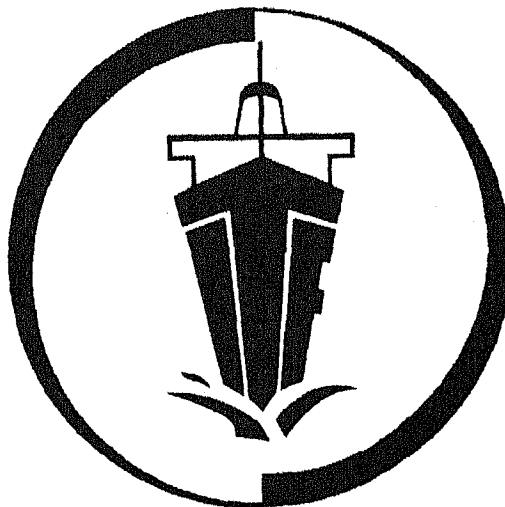
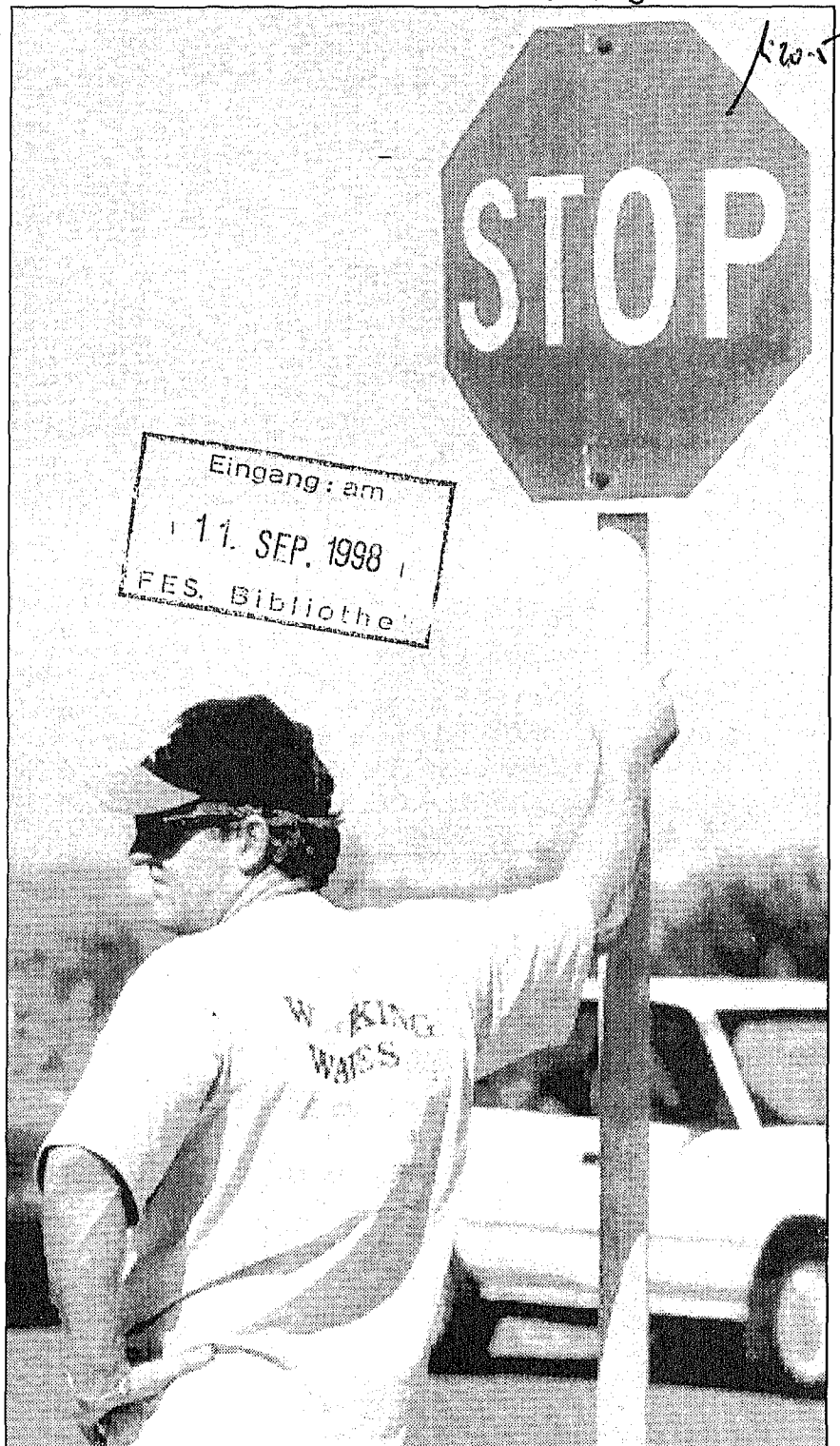


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PLUS... ITF ship
prepares to
mark 50 years
of campaigning
against flags of
convenience

Flags of convenience

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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 5 May 1998.

■ Cover photo: A member of the Maritime Union of Australia at Port Botany, Australia's second biggest port.

■ Cover and page 3 photos: Popperfoto

Lessons for global solidarity

International solidarity is taking on an increasingly important role when major disputes occur in the transport industry, and the ITF and its affiliates are developing new ways of supporting unions under attack. Working together with international secretariats in other sectors, with national trade union centres and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, we are beginning to show employers that the global economy, so often a threat to jobs and conditions, can also be a powerful weapon in the fight to defend workers' rights.

Following disputes at Cairns and Dubai last year in which ITF action proved decisive in supporting the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), it was clear that the next big fight was likely to take place on the Australian waterfront. That prediction came starkly true late at night on 7 April when Chris Corrigan, merchant banker chairman of Patrick Stevedores, controlling almost 50 per cent of the Australian ports industry, fired its entire workforce of 2,100 people and began replacing them with half-trained non-union workers. Three minutes earlier, the Australian Workplace Relations

"This is by no means the first time an employer has tried to intimidate the ITF by legal threats and I am sure it won't be the last. It shows that international solidarity works."

Minister Peter Reith issued a statement welcoming the sackings!

The ITF's reaction was immediate and strong. Already well briefed by a constant stream of ITF information bulletins, key maritime unions around the globe were asked to implement long established plans to support the MUA. All ITF affiliates in other sectors were asked to join the action where they could and shipping companies were urged to avoid using non-union facilities in Australia.

The Australian government, having introduced the most repressive labour laws in the western world, did not know how to react to the huge wave of international support for the MUA. They first ridiculed the ITF, labelling it a "paper tiger" and then (presumably discovering that the tiger had teeth) tried to paralyse it by encouraging Patrick to secure an emergency injunction in the English courts a few hours before the Easter holiday period forbidding it from organising any action which might affect contracts between Patrick and its customers.

In media interviews legal action against the ITF in London was regularly threatened by government ministers as their secret weapon.



ITF General Secretary David Cockcroft writes

In the event it turned out to be more of a damp squib. Working throughout the holiday weekend, the ITF's legal team prepared an effective and detailed defence against the substance of Patrick's claim as well as their spurious arguments for seeking an emergency order without hearing the ITF case.

Meanwhile in Australia, skilful use of the court system and massive support from the rest of the Australian trade union movement and the general public, has seriously undermined the conspiracy between Patrick, the government and the right wing National Farmers' Federation to destroy the MUA. As this issue of ITF News goes to press, the MUA has already won several key victories but the final outcome is still uncertain.

Two things are certain, however. Firstly that this dispute, like the United Parcel Service and British Airways disputes last year, is of strategic importance for trade unions worldwide. If this kind of brutal behaviour is allowed to prevail, no union in Australia or elsewhere in the world will be safe from attack. In supporting the MUA, therefore, the ITF is fighting a wider war with profound implications for all its members.

Secondly the lessons learned from the dispute will further strengthen our ability to coordinate solidarity action. This is by no means the first time an employer has tried to intimidate the ITF by legal threats and I am sure it won't be the last. It shows that international solidarity works.

