



NEWS

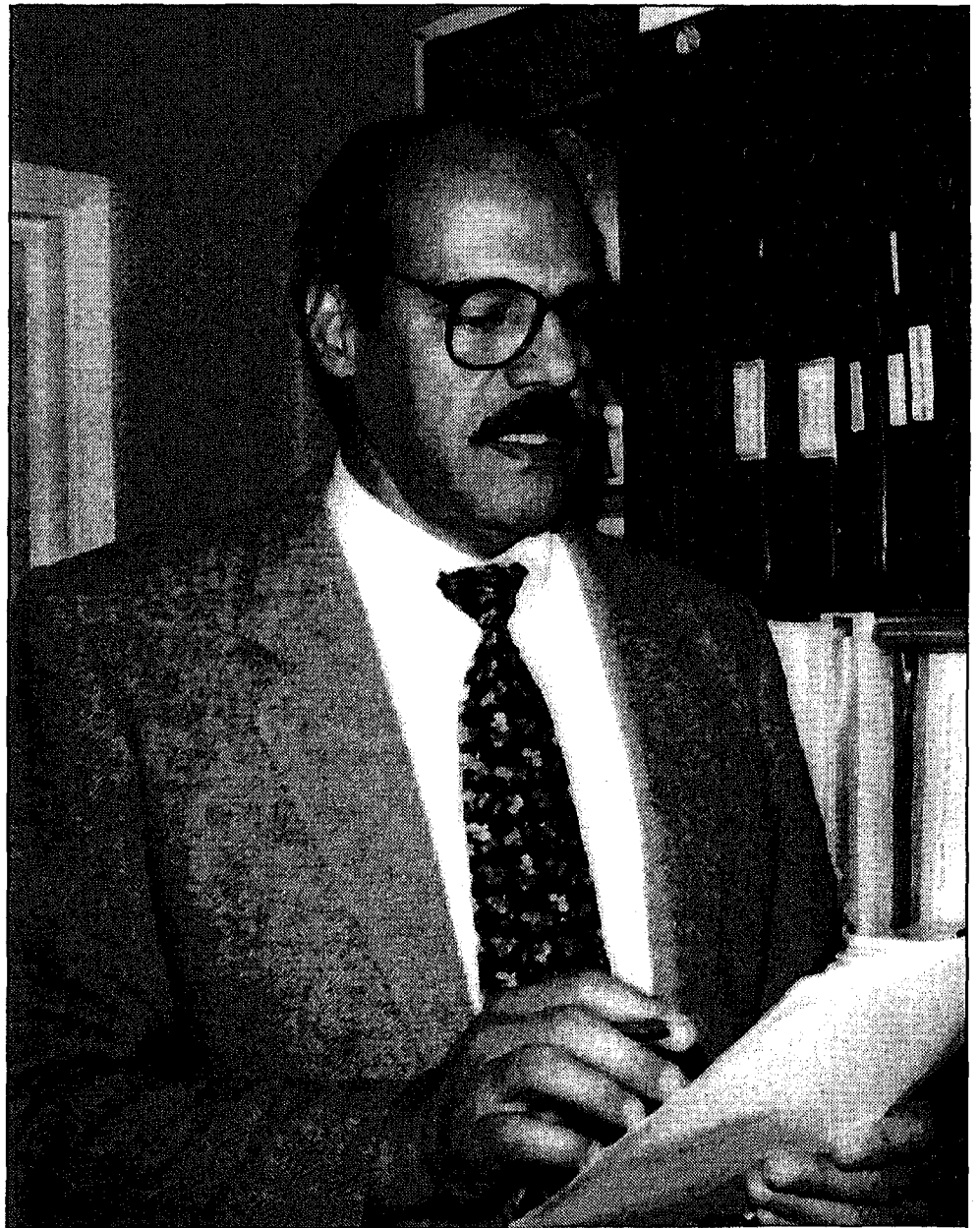
Nyheter • Noticias • 情報
Nachrichten • Informations

#3/April 1995

ITF appoints Latin American Secretary

Following the recommendation of the ITF Latin American Regional Committee, the ITF Executive Board has appointed Mauricio Sant'Anna (shown here) as ITF Regional Secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean. The Board has also agreed to establish a new ITF Regional Office in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The office should be operational by July 1st this year.

Reports on both meetings inside (pages 2 & 3)



New structures decided for ITF in Latin America and Caribbean

The ITF's activities in Latin America and the Caribbean were given fresh impetus in March following the appointment of a Regional Secretary and the creation of a subregional body for ITF unions in the *Mercosur* South American free trade area.

The appointment of Mauricio Sant'Anna, of Brazilian affiliate CONTTMAF, at the ITF's Executive Board meeting in London on 21st and 22nd March (see separate story) will revitalise the ITF's activities in Latin America.

ITF initiatives in the region have been severely limited by the lack of a continent-wide coordinator and of a functioning office since the closure of the organisation's Lima office in 1989.

NEW OFFICE TO OPEN IN JULY

But the Executive Board decision, which followed the recommendation made by Latin American affiliates at a meeting of their regional committee, held in Montevideo, Uruguay on second and third March, means a new office, based in Rio de Janeiro, should start functioning from July first.

Sant'Anna has already visited London to participate in a meeting of ITF regional representatives, giving him a taste of the considerable, and

Palestinian and Israeli unions agree

On 5 March 1995, the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) and the General Federation of Labour in Israel (Histadrut) signed an epoch making agreement to solve the problems of Palestinian workers in Israel.

They will establish a Joint Liaison Committee composed of senior officers of the PGFTU and Histadrut. A Dues and Organisation Committee will be set up to transfer half the dues paid by Palestinian workers for Histadrut to the PGFTU. Histadrut will utilise the remaining half for union activities in defending Palestinian workers' rights in Israel. Further committees will also be formed in the future to deal with matters of mutual concern.

Attending the ceremony in Tel Aviv, Histadrut Chairman Haim Ramon remarked that this was the first agreement signed by people's representatives of Israel and Palestine and stressed that the ordinary people's initiatives are the real essence of the peace process. PGFTU General Secretary Shaher Sa'ed shared the celebration and stressed the need for Histadrut's influence on border closure problems.

important, work to come.

"Recruiting new affiliates to the ITF family and promoting trade union education will be my first priorities" he explained.

General Secretary David Cockroft enthusiastically welcomed Sant'Anna's appointment. "I have the greatest confidence in Mauricio Sant'Anna's ability to carry out the daunting task of re-creating the ITF in Latin America and the Caribbean," he said.

MONTEVIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

Sant'Anna's appointment emerged after the ITF's Latin American Regional Committee lent undivided support to his candidacy.

Additional discussions at the meeting — which was generally a very positive event — covered the need for inter-American co-operation and the planning of a Conference on economic integration in the Americas, including *Mercosur* and the NAFTA free trade area, to be held sometime in 1996, possibly in Mexico.

Topics such as the danger of indirect forms of employment of workers — such as co-operatives, were also hotly debated.

ITF MERCOSUR BODY CREATED

Several of the union representatives in attendance at the regional meeting also participated in a consultation meeting on the *Mercosur* free trade area.

The *Mercosur* — which comprises Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, has its Secretariat in Montevideo. It was created in March 1991 by the Treaty of Asunción and was officially launched on January first this year after final documents were signed in December 1994. About 90 per cent of trade between the four countries is now free; Chile and Bolivia are keen to enter.

The union and its institutions does not bear comparison with the European Union's complex structure — the Secretariat depends on member states for technical resources, for example. The removal of national trade and employment restrictions, however, does present a great challenge to trade unions in the countries involved. And, unlike the European Union, there is no official trade union counterpart to the government policy-makers within the structure.

Extensive discussions at the meeting resulted in an agreement to establish an office in Buenos Aires, to be subsidised initially by the ITF. Supervised by a steering committee of ITF affiliates, the office is to service ITF affiliates in the *Mercosur* area and lobby at the *Mercosur* level in favour of the interests of transport workers.

Newly expanded Executive Board holds first full meeting

The ITF Executive Board has appointed a new Latin American and Caribbean Regional Secretary and agreed to re-establish an ITF regional office in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The expanded Executive Board, elected at last year's Geneva Congress with additional representation from the Asia/Pacific region and Central and Eastern Europe, met in London on the 21st and 22nd of March.

Ivan Shinkevitch (Russian Railwaymen's Union) and Christopher Veselka (Czech Transport Workers' Association) were attending their first full meeting of the ITF Executive Board since their election at last year's Congress.

MAURICIO SANT'ANNA APPOINTED

In endorsing the recommendation of the ITF Latin American Regional meeting to appoint Mauricio Sant'Anna as Regional Secretary, the Board took an important step in the process of revitalising the ITF's activities in Latin America and the Caribbean, a process which will, it is hoped, lead to the eventual establishment of an Interamerican Regional structure. The decision to place a single regional office in Rio de Janeiro follows a six year period during which the ITF attempted, with very limited success, to operate on a decentralised basis.

The Board was also informed that the parallel discussions which have been going on for two years to establish the location for an Asia/Pacific Regional office have not yet yielded a final solution. The issue will be reconsidered in October. In the meantime, the Board also agreed to promote Asia/Pacific Educational Co-ordinator Mahendra Sharma to the position of ITF Assistant Regional Secretary for the Asia/Pacific region and to strengthen the staffing in the newly opened New Delhi office.

EDO FIMMEN FUND

The Board also took some major decisions about the financing of Regional Activities and International Solidarity. The 'Edo Fimmen Account' through which 30 per cent of ITF affiliation fee income has been earmarked for 'Regional' work was drastically restructured. From now on it will be formally established as the Edo Fimmen International Solidarity Fund. Office and staff costs will in future be met from the ITF General Fund and the definition of 'Regional Activities' will expand to include work in Central and Eastern Europe. Also under the overall 'Edo Fimmen' umbrella, the Board agreed to establish for the first time in the ITF's history an International Solidarity Fund. This Fund, to be



New ITF Acting Women's Officer Sarah Finke.

financed by voluntary contributions from ITF affiliates, will be used exclusively to help ITF affiliates or their members in cases of urgent need and is designed to largely replace the current system of 'ad hoc' appeals for financial help during disputes.

NEW ITF AFFILIATES

The Board also accepted 22 unions from 18 countries for affiliation to the ITF. These unions will become full ITF affiliates when all remaining formalities, including payment of six months' fees, have been completed and they have settled their first remittances of fees. Three new countries were represented in this figure — Kazakhstan, Georgia and Guinea-Bissau.

ITF WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

The Board took several key decisions on women's activities, following up the conclusions of the Women Transport Workers' Conference held in Geneva. An interim steering group with representation from all ITF Regions will be established to begin work on establishing a Women's Committee and Women Transport Workers' network. The Board agreed to appoint Sarah Finke from the ITF Communications Department as ITF Women's Officer on an interim basis pending a further discussion of the job description and duties at the October 1995 Executive Board meeting. A final decision on the

Continued on page 4

...Special 100 year-old ITF Congress agreed for 1996

Continued from page 3

post will then be taken in March 1996.

