

# ITF

# NEWS

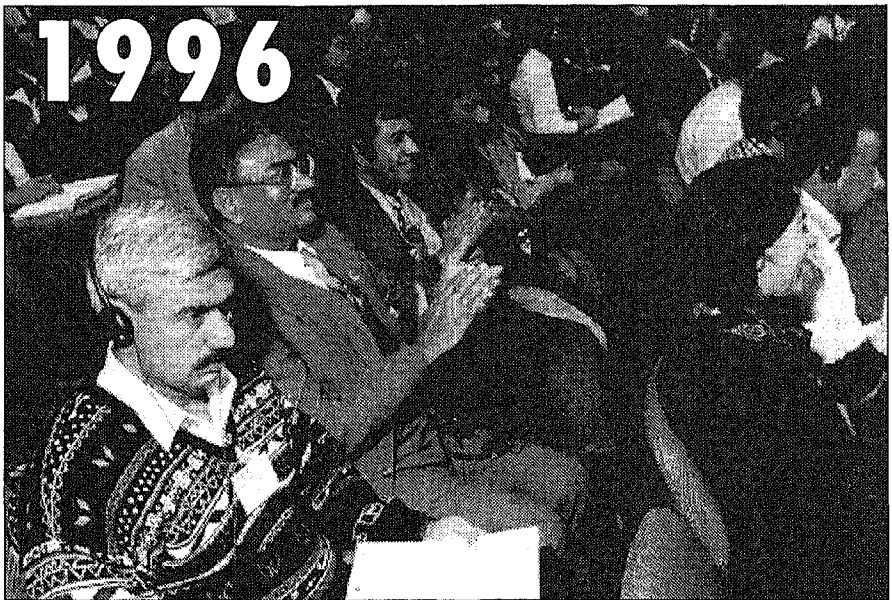
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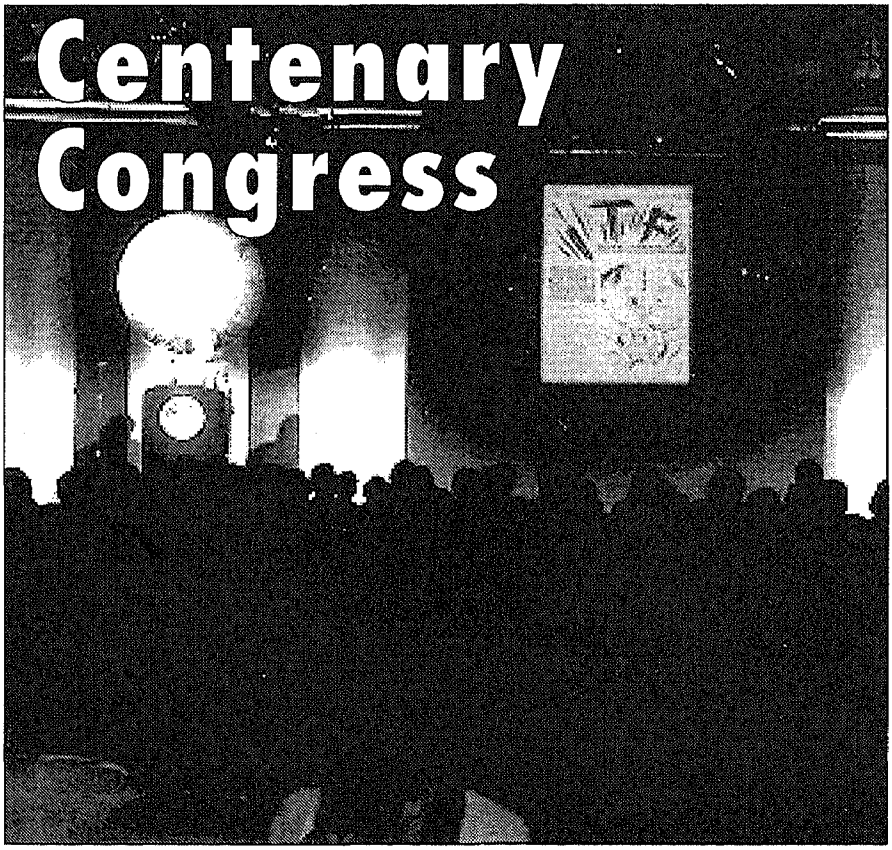
**INTERNATIONAL  
TRANSPORT  
WORKERS  
FEDERATION**

**INFORMATIONS  
NOTICIAS  
NYHETER  
情報  
NACHRICHTEN  
HOBOCTH**

## London 1996



## The ITF Centenary Congress



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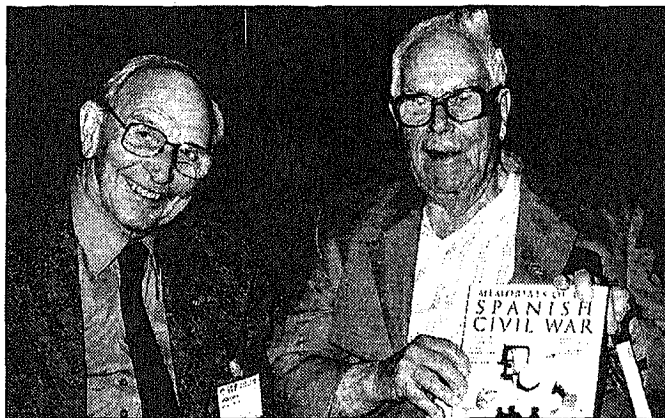
■ ITF General Secretary David Cockroft (left) presents ITF Gold Badges to (from left) Sven-Erik Nylund, John Connolly, Åke Selander and Victoriano Sánchez.

– Nylund, of the Finnish ship's officers' union, has been the ITF's co-ordinator in the International Maritime Organization since 1990. He retires next February.

– Connolly, of the British TGWU transport union, has been Chair of the ITF Dockers' Section for the past 13 years. He retires in September.

– Selander, a Swede, was a member of the ITF Secretariat for 37 years until earlier this year when he relinquished his position as Assistant General Secretary to take charge of the newly created International Committee on Seafarers' Welfare.

– Sánchez was General Secretary and later President of the FETT-UGT Spanish transport workers' union. He served on the ITF Executive Board from 1980 until his retirement earlier this year.



■ Two former transport union leaders – and veterans of the legendary anti-fascist International Brigade of the Spanish Civil War – Jack Jones (left) of the United Kingdom and Per Eriksson of Sweden share reminiscences during the ITF Congress. At 89, Eriksson was the oldest participant at Congress. "I was very impressed with the Congress and the international solidarity it showed," he said afterwards. "Today the ITF is as important as it has ever been before, with racism and mass employment once again growing."

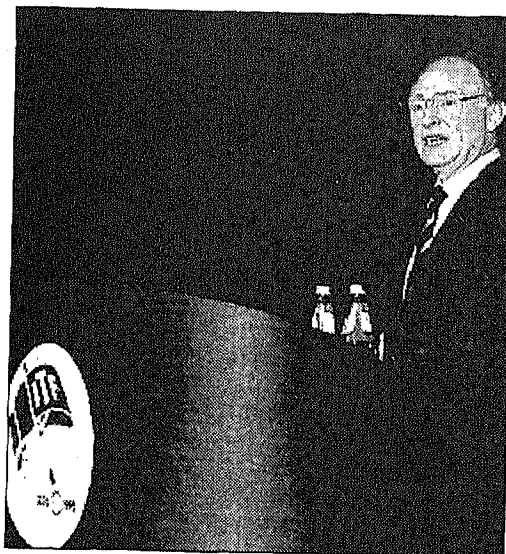


■ Delegates voting inside the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London venue for the ITF Centenary Congress.

■ They came to London from every continent and region of the globe to celebrate 100 years of the ITF, the international federation created at the end of the last century by a small group of seafarers' and dockers' unions in north-west Europe which now speaks on behalf of unions representing 5 million transport workers worldwide. There were over 800 delegates and advisers from 251 unions in 87 countries at the Congress in London from 30 June to 2 July. They not only looked back at the many lessons of the past century but also debated the challenges and dangers that lay ahead for transport workers and their trade unions.