The Australian confrontation is, I hope, the exception not the rule. Certainly the majority of transport employers do not adopt the aggressive stance of Patrick and most governments correctly see their role as helping to solve disputes not making them worse. The ITF and its affiliates are committed to dialogue and negotiation as the proper ways to bring about change. If we are attacked, however, we will most certainly defend ourselves with every weapon at our disposal. ☛

ITF wins legal right to organise support

An attempt by the company at the centre of the Australian docks dispute to prevent the ITF from organising solidarity action for the sacked dockers has been defeated.

On 17 April an English High Court judge threw out an injunction designed to stop the ITF from taking action that could damage the interests of Patrick Stevedores.

Defeat in the courts would have had very serious implications for the ITF's ability to provide solidarity and support for any affiliated union involved in a dispute, ITF officers warned after the court ruling.

The judge said it was quite evident that ITF support was vital for the MUA and "to deny it would be detrimental to the ITF and the MUA".

The court took the view that the whole sacking exercise had been carefully planned in advance by Patrick, so it would be "palpably unjust" to continue to give Patrick the benefit of what was clearly intended as a pre-emptive strike when it sacked its unionised dock workforce.

The judge made it clear that his ruling was unlikely to be overturned in the event of a full hearing.

The temporary injunction

was unconditionally overturned. A few days later, the company announced it was abandoning its application for an injunction and would therefore pay the ITF's legal costs.

Patrick Stevedores sacked its 2,100 dockers on 7 April. On, 10 April, a public holiday in Britain, the company served the ITF with an injunction designed to prevent it from taking any action that could damage Patrick's economic interests. ■

War on the Australian waterfront

Court backs dockers over mass sackings

The Australian high court ruled on 4 May that 1,400 dockers sacked by a government-backed anti-union employer must be reinstated.

The decision was hailed by the ITF-affiliated Maritime Union of Australia as a major victory in its fight to defend jobs and trade union organisation in the country's docks.

In a move which dramatically escalated the simmering anti-union war on the Australian waterfront, Patrick Stevedores announced on 7 April that it was sacking all 2,100 of its dock workforce - including the 1,400 permanent employees covered by the new court order - and replacing them with non-union labour.

Security guards with dogs were used to evict the dockers, all of them members of the ITF-affiliated Maritime Union of Australia (MUA).

The high court ruling upheld an earlier decision by a lower court, which said that there could have been a conspiracy involving Patrick and other parties to break Australian industrial relations laws.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard admitted in a television interview that the workers had been sacked because they were union members. Patrick is also supported by the National Farmers' Federation.

Meanwhile, all Patrick wharves in Australia were being blockaded by MUA pickets, pending the return to work ordered by the court. Nearly 200 pickets were arrested during the first few weeks of the dispute in often violent confrontations with the police. Only a small amount of freight was moving in and out of the company's wharves.

The situation between the dock workers and Patrick had been tense for some time, particu-



■ Dockers and other trade unionists demonstrate in Melbourne against the mass sacking of dockers.

larly after it emerged in December last year that the Australian government was behind a plan to recruit and train mercenaries in Dubai to work on the dockside in order to de-unionise Australian ports. This failed as a result of the international outcry and swift solidarity action by the ITF and the MUA.

ITF affiliates worldwide are being urged to target shipping lines using any non-union services which have replaced MUA members in Australia.

"Patrick Stevedores will pay a high price for this piece of industrial thuggery," said Dockers' Section Secretary Kees Marges. ■





■ A series of policy statements to be submitted for approval at the ITF Congress in India in the autumn were adopted by the ITF Executive Board, meeting in Prague on 23 and 24 April.

Chief among them is a document titled "Mobilising Solidarity" which suggests ways in which the ITF and its affiliates can best organise international solidarity and co-operation in an increasingly global economy. The paper says this would involve shifting the emphasis of ITF activities towards campaign-based work.

The other policy papers cover topics such as the ITF and the World Bank, transport and the environment, the global economy and minimum labour standards, transport transnationals, and transport and the global market.

Asia crisis

Workers in Indonesia, Thailand and South Korea would face more hardship in the coming months because of inadequate policy responses to the financial crisis crippling their economies, the International Labour Organization (ILO) said in April, echoing demands from the ITF and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) for more consultation with unions on economic management issues.

In a report presented to the Tripartite Regional Meeting on the Asian Economic Crisis on 22 to 24 April in Bangkok, the ILO warned of massive lay-offs and underemployment this year.

The ITF was represented at the meeting by Asia/Pacific Regional Secretary Shigi Wada and Assistant Regional Secretary Mahendra Sharma.

Meanwhile a delegation from the ICFTU met government representatives at the 2nd Asia-Europe Meeting in London earlier in the month and urged them not to overlook the impact of the economic crisis on workers and to pay more attention to labour and social issues at future summits. ■

Bosnia contacts

Contact has been made by the ITF with the two major transport unions in Bosnia: the railway workers' and road transport workers' unions, both of which are currently making efforts to build organisation and membership in the wake of the recent civil war.

Leaders of the two unions have told ITF Co-ordinator for the Alps-Adriatic sub-region, Vladimir Svalina, that they would like to affiliate to the ITF in order to help that process.

Svalina, of the Croatian seafarers' and dockers' union, met the Bosnian unions while on an ITF fact-finding visit to Sarajevo in February.

The railway workers' union currently has some 4,000 members and the road transport union about half that number. The leadership and membership of both are multi-ethnic, although the unions acknowledge political difficulties in recruiting among Bosnian Croat workers and in the Bosnian Serb entity, Republika Srpska, where Serbian unions operate.

However, Carlos Westendorp, the High Commissioner in charge of implementing the Dayton peace agreement, told Svalina that he has begun talks with unions in the Serb and Muslim/Croat entities in order to establish a dialogue between them with a view to unity. ■

North Africa seminar

The ITF's first ever seminar for North African transport workers' unions is being hailed as an important step forward in establishing an ITF presence in a sub-region where historically ITF organisation and influence have been weak.

The seminar, held in Cairo from 8 to 12 February, attracted 35 union representatives from Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia as well as from Palestine. The discussions revealed a strong need and wish for greater ITF involvement in North Africa and the Arab world in general, reports African Regional Secretary Ben Udogwu. He added that the seminar was useful in identifying how the ITF could assist in training union officers.

The seminar was a follow-up to a visit to the sub-region in 1995 by Udogwu and ITF General



■ ITF African Regional Secretary Ben Udogwu (left) greets El-Sayed Rashid, President of the Egyptian Trade Union Federation, at the ITF's North Africa seminar. Also pictured is Mounir Sheta, President of the General Trade Union of Land Transport.

Secretary David Cockroft. More contacts are now planned after the success of the Cairo meeting. ■

Indonesia protest

The ITF has protested strongly at the latest violation of trade union rights in Indonesia, which happened when between 30 and 50 police officers called at the offices of the SBSI independent trade union and forced it to close until after the presidential election. Eight members of the SBSI were arrested within 24 hours of the closure of the office, along with others protesting on the street over the high price of basic essentials and demanding that workers' wages be increased.

Muchthar Pakpahan, General Secretary of the SBSI, is currently serving a four-year prison sentence on trumped-up charges.

The ITF Road Transport Workers' Section annual meeting, held in London in March, passed a resolution condemning the Indonesian government for the illegal detention of Muchthar Pakpahan and other SBSI activists. It also pledged full support for the SBSI's calls for lower prices for basic commodities in the aftermath of the economic crisis and for political reform.

The resolution called on ITF affiliates to take all possible actions to press their respective governments to consider applying sanctions against the Indonesian government. ■

Nigeria inquiry

The International Labour Office's Governing Body has set up a Commission of Inquiry to examine persistent allegations of trade union rights abuses in Nigeria.

The decision comes after numerous complaints were lodged by the international trade union movement and the refusal of Nigeria to comply with ILO recommendations on workers' rights.

The ITF welcomes the decision, the first time the ILO Governing Body has taken such a measure against one of its own members. The ITF is also supporting the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (Icem) in its campaign for the release of union leaders Frank Kokori and Milton Dabibi

held in prison since 1994 without trial.

