

20 October

20-21 October

26 October

27-29 October

10 November

11-13 November

Asia/Pacific Dockers' Conference

Rhine Shipping Committee

Management Committee

Executive Board

Maritime Safety Committee

Seafarers' Section Conference

Ground Staff Technical
Committee

Civil Aviation Section Conference

Yokohama, Japan

Strasbourg

Copenhagen

Copenhagen

Genoa

Genoa

London

London



Air Niugini strike intensifies

Over one thousand workers are on indefinite strike against Air Niugini. This is the second strike within a month.

The strike was initially over pay, but has now been inflamed by the dismissal of over 100 workers during the earlier stoppage from 27-31 August (see *ITF News*, September 1992). During the weekend of 26-27 September three strikers were arrested and detained in police cells.

Unions had originally planned a four day strike. However, the company has sacked more strikers, and tried to force others to sign individual "no strike" contracts if they want to return to their jobs. On September 25 a mass meeting voted to escalate the action into an indefinite strike.

The strike of both cabin crew and ground staff involves co-ordinated action by all three ITF-affiliated aviation unions in Papua New Guinea, the National Airline Employees' Association (NAEA), the Flight Attendants' Association and the Aircraft Engineers' Association.

A few flights have been maintained by the company hiring casual labour off the streets to load and unload aircraft. The carrier is still maintaining its flights to Australia.

According to Kapai Aria, General Secretary of the NAEA, "They just used anybody with complete disregard for safety and health and safety procedures".

Two aircraft are reported damaged — this included a propeller that was rammed on one aircraft and the rupture of the front cargo hold of an Airbus.

Unions are also concerned about lack of the necessary security checks on casual staff who are given full access to aircraft and security-sensitive airport areas. "There are no security checks, and yet there is an armed secessionist war going on in our coun-

try with many rebel sympathisers in Port Moresby," pointed out one NAEA representative.

On September 30, the unions and Air Niugini management attended a conciliation conference at the Department of Labour. The unions put forward their demands for the reinstatement of sacked workers and an end to harassment of the strikers and withdrawal of all "no striking contracts".

At the court the company agreed to negotiate over the terminations. However, the next day they declared to the union that the terminations were non-negotiable and announced 100 more sackings. The union is now escalating the strike to include the eighteen small airports outside Port Moresby.

The company appears to regard the tribunal and conciliation with contempt, along with all the other industrial procedures set up to deal with disputes.

It has gone straight to the National Court to demand a restraining order against any strike action or mass meetings involving work stoppage, and to ban unions from seeking any international support actions against Air Niugini operations.

Kapai Aria says he believes this indicates the company is bent on breaking the unions.

The ITF has written to its affiliates asking for maximum support for the Air Niugini strikers, and protested to the PNG government over the arrests.

Calcutta police destroy Biman strikers' snack counter

Over three years ago 28 Bangladesh Biman baggage handlers based at Calcutta airport lost their jobs to non-union casual workers. Since that time the workers have maintained a permanent picket outside the airport terminal.

Last year, the workers set up a picketers' co-operative snack bar which both publicised their dispute and provided the workers with a small income (see *ITF News*, October 1991).

However, the embarrassment to the authorities of such a persistent and visible form of protest directly outside the terminal appears to have become too much for the state government.

On 17 August the police suddenly appeared and forcibly removed the workers' snack counter.

The workers refused to be intimidated, and immediately started a sit-in outside the airport terminal. But on the evening of August 31 police moved in again and arrested the workers on the sit-in.

AIRLINES SEEK CONCESSIONS

Northwest Airlines is looking for \$500 million in concessions from its pilots over the next five years. The ITF-affiliated Airline Pilots' Association (ALPA) is looking at the airline's finances and demanding that if employees make concessions then so should shareholders. One of the largest shareholders is KLM. ALPA is ready to consider profit-sharing schemes, partial ownership and stronger job security measures, but is opposed to wage cuts. The carrier is also currently pushing for concessions from its 26,000 members in the Machinists.

TWA is to drop several routes and cut up to ten per cent of its workforce in its latest survival plan.

Alaska Air is to lay off 800 of its 7,000 workforce as a result of losses made in fares wars. Negotiations have currently broken down between Alaska Air and 1,500 flight attendants represented by the ITF-affiliated Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) over cuts in holiday benefits, restrictions on scheduling and health care cost increases. In July AFA members held "informational picketing" at Seattle and Long Beach CA to educate passengers about the intransigence and unfairness of the management. Members passed out luggage tags and bookmarks predicting a "Long Hot Summer" of negotiations.

Air India employees in Bombay went on strike on September 26 in support of pay demands, resulting in long delays in flight departures.

ALLIANCES AND MERGERS

Sabena is planning to cut a further 1,000 jobs on top of the 2,200 redundancies already planned as part of its restructuring programme in the wake of its merger with Air France.

Air France has signed an alliance with **Air Canada**. Scheduling, customer and frequent flyer programmes and freight will be co-ordinated. Air Canada, which is currently in merger talks with **Canadian Airlines**, signed an alliance with **UAL** in August.

British Airways has said that it will

implement "immediate co-ordination and subsequent full integration of pricing and inventory control" if its merger with **USAir** goes ahead. The two airlines will not only be run like one global carrier but look like one. BA says within three or four years the two airlines will fly under identical colours with a new "global master brand".

BA has bought 49.9 per cent of the French regional carrier **TAT**. This falls into line with BA's strategy of buying into regional carriers in Europe.

Lufthansa plans to challenge BA's



transatlantic tie-up with **USAir** and **KLM's** link to **NWA** with a \$400m bid for **Continental Airlines**.

European airlines are also looking east, apparently following old colonial ties. **Air France** is entering an alliance, which may involve a stake in **Vietnam Airlines**. **KLM** is linking with **Garuda** in Indonesia, which may end with a stake in the airline when it is privatised. BA is considered a leading contender in the **Qantas** privatisation.

Iberia has temporarily failed in its bid to extend further its Latin American empire. The Bolivian government despite being desperate to sell off the national carrier **Lloyd Aéreo Boliviano** has turned down **Iberia's** offer as "inadequate".

The US-based **Worldspan** computer reservation system (CRS), which is already linked to the Asian **Abacus**

CRS, has forged a link with the major European CRS **Amadeus**. **Amadeus** has been looking for an American partner ever since its European rival **Galileo** linked up with the US **Apollo** system.

Compass Airlines was relaunched into the Australian skies in August. The airline collapsed at the end of 1991 as the result of a cut throat fares war being waged in Australia. 1,100 employees lost their jobs. The new airline will employ much fewer. The number of flight attendants is reduced from 250 to 112.

JOBS MOVE TO CHEAP LABOUR

British Aerospace aircraft manufacturers ended 60 years of aircraft production at Hatfield near London, shedding 3,000 jobs. It plans to produce its **BaE 146** regional jets in a joint venture with **Taiwan Aerospace (TAC)**. Mr **Denny Ko**, president of **TAC**, estimates that skilled Taiwan labour costs are 30 per cent below Europe. **BaE** says it can cut costs 20 per cent by moving to Asia.

Cathay Pacific has put its airline information processing to **Guangzhou** in China, blaming spiralling wages, and rentals in **Hong Kong**.