What could we learn from the ITF's history? General Secretary David Cockroft asked in his keynote address to delegates. "Probably the most important lesson of all is always to expect the unexpected," he said. "We have seen our membership grow and decline with war, fascism and Nazism, communism, the Cold War and post-communism."

From a small group of unions which came together in 1896 in the spirit of international solidarity, the ITF was today an organisation which spanned the entire globe, he declared.



## ITF CENTENARY CONGRESS

■ *European Union Transport Commissioner Neil Kinnock (left) addresses Congress, pledging in his speech to intensify the clampdown on sub-standard ships calling at EU ports. In particular, the EU would now seek to put pressure on flag states which failed to enforce International safety regulations. "We will continue to work with like-minded countries and with organisations such as the ITF that wish to promote flag state control in order to improve registers worldwide," he said.*



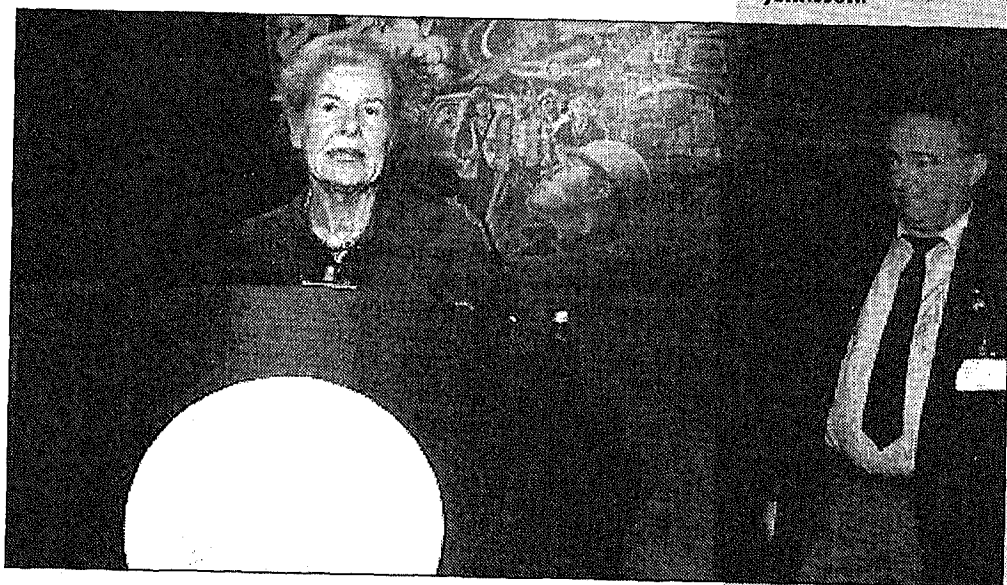
■ *Bill Jordan, General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, warns the ITF Congress that the globalisation of trade and technology was the greatest threat that trade unionism had ever faced. "The international trade union movement is the biggest single force fighting for freedom and social justice," he said, "and we will fight until the world market is our servant, not our master."*

■ *Cover photos:  
– Top: Delegates enjoy a lighter moment during the three-day special Congress.*

– Bottom: Images from the ITF past, in this case an anti-fascist leaflet from the 1930s, were displayed during a presentation on the ITF's history.

■ *Congress photos: Norman Reid, Mac Urata and Lennart Johnson.*

■ *Alida de Jager (right), daughter of Edo Fimmen, the ITF's General Secretary from 1924 to 1942, with ITF President Eike Eulen looking on, tells delegates how moved she has been by the tributes paid to her father. During his lifetime he had fought against racial intolerance and made no distinctions between people of different nationalities, she said. So it would have pleased him greatly to see that more than half of Congress delegates were now from outside Europe and the next Congress would be held in Delhi, India, in 1998.*



**Why we need to be strong**

■ Such is the power and influence of global capitalism today that trade unions are needed in all countries regardless of whether or not they have a government sympathetic to the labour movement.

This was the message that ITF General Secretary David Cockroft took to the congress of the Italian transport union federation FIL-CGIL in Montecatini in June.

"Happily in Italy you have elected a government of the Left, a government which has the best interests of Italian workers at heart," Cockroft told delegates. "But please do not take this for granted. In today's global environment, the international capital markets and other, less enlightened governments can exert powerful pressures on even the most dedicated politicians," he warned.

"In the end unions must ensure that they have the power to influence decisions by direct action, nationally and internationally," said the General Secretary.

THE ITF is to convene a meeting of unions organising workers in the US-owned United Parcel Services as part of a series of initiatives to deal with the growing strength of trans-national corporations in the global transportation market.

The decision in principle to arrange the get-together of unions involved with the giant UPS international freight forwarding company was taken at the recent Centenary Congress in London.

It was there that the US affiliate, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), together with European ITF affiliates organising UPS workers met to discuss the idea.

Representatives of unions from seven countries, all of whom gave accounts of UPS's anti-union or excessively paternalistic behaviour, welcomed the proposal of an international meeting to exchange detailed information on the company's plans and tactics.

For the IBT, Andy Banks said that UPS employed 200,000 of the union's members. "There is nothing we do not know about the company's methods and wider strategy, and we are more than willing to pass this on to other unions."

# ITF targets UPS in new initiative against global companies

Meanwhile, a meeting of a new and experimental group, the ITF Transport Policy Group of Experts, took place in July in conjunction with a project group on trans-national corporations (TNCs).

The meeting discussed the creation of a permanent but open group of affiliates and trade union-sympathetic experts which could act as an information resource and "think-tank" to develop strategic responses to the challenges facing unions in the globalised economy.

One of the ways the group could gather information would be by maintaining a network of labour-friendly academics, the meeting agreed.

On the issue of TNCs, the meeting listened to presentations from Jörg Lausch of the German ÖTV, who explained the union's methods of co-ordinating trade union contacts in these companies and underlined trends in transport TNCs in Europe.

The group decided that the ITF should identify a priority number of TNCs, including UPS and other international integrators – Federal Express, DHL and TNT – for immediate action. ■

■ Kurt Bentsen has been elected as the new chair of the seafarers' section of the Danish Railway Workers' Union in succession to Bjarne Hansen, who has retired after twelve years in the post.

■ Holger Eriksson, President of the Swedish Salaried Employees' Union HTF, is the new President of the Swedish Association of Private Sector Salaried Employees PTK, a body bringing together some 600,000 privately employed professional staff.

■ Kåge Gustafsson is retiring as national union officer in charge of collective bargaining for the goods transport sector at the Swedish Transport Workers' Union. Kåge is an active member of the committee of the Road Transport Workers' Section and has campaigned vigorously for the introduction of international load safety certificates in international intermodal transport.

■ S Bøje Larsen, the long-serving General Secretary of the Danish Radio Officers' Association, has retired after forty-four years with the association. After a professional career as a ra-

dio officer with the Danish shipping company DFDS as well as with Lyngby Radio, Bøje started work for the union in the early 50s as a secretary, becoming General Secretary some ten years later and going on to play a leading role for many years in the ITF Seafarers' Section. Bøje has also retired from the presidency of the Merchant Navy Welfare Council – a body with which he has been actively associated for well over thirty years – and has been succeeded by Jens-Jørgen Absalonsen, head of the secretariat of the Danish Engineer Officers' Association. Lizzie Moe, who has worked closely with Bøje for the past eighteen years most recently as union treasurer, is the Radio Officers' Association's new General Secretary. Ole Baadsgaard Pedersen, its president of the past nine years, has also resigned and is followed by Vagn Klovborg.

**PEOPLE**

**From Denmark and Sweden...**

# Asia/Pacific women fight discrimination

OPPOSING discrimination in civil aviation and sexual harassment in the maritime industry and encouraging career opportunities for women in transport industries in general should become higher priorities for the ITF, decided participants at the ITF Asia/Pacific Women Transport Workers' Seminar in Bangkok in May.