SPECIAL SEAFARERS' DEPARTMENT

On other ITF Secretariat matters, the Board sent best wishes for a speedy recovery to ITF Special Seafarers' Department Secretary Bruno de Bonis who had major surgery earlier in the year in Italy. Since continuing medical treatment will require Bruno to be absent from the office frequently in the near future, the Board agreed, with Bruno's support, to appoint Mark Dickinson (presently Administrative Secretary to the ITF Seafarers' Trust) as Deputy Secretary of the SSD on an interim basis. Bruno and Mark will work closely together to manage the major programme of reform and expansion in the operational side of the ITF's Flag of Convenience Campaign.

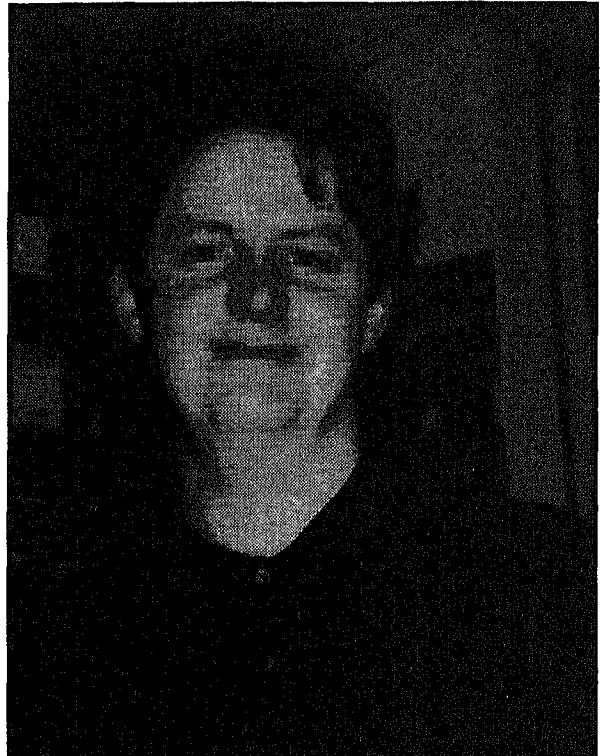
CENTENARY CONGRESS

The most historically significant decision taken was the convening of an Extraordinary ITF Congress in London in 1996 in order to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the ITF. This Congress will celebrate the ITF centenary and consider urgent motions from affiliates as well as reviewing the progress made in implementing the Action Programme — "Transport Workers: Beyond 2000". It will be held in the Queen Elizabeth conference centre in London from the 30th of June to 2nd of July 1996. Other activities connected with the centenary will include a celebration of the life of former ITF General Secretary Edo Fimmen sponsored jointly by the ITF and the Dutch ITF affiliate Vervoersbond FNV.

CHINA

The Executive Board also adopted two resolutions — one on relations with China and the other on the ongoing dispute involving Bulgarian fishing vessels.

The motion on China follows the growing debate in the ICFTU and amongst ITF Asia/Pacific affiliates about contacts with the "official" Chinese union the ACFTU. It supports the efforts of Han Dong Fang and other Chinese workers to create free trade unions in China, notes the large number of Chinese seafarers serving on Foc ships under ITF agreements, endorses the recent ITF complaint to the ILO against the Chinese government's repression of seafarers' rights, and encourages affiliates to keep the ITF informed about any contacts they may have with Chinese "unions". A report and



Mark Dickinson.

further discussion will take place at the next Board meeting.

BULGARIA

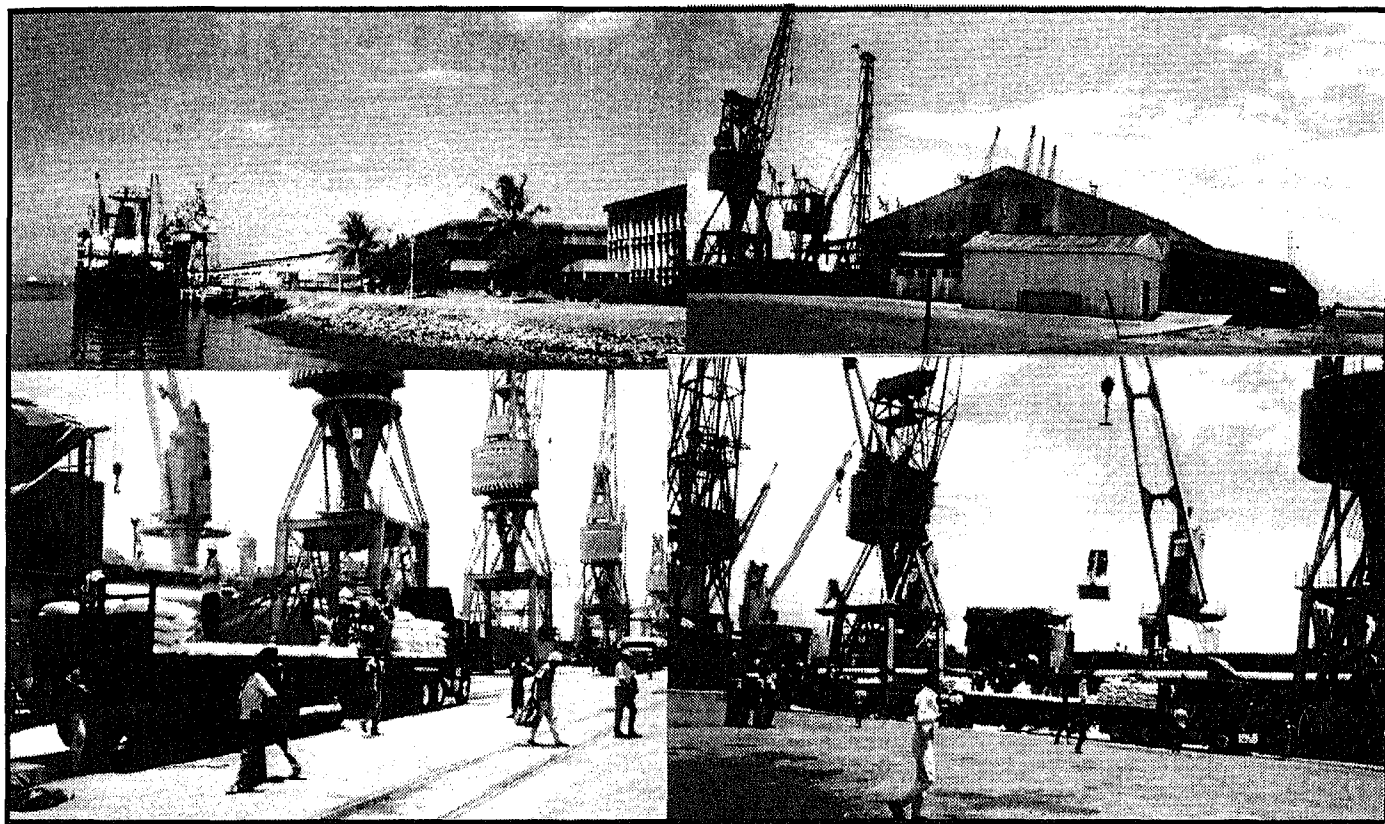
A second resolution was adopted protesting at the behaviour of the Bulgarian government in relation to a long standing dispute involving unpaid wages to the crews of fishing vessels abandoned in the Shetland Islands (see ITF News #2, March 1995). The Board called upon the Bulgarian Prime Minister to intervene in the dispute and on the British government to re-examine the deficiencies in UK laws relating to the arrest of vessels exposed during this conflict.

NEW OFFICE BUILDING

The Board heard from the General Secretary that the ITF has now completed the purchase of a new building in London. This new building, which is less than a hundred metres from the current Headquarters, will allow the entire ITF Secretariat to be housed under one roof rather than in two different locations as at present. It will also provide conference and meeting facilities.

Finally the Board agreed to accept the invitation presented to the ITF at the last Congress to hold the next ordinary Congress in 1998 in New Delhi, India. This will make it only the second ITF Congress ever held outside Europe and the first in a developing country.

ITF Eastern and Southern African education mission



Unions in East and Southern Africa were offered ITF support for their trade union education activities during a two and a half week tour in February of the sub-region by Education and Projects Officer Kees Marges and African Regional Secretary Ben "Roxy" Udogwu.

The visit, from 4 to 22 February 1995, took in five countries — Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa.

In a busy schedule, Marges and Udogwu held lengthy discussions with union and branch officers, who outlined their current educational programmes and suggested ways in which the ITF could assist unions in the sub-region with a number of projects.

One of the most important developments to come out of the visit were plans for an Africa wide road transport campaign to strengthen the trade union position in the informal sector of public transport using privately owned minibuses. The aim of the campaign will be to organise workers in this branch and to work for fairer conditions of competition with regulated public bus transport.

The campaign launch will be preceded by a research project into existing conditions on the minibuses, which are a common feature of the towns and cities in most of Africa. Africa wide workshops will discuss the findings and efforts will be made to involve the national centres and

to attract support for the campaign's objectives from the international trade union movement as a whole.

Preliminary consideration was also given, after consideration of a Zimbabwean initiative on the subject, to the introduction of pan African education activities on HIV/AIDS.

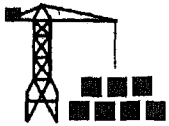
During their visit Marges and Udogwu met with labour leaders, worker educators and representatives of the national centres to help them obtain a clearer picture of the educational needs of unions in the sub-region and the resources available locally.

Shortly after his return, Ben Udogwu organised an educational seminar from 13 to 17 March in Zimbabwe.

Attended by 26 branch secretaries and chairmen from the three ITF affiliates — the TGWU, ZARU and NAWU — the seminar discussed the effects of structural adjustments programmes (SAPs) on the different sectors of the transport industry and the need to update the collective agreements in the transport industry.

The participants also reviewed Zimbabwean labour legislation, with particular reference to the need for application of Zimbabwe labour law in the Economic Protection Zones (EPZs).

In a separate session the seminar considered HIV and AIDS in line with the 37th ITF Congress resolution on the subject.



DOCKERS

Canadian port workers' strikes

Port workers in two of Canada's most important ports — Vancouver, British Columbia and Montréal, Québec — walked off their jobs last month in protest at the threatened imposition of cutbacks.

Following the breakdown of contract negotiations, 900 longshoremen, represented by Local 375 of the ITF-affiliated Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), in the port of Montréal, Québec, went out on strike on March seventh.

The dispute centres around a number of key issues which deal with the employers' desire to reduce the number of longshoremen in the port, the main point being a buy-out package that aims at putting over 130 dockers into early retirement.

No progress was made in negotiations during the two week conflict. Still the government was not willing to intervene as it did in Vancouver (see below), according to some sources, because of the delicate issue of Ottawa involving itself in Québec affairs. On March 20, however, Labour Minister Lucienne Robillard appointed a special mediator in an attempt to reconcile the parties. This move was welcomed by the union, which declared that it was ready to order its workers back to work immediately.

On March 22, both parties signed a back-to-work agreement in the presence of the national mediator, agreeing to stop all pressure tactics, while working with the mediator to reach a new collective agreement. The following day, the port reopened, ending Montréal's longest waterfront conflict since 1975.