The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association has repeatedly asked Nigeria to release all trade unionists imprisoned without trial and to end the harassment of the unions and guarantee their civil liberties. ■

Day of action in Russia

Russian transport workers joined millions of fellow trade unionists in a national trade union day of action on 9 April to demand the payment of wage arrears. According to the independent trade union federation FNPR, the arrears amount to about US\$10 billion and affect 20 million workers. Some workers have not been paid for months, and in some cases for over a year.

Last year the government announced that wage arrears would be settled by 1 January 1998. Today, however, the wage debt has increased by 4 per cent above the record level reached in July 1997. Debts between enterprises and the failings of the banking system are blamed, but corruption, as well as the policies advocated by the international financial institutions, are also factors say the unions. ■

Focus on WTO

The focus of the international trade union movement's campaign to establish an internationally-agreed framework of labour standards moves in May to Geneva where the World Trade Organization's Ministerial Conference is to be held.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), along with the ITF and other international trade union bodies, is calling on the WTO to work closely with the International Labour Organization, as the main tripartite body with a mandate to protect workers' rights. It condemns the absence of follow-up to the decision for the WTO to collaborate with the ILO taken by the last WTO ministerial summit in Singapore in 1996. ■

Thanks

Dear Friends,
My children and I wish to sincerely thank each and every one of you for the messages of condolence which you sent to us on the sudden death of my wife Victoria.

It was encouraging to know you share our loss through your words of comfort and advice. I want you to know that your messages gave us a great deal of strength and that we deeply appreciate your sympathy.

BEN UDOGWU

ITF African Regional Secretary

INLAND TRANSPORT

Rail unions in pact to defend services

German-speaking rail unions from four European countries have agreed a joint statement in which they pledge themselves to work together to preserve the European rail system to its current standard.

The unions said they were not opposed to the introduction of an element of competition into public transport, but this should only be done on the basis of maintaining agreed levels of pay and other conditions. They added that they would exchange information and co-ordinate strategies to achieve their objectives.

The unions concerned, all affiliated to the ITF, are the SEV Swiss rail and transport workers' union, the GdED German rail workers' union, the GdEO Austrian rail workers' union and the Luxembourg FNCTFEL rail and transport workers' union. The statement was signed in Switzerland at a meeting organised by the SEV to coincide with events marking the centenary of the country's publicly-owned rail service. ■

Success in South African truck drivers' strike

Goods transport by road was paralysed for eight days in South Africa in March when 40,000 truckers went on strike. The strike came as a result of the breakdown in national negotiations with employers for improved wages and working conditions.

Four trade unions, including the ITF's Transport and General Workers' Union and the Transport and Allied Workers' Union were involved in the dispute.

The key issues were wages, an improved subsistence allowance for long-distance drivers, improved parental leave (for mothers and fathers) and a demand that the unions should have administrative control over a national truckers' provident fund scheme.

After extensive negotiations and mediation

the strike was finally settled to the satisfaction of the striking workers.

Also integral to the dispute was an attempt by employers to exclude all non-mobile drivers from the terms of the national collective agreement. Employers insisted that non-mobile workers should be treated as a separate bargaining unit. In the midst of the dispute the issue was settled in the labour court, when a ruling was given in favour of the unions.

The outcome of the dispute is seen as an important victory in the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section's worldwide campaign to include all non-mobile transport workers under collective agreements. ■



■ Anders Westin, National Secretary of the main Swedish bus workers' union, SKAF (centre) and Bill Morris, General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union and ITF Executive Board member (right), with Mike Kinski, the Chief Executive of bus operator Stagecoach Holdings after announcing in London on 6 April the creation of the first European works council in the public transport sector.

Finns win safeguards

A strike by Finnish urban transport workers in February ended after one week with the unions winning agreement that companies which win tenders to operate privatised transport services will recruit staff only from among the existing workforce.

In addition, the long service entitlements of employees transferring to the new companies will be honoured. These concessions were won by the ITF-affiliated AKT transport workers' union and the KTV municipal workers' union following a strike by 3,300 bus, tram and underground drivers which paralysed public transport in Helsinki and other major cities.

A crucial factor in forcing the employers to accept the unions' demands, reports Juhani Koivunen of AKT, was the solidarity strike notice given by the Finnish railway workers' union and air transport union. These unions said they would halt rail services and Finnair flights unless an agreement acceptable to the unions was achieved before the strike entered a second week. ■

Malawi protest

The ITF-affiliated Railway Workers' Union of Malawi has been in dispute with the government over its decision, without consultation with the union, to privatise Malawi Railways. The union and its members were only made aware of the government's decision to privatise the railways through reports in the media. Protests were disrupted by armed police – a clear violation, says the union, of human and trade union rights. The government did, however, later agree to meet the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions. ■

The inaugural meeting of the ITF Latin American and Caribbean Region's newly formed Road Transport Workers' Committee has been held, with union representatives deciding that a priority objective must be to demand that governments observe internationally agreed rules on hours of work.

Non-compliance with International Labour Organization Convention no. 153 on the regulation of working time was identified by the committee, meeting in Rio

First ITF Latin American road transport meeting

de Janeiro on 29 January, as a serious problem for road transport workers in the region.

The ITF should campaign for legal limits on hours to be established, unions at the meeting decided. The committee, chaired by Hugo Moyano of the Argentinian truckers' federation, also agreed to press for recognition by the authorities and employers that loading, unloading and stand-by times should be included in calculations of the length of the working day. ■

Urban transport: making the case against privatisation

The future of public transport is bright. However, alliances with environmental groups and with public transport users need to be built in order to take on the politicians who continue to pursue policies of privatisation and deregulation, despite the evidence that such steps result in reduced quality of service. These were the key conclusions of the ITF Urban Transport Committee which met on 7 and 8 April in London.

The representatives of affiliates from the ITF's Road Transport Workers' and Railway Workers' Sections noted the experience in countries ranging from Finland to India that where high rates of return become the driving motivation in public transport, the quality of service declines and working conditions deteriorate.

Committee members were unanimous in their view that wastage and inefficiencies in public transport need to be tackled, but that private ownership is not the answer. For pri-

vatization, whether it be of bus, tram or rail systems, leads to fragmentation in planning and in operations.

Experience has also shown that invariably privatisation leads to the predominance of a few monopolies, some of which have begun to invest across country borders.

A typical example is Stagecoach, a British company which now operates rail and bus interests in the UK, Sweden, Kenya, New Zealand, Portugal, Australia and Finland.

These monopolies drive many smaller operators out of business and ultimately push up fare prices and push down wage costs.

In response, the committee decided to establish a network of trade unions with members in multinational operators. ■

Campaigning for taxi regulation

Fifteen delegates representing transport trade unions from all the ITF regions met on 16 March for the first ever meeting of the ITF Taxi Working Group.

Delegates noted that the industry varies greatly from country to country – in terms of licensing arrangements, degree of regulation, type and size of vehicle and employment contracts. However, most are low paid and work long and irregular hours. Formal employment contracts are rare, and many are paid on a commission basis. Job insecurity and the absence of social protection are common features.

A policy resolution adopted by the meeting – and subsequently by the Road Transport Workers' Section meeting – argued that the taxi industry in whatever form should be regulated as part of an overall system of planned public transport, and that this regulation should include the regulation of the employment relationship via a formal wage contract.

The resolution called for the ITF and affiliates to campaign for recognition of the taxi industry as part of a country's public transport system, and for the appropriate regulations. ■

■ Delegates (right) at the meeting in London also called for retirement at age 55 for bus and truck drivers.



Road transport section sets 8 September as worldwide action day

For shorter working hours

Building on the success of the 24-hour action last year, road transport workers' unions around the world will be calling for 8 September to be a day of action in their long running campaign for a reduction in drivers' working hours. Bus and coach, truck and – for the first time – taxi drivers will all be taking part.

This was the key decision taken by delegates attending the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section meeting held from 17 to 19 March in London.

The 70 delegates from 28 countries backed their campaign plans with a call for retirement at age 55 for bus and truck drivers in recognition of the cumulative effects on their health of the stress and strain of driving on today's overcrowded roads.

