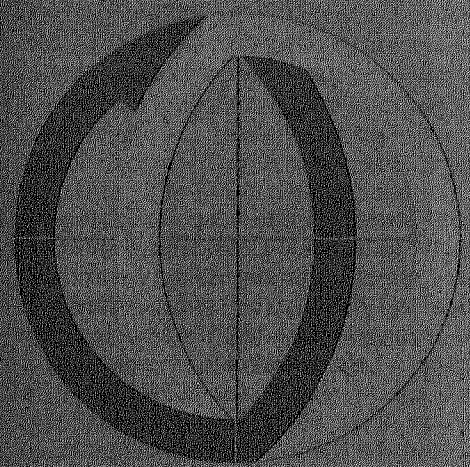


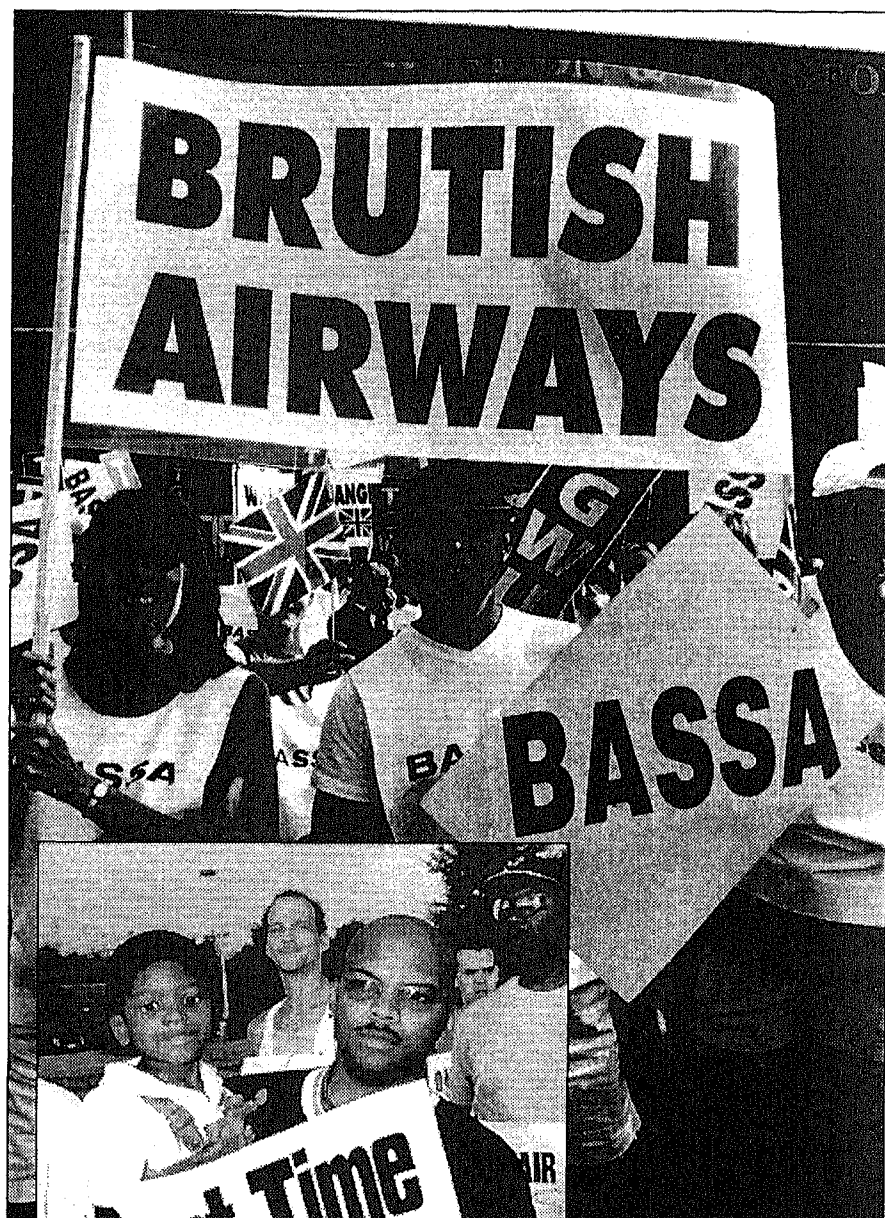
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No. 5 1297



British Airways and United Parcel Service: Victory in disputes with an international dimension

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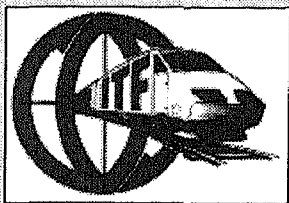
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- ITF News is published by the ITF six times a year in English, French, German, Japanese, Russian, Spanish and Swedish.
- This issue was published on 17 September 1997.

Fighting for the future of work

The British Airways and United Parcel Service disputes

July and August saw two landmark union victories of critical importance for all workers in the international transport industry.

At British Airways a highly effective action defeated a ferocious company attempt to break the Transport and General Workers' Union's (TGWU) organisation of 9,000 cabin crew. At UPS 185,000 employees in the IBT teamsters' union, in the largest US strike action for a generation, won a major victory over a company which ships 5 per cent of the US gross domestic product.

While both disputes involved traditional concerns about pay and conditions, at the heart of both disputes was a struggle about the future nature of work - about whether the jobs that today's huge global companies are creating are to be real jobs with permanence, security and career prospects or whether work is to become temporary, impermanent and casual.

Both companies are huge transnational corporations making enormous profits. UPS is the world's largest air cargo corporation as well as the biggest private sector employer in the US. BA is the largest international airline. Its alliance with American Airlines will create the world's largest mega-carrier.

UPS employs a third of its workforce as part-time workers and is developing networks of self-employed subcontractors who operate under the UPS corporate logo. BA's goal is to create a younger, cheaper (and more easily disposable) cabin crew workforce. Its plans for subcontracting and franchising routes to low cost airlines flying in the BA livery have led some industry specialists to comment on the creation of the "virtual airline". Both companies see unions as major obstacles to achieve these goals and have been prepared to move ruthlessly against them.

In both cases the public, reflecting increasing public concern about job insecurity and the quality of work, was sympathetic to the union case. In fact, the customer friendly image promoted both for BA cabin staff and for UPS drivers backfired when customers sided with the workers and not with the employer.

The disputes were very different in one basic aspect. The majority of UPS operations at present are concentrated in the US whereas 90 per cent of BA's operations are international. Nevertheless, in both strikes there were important international dimensions.

UPS knows that its future lies

ITF General Secretary David Cockcroft writes



as a global package distribution service. The company, while suffering industrial paralysis at home, gave enormous importance to maintaining its overseas services. Solidarity action by ITF affiliates therefore dealt the company a serious psychological blow by showing that the company could not guarantee even its international services.

In both disputes it was recognised that picket lines had to be made global, and both unions worked closely with the ITF to do just that. During the UPS strike the Teamsters' Union located campaign staff at the ITF headquarters in London to help co-ordinate international action. In the BA dispute, the TGWU picket line stretched all the way to JFK airport with some help from the ITF and the US Machinists' union. ITF affiliates were ready to prioritise the dispute of another union in another country. The ÖTV, for example, set up a permanent strike committee to give support to the TGWU in the BA strike of the kind it would normally only organise for its own disputes.

These developments reflect a shift in tactics and in thinking: an increased recognition that when disputes occur in companies which have adopted a global expansion strategy, unions will only win if they too think globally.

We cannot underestimate the importance of these victories against two of the most powerful and aggressive global transport companies, which have led the way in pushing for global deregulation and new forms of labour flexibility, job insecurity and downgrading of work.

These disputes mark a defining point in labour's capacity to find new tactics and organisational strength for taking on such struggles.

'When disputes occur in companies which have adopted a global expansion strategy, unions will only win disputes if they too think globally.'