VANCOUVER STRIKE

As if in sympathy for their fellow dockers striking in the port of Montréal, nearly 500 foremen walked off the job in Vancouver, British Columbia, frustrated over employer rigidity on key contract provisions such as wages, and work and hiring practices. Vancouver's foremen are represented by Local 514 of the Canadian division of the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU).

After the failure of contract negotiations in January of last year, ILWU longshoremen and foremen staged a 12-day strike that shut down the entire west coast of Canada, and only came to an end following back-to-work legislation enforced by the federal government.

ILWU foremen were without a contract as long as their longshore counterparts had been at the time of the 1994 strike, but were waiting for the conclusion of a longshore agreement before deciding their own deal. They have been working without a contract for 27 months. In the meantime, the government commissioned an independent report evaluating the situation, which might eventually even be used as the basis for a tentative agreement. As it turned out, the non-binding report showed itself to entirely favour the side of the employers. The union rejected the conclusions of the report, whose findings aimed at carrying out a number of sweeping changes, including "a gutting of the dispatch system", according to Howard Smith, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 514.

On Friday, March 17 the union put forward its final proposals for a settlement, adding that it was nonetheless willing to put final disputes to binding arbitration. The following Monday, the employer served the union with an ultimatum whose terms mirrored those of the government commissioned report. Not accepting these terms, the union took its members off the job that same day.

Doug Sigurdson, President of ILWU Local 514, said that management's plan all along was to "see us legislated back to work". Sigurdson said further that the strike was amply justified because they'd been dealing with "an employer who did nothing but say 'No' to us for 27 months at the negotiating table".

At the time the foremen walked off their jobs, they declared that they would nonetheless work grain shipments, as well as perishable loads (cattle, etc.). The employers refused this, and locked the foremen out, claiming that "moving grain should not be favoured over containers, forest products or other bulk commodities".

Three days into the strike, the government intervened, passing legislation ordering the foreman back to work. Ironically, Labour Minister Lucienne Robillard said the government had moved to end the Vancouver strike so quickly (whereas it wouldn't touch the Montréal situation) because vital grain shipments were being disrupted.

The government back-to-work order may have ended the strike, but in the end, it does not actually solve anything. Minister Robillard will therefore appoint a mediator, granted powers to conduct binding arbitration.

Indian dockers' boycott action is extended to port of Bombay

All work in India's Jawaharal Nehru port (JNP) near Bombay associated with Natwar Parikh Industries Ltd. came to a standstill on 20 March, when the ITF-affiliated Transport and Dock Workers' Union began boycott action of the company's container operations (see ITF News #1, January/February 1995). The boycott has also been extended to the port of Bombay where a number of containers are situated at two container yards privately owned by the company. The port authorities, the police and hired hands have resorted to intimidation and threats against the workers who are participating in the boycott.

The Indian Seafarers' Federation (ISF), in a press release, strongly condemned the actions of Natwar Parikh Industries Ltd. for its anti-labour attitude by challenging the fundamental right

of association of workers by preventing them from joining the Transport and Dock Workers' Union.

The ISF groups together the ITF-affiliated Maritime Union of India and the National Union of Seafarers of India.

The employers have indulged in gross and blatantly unfair labour practices and employed strike breakers after imposing a lock out. The ISF has called upon the company to lift the lock out and reinstate the 400 workers...if not, "the ISF shall whole heartedly support the boycott action and instruct all ships personnel namely officers and crew members to prevent loading and unloading of bulk cargo and containers operated by Natwar Parikh Industries Ltd. Ships will also be prevented from leaving if any cargo is loaded or unloaded".

Brazilian 48-hour national strike against port restructuring

On March 21, unionised port workers in Brazil walked off their jobs, for a 48-hour strike. The nationwide industrial action, involving port employees, stevedores and casual labour — a 100,000 member work force according to union sources — effectively shut down Brazil's 47 sea and river ports. Workers are demanding wage increases, as well as the unification of collective bargaining dates.

At Santos, Brazil's largest port which is responsible for 40 per cent of the country's container

traffic, 53 ships were idled on the first day of the strike, and 18 more were scheduled to arrive on the strike's second day.

Unions called the concerted action a "warning strike", stating that if talks with port management don't resume shortly, more strikes will be planned.

Furthermore, port workers' unions in Brazil want to reverse provisions in the country's so-called port modernisation law.

Japanese union thanks ILA-USA for humanitarian aid

By 28 March, some 5,500 people had died in the disastrous Japanese Kobe earthquake of 17 January (see ITF News #1, Jan/Feb 1995). In the aftermath of the tragedy, the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association (USA) donated US\$ 10,000 to the affected Japanese workers through the ITF Japanese Office. The contribution was delivered to Kobe Port Authority by Zenkoku Kowan (National Council of Dockworkers' Unions of Japan).

President Tetsuya Sakano of Zenkoku Kowan, in his letter of appreciation to the ILA, said that "words of support and encouragement from the brothers overseas have warmed up our hearts and given us power to gather our courage to face the situation. It will take at least two years for the complete rehabilitation of port functions. But we are determined to do our best in securing employment and recovering livelihood of the dock workers."

Thailand ILO Seminar stresses importance of union consultation



Governments, employers and workers must be involved thoroughly in port reform negotiations and redundancies should be the last option. This was confirmed at the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Seminar held in Pattaya, Thailand from 15 to 21 March 1995.

The meeting on "the Social and Labour Effects of Structural Adjustment in the Port Industry of Selected Asian and Pacific Countries" was attended by 32 representatives and 25 observers. The ITF was represented by Dockers' Section Secretary Kees Marges and Asia/Pacific Regional Secretary Shigi Wada. ITF Executive Board member John Coombs (Maritime Union of Australia) was elected Vice Chairman.

Today the port industry in the Asia/Pacific region plays a vital role. US\$1,500 billion alone is needed to create additional infrastructure capacity by the year 2000.

But public funding and foreign aid are decreasing and investment from other sectors is needed. Many countries in the region have undertaken structural adjustment programmes and although these schemes are said to improve economic growth, the programmes have led to a reduction in employment.

The ILO convened this seminar to review redundancy policies; exchange views on port structural adjustment measures; and discuss future labour policies regarding the implementation of these programmes.

In the course of the discussions, government representatives advocated port reforms, including the involvement of the private sector and called for dialogue with the social partners in the

process. One employer introduced a port restructuring programme where employment and conditions of the workers were secured through advanced labour-management consultations. Other employers said that overmanning and restrictive measures in their opinion had adverse effects on port development.

Worker representatives and the ITF referred to the recommendations of the World Bank and IMF which led to the implementation of port restructuring in the region and a significant increase in casual labour in some cases. They underlined the importance of establishing clear policies and schemes for redundancies which are of national concern and should not be confined to the port sector only. It was acknowledged by nearly all participants, including employers and government representatives, that negotiations are necessary for the workers to accept changes in their conditions. The ITF also called on all the governments to ratify and apply ILO Convention No.137 (Social Repercussions of New Methods of Cargo Handling in Docks).

The Seminar's conclusions confirmed and emphasised the need for co-operation between governments, employers and workers from the initial stages in port reforms and continuous dialogue and negotiations to foster improvements in the port industry. It also stated that "redundancy schemes should be the last alternative to be considered for coping with employment reduction and should not lead to an increase in reliance on casual labour". The deliberations of the meeting will be submitted to the ILO dockers' meeting next December.



INLAND TRANSPORT

Slovak road transport union congress

Delegates to the Second Congress of the ITF-affiliated Independent Trade Union of Public Road Transport in Slovakia held in Bratislava from 23 to 26 February 1995 worked late into the night debating points of procedure before re-soundingly re-electing Frantisek Kurej as union President.

ITF President Eike Eulen attended the Congress and delivered a fraternal address, saying that he was deeply impressed by the dedication of delegates who had shown a deep-rooted respect for democratic principles and had spared no effort in a bid to reach consensus on the many issues under debate.

An indication of the keen interest shown by fellow European unions in the development of free trade unionism in Central Europe were the strong foreign union delegations attending the Congress. ITF Executive Board member Christopher Veselka of the Association of Transport Workers' Unions in the neighbouring Czech Republic was present and played an active part in the proceedings, as was International Secretary Michael Lyakhov of the Independent Trade Union of Russian Railwaymen.

EULEN GREETES DELEGATES

Addressing the Congress on behalf of the ITF, Eulen conveyed warm fraternal greetings from General Secretary David Cockroft. "I am very pleased," he said, "to have this chance to speak at the Congress of such a new union, and one which has given such clear expression to its commitment to the ITF."

In his speech, Eulen stressed the importance of the common future of all the transport unions in the new Europe. The ITF had already taken steps to meet the challenge of the changed political and economic realities by reactivating the European Committee, he said. The strengthening of international co-operation between transport workers' unions Europe wide was one of its key goals.

Unions in Central and Eastern Europe were fortunate in having two new Executive Board members — Christopher Veselka (Czech Republic) and Ivan Shinkevitch (Russia) — who would be helping co-ordinate activities in the sub-region.

During his three-day visit, Eulen also held a number of meetings with the union representatives present in Bratislava to discuss the growing need for inter union collaboration in the face of current trends towards internationalisation in the transport sector.

Commenting on his stay, Eulen said the Slovak union was undergoing a structural crisis that was typical of many other unions. The union would welcome any assistance that the ITF was able to give and in return offered to help with the setting up of a training centre in Bratislava offering educational facilities to fellow transport workers' unions in the sub-region.

Bucharest metro workers on strike

After having organised a two hour warning strike on 24 March, the ITF-affiliated Metro Workers' Free Union Federation (Uniunea Sindicatelor Libere Metrou) of Romania went on strike from 27 March. The strike was suspended for 40 days by the Supreme Court on 28 March, but the strike was renewed spontaneously by the workers and the metro system closed down on 30 March.

The government is putting pressure on the workers in order to make them give up the strike, and the workers are being threatened with dismissal. Threats and false promises are also being used against the trade union leaders.

The dispute concerns the refusal by the METROREX Administration to negotiate a collective labour agreement, although the previous agreement expired in October 1994. The union claims wages should be increased by 30 per cent, which corresponds with the forecast increase in living costs from 1994 to 1995 according to the National Statistics Commission in Romania.

LONG-STANDING CLAIMS

The union also has long-standing claims, dating back five years, for improvements in physical working conditions, provision of adequate and appropriate tools and elimination of unsafe and unhealthy working conditions.

During the five years that these claims have been outstanding, 40 workers have died, many of them on duty, and a large number of workers have suffered illnesses related to conditions at work.

Together with the Uniunea Sindicatelor Libere Metrou the ITF has requested the government of Romania to intervene in the dispute in order to ensure that the right of the trade union to negotiate a collective agreement on behalf of its members is respected and also to ensure that working conditions are improved in the interests of workers' health and safety.

The ITF Secretariat has sent messages of protest to the Romanian President, Parliament, Government, Minister of Transport and Senate and will be contacting urban transport affiliates, requesting them to send messages of support if the dispute is not solved to the satisfaction of the workers.

