

ITF

NEWS

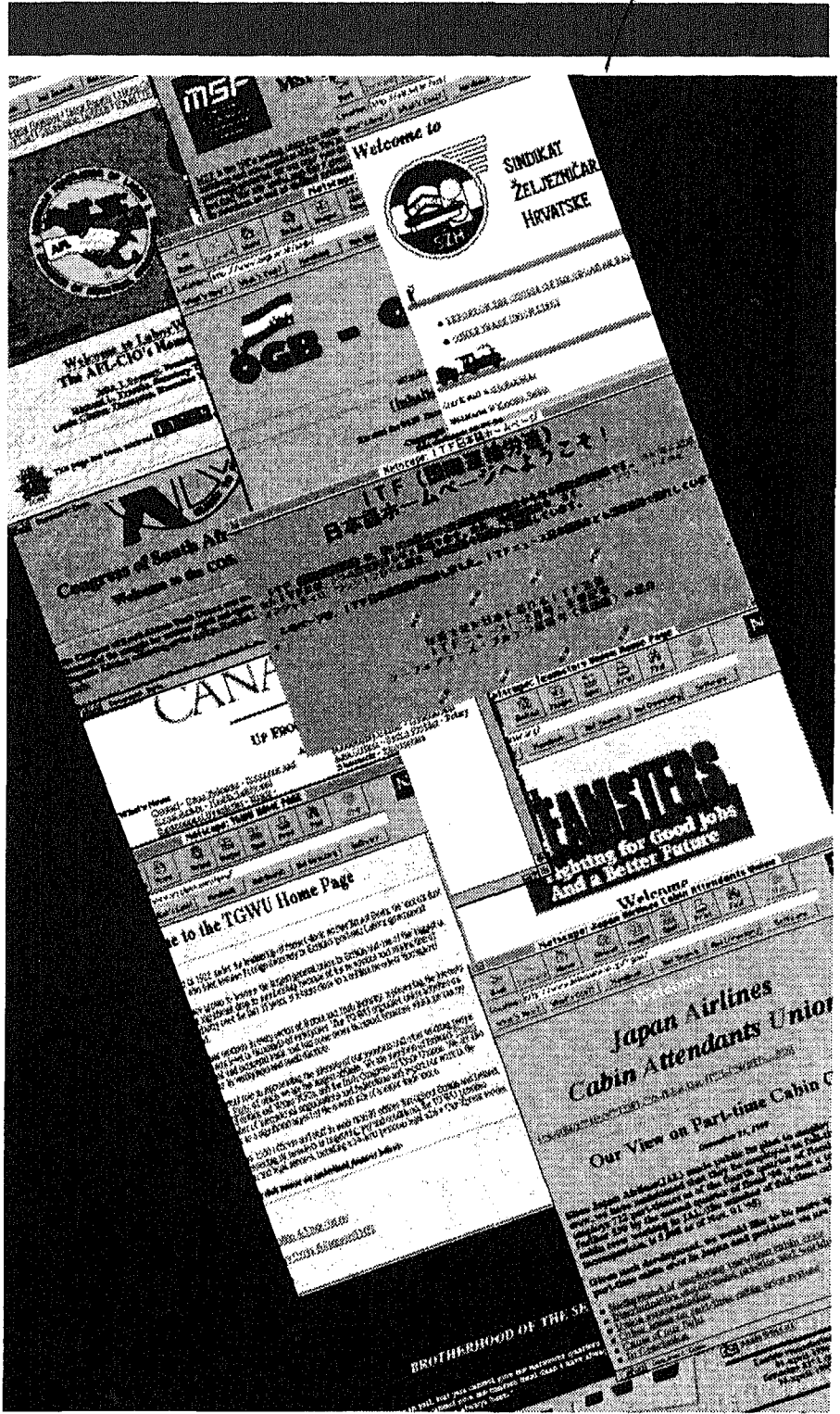


INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS FEDERATION

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Web pages

Contents

Global round-up:
*Guatemala condemned;
Women of the world
unite*

3-5

Inland transport:

*Fighting language
discrimination in the
USA; Boost for German
rail jobs; Jakarta bus
drivers want a proper
union; North American
truckers unite against
plan for open borders;
African drivers want
international standards
met*

6-8

Cover story:

*On the Web: How ITF
and affiliates are using
the World Wide Web for
communications*

9

Dockers:

*Executive Board backs
Liverpool strikers*

10

Fisheries:

*Backpay victory in strike
by Romanian crews*

10

Seafarers:

*Record pay-out in
Denmark; Action week
in north west Europe;
Right to free food
retained in New
Zealand*

11-12

Civil aviation:

*Unions challenge Latin
American open skies;
Duty time rules are not
improved*

13-14

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Jobs versus standards

OPINION

**ITF
General
Secretary
David
Cockroft
writes**



EVERY trade unionist who has ever negotiated with an employer has heard the argument that better working conditions means fewer jobs. It comes as no surprise, therefore, to hear it repeated at the international level in the debate about international labour standards.

Forcing "inappropriate" labour standards on poorer countries is portrayed as disguised protectionism, designed to maintain jobs for workers in the industrialised world at the expense of the mass of workers in the developing world. This argument is increasingly being used to attack the international trade union movement's campaign for a so-called "Social Clause" in trade agreements negotiated through the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The Social Clause campaign, which centres on respect for International Labour Organisation standards on freedom of association, forced labour, child labour and discrimination, has been misrepresented as a protectionist campaign for international minimum wages, hours of work or health and safety rules deliberately

Three years ago many of our Asian affiliates came under massive pressure from the shipping community to oppose a modest increase in the ITF minimum wage for FOC ships. They were told that any increase would result in a massive loss of jobs to other labour supply countries. Yet today, the increase has been implemented and the

number of ships under ITF agreements has almost doubled. This was done because we kept our nerve and strengthened our organisation.

Decent employers who treat workers with dignity and governments which take their international responsibilities seriously find themselves constantly undercut by their less scrupulous competitors. In shipping we call this flag hopping, but country hopping is all too familiar in other internationally competitive sectors. Strong trade unions backed up by universally respected international labour standards are a guarantee of more and better jobs, not a threat to employment creation.

In the shipping industry we are working to

ensure that flag states which do not respect minimum standards in practice as well as in theory lose the right to operate in the industry.

In today's global economy, we need a similar mechanism to drive countries which do not

respect basic human and trade union rights out of the international trading system. The fight for a Social Clause is our fight too. ■

'The Social Clause campaign has been misrepresented as a protectionist campaign for international minimum wages, hours of work or health and safety rules deliberately set at levels impossible for developing countries to enforce.'

set at levels impossible for developing countries to enforce.

Some developing country trade unions, including some ITF affiliates, have so far been persuaded to oppose the social clause on the grounds that it will damage job creation. Their views need to be treated seriously, unlike those of employers, governments and free market economists who argue vehemently against enforcing labour standards but have nothing but contempt for trade unions.

The ITF has more experience than most of the jobs versus standards debate. The nature of the flag of convenience system has forced maritime unions to go far beyond the idea of enforcing basic labour standards to include the establishment of an international minimum wage and standardised conditions for seafarers on fake-flag vessels.

Wages paid under ITF agreements, linked partially to the place where the ship is actually owned, can often be many times higher than those in the labour supply country. Ship-owners then accuse the ITF of imposing unreasonably high wages and of restricting employment opportunities in labour supply countries. It is hard to keep a straight face when a shipowner tells you that his main function in life is not to make money but to create jobs in developing countries, but we do our best.

International Solidarity Fund

LAST year the ITF Executive Board decided to establish a new International Solidarity Fund to provide emergency assistance to ITF affiliates. The fund was started with a donation of UK£100,000 from the ITF's own resources, and is being added to by contributions from ITF affiliates. It also incorporates the balances from a number of other funds set up in response to individual disputes in recent years.

The fund will not eliminate all requests for financial assistance which are currently made when unions find their existence threatened by their employer or government, or where union leaders face dismissal, imprisonment or other forms of repression. It will, however, enable the ITF to act quickly in such cases without compromising other ITF activities.

The fund is relatively modest in size and it is *not* an international strike fund. But ITF affiliates confronting serious disputes where emergency financial aid could make the difference between success and failure can now count on a new source of solidarity support. ■

■ *Newly appointed Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson (left) and Women's/General Policy Officer Sarah Finke with General Secretary David Cockroft at the Executive Board meeting.*

Mark Dickinson succeeds Åke Selander



upon the appointment of a successor to ITF Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander who left the ITF at the end of March in order to become the full-time coordinator of the International Committee for Seafarers' Welfare.

