

ITF NEWS

July 1996

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100 years of the ITF

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The burden of history

OPINION

ITF General Secretary David Cockroft writes



ANALYSING history is fun. Making it is difficult. The people whose work we are celebrating at our Centenary Congress had no idea what would come after them. Neither do we.

There have been many times over the last 100 years when the ITF's continued existence was in doubt. During the 1914-18 war activities virtually stopped, but a small band of men kept the idea alive until the ITF was able to be refounded in 1919. The rise of fascism and Nazism in the 1930s forced our headquarters to be moved from Amsterdam to London - as well as all but destroying many of its largest and most powerful affiliates. The postwar euphoria which led to the short-lived attempt at international trade union unity under the banner of the World Federation of Trade Unions posed an altogether different threat as the Stalinist forces within the WFTU tried, in vain, to convert the independent ITF into one of its trade departments.

During the postwar period the ITF was rebuilt and entered a period of stability. Public ownership of transport spread far and wide in Europe and with it expanding employment. For those (mainly non-Western European) unions which were not engaged in the day to day work of the industrial sections, the Cold War provided an ideological reason for involvement. For the maritime unions, the growing threat of flags of convenience provided a clear industrial reason for being ITF members. The periods of crisis seemed to be over.

Today not only the ITF but the entire trade union movement faces another critical period in history. This time we are suffering not from too little demand for international co-ordination but too much. The Cold War is over and workers in the transition countries are waiting to see the benefits. They desperately need trade unions and those unions need international contacts. But the backgrounds and experiences of these countries are very different from those of the ITF's so-called traditional members. The process of world economic integration seems to be accelerating almost out of control. The idea of creating a

global free trade area sometime early in the 21st century seems to be almost universally accepted amongst political thinkers. Yet this too would impose enormous strains on our organisation as workers from developing countries, with low incomes, appear increasingly to pose a direct threat to those in the industrialised world and pressure

grows to abandon the idea of international labour standards in favour of a vague concept of "employment creation".

The ITF's own membership, like the world economy, is shifting away from Europe and North America towards the Asia/Pacific. Western Europe no longer represents a clear majority of ITF voting membership and in some of the industrial sections it is a clear minority. Yet many (most) of our policies have traditionally been made by and based on the background and labour heritage of Europe and North America. How will the ITF adapt to these changing geopolitical facts? One danger is that of inward looking regionalism. The European Union continues its process of integration and acts as a magnet for the rest of Europe. European trade unions, under intense pressure, are often tempted to seek regional rather than global

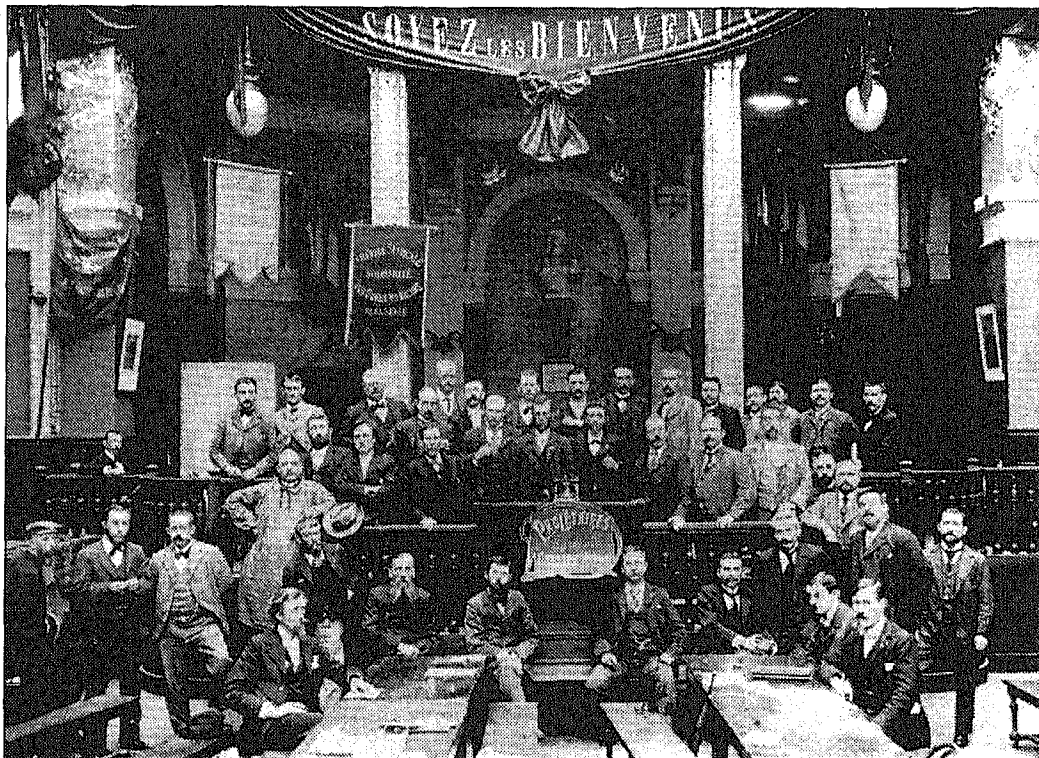
solutions to their problems. The risk to the ITF as a global organisation if this were to continue and even spread to other regions is enormous.

The globalisation of the world economy is the single most important issue facing transport workers today. Trade union organisation will either become more international and more industrial in nature or it will die. Both alternatives are serious possibilities. As we prepare ourselves and our International to face the 21st century,

there is no room for complacency. A heavy burden rests on our shoulders. It will be a long time before our actions today can be analysed by historians with the benefit of hindsight. All that we can do is try our best. ■

"Today not only the ITF but the entire trade union movement faces another critical period in history. This time we are suffering not from too little demand for international co-ordination but too much."

■ Congress of the ITF
held at the Bourse de
Travail, Paris, in
September 1900.



A century of solidarity

SEAFARERS who supported striking dock workers in the 1896 Rotterdam port strike by refusing to unload cargoes were being sacked. British seafarers' and dockers' union leaders joined them and encouraged all seafarers to back the strike. The strike was won, and the contacts made in the strike led to the formal creation of the International Federation of Ship, Dock and Riverside Workers, the body that became the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).

Now, in 1996, the ITF is celebrating its first centenary.

The ITF is producing a number of publications, an exhibition and a video to mark our birthday. Additionally, from 30 June to 2 July we will be having an extraordinary Congress in London to celebrate the anniversary and discuss progress so far on the *Transport Workers: Beyond 2000* project. A host of commemorative promotional items, including badges, bags, scarves, a china plate, a mug, and pens and pencils are all being produced.

ITF unions have demonstrated their support for the centenary project in a number of ways. Many ITF affiliates and national co-ordinating committees have decided that 1996 is an ideal year to organise various events that both seek to commemorate the ITF's history and to raise

awareness amongst union members and the general public about trade unionism, the principles of the ITF and the future.

Transport workers from 100 years ago would be stunned by the technological and social changes the last century has brought, but they would feel right at home in a modern day union meeting. The issues haven't changed that much – the 1896 Rotterdam dock strike was primarily concerned with an attempt by employers to cut wages through port re-organisation and workers' opposition to the introduction of new technology (an electric crane) without proper consultation. Sounds familiar?