According to the ITF-affiliated **AFA**, who are currently suing **United Airlines** over the setting up of a Paris cabin crew base (see **ITF News**, June/July 1992), the airline is planning similar bases in **Buenos Aires**, **Taipei**, **Tokyo** and **Mexico City**.

In August 1992 **KLM** spun off its maintenance ground equipment division into a wholly-owned subsidiary, **KLM equipment services BV**. The unit is the fourth **KLM** division to become an independent subsidiary under current cost cutting programmes. The data entry, fire service and staff canteens have undergone the same treatment. All 200 staff in the new subsidiary will be granted current **KLM** wages and conditions. This will not be the case for new staff.

As part of its new cost cutting programme (see page 10) **Lufthansa** is insisting that domestic flights within **Lufthansa Express** will not be covered by the industrial agreement on flight and duty times. Instead **Lufthansa Express** will fly to the legal threshold.

Russian police ransack ATC union offices

Police officers from the Russian ministry of the interior raided the Moscow offices of the Air Traffic Controllers' Union (FPAD) on September 17 and seized union documents after a five hour search. The raid follows a one day strike on August 26. Leaders of the FPAD are to face charges cited as "heavy material damage inflicted by the strike action of the union to the state".

According to FPAD's Secretary Yekaterina Donina, at 1.00 pm the police broke into their offices and presented a warrant signed by Colonel Vladimir Mazurski, who heads up top priority investigations.

FPAD president Vladimir Konusenko and other union officers were interrogated at police headquarters. Konusenko says the police seemed mostly interested in the union's finances and staff salaries. He says: "We were not informed that legal procedures were started against us and

we regard this search as illegal...Had they asked for all these papers we would surely have sent them to the police."

The government has assessed the damage inflicted at 177m roubles and tens of thousands of dollars.

The August strike had put forward demands to the government concerning urgent improvements needed for the air traffic control system. The controllers also have pay grievances.

The Russian Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoi, a former military pilot, vowed to defeat the strike, citing the 1981 PATCO strike defeated by the Reagan government in the US as his model.

The strike was declared illegal and military air traffic controllers were used to break the strike. The civilian controllers were forced to stand behind them as advisers, while behind them stood rows of police and crack riot troops.

The FPAD was formed in 1990 and helped defend the government against the August coup by reporting military aircraft movements.

Despite this, the government is becoming openly hostile to independent unions and is ready to move more strongly against them. Independent unions have been meeting in the wake of the strike to discuss the lessons learned, in particular the lack of support given by other unions, and the need for more co-ordinated action in the future.

- 130 pilots in the Flight Personnel Association (FPA) of Russia based at Aldan airport in Siberia went on strike on August 19 over the refusal of the local government to sign any agreement covering pay, conditions or flight and duty times. 31 pilots have been sacked, and the company has brought in strike breakers. On August 26, sixteen pilots began a hunger strike.

Bush halts flight and duty limitations law

A threatened veto by President Bush has stopped new laws which would regulate flight and duty times for cabin crew in the United States.

The US Senate passed the Department of Transportation appropriations bill last August. The bill included legal provisions on cabin crew duty hours and was seen as a major victory for the Coalition of Flight Attendant Unions (see **ITF News**, September 1992), an alliance of all major cabin crew unions, which includes ITF affiliates, the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) and the machinists' union (IAMAW).

The law would for the first time set legal limits which would ensure that cabin crew were rested enough to perform their vital safety duties on board aircraft.

However, President Bush threatened to veto the whole of the transportation appropriations bill, unless all references to flight and duty times were taken out. The Senate and House members decided to drop the flight

and duty time provisions before final passage of the bill.

This takes the cabin crew campaign back to square one. According to Fred Casey, AFA vice president, "This action means we start at the beginning in our fight to get some mandated limits on the amount of duty hours a

flight attendant can be on duty. Be assured that regardless of our frustration with President Bush with his unbelievable objections to this obvious basic right, AFA and the other flight attendant unions in this country will continue to fight for limits on our duty time".

Continental: Cabin Crew union returns

Flight attendants at Continental Airlines have a union again for the first time since 1984, after ratifying a contract negotiated by the ITF-affiliated IAMAW. The attendants were part of an unaffiliated union when Frank Lorenzo, in a notorious exercise in union-busting, put the company into bankruptcy and threw out all its bargaining agreements.

As a result, the Continental flight attendants merged with the IAMAW in 1984. But it took until last July for the union to finally triumphantly re-enter Continental with a four year bargaining contract. The contract

provides wage improvements of up to 15 per cent over the contract term and an extension of the pay scale.

On July 28, around the time that the union flag was raised again in the airline he once declared union-free, Frank Lorenzo was stopped by a Houston patrol officer. He was in a state of drunkenness, driving the wrong direction down a one-way street. Lorenzo, who the bankruptcy courts had previously declared unfit to run an airline, was declared unfit to be in charge of a car and sentenced to two years' probation for drunken driving.



US airlines push for European open skies

Air agreements between the US and European countries are currently in the front line of the bitter competitive struggles being waged in the process of airline industry globalisation.

On March 31 1992, Andrew Card, the newly-appointed US Transport Secretary, announced that the US was now offering to negotiate "open skies" agreements with all European countries, an initiative that could later be extended to other regions.

On 4 September the US government signed an open skies agreement with the Dutch — the first such agreement with a European country.

Among other liberalising measures, the open skies agreement provides:

- Open entry and unrestricted capacity and frequency on all routes
- Double disapproval of fares
- Open code-sharing opportunities
- The right for carriers to operate their own ground handling in either country

- Liberal charter and freight arrangements

- Non discriminatory CRS systems

The main gains appear to go to Holland, since KLM gains the right of access to all US airports and is allowed much closer co-ordination and integration of KLM operations with those of North West Airlines, in which KLM has a 20 per cent stake. The two airlines will be able to provide a substantial "seamless" travel link between NWA and KLM routes across the globe.

The deal will also improve the status of Amsterdam's Schipol airport as an international hub.

For the US the main achievement appears to be the creation of an open skies bridgehead in Europe, at a time when other European countries are seeking to push in the other direction. The German and French governments are seeking more restrictive regulations in current agreements.

The strongest pressure from the US is currently on the British government. Delta, American and United are all lobbying the US government hard not to approve the deal between British Airways and USAir unless there is a liberal revision of the US-UK bi-lateral agreement. They claim BA are gaining a back door entry to the US market. US and British transport ministers are to meet for talks in early October.

Many European airlines fear that an open skies agreement will allow the lower cost, and larger US airlines to flatten their European competitors. US open skies rules, for example, do not recognise predatory pricing as a valid criterion for complaint.

Bernard Attali, chairman of Air France, recently declared:

"...seen from this side of the Atlantic, open skies are rather like an American vision of Pax Americana."

Union stands its ground in Lufthansa deal

In an agreement reached with Lufthansa on 31 August, the ITF-affiliated German transport union ÖTV has conceded a range of productivity measures, but successfully stood its ground in a number of key areas under threat from the company's cost cutting plans.

Lufthansa has announced a major two year cost cutting programme. The company expects to make a US\$1bn loss in 1993 and wants to make this amount of savings in reduced personnel and material costs and increased revenue.