About 40 women from 14 countries attended the meeting, which called for a series of measures to improve conditions for women in the maritime sector, including active recruitment of women and improvement of maternity and parental leave provisions.

The development of an ITF framework sexual harassment policy could also assist women in the sector, it was agreed.

"A simple thing like a good definition of sexual harassment, for example, can be of use to many women in this region," said Naomi Hodby of the Australian Maritime Officers' Union - who was also nominated ITF network co-ordinator for the Pacific sub-region at the meeting.

Solidarity and support is also needed by many of the women working in Asian airlines.

THE development of an ITF framework policy on sexual harassment was one of the chief demands made by the ITF Women's Interim Steering Committee which met at the ITF's headquarters in June.

The meeting agreed that increased education about sexual harassment and other issues affecting women was necessary - both for women and, where appropriate, with the involvement of male trade unionists. Local-level support networks of women had been shown to be effective in many cases, participants noted.

In addition to legal information, there was a need to share information on developing union structures and negotiating company procedures to deal with some of

At the seminar, so many flagrant examples of discrimination were brought up that the women decided it was time to act, calling for an international campaign against sexism in civil aviation.

In several South Asian countries, female cabin crew are still forced to leave as soon as they become pregnant and, in one case, ground staff and cabin crew are forced to sign contracts promising not to have children for at least three years.

Constant references to the physical appearance of women cabin crew not only debased women but undermined their vital safety role, participants agreed.

Discriminatory retirement ages are still in force in several Asian countries. In others, unreasonable restrictions on weight and eyesight have also been attempted, to push women out of the workforce early.

Of course, many international airlines such as Singapore Airlines and Thai Airways actively promote the image of youth and beauty to their largely male prospective clientele.

The concern of cabin crew for human dignity was echoed by members of the Bangkok Mass Transit Authority State Enterprise Employees' Association, who work in Bangkok's crowded municipal bus system.

Women conductors suffer harassment and violence from the public, and are particularly vulnerable to attack on late shifts, or on the way home after night work. ■

## Wanted: ITF guidelines to combat sexual harassment

the problems faced by women transport workers.

Supporting and developing the ITF Women Transport Workers' Network was discussed, with the meeting agreeing that the network needed to be strengthened.

Other ideas suggested by the group included campaigning on safety issues for women in the railway industry, countering sexual discrimination in civil aviation, examining the needs of women clerical and supervisory employees in the road transport industry, plus the possible holding of

a Women's Forum meeting with prominent female politicians and trade unionists.

Dilia van der Heem, of the Dutch transport federation, Vervoersbond FNV, welcomed the initiatives: "The civil aviation campaign will be an opportunity for us, ITF women, to really make our mark and change something for the better. We are sure women and men in all the transport sectors will want to support it." ■

### SINGAPORE AIRLINES

The story so far ...



■ Constant references to the appearance of women cabin crew are demeaning.

**ITF women's network needs to be strengthened, meeting agrees**

**NB:** The Women's Interim Steering Committee is a group of about 20 ITF women. It met for the first time last summer, and is providing valuable guidance to the ITF Secretariat in the interim period up to the 1998 Congress when there will be a first opportunity to create an official women's structure. Its membership is nominated through the Executive Board, but meetings remain open to women delegates from unions with a specific interest in participating.

# Fragmentation tops ITF agenda

## In brief

### Zimbabweans win reinstatement

Over 300 members of the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union of Zimbabwe, who were dismissed last August by road haulage company Cargo Carriers for taking part in strike action, will all be reinstated. The 332 drivers went on strike in protest at the reinstatement of a managerial employee who they said was insensitive and racist. Although the TGWU won a high court ruling in November 1995, Cargo Carriers refused to obey the court's ruling and lodged an appeal with the supreme court which was successfully challenged by the TGWU. The reinstatement was agreed at a meeting in June.

### Strike in South Africa

Over 60,000 South African public transport workers, supported by the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union and the Municipal Workers' Union, staged a one-day strike at the beginning of July over the government's privatisation plans for public transport. The demonstrators marched from the library gardens in Johannesburg to the offices of the provincial minister of transport to hand over a memorandum demanding the development of public ownership of transport.

### Ukraine protest

The ITF-affiliated VPMU Ukrainian railway workers' union is in dispute with the management of the UZ, a state-owned undertaking over discriminatory action against their members involved in union activities. The union has campaigned against the late payment of wages and in defence of basic rights. This has resulted in the dismissal of some workers and management offering less work to union members. ITF General Secretary David Cockroft, in a letter of protest to the Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, said: "The ITF urgently request you to intervene to prevent this discrimination continuing and to restore to their places of employment those traction department employees who have been unfairly dismissed."

RESTRUCTURING of railway networks and the fragmentation of railway undertakings came under the spotlight at the Railwaymen's Section Committee meeting at the beginning of July.

Committee members were brought up to date on discussions at a round table on the organic separation of infrastructure and operations, organised by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport in Paris the previous month. This revealed widely differing viewpoints, ranging from the World Bank representative who dismissed state-owned railways as monolithic structures with no future, to the more moderate opinions of the USA, Japan and Austria who opposed an organic split and the International Union of Railways (UIC) which underlined the complexity of transactions in an organically split railway industry.

Kjell Sevefjord of SEKO reported that experience in Sweden had shown that an organic split did not benefit railway traffic, a view officially endorsed by a government inquiry. Section Vice Chair Umraomal Purohit described the European Commission

as no more than a "junction box" for World Bank ideology, while ITF Inland Transport Assistant Secretary Asbjørn Wahl added that the Commission's dream scenario of private companies competing against each other on the same tracks was more like a nightmare. The trade union alternative must be integrated national railway companies co-operating over national borders.

A presentation on European Union railway policy developments by Brussels Committee Secretary Hugues de Villèle was warmly welcomed by the committee, which felt that liberalisation and open access were important to rail unions everywhere because of the likely extension of any EU blueprint.

Finally, the committee agreed to recommend to the Executive Board that the section change its name from Railwaymen's Section to Railway Workers' Section. ■

THE health and safety problems of urban transport drivers and other operating staff were the subject of a two-day international symposium held in London at the beginning of June, the first day being devoted to improving drivers' health and the second to avoiding physical assaults on bus and train crews and station personnel.

The ITF International Symposium on Health and Safety in Public Transport, which brought together researchers and trade union representatives, issued a set of conclusions advocating close co-operation between unions, transport undertakings and specialist researchers in projects to minimise the health and safety problems of public transport workers.

To reduce the growing incidence of violence against staff, the seminar proposed that management and employees receive specialist training to equip them to work together on identifying and overcoming situations that could give rise to aggression. But as attacks on staff could never be entirely eliminated victims of violence must be given proper support and counselling as part of their rehabilitation and

## Health and safety action plan drawn up

must be able to count on the sympathetic understanding of fellow employees.

The trade unions and researchers mapped out a future plan of action committing the ITF to campaign for major improvements to the working conditions of drivers and other travelling staff and to produce a range of materials to back up the initiatives and activities that it will be conducting with the backing of its urban transport affiliates.

A working group is being set up with equal numbers of researchers and union representatives and will report to the next ITF urban transport meeting. Participation of the researchers on the working group is being co-ordinated by Professor June Fisher of the Muni Health and Safety Project at the University of California.

The working group will review and report on existing research projects and prevention measures, as well as advising on areas for further research. Unions will be helped to identify health and safety problems in the workplace and consideration will be given to public policy measures to minimise the problems. ■

**Demiryolu Bülteni**  
 Sayı 1 Çekirge / Subat 1996

**Demiryollarını yeniden rayına sokun!**



**Demiryolu Bülteni**  
 1996 yılı için hazırlanan bu bülten, demiryolu çalışanlarının sorunlarını ve ihtiyaçlarını ele almaktadır. Bültenin amacı, demiryolu çalışanlarının sesini duyurmak ve onların sorunlarını uluslararası düzeyde gündeme getirmektir. Bültenin içeriği, demiryolu çalışanlarının çalışma koşulları, maaşları, emeklilikleri ve diğer sosyal hakları ile ilgili olarak hazırlanmıştır. Bültenin yayıncısı, Demiryolu İşçileri Sendikası'dır.