Foundation

In its 100 years of history, the ITF has played a significant role in the international trade union movement and has had a direct impact on the working conditions of transport workers worldwide.

Trade unionism in the late nineteenth century was in a process of amalgamation and federation. Many unions were based in towns and cities and were in the process of federating into national groupings. Federated bodies were also often involved in creating local unions, and

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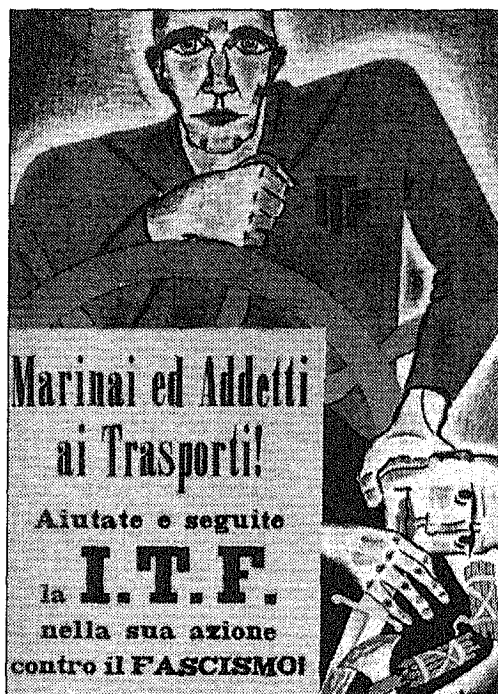
100 YEARS OF THE ITF

■ An ITF Italian language poster of the 1920s encouraging transport workers to resist fascism.



■ The ITF headquarters in Vondelstraat, Amsterdam, which were vacated in 1939 before the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands.

'The ITF stood out from the rest of the international labour movement in having a firm and practical stance in opposition to authoritarianism in all its forms.'



the early ITF also operated in this way. Delegations travelled to Antwerp, Le Havre and Bilbao, and an ITF representative was involved in forming the first port workers' union in New York.

From its early foundation, the ITF grew. But it was only following the 1904 headquarters move from London to Germany that, under the leadership of International Secretary Hermann Jochade from the German Railwaymen's Union, the ITF grew to 1 million members before the outbreak of World War 1 in 1914.

The German ITF leadership transformed and consolidated the organisation. The ITF's German affiliates, who were united into one organisation at the time (for the only time in their history), established a regular information service, standardised the organisation's finances and introduced a much needed element of bureaucratic formality (for which they were roundly criticised by some of the more militant unions in the ITF).

World War 1 was a disaster for the ITF. Transport workers sadly took sides with their own governments, and the only contacts were maintained by unions in the neutral states.

Refoundation

The ITF effectively collapsed by 1916. The ITF's principles and ideas were kept alive by a small group of trade unionists from the neutral countries of Holland, Switzerland and Sweden. Thanks to their efforts and particularly due to the work of Dutch trade union leader Edo Fimmen, the ITF was reconstituted in Amsterdam in 1919. While the ITF resided in Amsterdam (from 1919 to 1939), the organisation grew in stature and membership and under the charismatic leadership of Edo Fimmen (who became the ITF's first full-time General Secretary in 1924), the ITF became a unique organisation that broke new ground in being the first

international trade union body to reach outside of its European birthplace. By the outbreak of World War 2, the ITF had 30 affiliates in 18 non-European countries, including the All India Railwaymen's Federation, Japanese and Chinese seafarers' unions and the Indonesian tramway workers. The ITF opened its Tokyo office in 1931 and Fimmen spent most of that year travelling in the Far East.

Additionally, the ITF stood out from the rest of the international labour movement in having a firm and practical stance in opposition to authoritarianism in all its forms. The ITF boycotted transport to Hungary when the Hungarian dictator Admiral Horthy imprisoned transport trade unionists.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the ITF strongly opposed the proliferation of fascism and Nazism in Austria, Finland, Romania, Germany, Italy and Spain. The ITF produced anti-Mussolini leaflets that were dropped from the skies over Milan in an illegal aeroplane flight and following the Nazi seizure of power in Germany, the ITF co-ordinated a practical resistance campaign of sabotage and propaganda against Hitler.

Underground publications with phoney covers were produced in Holland and smuggled by transport workers into Germany. The ITF also supported a group of German seafarers and river workers who opposed Nazism.

The ITF further played a prominent role in supporting the anti-fascist republican government in Spain which fought against Franco. Relations with the republican government were conducted through an agreed system of secret codes and the ITF actively supported the republican cause – while many labour and socialist organisations refused to.

Survival

Unlike many other labour organisations, the ITF continued to exist during the Second World War. One of Edo Fimmen's last contributions to the ITF was to convince the organisation to move its Secretariat from then neutral Holland in 1939 to war-torn London. The ITF left Amsterdam shortly before the Germans invaded.

Thanks to the ITF's strength amongst British and non-European unions, the organisation was able to continue to operate throughout the war. Since the war against the Axis represented the culmination of what the ITF had been fighting against for 20 years, the organisation actively co-operated with the allied United Nations.

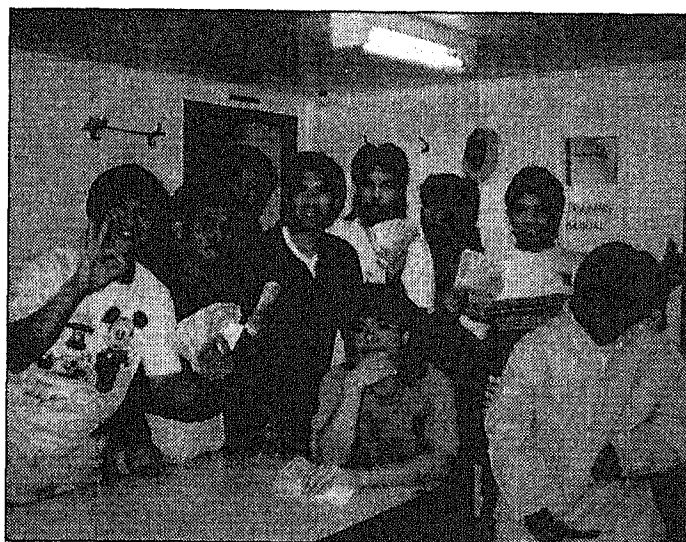
The ITF has remained in the United Kingdom since the war and has continued to grow in membership and activities. Following the Second World War, the ITF was in the leadership of the international free trade union movement which strongly opposed the dissolving of the ITF into a department of the newly formed World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), an organisation which eventually degenerated into a Soviet Union controlled body. The ITF was initially on its own in opposing the centralising tenets of this World

100 YEARS OF THE ITF

■ The ITF is known the world over for the successes in its campaign to improve the pay of seafarers on flag of convenience ships. Below: A study of the FOC campaign is one of three books being published this year by the ITF as part of the centenary



'Building upon its earlier contacts with the colonial world, the ITF emerged as a genuinely international federation with membership in almost every country of the world.'