Canadian government forces rail strikers back to work

Selective (and partisan) back-to-work legislation in Canada has forced striking railway workers back on the job. The Canadian government's continuing involvement in labour disputes (on the side of the employers) is frustrating and annoying trade unionists.

Bill C77 forced striking rail workers back to work on March 27.

A national rail strike in Canada had been in the air since the end of February, when contract talks for most of the 32,000 unionised workers at the state-owned CN North America, and private CP Rail System and Via Rail (a passenger service) broke down (see ITF News #2, March 1995). The concerned unions are the ITF-affiliated Canadian Auto Workers' Union (CAW), and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE). The most important disputed issue remains decades old employment security — laid-off rail workers with more than eight years of service are guaranteed the equivalent of a full salary until they either retire, or find another job.

Rail workers had already been without a contract since 31 December 1993 — Human Resources Minister Lloyd Axworthy commissioned a report by a commissioner, who had thus far held inconclusive mediation talks between the two sides.

The mediator's report was well received by the unions, and its release inspired the parties to renew negotiations. Ironically, the report sharply criticised the federal government and railway management for their hard-line positions during the conflict. The report blamed the government for holding a "partisan role in supporting the positions of the railways", referring to Transport Minister Doug Young's remarks opposing employment security, as well as the "collaboration" of Young and Paul Tellier, president of CN North America, in advocating emergency back-to-work legislation in the event of a strike.

Negotiations resumed in late February; the unions were eager to work toward a satisfactory resolution, declaring that they'd not yet set a strike date or strike target: "no intention to withdraw labour for the next 10 days or so — we have no desire to disrupt the economy of the country," said CAW President Buzz Hargrove.

Transport Minister Young made his position clear, openly advocating immediate back-to-work legislation. "Let me put it this way," he

said, "we won't have a very long strike."

Deeming legislation necessary to spare Canada's "fragile economy", Ottawa will be attempting to privatise its rail company in the coming year. Regarding the employment security provisions, Young was clear:

"The rail workers will continue to fight giving up the protection, so we'll just have to take it away from them. Government has a role in this, and we'll do what has to be done," he said.

On March 15, following almost a week of spot, rotating strikes by members of the BMWE against CP Rail, the company lashed back by locking out a group of striking workers in Ontario and suspending benefits to all of the union's 3,000 members, a move deemed by a BMWE

official as "a blatant overreaction and a heavy-handed gesture".

On March 19, CP Rail did manage to sign a tentative agreement with three smaller unions representing 2,900 workers for a three-year period, covering wage increases and modified employment security.

Despite this progress, CP Rail nonetheless locked out more workers in more cities, whereupon the union extended the strike to a national movement. Walk outs and strikes followed one another at CN North America as well, so by March 20, some 21,000 workers out of a total CN work force of 27,000 were either locked out or on strike.

By March 19 the government had agreed to submit back-to-work legislation to the House of Commons, hoping for a quick end to the strike/lock out situation.

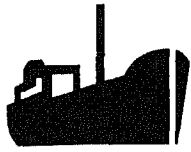
The legislation, introduced by Labour Minister Lucienne Robillard forced state-owned CN North America to resume operations immediately, whereas CP Rail (a private concern) was allowed to keep 7,200 workers locked out while it sought to resume labour negotiations.

The legislation imposes a mediation-arbitration process on CN and its workers lasting a maximum of 70 days. If settlements are not reached during that time, a binding settlement would be imposed by a special arbitration commission.

Of the legislation, a BMWE official rightly stated that it was highly unfair "to allow some workers to exercise their right to strike and not others".

CAW's Hargrove said the legislation handed to each carrier exactly what it wanted.





SEAFARERS

ITF declares German Second Register a Flag of convenience

On March 10 an ITF meeting endorsed a proposal from the German Public Service and Transport Workers' Union ÖTV to designate the German International Shipping Register (ISR/GIS) as an ITF Flag of convenience (Foc) with effect from April 1, 1995.

This means that all German Second Register vessels will have to comply fully with ITF Foc conditions:

They will be required to sign and comply with ITF approved collective agreements, which involve paying ITF rates. Ships that do not conclude ITF agreements will face boycott and other industrial action by ITF seafarers' and dockers' unions.

The motion emphasises that the ÖTV will have the negotiating rights for such German flag vessels and that the seafarers must be covered by the ITF approved ÖTV Total Crew Cost (TCC) Agreement as a minimum.

This decision by the ITF Fair Practices Committee Sub-Committee (which is authorised to add registers to the ITF Foc list) represents a

continuing hardening of the ITF line on "Second Registers". Following a decision of the ITF Congress last year, all second register ships must comply with the ITF TCC benchmark and this decision means that the GIS joins the Spanish Canary Islands second register on the ITF Foc list as the second "Second Register" to be so designated.

At the same time, industrial action by Danish dock workers was taken against the GIS *Sea Nordic* in Århus in line with the then ITF policy on second registers (see separate story).

In preparing for the April 1st deadline when the GIS will be formally declared an ITF flag of convenience, a special ITF Nordic Transport Workers' Flag of convenience meeting was held with inspectors from the Nordic region, Germany and ITF representatives in Gothenburg, Sweden on the 30th of March 1995. This meeting committed the ITF throughout the Nordic region to specifically intensify and target activities against unorganised GIS ships.

The shape of things to come: Danish GIS boycott action

Action by ITF-affiliated dockers' unions in Denmark and Holland forced the German owners of the *Sea Nordic* to reach an agreement with the German seafarers' union ÖTV and to replace underpaid Filipinos with German nationals. The nine Filipino crew members also received US\$100,000 in back pay negotiated by the ITF.

The settlement came on the eve of the GIS German international register being officially declared a flag of convenience by the ITF from 1 April (see separate story).

The Filipino crew of the GIS-registered *Sea Nordic* called for ITF assistance in Århus. Local dockers agreed to boycott the vessel on hearing from ITF German Inspector Ali Memon that the crew were being paid less than the International

Labour Organisation (ILO) minimum.

The following day the ship, owned by Schlüssel-Reederei Bremen, broke the boycott with only half her containers discharged and without having loaded a further 150 containers.

The *Sea Nordic* was heading for Rotterdam. Dutch dockers agreed to boycott the ship. But before it reached port, the owners agreed the pay-out to the Filipinos and despatched a replacement crew of eight German seafarers to Rotterdam.

Memon was delighted with the outcome. "On account of the international solidarity in the ITF it was possible to enforce ILO conventions on this ship where social dumping was practised," he commented.

Finnish court backs unions' right to boycott vessels

The ITF-affiliated Finnish Seamen's Union (FSU) are celebrating an important victory after the Raasepori municipal court in Finland threw out a case brought against the union by Eurocargo Shipping GmbH (ECS) of Hamburg, Germany.

ECS were suing the FSU who have been boycotting the Ukrainian crewed and registered ro-ro vessel *Akademik Guber* in the port of Hanko, Finland, since 27 February — claiming that their actions were illegal and that the FSU should be held responsible for all cost and losses incurred as a result of the boycott action. The court ruled that the claims were unfounded and dropped all

claims and charges. The FSU began boycotting the *Akademik Guber* when it was introduced on a regular line between Finland and Germany with sub-ILO Ukrainian wage rates. The FSU said they will continue their boycott action against the *Akademik Guber* and its sister ship the *Akademik Artsimovich* which has been prevented from leaving the port of Wismar in Germany.

The FSU states that its actions are not against Ukrainian vessels but solely against the social dumping which ECS seeks to introduce to the Finnish trade.

Privatisation of Puerto Rican shipping line goes ahead

The year-long, drawn-out saga surrounding attempts by the Puerto Rican government to privatise its national shipping line, Navieras de Puerto Rico, came to a close at the beginning of March, as BT Investment Partners of New York signed a US\$140 million deal.

The government's attempts to rid itself of the money-losing line were threatened when, in early February, BT Investment withdrew its purchase bid over concerns that the US Congress would repeal the Jones Act, which requires all maritime traffic between two US ports be carried on US-flag vessels, because, without that protection, Navieras would have to compete against low-cost foreign flagships.

The governor of the US territory, and two union leaders expressed confidence that the transfer of ownership would improve the company's market share, clearing the way for new investments that will improve wages and benefits for Navieras' workers.

"This sale will stem the tide and hopefully reverse the losses of the last few years," said Joel Bem, president of District 1/Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association, the ITF-affiliate which represents Navieras' shipboard engineers. Bem also expressed a certain confidence in the (regional) experience and vision of Ron Katims, a former president of Navieras (in the 1970s), who was a leading member of the investment group and who is now once again leading the shipping company.

Katim has reassured the non-marine work force that they are not under the threat of any immediate lay-offs; indeed those 640 workers are guaranteed their jobs for one year under the terms of the sale.

And Bem reports that the marine engineers have extended their collective bargaining contract with Navieras through June of this year and will re-negotiate a new contract with the new owners later this year.

Meridian Ferries goes bankrupt

Meridian Ferries, the British owned operator at the centre of the dispute with French seafarers over the employment of low paid Polish seafarers (see ITF News #2, March 1995), has called in the receivers after two of its ships the *Spirit of Independence* and *Spirit of Boulogne* were arrested in Boulogne for non-payment of port and pilotage dues.

The company who claim to have lost over US\$1 million as a result of the two month dispute with French seafarers, mainly members of the ITF-affiliated Fédération Générale des Transports et de l'Équipement — CFDT, was unable to come to an agreement with the local chamber of commerce regarding the rescheduling of debts.

UK government asks Donaldson to assess possible *Derbyshire* action

British Transport Minister Brian Mawhinney announced to the House of Commons on March sixth that the UK Government has decided to commission an independent assessment of what further work should be undertaken to identify the cause of the sinking of the *Derbyshire* (see ITF News #1, January/February 1995).

The British Oil/Bulk/Ore carrier *MV Derbyshire* sank in 1980 with the loss of 44 lives. The investigation, which will be led by Lord Donaldson, author of the acclaimed report into the *Braer* tanker disaster, will be given the task of assessing:

- what further work would be needed in order to learn more of and, if possible, make a judgement about the cause of the loss of the *Derbyshire*;
- in respect of each option for further work, the probability that the cause would be determined with reasonable confidence;
- for each option the costs likely to be incurred;
- what benefit to ship safety would be secured if the cause of the loss of the *Derbyshire* were established, or if better understanding of the cause of the loss was obtained, and whether in any case this would justify the likely costs involved.

Details of the "assessment" were revealed the same day during a meeting between the ITF, its UK affiliates RMT and NUMAST, and the UK Shipping Minister, Lord Goschen, who indicated that it would take about six months to complete and that the government would act as quickly as possible once Donaldson's recommendations were published.

In the summer of 1994, in response to requests from its affiliates and the Derbyshire Families' Association, the ITF funded an expedition to locate the wreck of the *Derbyshire* with the aim of providing sufficient new evidence to prove beyond reasonable doubt that it sank due to massive structural failure. The ITF subsequently submitted its sonar and video evidence to the UK government's Marine Accidents Investigation Branch (MAIB). A 1987 Formal Investigation had blamed the "forces of nature".