A proposed European Commission regulation making the free movement of goods a first priority in the European Union was roundly denounced by the meeting as a serious threat to the right to strike in Europe. The EU move, which would require member states to remove obstacles to trade such as road blockades, is being seen as a reaction to the highly effective industrial actions carried out by French road transport workers.

An ITF decision to support a revision of ILO Convention no. 153 on Hours of Work and Rest Periods in Road Transport was endorsed by the meeting. As part of this process the ITF will be seeking the inclusion of public urban passenger transport in the convention.

“Non-driving” road transport workers - a vital link in the transport chain

The important role of “non driving” road transport workers – loading, warehouse and terminal personnel, workshop and maintenance staff, and administrative and supervisory workers – in the transport chain was acknowledged by the meeting which decided to set up a small working group to support or-

ganising activities, evolve policies and deal with the special problems of this group. Automation and new technology, shift work, and safe loading and packaging were identified as issues of particular concern.

The meeting heard about the need for road transport affiliates to step up organising efforts among women working in route planning, customer service and cargo-handling facilities and for a change in the predominantly male culture in areas such as trucking where long hours and poor social provisions have proved obstacles to attracting many women into driving jobs. Delegates suggested that the section should focus on improving promotion opportunities for women in “non driving” jobs and persuading employers to invest in training women as goods and passenger drivers.

At the close of the debate, the meeting agreed to elect a women's liaison representative to represent the section within the ITF Women's Committee, which will be set up at the ITF Women's Conference in New Delhi in October.

Passenger services group meets

A separate passenger services group meeting exchanged information on the growing number of multinational companies operating across borders and expressed concern that privatisation of bus services was leading to the creation of private monopolies.

Unions complained that the interests of employees were not taken into account when bus services were privatised and that workers in privatised companies had lower social standards than in publicly owned companies.

The ITF was asked to investigate multinational bus strategies, promote closer trade union co-operation and campaign for passenger traffic to remain a public responsibility subject to strict regulation.

It was also suggested that the ITF create an information network so that when companies were thinking of moving into new countries unions could be provided with full details of pay and conditions in their home country to prevent companies exploiting workers to offer cut price services.

Fifty years of the ITF campaign

1948

The ITF Congress in Oslo adopts a strongly worded statement saying that an international boycott is the only way of eliminating the threat of the flags of convenience of Panama and Honduras. Thus begins the international industrial campaign against FOCs. The action is set to begin from the date of the next seafarers' conference, 1 May 1949. A special joint seafarers' and dockers' committee, later to be known as the Fair Practices Committee, is set up to run the campaign.

1949

The Panamanian government requests talks with the ITF a few weeks before the campaign is due to begin.

1950

Negotiations with Panama come to nothing and are halted by the ITF. Work begins on defining a "minimum standard" collective agreement, and an international welfare fund is created from fees paid by shipowners signing the collective agreement.

1952

Some 50 ITF collective agreements have been signed – fewer than hoped – and, although selective boycott actions have been held in Europe and North America, the campaign fails to take off in the way that had been hoped in Oslo.

1956

The world's flag of convenience fleet continues to grow, reaching 9 million tonnes. Half of all new tankers are being registered with an FOC. Meanwhile, Liberia has now overtaken Panama as the largest FOC registry in terms of tonnage.

1958

The ITF Congress in Amsterdam introduces the Blue Certificate scheme so that ship's masters have evidence that their crew are covered by an ITF-acceptable agreement. The Congress also set 30 November as the start of four days of worldwide boycotts, the so-called PanLibHonCo Boycott (identifying the four main FOCs of the day: Panama, Liberia, Honduras and Costa Rica). Some 300 ships are stopped, giving the ITF campaign a big boost.

1960s

The campaign again falls into the doldrums, and action is mainly confined to Scandinavia.

1971

Finnish and Swedish unions present the ITF Congress in Vienna with an ultimatum either to support the campaign or to wind it up. The campaign is relaunched, with unions in Australia and the United Kingdom taking boycott action. The first ITF Inspectors are appointed.

ITF sponsors shipping industry conference

Is there a better way to regulate the shipping industry? This is the title of a two-day conference organised by the ITF in conjunction with Lloyd's of London to be held at the Folkets Hus Conference Centre, Oslo, Norway, on 23 and 24 June.

The conference is an opportunity for professionals from all sections of the industry to hear the views of leading representatives and debate with them the key issues shaping the future of shipping and its regulation.

The registration fee of UK£320 (US\$535) for ITF affiliates (£400 to non-affiliates) includes attendance at the conference, a full set of speaker papers, tea, coffee and lunch on both days and dinner on 23 June. ■

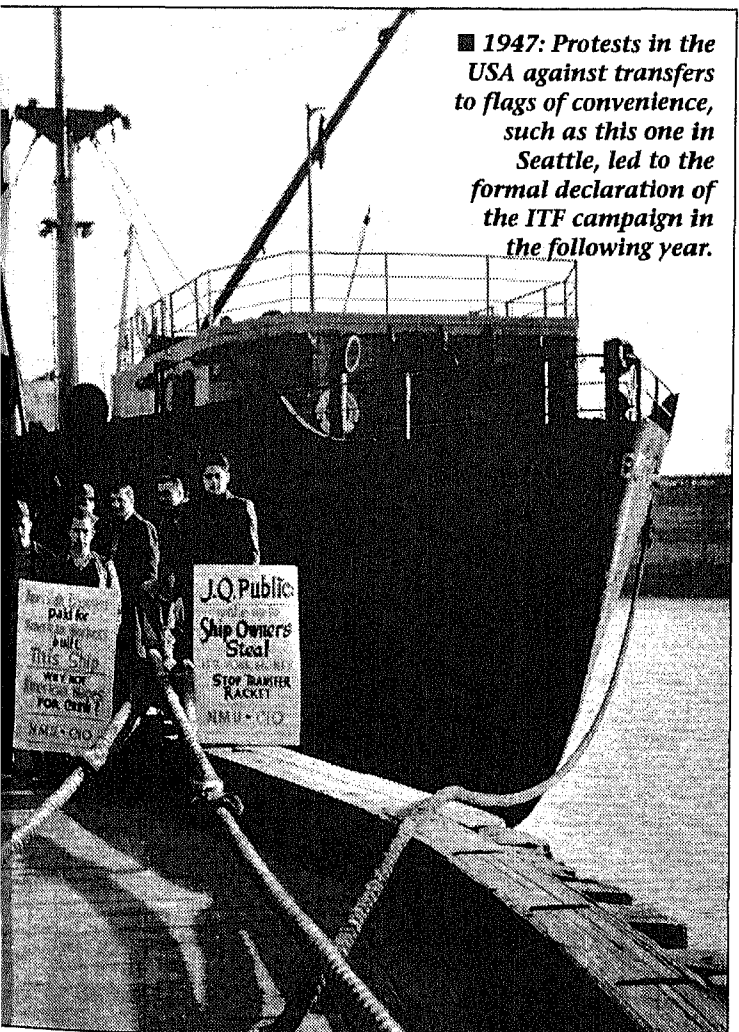


■ 1997: Waterfront picket in the ITF's Asia/Pacific Rim week November, when US\$750,000 was won for flag of convenience crew.





... during
... action in
... k pay was



■ 1947: Protests in the USA against transfers to flags of convenience, such as this one in Seattle, led to the formal declaration of the ITF campaign in the following year.

1973 ITF unions have signed 420 agreements and secured some US\$4 million in back pay over the past two years.

1976 The International Labour Organization adopts Convention no. 147 on Minimum Standards for Merchant Shipping. The Convention becomes a powerful weapon in the ITF campaign, as it establishes the principle that coastal states can intervene to ensure certain social and safety conditions on ships calling at their ports.

1981

The ITF Seafarers' Trust is created, financed from contributions by FOC shipowners into the ITF Welfare Fund. Now one of the most important seafarers' charities in the world, the trust has since made donations totalling over US\$100 million to assist seafarers' welfare.

1986

The ITF Seafarers' Bulletin is published for the first time. The magazine for FOC crews is now published in 14 languages and has a print run of over 300,000.