■ "As well as smiling at you, we can save your life," says this poster produced by ASSA, the ITF-affiliated Mexican cabin crew union. This is a message at the heart of the ITF campaign against sexism in civil aviation, which stresses the professional nature of cabin crew work in contrast to the glamorous image presented by many airlines.

Back at work: Thai female cabin crew

Thai Airways female cabin crew no longer have to be under 45, thanks to a successful campaign for equal treatment with men which was waged by their union with ITF backing.

The airline is now redeploying women who had been transferred to ground duties as a result of the discriminatory age limit.

The ITF-affiliated Thai Airways International State Enterprise Employees' Association won an assurance from the airline last year that the age limit for women flight attendants would be increased from 45 to 60 – the same as for men.

Now that this decision is being implemented, the union has written a letter of thanks to the ITF. "We would like you to share the joy of



this success and at the same time show our gratitude," says Vice President Chamsri Sukchotiratana. "We always remember that we could not have gone this far without your kind co-operation and concern."

The ITF supported the Thai union in its fight to lower the age limit for Thai Airways female cabin crew as part of its campaign, launched earlier this year, against sex discrimination in the civil aviation industry.

As part of its campaign the Thai union handed out "No sexual discrimination" stickers to passengers. ☺

Proposed new labour laws in Indonesia have been denounced by the ITF and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) as a step backwards in human and trade union rights. The Indonesian government is being urged to amend its plans so that the Manpower Bill currently before the country's House of Representatives conforms with standards laid down by the International Labour Organisation.

According to the ITF and the ICFTU, the draft law contravenes the right to freedom of association by requiring unions to be registered and approved by the government and affiliated to the FSPSI state-approved trade union centre. In addition, it requires workers to

Warning to Indonesia over new labour law

submit the names of strike leaders and seek government permission at least 72 hours before a strike. It also bans sympathy strikes, outlaws the payment of wages during strikes and prevents strikers from staging protest marches and demonstrations.

In a letter to President Suharto, ITF General Secretary David Cockroft condemns the bill for institutionalising repressive labour practices through state intervention and

the systematic destruction of workers' collective rights.

"The ITF holds the view that the Indonesian government should endeavour to fulfil its solemn commitment, repeatedly made to the ILO, to reform its existing laws and regulations on industrial relations," he adds.

● The decision of the new administration in Hong Kong to suspend laws protecting union rights has run into criticism from the ITF. Failure to reinstate the legislation, which includes the right to bargain collectively, will lead to a complaint to the International Labour Organisation, the ITF has warned.



Arrests in Burma spark ITF protests

The ITF has protested in the strongest terms following the detention of an official of the ITF-affiliated Seafarers' Union of Burma. Khin Kyaw was arrested in Yangon on 13 June by officers of the National Intelligence Bureau of Myanmar (Burma). Also arrested was Myo Aung Thant of the All Burma Petro-Chemical Corporation Union, a fellow member of the executive committee of the Burmese Federation of Trade Unions.

The country's military rulers have been warned that they must unconditionally release both men or else risk possible action by ITF affiliates against Burmese economic interests, including aircraft and ships.

In addition, General Secretary David Cockroft has threatened to lodge a formal complaint against Burma with the International Labour Organisation.

"The arrest of trade union activists for the exercise of legitimate trade union activities is a flagrant violation of internationally agreed trade union rights, full respect of which is binding on the Union of Myanmar by virtue of its membership of the ILO," Cockroft writes in his letter to General Than Shwe, chair of the country's ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council.

Affiliated unions are meanwhile being urged by the ITF to send letters of protest to their Burmese embassy.

Khin Kyaw was detained on account of his trade union activities in 1993 before being released by a court for lack of evidence against him.

He was tortured and his wife sexually abused.

Trade union role in the overthrow of a dictator

by Jean-Pascal Motyngesa Bothola,
STPM (union of port workers),
Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 18 October 1996 Zaireans took up arms under the direction of revolutionary leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila to attack the dictatorial power of Mobutu Sese-Seko in the town of d'Uvira in South Kivu in the Zairean Republic – now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was the start of a civil war which ended on 17 May 1997 with the taking of Kinshasa, the headquarters of institutions of the Republic. The seven-month war of liberation cost the lives of more than 250,000 Rwandans, Burundians and Zaireans: 210 days of enormous suffering, grief and destruction.

This civil war was the result of an uprising of an entire nation taken hostage by 300 families comprising at least 2,000 people. They imposed a dictatorship during 32 years which cost the lives of more than a million citizens and submitted the 50 million Zaireans/Congolese to slavery, exploitation and disgraceful misery in a country scandalously rich with the complicity of certain powerful Western neo-colonialists.

During the seven months of popular uprising, transport workers' trade unions

in the Democratic Republic of the Congo affiliated to the ITF actively participated in the overthrow of the Mobutu dictatorship. They ordered their members to sabotage cargo planes, trains, ships, lorries, ports and airports in order to hinder the government of the dictatorship to attack the forces charged by the people to liberate the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire). Dockers and seafarers have played a very important role in the execution of orders from the unions.

Transport workers' trade unions asked their affiliates in the liberated provinces to make their skills available to the revolutionary forces free of charge and to stop all collaboration with the military and governmental agencies in provinces not yet liberated.

The fall of Kinshasa on 17 May 1997 is the crowning of efforts by an entire people engaged in liberating themselves from the servitude of a group of gangsters directed by Mobutu Sese-Seko.

'Transport unions ordered their members to sabotage cargo planes, trains, ships, lorries, ports and airports...'

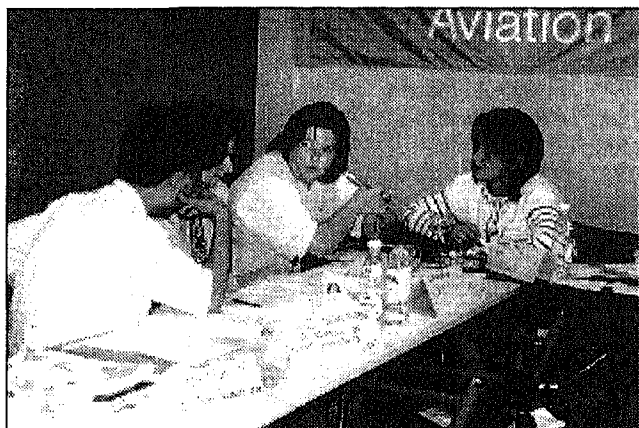


Victorious rebel troops remove a poster greeting the deposed Zairean president. Photo: Popperfoto

The courage and bravery of transport workers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo grouped together by our affiliates, the FNTT, STPM-FLI, Synagon, STL, Sytracom and SMSZ merit the esteem and congratulations from the ITF and its affiliates.

Our Zairean/Congolese friends have followed the example of the leaders of the ITF in the 1940s who organised great actions against the Nazis in Europe for the construction of a democratic, strong and prosperous Europe.

First ITF youth meeting



Delegates at the first ever ITF meeting for young workers in Brussels on 29 August debated flexibilisation and the need for job security for young people in the transport industry. The meeting, hosted by the aviation branch of Belgian affiliate CGSP, was attended by 21 delegates from 11 different countries.

Co-ordinators for Central and Eastern Europe

With the expansion of membership in Central and Eastern Europe, the ITF has been asking affiliates about the best way of co-ordinating and stepping up activities.

As a result of this consultation, which has taken place since the ITF European Committee meeting in June, a network of sub-regional co-ordinators is being created, with five trade union officials being appointed: Jacek Cegielski (Poland) for the Baltic states; Vladimir Svalina (Croatia) for the Alp/Adria region; Josef Halaj (Czech Republic) for the Visigrad group of countries; Mikhail Lyakhov (Russia) for the former Soviet nations; and

Gheorghe Caraiani (Romania) for the Black Sea area.