He is succeeded by 34 year-old Mark Dickinson, who originally came to the ITF from the International Shipping Federation in 1988.

For the past 12 months Dickinson has been acting as Deputy Secretary of the ITF's Special Seafarers' Department responsible for the operational side of the ITF's flag of convenience campaign during the extended absence on sick leave of SSD Secretary Bruno de Bonis. Dickinson is a former deck officer and has studied at the University of Wales, Cardiff, and the London School of Economics. He formally assumed the position of Assistant General Secretary on 1 April.

The Board also approved final arrangements for the extraordinary ITF Congress this June in London which will be devoted to commemoration of the ITF's Centenary and an initial discussion of the Transport Workers: Beyond 2000 project – final "Beyond 2000" decisions (including amendments to the ITF Constitution) will take place at the New Delhi Congress in 1998. ■

Executive Board makes two key appointments

IMPORTANT appointments to the ITF's leadership were agreed by the Executive Board meeting in Stuttgart, Germany, from 19 to 21 March.

The board continued discussions on the Transport Workers: Beyond 2000 project which seeks to revitalise the organisation in the next century. This discussion was the reason why the usual two day meeting was extended to

three. Part of this scheme involves making the ITF more relevant to female transport workers. In line with this commitment the ITF appointed Sarah Finke as its first Women's and General Policy Officer.

Finke, 31, has worked for the ITF for six years, in the Special Seafarers' and Communications Departments.

The meeting also decided



The ITF has approached all ITTs seeking discussions on ways to build and diversify international solidarity in the global economy

ITF and metalworkers agree to co-operate

A FIRST joint meeting has been held between the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) and the ITF, as a result of which the two international trade secretariats (ITTs) will co-operate on a series of initiatives promoting better safety, working and living standards in the shipping industry and protecting the marine environment.

The initiatives include an exchange of information and technical expertise, co-operation in relation to work within the International Maritime Organization and co-ordination of lobbying activities.

The ITF and the IMF, whose affiliated unions represent most of the world's shipbuilding workers, found common ground during their discussions about ongoing deregu-

lation policies in the maritime industry – the consequences of which are all too well reflected in the labour and safety record of flag of convenience vessels. They aim to campaign for the renewal of the world's ageing, and dangerous merchant fleet.

Shipyard workers – often the first point of contact for crew members whose ship is in for repair – are to be targeted with information about the ITF's FOC campaign. The ITF is providing the IMF with details of vessels covered by ITF-approved agreements.

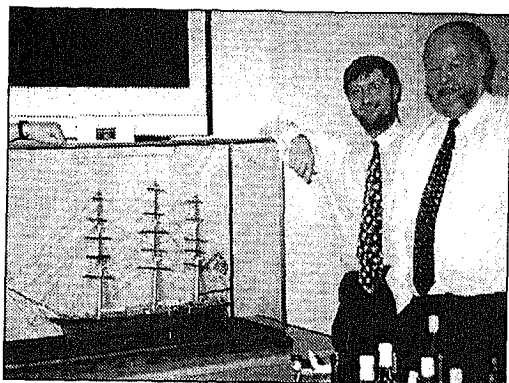
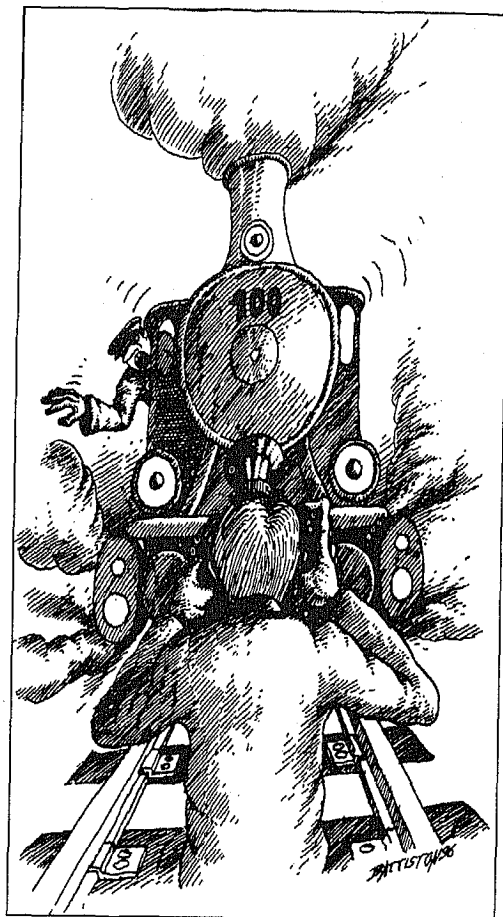
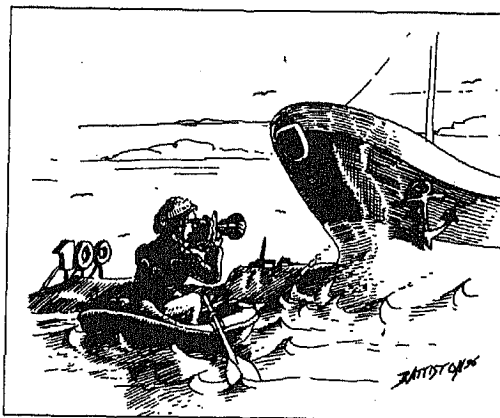
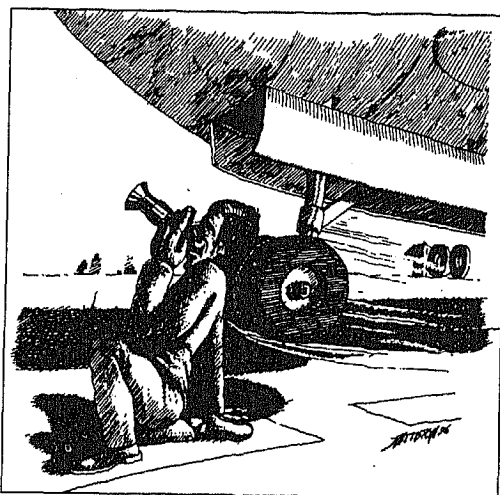
The ITF has approached all ITTs seeking discussions on ways to build and diversify international solidarity in the global economy. The discussions with the IMF were part of that process. ■

Centenary photo competition

Not yet entered the ITF Centenary Photo Competition? Don't despair - the closing date has been put back to the end of the year to allow more time for members of ITF-affiliated unions to take part. The theme of the competition is transport workers, with three categories, each with its own winning prize:

- transport workers at work
- women transport workers
- transport workers in struggle.

Entries can be black and white or colour prints of any manageable size. The prize is a free trip to London for two and a week's accommodation. The panel of judges will be announced later this year. Send entries by 31 December 1996 to: ITF Centenary Photo Competition, 49/60 Borough Road, London SE1 1DS. The ITF reserves the right to retain, publish or display any of the entries.



Retiring Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander (above, right) was presented with the ITF's farewell gift of a model ship - appropriately flying the Swedish colours - at a party given in his honour at the end of March. Members of the Executive Board meeting in Stuttgart earlier in the month also expressed their appreciation to Åke for the splendid service he had given to the ITF's maritime unions over the years and passed on their best wishes for the future. Åke is leaving the ITF to take up a new job as Executive Secretary of the International Committee for Seafarers' Welfare.

Former TCU International Vice President and ITF Executive Board member Jack Otero

has been nominated as Assistant Secretary for International Labor Affairs in the US Department of Labor. In his new post Otero will be responsible for the implementation of the labour side accord to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and will assist US negotiators in trade talks. The post is still subject to official Senate confirmation.

■ Emin Kul, Honorary President of the Seafarers' Union of Turkey (TDS), has been appointed Labour and Social Security Minister in the new Turkish government. Kul was TDS President from 1983 to 1991.

■ Ottiwell Simmons stepped down after twenty-four years as President of the Bermuda Industrial Union at the BIU's biennial delegates conference in March. Simmons will be staying on for a while to assist the new President Derrick Burgess. Chris Furbert takes over Burgess' previous post as BIU Vice President.

■ Andrzej Wójcik was re-elected President and Longin Kolacinski was elected Vice President of the Polish Seafarers' Union at its congress in Gdynia. PSU Secretaries are: Henryk Piatowski, Henryk Poniatowski and Henryk Wiszniowski.