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■ The first edition this year of the ITF Railway Bulletin is now available in Turkish thanks to our Turkish railway workers' affiliate DEMIRYOL-IS, who have generously translated it for us.

■ The latest sectional newsletter to be published by the ITF is for road transport workers. The 12-page bulletin includes articles on the European Commission's recent proposals for costing different transport modes, the design and construction of truck cabs and driving compartments, and the lack of enforcement of regulations on working hours for drivers. Apart from English (above), "Road Transport" is published in French, Spanish, German, Japanese and Swedish. Copies are available from the Inland Transport Department at ITF head office.

**Road Transport**  
 July / August 1996

**Regulation without enforcement**  
 The sad story of working hours in road transport



**New bulletin for road transport workers**

**Road Transport** is a periodic bulletin issued by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) at London SE1, UK. Tel: +44-171-403 2733 Fax: +44-171-352 7871 Internet: INFO@ITF-ORG.UK General Secretary: David Cockroft

**Road Transport Workers' Section:**  
 Chair: Peter Lisowski (Germany)  
 Vice Chair: Don Cunningham (New Zealand)  
 Secretary: Graham Brothers  
 Assistant Secretary: Robert Wahl  
 Section Assistant: Dawn West

**Road Transport** invited articles to contribute to the bulletin. Background material, reports, photographs etc. are also of interest. Copies are free.

**Regulation without enforcement**  
 Due to the increased competition, shorter time and speed limits are frequently breached in road transport. Enforcement is almost nonexistent. The international regulations of working hours for drivers is highly defective. However, not even the existing, insufficient regulations make states different as there is a glaring lack of enforcement. A Union still seems remote. The ITF demands proper legislation on duty and rest time as well as effective enforcement of the regulations. Pages 10-12

**New bulletin for road transport workers**  
 This is the first issue of the new bulletin for road transport workers. The ITF decided to publish a new bulletin for road transport workers. The bulletin is published in English, French, Spanish, German, Japanese and Swedish. The bulletin will be published in other languages if there is sufficient interest.

# ITF unions meet to consider financial crisis hitting workers and services

## Rail disaster in former USSR

THE railways of all CIS countries (formerly the Soviet Union) have suffered massive reductions in traffic since the political changes at the end of the 1980s. This has been due not only to falls in industrial activities and different international trading patterns but also to the transfer of traffic to the roads and reductions in their people's purchasing power and therefore ability to pay for travel. Typical losses of traffic have been around 50 per cent but in certain countries such as Armenia the loss has been much greater due to armed hostilities and the blocking of former rail links.

These grave problems were the subject of a special ITF seminar on the state of the rail industry in CIS countries and the consequences of introducing so-called market reforms.

Co-hosted by the Independent Trade Union of Railwaymen and Transport Construction Workers of Russia, the seminar in St Petersburg at the end of May attracted 47 participants from 14 railway workers' unions in CIS countries.

In addition to Graham Brothers, ITF Assistant General Secretary, who spoke on the structure of the railways in a variety of countries as well as relations between the railways, governments and trade unions, the seminar was addressed by Jim Knapp, Chair of the ITF Railwaymen's Section, and Ulla Olovsson and Robert Björkenwall of SEKO, Sweden, who described developments affecting the railways in their countries and the trade unions' response to these developments.

The CIS railway union representatives gave accounts of the disastrous financial situations their railways were encounter-

ing, leading to wages being unpaid, maintenance not being carried out and an almost complete lack of funds for investment. So far most of the unions have managed to prevent any substantial reductions in jobs, but do not view the future with any optimism in this respect.

Inevitably, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are on the spot with their familiar calls for privatisations, redundancies and the disposal of activities such as workshops and catering services.

In particular, the social welfare institutions jointly run by the CIS railways and the trade unions are under threat, despite the fact that railway workers and their families are dependent on them for such necessities as housing and medical care, in the absence of alternative provision by government and inability to afford such private services as may exist. The average wage of a Russian railway worker was stated to be US\$120 per month.

To date, the CIS railway workers' unions have resisted the majority of the threats to their members' jobs, albeit not without sacrifices, wishing to retain their skills for the railways in the future and to protect them from the catastrophe that unemployment represents in countries where this phenomenon did not exist until recently. However, future job losses will be inevitable if these countries move further towards the market-economy system and especially if railway restructuring is dictated by the international lending agencies applying their usual policies.

The CIS railway unions will continue to need the support and advice of the ITF and its affiliates in attempting to alleviate the repercussions of the profound political and economic changes which are continuing to take place.

# Training the educators

**Acting Education Officer Joanne Abayasekara explains how the ITF aims to promote and develop democratic transport unions through its education activities.**

A PRIORITY for the ITF's education work in all regions has been to develop and maintain a network of trained educators who will be able to initiate and implement ITF education activities.

In order to develop the network of educators in Africa intensive two week training of trainers courses were held in 1995 in Accra, Ghana for affiliated unions from West Africa and Nairobi, Kenya for affiliates in Eastern and Southern Africa. The aims of the workshops were to begin to develop a systematic programme of trade union training and to train participants in participatory learning techniques. The same course will be held in Niger in August 1996 for unions from francophone Africa. Selected educators from the anglophone group participated in a follow-up



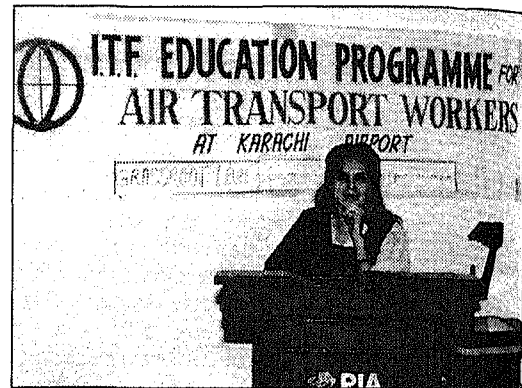
education planning workshop in Nairobi in June 1996. The objectives of the workshop were to assess the educational needs of ITF affiliates in Africa and to train the trainers to enable them to plan, organise and implement future ITF education projects. Long term programmes in several countries are now in preparation.

The ITF's education programme in Latin America was launched in a similar way when three training of trainers courses for affiliates were



held in Montevideo, Uruguay, Limeira, Brazil and San José, Costa Rica in November 1995. Selected participants from these workshops then attended a two week follow-up seminar in Costa Rica in May 1996 to acquire further skills in preparation of training materials and instruction. A cadre has now been established of ITF trained educators who will be able to carry out educational activities in the field. Plans for future education projects in several countries of the region are now being developed as a result of the advanced level seminar.

In the Asia/Pacific region a group of educators



is already in place and long term projects are running in several countries such as India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Fiji.

In Central and Eastern Europe a seminar was held in St Petersburg in May 1996 for unions from CIS countries to discuss their problems and assess educational needs. A similar seminar for other countries in the region will be held in Prague in September 1996. As a result of these two seminars applications will be made in 1996 to the European Union's TACIS and PHARE Democracy Programmes for funding for trade union education projects.

The main objectives of the ITF's education work are to develop strong independent transport workers' trade unions by training new generations of trade union leaders in the basic principles of trade unionism and in international solidarity, and by developing trade union awareness among new members joining the transport unions.

The ITF's women's activities have included organising seminars at national, sub-regional and regional level. Future priorities include developing the role of sub-regional co-ordinators and National Co-ordinating Committees in promoting women's education activities, and developing an ITF education pack and additional materials for women transport workers.