The new co-ordinators will have the task of developing co-operation between transport unions in the countries they represent as well as of recruiting new unions into the ITF. Where appropriate, western European affiliates are also included in these groups. The new co-ordinators will meet each year with the Executive Board members from the sub-region to review progress.

ITF's global response

As governments around the world and postal service monopolies, UPS intends to become the dominant global package delivery service. During the Teamster strike the company took enormous pains to publicise its assurance that its international operations would remain untouched, and in particular its transatlantic services.

The ITF, playing on the company's worldwide slogan "Consider it Done", immediately launched an ITF "Consider it stopped" campaign. Working with Teamster staff based in the ITF offices in London,

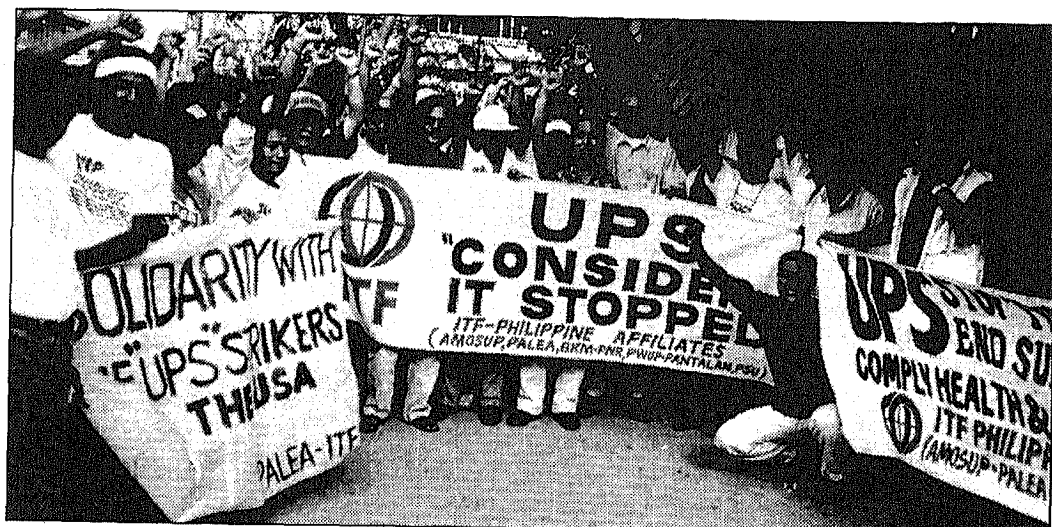


photographs (above) were released showing UPS aircraft grounded at the UPS hub at East Midlands airport in England, blowing a hole in the company claims of "business as usual" in its international operations. A Teamster campaign team toured key UPS workplaces in Europe.

By the time the ITF had called an emergency UPS World Council meeting, and the announcement by ÖTV Vice President Wolfgang Warburg that the unions in Germany (where UPS has its largest hub and distribution centre outside the United States) would join a solidarity action, CNN was sending out global news bulletins reporting on the ITF campaign and the growing likelihood of action by its affiliates spreading support for the Teamsters into Europe.

The strike was settled two days before the UPS World trade union council meeting was scheduled to take place.

The significance of the victory was recognised by unions outside the United States who deal with this global company. Wolfgang Warburg says: "The victory was important for the international trade union movement. The UPS world trade union council was able to produce counter pressure against UPS management." ■



■ International solidarity: ITF affiliates in the Philippines organised a "Consider it Stopped" protest outside the UPS offices in Manila.

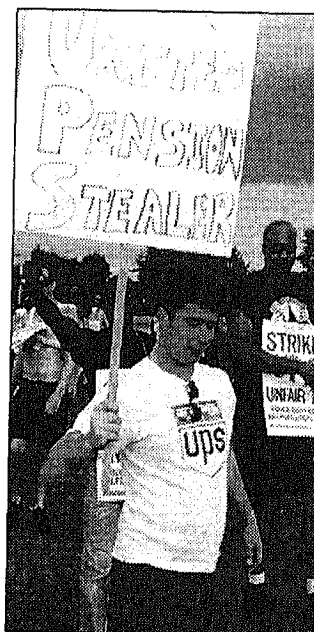
UPS strike victory

The largest labour strike in the United States for 40 years took place this August, ending on the eve of US Labor Day in a comprehensive victory for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

From the beginning the strike was awesome in its scale; with hundreds of picket lines coast to coast across the US drawn from an extraordinary 185,000 strikers.

In an impressive act of solidarity 2,000 UPS pilots in the Independent Pilots' Association refused to cross Teamster picket lines stranding UPS aircraft in the United States and across the world.

The significance of this victory is not only its scale, and the boost it gives to the US labour movement which is regaining confidence after years of retreat. The basic issues about job security and the nature of work being fought out in the dispute clearly resonated strongly with the American public (see box overleaf). Moreover, during the strike the Clinton administration re-



sisted the company demands for a government ban against the strike.

UPS is a gigantic company. It shifts an estimated 5 per cent of the US GDP, handling 12 million packages per day. UPS made \$1 billion profit last year.

Yet nearly two thirds of workers in this vast and prof-

itable company are on part time contracts. Their hourly rates are much less than those of the full time workers.

Jobs in UPS are not only part time and casual. UPS is number one in OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) complaints in America. The company now pays more than \$1 million per day in workers' health and safety compensation.

The impact on US businesses of a UPS shut down was devastating. Yet the Teamsters' fight for secure and safe jobs captured widespread public and media support.

Victory was secured, however, by the solidness of the strike which brought UPS to a halt across the United States and which threatened to spread to the company's much smaller but highly important global services.

On 18 August, following 15 days of strike action, after an initially intransigent and aggressive posture, company resistance collapsed and the management acceded to virtually all the union demands.

The company's problems are still not over, however, as they are now in dispute with the pilots over unresolved contract issues.

The Teamster victory in-

'Nearly two thirds of workers in this vast and profitable company are on part time contracts. Their hourly rates are much less than those of the full time workers.'

Continued overleaf

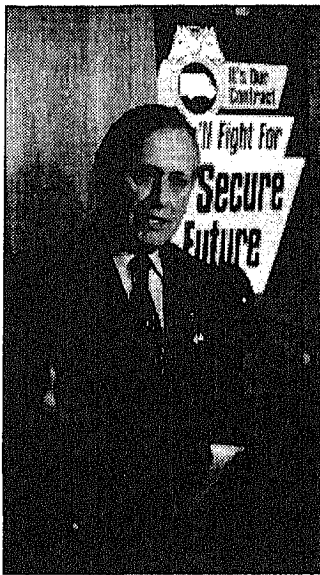
Open letter to trade unions and trade union members around the world who supported the Teamsters' strike at UPS

It is a great honour to report that, due in great part to the solidarity demonstrated by unions and workers around the world, the 15-day strike by Teamsters at UPS in the United States has ended in a resounding victory for the workers. This victory signals a resurgence of the trade union movement in the United States.

The broad support our strike received, not only from trade unionists but the general public, demonstrates a rejection of a global corporate vision which embraces an economy maintained by super-profits on the one hand and degraded part-time, sub-contracted and temporary jobs on the other hand.

In this strike we have re-learned the age old lesson that when workers stand united together they will prevail. We have also learned that at a global company such as UPS, workers' solidarity must extend across all borders.

Without a doubt it can be said that the 185,000-person foundation of this strike was tremendously strengthened by the often courageous international solidarity actions



■ Carey: remarkable response.

taken by union members around the world.

The extent of this international solidarity was made possible in great part by the work of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and the member unions of the ITF World Council of UPS Unions which had been formed only last February. The speed and force in which the ITF World Council responded was truly remarkable to witness. The Teamsters will redouble our efforts to strengthen this international trade union structure still in its infancy.