PEOPLE

From Sweden, USA, Turkey, Bermuda and Poland

Guatemala condemned

ITF protests to President over attacks on trade union activists

KIDNAPPINGS and death threats against trade unionists are still rife in Guatemala – a state of affairs which has prompted the ITF to join the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in condemning recent events in the Central American country.

In letters to the Guatemalan President, Alvaro Arzú Irigoyen, the ICFTU and ITF have denounced the kidnapping in February of Vilma Cristina González, sister of a trade union activist in the bank and insurance sector. Her abductors released her after having drugged and beaten her and after trying in vain to make her admit that her brother was a member of an organisation linked to the guerrilla movement. As they released her, the kidnappers threatened to kill Vilma and her brother if they did not leave the country.

There have been renewed death threats too against Debora Guzmán Chupen, her husband Felix, and their four-year-old child, after they had fled to a supposedly secret hiding place. Debora and Felix are both trade unionists who defend workers' rights in the maquiladoras (factories producing goods for

export to North America). Debora was kidnapped and released last year by members of a paramilitary group.

Another trade unionist, Rolando Yoc, from the public health workers' union, was abducted on February 24 and many other activists continue to receive death threats. The legal system has so far failed to identify those responsible.

The ITF protest letter to the Guatemalan President strongly condemns these anti-democratic actions and urges him to take immediate measures to guarantee the life and liberty of Guatemalan trade unionists and their families. ■



■ Right: May Day in Guatemala City, where trade unionists face intimidation and beatings.

■ Women trade unionists, including members of the ITF-affiliated All India Railwaymen's Federation, at a meeting in Delhi organised by HMS, the Indian national trade union centre, to mark International Women's Day.

EVERY year International Women's Day is celebrated by trade unions all over the world. This 8 March the ITF asked affiliates to report their activities to the ITF Women's Department and found that unions had marked the occasion with differing degrees of eagerness.

In Russia, for example, the day is marked by a national holiday, and special lotteries were organised. Even our Turkish railway affiliate Demiryol-Is – 99 per cent of whose members are men –

Women of the world unite

included a short item in its newsletter. But one country where the day was celebrated by ITF affiliates with genuine enthusiasm was India.

In Delhi, ITF Women's Network contact-person Parminder Kaur co-ordinated a day-long celebration organised for women in the Northern Railwaymen's Union. Anju Mohan, of the ITF Delhi office, participated in the meeting.

Parminder led 150 women activists in discussions on organising women workers, raising their trade union consciousness and training men to ensure better sensitivity to issues affecting women at work and within union structures.

Meanwhile, women from

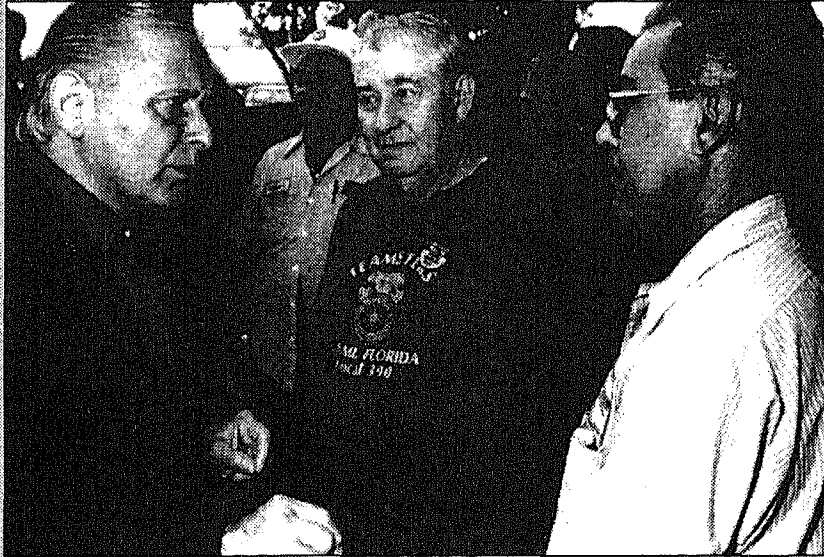
the Madras Port Trust Employees' Union gathered at a function conducted by another ITF contact-person, Sister RR Prathima, which included cultural presentations by workers' children and a debate on women workers in trade unions and the problems they face.

In Bombay, celebrations co-ordinated by two unions, the Mumbai Port Trust Union and Western Railways Employees' Union, took place on 13 March. Around 250 women participated in the function, which was attended by prominent women including Kanchan Gawada, the first woman taxi driver in Bombay. ITF contact-person Kalpana Desai welcomed guests, whilst Pushpa Kale made a presentation and performed a song highlighting the importance of International Women's Day.

The meeting resolved to focus on organising women workers and combating sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace. ■



Fighting language discrimination



■ **IBT President Ron Carey (left) meets employees of Fritz subsidiary Stair Cargo in Miami. The dispute with Fritz is seen by the Hispanic community as a test for US unions, say the Teamsters.**

Teamsters seek international support for struggle of Fritz Hispanic workers in Miami and Los Angeles

THE International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) had nearly completed negotiating a collective agreement with Stair Cargo in Miami when, about a year ago, the parent company, Intertrans, merged with Fritz Companies, making Fritz the second largest freight forwarder in the world, with offices in at least 50 to 60 countries.

The company installed a new negotiating team and at their first session handed IBT negotiators a three-step wage proposal for warehouse workers. Until then all warehouse workers were to have been in a single grade – but now there were to be three categories. Asked for a justification of this, Fritz said the wages were based on how well the warehouse workers spoke English.

This was very strange since Stair was originally founded by expatriate Cubans and, typically, Spanish was the only language spoken. All the warehouse workers are immigrant workers, all but one of them coming from Cuba.

After further investigation, the IBT soon discovered that when the company wanted to communicate with the workers on how bad they felt the union was, they used Spanish. And when the company

wanted specific work practices done in a certain manner deemed most efficient, they communicated in Spanish.

However, when it came to issues that were potentially to the benefit of the workers, the company communicated only in English.

For example, all employees must sign that they have received the 45-page company employee handbook. This book spells out what the rules and benefits are for employees, as well as the grounds for being disciplined and certain rights, including, ironically, the right not to be discriminated against. The book is only in English. Job postings are also only in English.

Not surprisingly, the Teamsters helped workers file discrimination charges against Fritz based on this language discrimination. Within a few weeks Fritz workers were brought into the manager's office. There the manager threatened to sack them if they did not sign a decertification petition. About nine workers signed.

In response the IBT has now filed unfair labour practice charges against the company.

In February the union was contacted by Mexican-American community activists in

Los Angeles who were working with non-unionized Latino truck drivers in the city's port. They told the IBT that 60 Fritz drivers had staged a three-day wildcat strike because the company had classified them as independent operators who were leasing their equipment from Fritz. This is a common, and often illegal, way cargo companies try to exploit non-union drivers. Fritz made the drivers sign a 65-page contract in – surprise, surprise – English.

As part of the campaign against Fritz, the Teamsters have targeted the "Fritz Companies National Advisory Board", an impressive array of about 150 of the most prominent manufacturers and retailers in the US, such as Monsanto, Estée Lauder, McDonalds, Xerox and Wang Laboratories. IBT President Ron Carey wrote a very strongly worded letter to these companies, protesting at their involvement with such a discriminatory and anti-social company. They panicked and within a few days the union's phones were ringing off the hook with calls from the companies trying to distance themselves from Fritz.

Fritz, meanwhile is suing the IBT for libel, which the union sees as an opportunity to hit the company with some legal requests which could prove to be embarrassing.

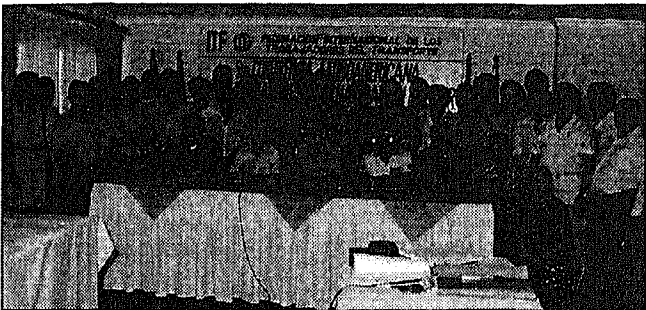
The Teamsters feel that Fritz is a priority. Other unorganized immigrant workers in Miami and Los Angeles will judge the union by how hard and how creatively Fritz can be fought.