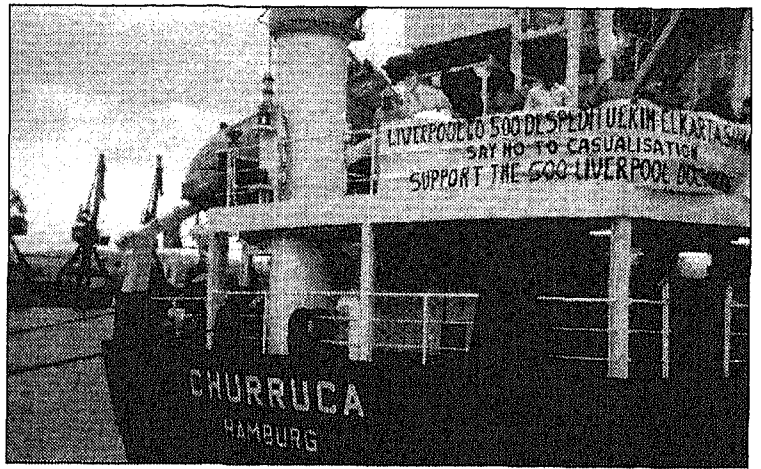
As the ITF's resources for education activities are limited, funding from external sources has become increasingly important. Since the establishment of the ITF Education and Projects Department in 1993 co-operation with a range of donor organisations in the USA, UK, Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland has been developed with the active involvement of the ITF affiliates in those countries. Other sources of funding in other countries such as Japan, Italy and Spain are now being explored.

Future priorities include: the development of education materials which deal with issues specifically related to the transport industry for use by the ITF; the promotion of exchanges between affiliates; the development of training courses for affiliates and the continued development of a comprehensive ITF education policy aimed not only at affiliates in developing countries, but also in developed ones. ■

■ Pictured here, ITF education courses on three continents, clockwise from the top: - Karachi, Pakistan, - San José, Costa Rica, - Nairobi, Kenya, with ITF Acting Education Officer Joanne Abayasekara pictured in the front row, third from left.



# Liverpool strikers reject severance package



Members of the ITF-affiliated transport federation ELA-STV in Bilbao, Spain, showed their full support for the Liverpool dockers by preventing the unloading operation of the Churruca, which trades between the two ports for 45 minutes on its arrival in Bilbao in June.

SACKED Liverpool dockers have rejected the latest "final" offer of 60 jobs and severance payments of £25,000 (US\$38,288) for each of the remaining 400 strikers which was put forward by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company in June.

Meanwhile, in the following month the ITF's Fair Practices Committee – which brings together dockers' and seafarers' unions involved in the flag of convenience campaign – declared its support for the stand being taken by the strikers in Liverpool, who are members of the British TGWU transport union.

Affiliated unions were once again urged to make donations to the hardship fund set up for the benefit of the sacked dockers and their families.

The latest offer was submitted at a meeting of the British conciliation and arbitration service, Acas. Later, at a mass meeting of dockers, the offer was unanimously rejected.

The dockers were dismissed in September 1995 because they refused to cross a picket line.

The company is also planning to sack a further 80 ancillary workers at the port after Atlantic Container Line, the largest shipping company that uses the port of Liverpool, transferred their trade to another port.

The company recently launched legal proceedings in a district court in New York, against the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association, claiming that the union had threatened to boy-

cott ACL ships if the company continued to trade out of Liverpool.

The ILA has denied the allegation, indicating that individual longshoremen have supported a picket of ACL ships by the Liverpool dockers. The ILA also insists that no threats were made to boycott ACL's ships in the US.

The dockers have stated that a solution to the dispute would be for Mersey Docks to remove all casual labour from the port and for all the dockers to be reinstated.

● Swedish dockers showed their support for the dockers when they delayed working on an ACL vessel from Liverpool in the port of Gothenburg for 14 hours in June. ☐

## Successful ruling

Unions representing striking port workers in the port of Santos in Brazil have won an important decision by a Brazilian Labour Tribunal which ruled that their strike over pay and conditions was not illegal. The three-day strike in July resulted in loading and unloading at the port being severely affected.

## FISHERIES

# ITF rescues assaulted crew

ELEVEN Chinese fishermen, who were beaten and abused over a four-month period while employed on a Taiwanese vessel chartered by New Zealand fishing company Sanfords, have finally been repatriated.

The crew joined the fishing vessel in China in December to work during the squid season and were immediately subjected to beatings with fish hooks, pipes and a baton inscribed with the words "for beating the dogs".

In April the fishermen were found outside the office of the ITF Co-ordinator in New Zealand seeking assistance and trying to escape the regular beatings from the Taiwanese officers.

The full extent of their injuries only came to light after the Chinese embassy in New Zealand offered to interpret fully what the crew were saying.

The police were contacted, but they said they

had no jurisdiction. However, this later changed when two crew members were severely beaten while the vessel was in Wellington. A criminal investigation was undertaken, but no charges were brought against the officers due to conflicting evidence and lack of independent corroboration. The officers denied the claims saying that the crew members were fighting among themselves hence their injuries.

The owner's representative in Wellington tried to negotiate with ITF Co-ordinator Dave Morgan to have the crew transferred to another vessel. This was rejected. The thought of having to go aboard another vessel had the crew cowering and hiding in a corner. They were later placed in accommodation and flown home. ☐

## Clash over sandeels

Greenpeace campaigners and Danish trawler crews have clashed during the sandeel fishing season off the east coast of Scotland where the sandeels concentrate in shoals each summer. Scientists supporting the trawler crews argue that sandeel stocks have remained constant over the past 20 years, so there is no need for quotas. But Greenpeace claims that fishing sandeels, used in fish meal and fish oil, is disturbing the ecological balance as many marine species are sandeel predators. Trawlers in the area have had to run the gauntlet of Greenpeace dinghies. In one incident the Greenpeace vessel *Sirius* collided with a trawler.

*The ITF-sponsored complaint was submitted in 1995 in response to slave-like conditions, double book-keeping, cruelty and a climate of fear discovered by ITF inspectors on a series of flag of convenience vessels employing Chinese crews.*

**Jane Barrett, of the ITF Seafarers' Section, reports on the 1996 meeting of the body which oversees the ITF's flag of convenience campaign, the Fair Practices Committee, which brought together seafarers' and dockers' unions from 53 countries in London early in July.**

## ILO backs complaint by ITF and ICFTU

# China condemned over treatment of seafarers

THE ITF and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions have won an important victory in a ruling concerning the Chinese government's "anti-union discrimination" against its own seafarers.

In a report published in June, the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Committee on Freedom of Association urges full respect of trade union rights for Chinese seafarers. Responding to evidence provided by the ITF, the committee states that China must stop discriminating against seafarers who exercise their right to bona-fide trade union representation, including their right to seek international help from ITF unions.

The practice of detaining seafarers who complain or seek help from the ITF or other organisations must cease, the ILO says.

The committee also recommends that the Chinese government restore back-wages won by three seafarers who served on the Bahamas-registered, Greek-owned *Arcadia* in Ravenna, Italy, in April 1992. The money was forcibly confiscated by officials in China. The government should compensate these seafarers for eco-

nomical losses incurred over a two and a half year detention period, and it must return confiscated seafarers' papers and qualifications, the committee adds.

The ITF-sponsored complaint was submitted in 1995 in response to slave-like conditions, double book-keeping, cruelty and a climate of fear discovered by ITF inspectors on a series of flag of convenience vessels employing Chinese crews.

Before leaving China to embark on foreign-flag ships, crews are told that they must direct all complaints to official manning agents, not to the ITF or its affiliates. Huge deductions from wages, threats to families in China and intimidation from Chinese diplomats abroad have been part of the category of abuse.

The ILO has agreed with the ITF in stating that the government-run All China Federa-

tion of Trade Unions provides no support for Chinese seafarers: "The committee urges the government to guarantee and respect the rights of Chinese seafarers to form trade unions of their choice and to affiliate with organizations freely chosen by them, including directly with an international organization if they so wish," the committee says.