1980s

A global trend towards more restrictive laws on trade union activity, especially limiting the right to take secondary boycott action, forces the ITF to refocus the campaign. The emphasis shifts towards encouraging FOC crews themselves to take industrial action. The ITF also seeks constructive relations with good employers by introducing the "total crew cost" agreement. For agreements negotiated voluntarily, this allows for lower rates of pay than in the "standard" agreement provided other minimum standards are observed.

1994

At the ITF Geneva Congress General Secretary David Cockroft announces a major expansion of the campaign and vows that "no port will be ITF safe". As a result, the number of ITF Inspectors doubles and additional resources are allocated to supporting them at ITF head office.

1996

The first "week of action" is held in north west Europe from 3 to 7 June. There are 22 boycott and industrial actions, and 43 new ITF agreements are signed. A record US\$35 million is recovered in back pay for FOC crews throughout the year.

1997

A second week of action covering the whole of Europe, from 12 to 16 May, recovers US\$1.6 million in back pay and 120 new agreements are signed. A week of action in Asia/Pacific Rim countries, from 20 to 26 November, results in 350 ship inspections, US\$750,000 in back pay and new ITF agreements for 45 ships.

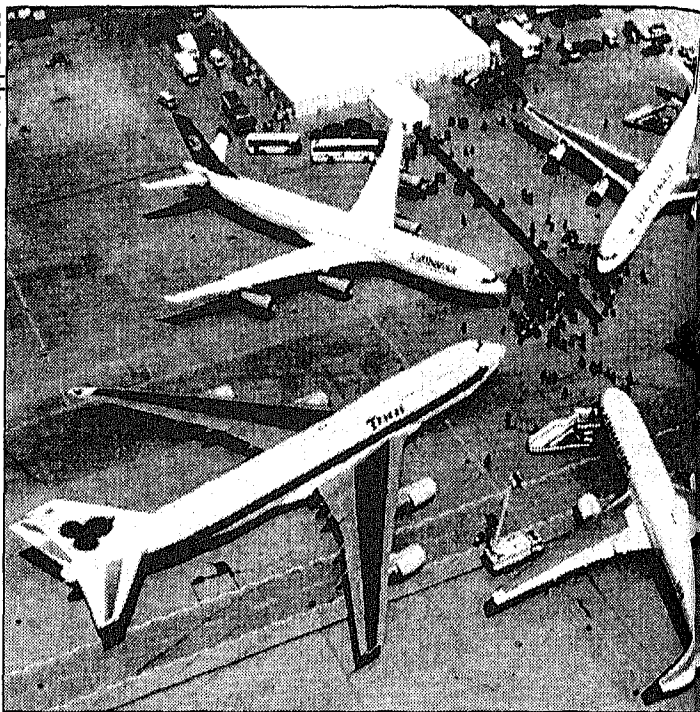
1998

There are now ITF agreements covering more than 4,500 FOC ships, and a total of 111 ITF Inspectors in 39 countries around the world are involved in the campaign. Meanwhile renewed efforts are being made in the political campaign against FOCs. The ITF is co-ordinating much of the lobbying within the International Maritime Organization to secure agreement that countries must ensure that their vessels conform to internationally-agreed standards, the principle known as "flag state implementation". To mark the 50th anniversary of the campaign, the ITF buys a ship to take its message to the ports of the world.



ITF Civil Aviation Secretary Stuart Howard describes how unions are responding to the challenges posed by the emergence of global airline alliances...

Photo: Popperfoto



ITF presses for strict US baggage rule

The ITF has joined US affiliates in pressing the FAA for a strict cabin baggage rule. In its submission the ITF rejects FAA proposals allowing carriers to develop their own policies on baggage and is calling for a universal maximum limit of cabin baggage of 45 linear inches or 115 centimetres and a maximum weight of 6kg/13.25lbs. ■

Call for training on new exit

The ITF has made a submission to the US FAA calling on the regulator to ensure that cabin crew have hands-on initial and recurrent training on the new Boeing Type III hinged canopy exit. The new exit is a significant safety improvement on the old hatch, says the ITF in its comments, but it operates completely differently so the rule requiring hands-on training must be respected. ■

Both the above submissions can be seen on the ITF Web page.

Seat on key JAA committee

The ITF has now become a member of the European JAA's Regulation Advisory Panel (RAP). This committee reviews all proposed regulations before they are issued for public consultation. It is also drawing up proposals for future rule making procedures. The invitation to join RAP follows from the ITF's detailed work on rule making systems during a review of the JAA last summer. ■

Last October the Star Alliance airline companies held a meeting of hand picked young executives at the plush Lufthansa training centre at Seeheim near Frankfurt to "build team spirit". This March, the trade unions used the same facilities to build international union solidarity within the Star Alliance.

An invitation by the German aviation union ÖTV for the companies to provide the Seeheim facilities for the trade unions, provoked a flurry of activity amongst the alliance carriers. A special meeting of top executives decided not to acknowledge or accommodate the trade union alliance which was shadowing their work. The meeting went ahead in the Lufthansa Training Centre in any case.

The Star Alliance, the biggest established airline alliance, is made up of United Airlines, Air Canada, SAS, Thai Airways, Lufthansa and more recently Varig. Union representatives attended from each of the member carriers as well as from prospective members Ansett and Mexicana. Unions continued to identify areas of key concern, including the setting up by the companies of a "people policy committee" which looks at employee resources within the alliance. Cabin crew unions made a detailed comparison of conditions. A special meeting is planned to take place in Hamburg early next year to look at the impact of the alliance on aircraft maintenance work.

The meeting of unions in the Star Solidarity Alliance is one of a series of meetings co-ordinated by the ITF during

Forging new union alliances

this year, as it develops its work on airline alliances. A meeting was held earlier in the year in Lisbon in February, hosted by the Portuguese cabin crew affiliate, SNPVAC.

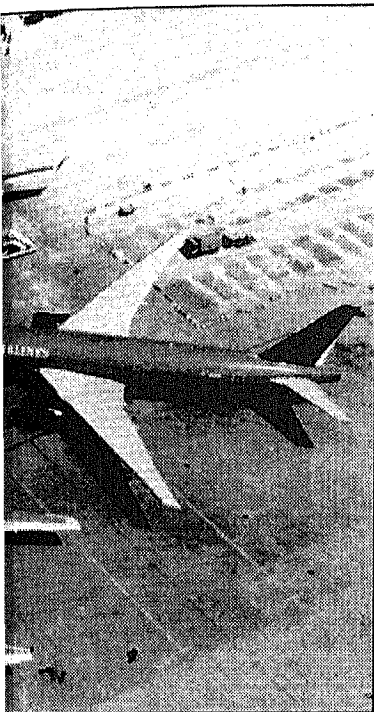
Unions within the airline alliance which comprises Swissair, Sabena, Austrian Airlines, Air Portugal, Turkish Airlines and Delta Air Lines, as well as Air France, Aer Lingus and Finnair agreed to form a global trade union network to promote rapid information exchange, solidarity and mutual co-operation amongst

workers. In the absence of a brand name for the airline alliance, the union network decided to call itself the Alpha Solidarity Alliance, and agreed arrangements for on-going dialogue and future meetings. Unions also signed a co-operation agreement and expressed support for efforts by US affiliates to organise Delta workers.

The American Airlines/British Airways link-up is still grounded by regulatory and competition concerns within the European Union and the United States. Unions within these carriers, and their existing partners such as Qantas, Aerolíneas Argentinas and Iberia, have agreed to meet in Miami on 17 July to map out a strategy for co-ordination and information exchange.

The development of these

'The meeting of unions in the Star Solidarity Alliance is one of a series of meetings co-ordinated by the ITF during this year, as it develops its work on airline alliances.'



Battles to organise low cost carriers

Aviation unions seek to extend influence beyond major carriers

Are aviation unions only about organising workers in the large flag carriers? Recent disputes show that union battles are increasingly happening at the new low cost carriers which are proliferating in the liberalised aviation markets of the United States, Europe, India and in Latin America.

Trade union organisation in civil aviation is still overwhelmingly based in the major carriers. It still not uncommon for the flag carrier unions to be the only aviation unions in a country.