Federation. But under the dynamic leadership of General Secretary Jacobus Oldenbroek and President Omer Becu, the ITF eventually convinced a large number of unions to leave the WFTU and form the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in December 1949.

Growth

In the 1940s, the ITF Seafarers' Section faced its greatest ever challenge with the emergence of the flag of convenience (FOC) system which allowed shipowners to change the flag of their ships and subsequently ignore trade union agreements and wages. In 1948, at the ITF Oslo Congress, the Seafarers' Section discussed the emergence of the new FOCs and adjourned in order to send a delegation to the ITF Dockworkers' Section conference. Upon hearing the seafarers' case, to their great credit the dock workers pledged their practical industrial solidarity to an ITF campaign against FOCs. This campaign continues today and remains a unique international example of labour solidarity.

The period following the Second World War saw many changes in the nature of transport and in the nature of the ITF. Building upon its earlier contacts with the colonial world, the ITF emerged as a genuinely international federation with membership in almost every country of the world. The biggest gap was the absence of affiliated membership from the then Soviet Union and the Communist-controlled states of Central and Eastern Europe. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the ITF family has finally been re-united with the re-joining of unions from Central and Eastern Europe. New members have also joined from the territories of the former Soviet Union – an area never before covered by the ITF.

Centenary Congress

In commemoration of our 100th birthday, the ITF Congress and Executive Board have endorsed a number of celebratory activities, and many national affiliates and regional groupings are also planning activities.

The principal activity will be the special Cen-

tenary Congress, to be held in London from 30 June to 2 July.

The centenary exhibition

The Gothenburg Maritime Museum, in Sweden, has been commissioned to produce an exhibition commemorating the ITF's centenary. This exhibition will be unveiled at the Centenary Congress. A portable history exhibition is also being planned, which unions will be able to show in their own countries.

Video

A 15-minute video presentation on the history of the ITF is being produced and, like the exhibition, it will be premiered at the centenary Congress.

Publications

A number of books are being produced or sponsored by the ITF. The principal volume is an overall history of the ITF. "Solidarity – The first 100 years of the International Transport Workers' Federation" was published in June by Pluto Press. This paperback volume includes 120 photographs and 20,000 words.

Lennart Johnsson, former Communications Director of the Swedish Seafarers' Union (now part of the SEKO transport and communications union) has written "Funny Flags", a history of the ITF's unique campaign against FOC shipping. The book is being published in English and Swedish by Brevskolan (Sweden) and will also be available at the ITF Centenary Congress.

Additionally, Doctor Bob Reinalda (Nijmegen University, the Netherlands) has produced a more "scientific" volume on the activities of the ITF between the two world wars (the Edo Fimmen years).

Photo competition

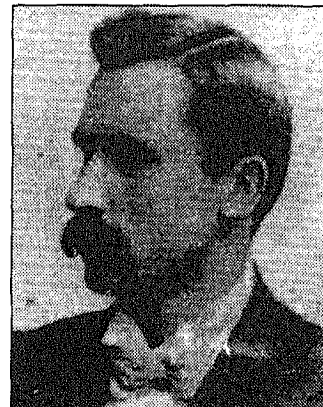
The ITF is also running a Centenary photography competition open to all members of affiliated unions. Only professional photographers are barred from entering. The closing date for entries is 31 December 1996.

The theme of the competition is transport workers around the world, with three sections and an overall prize for the best entry:

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

The ITF History Fund

ITF affiliates have been asked to contribute to a special ITF History Fund. This fund has been used to support the exhibition and publications work. The ITF itself has donated UK£60,000 (US\$90,000) to the fund and as of 1 June, a total of 34 affiliates had donated over US\$50,000 to the fund. ■



■ Above: Ben Tillett (left), the ITF's first International Secretary (a position later renamed General Secretary), and Tom Mann, the first ITF President. See centre pages for more about their role in founding the ITF.

■ Left: Charles Lindley, of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union, one of the key figures who inspired the setting-up of an International for transport workers.

Founding fathers

CHARLES Lindley was born in Sweden in 1865 and his early life was spent working on British ships. While living in Sunderland, England, together with Havelock Wilson he helped found the British Sailors' and Firemen's Union and when he returned to Sweden in 1894 he helped to organise the Swedish seamen and dockers into the Swedish Transport Workers' Union which was founded in 1897, an organisation he led until 1938.

He attended the founding conference of the ITF in London in 1896 and he was the individual who proposed in 1898 to have the organisation adopt the name International Transport Workers' Federation. At the London Congress of 1897 he was appointed the first Vice-President of the ITF. He was elected to the Swedish Parliament in 1906 and served there until 1911.

He was responsible for the parliament adopting a range of measures supporting the rights of seafarers, particularly the right to take strike action. He was a delegate at the 1919 Amsterdam meeting that led to the refoundation of the ITF.

In 1933 ITF President CT Cramp died and Lindley, who was Vice-President, became President of the ITF until 1946 when he retired due to old age.

During the Second World War he was an enthusiastic supporter of the resistance against Fascism and was closely involved with Edo Fimmen in a number of cases in which individuals were smuggled out of Austria and Germany. ■

HERMANN Jochade, the leader of the German Railway Workers' Union, was appointed International Secretary of the ITF in 1904, a position he maintained until the collapse of the ITF during the First World War.

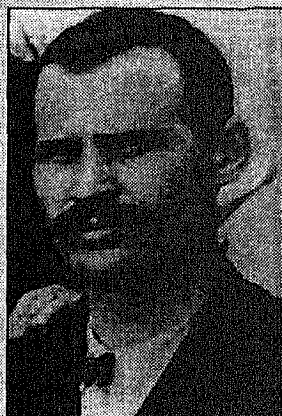
The ITF flourished under Jochade's guidance and its finances and organisation were substantially improved – Jochade began issuing weekly reports to affiliated members on the activities of the ITF Secretariat and he began correspondence with unions in America, Australia and Argentina.

In 1914 ITF membership reached the 1,000,000 mark and Jochade announced to the ITF members in July 1914: "We shall try, so far as circumstances and restraints placed upon us by the conditions of the war allow, to re-establish normal relations with those who have comrades in neutral states."

However, as the war progressed both German and Austrian transport workers on one side and British and French union leaders on the other side increasingly identified with their governments. Jochade was in fact called up to fight for Germany in October 1915 and joined the army. The weekly report he had begun was continuing to be issued during 1916, but effectively by December 1916 the organisation had collapsed.

Following the war with the reconstitution of the ITF in Amsterdam, peace was made between the belligerent trade union leaders and the ITF was effectively reconstituted under the leadership of Edo Fimmen.

German transport workers, now divided into two organisations, continued to be effective and important in the ITF. Jochade himself continued to attend ITF meetings and remained active within the organisation. In 1939 he was murdered by Nazi concentration camp guards. ■



■ ITF President and International Secretary Hermann Jochade, who led the ITF from 1904 to 1916.

The
men
who
built
the ITF



■ The charismatic Fimmen, as portrayed by a Dutch cartoonist and, below, in 1919, supervising ITF shipments to help starving Austrian workers.