Fritz has two big vulnerabilities: its overseas operation and its customers being edgy about being associated with a human rights violator, especially the charge of discrimination against Hispanics. That is why the IBT wants fellow ITF-affiliated unions to support their fight. ■

What you can do

■ Send letters of protest to the Fritz Companies subsidiary in your country, or raise the issue face to face with management. Names and addresses of Fritz's subsidiaries are available from the ITF Secretariat in London. Send copies of all correspondence to: Ron Carey, President, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, 25 Louisiana Avenue NW, Washington DC 20001, USA.

■ Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers addresses the opening of the ITF African Road Transport Workers' Conference in Accra in March. Also pictured is ITF African Regional Secretary Ben Udogwu. For a report of the conference, see page 8.



■ Delegates to the 5th ITF Latin American Inland Navigation Workers' Conference held in Asunción, Paraguay, in March.

Boost for German rail jobs

A SIGNIFICANT success has been scored for the German trade union "alliance for jobs" with an agreement reached last month that will secure or create jobs for over 12,000 railway workers.

Following talks involving Transport Minister Matthias Wissmann, German railways president Heinz Dürr and railway workers' union GdED president Rudi Schäfer, 6,000 railway jobs will be safeguarded with the decision to take back work previously contracted out.

Some 4,500 new posts will be created to enable overtime now being worked to be cut back and future overtime avoided, while 4,200 training places will be offered this year – 2,000 more than originally foreseen. A further 500 positions will be

created or saved through part-time and early retirement measures.

The railway company has also agreed that there will be no lay-offs due to fluctuations in work before the end of 1996 and that more flexible working hours should be introduced.

Railway civil servants will also be included in the working hours regulations and will have the right to take early retirement from their 55th year.

"With these results the GdED, which organises 80 per cent of Germany's 294,000 railway workers, has demonstrated the viability of the German trade union confederation's alliance for jobs," commented a delighted Rudi Schäfer. ■

INLAND TRANSPORT

Jakarta bus drivers want a proper union

'Many of the drivers have been working for the company for more than 10 years and have no choice but to take a second job to support their families. One driver with 20 years' service was earning as little as Rp 88,000 (US\$40) a month.'

THE ITF is to support drivers of the Indonesian state-owned Jakarta bus company PPD in their efforts to form a union to defend their rights.

Over the last few months representatives of PPD's more than 12,000 employees have approached the Indonesian Prosperity Labour Union (SBSI) seeking help with improving their pay and conditions. They also want to clear up doubts about their status, in particular whether they should be classed as civil servants or as employees of a public or private company.

ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Secretary Shigeru Wada, addressing PPD drivers in February at the offices of the SBSI, promised: "The ITF will provide PPD drivers with the necessary training to enable them to communicate their interests to the company's management." He added: "From now on, we will help you with your education programme to determine how you proceed as a union in the future."

The drivers are officially registered as members of the civil servant body KORPRI and are prohibited from forming a union. KORPRI, set up by the government in 1971, is chaired by the Minister of Home Affairs.

The drivers complain that KORPRI, which also includes the company's management among its members, has not done anything to solve their legitimate grievances.

Wada said: "The ITF does not consider KORPRI a substitute for a trade union. It could

be considered an organisation which serves purposes other than that of a trade union."

Drivers have to report daily to the bus depots and regularly work 12 to 13 hour shifts without overtime pay. The legal requirement is only seven hours.

Money is deducted from their salaries when buses – many of which are in poor mechanical condition – cannot be taken out. They forfeit a day's pay each time a bus fails to run and if they complain are left without work.

Illegal levies are also imposed by fellow PPD workers at the bus depots and by the police on the roads. When a driver takes and returns an operation order he has to give money to the person in charge.

Many of the drivers have been working for the company for more than 10 years and have no choice but to take a second job to support their families. One driver with 20 years' service was earning as little as Rp 88,000 (US\$40) a month.

The drivers have filed complaints about their working conditions and unclear status with KORPRI, the Ministries of Transportation and Manpower, the House of Representatives, the Jakarta Governor and the National Commission on Human Rights. ■

African drivers want international standards met

THE main items of discussion at the ITF's 4th African Road Transport Workers' Conference were the adverse physical conditions under which African road transport workers are forced to work and the relative lack of progress in implementing international standards regarding working hours and rest periods.

In particular there was concern that the requirements of International Labour Organisation Convention 153 were not being met, although some progress towards this objective was reported by delegates from Ghana and Uganda.

The conference expressed appreciation for the work carried out by the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section with respect to the preparation of design and construction standards for truck cabs and buses, but noted that road conditions and the nature of some journeys presented specific problems with regard to safety of the

crew and the signed for European stand African update a survey legislative and provisions relating driving time and to support contingents to achieve the convention 153.

The conference in Ghana, on 11 organised in coninar on trade unorsored by the Trade Centre of Finland's ish Transport which took place. The conference representatives countries. Assistant Graham Brothearty Ben Udogn

North American truckers against plan for open border

REPRESENTATIVES of millions of truck drivers and freightworkers in the United States, Canada and Mexico have adopted an action plan to maintain the blockade against implementing the cross-border trucking provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The truckers' unions say such a move would hurt jobs, highway safety and the environment.

A meeting of union delegates from the three countries, held in Chicago in March, agreed to step up membership education, campaigning among non-member drivers and the general public on the issue, plus a co-operative political action strategy targeting members of the US Congress who support the NAFTA provisions.

"NAFTA threatens jobs and highway safety in all three countries," said Ron Carey, President of the ITF-affiliated International Brotherhood of Teamsters, after the meeting.

"It is time for truckers to unite," he added. "Our fight is not with each other - our fight is against corporate greed that is destroying jobs and wages on both sides of the border."

His views were echoed by the US Owner-Operator Independent Drivers' Association (OOIDA).

"Truck drivers cannot continue to go it alone against the corporate interests that are behind NAFTA," said Jim Johnston, OOIDA President. "These corporations care about short-term profits and have little or no regard for highway safety or job security."

The "Truckers' Summit", as the March meeting was billed, marked the first time that union and independent trucking groups from the three countries had joined forces to address

Jobs and safety would suffer under NAFTA provisions, Chicago summit agrees

these issues. Inad programme are:

- A plan by IBT millions of work palm cards and ms and CB radio. The parts have product
- Full-page joint appear in major USA publications.

- Grass-roots polic bying supported by congressional date

- A full-page IBI in Mexico's large newspaper calling efforts by working NAFTA countries

standards, while decrying the scapegoat

- Research projects conducted jointly can trade unions to support organisational campaigns.

Plans to open the border to competition line with the terms of the NAFTA agreement, rarely delayed last December after a PR the IBT and other union, highway safety groups.

"International solidarity is the most working people have to resist attacks by employers," said IBT Canada President

"From this point forward, we'll are heard, not just the voice of big Domínguez of the Frente Auténtico of the participating Mexican trade union set of standards to force big rules that benefit all workers."

In brief

Eurostar meeting

The second meeting of unions representing Eurostar employees was held at ITF headquarters at the end of February and was attended by 19 delegates from seven railway unions in Belgium, France and Great Britain. The meeting discussed a memorandum of understanding on inter-union co-operation which had been drafted by the ITF, the main thrust of which being that the unions would support each other when they were having problems or disputes with their respective managements. It was agreed that the unions would consult further on the draft with the aim of signing the memorandum at the next meeting.

Japan deal

Japanese private railway workers have settled their "shunto" spring wage negotiations with a monthly increase of 3.38 per cent. The increase was the same as in the previous year in percentage terms, but for the first time in six years was larger, in cash terms, than the previous year's settlement.

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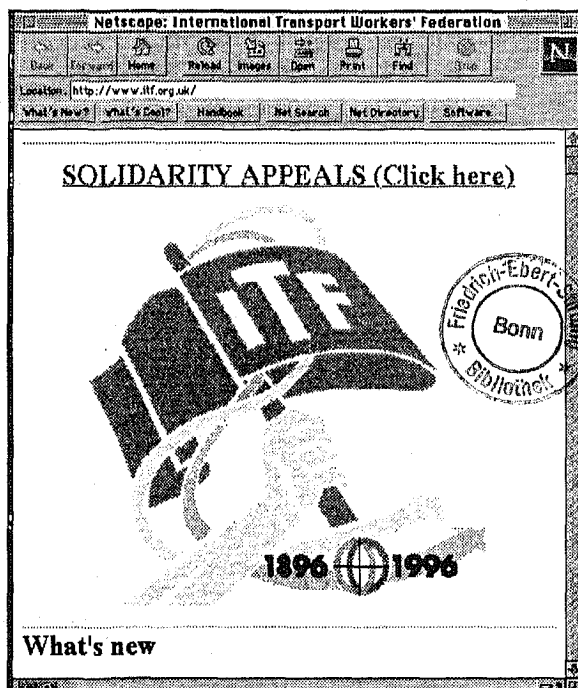
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ess," added Alfredo
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On the Web

Last month we announced that the ITF was now using the Internet - with its World Wide Web of links to other organisations and their Web pages - as a means of communication with affiliates and transport workers around the world.