The company recently said it wants to shed around 6,000 jobs over two years. The government is also stepping up its plans to privatise the airline.

The union has accepted a number of measures to raise productivity. These include the extension of a wages freeze; a new system for calculating shift pay; and the possible introduction of total annual working hours.

However the union successfully de-

fended key conditions. It withstood the threat to the 13th month salary; and it refused a return to the 40 hour week.

Significantly, the union successfully resisted one of Lufthansa's main aims, to hive off domestic operations into a separate independent subsidiary company, Lufthansa Express.

While a number of conditions in Lufthansa Express will differ slightly from those in the main group, it will remain as a division of Lufthansa and within its bargaining structure.

The union has also extended worker participation with the setting up of divisional bi-partite steering committees, through which the union says "employees will actively participate in the future shaping and monitoring of developments within Lufthansa".

This will be particularly important when the company starts to make lay offs. It is hoped that all retrenchment will be kept voluntary. The company has agreed to make generous pay outs to those who do leave.

However, ITF European Vice President, Eike Eulen (ÖTV) says "Although the agreement contains a measure of pay restraint, it would be wrong to conclude that it marks the beginning of a shift towards wider restraint in collective bargaining, as is being claimed by some".

Instead Eulen points out that Lufthansa is placed in a fiercely competitive international market place, in direct competition with American airlines as a result of an over-liberal bi-lateral air agreement with the United States.

Eulen says any survival plan for Lufthansa "must include a decision to end the German-American air agreement, which distorts competition, and to negotiate a new agreement".

On 18 July, ÖTV president Monika Wulf-Mathies held a meeting with the German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel to press for the scrapping of the German-American air traffic treaty.

Canadian airlines merge: unions say *open skies* is the real threat

As Air Canada and Canadian Airlines International (CAI), owned by PWA Corporation, appear set to merge, Canadian unions say that the merger in no way guarantees the independent survival of Canadian aviation while the government maintains deregulation and continues to pursue an open skies agreement with the US.

A merged airline would mean that

deregulation in Canada has resulted in a single major airline monopoly of the Canadian airline industry. The merger would put an end to recent talks between CAI and American Airlines (see *ITF News*, September 1992).

According to Judy Darcy, National President of the ITF-affiliated Canadian Union of Public Employees

(CUPE) — Canada's largest union:

"The crisis within the airline industry will continue whether the merger proceeds or not. The fundamental problem is deregulation. The government's hands off approach has been a disaster.

"Deregulation has produced exactly the opposite effect that the government promised. We have fewer independent airlines, fewer routes, fewer communities served, higher fares, dramatically lower wages, thousands fewer jobs and far less competition than prior to 1988".

CUPE says that if the merger goes ahead the consensus amongst analysts is that a minimum of 6,000 jobs will disappear; fares will rise significantly; and air service will decline or disappear in many communities.

The union points out that this scenario is neither inevitable nor necessary. Studies commissioned by the federal government's Ministerial Task Force on International Air Policy showed that both Air Canada and CAI have reached the mass necessary to exploit available economies of scale, and are cost competitive with US airlines — but only if the government abandons its negotiations for open skies with the US. The Task Force says that an open skies policy will allow US airlines to flatten even a merged Air Canada-CAI.

CUPE is recommending a series of measures to deal with the current crisis, including: federal loan guarantees and bridge financing to help Air Canada and Canadian through their current period of crisis; an enhanced adjustment programme for dislocated workers; reform of taxation and leasing policies to make Canadian carriers more competitive; abandonment of open skies in favour of realistic bilateral air agreements with other countries, especially the United States; rejection of cabotage; and retention of the 25 per cent limit on foreign control of Canadian airlines.

Air Ontario crash: a deregulation disaster

On 10 March 1989 an Air Ontario F-28 jet crashed at Dryden Ontario, killing 24 people including 3 crew members. A Commission of Inquiry into the accident was conducted by Justice Virgil Moshansky.

In March 1992 the Commission issued a four volume report which described Air Ontario as a low cost airline run by Air Canada in which "Air Canada management...required Air Ontario only to comply with Transport Canada's threshold operational safety standards".

The desire to lower costs, the report says, came from "the real concerns created by deregulation regarding profitability".

At the same time, resources for government regulatory bodies were being cut, so that: "it became obvious that during the latter half of the 1980s the Aviation Regulation Directorate of Transport Canada became increasingly less able to cope with the certification, inspection and surveillance workloads being generated by the air carrier industry".

Deregulation together with cuts for regulatory bodies produced a lethal combination. According to the Commission:

"The effect of Economic Regulatory Reform, combined with deficit reduction...created a synergy that, in my opinion based on the evidence before this Commission, had an adverse impact on the effective application of safety standards."



Tuvalu register declared Foc

The ITF list of designated Flag of convenience registers has grown to 18 with the addition of the South Pacific State of Tuvalu.

The ITF Sub-Committee on the Collective Agreement (which has been delegated power to declare registers Foc by the Fair Practices Committee) added Tuvalu to the list at its meeting in Rotterdam on September 24-25.

Tuvalu is an independent monarchy (with the Queen of England as Head of State) that became independent in 1978. Twenty-six square kilometres of land are distributed amongst nine islands, south of Fiji in the Pacific Ocean.

Tuvalu's real shipping fleet consists of two government owned training ships — the *Te Tautai* and the *Nivaga*

II, but the register now has four German-owned tankers flying its flag.

Tuvalu is classified by the United Nations as one of the least developed nations on earth. Tuvalu's 8,229 (in June 1985 census) residents have an average annual income of US\$326 per head. It's unlikely that offering their shipping register to foreign owners will bring any noticeable improvement.

ICS adopts new Bulker safety guidelines

A new safety checklist, designed by the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) to limit bulk carrier defects, has been adopted.

Investigations into bulk carrier losses have revealed that poor ship-to-shore communications whilst vessels are in port may result in unsafe loading.

The checklist must be filled out by both the vessel's master and by the terminal supervisor who must include details on cargo, stowage plan and ship stability. A contact person, responsible for communications between the ship and terminal, must be designated.

Action on safe access to the ship, ballasting systems and checks on the weighing and measurement of the cargo are also listed.

The initiative comes after complaints from some terminals that ships arrive with no clear cargo-loading and deballasting plan, as well as suggestions that ship's personnel have been overruled in the past by terminal operators changing loading sequences — sometimes without prior notification.

A leaflet, with advice to crews on the need to observe routine safety precautions, has been distributed to dry cargo shipowners through their

international association. The ICS says it is developing a more comprehensive guide to bulk carrier operations.

However, not all damage is caused by incorrect cargo loading. There is still plenty of evidence that sub-standard vessels are not being picked up during ship safety inspections.

New evidence from welding experts has proved that visual inspection — recommended by classification societies — for cracking in ship's holds or in the structure of large ships is virtually useless.

John Jubb, an international welding consultant who gave evidence at the *Derbyshire* enquiry, reported to a September meeting in England that tests had proved that close visual inspection of a section of plate picked up 40 cracks, magnetic testing revealed three times that many.

Visual testing was "a nonsense that should not be tolerated," said Jubb.

He also made suggestions for improvements in bulk carrier design that would make them less vulnerable to metal fatigue and cracking.