Edo Fimmen: ITF colossus of the interwar years

EDO Fimmen, born in 1881, started professional life as a clerk. At the age of 20 he was given a choice by his employer to give up his trade union agitation or his job. He chose to leave his job.

He went on to help to found the Dutch General Union of Commercial Office Employees and was a leading member of the Dutch Federation of Trade Unions that was established in 1906.

In 1908 he was elected Secretary of the International Federation of Commercial Office Employees and in 1915 he became Secretary of the Dutch Federation of Trade Unions.

During the First World War he worked closely with trade union activists to keep both the International Federation of Trade Unions and the International Transport Workers' Federation alive by operating the Amsterdam post box which linked the Berlin ITF headquarters with the British and French transport workers.

Fimmen organised the ITF reconstruction in April 1919 in Amsterdam which agreed to refound the ITF and appointed Fimmen as provisional Secretary. In 1924 he assumed the full-time position of General Secretary of the ITF, which he maintained until his death.

In 1919, when Fimmen realised that Austrian workers were facing starvation, he immediately organised shipments of food aid from Dutch transport workers to the Austrians. When the ITF received reports that the dictator of Hungary Admiral Horthy was repressing transport trade unionists, Fimmen co-ordinated and organised an international transport boycott of Hungary that led to a negotiated deal with the Horthy regime and the release of certain political prisoners – this was the first co-ordinated action against a government taken by an international trade union organisation.

Fimmen was also strongly committed to taking the ITF beyond its European birthplace and making it a truly international organisation. He conducted a lengthy personal correspondence with the nationalist and trade union leader Jawaharlal Nehru and in 1931 he travelled to Tokyo, where as a guest of the Japanese seafarers' union he met with many Japanese transport workers.

Fimmen and the ITF established an underground network of transport workers (railway workers, inland navigation workers, seafarers and dockers) who continued to operate illegally as sabotage crews in Nazi Germany and other Fascist countries. Much of this underground work was co-ordinated by Fimmen in Amsterdam and through the German Seeleute group that was based in Antwerp, Belgium and the railway workers' organisation that was based in Luxembourg.

He convinced the ITF to move from Amsterdam to war-torn London in 1939 shortly before the Germans invaded Holland. He died three years later. ■

A dockers' strike in the Netherlands led to the creation of the ITF, the world's mightiest international trade union federation



**Extract from
"Solidarity",
the new
history of the
ITF which has
been
published to
mark our
centenary**

■ A copy of the history will be given to each delegate at the Centenary Congress in London, and a copy will be sent to every affiliated union. Additional copies of the 168-page, fully illustrated book cost UK£10 (US\$15) and are available from the Administration Department at ITF head office. Payment, in sterling or US dollars, must accompany each order. To cover mailing costs, please add 15 per cent to order cost for orders in the UK and 25 per cent for orders in the rest of the world.

EVEN if they were not active socialists, most trade unionists in northern Europe would have been aware of the International Socialist Trade Union Congress, which was to take place in London in July 1896. The opportunity presented by the meeting was not lost on the seamen of Hamburg, who were probably the first to identify the potential for an international forum for seafarers.

Havelock Wilson, leader of Britain's National Sailors' and Firemen's Union, had been in regular contact with Charles Lindley, of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union. The two men had worked together in the north-east of England during Lindley's early career as a seaman. Wilson wrote to his friend on 11 April 1896 about the International meeting in London: "There will of course be labour men present from all ports of the world. I have not heard as to whether there will be any from Stockholm or not? The seamen's union at Hamburg is sending its delegates and I have been requested by it that when the delegates are in London to avail myself of the opportunity and hold an international conference of the seamen. Do you think you could manage to have your society represented? It would be a great stroke of business if we could say there was an annual conference of sailors and firemen representing Sweden, Denmark, France and England."

At the same time as he received the message from the Hamburg seamen, Wilson was in the middle of an aggressive recruitment campaign for his union. A docks dispute in Rotterdam was the final catalyst which made many begin to recognise the potential of an international organisation of seafarers and dockers.

The Rotterdam strike had been caused by plans by the largest employer in the port to introduce a fixed wage of £1.50 a week, effectively cutting wages by 25 per cent. Any extra money earned by piece work would only be paid every 12 months and would be used to pay the bills for medical treatment and other emergency items. By the time the two Britons arrived, the whole port was on strike and the military had been called in by a nervous Burgemeester. Three of the largest ships of the Dutch Navy were lying at anchor.

Wilson found about 40 British ships caught up in the dispute and obtained a steam launch to visit every vessel telling the crews to attend a meeting that evening. Attended by 600 seafarers and striking dockers, the meeting was closely observed by the police, who took copious shorthand notes. It resolved that British crews would refuse to load or discharge their cargoes until the strike was resolved.

Wilson's experiences in Holland and the formation of an Antwerp branch of the union in June had clearly strengthened his determination to exploit the "great stroke of business" of an international conference. The Seamen's Chronicle of June 1896 had the story and clearly saw its international links in terms of an expansion of the British influence and a help in achieving domestic objectives: "The Sailors' and Firemen's Union is peculiarly well adapted for the extension and consolidation of an international federation. Its members are continually visiting other countries and fraternising with foreign people and we hope to live to see the day when London shall be the headquarters of a great extensive and powerful international union of all sailors and firemen of whatever colour and race... The general president, Mr JH Wilson, is an un-

■ Dutch cavalry strike which was the

equalled organiser head of the might

As the date of the Johnson, Tom Ma plan a confederat was elected presid Johnson, referenc of Dock and River

Almost immedi ganising seamen. Representatives fr for a fully interna federation - thus the ITF. It was held present were Wils werp), Charles Lir burg), Henry Pola

Probably ignor the meeting, LMJ tion among union of the Seamen's Cl terrace of the Hou MP, Tom Mann an ing of delegates of in Anderton's Hot of the whole of th strike occurred at f idea of making th

The election of which matched th rational leader, w porary report of o view indicated his

How it all



...their way to confront Rotterdam dockers during the
...catalyst for the creation of the ITF in 1896.

...sailors and firemen and is just the man to stand at the
...ade union the world has known."

...cialist International grew nearer, Havelock Wilson, LM
...and James Sexton, the Liverpool dockers' leader, met to
...and formed the organisation's Central Council. Mann
...en. On 11 July, in a letter to the press signed by Mann and
...was made for the first time to the International Federation
...rkers.

...te, Wilson and Mann visited Rotterdam and Antwerp, or-
...nforming dockers about the international federation.
...both ports were invited to London later in the month
...titial meeting of the central council of the international
...plying it as the first ever meeting of what was to become
...the Cranbourne Hotel, Charing Cross, on 27 July. Those
...or Mann, Tillett, LM Johnson (Britain), L Janssens (Ant-
...rville (Sweden), McGuire (New York), Albert Störmer (Ham-
...k (Netherlands) and Louis Favert (France).