Here, we explain how the Web works, and report on the growing number of unions which now also have their own Web site.



ITF trade unions are increasingly making use of the Internet for communications and information presentation.

The global network of computers known as the internet provides easy access to electronic mail (which makes sending messages anywhere in the world as easy as typing them in on a computer keyboard) and also to other services that make use of this "network of networks" - new developments are emerging constantly that allow for the internet to allow connected users access to video conferencing, inexpensive long distance phone calls and a range of audio and video services.

One of the most interesting internet developments is the World Wide Web (WWW) - an interlinked network of computers (using the internet as their host) that presents words, images, sounds and sometimes video in a format accessible to almost any computer. The Web is a dynamic, living book that can be accessed by almost anyone.

The Web is based upon the "hypertext" principle - text and images are "linked" to other local items or even to computers on the other side of the world. Users can use these hyperlinks (usually by clicking with their computer's mouse) to switch between computers and travel the globe electronically. This is what internet fans call "surfing".

Access to the Web is usually through the same route that users connect to mail and other internet services. To access the full graphical elements of the

Web, you need to run a "web browser" programme. Many browsers are free (for non-profit groups) and they are available in different versions for most types of computer (PC, Mac or Unix).

Many companies and educational institutes and some computer networks have a simplified, non-graphical link to the Web which allows users access to web-pages as text-only documents.

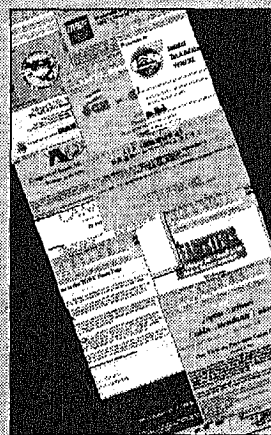
The Web was invented in Switzerland by Tim Berners-Lee who worked for the computing division of the high energy particle research centre CERN in Geneva and was first brought into being at the beginning of this decade. In the last couple of years, the numbers of machines providing "Web Pages" has mushroomed at an exceptional rate. There are now many thousands of pages accessible to over 40 million computers.

The trade union movement must not allow this new technology to develop without our using it for more rapid and efficient communications and for electronic publishing.

The ITF has its own WWW page (<http://www.itf.org.uk>) and affiliated unions are opening services all the time. ITF members in Britain, Canada, Croatia, Japan, Switzerland, and the USA are publishing web pages.

Their addresses are reproduced on this page and hyperlinks to all of them exist on the ITF WWW page. Unions opening pages should send e-mail to the ITF (info@itf.org.uk) giving us their address so we can link to them.

COVER STORY



ITF affiliates with World Wide Web pages

Every month, we hear about new ITF affiliates on the WWW. The following list is accurate as we go to press.

The addresses are expressed as standard Universal Resource Locators (URLs). These and many other labour and transport links can be accessed on the ITF WWW page at <http://www.itf.org.uk/english/itflinks.html>

If you know of a link we should add, please send internet electronic mail to us at "info@itf.org.uk"

- ITF Japan (in Japanese) - <http://www.bekkooame.or.jp/~itfjpn>
- Sailors' Union of the Pacific (USA, English) - <http://www.org/~robin/SUP/SUPindex.html>
- The Teamsters (USA, English) - <http://www.teamster.org>
- SZH (Croatian Railway Union, English) <http://ahf.tel.hr/szh>
- Transport and General Workers' Union (UK, English) - <http://www.ws.pipax.com/tgwu>
- Canadian Auto Workers (English) - <http://www.web.apc.org/caw>
- VPOD (Swiss public services union) - <http://apocba.ethz.ch/VPOD/> (German and French).
- UK public services union UNISON (English) - <http://www.poptel.org.uk/unison>
- Japan Airlines Cabin Crew Union (English & Japanese) - <http://www.bekkooame.or.jp/~jcau>
- UK road transport union USDAW (English) - <http://www.poptel.org.uk/usdaw>
- Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union MSF (UK, English) - <http://www.poptel.org.uk/msf>

DOCKERS

Affiliates are urged to find ways to give support

EB backs Liverpool strikers

THE ITF Executive Board, at its meeting in March, adopted a statement in support of the sacked Liverpool dockers.

Earlier in the month the ITF Joint Seafarers' and Dockers' Steering Committees were briefed by representatives of the dockers, who have been in dispute since September 1995 when they were sacked for refusing to cross a picket line.

The dockworkers are demanding reinstatement and an end to the casualisation of port labour. These aims are fully in line with current worldwide ITF policy.

The ITF Executive Board is calling upon all ITF-affiliated unions to express their support for the Liverpool dockers in the most appropriate way in their own country.

This might also include financial support for the dockers and their families and by contacting shipping lines calling at the port of Liverpool urging the employer of the sacked dock workers, the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, to re-instate the sacked workers.

All affiliated unions are being asked in the statement to inform the ITF Secretariat about the actions they are planning to undertake/have undertaken. This will enable the ITF Secretariat to co-ordinate these actions, where possible, maximising the effect of the actions. Information received by the ITF Secretariat will be passed to the affiliated unions.

Early in April a further round of negotiations took place between the shop stewards' committee, the British transport union TGWU and the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company. The seven hours of talks failed to reach a settlement.

TGWU General Secretary Bill Morris has asked for his thanks to the many ITF unions who have undertaken (and continue to take) solidarity actions in support of the Liverpool strike to be passed on. ■

■ A series of stickers with slogans supporting the campaign to preserve cargo handling as exclusive work for dockers has been produced by the ITF. Copies of the stickers - which to date exist only in English and German versions - are available from the ITF Secretariat.



Sri Lanka protest

OVER 2,000 members of the ITF-affiliated Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union (CMU) picketed the Sri Lankan Ministry of Shipping, Ports and Rehabilitation offices on 28 March to protest against government plans to privatise part of the port of Colombo.

The demonstrators also underlined their union's demand for urgent talks with the ministry about privatisation. ■

FISHERIES

A TOTAL of US\$177,000 was shared out by the crews of two Romanian-owned fish factory ships who approached the ITF for help when the Cypriot-flag vessels called at the Polish port of Szczecin in January.

The Romanian crews went on strike after the refrigerated trawlers' owner, Tulcea Fishing, of Tulcea, Romania, refused to negotiate with ITF

Backpay victory in strike by Romanian crews in Poland

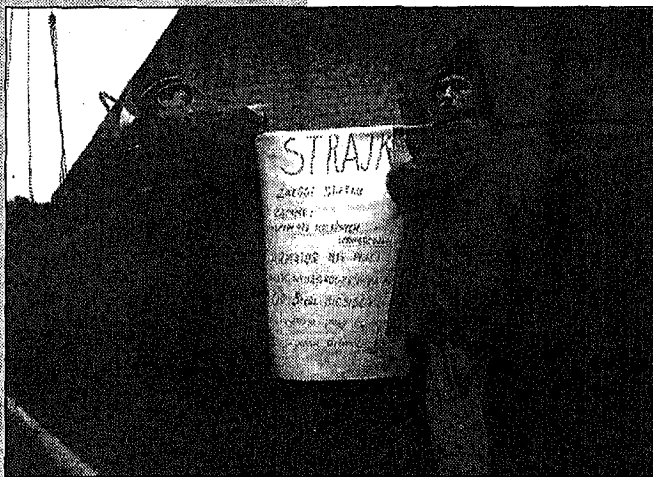
Inspector Andrzej Jaskiewicz. The stoppage lasted two days before the company agreed to pay the money owed to the two crews. The hatches were then re-opened and discharging continued.

Jaskiewicz had earlier found out that there was no collective agreement for the 52 seafarers on each ship, only individual contracts of employment.

The monthly pay for an AB, including consolidated overtime pay, was US\$290 plus \$15 for each ton of cargo loaded or unloaded.

With full ITF backing the crews demanded five months' backpay. Over 80 of them signed a power of attorney authorising the ITF to act on their behalf.