Emphasising the especially complex structure of these vessels, Jubb said that more effort should be made to round corners, whilst design should be re-thought to reduce and reinforce areas of stress.

Bulk carriers were not properly strengthened to withstand the service expected of them, he said, and the grade of steel normally used was inadequate.

Designers did not always understand the practicalities of maintaining weld quality, he added.

More money and time should be spent on scientific assessment of current ship surveying, more personnel deployed in surveys and tighter standards introduced for inspections.

Some maritime administrations are waking up to these obvious needs — but to a limited degree.

The Hong Kong Marine Department has announced that it is focusing its ship inspections on Hong Kong-registered capesize bulkers in an attempt to eradicate sub-standard shipping from its fleet.

Inspections would not be more frequent, said an official, but more detailed.

The Marine Department was in favour of inter-port cooperation, and was actively seeking information on Hong Kong-registered vessels detained by port state control in other countries. It was a waste of time to inspect ships in consecutive ports, he added, and ports in the region should share the burden of inspection.

Clipper Fidelity boycotted in Sweden

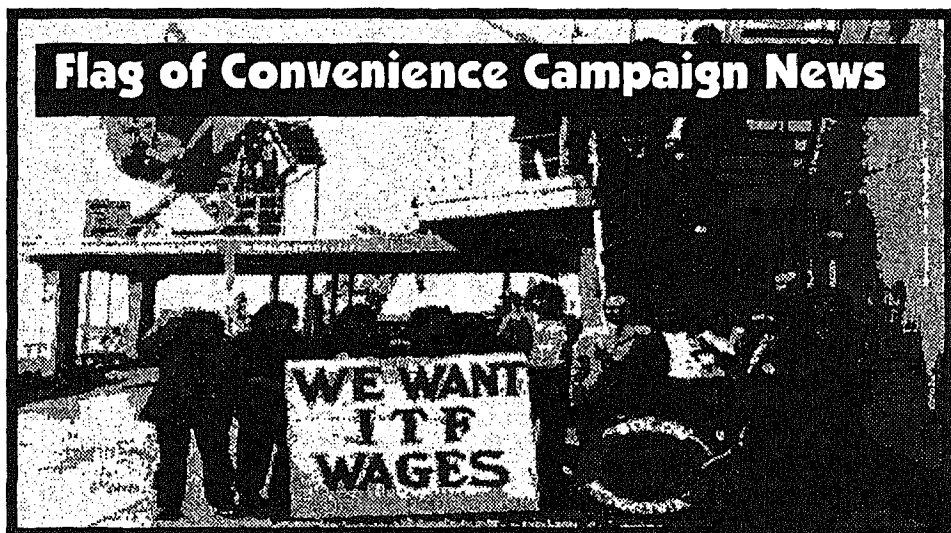
The Maltese Flag of convenience *Clipper Fidelity* used to belong to the infamous Gokal/Terra-Marine (see later item in this article), but has recently been bought by Swiss owners and managers Acomarit. Sailing without an ITF-approved agreement, the ship arrived in **Uddevalla**, Sweden on September 20. ITF Inspector Sten-Ove Niklasson visited the Pakistani crew ship and demanded that the ship sign an ITF Agreement and pay backwages to the crew. A blockade was called for, and the dockworkers (members of the ITF-affiliated Swedish Transport Workers' Union) responded by boycotting the ship. Acomarit responded quickly and signed a standard agreement and paid US\$158,000 in backwages to the crew.

Regular readers of ITF publications know only too well the atrocious and repressive attitude of the Burmese military junta towards seafarers. Working hand in hand with manning agents and owners, the thugs who rule Burma have effectively declared that seafarers who complain, or contact the ITF are liable to imprisonment and confiscation of any extra money they may have received. Crews are consequently very scared to take any action at all. The Maltese Foc *Arhon*, an 18 year old bulker owned by Starlady Marine Limited, Piraeus, Greece, was covered by an ITF Agreement with a mixed Korean and Burmese crew. Despite terrible conditions and the fact that the crew were being cheated on their wages, they were too scared to contact anyone for help. The ship called in a number of **Australian** ports, beginning with Portland, Victoria. One Burmese crewmember lost two of his fingers during cargo handling, and was hospitalised. Compensation in line with the ITF Agreement was obtained and the ITF was informed — however, the owners tried to get the man to pay some of the money back! In the face of this obvious barbarity, the Burmese crew decided that they had had enough and wanted to leave the ship.

Union intervention, and industrial sympathy action, eventually secured a backwages payment for the men. The owners originally wanted the men to fly to Burma — where they would have been immediately arrested, but agreed to repatriation to Bangkok. The crew contacted the Seafarers' Union of Burma (SUB) in exile. The SUB discovered that shipping agent Aung Min (from the C.O. Yang company), in collaboration with the Burmese embassy in Bangkok, was planning to kidnap the seafarers from the airport terminal, take them to the embassy and then smuggle them out

and so put in a claim for backwages and repatriation. He contacted the company, and they eventually agreed to repatriate the men to Sri Lanka and pay the difference in their wages — altogether they received US\$11,300.

The Gokal brothers saga goes on and on (see **ITF News**, September 1992). The *Endurance Sea* crew are still waiting in **Chittagong** — another company ship, the *Miramar*, is now also under arrest in Chittagong. Courts have put the *Halron* in **Douala** up for sale. The *Al Samad* (whose crew were on strike) is now under arrest in **Co-**



in a flight to Rangoon the next day. The SUB warned the crew and appealed for international support. The crew avoided the trap. A number of them went to Hong Kong, where they were assisted by the ITF-affiliated Merchant Navy Officers' Guild (MNOG). They have subsequently entered Thailand safely (with both the ITF and SUB providing security at the airport). The injured seafarer has remained in Australia, where he has been granted refugee status.

The Cyprus flagged *Perla One* arrived in **Hamburg** at the beginning of September, and two Sri Lankan crew members contacted ITF Inspector Ulf Christiansen to say they had been on board for 15 months on a 12 month contract. Christiansen also discovered that their pay was under ILO rates,

lombo. The *Al Majeed* in **Vancouver** is now set to be auctioned, and the courts have ordered the sale of the *Neptunian* in **Valletta**. The Gokal brothers — Abbas, Murtaza and Mustapha — still control a substantial shipping empire. According to an investigation by *Lloyd's List*, the British Serious Fraud Office, the US government, liquidators Touche Ross and the BCCI Depositors Protection Association are all looking into the Gulf Group of companies owned by the Gokals. The Gulf Group has been identified by auditors Price Waterhouse as the "principal bad debtor" of BCCI — their "account manipulation" apparently involved 750 bank accounts with a turnover of US\$15 billion over a 15 year period. With all that money passing through their companies, you'd expect the Gokals to keep their crews paid.

Dutch renew shipping subsidy scheme

The Dutch government has unveiled a Fls150 million (\$90m) package of measures designed to keep Dutch owners under the national flag. Much of the package is a continuation of the IPZ Investment Premium scheme which expires this year — though some extra cash is involved. A study carried out by Coopers and Lybrand for the Dutch Government warned that if the IPZ scheme was not replaced, up to 60 per cent of the Dutch-flag fleet would flag out. There are over 700 ships flying the Dutch flag and the government estimates that the industry directly or indirectly employs 30,000 people.