Unions have not always felt much incentive to organise in the smaller independent carriers, which can use up a lot of resources for little reward in terms of new members. Low cost carriers often put up fierce resistance to unions representing their workforce.

But the rapidly changing environment of the industry has meant that unions are having to reach beyond the major carriers. Two current union fights demonstrate the seriousness with which unions are taking the need to address employee conditions in low cost carriers.

Case study 1: AFA

A union such as the AFA in the US, which represents over 20,000 cabin crew members in United Airlines, might be expected to turn up its nose at airlines with only one or two hundred cabin staff. Not so, says the AFA, which points out that its stated mission is to organise all unorganised cabin crew.

AFA president Pat Friend notes a new trend in the US industry: "No longer are generalised comparisons being made based on similarity of carriers, but rather a detailed composite of competitors' costs is used which invariably includes non-union airlines."

The AFA has developed criteria to evaluate whether or not a low cost carrier is worth organising such as how long they are going to be in business. It also tests the ground among employees by issuing authorisation cards which they can return to the union to indicate a desire for union representation.

After one such exercise at Midway Airlines late last year, which showed a majority of

employees wanting union representation, the AFA began to organise among the company's 130 cabin crew. The carrier had moved its base from Chicago to North Carolina, a part of the country which was never going to be an easy recruiting ground for a trade union. Yet by February this year the union only just failed to win a majority for the union by four votes.

On the day that the union filed its application for an election to be held, the company announced a pay increase, a stock option agreement, free uniform replacements, an improved bidding system for scheduling and other benefits for cabin crew.

Management memos were sent to employees urging them to vote against a union and threatening that benefits would be taken away if the AFA was elected. The company held anti-AFA meetings in which employees were pressured to vote against the AFA. An anti-AFA group of employees was allowed company facilities to distribute literature while the AFA was not allowed such facilities and pro AFA materials were banned by the company.

The AFA is asking the National Mediation Board to overturn the election result because of the levels of coercion faced by employees during the election. The union has vowed not to give up its campaign for recognition.

Case study 2: SIPTU

Across the Atlantic in Ireland, the Irish union SIPTU is involved with an equally intransigent low cost carrier: Ryanair.

Ryanair likes to model itself on the successful US low cost carrier Southwest Airlines. This emulation is somewhat selective, however. Southwest is fully unionised and places a high value on its relationship with its employees. Ryanair is ferociously determined to keep out unions at all costs. Southwest operates a profit-sharing scheme with employees. The only profit sharing at Ryanair was the Irish€24 million shared between three of the company's executives.

When baggage handlers at Ryanair asked for improvements in conditions and a pay rise last December the company refused even to discuss these issues if they were put through the union the employees had chosen to represent them. Unlike in the US there is as yet no law in Ireland which can force the airline to recognise a union, even though the majority of workers want it.

As a result, on 9 January, 39 baggage handlers at Dublin, with assistance from SIPTU,

major airline alliances, with their potential economies of scale, integration of marketing and handling functions and rationalisation of subcontracting and purchasing, will have a varying impact on the working conditions within member airlines. Each alliance is unique, and it is difficult to generalise their likely effects, but unions in all the alliances share a common demand for their managements to ensure full information and consultation.

All the alliance meetings have stressed the need for the fast exchange of information between unions. The ITF Civil Aviation Section is already setting up a working conditions database covering all alliances.

A plan has now been agreed for the setting up of an ITF airline alliances information website. We will need extra resources for this project and may need to request financial support from affiliates. It is hard to see how we can provide the level and speed of information exchange without such a system. ■

Low cost carriers

'The tough fights at Ryanair and Midway have only been possible because the courage of individual employees was backed by a union organisation prepared to go the distance to defend the basic rights of a small group of workers.'

Latin American unions meet

Civil aviation unions in Latin America and the Caribbean met in Rio de Janeiro on 3 and 4 March. The meeting focused on the impact of global alliances and "open skies" agreements with the United States. Delegates discussed the need for a policy of "Fair Skies for the Americas". Latin American and North American unions will be meeting in Miami in July. ■

▶ began to press their case with a series of industrial actions, involving three-hour stoppages on certain shifts.

Workers on strike faced a barrage of abuse, threats and intimidation by the management. Some reported the use of private detectives to trail individual workers.

The company revoked the workers' security passes, effectively locking them out. When the workers tried to picket within the airport complex the authorities informed them they could only picket at the airport entrance.

When the picket moved to the entrances, thousands of other aviation workers, as well as many bus and taxi drivers, refused to pass the picket lines, leading to the first ever complete shutdown of Ireland's international airport on 7 and 8 March.

The shutdown was lifted after two days when the government appointed an inquiry team to comprehensively investigate the dispute. Employees have returned to work while the inquiry sits. Ryanair on the other hand has sacked three of the strikers who were still in their probationary period. This has been referred to the inquiry team.



The tough fights at Ryanair and Midway have only been possible because the courage of individual employees was backed by a union organisation prepared to go the distance to defend the basic rights of a small group of work-

The restructuring of Olympic Airways resulted in a national strike against the airline on 9 April. On this date the Greek parliament passed a law allowing the company to abrogate all existing collective bargaining agreements at the company and to impose new conditions.

The union protests were headed by the OSPA federation, which covers civil aviation unions.

The cabin crew unions have been most strongly affected by the company's plans to save costs, with flight and duty times and other conditions being radically affected. According to the cabin crew union EISF the company has tried to look at existing conditions in European airlines and to take the lowest conditions from each.

ITF Civil Aviation Secretary Stuart Howard condemned the "gun against the

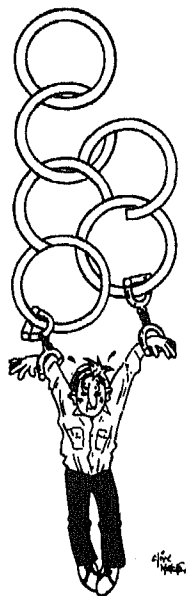
Success in Mexico

Aeromar was set up as a small low cost carrier in Mexico in January 1997. It offers cheap fares in the liberalised domestic market in Mexico as well as a short hop across the border to San Antonio and Dallas in the US. In early 1998 the ASPA pilots union and ASSA cabin crew union had organised most flying staff. But management adamantly refused recognition. In March the pilots' union threatened strike action and called on the ITF to contact US unions for support. The company backed down and recognised the union. It is expected that recognition will soon follow for the cabin crew union. ■

ers. This, says Paul O'Sullivan of SIPTU, is a battle very much worth fighting.

Significantly, the AFA showed its solidarity with the struggle at Ryanair by sending a representative to the SIPTU Day of Protest at Dublin airport on February 27. Airport workers in Norway and Sweden handed out leaflets to Ryanair passengers at its Scandinavian destinations. ■

Crisis at Olympic



head" approach of management. He called on the company to keep talking to the unions.

The company has now accepted the union proposals concerning flight and duty times, but has unilaterally imposed cuts in a wide range of conditions and benefits.

The main current concern of the unions, however, is the future of the airline. According to EISF's Giselle Doulaveri: "The demands of the company for massive cost savings has at no time been accompanied by any clear plan for how these savings will secure the future of the company."

She added: "There is a fear that the government is content to run the airline down." ■

Don't forget social dimension of ports industry, says ITF

The ITF has sharply criticised a European Commission green paper (discussion document) on ports for failing to take account of the social dimension of port activities and employment.

In his contribution to the EFT (European transport workers' union federation) response to the green paper, ITF Dockers' Secretary Kees Marges urges that new industry regulations should incorporate standards set by International Labour Organization Conventions on employment, collective bargaining and safety.

"Implementation of the green paper may cause increased and intensified competition by worsening working conditions and health and safety standards on the terminals," he explained.