ITF General Secretary David Cockroft said: "The ITF and its UK affiliates view positively the announcement by Dr. Mawhinney, although we believe that the evidence uncovered by our expedition was already sufficient to invalidate the findings of the 1987 Inquiry. Lord Donaldson is a highly respected expert in this field and we are confident that he will assess the evidence objectively. We offer him our full cooperation."

Owners, operators and managers?

Many ship operators find ITF policies and procedures somewhat perplexing and while they may wish to co-operate with the ITF in shipping matters, they often have many questions that they would like answered.

The ITF by acknowledging the importance of informing this group within the industry of our policies and procedures is holding an ITF consultation meeting on Monday 26 June starting at 2pm at the International Coffee Organisation (22 Berners Street, London W1, UK). Anyone connected with the shipping industry who wishes to attend this meeting should apply to the ITF for tickets in advance. The meeting will provide an opportunity to brief shipping industry management representatives on the decisions taken at the 1995 Fair Practices Committee (which will take place before this meeting) and to ask general questions about ITF flag of convenience policies and procedures.

Ecuadorian seafarers create union

Brave attempts to form an Ecuadorian seafarers' union were given a boost by the ITF when severance pay was twice negotiated for union members on the *Rio Amazonas* who decided to resist their employers' moves to flag out and cut wages.

Cash compensation was first secured for crew members who were paid off in Algiers. Then their replacement crew also won severance pay when they went on strike in Italy.

Seafarers employed by Naviera del Pacífico have in recent months been sacked on false pretences or kept ashore until they left with little or no compensation.

The crews decided to create a union, and a lawyer was hired to make sure that everything was done in accordance with Ecuadorian legislation. Immediately the company — which has seven ships under the Ecuadorian flag and nine already under flags of convenience — stepped up its campaign of dismissals.

The company tried to bring on a replacement crew in the North African Spanish enclave of Ceuta. But ITF Inspector David Echevarrieta intervened and the ship was forced to leave without the new crew.

The original crew was dismissed in the next port, Algiers, but with Naviera del Pacífico agree-

ing to pay the officers US\$2,500 and the ratings \$1,600 for each year of service.

Then a new strike was ordered by the union and 10 seafarers on the *Rio Amazonas* declared themselves to be in dispute on arrival in Salerno. The Ecuadorian consul in Rome told them they were sacked and their action was illegal.

But ITF Italian Inspector Paolo Serrettiello still succeeded in negotiating pay-offs of 50 per cent of the redundancy money owed to the remaining unpaid members of the union, amounting to US\$1,250 a year for officers and \$800 for ratings.

The Ecuadorian union — now no longer illegal — thanked the ITF and promised to continue efforts to organise crews and eventually affiliate to the ITF.

Danish boycott nets US\$80,000

Twelve Russian crew members of the Panamanian-flag *Fortuna 1* shared over US\$80,000 in back pay negotiated after ITF boycott action by Danish dock workers in Fredericia, Denmark last month. The Russian beneficial owner was forced to sell the 25-year-old ship for scrap in order to pay the crew's wages and harbour and cargo charges.

Blind captain sacked

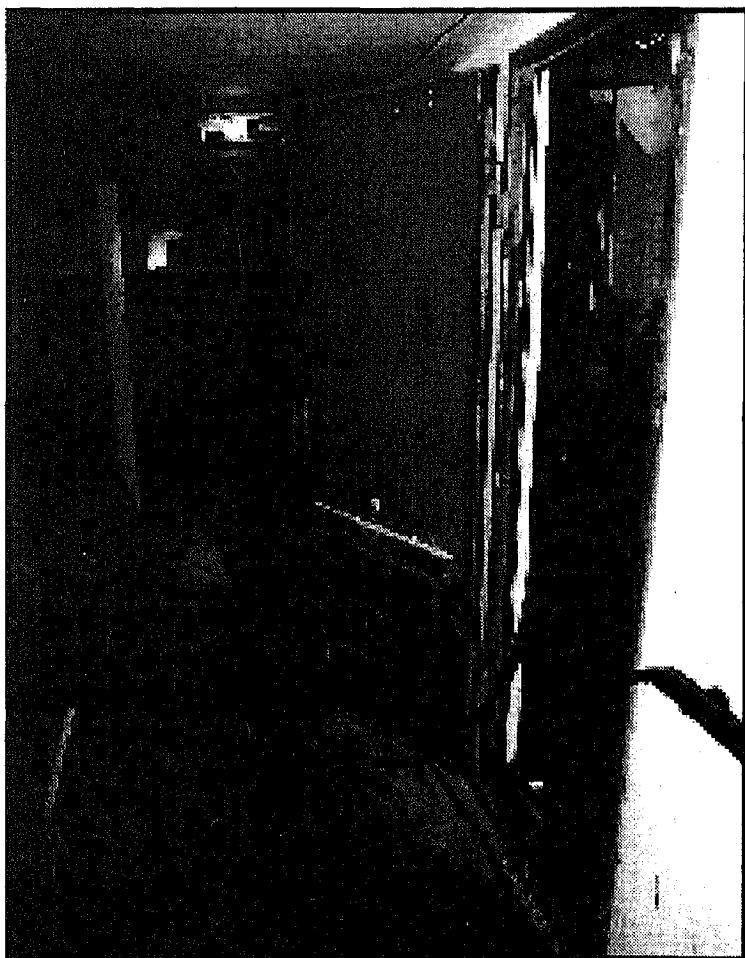
A deadly safety hazard — and one that was unique in the ITF's experience of ship inspections — was encountered when the Cyprus-registered *Pierros* docked at Århus, Denmark. ITF Inspector John Jacobsen found that the master was virtually blind!

The 18 crew had complained to the ITF that they were not being paid in accordance with the Cypriot national agreement, and US\$95,000 in back pay plus repatriation costs was soon extracted from crew managers Kapelco Maritime Services of Piraeus.

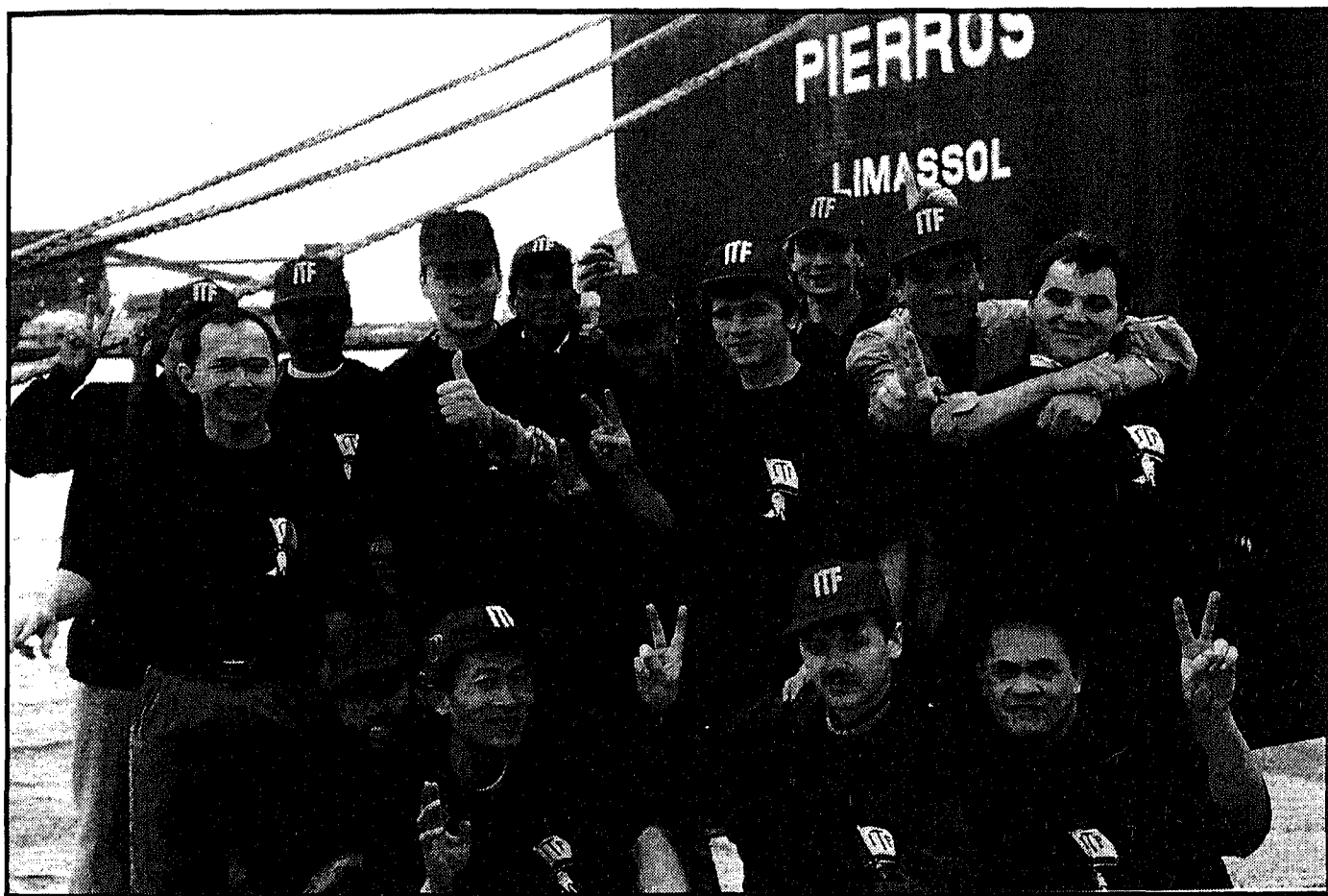
But in sorting out the wages of the mainly Russian and Sri Lankan crew, John Jacobsen was horrified to notice that the Greek master could hardly see. His eyesight was so bad that he had to use a magnifying glass to study documents — and he had failed to see that none of the crew had valid medical certificates.

All this was reported to the Danish port authorities, who promptly detained the ship and medically examined the crew, including the master. He failed the eyesight test and was repatriated immediately.

"No-one knows if he actually made it home," said John Jacobsen afterwards. "How could he read the signs at the airport? Perhaps he's stuck in the departure lounge at the NASA space station."



52 faults were detected by Canadian authorities on board the *Aghia Markella*



Belgian court victory

Over US\$185,000 of back pay was won by the ITF for the crew of the Cypriot-flag *Leon K*, owned by Priceless Marine of Cyprus and managed by Elvira Shipping of Piraeus, after their ship was arrested in Antwerp for non-payment of debts. These included a \$1.5 million loan from Credit Lyonnais. Pressure was put on the bank to settle the pay bill, with the ITF pointing out that wages are protected under Belgian law. The bank eventually agreed to reimburse five months' wages, totalling US\$185,290 plus air fares to repatriate the 26-strong crew. Belgian ITF Inspector Roger Opdelocht visited the mixed nationality crew every day, and arranged doctor's visits.

52 faults on ship

A Canadian Coast Guard inspection ordered by the ITF found no fewer than 52 faults on board a Cypriot-flag ship which called at Port Alfred, Québec.