...nt the part played by the Hamburg seamen in suggesting
...on attributed the beginnings of the ITF to a conversa-
...ders in London. He wrote in the September 1896 edition
...icle: "It arose from an almost fortuitous meeting on the
...self Commons of Mr Havelock Wilson, MP, Mr R McGee,
...dysself. As the result of a conversation, there was a meet-
...th unions connected with the shipping and carrying trades
...el London, and it was decided to form a national federation
...ions of the trade. Whilst this was being carried out, a
...erdam...Mr Wilson...on going over, was struck with the
...vement international."

...for Mann as president ensured a bout of feverish activity
...andiose vision of Havelock Wilson. Mann was an inspi-
...ratory could enliven the largest gathering. A contem-
...Mann's meetings in a 1895 edition of Fortnightly Re-
...nique: "He knows all the hardship of a labouring life;

began

he knows all the discontents and resentments that labour broods over most sullenly; he knows how frequently workmen hate the very idea of having 'a master'; and in this knowledge he deliberately touched his hearers on the raw, until they bayed with rage in response to the fierce, rancorous, sullen voice that seemed to be giving concentrated utterance to the deepest class-passions of their nature."

Mann was to remain at the vanguard of the working-class movement for more than 50 years, visiting Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Russia, China, Canada and the United States as well as most European countries. Born in 1856, the son of a colliery bookkeeper, he started work at the age of eight. His mother died at the age of 38, when he was two, and at 10 he was sent down the mine. Long 12-hour shifts were the norm until a fire closed his pit and his family moved to Birmingham where he was apprenticed to an engineer at the age of 14. It was here he began a process of self-education.

Ben Tillett was working in a brickyard at the age of six. He later became a casual worker on the docks in London and it was not until he was in his late

teens that he learned to read and write. He was leader of his dockers' union for 30 years before it joined the amalgamation of 18 unions that was to form the Transport and General Workers' Union in 1922. He ended his career as a Labour MP and a member of the General Council of the TUC. Both Mann and Tillett were imprisoned for their trade union activities.

Such colourful characters helped ensure that the new international was given enough momentum to survive longer than its initial burst of activity. Although

"The order to our men is 'prepare for action', for there is no knowing at what hour the capitalists of the shipping industries may open fire. Let them. But remember through it all, our whole fight is not to fight down capitalists but to raise the standard of the workers, and if the latter be done by peaceful means so much the better, say we. If the employers by their stubborn refusal to negotiate, compel rougher work, then on their heads will rest the responsibility."

– ITF leaflet, 1896

not brilliant organisers, they were able to give the federation a high public profile.

The meeting on 27 July 1896 was followed two days later by a further international gathering during which reports were received from 87 ports in Europe and demands were drawn up to present to shipping and port employers. Tom Mann sketched out a vision of the future of the federation in August: "We believe that it will become so powerful that it will be able to almost entirely abolish strikes and lock-outs in the shipping industries."

The optimism and aggression continued in the federation's second-ever leaflet, published in October 1896: "The order to our men is 'prepare for action', for there is no knowing at what hour the capitalists of the shipping industries may open fire. Let them. But remember through it all, our whole fight is not to fight down capitalists but to raise the standard of the workers, and if the latter be done by peaceful means so much the better, say we. If the employers by their stubborn refusal to negotiate, compel rougher work, then on their heads will rest the responsibility." ❁

GLOBAL ROUND-UP

■ *Railway and dock workers, members of the ITF-affiliated BTS Turkish transport workers' union, join other state employees in a demonstration in Istanbul against government policies of restrictions on trade union activity and pay restraint. The demonstration was part of a day of action on 18 April involving strikes by public sector employees. Most of the country's rail network came to a standstill on the day, and ships were left idle at major seaports. Since the strike BTS has reported harassment of employees of TCDD Turkish state railways who took part in the protest and is asking for international support to defend members being punished for taking part in lawful industrial action.*



Asia/Pacific regional office opens in Tokyo

JULY 1 marks the official opening of the ITF's Asia/Pacific Regional office in Tokyo. Until now, Regional Secretary Shigeru Wada has been based at ITF headquarters in London, but from July he will work from the ITF's Tokyo office, which becomes the nerve centre for the entire region.

According to General Secretary David Cockroft, the relocation of the regional office to Tokyo is of major strategic importance to the ITF. "The world's economic centre of gravity is rapidly shifting to the Asia/Pacific region as a whole, so it is vital that the ITF has a major presence in the region in order to support transport trade unionism," he adds.

As Regional Secretary, Shigeru Wada will have overall responsibility for all the ITF activities throughout the region, and he will also have special responsibility for the East Asia sub-region. Assisting him in the Tokyo office will be:

- Mark Davies (Regional Secretary Assistant), responsible for the South Pacific sub-region and jointly responsible for the flag of convenience

campaign and for communications;

- Masahiko Nakamura (Japan Office Representative), who will work with Mark Davies on the FOC campaign as well as undertaking existing responsibilities;

- Makato Urata (Japan Office Deputy Representative), jointly responsible with Mark Davies for communications, plus existing Japan Office responsibilities.

Assistant Regional Secretary Mahendra Sharma will continue to work from the ITF's sub-regional office in Delhi and be responsible for the South and Central Asia sub-regions and act as the regional education co-ordinator.

The relocation of the Asia/Pacific office is providing the opportunity to improve communications with affiliates in the region. A regular regional news update, titled Asia/Pacific Express, is therefore to be launched.

It is anticipated that the bulletin will be sent by fax where possible perhaps twice a month, depending on demand, resources and availability of news. ■

ITF General Secretary David Cockroft has protested to Belarus President Aleksandr Lukashenko over the arrest in May of two leaders of the Polish NSZZ Solidarnosc trade union while on a visit to the Free Trade Union of Belarus.

Marian Krzakewski, NSZZ President, and International Secretary Andrzej Adamczyk were interrogated and deported by officers of the

Solidarity leaders arrested in Belarus

Belarus presidential police.

"Freedom of movement is an internationally recognised convention, and one I am sure you wish to respect," wrote Cockroft.

"I therefore urge you to consider the impact of such events on the international reputation of your country and to take steps to ensure that visitors to Belarus are not challenged in this way again," he added. ■

Danish donation

■ Another donation has been received for the ITF History Fund: 25,000 Danish kroner from the Danish union HK/Service.

ITF affiliates respond to questionnaire

**Safety lessons
in survey on
driver-only
trains**

A NEW survey by the ITF into driver-only freight train operations has shown up widely differing practice throughout the world – but some useful safety pointers for unions in all countries. The survey, carried out on the suggestion of the Public Transport Union of Australia, received an overwhelming response and is now being circulated to rail affiliates worldwide.

Unions from Austria to Zimbabwe replied to a number of questions relating to safety, length of shifts worked, maximum distances for operation of trains before a change of driver and trials and time frames negotiated for the introduction of driver only freight trains.

In Austria an "automatic vigilance device" was demanded by the rail system as a safety requirement, whilst in Ghana the union demanded that defective shunting signals be repaired and that signalling efficiency be improved.