Most important of all, I want to extend the thanks of the striking Teamsters at UPS to those workers in other countries who risked their income and sometimes their jobs to support their sisters and brothers on strike in America. To these workers our union pledges solidarity and stands ready to support your struggles for justice.

In solidarity,
Ron Carey, General President
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Washington DC 20001, USA

UPS victory

From previous page

volves not only pay increases, improvements in health and safety procedures, pension arrangements, and increased negotiating rights for the union, but most significantly of all the company has agreed to the Teamster demand that 10,000 new full time jobs be created out of existing part time jobs.

Teamsters' President Ron Carey says "American workers have shown that we can stand up to corporate greed."

"After 15 years of taking it on the chin, working families are telling big corporations that we will fight back. This is not just a Teamsters' victory – this is a victory for all working people."

Indeed this victory marks a defining challenge to the insatiable demands by companies for ever more labour flexibility, which will resonate far beyond the United States. ■

Working more – to earn less

"In the last three years, our economy has created over eight million jobs" claims a US politician at a fund-raising dinner to finance his campaign. At the back of the room one of the waiters mutters "I know. I've got three of them." The joke now doing the rounds in the United States speaks volumes about how the average American sees their country's glowing economic statistics.

In his book "America needs a raise" John Sweeney, the President of the AFL-CIO, recalls that between 1979 and 1995, downsizing cost the United States a staggering 34 million jobs, and while the economy generated a net gain of 23 million jobs over the same period, each of the new jobs created paid on average \$85 less per week, the equivalent of half the national minimum wage.

Sweeney believes the fall in wages is due in



part to the growth in the number of temporary workers and part-time workers, who make up the 'contingent' workforce.

"Their jobs have several things in common," explains John Sweeney, "low wages, lack of health insurance and pension plans, and little or no legal protection."

This contingent labour force is today estimated at 37 million people, a quarter of the working population in the United States, and an increase of almost double compared to 1985. Time

magazine estimates that temporary workers will make up the bulk of the US workforce by the year 2000.

Manpower Services, the biggest temp agency, has already superseded General Motors as the country's largest employer.

The result is that Americans are working more and more to earn less and less. And to make ends meet, more than 8 million of them have at least two jobs. ■

(Source ICFTU)



New Assistant Secretary

Jane Barrett (above) is the new Assistant Secretary in the Inland Transport Sections. Jane, who has been working for the past three years as a research assistant in the ITF seafarers' section, is a former General Secretary of the South African Transport and General Workers' Union. She takes over from Asbjørn Wahl, who has returned to Norway to take up a post with the Norwegian Municipal Workers' Union. ■

Zimbabwe award must be paid

The Zimbabwe Amalgamated Railwaymen's Union (ZARU) has won a ruling that its 1996 wage increase must be paid in full. The ITF-affiliated union called its members on the National Railways of Zimbabwe out on strike on 9 July seeking implementation of last year's pay award. Two months earlier, an arbitration committee had ordered payment of the 9.25 per cent increase, but the employers disputed the ruling, alleging procedural irregularities, and the matter was referred to the high court. After the railways ignored a union ultimatum demanding implementation of the award by 30 June, ZARU decided on industrial action. The dispute, which paralysed the national rail network and cut rail links with South Africa and Botswana, ended when the Railway Employment Council ruled that the railway must pay the award, backdated to 1 July 1996. ■

World Bank representative is invited to address delegates

Restructuring to dominate rail union conference

The restructuring, fragmentation and privatisation of national railway systems will be the main talking point when representatives of rail unions from all over the world attend the ITF Railway Workers' Section Conference on 5 to 7 November.

Hosted by the German railway workers' union, the GdED, the conference will review re-

Against the background of concern over the involvement of agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in restructuring programmes in developing countries and Central and Eastern Europe, the ITF has taken the unprecedented step of inviting a senior representative from the World Bank to address the conference. He is Jean François Rischard, a World Bank Vice President.

Prior to the main section conference there will also be a meeting of ITF affiliates connected with Wisconsin Central (WC), the multinational railway company with operations currently spanning three continents.

WC's attempts to introduce driver-only and remote-shunting practices throughout its operations have caused considerable controversy.

At a special ITF conference in Budapest in October 1995, unions acknowledged the need to develop a more co-ordinated and unified response to meet the challenges faced by the fragmentation of their industry. It was decided that the ITF should formulate an action programme promoting co-ordination and joint action between workers at regional and international levels.

ITF Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers commented before the Berlin conference: "This is an era of unprecedented change on the railways and hundreds of thousands of jobs have disappeared. The railways are vital to ensure a sustainable transport system for

the future and they should not be restricted to a narrow commercial role. The railway unions are committed to the railways as a public service." ■



cent developments in the separation of rail infrastructure from operating undertakings. Delegates will assess the effect this has had on employment, working conditions and union recognition.

Transport costs, such as charging for infrastructure usage and the internalising of external costs between transport modes, will also be discussed.

'The railways are vital to ensure a sustainable transport system for the future and they should not be restricted to a narrow commercial role.'

The Road Transport Workers' Section of the ITF is compiling information concerning the provision of off-road parking areas or overnight accommodation for professional drivers on main driving routes.

The section wants to hear from affiliates in countries where there is legislation stipulating that rest areas

ITF off-road parking survey

should be provided as a standard amenity - or where they must be incorporated in the design of new roads. Equally, ITF officers at head office in London are keen to receive information from countries where there are no amenities or where programmes are underway to construct them ■

British Airways:

For 72 hours from 9 to 11 July British Airways was hit by the most damaging strike action in its history. The 9,000 strong cabin crew members of TGWU-BASSA reduced BA's operations to a skeleton.

The strike received unprecedented international support from ITF unions. The extraordinary effectiveness of the union's action, which cost the company £125 million, forced BA to abandon plans to break the union and impose radical new conditions without the union's consent.

As part of the settlement BA withdrew threats to discipline strikers and restored union facilities at London's Heathrow and Gatwick airports.

'Many airlines in different countries warned staff that they would match any measures that BA might take.'

For almost a year before the strike British Airways had made vague but sweeping announcements about a re-organisation and cost saving programme under its Business Efficiency Plan. These included plans to introduce massive levels of contracting out and increased work flexibility to the extent that industry specialists began to talk of BA becoming a "virtual airline". What was certainly clear was that BA intended to drastically reduce costs in order to maintain its competitive lead in the worldwide aviation industry.

BA has been a consistent industry pioneer in introducing new ways of squeezing their workforce for increased productivity and lower labour costs. This new plan, as on previous occasions, would certainly trigger another downward spiral of pressure on working conditions among all major airlines.

Many airlines in different countries gave staff warnings that they would match any measures that BA might take. Moreover if BA succeeded in breaking the union it would be a serious blow

against unionism in the worldwide aviation industry. It was for these reasons that the ITF Civil Aviation Section Committee made international support for the TGWU's defence of employee conditions against BA's new plans an International Strategic Priority.