"Everything on board was broken or missing," said a shocked Jim Given, the ITF's Montréal-based Inspector, after visiting the *Aghia Markella* himself.

The crew of 22 Filipinos and four Greeks found themselves detained in port for six weeks while repairs were carried out on the orders of the Canadian authorities. The list of defects ranged

from out-of-order radar to cockroach infestation in the accommodation areas.

Given noted that the crew managers, Ocean East Agencies, had five relatives among the crew. "I can't imagine hating my family that much!" he commented after the ship eventually sailed.

Topaz case won

The ITF won a resounding victory in late March in the court case against the Brunsbüttel shipping company Sprante Schiffahrt (see ITF News #2, March 1995). In the resumed hearing, the judge rejected Sprante Managing Director Horst Mussehl's claim that contracts of employment on the Antigua flag *Topaz* had been concluded with a Cyprus company Hibiscus Marine Management, which it dismissed as being no more than a "brass plate" company. The court ruled that the contracts were with Sprante Schiffahrt, whose Managing Director was ordered to pay the German officer and three ex-*Topaz* Polish crew members their claim in full — a total of US\$35,000. The ITF will be keeping a close watch to see that the seafarers actually get their money. Interviewed about the case ITF Inspector Ulf Christiansen said that he was delighted that the German courts had issued such a resounding condemnation of a German Foc shipowner's attempts to shrug off responsibility for his employees.

UN agency debates code of conduct for responsible fishing

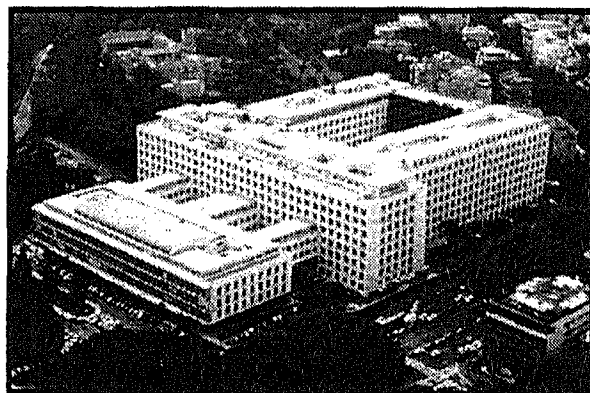
The ITF was represented at the 21st Session of the Food and Agricultural Organization's Committee on Fisheries held in Rome from 10th to 13th March, as well as at the Ministerial Meeting on Fisheries, which followed on 14th and 15th March. The FAO is a United Nations agency which attempts to set world standards and norms for sustainable food and agricultural production. The ITF's full participation in the FAO fisheries working programme follows a decision taken at the 1994 ITF Congress to do so. Jon Whitlow (Assistant Secretary, Seafarers' and Fishermen's Sections) and Oli Jacobsen (Chair of the ITF Fishermen's Section) attended the Rome meetings on behalf of the ITF.

CODE OF CONDUCT

From the ITF's point of view the key agenda item of the FAO Committee on Fisheries meeting was a Draft Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing.

The ITF has consistently held that in developing guidelines for fisheries development, people should be focused on rather than solely fishery resources. The importance of fishworkers needs to be acknowledged. In the discussions on the Code of Conduct, the ITF argued strongly that fishing trade policies must be based on the principles of fairness, equity, and environmental concern. Whitlow argued that where considerations of equity are ignored, the market system is prone to violent price fluctuations which in turn "may have severe social consequences and adversely impact upon workers. Moreover it may compel them to place short term economic considerations over and above responsible and sustainable fishing."

After lengthy discussion the Committee agreed that the Code should include a clear statement to the effect that access to markets should not be conditional on access to fishing resources. In short, there should be ample recognition of the need for social responsibility towards fishing communities. The Code for Responsible Fishing



The FAO headquarters

will be finalised at the General FAO Conference in October 1995.

OVERFISHING

The Ministerial Meeting focused on the problems of overfishing in and the overcapacity of industrial fishing fleets. The meeting concluded that action is required to eliminate overfishing; rebuild and enhance fish stocks; minimise wasteful fisheries practice; rehabilitate fish habitats; develop sustainable aquaculture; and develop fisheries for new and alternate species based on principles of scientific sustainability and responsible management. In this context, the Ministerial Meeting endorsed the recommendation of the Committee on Fisheries that the Code of Conduct be submitted to the October 1995 FAO Conference.

The ITF is conducting its own research into the worldwide crisis in the fishing industry, and has circulated a survey form to all fisheries affiliates. The results of the survey will form the basis of a discussion document which in turn will assist the Section in developing consistent positions and arguments which can be put forward in meetings of organisations such as the FAO. Affiliates should also find the survey results useful in arguing for progressive fisheries development policies which take account of workers' rights in their own countries.



**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations**

Bulgarian government attacks ITF

As we went to press, crew members from the MV *Rotalia* (see ITF News #2, March 1995) were considering an offer from the new owners of the vessel reported to be worth around \$75,000.

Following a previous fruitless meeting with the Bulgarian ambassador in London in February, on 22 March a delegation led by Peter Hamilton of the Shetlands Labour party visited European institutions in Brussels in an attempt to increase pressure on the Bulgarian government. Previous promises given to the men themselves and to the UK government and the British TUC that the crew members would be paid from the proceeds of the vessel sale soon proved false.

Hopes that the hard line position of the previous Bulgarian Prime Minister Reneta Indjova might be modified following the election of a new Bulgarian Socialist Party led by Jan Videnov also soon proved hollow. In a letter to Videnov dated 22 March, timed to coincide with the Brussels visit, the ITF General Secretary called on the Bulgarian government to open negotiations with ITF unions in Bulgaria, not only on the plight of the unpaid crew of the *Rotalia* and its sister ships, but also on the proposed liquidation of Okeanski Ribolov which threatens the jobs of more than 2,000 Bulgarian fisheries workers.

The Bulgarian Prime Minister on 31 March reportedly made a hysterical attack on the ITF. In a speech to the Parliament, he publicly accused the ITF of having an (undefined) commercial interest in the *Rotalia* and announced that he would not enter into any negotiations whatsoever on the fate of the men or the company. The ITF General Secretary called on the government immediately to substantiate or withdraw its slanderous allegations against the ITF and questioned how it could possibly act in a way

which appears totally lacking in any concern or interest for its own nationals.

The unanimous resolution adopted by the ITF Executive Board already demonstrated the very strong support within the ITF family for continuing action to secure justice for the Bulgarian fishermen. It is to be hoped that the attitude of the Bulgarian Prime Minister has been based on a lack of understanding about the role of trade unions in a democratic society and about the motives of the ITF and the local trade union and political support groups in the UK which have taken up the Bulgarians' cause. If so, it may still be possible for a negotiated solution to the dispute, involving ITF-affiliated unions in Bulgaria, to be reached. If not, a long and sustained campaign of political and industrial action against the Republic by ITF-affiliated transport unions cannot be ruled out.

Spain-Canada dispute...

Negotiations in Brussels on the well publicised fisheries dispute between the European Union and Canada appeared to be close to success as ITF News went to press. Throughout the dispute, the ITF Secretariat was in close contact with the Spanish and Canadian affiliated fisheries workers' unions most directly concerned. The ITF Fishermen's Section strongly supports fisheries conservation measures but is equally concerned at any government or other act which might endanger the lives of fisheries workers at sea. For this reason, preliminary contacts were established with a view to bringing the union representatives together in an attempt to avoid any further confrontations at sea. These included informal discussions during the recent ITF Executive Board meeting between fellow Board members Victoriano Sánchez (FETT-UGT Spain) and Jim O'Neil (CAW, Canada).



PEOPLE

Lars Hellman resigned as President of the Swedish Salaried Employees' Union (HTF) at the beginning of March. Hellman, who has worked for the HTF since 1964, was elected Vice President in 1978 and President in 1982. During his thirteen years at the head of the union he has played a prominent part in the ITF. Elected to lead the Travel Bureau Workers' Section at the ITF Dublin Congress in 1977, Lars was a very effective

chairman working tirelessly to develop and expand the activities of the Section. He announced his retirement from this post at the 1990 Florence Congress, saying that he wished to concentrate on his union job in Sweden. Holger Eriksson, who was previously HTF Vice President, now takes over Hellman's former responsibilities until the summer when the HTF Executive Board will elect a new President.

OBITUARIES

Harry Lycke, President of the Swedish Engineer Officers' Union (SMBF) from 1955 to 1958, died on 5 February at the age of 85. Lycke came to the

union from the Swedish Supervisors' Union (Arbetsledareförbund, now Ledarna), where he had been a union official since 1944.



CIVIL AVIATION

ITF unions commit themselves to building global solidarity



Over a hundred union delegates gathered in Sydney, Australia between March sixth and ninth for the major policy making meetings of the ITF Civil Aviation Section.

This was the first time that meetings of the Ground Staff Committee, the Cabin Crew Committee and the Section Committee had been held together in one block of meetings.

Delegates were welcomed by Lance Webb, President of the Flight Attendants' Association of Australia, who reminded them of the key theme of the meetings, Building Global Solidarity.

"In Australia," he noted, "where at times we can feel very geographically separated from the rest of the world, we attach particular importance to international solidarity. I am proud that my union has been in the forefront in finding new ways to respond to the development of globalisation in the aviation industry through international union links".

Stuart Howard, Civil Aviation Secretary, noted that: "The theme of Building Global Solidarity is an ongoing discussion in this Section. International solidarity is the key to our survival in a globalising world. These meetings are also a time to mark progress and we can take heart from how unions have acted upon our previous discussions, such as the link between the FAAA in

Qantas, the TGWU in British Airways and the AFA in USAir, and other similar practical links between unions responding to global airline alliances."

The meetings were formally opened by Bill Kelty, Secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, with an address which contained a strong message for aviation unions. He told the meeting:

"International solidarity is not something about which you sing, it is something about which you sing and rejoice in with pride, but it is much more than that.

"It is something about which you act...In a globalising world we must make sure that the international standards and the international decency that the union movement brings to the way in which nations address issues is maintained and not weakened.

"Your industry is at the fulcrum of that, because if you can't get it right, if the civil aviation sector can't get it right, then I tell you it's damned hard for other sectors to get it right.

"Unions in your industry with the mobility and the capacity to bargain, the ability to confer, the ability to negotiate, the ability to communicate on an international level, you must act as a beacon."

Practical steps to strengthen co-operation

Building Global Solidarity was the theme for the Section Committee meeting in Sydney, and a considerable time was spent at the meeting discussing ways of strengthening and deepening solidarity action.

This particularly focused on the need to build international solidarity at the workplace level.

The meeting adopted a detailed set of conclusions which emphasised the importance of membership education and awareness; obtaining the right where legally possible to refuse to perform strike breaking work; sponsoring bilateral exchanges between unions; and building a common identity towards solidarity.

The meeting also agreed that the ITF should hold an annual Campaign Day for Civil Aviation similar to the December 2 Campaign Day last year. It was agreed to designate December 1st as the 1995 International Trade Union Campaign Day for Civil Aviation with aviation safety as a probable theme.