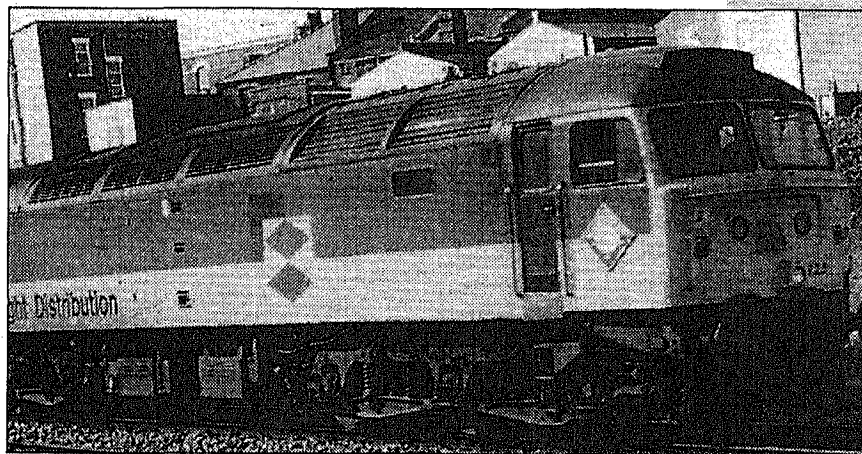
In Luxembourg before the introduction of driver-only operation these minimum conditions were achieved: signal repetition on the locomotive; automatic block; automatic vigilance device; and a ground train radio link allowing continuous two-way telephone communication between the traffic control centre and the locomotive.

Freight trains in the Netherlands have been operated by driver only for at least 30 years, but the distance involved is very small. All trains are protected by ATB, the Dutch system of automatic train protection. The system controls the speed of the train and all trains have a direct communication system with the traffic control centre.

When asked what was the maximum length of shifts, only unions in Austria, Germany and New Zealand said it exceeded 10 hours.

Ireland, Japan and Kenya all had maximum distances before a change of driver: Ireland, 360 miles; Japan, 190 km or 220 km on one line; and Kenya, 270 km.

In Austria the first step negotiated before the introduc-



■ Driver-only operations are on the increase around the world.

tion of the driver-only system was to have one driver plus one guard in the rear driver's cab.

Other pre-conditions negotiated by unions included:

- Ghana: There was a trial period of two years.
- Ireland: Once all safety mechanisms were in place the system was introduced.
- Japan: In order to reduce

driver fatigue, improvements in the driver's cab and a long rest period at destination was secured.

● Kenya: A maximum weight freight train was run between stations at the maximum permissible speed of 72kph, subject to certain restrictions.

● New Zealand: There was a delay of two years owing to delays in modifying locomotives and getting the radio system to work. A safety risk assessment was also carried out by consultants.

The survey also finds that in Burkina Faso freight trains are always operated by two drivers, while in Indian railways freight trains are operated by a driver assisted by a stoker (steam) or an assistant driver (diesel or electric).

In Malaysia there are two drivers and an assistant, in Spain a driver and assistant driver, in Zaire a driver and assistant and in Zimbabwe a driver and a guard. ■

'All trains are protected by ATB, the Dutch system of automatic train protection. The system controls the speed of the train and all trains have a direct communication system with the traffic control centre.'

Contacts for drivers in distress

■ ITF headquarters is updating its list of contacts for European truck drivers requiring trade union assistance.

The contact list names the union officials to be contacted in the event of an emergency concerning a driver working abroad.

It is hoped to circulate the new list to affiliates in the autumn.

"With cross-border work continuing to increase, it is essential that unions are able to call on sister unions in other countries to help one of their drivers who might need urgent assistance," ITF Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers told ITF News.

"The ITF contact list is therefore an essential resource for all unions representing drivers in Europe," he added.

The list was first launched in 1992 and contains contact information for 10 countries. This includes the names, addresses and telephone numbers of relevant union officials, along with the languages spoken by them.

The decision to bring the list up to date was taken at the ITF's Road Transport Workers' Section meeting in December last year.

Air Gabon: Union action forces government to instruct airline to negotiate

FACED by a solid strike of SNPNC (Gabon) cabin crew members, support from other unions in Gabon, and an active international campaign in support of the strikers, the Government of Gabon has intervened to force the company to enter negotiations with the union.

The Air Gabon cabin crew strike was precipitated when the airline management originally announced that it was to dismiss the entire cabin crew workforce effective from 30 April, and permanently replace them with contract workers, as a means of saving costs. The announcement was made by letter and the company refused to enter any discussion with the union about this drastic decision. When the union announced a strike on April 5, the company imported strike breakers from France.

During the dispute SNPNC Gabon members daily picketed the airline and conducted a highly effective media campaign. They gained important support from other unions in the country.

As well as writing a formal protest to the government the ITF launched an interna-

tional protest campaign in support of the strike. In Togo the ITF-affiliated STRANAVITTO ground staff union also leafleted Air Gabon passengers at the airport in Lomé. ITF aviation affiliates in France put pressure on Air France (a shareholder in the company) and the French government. Paris is the only international destination of Air Gabon outside of Africa. French unions called on members to boycott Air Gabon aircraft and distributed leaflets about the dispute to passengers at French airports when Air Gabon flights were due to depart.

According to Blythe Essono, an SNPNC Gabon official international protest played a key role. The Government showed great concern at the international attention the strike was receiving: "The government received protest letters from all over the world from unions in big countries and tiny countries. This clearly impressed them."

On 13 May, the President of Gabon called on the unions to hold off their actions against the company in return for insisting that the management agree to enter negotiations with the union. ■

Crew bases workshop

■ An ITF workshop meeting on the cross border employment of cabin crew in United Airlines and Lufthansa was held on 15 May in Bangkok. The meeting was part of an ongoing set of discussions between cabin crew unions to develop effective and practical responses to the strategy of a number of major airlines which are setting up major cabin crew bases outside their home country.

The meeting, which involved union representatives from Lufthansa in Germany and UAL in the United States and Thai and Indian cabin crew unions, agreed a joint statement for "co-operation and practical measures that would work towards full and effective trade union representation for workers in United Airlines' cabin crew base in Thailand, and in UAL's cabin crew bases in Thailand and India".

Change unsafe flying rules, say unions

■ European trade unions have lobbied their national aviation authorities not to accept the proposed JAA rules on Flight and Duty Time Limitations, prior to a special Committee meeting of the Joint Aviation Authorities which was due to meet in Hoofddorp on June 25. The ITF has told the JAA that its rules are unsafe and inadequate.

The Committee of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Community also presented their criticisms of the proposed JAA rules at a special forum held in Brussels on 11 June.

THE US National Transportation Safety Board investigation into the crash of ValuJet flight 592 on 11 May which killed all 110 people on board should look to the example set by their Canadian counterparts in their investigation of the Air Ontario crash at Dryden in 1989.

In the immediate aftermath of the ValuJet tragedy, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the highly competitive and deregulated environment of US aviation and its impact on the entire system of airline safety regulation and oversight needs scrutiny.

ValuJet has been trumpeted as the success story of US deregulation. In the same issue of the London Financial Times which reported news of the crash an article in the Business Travel section of the paper held up ValuJet as a model for new European carriers.

ValuJet has achieved its success through keeping its operational costs to the minimum. Pilots at ValuJet pay for their own training and their salaries are among the lowest in the industry. The same approach applies elsewhere in the airline.