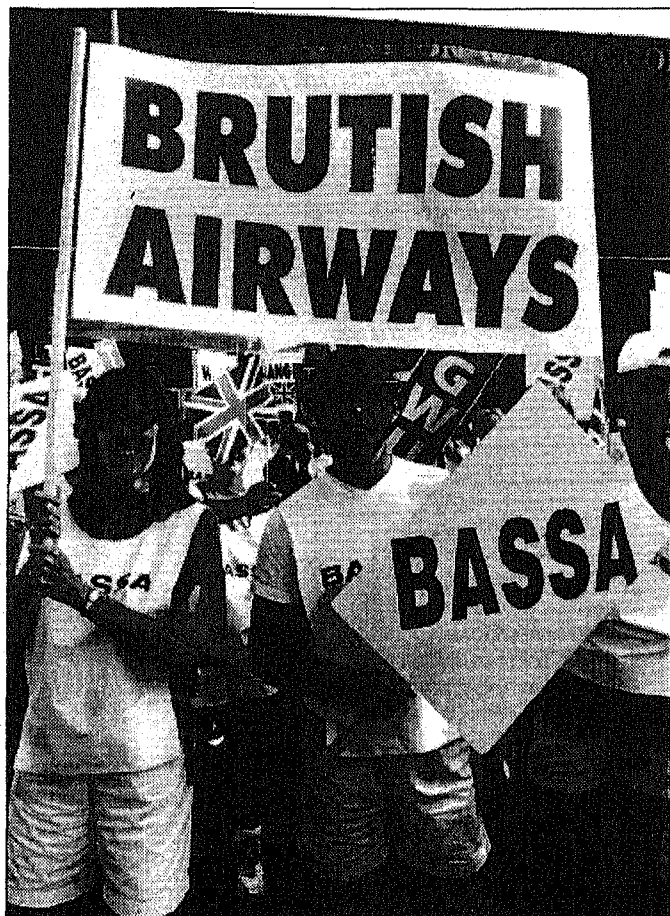
One of BA's key aims was a radical restructuring of cabin crew working arrangements. This re-organisation involved working longer hours, a pay freeze, as well as developing a new workforce of younger and less experienced but super-cheap cabin crew.

But the TGWU did not even get the chance to put forward its views on these proposals. The company already had a strategy for putting into place its cabin crew plans. The company reached an agreement with a minority union, Cabin Crew 89, and then refused to allow the much larger TGWU-BASSA either to discuss or vote upon the proposals.

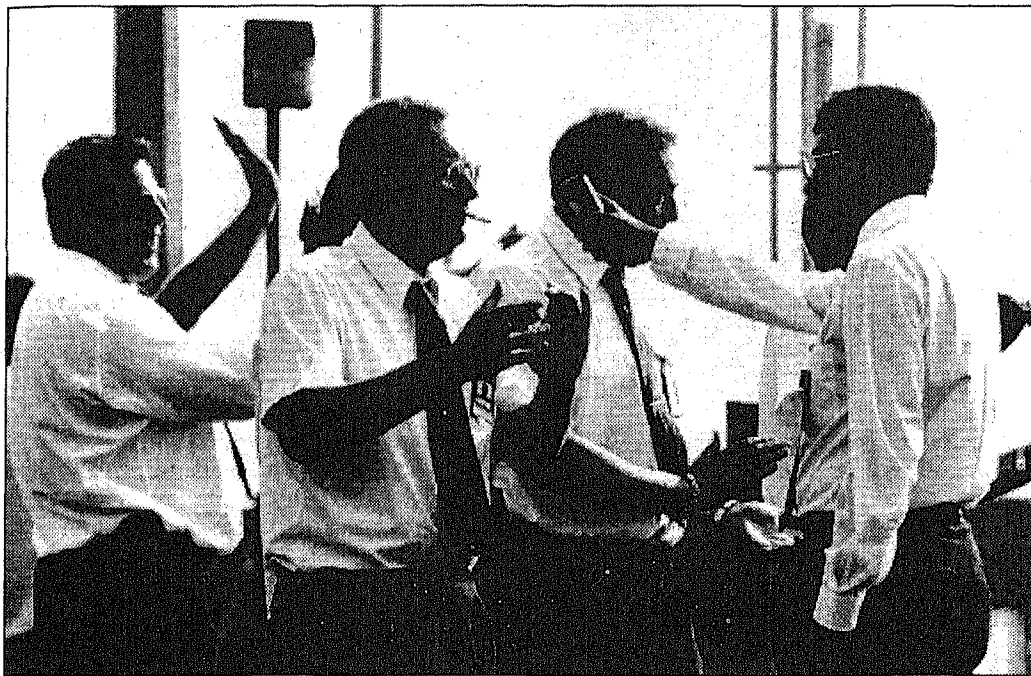
At the same time the company unleashed a blizzard of threats against TGWU union members. According to George Ryde "The com-

■ Union members were subject to intense intimidation from the company. During the strike ballot BA wrote to all union members informing them that any one going on strike would be dismissed and might be individually sued by the company for any losses resulting from strike action. Union members were phoned at home by managers with the same threat. There is no legal protection for strikers in Britain. This did not prevent a 3-1 vote in favour of strike action. During the strike BA managers took photographs and video film of all individuals on the picket line. The thuggish actions of the company earned it the tag of "Brutish Airways".

Photo: Andrew Ward



How union-busting



■ BA ground staff defy their manager's orders to return to their workplace. Vehicle drivers had gathered to applaud striking TGWU-BASSA cabin crew members.

Photo: Andrew Wiard

'The company simply said employees must accept these new conditions. It said there will be no negotiation with the union, and if anyone follows a union call for a strike they will be sacked.'

pany simply said employees must accept these new conditions. It said there will be no negotiation with the union, and if anyone follows a union call for a strike they will be sacked."

When the union balloted its members, in addition to issuing threats to union members (see box overleaf), the company openly publicised its preparations for accelerated training of strike breaking cabin crew and its readiness to hire strike breaking aircraft from other countries. Indeed it increasingly appeared that the company's real goal was to get rid of TGWU-BASSA and replace it with a more compliant employee organisation. During the strike action leaders of the minority Cabin Crew 89 union regularly attacked the TGWU in the media.

With such assistance and advance preparations the company appeared to be arrogantly confident that employee resistance would crumble. They were proved very wrong. Not only did the union stand and fight but the company's crude tactics of intimidation quickly brought public sympathy for the strikers.

In the three day action, support for the strike, far from crumbling away, hardened. The union came out of the action stronger than when it went in. When TGWU General Secretary Bill Morris offered "a pause for peace" the company had to accept it could no longer refuse to negotiate with the union.

Even with this peace period it was some time before the company faced up to the inevitability of bargaining its way out of trouble. On 15 September the company at last signed a commitment to negotiate on the two key is-

sues of cost savings and pay restructuring, which prior to the strike it had declared were not negotiable.

This marked a major victory for the union achieved by its defeat of BA's blatant attempts to break TGWU organisation and worker morale. It is recognised as a victory of critical importance to union organisation throughout the world.

After the strike action, TGWU General Secretary Bill Morris thanked the ITF for the "magnificent support" it had given during the dispute. "We have sent a clear message to global employers that the international trade union movement is alive, viable and strong, ready to work with good employers but will not hesitate to oppose bad ones," he said.

The future programme of negotiations between BA and the TGWU will not necessarily be easy. The union has agreed to find cost savings and has already put proposals to the company. It remains to be seen whether BA has genuinely been able to come to terms with new realities, to drop its obsession with weakening cabin crew organisation, and to negotiate in good faith. An international union "BA Watch" may have to continue a little while longer.

Strikers cheered by support from around the world – see overleaf

plans were thwarted

International action put extra pressure on British Airways

Strikers cheered by support from around the world



'A fax storm snowed up the fax machine in the British Airways dispute centre, with an avalanche of letters informing BA's lawyers of their union's membership of the ITF and their total commitment to solidarity for TGWU-BASSA.'

Strike supporters walking in and out of the TGWU-BASSA strike centre in the Heathrow Park Hotel would pause on their way out to their picket line duties to read the notice board set up containing scores of solidarity messages from ITF unions all over the world. As one picket said: "I look at the board every day. Every day there are new messages there from Spain, from South Africa from Hong Kong, from Japan...everywhere. It shows we are not alone. Everyone sees this strike as a fight for basic rights which affects everyone in this industry."

The BA dispute was declared an International Strategic Priority by the ITF Civil Aviation Section Committee in November 1996. The launching of the 72-hour strike action in July 1997 brought an unprecedented solidarity campaign. The level of international support drew increasing attention from the media and hostility from BA.