The ITF action generated considerable press and media interest, according to Jaskiewicz. The dispute was extensively reported not only in Poland, but in Romania too. ■



■ Some of the Romanian crew raise a strike notice on the quayside in Szczecin.

In brief

Pay for Russian crew

■ Ulf Christiansen, the ITF Inspector in Hamburg, reports that the Russian crew of the *Akademik Gorbunov*, a Russian ship arrested in the German port for seven months because of heavy debts, have now received outstanding wages totalling US\$47,335 and have been repatriated to St Petersburg. The ro-ro vessel belonged to the troubled Russian shipping line Baltic Shipping, and it required ITF negotiations with the six arrest parties and the belief to secure the money owed to the 17-strong crew. The vessel left Hamburg in March, having been sold to an Italian company.

\$48,000 for crew

■ A routine visit by ITF Inspector Ab Memon to the Cyprus-flag *Abdon*, while berthed in the German port of Bremen, revealed that the crew of 30 were being paid less than the Cyprus collective agreement. Memon informed representatives of the owners, Oceanrole Shipping, of the problem, and within three days US\$48,000 had been paid to the crew.

Costly visit

■ All it took was a ship visit by ITF Inspector Gianbattista Leoncini and a tip-off to the Italian harbour authorities to persuade Eurostar Navigation, of Piraeus, Greece, to pay back wages of over US\$40,000 to the 11-man Russian crew of the *City of Virginia*. The St Vincent-flag vessel was detained for two days in the port of Brindisi after being ordered to repair hatches which did not open. No doubt worried that the ITF and the crew might take action to secure higher pay rates, the owner paid the extra money to the crew before even the ITF had made contact.

Strike wins \$24,000

■ A four-day crew strike and a boycott by Italian port workers eventually persuaded the Greek owners of the Honduran-flag *Unity III* to pay back wages owed to the seafarers on board. The action was ordered by ITF Inspector Gianbattista Leoncini, after three of the crew — which consisted of three Ukrainians, two Greeks and a Yugoslav, Albanian, Egyptian, Tunisian and Georgian — called him when the vessel arrived in Brindisi. The siege of the vessel was lifted in February after owners Capri Navigazione Commercial, of Piraeus, paid out US\$24,000 between the crew, plus the air fare home for a seafarer who wanted to be repatriated.



THE biggest ever settlement in Denmark in the ITF flag of convenience campaign was achieved in March when Filipino seafarers and Danish dockers combined to extract nearly US\$300,000 from German-owned Philman Shipping, of Manila, the Philippines.

The money was secured after ITF Inspector John Jacobsen discovered that the 28 crew members of the Filipino-flag *Cayman* were not covered by a collective agreement and were being paid less than the International Labour Organisation

Record pay-out in Denmark

■ Above: Jubilant crew members of the *Cayman*, with ITF Inspector John Jacobsen (centre).

minimum. An AB, for example was on a basic of just \$326 a month.

Meetings with the master and the German manager who was on board when the ship berthed in Esbjerg failed initially to make any progress. But the dispute was swiftly resolved when some 50 dockers stopped working on the vessel for three days.

A total of \$297,711 was eventually shared out among the crew. The previous record for an FOC settlement in Denmark was \$191,104. ■

NW Europe action week

A SIGNIFICANT escalation of activities in the ITF campaign against flag of convenience shipping will take place in June with the launch of a co-ordinated "action week" focusing on the North Sea ports of Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and northern France.

The week of action starts on 2 June and will consist of a systematic targeting of all ships operating without ITF-approved collective agreements. Shipowners without valid contracts will be invited to sign ITF agreements. Those that decline will be subject to actions by ITF seafarers' and dockers' unions which will seek, within the local legal framework, to persuade the owners to sign.

This mode of operation is common throughout the world where the ITF campaign is active, and it already occurs in some of the ports of the region. The week represents a "stepping up" of existing activities, coupled with specific vessel tracking:

"If a ship runs away from an action in, say, Le Havre and diverts to Antwerp, Rotterdam or Hamburg," said ITF Assistant General Sec-

retary Mark Dickinson, "we will be waiting on the waterfront when she arrives to continue the action."

Extensive preparations for the week, including a series of national seminars, have been held in the past six months.

The success of the week depends critically on the active participation of dock unions:

"We have done a lot of preparatory work with dock unions," said ITF Dockers' Secretary Kees Marges. "The FOC campaign relies on solidarity given to seafarers by port workers. With dockers currently facing attacks on their acquired rights, we must point out to them that ITF-approved agreements protect seafarers from being forced to handle cargo and so support dock workers too."

The week of action is the beginning of a revitalisation of the campaign in the region. Similar weeks in other regions are planned for the future. ■

In brief

Backpay for Indians

■ A routine visit in January to the Cypriot-flag *Csiv Tolken* by Peter Christoph, the ITF Inspector in Gothenburg, Sweden, revealed that the 25-strong Indian crew were being paid less than the Cyprus collective agreement. He arranged for the US\$34,074 owed to them by Cypriot owner, *Cav Sand Shipping*, to be paid in Hamburg; their next port of call – which has now been done.

Home with their wages

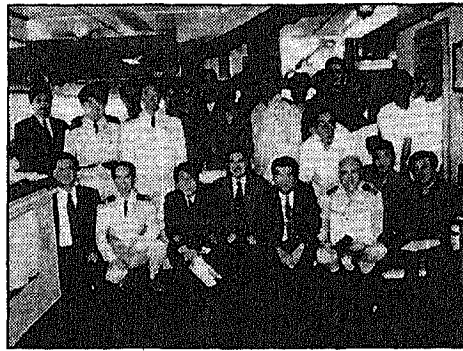
■ Crew members of Adriatic tankers *Ionian Jade* have finally received the wages owed to them and have been repatriated – nearly nine months after the Panamanian-registered ship was arrested in Bremerhaven, Germany, for unpaid debts. The ITF, claiming unpaid wages on behalf of the crew of 10 Russians and five Maldivians, was one of five parties to the arrest. The ITF also arranged water and provisions for the crew – something that the Greek owner refused to do – until the ship was eventually auctioned in February and the crew went home after sharing US\$172,000 in backpay.

Boycott victory

■ The three crew members of the St Vincent-registered *Maria I shared* US\$5,600 in backpay and were repatriated following an ITF-organised boycott of the Greek-owned vessel by dockers in the Italian port of Monopoli.

\$10,000 for master

■ A Russian master accused of stealing money from the cash box of a Panamanian-flag vessel and of falsifying crew wage accounts turned to the ITF for help and thereby was able to disprove the charges levelled against him. He was also paid US\$10,000 in wages owed to him, and was repatriated from Hamburg. The captain contacted Hamburg-based ITF Inspector Ulf Christensen saying that the Algerian owner of the *Samsun*, Medguls Shipping, was refusing to send him home after completion of his six-month contract. Several visits were then made to the vessel by Christensen together with the Algerian superintendent to check the ship's accounts. No discrepancies were found, and the Russian received his backpay and fare home.



■ The crew of the *Akashi Bridge* arrive back in the port of Tokyo after rescuing the crew of the 23-year-old Maltese-flag bulk carrier *Seafaith* which sank at night in a storm off Taiwan. On their arrival the Japanese crew were welcomed by JSU Vice President Y Sasaki and praised for their courageous sea rescue.



■ Pictured at the second congress of the Polish Seafarers' Union in Gdynia in March are, from left to right: Jerzy Uzlebło, PSU delegate; Tony McGregor, ITF Seafarers' Section (at the rostrum) and (seated) Zdzisła Rżanny, Congress Vice Chair, Zbyszko Felski, Congress Chair and Konstanty Michalowski, Congress Secretary.

Right to free food retained in New Zealand

THE ITF-affiliated New Zealand Seafarers' Union (NZSU), supported by the New Zealand Merchant Service Guild, has won its dispute with Tranz Rail over the provision of free food to crews in its fast ferry operations.

The company was refusing to provide meals free of charge to its crews in contravention of ILO Convention No. 68, which has been ratified by the New Zealand government.

The Employment Court has now ruled that an employer of seafarers on a New Zealand ship is required to provide food satisfying the requirements of article 23 (1)(a) of the Maritime Transport Act 1994,

without charge to the seafarers. Although much stress was laid on the interpretation of the word *provide* throughout the hearing the judge ruled that *provide* in relation to food and water on ships meant to supply without cost to the recipient.