The committee clearly demands China refrain from "having recourse to any act of anti-union discrimination, especially the arrest and detention of Chinese seafarers who pursue their legitimate grievances through the organisation of their choice (in the present case the ITF)". ■

## ITF warning on Luxembourg and second registers

IT was agreed that the Luxembourg flag would be declared a flag of convenience from 1 September, unless the Belgian shipowners using it satisfied the Belgian affiliates by reversing a range of recent decisions. These include the decision to terminate collective agreements and to employ non-Belgian ratings. Should the declaration of the Luxembourg flag proceed, this will take the number of FOCs to twenty five.

The flags of Aruba, Cambodia and Djibouti were also discussed. It was agreed that the Collective Agreements Sub Committee should look into whether these flags should be designated FOCs.

For the moment however, the Danish (DIS) and Norwegian (NIS) second registers escaped being declared FOCs. Whilst the committee expressed dissatisfaction that in both cases the governments had not committed themselves to giving full statutory collective bargaining rights for the DIS and NIS to the Danish and Norwegian affiliates, the FPC remained hopeful that both governments would be persuaded. A final decision was

therefore deferred until the 1997 FPC meeting.

The role of dockworkers worldwide in supporting the FOC campaign was applauded by the FPC, which resolved in turn to encourage seafarer affiliates to support dockworkers in their own struggles.

An earlier decision to increase the ITF minimum wage for an able seaman to \$1200 as of January 1998 was re-emphasised, and a decision to monitor all TCC (total crew cost) agreements to check on the application of the agreed minimum was endorsed.

It was also agreed that where unions accept membership fees from seafarers, there should be an obligation to provide minimum core services to them - including assistance with claims arising out of violations of agreements. The minimum core services should be provided for all members, irrespective of whether they work on FOCs, second registers, or if they are non-domiciled seafarers. ■



■ Roberto Alarcón (fourth from right) with seven of the Cape Hope crew as they set off on their journey home from Argentina.

## Poles make a million

SEVENTY-THREE Polish seafarers will share nearly a million US dollars thanks to action taken by the ITF in the Spanish courts to recover money owed to them by the Swedish company, Corona Line.

The money was handed over to ITF Co-ordinator Miguel Coronado after the ferry *Balanga Sister*, on which the Poles had served two years ago, was arrested.

The Panamanian-flag ferry, owned by the Spanish company Agencia Schembri, had been bareboat chartered to Corona Line. But when the charter ended, the Swedish company did not settle outstanding wages and leave pay, totalling Swedish K889,681, with the 73 seafarers ashore.

After arresting the vessel on behalf of the former crew, the company agreed to pay 70 per cent of the amount claimed by the ITF - K610,565 - which was accepted by Coronado. ■

## Back pay for crew stranded in Argentina

THE crew of a tanker stranded in Argentina received

# Flag of convenience campaign round-up

US\$270,748 after the ITF had the vessel arrested through the Argentine courts.

The 11 Korean, Burmese and Chinese crew members contacted ITF Inspector Roberto Alarcón after supplies on their ship, the *Cape Hope*, ran out in June. The sum negotiated by the ITF represented nearly 95 per cent of the wages owed to the seafarers since they were abandoned in the port of Rosario last year, plus their repatriation costs.

Negotiations were conducted with the representatives of the ship's bankers, who took possession of the Panama-flag ship after Greek owner Adriatic Tankers defaulted on debt repayments. ■

## Phone call nets five months' wages

A PHONE call to the ITF Inspector in Hamburg secured five months of back pay for the Ukrainian crew of the St Vincent-registered bulk carrier

*Elina*. After being contacted by the crew, Ulf Christiansen complained to the agents of the Ukrainian-owner and, within 24 hours, US\$155,000 was paid to the crew before the ship left Germany. ■

## Greek owner agrees to pay up

THE Filipino crew of the Cyprus-flag *Explorer LT* shared US\$31,426 in the US port of Linden, New Jersey, after local ITF Inspector Spiro Varras discovered that ITF-negotiated rates were not being honoured. Within two days of demanding the back pay, the Greek owner, Blue Flag Navigation, agreed to pay the amount due to the seafarers. ■

## Boycott in Denmark

BACK pay of US\$157,459 was secured by the ITF for the mainly Filipino crew of the Cyprus-registered *Georgios L*, in

Århus, Denmark, after the ITF had received complaints from the crew that they were being forced to work unpaid overtime. The ITF's hand was strengthened by three days of boycott action by local dockers which resulted in 150 trucks and trailers clogging the port while waiting to unload corn on the Greek-owned vessel. ■

## Costly detour for Romanian ship

AN unscheduled stop at Los Angeles turned out to be a costly mistake for the ship-owner and cargo owner of the Romanian-flag *Giurgiu*, but proved to be a godsend for the crew of 24.

The US Coast Guard found 22 defects on the ship that needed correcting before it could be allowed to set sail again.

And the crew complained to local ITF Inspector Ray Familathe that they had not been paid for 55 days and that three of them were in urgent need of medical attention.

The Romanian owner, Self-Invest Maritime, and the New York based owner of the cargo of fish meal loaded in Peru, Sunkyoung America, had to pay US\$119,000 in repairs, medical bills, back pay and repatriation costs before the ship resumed its voyage to China over three weeks after it had limped into the Southern Californian port with mechanical problems.

While the repairs were being made to the ship, Familathe negotiated some \$30,000 in back pay for the crew, along with the fares home for 11 of them, including a seafarer with a hernia, another with a broken rib and another with severed fingers.

"The crew had been taken care of very poorly," said Familathe. "The only reason they eventually got paid was because the cargo owner, fear-

## Flag of convenience campaign round-up



■ The latest edition of the ITF's popular *Seafarers' Bulletin* is in Arabic, the 11th language in which the 1996 issue of the magazine has so far been published. It is also available in English, Spanish, French, German, Swedish, Russian, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog and Polish. Copies can be ordered from the Communications Department at ITF head office.

■ Ray Familathe (back row, fourth from right) with jubilant crew members of the *Giurgiu* after receiving their back wages.

ful of losing \$132,000 if the delivery date was missed, agreed to put up the money." ■

### Ferry crew in successful strike

A STRIKE over low pay by the Ukrainian crew of a passenger ferry running between Italy and Greece won back pay for the 25 seafarers and, according to Taranto-based ITF Inspector Gianbattista Leoncini, served as a warning to other Greek shipowners using flag of convenience ferries to Italy.

The stoppage detained the Malta-flag *Julia Sea* in the Italian port of Brindisi for three days before the owner, P&L Ferries, of Piraeus, Greece, handed over US\$47,574 in back pay plus return fares to the Ukraine totalling \$18,000. The back pay secured in negotiations led by Leoncini was for wages owed for the two months that the crew had been aboard the ro-ro vessel. ■

### Arrested in Sri Lanka

OVER six months of pay for the crew of the Honduras-flag *Lord Nelson* was won when the ITF-affiliated Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union had the Indian-owned vessel arrested in May for non-payment of wages to the 18 Indian and Filipino seafarers on board. With the vessel detained in Colombo, Sri Lanka, the owner agreed to negotiate a settlement acceptable to the crew. This provided 75 per cent of the wages owed to the nine Indian seafarers – totalling US\$31,243 – and 65 per cent of the amount due to the nine Filipinos, plus the repatriation of the crew. ■

### New Danish record

A RECORD back pay settlement of US\$397,386 was won



for the Filipino crew of the Liberia-flag *Maria SJ* after dockers in the Danish port of Århus boycotted the vessel.

The amount negotiated for the 27-strong crew by ITF Co-ordinator John Jacobsen is the biggest ever recovered by the ITF in Denmark. It breaks the previous record of nearly \$300,000 achieved in only March this year for the crew of the Philippines-registered *Cayman*.

The Greek owners of the ship, managed by Kosmos Marine, of Piraeus, conceded Jacobsen's demand to sign an ITF standard agreement within a day of the boycott action starting. The Esbjerg-based ITF Co-ordinator had earlier discovered that wages on board were as low as \$672 a month for a 48-hour week and 120 hours of overtime a month.