Robert Ayling, BA's Chief Executive, publicly attacked the ITF in a personally written article published in The Times. After one BBC television news focus on the ITF affiliates' campaign British Airways issued a legal threat against the ITF and demanded an end to solidarity support. BA's lawyers complained that they did not know who the ITF's affiliates were. ITF affiliates obliged them with a fax storm which snowed up the fax machine in the BA dispute centre with an avalanche of letters informing them of their union's membership of the ITF and their total commitment to solidarity for TGWU-BASSA.

It is probably difficult for companies to understand that it is trade unions themselves which commit themselves to solidarity actions in support of another union in such a conflict. Below are some highlights of these actions, with apologies to unions for all the actions too numerous to include in this sample.

Hampering BA's efforts to hire in strike breaking aircraft and crews

BA constantly boasted of having ready a strike breaking army which included management staff. This army failed to materialise. BA did manage to charter around seven aircraft and crews (Ryan Air being one notable supplier). More substantial charter carriers like Martinair and Transavia in Holland had already been barred to them by Dutch union action. The largest charter carriers, however, are US companies like Tower Air, World Airways and

American Transair, which have huge fleets for undertaking large contracts for the US military. BA reportedly made approaches to all three of these carriers. The Association of Flight Attendants made it clear to Tower Air before the strike began that the union would not accept any strike breaking by the company. BA approached World Airways and American Transair. Both companies declined these contracts. In both airlines the International Brotherhood of Teamsters organises the pilots.

Spoiling BA's plans to keep transatlantic flights going as an absolute priority

Industrial solidarity actions in New York, resulting from a TGWU-BASSA picket line which magically materialised with all the required permits for mounting pickets at JFK airport, kept four jumbos on the ground and substantially delayed at least one Concorde flight. This success had a great psychological impact.

Delaying or refusing to handle other BA strike breaking flights

This was the most difficult area for civil aviation workers. Nevertheless effective industrial action was reported in Malta, Copenhagen and Helsinki which hit strike breaking flights. Members of the Zimbabwe aviation union NAWU were arrested for actions against BA at Harare airport. Shortly afterwards BA dropped its flights to Zimbabwe.

Actions by BA staff outside the UK

- BA check in staff in Paris (Roissy) went on strike for 72 hours in solidarity with the TGWU-BASSA strike.

- Representatives of cabin crew at TAT-Air Liberté addressed a BASSA mass meeting at Heathrow on the eve of the BASSA strike and promised co-ordinated actions. They lived up to their promise with lightning one day strikes which further disrupted BA's global network. TAT-Air Liberté ground staff unions organised strike action for a whole week.

Local publicity

Unions drew attention to the potential disruption to passengers through editorial copy, press conferences and interviews with local media. This countered the company's expensive damage-limitation advertising.

World Wide Web war

Throughout the dispute the ITF did battle with BA on the Internet setting up an ITF BA Strike Web Page. Affiliates were kept informed through BA Watch fax notices.

Renamed Fisheries Section launches flag of convenience campaign



■ Delegates to the ITF's Fisheries Section conference held in London on 3 to 5 September (pictured above) unanimously agreed to launch a campaign with the aim of eliminating flag of convenience fishing vessels from the high seas. An FOC collective agreement, based on the ITF's existing standard collective agreement for merchant ships, was adopted as part of the campaign.

The conference was the "most widely represented

conference the section has held to date", according to ITF General Secretary David Cockroft in his welcoming remarks to delegates.

The conference also agreed to change the name of the Fisheries Section to the "Fisheries Section".

Over 30 delegates representing unions from countries in all continents of the world – including, for the first time, Argentina and Chile – went on to endorse the United Nations' Food and

Agriculture Organization Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

Also agreed was an ITF-drafted environmental policy, along with a decision to work towards greater solidarity and closer co-operation with non-governmental organisations.

Brazil strike postponed

Dockers at the port of Santos, Brazil, have postponed strike action planned for September after the São Paulo Labour Tribunal ruled that the port authority, Codesp, was not authorised to lay off dock workers without giving 60 days notice. The dockers had agreed to take indefinite strike action if a new collective agreement was not in place for the 2,900 workers who are to be transferred to Ogmo, a new federal agency responsible for hiring dock workers. The tribunal has insisted that talks continue between Codesp and the unions. ■

Sri Lanka protest

ITF Sri Lankan affiliate, the Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union (CMU), held a one-day strike on 28 August, in protest at the anti trade union policies of the ports authority in Colombo. Union officials and activists have been issued with transfer orders to the port of Galle, 115 kilometres south of Colombo, in order to weaken the union. ITF Dockers' Secretary Kees Marges has called on the ports authority to cancel all anti trade union activities or the ITF will co-ordinate a worldwide campaign targeting ships travelling to or from Colombo. ■

Following success of European week of action...

Flag of convenience ships face ITF blitz in Asia/Pacific ports

A further round in the ITF campaign against flags of convenience is scheduled for November when ITF maritime unions will mount an intensified action against FOC shipping in the countries of Asia and the Pacific Rim.

Dockers' and seafarers' unions and ITF Inspectors in 21 countries – Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and the United States – will be joining forces in this latest action.

It follows six months after a hugely successful "campaign week" last May in Europe when over US\$1.5 million was recovered in back pay.

The focus this November will be on the 14 Pacific Rim countries where the ITF has a strong and well-established inspectorate. These 14 core

countries will be joined by unions in seven further countries in the region that have indicated support for the aims of the ITF campaign.

ITF Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson said that the action would be a practical expression of the willingness of ITF seafarers' and dockers' unions around the world to work closely together on behalf of FOC seafarers.

"It will also demonstrate to FOC owners that there is no such thing as a port safe from the ITF and its affiliates," he added. ■

ITF joins search for wreck of Cordigliera

The ITF and the South African government are joining forces to jointly fund an expedition to survey the wreck of the 1979-built general cargo vessel *Cordigliera*.

The Indian-owned, Panamanian-flag ship sank on 13 November 1996, four miles off the South African coast en-route between Durban and African ports with the loss of 29 Indian seafarers' lives and a South African technician.

Both the ITF and the country's Department of Transport are anxious to determine the cause of the vessel's loss. This would enable the ITF,

Expedition co-funded with South African government

on behalf of the dependants of those who died, to seek compensation from the owners of the vessel and any other responsible party. In addition, assessing any further pollution

damage from the wreck will also be an objective.

The expedition will utilise side scan sonar, a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) equipped with both video and still photographic equipment, and divers to determine what caused the vessel's loss.

Announcing the plan, Mark Dickinson, ITF Assistant General Secretary, said: "This joint expedition is being undertaken because it will benefit not only the families of the seafarers whose lives were lost but also send a clear message to the shipping industry that they can not escape their responsibilities and liabilities."

He added: "It is noteworthy that neither of the flag state authorities of these two flag of convenience ships is involved in the expeditions."

Brian Watts, Chief Director of the Shipping Directorate in South Africa, said: "Our priority is to determine more precisely why the *Cordigliera* sank and in doing so determine if any lessons can be learnt. In this regard we are pleased to be able to collaborate with the ITF towards these shared objectives."

The exact timing of the expedition will be dependent on the weather, with November or December this year being the most favourable period.

In 1994 the ITF funded a successful expedition to find the wreck of the UK-registered bulk carrier *Derbyshire*. This forced the British authorities to mount a follow-up survey of the wreck, the results of which are currently being assessed.

Dock unions sign solidarity pact...

The ITF has launched an International Solidarity Contract in a bid to strengthen the position of dockers' unions as they resist job losses, pay cuts and union derecognition as a result of port privatisation and restructuring.

ITF-affiliated dockers' unions from 51 countries unanimously approved the solidarity contract at their section conference in Miami in June. The contract confirms unions' commitment to give whatever practical solidarity possible to other affiliates in their struggle for proper involvement in port reform and their opposition to casualisation.