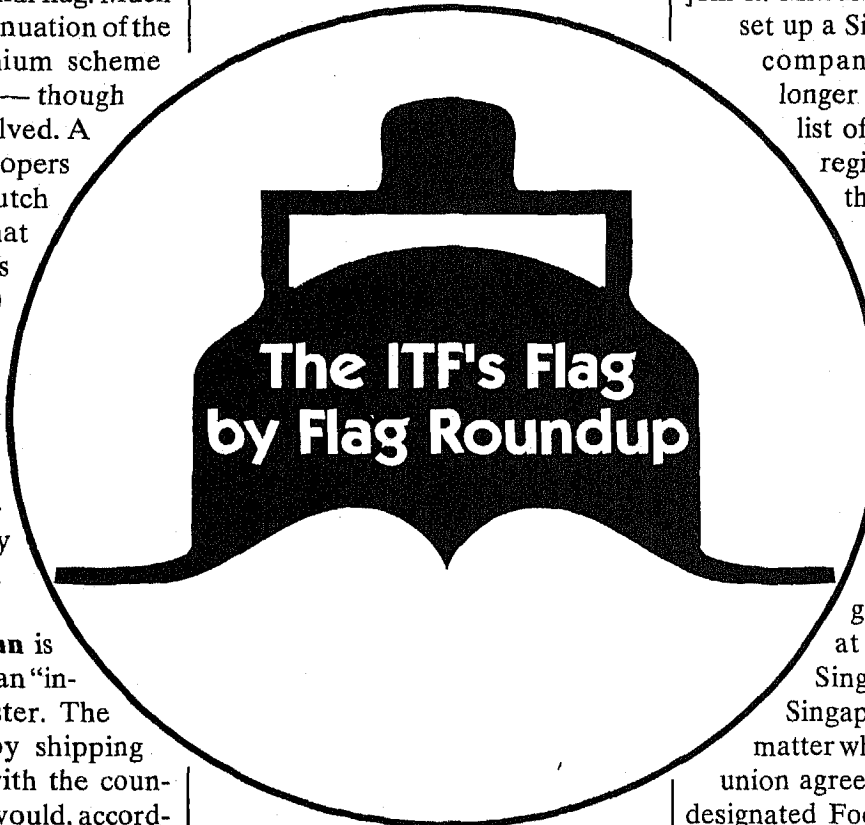
The Kingdom of Jordan is reported to be planning an "international" ship register. The proposal, presented by shipping agents in agreement with the country's port corporation, would, according to Tawfiq Kawar (one of the plan's proponents), closely resemble the Cypriot and Maltese registers — in other words, a Flag of Convenience.

The Singaporean register has increased by 14 per cent in the year to August 1992. According to the

Singaporean Marine Department, 1,967 ships were registered on August first 1992, 242 more than the same

Springtide — part of Nippon Yusen Kaisha's fleet — has begun life on the register, and other NYK ships may join it. Mitsui-OSK Lines have also

set up a Singapore management company. Singapore is no longer on the ITF designated list of Flag of Convenience registers (in recognition of the fact that a very large number of vessels are genuinely locally-owned), but it is still, like Hong Kong, subject to a ship-by-ship examination (where Singaporean ships are checked for local ownership, and treated as Foc if they cannot be shown to be genuine). Furthermore, at the request of the Singaporean unions, any Singaporean flag ship — no matter who owns it — without a union agreement is automatically designated Foc and treated accordingly.



time last year — representing a ten per cent gain in gross tonnage. An official of the register told *Lloyd's List* that a "substantial amount" of the increase is locally owned — though a growing number of Japanese owners are interested in registering with Singapore. The newly built NYK

The US maritime unions, along with their national centre, the AFL-CIO, and (it would seem) a majority of US voters are backing Democrat Bill Clinton's campaign for the Presidency. A nice example of President George Bush's shallow lack of concern for the dramatic decline in the US-flag merchant fleet was a recent 60 second television commercial where he pledged his commitment to fight for American jobs by seizing export opportunities. The President's voice-over accompanied a film clip of a container being loaded onto an Evergreen vessel which then sailed out of port. Evergreen is, of course, a Taiwanese company, and their vessels are crewed by Taiwanese and Filipinos. Embarrassed Bush campaigners admitted that the advertising agency hadn't checked to see if Evergreen was a US company. Officials at Evergreen expressed surprise at the choice of one of their ships.

Liverpool memorial service

ITF News has been asked by the UK seafarers' union RMT to draw the attention of the world's seafarers to an international service of remembrance and thanksgiving that is being held in Liverpool on Sunday 8 November.

The service, which is non-denominational, has been held for a number of years now. Foreign seafarers have always been welcome and some have attended when their ship happened to be in port.

The union would very much like to see more foreign seafarers at the serv-

ice this year and so has asked us for our help in publicising the event.

Though the service is being held at the time of year in Britain when church services remember those who gave their lives in the two world wars, it is dedicated not just to those seafarers who perished in troubled times, but to merchant seafarers everywhere who have given their lives in the course of their profession, both in peace and in war. It is an ecumenical service and will be held in Liverpool's Anglican cathedral starting at 3pm.

IMB establishes regional piracy centre in Malaysia

The International Maritime Bureau's regional piracy centre for South-East Asia was opened on October first.

Located in the IMB regional office, the centre will operate on a 24-hour basis. It is to send warning messages to ships, collect reports on suspicious craft movements and collate this information for the use of the maritime industry.

All the centre's services are free — the centre is funded voluntarily by the industry.

The centre will also liaise with law enforcement agencies in the region, and provide support to vessels that have been attacked.

According to the IMB, in 1991 there were over 200 pirate attacks.

Concern about loss of life and navigation safety in the international shipping community has been compounded by the possibility of an environmental disaster — ships carrying hazardous cargoes could veer out of control whilst their navigating officers are under attack, tied up or imprisoned.

The IMB says that a recent oil tanker collision in the Malacca Straits, possibly due to piracy, is still being investigated.

Attacks at sea are becoming more brutal, says the IMB. During one April incident involving a tanker, the *Valiant Carrier*, a seven-month old baby was battered.