The establishment of "a level playing field", which is the European Commission's objective, should not be confined to the harmonisation of subsidies and other financial arrangements, Marges added. It must also include social, safety and environmental concerns. ■

Protest against Greek privatisation

Most of Greece's main ports were idle on 18 March as dock workers protested against government plans to privatise the country's two largest ports, Piraeus and Thessalonika. Dockers and other port workers marched to the Ministry of Merchant Marine in Piraeus to demonstrate their disapproval of the scheme, which initially involves turning the two state-run port authorities into corporations. ■

Japanese dockers in work boycott

As part of their annual spring offensive the ITF-affiliated National Council of Dockworkers' Unions of Japan (Zenkoku-Kowan) and the Japanese Confederation of Ports and Transport Workers' Unions have been boycotting Sunday stevedoring work at 98 ports and harbours throughout the country since March. The aim is to secure improved working conditions for their members. The unions say they will continue the Sunday and night boycotts for an indefinite period until their demands are met. ■

Correction

The ITF Inspector identified in the photo on the back page of our last issue was Abdulgani Serang and not Maruti Rethrekar. ■

Dialogue resumes with world's shipowners

An important step towards improving social dialogue in the world maritime industry was made in London on 3 March at a meeting between representatives of the International Shipping Federation (ISF) and the ITF. Forty representatives of national shipowners' associations and seafarers' trade unions gathered for a full day session in what was the first formal ISF/ITF meeting since 1995.

The two organisations exchanged views on their common goal of eliminating sub-standard ships and their different approaches to realising this objective.

In addition, the meeting discussed the possibility of narrowing differences over methods used by the two organisations for calculating the total earnings of an able seaman paid in accordance with the International Labour Organization (ILO) minimum basic wage. The ILO minimum is determined by the ILO Joint Maritime Commission, a body which com-

prises shipowners' and seafarers' representatives.

The meeting agreed to set up a small working group to deal with this and other issues relating to the ILO. These include reviewing major ILO maritime conventions and recommendations, encouraging ratification of instruments adopted at the 1996 Maritime Labour Conference and securing the continuation of separate maritime machinery within the ILO structure.

The ISF agreed to look at evidence to be provided by the ITF of delays by P&I Club insurance companies in settling claims relating to loss of life or personal injury submitted by seafarers and, if necessary, to consider the possibility of organising joint discussions with the ITF and P&I Club representatives on expediting the handling of such claims.

The two organisations also agreed to strengthen existing co-operation on humani-

tarian questions such as abandoned seafarers and stowaways well as on piracy and armed attacks on shipping, all issues on which there is considerable common concern.

In the light of the generally positive atmosphere at the meeting, the two organisations expressed the hope that similar consultations would take place in the future, probably on an annual basis.

The spokesman for the ITF at the meeting was John Fay, of the United States. ■

Pact with shipbuilding international

The international union federation representing shipyard workers has agreed to support the ITF campaign against flag of convenience shipping.

A joint policy initiative with the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) also envisages joint action against bad conditions and unfair subsidies in the shipbuilding sector. "The world's shipowners now face the

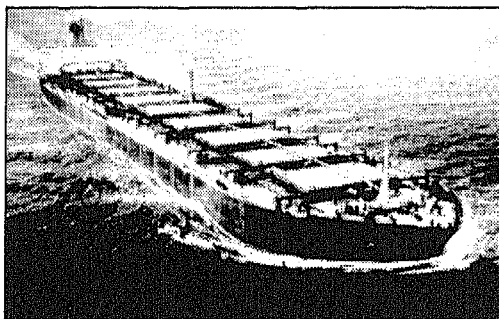
prospect of shipyard workers downing tools alongside seafarers and port workers in support of crews on FOC ships," the ITF announced in March.

A joint campaign will urge transnationals to observe strict codes of conduct. New shared information and lobbying strategies are also planned. ■

Derbyshire inquiry reopened

Decision seen as vindication of 1994 ITF expedition

■ *The Derbyshire (right) disappeared in the South China Sea.*



The decision of the British government to reopen the inquiry into the loss of the bulk carrier *Derbyshire* is being hailed as a vindication of the 1994 ITF expedition to find the wreck in the South China Sea.

The sudden disappearance of the 169,000 deadweight tonne UK-flag vessel in 1980 with the loss of all 44 lives on board has never been properly accounted for. Meanwhile, concern over the structural safety of this class of ship has mounted as the rate of casualties involving bulk carriers – and the consequential loss of seafarers' lives – escalated during the 1980s and 1990s.

It was as a result of an expert assessment of the video evidence retrieved by the ITF in 1994 that the British authorities ordered their own full-scale underwater survey of the wreck, which was jointly financed and administered with the European Commission.

A report containing the findings of the UK£2.7 million (US\$4.5million) survey was published in March, and at the same time it was announced that the original inconclusive inquiry into the loss would be reopened this summer. This allows time for all interested parties to propose how the inquiry should be constituted and which questions it should address.

The ITF welcomed the publication of the UK/

PEOPLE

Obituaries

■ **Osamu Mimashi**, former President of Japanese taxi workers' federation Zenjiko-Roren, died on 4 April, aged 65. Until his retirement last year, he spent 38 years as a full time union official. It was under his leadership that the union decided to re-join the ITF in 1992.

■ **James R Herman**, former President of the US International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), died on 20 March, aged 73. He led the ILWU into an era of unmatched prosperity for the West Coast dockers, doubling their wages and trebling their benefits. It was Herman who brought the ILWU back into the AFL-CIO, increasing its influence in the labour arena, and into the ITF.

■ **Protapuddin Ahmed**, General Secretary of the Bangladesh Naujan Sramik Federation (BNSF), died in Dhaka, on 14 March.

■ **Juan Somavía**, Chilean Ambassador to the United Nations, was elected the next Director General of the International Labour Office at the March meeting of the ILO Governing Body.

■ **Josy Konz**, President of the Luxembourg transport workers' union FNCTFEL, has been elected as the new president of the Transport and Communications Section of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities, succeeding ITF President Eike Eulen.

■ Federation of Korean Taxi Transport Workers' Unions President **Lee Kwang-Nam** has been elected Executive Vice President of the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU).

■ **Yordanka Milanova Radeva** was elected President of the Union of Transport Workers' Syndicates in Bulgaria (UTWSB) at the union's 3rd ordinary Congress in Sofia. **Svetlin Gueorgulev Spassov** is the UTWSB's new Vice President.

■ **Captain S Naqlur Rehman** has been elected as the new General Secretary of the Pakistan Airline Pilots' Association (PALPA), with **Captain Junaid Younus** as Vice

President. **Captain NA Boucha** remains PALPA President.

■ **Henk Krul** is the founding President and **Fred Kragie** the first General Secretary of the new Dutch super-union Bondgenoten FNV (FNV Allies), founded at the end of January in Amsterdam. Former Vervoersbond President **Wouter Waleson** takes over responsibility for transport and collective agreements, and former Treasurer **Gerd Ros** is the union's first treasurer and former Dienstenbond President **Martin Spanjers** is in charge of commercial services.

■ The following have been newly appointed to the leadership of the Organisation of Karachi Port Trust Workers: **Fazal Waheed**, President; **Mallik Haq Nawaz**, Deputy President; **Imtiaz Hussain Shah**, Chairman; **Bashir Khan**, General Secretary.

■ **Swarton del Agulla Boria** has been elected as the new General Secretary of the Peruvian Road Transport Drivers' Federation (FECHAP) at its 10th ordinary Congress in Lima.