At the ITF Asia/Pacific Seafarers' Regional Committee meeting in Cairns in January, Tranz Rail was condemned for resorting to litigation against the NZSU in a health and safety matter and urged to respect international practice in providing food free of charge to all crew members employed in its fast ferry operations. ■

Concern over conditions offshore

THE ITF is receiving an increasing number of complaints from workers in the offshore oil and gas industries about deteriorating pay and conditions and is consequently planning a co-ordinated response from affiliated unions representing offshore workers.

ITF officers believe that the downturn in conditions is the result of policies which have been introduced by governments with the encouragement of the oil and gas multinational companies.

A letter has gone out to ITF-affiliated unions inviting them to participate in the process of devising an internationally co-ordinated response to companies which show "nothing but contempt for the workforce and the environment". ■

Maltese pilot strike ends accident liability threat

ALL Maltese ports were paralysed for nine hours on 1 March when pilots – all of them members of the ITF-affiliated General Workers' Union (GWU) – went on strike in protest at plans by the Malta Maritime Authority (MMA) to make them liable for any loss or damage caused by their professional actions.

The strike prompted the Ministry of Transport to convene an urgent meeting of the parties to the dispute, at which the union's proposed wording for a civil liability clause was accepted by the MMA. The clause limits damages to LM5,000 (US\$13,935.34) for any one voyage.

A pleased GWU Assistant Secretary Charles Briffa afterwards wrote to the ITF to say: "Kindly forward our apologies for any inconvenience caused to any seafarers by our action."

He added: "However, please keep in mind that without the pilots, who are always willing to co-operate and assist in the flag of convenience campaign, the union would not be able to put naughty shipowners on their knees." ■

AA dispute

■ *Aerolíneas Argentinas* find themselves once more in dispute with their unions over job-cutting measures. The company announced at the end of March that it would abandon its direct routes to Mexico and a number of other destinations, flying instead to Miami, where passengers would transfer to flights using planes and crews hired from Atlantic, a non-union enterprise. The ITF has protested to the company and will monitor developments closely.

Carriers rent crews

■ "Rent-A-Crew" is now a reality in Latin America, with the emergence of a company that supplies pilots and cabin crew to air operators "at low cost" under a system of individual contracts. ASPA Rent-A-Crew has been formed by pilots formerly employed by AVENSA, the Venezuelan regional carrier, and is offering a "novel system of hiring staff" to airlines across Latin America and the Caribbean. The company was set up under the auspices of the AVENSA pilots' union, ASPA, which had earlier agreed to a transfer to individual contracts for pilots previously employed by AVENSA subsidiary SERVIVENSA. Under these individual contracts, crew are paid only for the scheduled (not actual) flying time, are responsible for their own layover costs and have to indemnify passengers against accidents or damage. The ITF is co-ordinating a campaign against Rent-A-Crew with the international pilots' organisation IALPA.

Venezuela alert

■ Venezuelan air space is not safe, according to the air traffic control trade unions which have protested at the year-old military takeover of their jobs. The militarisation of the air traffic control service has resulted in a significant increase in the number of near-misses, communication errors, flight path and approach mistakes and other such incidents. The origins of the dispute lie in the repeated complaints by the air traffic controllers about the failure of the government to invest adequately in airport and traffic control infrastructure and equipment. The 700 dismissed controllers are continuing to campaign strongly for demilitarisation and a complaint has been lodged with the ILO with the support of the ITF.

The crisis since 1990...

US airlines have increased their domination in the region

The US megacarriers have increased their market share on US-Latin American routes by over 10 per cent between 1990 and 1993. American Airlines and United Airlines between them have 3 million members of their frequent flyer programmes who are resident in Latin America.

New, aggressive, anti-union carriers have grabbed niche markets

New start up airlines, such as Bolivia's Aerovias, Chile's National Airlines, LAPA of Argentina, Taesa in Mexico, Venezuela's Servivensa and Saeta in Ecuador have all challenged established carriers with low cost fares underpinned by aggressive anti-union strategies. There are now 48 new

airlines operating scheduled services in Latin America that were not operating in October 1993.

Latin American carriers have faced their worst losses in history

Every major Latin American carrier lost money on long haul services to the US and Canada in the years 1990-1993. The 12 largest Latin American airlines lost a combined US\$2.5 billion in 1991-1993.

US airlines have made record profits in Latin America

The combined operating profits for all the US major carriers on Latin American operations was \$567 million over the five years 1990-1994.

Latin America has become a continent of privatised airlines

In 1990 two thirds of the flag carriers in Latin America were

state-owned. By the end of 1993 the proportion was less than one third. Now none of the flag carriers in Latin America is state owned.

Established airlines have lost out to the new anti-union competition

As many as five flag carriers were grounded at any one point during 1994. Since October 1993 an estimated 29 Latin American or Caribbean airlines have ceased operating.



Unions challenge Latin American open skies

AS global open skies spread north into Canada and south from Tijuana to Tierra del Fuego, threatening working conditions and job security, North American and Latin American trade unions share a common interest in challenging deregulation. This was one of the key conclusions of the ITF Civil Aviation Section's Latin America and Caribbean Regional Committee, which met in Caracas from 5 to 7 March. The meeting was the largest assembly of aviation unions in the region to date with 40 delegates from 20 unions.

The opening up of newly deregulated markets in Latin America and the Caribbean also threatens to offer US megacarriers new sources of flexible labour to undermine working conditions and union organisation. Only international co-ordination and co-operation between aviation workers offers the possibility of restraining union bashing and wage cutting in the aggressive competition that characterises the Latin American and Caribbean aviation market. Latin American trade unionists need to make common cause with their North American counterparts to ensure that union-bashing carriers such as Taesa, Taca and Servivensa do not become the standard response to competition with the US megacarriers.

Action at a national level, with effective solidarity between aviation unions, must also be a priority, delegates concluded, after hearing reports of job losses, economic mismanagement, and asset stripping in countries ranging from

Argentina to Venezuela. To achieve this, however, the ITF needs to continue to build its strength in the region. This goal was given an immediate boost with requests from at least seven of the observer unions present to affiliate to the ITF. Education initiatives to support union organisation were also announced at the meeting.

Resolutions were adopted on ground staff dismissals in Brazil, individual contracting of pilots in Venezuela, the militarisation of Venezuelan air traffic control, International Women's Day, anti-union practices by Avianca of Colombia, Iberia, ground handling liberalisation in Argentina and aviation safety in the Caribbean.

Summing up at the end of the meeting Alicia Castro, chair of the Committee, emphasised that the challenge for labour is to be able to look at the wider horizons at the same time as fighting local battles to preserve the jobs and working conditions of aviation employees.

■ A meeting of Iberia Group trade unions in Latin America took place in Caracas, Venezuela, on 7 March. With the decision by the European Union that Iberia, Spain's financially-troubled flag-carrier, must divest itself of most of its Latin American investments, the debate at the meeting focused on the prospects for Viasa, the Venezuelan airline in which Iberia has a controlling stake, and the impact of its continued management control of Aerolíneas Argentinas. ■

JAA accused of bowing to airline pressure

Duty time rules are not improved

THE Joint Aviation Authorities has failed to use its final opportunity to introduce significant improvements to its harmonised rules on flight and duty times.

Its final internal debates reveal that the JAA found itself caught between the criticisms from crew unions and aviation medical experts, and the well orchestrated lobbying of the operators.

In particular the JAA has been aware of the possibility of the very long duty times without breaks allowed by its current proposals. But proposals from within the JAA to introduce new controls on the "block time" flown by pilots were rejected as being more "than the industry could, conceivably, accept".

In the end the JAA has bowed to industry pressure

and Rest Scheduling in Commercial Aviation". During an ETSC conference Dr Hans Wegmann of the respected DLR Institute of Aviation Medicine in Germany noted that: "Medical advice has been largely ignored in drawing up the new flight time proposals. They are still unsatisfactory in many respects from a medical and safety point of view."

The NASA report directly challenged the standards being proposed by the JAA and forced it to delay publication.

Yet the JAA appears to believe it can ride out the criticisms of NASA and interpret the report in a way that limits the damage.

However, as ITF Civil Aviation Secretary Stuart Howard wrote to JAA Regulation Director Yves Morier: "During this period a number of aviation

safety experts have made public statements concerning the lack of serious consultation by the JAA with

aviation medical experts. The JAA's response has been first to delay and then to put forward inadequate minor amendments which, in our view, come nowhere near to addressing the key safety concerns relating to duty times and minimum rest."