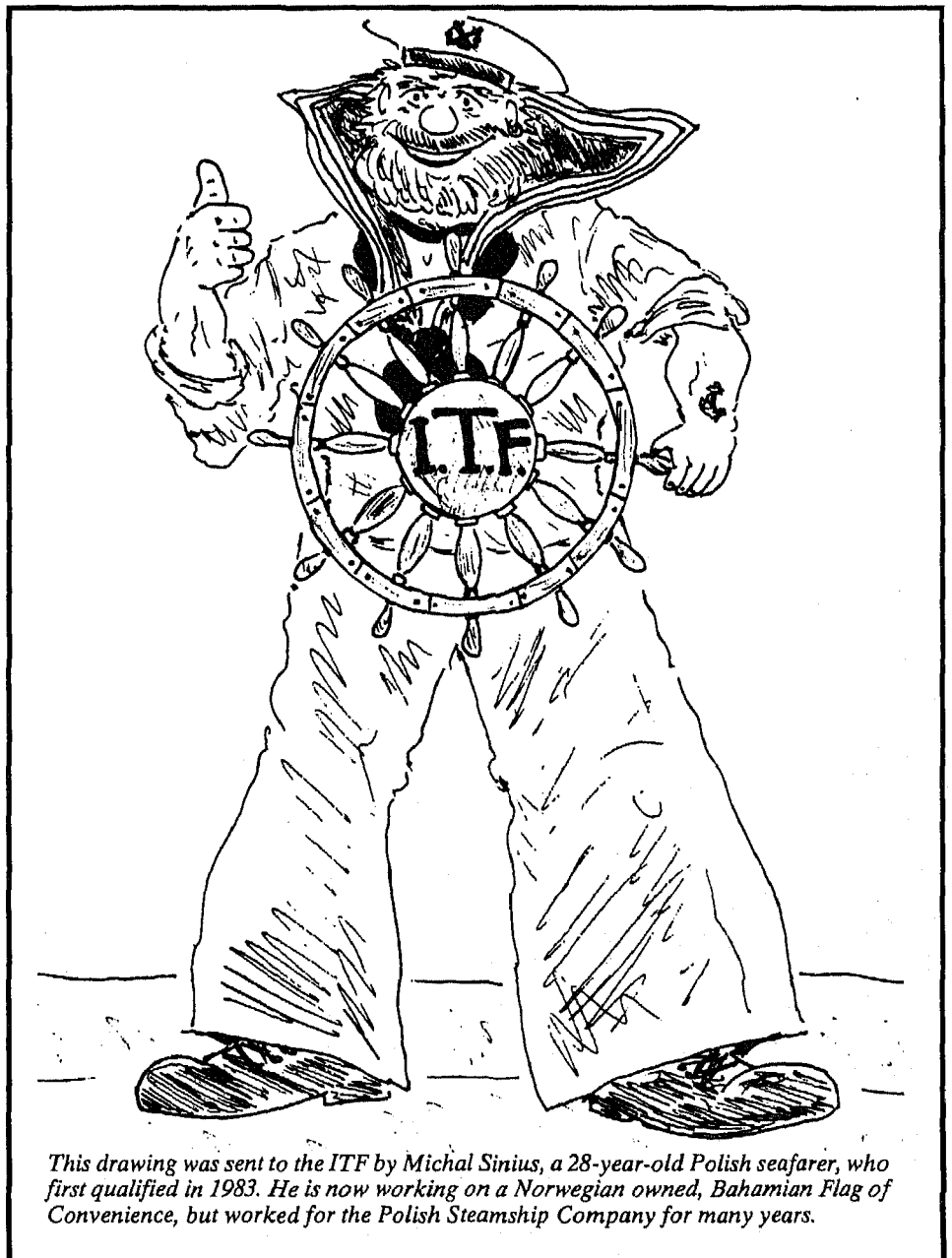
The ITF talked to IMB director Eric Ellen who is enthusiastic about seafarers and their unions using the centre. The more people who have this information, the better, he says.

Seafarers and trade unions wishing to report incidents, or request the centre's services whilst in the area should contact the address given on the right.

Regional Piracy Centre
ICC-International Maritime Bureau
16.03 A Wisma Nusantara, Jalan Punchak
50250 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

24-hour lines:

Telephone: (03) 201 0014
Fax: (03) 238 5769
Telex: MA 31880 IMBPCI



This drawing was sent to the ITF by Michal Simius, a 28-year-old Polish seafarer, who first qualified in 1983. He is now working on a Norwegian owned, Bahamian Flag of Convenience, but worked for the Polish Steamship Company for many years.

ITF worldwide Inspectors' seminar

ITF Flag of convenience inspectors gathered for the annual worldwide Inspectors' seminar in Eastbourne, England from 7-11 September.

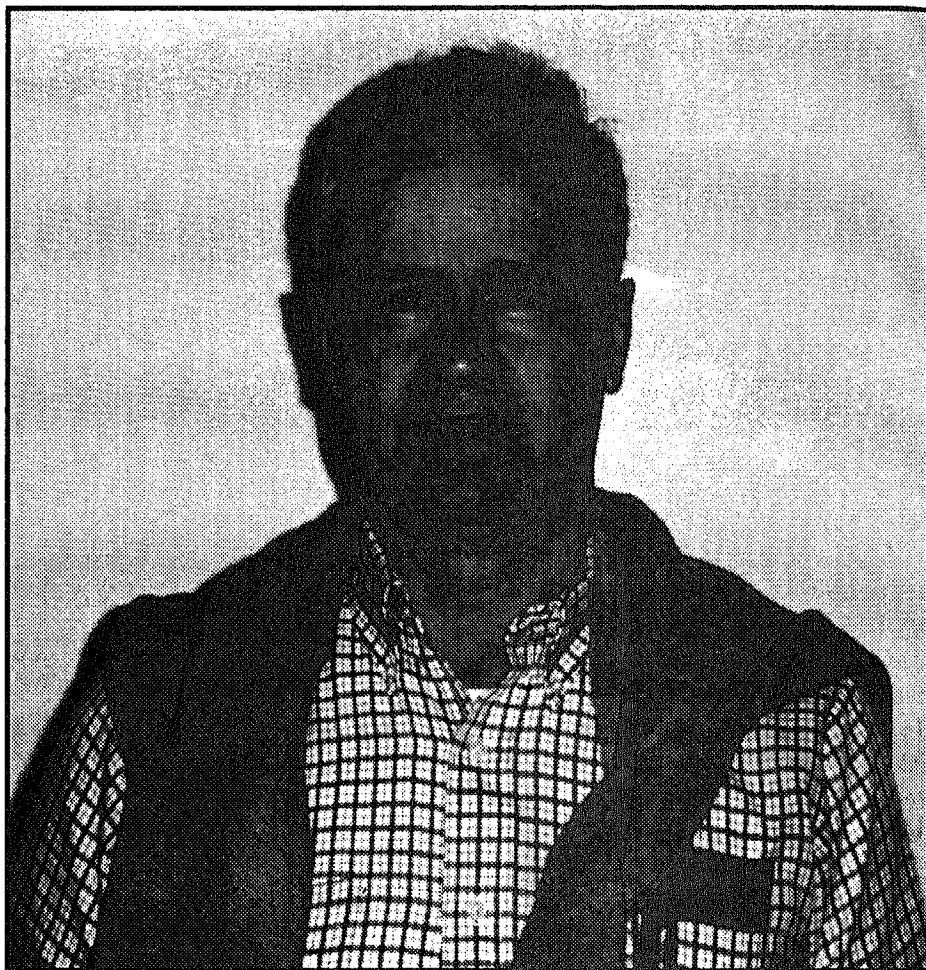
A total of 76 people, including ITF Inspectors and union officials from 26 countries, members of the ITF Secretariat, lawyers and representatives from the International Christian Maritime Association attended the seminar.

The ITF Secretariat was represented by Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander, along with Seafarers', finance and research and publications staff. Assistant General Secretary David Cockroft and General Secretary Harold Lewis also participated.

By all accounts, it was the most successful and productive seminar in recent years. The meeting was structured into smaller workshop meetings that fed back into plenary sessions — most people were able to contribute to the discussions that covered detailed, practical discussion of the Flag of Convenience Campaign, and Inspectors' problems.