A report was given about the ICAO Conference held in Montréal and the ITF policy calling for new international regulatory safeguards for civil aviation, including a code of conduct providing minimum social protections.

Industrial items discussed included developments in the ITF's work on civil aviation occupational health and safety and on the forthcoming pay and conditions survey results and database developments.

It was noted that the Secretariat was currently assessing the feasibility of establishing electronic bulletin boards within the Section.

Participants heard reports on the progress of bilateral trade union links between unions organising employees within groups of companies or airline alliances. A new agreement between the CMB and CGSP (Belgian affiliates) and VPOD (Switzerland) concerning the possible link between Sabena and Swissair was reported as was an agreement between CAW of Canada and the Teamsters of the USA, while the FAAA of Australia and FARSA of New Zealand announced that, during the meeting, an agreement establishing an Australian and New Zealand Flight Attendants' Federation had been signed.



Stuart Johns: "service to aviation unionism"

An inscribed crystal decanter was presented to Stu Johns during the Section Committee meeting in Sydney for his years of service to aviation unionism and the ITF.

The presentation was made by Stuart Howard, Civil Aviation Secretary. The presentation marked the fact that Stu plans to retire from his position as ITF representative at ICAO later this year.

Stu Johns has been the ITF representative at ICAO in Montréal for over 12 years, during which time his technical expertise and highly professional manner has steadily increased the ITF's influence in ICAO and ensured that the voice of ITF aviation unions gets heard.

Stu regularly sits as an observer in the ICAO Air Navigation Commission and he has pushed forward ITF positions on a range of important issues from flight time limitations to licensing standards for aircraft maintenance engineers.

Stu started his career in Canadian aviation in 1943 as a radio operator in Trans Canada Air Lines. He became a flight operations officer in 1947, and eventually an Operations Control Manager for Air Canada. During this time Stu was an active union member in the Canadian Airline Dispatchers' Association (CALDA). Stu retired in 1983 and was immediately recruited by the ITF to be its representative to ICAO.

Stu's experience in aviation and in unionism has been invaluable to the ITF. As Stuart Howard says: "Its quite something to work alongside someone who started out in aviation before you were born. Due to his work the ITF has progressed from being barely recognised to becoming an established and respected presence in the world inter-governmental forum for aviation."

Stu himself points out that as well as defending aviation union interests the work has had another dimension: "Working in this job, working with all the union people in the ITF means I have got friends, good friends, all over the world. And that lasts."

While Stu's retirement is imminent his work for the ITF is certainly not over yet. Stu plans to ensure a successor is in place before his departure and his expertise will guide the ITF once more through the ICAO General Assembly in September this year.

"For one thing," he says, "I've got to have another crack at that damn cabin crew licensing".

Building solidarity: Ground staff meeting



The Ground Staff Committee meeting held in Sydney on 6-7 March 1995 attracted over 50 trade unionists from 40 countries. Claus Lindegaard, of the Danish affiliate SiD, was re-elected Chair of the Committee.

The Licensing of Aircraft Maintenance Engineers was the first of three major debates. With the participation of delegates from over a dozen unions with maintenance engineering membership the debate was detailed. Shane Enright, Senior Assistant in the Civil Aviation Section, presented the results of a Secretariat survey which showed that in some countries maintenance safety and certification standards were under pressure as a result of cost-cutting and liberalisation.

The Committee was advised of the Secretariat's work in ICAO on engineers' licensing, and agreed that this work should be ongoing, and underlined in the proposed safety campaign that the ITF will run at the ICAO General Assembly in the autumn of 1995. It was also agreed that all ground staff affiliates should be circulated with the final draft of proposed European maintenance rules being developed by the Joint Aviation Authorities — the JAR 65 rules — when these become available. Affiliates will be asked

to lobby their national governments direct regarding any concerns, and the views of affiliates will be incorporated into an official ITF response at that stage.

The impact of liberalisation and privatisation of airport ground services was the subject of a lively debate introduced by John Skewes of the UK affiliate Unison. His description of the British experience clearly touched a chord with many other participants and the discussion focused on exchanging practical and strategic information.

Bill Roger, of the British union IPMS, introduced the debate on privatisation of air traffic control. During his contribution he brought the Committee up to date with the on-going campaign against the British government's attempts to privatise British national air traffic services.

During the meeting Daniel Verreault, of the Canadian Aviation Maintenance Council, gave a detailed report of the system for accreditation and certification of licensed maintenance engineers in his country, and outlined the competence-based systems of qualifications which are increasingly being adopted in Canada and elsewhere.

Building solidarity: Cabin crew meeting



Danièle Jullien (SNPNC, France) stepped down as Chair of the Cabin Crew Committee at its meeting in Sydney on March 6-7. Participants at the meeting gave Danièle, who is retiring from full time union work, an enthusiastic vote of thanks for the work and the leadership she has provided cabin crew unions during her term chairing the committee. The meeting voted Betty Lecouturier (SNPNC, France) as the new chair and elected two vice chairs Patricia Friend (AFA, United States) and Lance Webb (FAAA, Australia).

The meeting looked at a number of perennial issues which require action in the coming year.

The ITF campaign for an ICAO cabin crew licence is to be stepped up in preparation for the ICAO General Assembly which takes place in September. The ITF is to prepare campaign materials focusing on the vital safety role performed by cabin crew. All affiliates were urged to contact their governments and push the case for an ICAO Study on cabin crew licensing.

The ITF is likely to participate in two ICAO Working Groups important to cabin crew.

A future ICAO Working Group for a revised ICAO Cabin Attendant Training Manual will include ITF representation. This Working Group is to deal with a revised ICAO Cabin Attendant

Training Manual. The ITF called for this document to be updated during the last ICAO Assembly in 1992.

An ICAO Study Group on Cabin Air Quality is also going to be set up.

Flight and duty time limitations is likely to lead to a co-ordinated campaign of cabin and flight deck crew unions in Europe if there are no further improvements in the Joint Aviation Authorities' proposed rules for harmonised European standards. The major industrial relations issues discussed focused on the growing use of "Flag of Convenience" methods by airlines.

The recent use of wet leasing by Alitalia which contracts a company controlled by the Australian carrier Ansett to provide planes and crew to fly Alitalia transatlantic routes (with planes painted in Alitalia livery and crews in Alitalia uniforms) at crew costs one third lower than Alitalia's. A range of legal and industrial responses were discussed.

Other threats to job security and union organisation include cross border employment and increased use of temporary workers.

A further issue raised was the introduction of random drug and alcohol testing of aviation workers in the United States.

Comment: where do we go from here?

The main theme of the Civil Aviation Section Committee meeting in Sydney was Building Global Solidarity. A major discussion took place on how to build effective international solidarity. Stuart Howard, Civil Aviation Secretary, told ITF News some of the conclusions that came out of that discussion.

One very clear conclusion came out of our discussions. Every union representative spoke of the same thing: that unions can generally deliver a certain level of solidarity support when they receive a request, but sustained solidarity action is only effectively delivered when union representatives at the workplace are actively informed and are actively involved in the process of developing a solidarity strategy.

A NUMBER OF TASKS WERE IDENTIFIED

Firstly, workers must be made aware that international union co-operation is no longer a luxury, but a vital part of any union's industrial response to the changes currently affecting the civil aviation industry. Aviation workers already experience that they work in an increasingly globalising industry. This is why unions must increase (as many are indeed doing) education work that takes discussions of globalisation, and what it means for unions, to union members at the workplace level.

This also places new obligations on the ITF to assist unions by producing materials which they can adapt or incorporate into their own education materials. One of the chief vehicles for this should be the production of an ITF Civil Aviation Bulletin, which has long been a goal in the Section.

In recent Civil Aviation Section Conferences unions have agreed that they need to develop more links with unions in other airlines which make up part of an international airline alliance or merger. This has already started to happen. Unions in BA-USAir-Qantas have developed co-ordination meetings. Similarly between unions in United Airlines and Lufthansa, and more recently Sabena and Swissair. Such links are at the core of an effective union response to globalisation.

However, it is clear that other wider forms of solidarity and co-ordination are required of us beyond those between unions with direct links through their companies.

We have been looking for some time at how unions can respond more effectively when a union in another country calls for international support.

The message from the discussions at the Section Committee meeting in Sydney were very clear. The effectiveness of the union response

closely depends on the understanding and consciousness of union members at the workplace. Solidarity will not simply come from the arrival of a fax message from the ITF office!

Once more this awareness must be actively developed, and the best way of developing international solidarity is for workers to have direct contact with other workers in another country.

This means unions with more resources sponsoring and hosting visits from representatives from a union in another country, with less resources, and where union rights may be under threat; organising for them to speak at local and workplace union meetings. It means organising visits for a local union representative from your union to visit another country and to report back to local union meetings on conditions for their counterparts.

NOTHING CAN BEAT SUCH DIRECT CONTACT

Unions should concentrate on building links where there are strategic relationships, for example where there is a high degree of traffic between countries. Such a strategy in particular requires work by unions who may look on themselves as being likely to need to call for international support.

Unions should not wait for a dispute to be the cause of seeking international links. They should start now. So that links have already been developed and when a dispute does occur and there is already a bond of solidarity which has been built, where it counts at the workplace, to mobilise for effective international support.



"We are ITF"

Unions have been urged to put the ITF globalisation logo used for the Sydney meetings on their headed note paper and union materials, and business cards. As one participant put it: "This will send out a message: we work together; we are internationally organised; we are ITF".

The proposal, which was included in the conclusions of the Section Committee meeting, recognises that this is not always easy or practical for all affiliates, especially those which are part of general unions with no union materials specific to aviation, but urges all unions to incorporate this change, wherever possible.

The Secretariat promised to provide art work for affiliates (the logo will need to be slightly adapted) and also some stickers with the logo.

Early warning system for aviation flags of convenience proposed

Early warning system proposed for international relocation and airline "flags of convenience"
The European Union's (EU) Council of Ministers has called upon the Commission to draft a report on the relocation of jobs in the air transport sector.

New Transport Commissioner Neil Kinnock was already planning a Commission study on

the employment impact of liberalisation in civil aviation. The call from the Council of Ministers (where the weight of political power in the EU lies) will ask that issues involving relocating jobs specifically to take advantage of cheap labour in other countries, or importing cheap non EU crews unprotected by EU social protections should be included in this study.

French Transport Minister Bernard Bosson also suggested the setting up of an "early warning system" to guard against such abuses.

These suggestions came at the Council of Ministers meeting on 14 March.

The Council of Ministers had been immediately preceded by an informal meeting, held at the initiative of the French presidency of the European Union, to discuss these problems with the employers' organisations and trade unions.

Lufthansa recently relocated its accounts department to India, and British Airways may follow suit. Alitalia recently contracted out its transatlantic routes to be flown by a company owned by the Australian carrier Ansett.

According to ITF Civil Aviation Section Chair George Ryde: "In the meeting it became clear that the airlines would like to keep the Commission's attention away from these trends. But air carriers, with international mergers and alliances, increasingly behave as global airlines. They have little loyalty to any particular national or regional location for their employees or their operations. With the cost of labour a prime factor in determining competitiveness the companies will seek to locate jobs where wage and social insurance costs are lower. This is part of globalisation and a global response is needed. The Commission should be taking an international lead in seeking controls over the companies' labour practices. Otherwise aviation will go the way of the maritime industry."