ITF MEETINGS

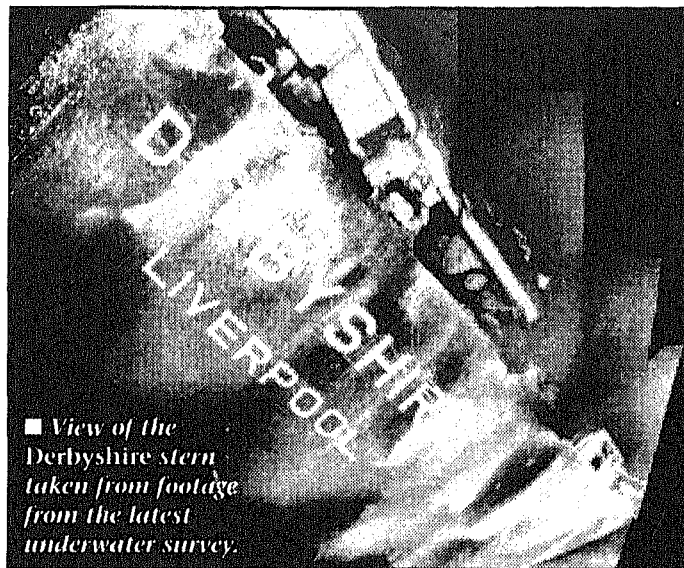
- Tourism Services Section Conference, London, 9-10 June
- European Seafarers' Regional Committee, Rijeka, 18-19 June
- Seafarers' Section meeting, London, 29-30 June
- Dockers' Section meeting, London, 30 June
- Fair Practices Committee, London, 1-3 July
- Interamerican Regional Conference, Miami, 13-18 July
- BA/American Airlines alliance meeting, Miami, 17 July
- Asia/Pacific civil aviation meeting, Sydney, 28-29 July
- Africa road transport seminar, Nairobi, 10-12 August
- Seafarers' Section Steering Committee, London, 31 August to 4 September

EC report, but announced that, along with the Numast and RMT British maritime unions, it would be sponsoring an expert technical examination of the survey findings.

ITF Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson – who took part in the original expedition – said the new report was an important step in the campaign to find out the truth about what happened to the *Derbyshire* and to improve bulk carrier safety in general.

"The ITF organised the search for the *Derbyshire* back in 1994 because our affiliates believed that lessons could be learned which would benefit all seafarers and so that the families of those who died could at least know what happened to their loved ones," he added.

The report makes several recommendations aimed at ensuring that in future ship design is strictly regulated. Among them is a proposal that regulators should guarantee the survivability of all ships under extreme weather



■ View of the *Derbyshire* stern taken from footage from the latest underwater survey.

■ The new report on the *Derbyshire* loss rejects the long-held theory that the ship snapped in two in a location known as frame 65, just forward of the superstructure at the stern of the vessel. Instead the expert assessors appointed by the UK government and the European Commission said the sudden loss was probably the result of a chain of events lasting only a few minutes that began with water entering the bosun's store hatch cover and ventilators near the bow. This made the ship sluggish in the typhoon which was lashing it at the time. One by one the hatches to the nine cargo holds were destroyed by the force of the waves breaking on top of them. Water filled the holds and the ship sank.

conditions. It calls for double-skins to be made mandatory in all new bulk carriers, and for the 1966 International Convention on Load Lines to be reviewed with a view to addressing the question of the freeboard requirements for bulk carriers.

The ITF said it needed more time to consider both the findings of the report properly and to assess their implications for bulk carrier safety and for seafarers worldwide.

The ITF organised and funded a UK£500,000 (US\$840,000) expedition in 1994 which successfully located and filmed the wreck of the *Derbyshire* 400 miles east of Okinawa using a remotely operated vehicle fitted with cameras and deep ocean side scan sonar technology to map the seabed. The report of that mission eventually forced the UK government to reopen the file on the mystery of the *Derbyshire* and organise a follow-up survey. ■

ITF working party on bulker safety

The ITF has agreed to establish a working group of experts to campaign for improvements to the safety of bulk carriers and to renew pressure for tougher international rules on their design, construction and operation.

The decision was taken by the ITF Seafarers' Section Steering Committee, meeting in London in March, and came in response to worries over the number of seafarers' lives being lost on bulk carriers.

A study carried out by the International Association of Classification Societies for

the International Maritime Organization in 1996 estimated that 70 per cent of the existing bulk carrier fleet lacked sufficient structural integrity and would not stand an ingress of water into cargo hold no. 1.

In January the Cyprus-flag vessel *Flare* snapped in two in the Gulf of St Lawrence with the loss of 21 lives.

The ITF and the Norwegian government are currently working on a joint expedition to establish what happened to the *Leros Strength*, also registered in Cyprus, which sank off Norway with

the loss of its 20-strong Polish crew in February.

The group will look at whether problems arise from classification societies' close relationship with shipowners.

ITF Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson commented: "We are hoping that this initiative will result in cross-industry resolve to tackle the continuing problem of bulk carrier losses."

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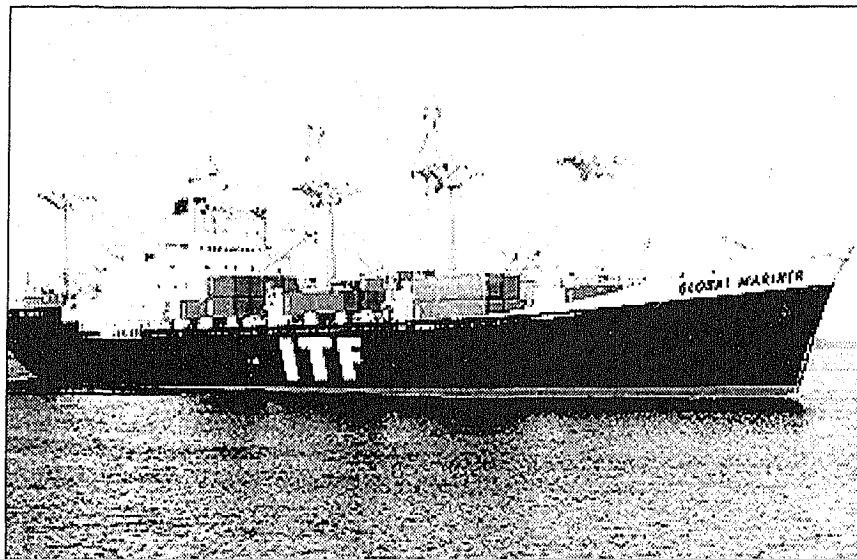
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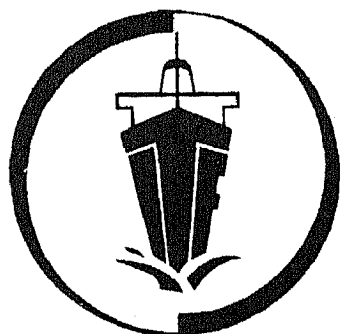
Getting ready to set sail

ITF ship will take anti-FOC message to ports worldwide in anniversary voyage

■ The first ports of call for the *Global Mariner* on its voyage around the world will be:

- London** 28 June to 7 July
- Reykjavik** 10 to 13 July
- Bergen** 16 to 19 July
- Kotka** 23 to 26 July
- St Petersburg** 27 to 31 July
- Gdansk** 5 to 9 August
- Copenhagen** 11 to 14 August
- Göteborg** 15 to 18 August
- Oslo** 19 to 24 August
- Hamburg** 25 to 28 August
- Rotterdam** 29 August to 1 September.

NB: All these dates and destinations are provisional. Check with local ITF affiliates for confirmation.



The ITF, which for 50 years has challenged the lies and hypocrisy that underpin the flag of convenience (FOC) system in shipping, has itself become a shipowner.

As part of its activities marking a half century of campaigning against FOCs, the ITF has purchased the 12,778-tonne general cargo ship *Lady Rebecca*.

The ship will be renamed *Global Mariner* and re-flagged to the United Kingdom.

The bill of sale was exchanged on 27 March in London. Simultaneously, ITF Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson, together with a representative from the appointed ship management firm Acomarit, of Geneva, took delivery of the ship in Pusan, South Korea.

Built in Sunderland, England, in 1979, the ship will be upgraded and converted to house an exhibition on the ITF campaign against FOCs.

Early in July the ship is scheduled to begin a worldwide tour of major ports, raising awareness of the work of the ITF to defend the interests of seafarers, many of whom suffer from appallingly low standards for wages, safety, and living and working conditions on board FOC vessels.

The exhibition will focus on the FOC system as the prime example of the globalisation of labour, and include elements on human and trade union rights.

Crew members are now being sought through advertisements in the shipping media calling for seafarers to "join the campaign against flags of convenience".

ITF General Secretary David Cockroft commented: "For the ITF and its affiliated unions worldwide, the birthday of the campaign signals a new phase of determination to tackle the problem of the FOC system."

■ Left: The ITF campaign ship logo.