ValuJet crash raises new safety fears

In a February memo, the Federal Aviation Administration warned of a "significant decrease in the experience level of new pilots being hired by ValuJet as well as other positions such as mechanics, flight dispatchers etc". Al-

'ValuJet has achieved its success through keeping its operational costs to the minimum.'

most all of the direct and indirect maintenance of ValuJet aircraft is carried out by contractors or sub contractors.

The ValuJet crash has now focused attention on other low cost carriers. According to Lawrence Weintrob, Deputy Inspector General of the US Transportation Department, the newer airlines, excluding Southwest Airlines, have accidents at double the rate of larger, established airlines.

The decision by President Clinton in the aftermath of the crash to recruit 100 more inspectors for the FAA reflects the US Administration's sensitivity to a growing loss of confidence in the deregulated skies of America.

The Transport Canada investigation of the Dryden crash covered not only the technical and human factors which caused the crash, but examined the safety culture of the whole airline, the performance of the regulatory authorities and the role of economic deregulation on safety and performance standards both within the airline and the regulatory authority.

The US safety investigation must do exactly the same. ■

■ *Members of the Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union mount a picket line protest at the end of April against the privatisation of the port of Colombo. Anti-privatisation campaigns, such as this one by the ITF-affiliated CMU, are being replicated throughout the world, delegates at the ILO conference in May heard.*



Reforms must be agreed with unions

Give unions a say in restructuring, ILO statement declares

Philippines strike success

■ A two-day strike in May by port workers in Manila and other ports in the Philippines succeeded in persuading the port authorities to shelve plan to privatise cargo handling contracts in government ports. The ITF-affiliated Port Workers' Union of the Philippines called off the industrial action after the government agreed to set up a committee made up equally of port authorities, port workers and cargo handling contractors to review all contracts which expire. The government had originally wanted all such contracts to be put out automatically for tender rather than be considered for renewal.

A MEETING of governments, port employers and dockers' unions to discuss the wave of privatisation and casualisation sweeping through the world's ports has ended with the ITF giving a qualified welcome to its conclusions.

The meeting, held in Geneva in May, was called by the International Labour Organisation with the aim of arriving at a joint approach for implementing port reforms.

Among the concessions won by the unions was a clear statement setting out the principle of co-operation with unions on the introduction of any reforms and the retention of collective bargaining rights.

ITF Dockers' Secretary Kees Marges, who represented the ITF at the meeting, welcomed this and other conclusions, pointing out that the opinions of employers and trade unions differed hugely, with governments in most cases supporting the employers. "Nevertheless the adopted resolution and conclusions contain some guidelines for port reform which can be of support for dock workers' unions in many countries, notably in the developing world," he added.

For example, on the question of the use of casual labour, which the ITF and unions strongly oppose, it was nonetheless agreed that employment conditions should be formulated and agreed between employers and workers' representatives and that employment conditions should not be dictated by employers – which is the case in most countries nowadays.

The meeting was attended by 20 delegations of port employers, governments and dock workers' unions from all regions in the world. All delegates on the workers' side were representing ITF affiliates. The workers' side chair was John Connolly, of the UK's TGWU, and

Kees Marges acted as secretary.

Key extracts of the jointly agreed final text include:

● "National policy should encourage co-operation between port employers and workers' representatives and freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining according to national law and practice which are consistent with international labour standards."

● "The establishment of sound labour-management relations, based on mutual trust and confidence between employers and workers' representatives, is important in reconciling and promoting the interests of the industry and in enabling productivity improvements."

● "Since structural adjustment in ports inevitably affects the working conditions of port workers, the importance of early dialogue between employers and workers' representatives on the impact of change cannot be overstated."

● "When the use of casual labour is inevitable, employment conditions should be formulated and agreed between employers and workers' representatives."

Another success for the unions was to fend off attempts by the employers' side to sideline ILO Convention 137, which deals with the social repercussions of new methods of cargo handling.

In fact, the final joint resolution stated that the ILO would, "in undertaking activities concerning structural adjustment issues in the port sector, continue to promote the ratification and application of relevant international standards". ■

OBITUARIES

Anisuddin Khan and Edward van Wyk

■ Anisuddin Khan, General Secretary and founding member of the Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress (BFTUC), died on 21 April, aged 62. Khan, whose union career spanned nearly forty years, founded the BFTUC in 1983 as a non-political national centre for workers in 23 industries.

■ Edward van Wyk, former Western Cape Branch Secre-

tary of the South African Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), died on 7 March. Wyk came to the ITF for training in the late 1980s and would have become our first Inspector in South Africa had he not left the TGWU to join the metal workers where he worked as an organiser.

PEOPLE

From Azerbaijan, Ghana, Slovenia, Portugal, Spain, Russia...

■ The First Congress of the Independent Trade Union of Marine Transport Workers of Azerbaijan elected Mazair Abdullayev as President and Beyukaga Kuliyevev and Shaheddin Orugev as Chairs respectively of the Seafarers' Section and Port Workers' Section.

■ Kobina Owusu Afriyie was elected National Chair and Kofi Asamoah General Secretary of the Maritime and Dockworkers' Union of TUC, Ghana during its 7th Quadrennial Delegates Conference in Accra.

■ Branko Krznic is the new President of Sindikat Pomorscakov Slovenije (the Seamen's Union of Slovenia), taking over from Vladimir Zevnik.

■ Five representatives of ITF maritime affiliates were elected as National Secretaries of the Portuguese General Workers' Union UGT at the 7th UGT Congress: João de Deus (SEMM), Alexandre Delgado (SITEMAQ), Tiago

Cardoso (SMMCMM), José Teixeira (SINCOMAR) and António Mariano (FNSTP). Rogério Pinto (SOEMM) is a substitute National Secretary.

■ The new team of leading officials of the Spanish Transport, Communications and Maritime Workers' Federation elected at FETCOMAR-CC.OO's 3rd Congress earlier this year is: Julián Jiménez, General Secretary; Eduardo Uribe, International Secretary; Florentino Rodríguez, Organisation Secretary; Enrique Fossoul and Carmelo Aylagas, Secretaries for Trade Union Action in the Organised and Non Organised Sectors respectively; José Antonio Frieria, Finance and Services Officer; Rómulo Silva, Communications Secretary; Javier Jiménez, Training and Employment Officer; María Antonia Martínez, Women's Officer; and Santos Núñez, Sectoral Policy Officer.

■ Viktor Zyrianov has been re-elected President of the Russian Fishing Industry Workers' Union.

ITF NEWS

Please note that the English language version of ITF News is the first of the various language editions to be published. Affiliated unions who are on the mailing list to receive non-English editions can also be sent an advance copy or copies in English in order to familiarise themselves with the stories to appear in their translated edition.

In addition, unions can, on request, be sent advance pages of the English language ITF News by fax or electronic mail if required for translation or other immediate use.

Requests to be placed on the English language mailing list should be sent to the ITF Communications Department. See this page for head office details.