The Filipinos were repatriated at the owner's expense, and replaced by Greeks. ■

### Maldives crew benefit

A TOTAL of US\$4,233 in back pay was negotiated by ITF Inspector Ulf Christiansen for six Maldivian crew members of the Panama-flag, Greek-owned *Nafplio* while in Bremen. ■

### Russians share over \$200,000

THE ITF secured US\$208,259 for 22 Russian seafarers on the Panamanian-flag *Ocean Knight* after they complained to the

ITF of not having been paid for several months. The vessel was arrested by Spanish ITF Inspector Felipe Medina Sosa while in Las Palmas, the Canary Islands, but was sold to a new owner, Sirocc Shipping.

Sosa then negotiated the settlement, plus repatriation expenses, for the Russians – and the ship was released. ■

### Ukrainians win wages in India

A BACK pay settlement totalling US\$122,327 has been won for the 28-strong Ukrainian crew of a Vietnamese government-owned ship which arrived in Bombay, India, with the crew complaining to the ITF that they had not been paid for six months. ITF Inspector Maruti Rethrekar immediately approached the managers of the Honduras-flag vessel, Katran Shipping, of Hong Kong, for the back pay. He also secured the supply of provisions to the ship and fares to repatriate the crew to Odessa. ■

**Action checklist**

- Governments must retain final control over market access and market participation to be able to, when necessary, curb the negative effects of competition on safety compliance and safety standards.

- All aviation safety regulators should have one single mission: ensuring the highest safety standards. Commercial considerations should not play any part in the aviation authority function.

- Governments must provide the necessary resources for the increasingly difficult tasks of monitoring and

inspecting the implementation of safety rules in a more competitive, complex and globalised industry.

- ICAO must have its role as the specialist and authoritative, inter-governmental organisation governing the world's aviation system maintained and reinforced.

- International harmonisation of safety rules should be on the principle of producing a set of rational efficient international rules operating to the highest safety standard.

- Operators must retain direct control and responsibility over aircraft maintenance and other

major aspects of operational safety.

- Operators must retain direct responsibility for all staff with safety-related functions. This must include high training standards with a premium placed on experience and stability of employment. All staff with safety-sensitive duties should be state licensed.

- Trade union organisations should be consulted by national aviation authorities, and bodies involved in international harmonisation of rules, and be fully involved in accident investigation.

*'Not only have governments failed to provide national aviation authorities with the extra monitoring resources required, they have also begun to lower the standards themselves.'*

# Crisis of safety

IN the last six months a string of aviation disasters has led to an unprecedented crisis of public confidence in aviation safety. For the first time there have been mass refusals by passengers to board individual flights because of concerns about safety. Moreover the public and the media are making a direct link between deregulation and safety.

The airline industry argues vigorously that safety is never compromised by commercial considerations. The reality of course is that safety involves significant operational costs, including the thoroughness and efficiency of maintenance checks, the age of aircraft, the training level of employees, the working hours and fatigue levels of both ground staff and air crew. All of these come under fierce pressure in a climate of competition.

This should mean extra vigilance backed by extra resources for safety compliance, plus checks and monitoring by regulatory bodies to ensure that cost cutting is not done at the expense of safety requirements. Yet economic liberalisation has not been matched by any significant strengthening of safety monitoring and enforcement of standards.

Not only have governments failed to provide national aviation authorities with the extra monitoring resources required, they have also begun to lower the standards themselves. International competition has put new pressures on the national aviation authorities. Those which set higher safety standards are seen as putting their airlines at a competitive disadvantage.

The international body which sets international safety standards is the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). But in an economic climate dominated by liberalisation and

deregulation there have been serious attempts to reduce ICAO's role and to have civil aviation treated as just another international commercial service dealt with by the World Trade Organization. So far it has been successfully argued that the particular safety and infrastructure needs of aviation make it a special case.

One of ICAO's strengths is that it involves the participation of almost every nation flying air services. One of its weaknesses, however, is that while ICAO sets international standards it depends on individual member states to enforce them. Commitment on paper to ICAO standards has not always translated into the monitoring and inspection resources needed for compliance.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of the United States has attacked the lack of safety oversight by ICAO. The FAA has undertaken its own safety audit of other countries (International Aviation Assessment Program), which has resulted in restrictions on air traffic between the United States and a number of other countries.

**A single mission**

It is national aviation authorities, however, which have been buffeted most strongly by the dominating ideology of liberalisation during the last decade. There has been a change of culture demanded. Aviation authorities have been variously expected to reduce their own costs, become commercially self sustaining, to promote national commercial aviation interests, as well as continue to regulate an increasingly complex industry.

In the wake of the ValuJet crash last May the

**Safety casebook**

■ Until recently Aerolíneas Argentinas flew its scheduled passengers on routes from Miami to Mexico using a US charter carrier Air Atlantic. The charter carrier crew costs were one third lower than those of the Argentinian national carrier. Cabin crew were hired as casual employees. In May 1996 the FAA grounded Air Atlantic because of concern at the lack of cabin crew training standards. This was the first time a US airline had ever been grounded for this reason.

■ Air Atlanta is a charter carrier based mainly in Manchester in the UK and carrying British tourists. Yet the UK civil aviation authority has no remit for inspecting its safety standards, as the airline and its fleet are registered in Iceland. Recent press reports in Reykjavik have focused on a leaked Icelandic civil aviation authority document listing a catalogue of maintenance problems in Air Atlanta aircraft which are 20-25 years old. Aircraft maintenance workers are employed on individual contracts and are not allowed union protection.

■ The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recently froze flights by the Ecuadorian carrier Ecuatoriana into the US as the result of an inspection of the country's safety standards. However, the recently privatised carrier is now owned by the Brazilian airline VASP. VASP has foiled the FAA sanctions by registering the Ecuatoriana aircraft in Brazil, putting in Brazilian cockpit crews, and resuming services to the US.

■ On 13 June a Garuda Indonesia DC-10 bound for Bali failed to take off at Fukuoka airport in Japan and caught fire. Three passengers were killed and more than 100 injured. Out of 260 passengers 256 were Japanese. All the cabin crew were Indonesian. It has been reported that none of them was able to issue evacuation instructions in Japanese and that this almost certainly resulted in more serious injuries to passengers trying to get out of the aircraft. In the late 1970s Japanese interpreters had been assigned on board Garuda Japanese flights. These were dismissed in 1990 by the company after they joined the Kaniko Roren union and demanded status as permanent employees rather than as casual staff.

FAA itself has come under fire. In particular there has been new concern over its "dual mission" to promote the industry's interests and to regulate it. ValuJet had been a high profile favourite of the Department of Transportation, a kind of deregulation role model. The FAA is effectively beholden to the DOT. Investigation into ValuJet's safety record showed a long record of safety violations logged by the FAA, while the DOT continued to publicly promote ValuJet as a low cost carrier success story.

A similar story is repeated elsewhere, particularly in countries where governments have enthusiastically promoted deregulation. The UK Civil Aviation Authority has come under similar fire for its "dual mission". A current review of safety regulations in Australia has already been fiercely criticised for allowing the industry too much influence.

The Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA) in Europe is the club of national aviation authorities which is harmonising European safety rules, and has a major influence on aviation standards around the world. The JAA's need for consensus among its members (pursuing 25 conflicting sets of national economic interest), however, has frequently overridden safety considerations. Instead of harmonising standards upwards to the safest level, the JAA has engaged in a process of brokering and averaging out.

**New entrants**

National aviation authorities have to cope with an industry which has radically changed from that of 10 or 15 years ago. One of the key differences is the sheer number of new operators. Aviation authorities around the world which had formerly only been responsible for perhaps one international and one domestic carrier are now responsible for monitoring an influx of new entrants which frequently lack experience in the industry or proper financial resources to keep to regulated safety standards.