The Inspectors also received copies of the completed Inspector's Manual and watched the final version of the accompanying Inspectors' Training Video.

It was also the last Seminar for ITF Australian Inspector Les Symes, from the Waterside Workers' Federation. He retires at the end of this year (and there will be a piece in *ITF News* then as well), and Roger Chapman (from the Seamen's Union of Australia) has been appointed as his replacement.



Les Symes

Les has been in charge of the campaign in Australia since 1976 — and in that time he has earned the respect and admiration of countless seafarers, trade unionists and everyone who has worked with him at the ITF. It will be a long time before many shipowners forget about him too — the wise ones have long since realised that you don't mess with the Australian maritime trade unions.

In a special presentation during the Seminar, ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis gave Les a painting of Istanbul docks as a gift from all the Inspectors and ITF Staff. During a commemorative reception, the seminar also viewed "The Thoughts of Chairman Les": — a specially produced, feature-length video consisting of interviews with him. He was then presented with the video.

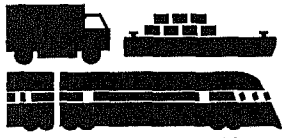
PEOPLE

Israel Kessar, General Secretary of the Israeli trade union centre Histadrut, has been appointed Transport Minister in the incoming Labour Party government of Yitzhak Rabin. **Haim Haberfeld** has taken over as Acting General Secretary until a suc-

cessor to Kessar, Histadrut General Secretary for the past seven years, is elected at the end of 1993.

Bob White, former president of the Canadian Auto Workers, has been elected as the new President of the

Canadian Labour Congress in succession to **Shirley Carr**, who had earlier announced that she would not be seeking re-election. **Dick Martin**, previously CLC Executive Vice President, was elected Secretary-Treasurer by acclamation.



INLAND TRANSPORT

Argentina tries to close down railway

A trade union plan to save Argentina's inter-urban passenger trains was presented to the country's government last month.

Long-distance trains, run by the state enterprise Ferrocarriles Argentinas (FA), figure high on President Menem's list of state industries to be phased out.

Menem had ordered FA not to issue any tickets from August first, intending to terminate nearly all services from that date. Coach and bus services were to benefit from this move.

But following an outcry both from the public and from the industry, Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo announced on July 15 that some services would be allowed to continue until the end of the year, after which opera-

tion would be turned over to private companies, with the regions committing financial resources.

All reduced rate tickets have been withdrawn until December, sleeping-car services have been terminated, and a 30-day deadline to produce information on the real costs of each service has been implemented.

Amid accusations against the industry of inefficiency, over-manning and low productivity (a situation that can only be blamed on successive governments and which now usefully appears to legitimise Menem's action), the rail unions have come up with a plan that would cut staffing and increase fares by 25 per cent — but saving Argentina's passenger railways from what looked like certain

demise.

The proposal has been welcomed by the government and it seems that there is hope for a workable solution.

Wagons-lits dispute

French sleeping-car workers took strike action during September over proposals by their employers, the international travel company Wagons-Lits, to reorganise carriage attendants' work.

The proposals involve cutting the workforce by half — from August 19 there was to be one attendant per every two sleeping cars, instead of the former one for each car.

Workers were not to receive any extra compensation for this doubling of their duties.

There are concerns that safety standards will be seriously threatened by this reduction in personnel — one French attendant has already died as a result of stress.

The workers, members of the Force Ouvrière (FO) and CFDT (Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail), decided to take action to prevent the introduction of this drastic measure, in order to protect their jobs and working conditions.

The ITF was contacted by another trade secretariat, the International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF), when it became clear that non-union strike-breakers were being used to continue Wagons-Lits' Italian services.

The ITF contacted Italian rail affiliates, asking them to support the strikers and pass on any information about the strike-breakers.

Nigerian Rail to be broken up

Railway privatisation and commercialisation seem to be catching on — hard on the heels of Britain, Nigeria has become the latest country to embark on the first stage of a far-reaching plan involving increased private participation in the rail industry.

According to a recent government announcement, the cash-starved Nigerian Railway Corporation (it has had trouble meeting its wage bill recently) is to be broken up into three separate companies.

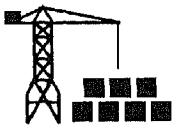
NRC's fleet of locomotives, passenger coaches and freight wagons and other railway assets will be handed over to the newly-created and wholly government owned Nigerian Railways Ltd, which will assume overall responsibility for freight and passenger service operation throughout the

country.

A Nigerian Railway Track Authority will be set up to oversee maintenance, improvement and development of the permanent way, while a third division, the Nigerian Railway Engineering Company, will take over all of NRC's major engineering workshops, producing new rolling stock in Nigeria, probably with the assistance of a foreign technical partner.

As in Britain, the reorganisation of NRC, which is due to be implemented before the end of 1992, comes as bad news for railway workers, who have seen their numbers fall very steeply in recent years.

The Nigerian Union of Railwaymen (NUR) will have a fierce fight on its hands, in the light of a recent comment by the Transport Minister that seventy per cent of rail jobs are threatened by the move.



ITF Latin American port workers meet

New measures to step up activities and improve communications between the ITF and dockers' trade unions in Latin America, including a new regional committee, were discussed at a three-day Latin American Portworkers' Regional Conference, held in Vitória, Brazil from September second.

The meeting was hosted by the Vitória branch of CONTTMAF — the Brazilian transport workers' federation, headed by Mauricio Sant'Anna, who has taken a leading role in many of the ITF's activities over the years.

Over 40 delegates and observers from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Uruguay were at the con-

ference. The ITF Secretariat was represented by Assistant General Secretary David Cockroft and Sarah Finke.

In his opening speech, Cockroft underlined the importance of this meeting given the concerted attack on Latin American port workers' unions and pay and conditions in the region over the past year or so.

The ITF existed to help unions in the region's ports to come together and develop international strategies ensuring the social dimension was not omitted from the process of change, he said.

Kees Marges of the Dutch transport workers' union, Vervoersbond FNV, gave delegates an overview of the evolution of the ports industry over the past decades, and provided an insight

into the latest automated installations in the port of Rotterdam, and a presentation highlighting the importance of training policies in tomorrow's port industry was made by Bart de Boer of the ILO Maritime Industries Branch.

José Olaizola of the Spanish affiliate FETTC-UGT was also present, and was able to give valuable guidance to debates over the three days.

The meeting agreed to set up a Dockworkers' Regional Committee, constituted by one representative from each country.

The Conference resolved that the first meeting of this Committee should take place in conjunction with the Latin American Regional Conference

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US government tightens its interpretation of seafarers' cargo handling restrictions

The US port unions' campaign to get the State Department to correctly apply the provisions of a reciprocity clause in the 1990 Immigration Act, intended to protect US dockers by severely restricting the use of foreign seafarers for cargo-handling, has ended in clear victory.

The 1990 Immigration Act dictated that the State department should draw up a list of countries where US seafarers were not permitted to do this work. Nationals of those countries were to be precluded from carrying out the same work in US ports.

But the State Department looked merely at legislation abroad — not at the provisions of collective bargaining agreements, or at the restrictions laid down by custom or practice in other countries.

US dock workers' unions the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and the International

Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) launched a widely publicised joint campaign to expose the State Department's incorrect interpretation of the Act's provisions (see *ITF News*, September 1992). With the announcement of new rules in mid-September it became clear that their campaign had been a great success.