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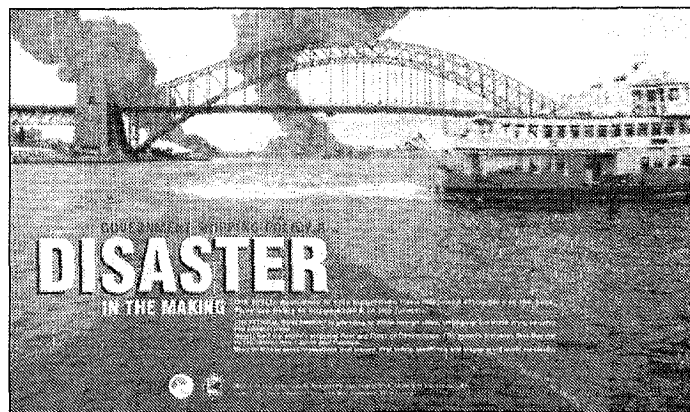
Australians issue FOC warning

■ The ITF-affiliated Maritime Union of Australia is launching a major crackdown on flag of convenience ships entering Australian ports.

John Coombs, MUA joint national secretary and ITF Executive Board member, warned shipowners in May: "We are not going to stand by and allow sub standard shipping, employing crew on starvation wages, subjected to sexual and physical abuse in our ports."

He added: "We are certainly going to lobby strenuously against the federal government policy of inviting more of these sort of ships into Australian waters to carry Tasman and coastal trade."

In support of the crackdown



the MUA has issued a poster (above), "Government shipping policy: a disaster in the making", depicting an oil spill in Sydney harbour and asking: "Is it worth the risk?" In addition, leaflets are being

published highlighting abuse, low and unpaid wages and the death of Indonesian seafarer Santoso Budi, who died in Australian waters after being attacked on board the Panamanian-flag Glory Cape.

Italian boycott wins \$150,000

ITF campaign round-up

BOYCOTT action by tugboat crews in the Italian port of Monfalcone, near Trieste, persuaded the Austrian charterers of the Romanian-flag *Maraki* to pay US\$50,000 in backpay to the crew of 30 seafarers. Intervention by the FIT-CISL union also resulted in \$5,000 of fresh food being supplied to the ship as well as a number of repairs being carried out after the union contacted the local port authorities. The union was contacted by the crew when the ship was in Trieste, and each member of the crew of 24 Romanians, five Greeks and one Egyptian, from master to cabin boy, authorised FIT-CISL to act on their behalf to improve conditions and arrange for wages to be paid. ■

THREE Filipino seafarers on a St Vincent-flag ship in the UK port of Belfast, were threatened with the sack and having to make their own way home – until the local official of the RMT seafarers' union intervened on behalf of the ITF. The men told the union that they were being paid off the *Isabel* because they had demanded ITF rates of pay. The owner denied this, claiming that the men had threatened other crew members with a knife. But after the master was

approached by the union official, the three crew were paid \$622 each and repatriated at the owner's expense. ■

THE Maltese-flag *Mount Parnitha* was not allowed to leave the Australian port of Portland until the crew were paid US\$145,000 in outstanding wages. The 25 Romanians and three Greeks had not been paid for four months. Action co-ordinated by the ITF-affiliated Maritime Union of Australia ensured that the Greek-owned ship could not set sail after loading grain. ■

THE Romanian crew of a ship which docked in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in October received US\$30,000 owed to them with the help of the ITF-affiliated Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union. The 12 seafarers on the Romanian-flag *Sea Lion* contacted the union to say that they had not been paid for five months. The union contacted the owners with a warning that action would be taken against the vessel unless the back wages were paid. The outstanding money was immediately paid out to the crew by the ship's local agents in the presence of CMU officials. ■

Forthcoming ITF meetings

- North American FOC Inspectors' Seminar, New Orleans, 27 July-2 August
- European Dockers' Committee, London, 4-5 September
- Latin American Regional Committee, Mexico City, 9 September
- Conference on Economic Integration in North and South America, Mexico City, 10-13 September
- South Pacific Seminar, Fiji, 16-20 September
- Road Transport Section Conference, Paris, 17-19 September
- Latin American Maritime Safety Seminar, Buenos Aires, week commencing 23 September
- African Regional Committee, South Africa, 25-27 September

SEAFARERS

■ Backpay totalling US\$8,900 was recovered from the Greek owners of the Cypriot-flag *Pelopidas* which was boycotted in Brake, near Bremen, during the week of action.

Week of action against FOC ships in north west Europe yields 43 new ITF agreements

Thanks to the tremendous solidarity shown by dockers, we have entered a new era of aggressive and direct intervention by ITF Inspectors and affiliated unions in north west Europe.

Next time there will be no warning

COLLECTIVE bargaining agreements covering 43 ships were signed from 3 to 7 June by the ITF during the week of action against flag of convenience ships arriving at ports in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and northern France.

Next time, however, there will be no prior warning for shipowners, ITF assistant general secretary Mark Dickinson warned at the end of the successful week.

The total does not count the many agreements concluded in the weeks building up to the week of action as owners scrambled to sign agreements with the ITF to avoid their ships being detained in north west Europe.

Out of 418 FOC ships due in the main ports of the region, 188 did not have an ITF-approved agreement. Of these, 128 were targeted for inspection, and the outcome was that 43 of them (34 per cent) finished the week with an ITF agreement.

There were 22 separate boycott actions involving seafarers and dockers in Antwerp, Rotterdam, Bremen and Hamburg, most of which resulted in agreements being signed. In other cases shipowners decided to negotiate agreements with the ITF without any industrial action taking place.

The ITF is hailing the week as a turning point in the campaign against FOCs.

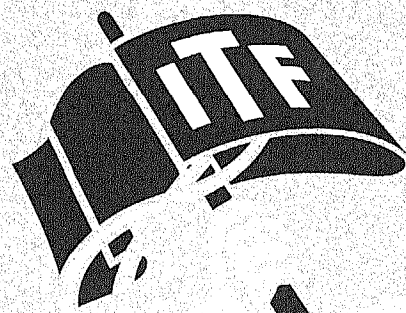
"Thanks to the tremendous solidarity shown by dockers, we have entered a new era of aggressive and direct intervention by ITF Inspectors and affiliated unions in north west Europe," said Dickinson.

"The message from now on is clear: don't come to north west Europe without an ITF Blue Certificate," he added.

It was heartening that only one of the 125 ships inspected had been reported by the ITF to the port state control authorities for breaching international safety requirements, Dickinson went on to say. This was a clear indication that shipowners had heeded the advice of the International Shipping Federation to ensure that any deficiencies were eliminated prior to arrival in any of the ITF-targeted ports last week.

There was evidence too that some crews had been warned not make contact with local ITF inspectors or dockers. Others had been silenced by means of special loyalty payments.

"What a pity that the ISF needed the threat of boycott action to urge shipowners into doing what any good shipowner should be doing anyway - running a safe ship and treating their crews with respect," the ITF Assistant General Secretary declared. ■



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INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS FEDERATION

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FEDERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE LOS
TRABAJADORES DEL TRANSPORTE

INTERNATIONELLA
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INTERNATIONALE
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МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ
ТРАНСПОРТНИКОВ

INFORMATIONS
NOTICIAS
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