The contract was formally signed by delegates at the Miami meeting and the document has now been reproduced by the ITF as a poster.

Kees Marges, ITF Dockers' Secretary, insists the poster is more than a reaffirmation of trade union principles. "We expect practical solidarity, industrial and otherwise, to flow from this contract when unions and their members are under attack," he says.

Copies of the poster (right) are available from ITF head office in London.

... and already it makes a difference

The ITF International Solidarity Contract is already having an effect in Poland and Rotterdam.

From Poland comes news via the Solidarnosc port workers' union that the deregulation process has been stopped for the time being. According to the union, this was as a result of the solidarity contract and the publicity in Poland surrounding it.

Similarly in Rotterdam publicity initiated by the Vervoersbond FNV transport union about the solidarity contract and a possible ITF co-ordinated international action against Maersk has produced a conciliatory letter from Maersk to the union. The letter declares that the company now intends to accept standard working conditions for the container section in the Dutch port. Until recently management had been indicating that it wanted lower working conditions.

"It's good to know about this quick effect of the decision taken at the Dockers' Section Conference in Miami," said ITF Dockers' Secretary Kees Marges. "I hope more and more unions will follow this lead and publicise the solidarity contract."

Safe haven

With the assistance of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, the ITF succeeded in arranging for dissident Chinese seafarer Miao Qi Hai to leave Hong Kong on 24 June — a week before the handover of sovereignty from Great Britain to the People's Republic of China — and resettle permanently in Britain. Miao Qi Hai was sacked in 1993 from a flag of convenience ship covered by an ITF agreement and operated by Ming Wah for complaining about the treatment of fellow crew members. He was repatriated to China, detained, fined and harassed but escaped and entered Hong Kong illegally before further charges could be served.

New Brazilian register

The Brazilian government has finally announced the setting-up of a Brazilian second register, the REB, which will operate according to certain restrictions under the Brazilian constitution and labour law. The ITF-affiliated Brazilian trade unions are withholding final judgement on the register until it has been operating. The law allows foreign involvement in Brazilian shipping along with tax exemptions for REB ships. The regulations require that at least two-thirds of the crew should be Brazilian nationals. The unions believe that Brazilian labour law will still apply to vessels on the register. The ITF-affiliated Confed trade union federation hopes that the second register may lead to an increase in Brazilian seafarers' employment.

PORTUGAL
ROMANIA
RUSSIA
SINGAPORE
SOUTH AFRICA
SPAIN
SRI LANKA
SWEDEN
SWITZERLAND
TAIWAN
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
TURKEY
UKRAINE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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ITF MEETINGS

- *Asia/Pacific Tourism Services Meeting, Tokyo, 2-3 October*
- *Seafarers' Section and Regional Seafarers' Meetings, Singapore, 6-10 October*
- *Regional Representatives Meeting, London, 16-17 October*
- *Central and Eastern European Unions Civil Aviation Seminar, Budapest, 20-21 October*
- *Education Working Party, London, 21 October*
- *Management Committee, London, 22 October*
- *Executive Board, London, 23-24 October*
- *ITF Seafarers' Trust, London, 25 October*
- *Railway Workers' Section Conference, Berlin, 5-7 November*
- *Airline Alliance Meetings, London, 8 December*
- *Cabin Crew and Ground Staff Committees, London, 9-10 December*
- *Fair Practices Committee Collective Agreements Sub-committee, London, 9-10 December*
- *Civil Aviation Section Conference, London, 11 December*
- *Flag of Convenience Campaign Steering Group, London, 11-12 December*

Yet another country, Iceland, is now on the list of those where successful action has been taken by the ITF in the campaign against flags of convenience. Here, TOMMY MOLLOY of the Actions Unit – which co-ordinates FOC campaign activities at ITF Headquarters – describes how the crew of the Maltese-flag *North Wind* were helped by recent changes in Icelandic industrial relations legislation in their bid to win back pay owed to them.

Putting Iceland on the ITF map

The Actions Unit was contacted on 8 July by the Romanian crew of the *North Wind* to say that they had not been paid for three months and that some of them had completed their contracts and requested repatriation but had so far been refused. The vessel was headed for Reykjavik, Iceland, to unload fuel oil.

The company, Coral Star Shipping of Monaco, had informed the crew that they would arrange to repatriate them from the next loading port – thought to be St Petersburg – and pay them their owed wages when they were back home in Romania. Needless to say, the crew were not impressed with this offer.

The crew thought they had individual contracts of employment and were not aware of any agreement covering the vessel. It was soon established that the vessel was, in fact, covered by an ITF agreement valid from 31 March 1997.

ITF Inspector Borgthor Kjaernsted was contacted to see if a visit could be arranged and asked his advice on the best way to handle the case in Iceland. His view was that the

crew should be encouraged to take strike action as recent changes to Icelandic industrial relations legislation and subsequent test cases meant that sympathy action from other workers, such as dockers, was possible.

Borgthor boarded the vessel upon its arrival at Reykjavik and called a meeting with the crew and circulated a copy of the ITF agreement and wage scale. After a lively discussion the crew decided to strike. Borgthor was advised by local industrial relations lawyers that the strike was perfectly legal.

The strike commenced at 21:00 hours on 10 July. Work in connection with the safety of the vessel, such as safety watchkeeping, continued. The crew claim, including compensation for breach of agreement, was calculated at over US\$120,000.

At 10:00 hours on the next day the ship's agent, Samskip, offered a proposal to resolve the matter. Since 50 per cent of the oil was to be discharged in Reykjavik and the rest of it in Hvalfjoerdur the agent was ready to bring \$60,000 on

PEOPLE



■ **Jatta Moilanen.**

■ **Jatta Moilanen**, who has been an ITF Inspector in the leading Finnish port of Kotka for the past 20 years, retired in May.

With her trade union background – she was sacked from a job in a local shipping company because of her organising activities – Jatta came to the notice of Lauri Heinonen, then ITF Inspector in Kotka, who invited her to come to work for the Finnish Seafarers' Union in the summer of 1976.

When, a year later, Lauri moved to Helsinki, Jatta, with her excellent command of English, was a natural choice to take over the job of inspecting FOC ships in Kotka and the surrounding ports.

She quickly won a name for herself as a fearless fighter for seafarers' rights, attracting the attention of the local press and television at a time when a woman visiting ships was something of a rarity.

She has had an adventurous career – she has had a captain wave a pistol at her and was once

held hostage – but has never shown any fear, going into situations that had the local police backing off.

We wish Jatta well in what we know will be a very active retirement.

■ **R Thomas Buffenbarger** is the new President of the US International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM). He succeeds retiring IAM President **George Kourpias**. Buffenbarger has been an IAM Vice President since 1993.

■ **Hsieh Cheng Chuan** has stepped down from the presidency of the National Chinese Seamen's Union (NCSU) of Taiwan and taken up the position of ITF Co-ordinator. He is succeeded as NCSU president by **Chang Kai-Fong**.

■ **Julio C Hernandez Miras** has been elected President and **Jaime Alcade Dayviere** Vice President of the Uruguayan Masters' and

board immediately and the rest in Hvalfjoerdur before discharging the rest of the oil there. This proposal was rejected by the crew who were prepared to continue the action until all of the money was paid on board in Reykjavik. Lawyers for the cargo receivers came on board, but withdrew when they discovered the action was for the non-payment of wages.

At 13:30 hours the money arrived on board and, after the crew were paid out a total of \$127,000, discharge of the vessel eventually commenced at 14:45 hours. Ten crew members requested repatriation and flew home from Iceland on 14 July. Letters of indemnity were secured for all the crew.

Borgthor commented: "This was the first industrial action undertaken by a crew in the port of Reykjavik and the outcome was entirely successful. It is good to know that seafarers can add Reykjavik to the list of ports where they have real hope of being able to secure their legal entitlements."