The letter points out: "At a time when it is estimated that the number of air travel passenger movements in Western Europe will more than double between now and 2010. At a time when it is recognised that 75 per cent of aviation accidents are caused by human error, and the most common cause of human error reported by crews is fatigue, the JAA's decision to ignore the advice of medical experts and of the employees in the industry in the drawing up of these rules seriously undermines its credibility as a safety driven agency." ■

'Medical advice has been largely ignored in drawing up the new flight time proposals'

and remains a long way from providing the changes which the ITF believes are needed to bring the standard to an adequate minimum level of aviation safety.

In the previous JAA consultations the ITF focused on the particular inadequacy of measures dealing with split duty, crossing of time zones and standby duty. The new proposed amendments go nowhere far enough to make the changes which the ITF believes are needed to bring the standard to an adequate minimum level of aviation safety.

Nor do they meet the criticisms put forward by the aviation medical experts. The JAA rules faced particularly credible criticism from the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) in November 1994 and in 1995 from a NASA scientific report called "Principles and Guidelines for Duty

ITF unions hit Air Gabon

ITF unions have been taking solidarity action in support of employees of Air Gabon, which is using strikebreakers as cabin crew on its flights to France and to African countries. The company has announced it intends to sack all its 94-member cabin crew workforce on 29 April and replace them with cheaper contract workers. The management has refused to negotiate with the union SNPNC (Gabon).

The company's plan amounts to an attempt to destroy the union as well as to turn cabin crew into casual employees. The union launched a strike on 5 April.

The company tried to have the strike banned by the courts. When this failed they began to recruit strikebreakers. An attempt to recruit strikebreakers in South Africa appears to have failed after meeting with hostility from the South African government. The company has now recruited unemployed French cabin crew and has taken them to Gabon.

According to the SNPNC, it seems that some of the strikebreakers do not even know how to open the emergency doors.

The union called on the ITF for international support.

In France the FETS-FQ transport union called on airport workers not to service Air Gabon flights and the airline has experienced a number of delays.

French airport workers met Air Gabon flights coming in and going out of Paris, leafleting all Air Gabon passengers informing them about the strike.

Passengers taking Air Gabon flights at Lomé in Togo were being met by airport ground staff and issued with leaflets warning them that the use of untrained strikebreakers posed a threat to the safety of the flights.

The ITF-affiliated STRANAVITTO union in Togo has warned the company that this leafletting campaign will go on until the company settles the dispute.

French unions SNPNC, CFDT and FO are putting pressure on Air France, which is a shareholder in Air Gabon, to persuade the management to negotiate with the union.

Forthcoming ITF meetings

- South Asia Sub-Regional Women's Seminar, Kathmandu, 2-6 May
- Latin American Road Transport Conference, Rio de Janeiro, 7-9 May
- Caribbean Flag of Convenience Seminar, Puerto Rico, 14-15 May
- Asia/Pacific Women's Seminar, Bangkok, 13-15 May
- Asia/Pacific Civil Aviation Conference, Bangkok, 16-18 May
- Training of Trainers Seminar, Costa Rica, 20-31 May
- CIS Railway Seminar, St Petersburg, 21-24 May
- Technical Assistance for CIS Countries Project Planning Seminar, St Petersburg, 21-22 May
- North West Europe Flag of Convenience Campaign Contact Group, Rotterdam, 28 May
- Urban Transport Health and Safety Symposium, London, 4-5 June
- Fishermen's Section Working Group, London, 18-19 June
- Women's Interim Steering Committee, London, 28 June
- Centenary Congress, London, 30 June-2 July
- Seafarers' and Dockers' Steering Committee, London, 3 July
- Civil Aviation Section Steering Committee, London, 3 July
- Fair Practices Committee, London, 3-5 July
- Railway Section Committee, London, 4-5 July

10 YEARS AGO

ITF News, May 1986

South African unions harassed during May Day demonstrations

BLACK South African trade unions provided a massive display of solidarity in opposition to white minority rule with a one day general strike on 1 May – and were subjected to organised police violence and intimidation.

ITF-affiliated General Workers' Union (GWU) members took the day off to attend May Day rallies. The ITF later received word from the GWU that workers from the Everite factory in Cape Town, on their way peacefully to a mass meeting, were attacked by the security forces. The police ordered them to return to their hostel and fired tear gas.

Five trade unionists – including Msokoli Qotoli, General

Secretary of the GWU – were arrested under the notorious Section 50 of the Internal Security Act, which allows the police to detain anyone deemed a "threat to national security" for 48 hours without charge or access to legal counsel.

ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis sent two telexes to the South African President and the London Embassy protesting against the arrest of the trade unionists and calling for their immediate release. "Police action and arrests were totally unjustified and provocative. Have informed the GWU of our total support and will give maximum publicity to their case," he added. ■

20 YEARS AGO

ITF Newsletter, May 1976

ITF organises historic meeting on seafarers' welfare

OVER 50 representatives from a broad cross-section of national and international bodies active in the field of seafarers' welfare – among them the ITF, the International Christian Maritime Organization (ICMA), the International Co-ordinating Council for United Services to Seamen, the International Labour Office (ILO) as well as various national and governmental welfare agencies, shipowners' associations and voluntary organisations – met at ITF headquarters in London in May to consider how to achieve maximum co-operation and utilisation of resources.

The conference established scope for co-operation on sea-

farers' welfare at local and, in particular, international level. It was therefore agreed to set up a working group on which the ITF, International Shipping Federation, ICMA, ILO and certain national and governmental agencies and voluntary organisations would be invited to be represented.

The main task of the working group will be to consider the establishment of an international body (in the spirit of ILO Recommendation 138, but not necessarily under ILO aegis) which would pursue the co-ordination and financing of seafarers' welfare services and facilities where necessary. ■

OBITUARIES

■ Former ITF Francophone Co-ordinator **Kokou Fantognon** died on 18 March in Lomé. Fantognon was formerly General Secretary of the Togolese Civil Aviation Workers' Union STAMAS.

■ **GK Kale**, former President and founder member of the All India Port and Dock Workers' Federation, has died, aged 93.

■ **KA Khan**, General Secretary of the Air India Employees' Guild, has died.

■ **Jytte Mols Sørensen** would like to thank all those who have written to her offering their condolences on the death of her husband, Mols. She hopes everyone will understand that she is unable to reply individually to the many letters of sympathy that she has received and would ask all concerned to accept this announcement as a mark of her appreciation of the kind thoughts expressed. These have proved a great comfort to her and her family in recent weeks.

ITF

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**FROM THE
LABOUR PRESS**

**UNYU-ROREN,
Japan**

Truck unions initiate road safety campaign

THE annual "Road Safety Action Week" was held nationwide from 5 to 14 March in Japan by members of the All Japan Federation of Transport Workers' Unions UNYU-ROREN. The campaign aims to eliminate traffic accidents in order to secure safer working conditions for truck drivers.

One of the main activities was the "Illegal Parking Survey" on 6 March. In the Tokyo area, trade unionists in three groups walked around different parts of the city to identify vehicles parked illegally on the streets.

One particular feature found was the high rate of illegal parking by non-commercial vehicles such as private vans and small trucks which may be a national tendency. While the illegal parking rate of commercial trucks was about 10 per cent of 2,657 vehicles surveyed, private vans accounted for 21.2 per cent. As for passenger cars and small trucks, the figure amounted to 68.3 per cent.

In downtown Tokyo where wholesale business is active, nearly 90 per cent of the cars parked illegally were non-commercial vehicles. There are many precious metal wholesalers in the area and company cars making goods deliveries are often parked illegally for long hours.

By contrast, the illegal parking rate of both commercial and non-commercial freight trucks totalled nearly 50 per cent in midtown Tokyo. This is the area where the vast majority of department stores and retail shops are concentrated.

One of the participants says: "There were extremely bad cases of passenger cars parked illegally as well as those parked for an extensive period without properly paying the parking meter charge. This inevitably has a negative impact on the effective operation of our union members working in the area. Some business people even seemed to think that the section of the street in front of their premises belonged to them. We saw bicycles left to secure the parking space!"

As changes in road traffic legislation come into effect and local governments enact more ordinances related to illegal parking, illegal parking is said to be reducing nationwide. The union, however, concluded that the situation is still serious in the Tokyo metropolitan area and a more effective campaign is necessary to ensure the smooth operation of trucks. The union will finalise the results of the campaign by May for debate at its national congress in July. ■

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