Under a revised interpretation of the Immigration Act, the new regulations mean that foreign seafarers will only be allowed to carry out cargo-handling work in very specific circumstances:

— if the flag-state permits US seafarers to do longshore work in its ports, and the vessel is majority-owned by citizens of a country which allows US seafarers to carry out cargo handling in its ports,

— if collective bargaining agreements covering at least 30 per cent of

the dock workers in a US port permit this,

— if the shipowner lodges an attestation with the US Labour department to the effect that foreign seafarers are permitted to handle cargo under prevailing practice.

The emphasis has been radically shifted in favour of the union's arguments: now it is up to the shipowner to prove that the right set of circumstances exist in order for foreign seafarers to be used for these jobs in US ports.

From October eighth, shipowners found in violation of the statute can be fined up to US\$5,000 per foreign seafarer used for cargo-handling work at a US port (the 1990 statute defines longshore work as any activity relating to the loading or unloading of cargo). Offending owners may also be penalised by a US ban on all the ships they own or charter.

Aggressive port privatisation schemes dominate Latin American industry

Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari caused shock waves when he announced the complete privatisation of the Mexican National Port Authority at the beginning of September. The whole port system is to be disintegrated, it has been reported, and around 1,200 jobs are threatened.

The government is to auction concessions to manage nine ports, to include installations at Acapulco, Progreso, Lazaro Cardenas and Manzanillo. Under the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA), restrictions on foreign in-

vestment will be lifted, meaning that US and Canadian shipping lines will be eligible to control Mexican port operations.

Claiming that the move is an attempt to improve productivity, the Mexican government also hopes to attract marine investors from Japan, Singapore and Taiwan.

If plans under discussion by the port authority and the private sector are successful, cargo-handling operations at the **Panamanian** ports Cristobal and Balboa will to be privatised from the beginning of next year.

Cargo-handling is the only port operation not already deregulated. The National Ports Authority says it has already received inquiries from various stevedoring companies.

Privatisation would make the ports more profitable, port employers are claiming. But it seems that the real

reason is a widespread reluctance to invest in basic infrastructure.

"If we can increase efficiency and reliability at our ports, we will not need to rely on new facilities because we will take advantage of our existing ones," said one port manager.

It seems that container handling through Panama's ports has risen by 26 per cent in the last four months. But neither port authority nor government are keen to invest new profits in building new facilities, preferring to leave investment to the private sector.

Following rapid deregulation and mass dismissals last year, **Peruvian** port workers took strike action in September for greater job security and better working conditions. It is reported that the trade union centre in Peru, CTP, has approached the Labour Ministry to open negotiations.

... Dockers' meeting

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planned for 1993. Proposals to examine the ITF's structure in the region were noted, and it was suggested that they be properly discussed at this Conference. The meeting recommended that the Regional Conference should be held in a country in the Northern part of the Latin American region.

Structural changes in the industry as experienced by Latin American portworkers were examined, as were measures to protect employment and improve port training in the region. The conclusions of two working groups on these themes were adopted in the plenary session of the conference, underlining the importance of ratification of ILO Conventions on health and safety, and on the social protection of dockworkers.

Resolutions of solidarity with workers in Chile, whose trade union rights are being denied, and Nicaragua, where an earthquake had seriously affected at least two port cities, were approved. A CONTTMAF statement supporting the impeachment of the Brazilian President Fernando Collor over the continuing scandal of his state fund-swindling was also read to the meeting.

Italian law to abolish dock monopolies adopted

A draft law to abolish monopolies on dock labour has been approved by Italy's cabinet and is due to go before parliament.

The move is linked to last year's European Court of Justice decision that the Genoa port cooperative, **Compagnia Unica (CU)** — whose workers are members of the ITF-affiliated federation **FILIT-CGIL** — violated competition regulations under the Treaty of Rome (see ITF News, June/July 1992).

Now the government hopes to introduce legislation that will oblige the CU to turn itself into a commercial company and whilst employers would be able to use their own or outside labour, preference would have to be given when hiring to CU port workers.

In the meantime, the government has tried to enforce an agreement for non-CU workers to unload at the new **Voltri container port near Genoa**, despite a local magistrate's August ruling that under Italy's current laws, Voltri — part of the Fiat group — must use only CU labour.

Australian workers jailed for picketing in Hobart

Fifty-six Tasmanian dock workers were arrested in August when they picketed over the use of non-union labour in the first major dispute in the port of Hobart for 36 years.

The workers, members of the ITF-affiliated Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia (WWF), started the action on August sixth when the Australian trawler *Austral Leader* arrived from New Zealand. All the ratings on board were non-union members — many of them New Zealanders working under individual employment contracts.

Ship's crew and shore-based personnel from the fish factory receiving the frozen cargo began discharging the load.

As WWF members had done this work in the past, the Hobart branch contacted the shipowner — who said he supported their claim, but that he could not intervene, as the cargo was now the property of the factory, Trident Seafoods.

Trident Seafoods' manager, though, was unavailable to talk to the WWF — even when the union Assistant General Secretary, John Coombs, tried to contact him.

At a meeting of members on the adjoining terminals dock workers unanimously supported mounting a picket. Early on the morning of Friday August seventh, members

began their vigil. Their action was supported by the Tasmanian Trades and Labour Council.

Meetings during that day with Trident Seafoods and the manager of the Hobart Marine Board were unproductive.

Mervyn Lee, the elusive Trident manager, refused to agree staffing levels with the WWF and threatened the union with legal action.

Meanwhile WWF members on the terminal were approached by the crew of the *Austral Leader* who complained about their pay (the lack of it) and bad conditions.

Following complaints by the WWF and the crew, some of the problems were settled and the seafarers were given a payment of A\$200 for a night on the town.

Early that morning the picketers were attacked by a drunken crew member brandishing a hammer.

Over the weekend solicitors for Trident told the union that the picket was illegal secondary action, and that if it continued, legal proceedings would be initiated.

On the morning of Monday August tenth, the harbourmaster called in the police and the WWF members were charged with trespassing — in their own work area.

Even after the arrest of 56 picketers, other trade unionists refused to cross the deserted picket line. The picketers were bailed, and a stop work meeting was held,

during which members voted to continue the picket and withdraw labour from other port users.

The next day, August eleventh, a labour court hearing recommended that the WWF begin work on another ship, the *Bass Trader*, and open negotiations with Trident Seafoods.

But Trident manager Mervyn Lee refused to talk to the union.

Meanwhile the *Austral Leader's* owners had requested the WWF to allow truck drivers from the Tasmanian workers' union to refuel the vessel (the drivers had refused to cross the picket line) and the WWF agreed: on the condition that Trident answered a proposal on an interim agreement that the union had put together in conjunction with the Tasmanian Fishing Council.

Trident declined to answer, but as a mark of good faith the WWF members agreed to discharge the *Bass Trader*.

At a later meeting and after talks between John Coombs and the National Fishing Industries Council (NFIC) an agreement was reached with Austral Fisheries and Trident to employ six WWF workers during the discharge of the *Austral Leader*.

It was settled that future manning levels should be negotiated between the union and the NFIC before the ship's next visit.

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