"It is good to know that seafarers can add Reykjavik to the list of ports where they have real hope of being able to secure their legal entitlements."



Merchant Navy Officers' Union (UCOMAR).

■ **Franz Hums**, President for the past seven years of the Austrian Railway Workers' Union (GdEO), retired in the summer from the GdEO presidency and from the ITF Executive Board. He is succeeded as GdEO president by **Gerhard Nowak**.

■ **Frantisek Kurej** has resigned as President of the Independent Trade Union of Public Road Transport in Slovakia (ITU PRT) on being elected Vice President of the national trade union confederation. The new ITU PRT President is **Marián Grác**.

■ ITF Executive Board member **Ivan Shinkevitch** did not stand for re-election as President of the Independent Trade Union of Railwaymen and Transport Construction Workers of Russia at its recent Congress which elected **Anatoliy Vasiliev** as his successor.

■ **Lila Smith** of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) has been appointed as the first full-time woman ITF Inspector in the United States. Based in Seattle, Washington, Lila who has previous ferry experience, began work at the beginning of September.

■ **KE Suhkia**, General Secretary of the Maritime Union of India (MUI) and a leading MUI official since 1967, retired in April. **US Adam** has taken over as Acting General Secretary.

■ We extend warm congratulations to former Executive Board member **Dilia van der Heem** who has been appointed Deputy Public Prosecutor in The Hague.

HEAD OFFICE

49/60 Borough Road,
London SE1 1DS, United Kingdom
Telephone: +44 (171) 403 2733
Fax: +44 (171) 357 7871
Telex: (051)8811397 ITF LDN G
Internet: Info@itf.org.uk

AFRICAN REGIONAL OFFICE

PO Box 66540, Nairobi, Kenya
Telephone: +254 (2) 44 80 18
Fax: +254 (2) 44 80 20

AFRICAN FRANCOPHONE OFFICE

c/o SUMAC, 01 BP 75,
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Telephone:
+226 30 42 05 or 30 65 15
Fax: +226 34 66 10

ASIA/PACIFIC OFFICE

Toko-Kaikun, 3-1-35 Shibaura,
Minato-ku, Tokyo 108, Japan
Telephone: +81 (3) 3798 2770
Fax: +81 (3) 3769 4471
Internet:
QWK11030@niftyserve.or.jp

ASIAN SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE

12D College Lane, New Delhi
110001, India
Telephone: +91 (11) 335 4408
Fax: +91 (11) 335 4407
Internet:
itfdelhi@giasdl01.vsnl.net.in

EUROPEAN SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE

c/o ITURR, 21 Sadova Spasskaya,
107217 Moscow, Russia
Telephone:
+7 (095) 262 2995 or 5873
Fax: +7 (095) 923 8831
Internet: iturr@arc.ru

LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL OFFICE

Avenida Presidente Vargas 446,
Salas 603/604, CEP 20085-900
Centro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Telephone: +55 (21) 233 2812
Fax: +55 (21) 283 0314
Internet: itforgrbr@ax.apc.org

MERCOSUR OFFICE

Caseros 921, 1152 Buenos Aires,
Argentina
Telephone:
+54 (1) 300 2200 or 1294
Fax: +54 (1) 300 2202
Internet: cuen@fedcam.org.ar

USA FLAG OF CONVENIENCE CAMPAIGN OFFICE

Suite 400, 1101 17th Street NW,
Washington DC 20036, USA
Telephone: +1 (202) 955 8347
Fax: +1 (202) 955 8364
Internet: itf_was@ari.net

Guidelines for dealing with stowaways

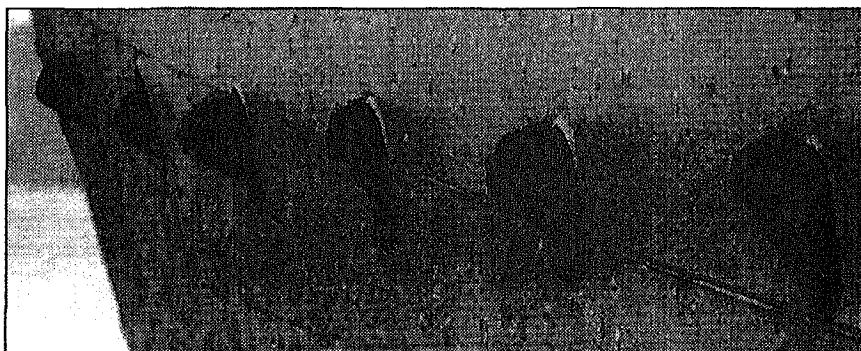
ITF-affiliated unions have drafted a set of guidelines on stowaways. The draft policy will be presented for approval by the ITF Seafarers' Section Conference in Singapore in October.

There is concern among affiliates that the number of stowaway incidents is growing and consequently so is the potential for disruption and conflict on vessels at sea.

Despite the best efforts of the ITF and affiliates, the International Maritime Organization's 1957 Brussels Stowaway Convention, which attempted to establish an internationally acceptable regime for dealing with stowaways, has not come into force because of a lack of support by IMO member states. Instead, there is the recommendatory "Guidelines on the Allocation of Responsibilities to seek the successful Resolution of Stowaway Cases".

There have been cases where stowaways have remained on board for months, even years, because the authorities refused to allow them to be landed, where stowaways outnumbered the crew and where stowaways were murdered or thrown overboard. The status of a stowaway is often unclear. On board a vessel it is impossible to determine whether a stowaway is a refugee, an asylum seeker, an illegal immigrant or a criminal.

ITF Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson told ITF News: "The responsibilities of the master, crew and shipowner for the proper treatment of stowaways needs to be clearly set out, as does the need to ensure that a ship's personnel are not required to act as quasi-immigration officers."



■ Illegal Indonesian immigrants peer from a ship berthed at Pasir Gudang, Malaysia, in January this year.

Photo: Popperfoto

What the ITF is recommending...

According to the ITF guidelines, a stowaway should be treated fairly and humanely whilst on board. This treatment should include medical checks and the provision of food and lodging.

Accurate records should be kept of the circumstances of a stowaway's detection, including details of when the ship's owners and relevant authorities were informed.

The stowaway should not be unnecessarily detained, though this does not affect the right of the master to maintain discipline and order on board.

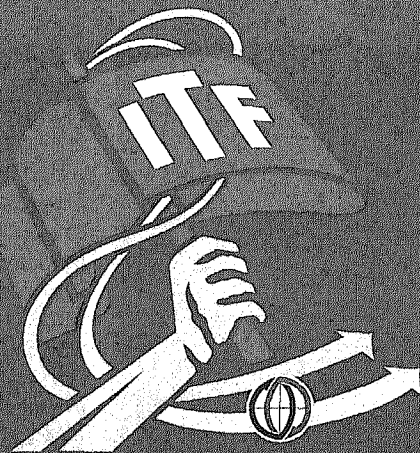
The stowaway should be given basic training in case of emergency (fire or abandon ship) and be allocated a lifejacket.

A stowaway should not be forced to work, nor be allowed to work

without basic training. Any work must be suited to the stowaway and not reduce the remuneration of any other crew members. The remuneration must be appropriate to the work performed, non discriminatory and in line with applicable collective agreements.

The master is not an immigration officer and should always keep in mind that the stowaway may be traumatised. The ITF therefore considers the interviewing of stowaways to be the responsibility of governments and their relevant authorities who are trained for that task.

All efforts should be made to have the stowaway disembarked at the first port of call.



FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES
OUVRIERS DU TRANSPORT

FEDERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE LOS
TRABAJADORES DEL TRANSPORTE

INTERNATIONELLA
TRANSPORTARBETAREFÖDERATIONEN

國際運輸勞連

INTERNATIONALE
TRANSPORTARBEITER-FÖDERATION

МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ
ТРАНСПОРТНИКОВ