Hugues de Villèle, Secretary of the Committee of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Community told the meeting that "these practices are undermining the safety and employment levels in a sector where tens of thousands of jobs have already been lost since the implementation of the process of liberalisation".

The union message seems to have got through.

The French Transport Minister told the Council of Ministers meeting: "The trade union organisations are afraid of relocation, both internal, in which an airline practises wet leasing, and external in which EU based airlines bring pressure to bear on the traditional carriers by employing non-EU staff at lower rates of pay."

US-Canada "Open Skies" agreement signed

One of the major agenda points during the US President's state visit to Ottawa in late February was the signing of an Open Skies agreement between the United States and Canada. President Bill Clinton and Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien inked the accord, which gives US and Canadian airlines virtually unlimited access to cities in either country.

In essence, this open skies agreement is viewed as a compliment to the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta), whose free trade provisions for the US, Mexico and Canada do not include aviation. In a matter of days following the signing of the pact, US Transportation Secretary Federico Peña awarded US airlines 17 new air routes to Canada from 12 US cities. And certain other airlines intend to begin immediate service to Canadian cities that do not fall under the phase-in restrictions of the pact. Northwest Airlines, for instance will double the number of Canadian cities it currently serves.

The agreement will increase the pressure on both US and Canadian employees to reduce labour costs in order to win the dog fight for new transborder routes.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees believes that the "Open Skies" agreement signed provides too short a phase-in period; that the rules meant to protect against cabotage are undermined by the fact that trans-Canada routes can be flown through US hubs; and that there is inadequate protection against price wars.

The union says that the dropping of capacity and frequency controls is based on "a leap of faith, rather than the reality of industry dynamics under airline deregulation".

Three years ago (March 23, 1992) three ITF affiliates (IAM/ CUPE/CAW) submitted the following evaluation to then Transport Minister Jean Corbeil:

"This legislation is promoted by ideology, not the best interests of Canada. It is based on the wish of continental free trade, not the needs of many small and isolated Canadian communities. Finally, it caters to the greed of a small elite."

Turkish airline strike continues

The Turkish courts appear to be banning cabin crew in Turkish Airlines from going on strike. The courts have supported the right of the management to stop industrial action by ITF-affiliated Hava-Is. However, the strike by Turkish ground staff, who are also organised in Hava-Is, continues to hold solid. The strike, which began on February 24, involves 2,300 workers. The strike has hit foreign airlines as well as Turkish Airlines reducing flights by 30 per cent.

Air India disputes

Industrial relations in Air India have recently soured with two cabin crew disputes during February: one over changes in long haul stop-over times which reduced cabin crew rest, and another over the company's disciplining of 19 crew members. Air India flights were badly hit by a one day strike of 2,200 cabin crew members of the ITF-affiliated Air India Cabin Crew Association on February 21. The disputes have now been settled after the removal of Air India's manager Captain Dr. Mathur.

The strike is costing Turkish Airlines US\$250,000 per day. Nevertheless the union expects it is in for a prolonged struggle. The union has asked for all possible support from ITF affiliates. The strike is in protest against the privatisation of the airline under conditions being imposed upon the trade unions. The union is seeking negotiations on job security and social rights as well as a new pay deal. Turkey currently has a 160 per cent inflation rate.

• The ITF has raised with the ILO Freedom of Association Committee the case of Atilay Ayçin, President of Hava Is, currently serving a 20 months prison sentence for a speech made at an open human rights meeting. His imprisonment is not only an indictment of freedom of speech in Turkey, but Turkish law now prohibits him from ever holding a union position in the future. Ayçin was imprisoned immediately prior to union elections in January 1995, and at the time that the privatisation of Turkish Airlines and Havas ground handling were becoming a contentious issue between government and unions. The Turkish government have confirmed to the ILO that Ayçin was imprisoned as a result of making a speech at a human rights meeting.

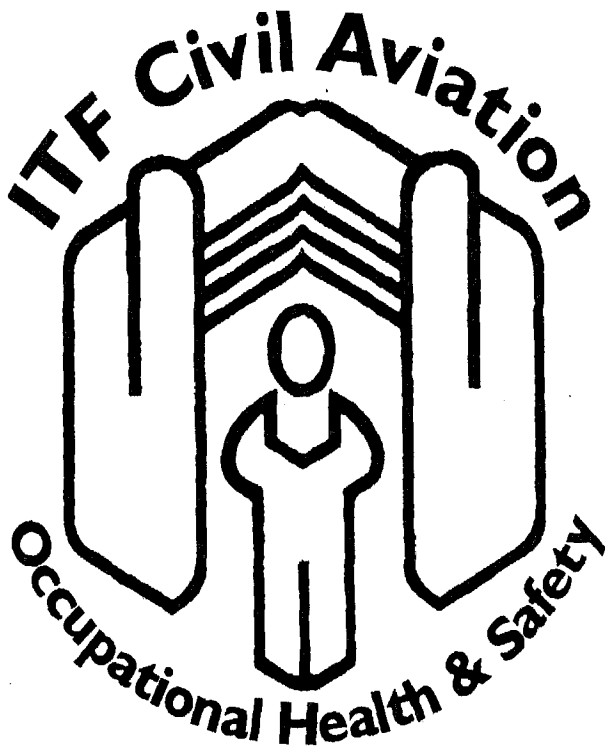
ITF health and safety bulletin now available

The first ITF Civil Aviation Health and Safety Bulletin is now available for all affiliates. The Bulletin, which will be produced once a year, contains articles about the fight by cabin crew unions in the United States for new rules governing cabin air quality, the best measures for ground staff working on the airport apron to be made properly visible, the successful campaign to regulate working hours for air traffic controllers in the UK, a Danish study on health problems for baggage handlers, and the stress and harassment suffered by airline reservations staff from the electronic monitoring of their work.

The bulletin will be produced at least once a year. It is only available in English, although it is hoped that unions will translate articles for use in their own publications. The Secretariat is also eager to receive from affiliates any health and safety materials, in any language, which are relevant to health and safety in civil aviation.

The bulletin is being sent to all affiliates, but extra copies may be ordered by writing to the ITF Secretariat.

The Civil Aviation Working Conditions Survey will be available in May 1995.





Urban Transport

Nr 1

March

1995

Urban Transport

is a periodic bulletin published by the International Transport Workers' Federation
133-135 Great Suffolk St.
London SE1 1PD

Tel: +44-171-403 2733
Fax: +44-171-357 7871

Internet:
ITF@GEO2.POPTEL.ORG.UK

General Secretary
David Cockroft

Urban Transport Committee:

Chairman
Siegfried Weis (Germany)
Vice Chairman
Anders Westin (Sweden)

Secretariat:

Assistant General Secretary
Graham Brothers
Senior Section Assistant
Asbjørn Wahl
Section Assistant
Dawn Weeks

Urban Transport

invites affiliates to contribute to the bulletin with notices and articles. Background material, reports, photographs etc. are also of interest.

Copies are free.

New bulletin for urban transport workers

For a long time there has been demand for an ITF Urban Transport Bulletin. The Secretariat has finally been able to start producing a periodic bulletin, the first issue of which you are now reading.

The content and the quality of the bulletin will depend to a high



The introduction of an 'Urban Transport' bulletin — a new station on the line to a better transport policy?

degree on the contributions we receive from our affiliates. We would like to receive articles as well as background material, reports, statements, photographs and other relevant material.

We are looking for feature articles dealing, either from a national or international perspective, with questions such as deregulation, privatisation, working conditions, financing of urban transport, fares, training, new technologies and the social and environmental consequences of urban transport.

Exchange of information between affiliates facing many of the same problems is of increasing importance to meet the challenges of an ever more internationalised transport industry. A

Health & Safety

This Urban Transport bulletin contains a Health & Safety section developed in co-operation with the Muni Health and Safety Project at the University of California (starting on page 7).

To further develop this co-operation between workers and researchers in the field of urban transport, we would like to receive addresses of research institutions, researchers and other interested parties from our affiliates. A



Railway Bulletin

Nr 1

March

1995

Railway Bulletin

is a periodic bulletin issued by the International Transport Workers' Federation
133-135 Great Suffolk St.
London SE1 1PD

Tel: +44-171-403 2733
Fax: +44-171-357 7871

Internet:
ITF@GEO2.POPTEL.ORG.UK

General Secretary
David Cockroft

Railwaymen's Section:

Chairman
Jim Knapp (Great Britain)
Vice Chairman
Umarasani Purohit (India)
Secretariat:
Assistant General Secretary
Graham Brothers
Senior Section Assistant
Asbjørn Wahl
Section Assistant
Dawn Weeks

Railway Bulletin

invites affiliates to contribute to the newsletter with notices and articles. Background material, reports, photographs etc. are also of interest. Copies are free.

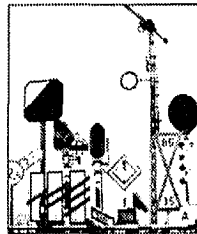
Printed by College Hill Press (TU), Worthing, GB

A change of mood in European rail policy?

The unique European way of organising the railways by splitting the infrastructure from operations and introducing large scale dismantling and privatisation of railway undertakings is being met with increasing scepticism and doubt about whether it will work at all.

This scepticism is not only being raised by the trade union movement. The railways of the USA and Japan have repeatedly

warned Europe against such a move — and the Europeans have begun to realise the problems. Page 6



Will European railway policy use increasing problems and obstacles — and possibly chaos?

Structural adjustment programmes

African railway unions face immense pressure from structural adjustment programmes and call on governments for consultation and the establishment of social funds for retraining where retrenchment is inevitable. Page 10

New bulletin for railway workers

This is the first issue of the Railway Bulletin, which the ITF Secretariat has decided to start publishing with a frequency of three issues a year.

The objective of the bulletin is to establish a better exchange of information between railway workers' unions and to contribute to the development of trade union policy. Contributions are welcome.

The ITF is proud to announce the availability of the first issues of both the Railway Bulletin and the Urban Transport Bulletin. The twelve page Railway Bulletin and the sixteen page Urban Transport Bulletin represent a significant new publishing initiative by the ITF in an effort to improve the services given to affiliates in the Inland Transport sections. Affiliates are receiving copies based on the orders that they have placed and interested individuals should write to the ITF requesting copies.

General Secretary: David Cockroft

Communications Secretary: Richard Flint

133-135 GREAT SUFFOLK STREET, LONDON, ENGLAND SE1 1PD

International Transport Workers' Federation * Federación Internacional de los

Trabajadores del Transporte * Internationale Transportarbeiter-Föderation *

Fédération Internationale des Ouvriers du Transport *

Internationella Transportarbetarefederationen * 國際運輸勞連

Telephone: +44-71-403 2733

Fax: +44-71-357 7871

Telex: (051) 8811397 ITF LDN G

Internet: ITF@GEO2.GEONET.DE