Low cost carriers are not only competitors to the major airlines, forcing them in turn to reduce their costs, but they are increasingly being incorporated within the established carriers.

Through wet leasing and franchising a passenger who buys an air ticket with an established carrier may find themselves at some point in their journey changing onto a low cost new entrant.

**Casualised and fragmented**

Deregulation has not only affected the number and quality of air carriers flying passengers. The whole structure of the industry has altered so that what was once a single process in the provision of an airline operation under the control of one central management has now been decentralised and dispersed. Instead of providing their own loading, cleaning, catering and even security services, many airlines now prefer to contract these out.

Airline work is being casualised and de-professionalised with permanent full time jobs being replaced by casual and temporary jobs. Employee turnover has become much higher in the industry. Most airlines recruit and train their own crews but there is a growing trend to attempt to contract out even these jobs to recruitment agencies.

Yet human error by airline crews is recognised as the single most significant cause of aircraft safety incidents. Safety experts are making it clear that the competence and training of staff must be given a higher priority. They are recommending more thorough training approaches involving greater co-ordination between flight deck, cabin and ground crews, requiring more training investment in more categories of staff, and giving a premium to a stable staff, rather than a high staff turnover.

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## 10 YEARS AGO

ITF News,  
September 1986

### Affiliates act against apartheid

AN attempt by a Dutch-flag cargo ship, the *Heemskergracht*, to beat the 12-month old ban by Australian dockers and seafarers on South African trade was defeated by the threat of widespread strike action in early September. The Waterside Workers' Federation and other ITF affiliates have a general policy of boycotting all South African-flag ships or South African cargoes for a minimum period of 48 hours.

The *Heemskergracht* tried to beat this ban by discharging its cargo at a small fishing port not organised by the WWF.

On learning of this attempt to evade the union ban, WWF members in the main Australian ports threatened to strike against other ships unless the

discharging stopped and it was moved to a port using registered dockers.

The union treated this action not only as an attack on the South Africa ban but also as a threat to the dock work register.

On this occasion the threat of general industrial action was successful in stopping the discharge of the ship. With most of its cargo lying on the waterside at Eden, the *Heemskergracht* moved to Port Kembla where it was unloaded for a day and then subjected to a further 48-hour boycott.

## Forthcoming ITF meetings

- **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**
- **Flag of Convenience Seminar, Istanbul, 1-4 October**
- **Management Committee and Executive Board, London, 23-25 October**

## 20 YEARS AGO

ITF News,  
September 1976

### Detention of George Fernandes

ON 20 September, the ITF arranged a press conference in London for Mrs Leila Fernandes, the wife of George Fernandes, President of the ITF-affiliated All India Railwaymen's Federation.

Mr Fernandes had to go into hiding in order to carry on opposition against the repressive actions of the government of Mrs Indira Gandhi following the declaration of a state of emergency by that government. In June of this year he was arrested and has since been imprisoned without trial. He has also been subjected to torture by the authorities.

In her statement to the journalists, Leila Fernandes detailed how she and her small son had been forced to flee

from India following the state of emergency and was now carrying on the fight to free her husband and other political prisoners in India from her temporary home in the United States, where she has already met a number of trade union and political leaders.

George Fernandes had initially been held and interrogated in police custody, but had then been taken to a military camp and tortured. It is now known that he is being held in solitary confinement in Hissar, in a cell which has no walls, but only wire mesh and piping around it. Fernandes is exposed to the elements and, at night, floodlights continually prevent him from sleeping.

## OBITUARIES

PP Narayanan,  
Francis A Hagan,  
Gustaf Klang,  
Martti Komulainen,  
Kristján Sigurdur  
Adalsteinsson

■ Veteran Malaysian trade union leader **PP Narayanan**, who was president of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions from 1975 to 1992, has died, at the age of 73. The first ICFTU President to come from a developing nation, Narayanan's enduring legacy will be the strong links between the international union movement and the regional organisations which he – a former President of the ICFTU's Asia/Pacific regional organisation – built up steadily over the years.

■ **Francis A Hagan**, former Secretary General of the Sierra Leone National Seamen's Union and later Director of Education at the Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC), died on 17 June, aged 66.

■ **Gustaf Klang**, who served as vice president of the Swedish Seafarers' Union during the 1970s, has died, aged 73. Klang's lasting memorial is the world-renowned seafarers' centre at Rosenhill with its excellent leisure and sporting facilities which was opened largely thanks to his drive and initiative.

■ **Martti Komulainen**, who was elected as second vice president of the Finnish Seafarers' Union in May of this year, died on 16 June, aged only 49.

■ **Kristján Sigurdur Adalsteinsson**, who held the presidency of the Icelandic Seafarers' and Fishermen's Union from 1961 to 1963, died on 14 March, at the age of 89.

FROM THE  
LABOUR PRESS

Maritime  
Workers'  
Journal  
Maritime  
Union of  
Australia

# Seafarer abuse out of hand

BURMESE seafarer San (not his real name) knew he was approaching Australian shores. He did not need to study the charts or search on the horizon for land. He needed only to look at his dinner bowl.

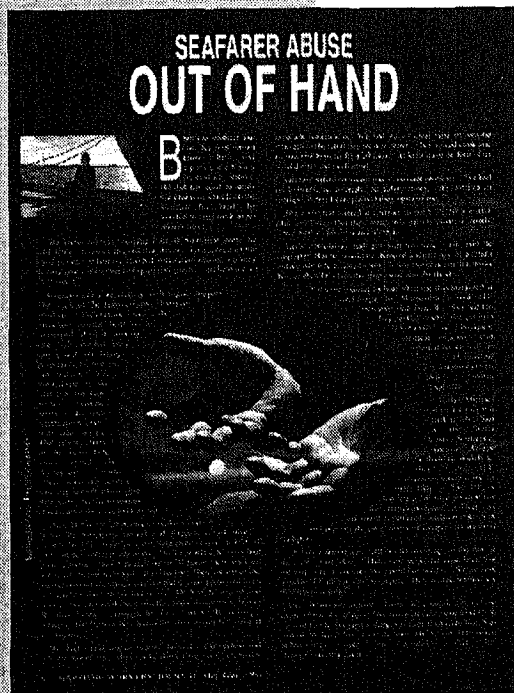
"We knew we were coming into an Australian port," he told Maritime Workers' Journal, "because up until that day we were served a little mouldy rice. When we reached Australian waters, we were getting generous serves of top quality grain – the best we've ever tasted."

Australia has a reputation with rogue ship-owners. The work of the International Transport Workers' Federation and the maritime unions here is so successful that, if nothing else, half-starved crew can count on being properly fed while in our waters. The most desperate can also rely on help with wages, medical care and repatriation once their ship moors. This is why many of the worst FOC ships avoid the Australian trade. Those who do venture into our waters often give their crew special treatment – at least until they are back at sea.

San was one of 20 Burmese seafarers on board the Singapore-owned and flagged *Wan Ling*. (The ITF classifies some Singapore vessels as FOC if they employ foreign seafarers.) For 13 months the crew had gone without. They laboured up to 70 hours each week on only half the pay they had signed for. Then, on top of the hunger pains and exhaustion, San had his hand mangled in an accident on the job off Indonesia. He lost the top of one finger. The captain docked him his medical expenses. It

was the final straw, enough to drive him to the union, whatever retribution the captain threatened once he returned to Singapore...

..."We were waiting for him when the ship bunkered at anchorage in Melbourne," said ITF delegate Matt Purcell. "San had his bag packed ready. We got him US\$6,000 in backpay, medical expenses and repatriation as well as his Melbourne accommodation and living expenses." ■



FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE  
DES OUVRIERS DU TRANSPORT  
FEDERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL  
DE LOS TRABAJADORES DEL TRANSPORTE  
INTERNATIONELLA  
TRANSPORTARBETAREFEDERATIONEN  
国際運輸労連  
INTERNATIONALE  
TRANSPORTARBEITER-FÖDERATION  
МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ  
ТРАНСПОРТНИКОВ

