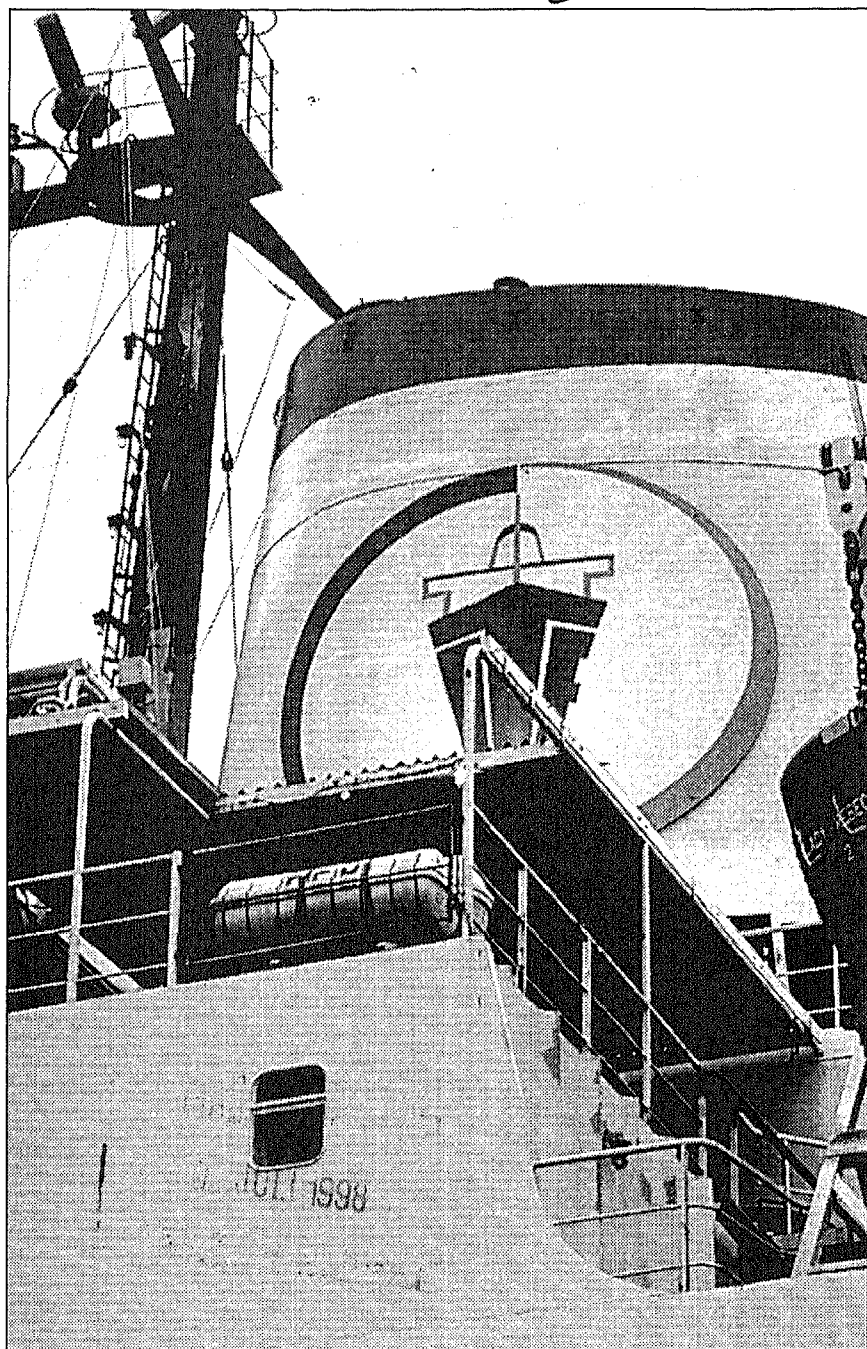
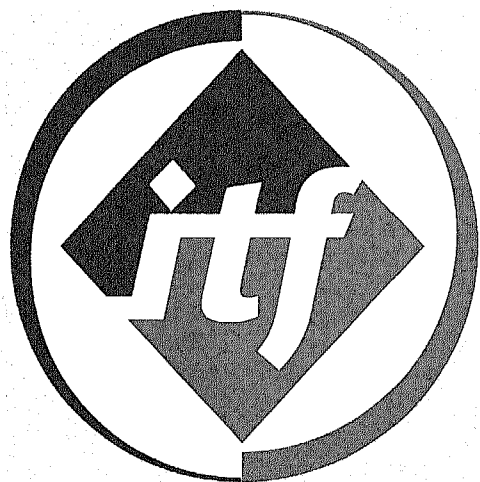
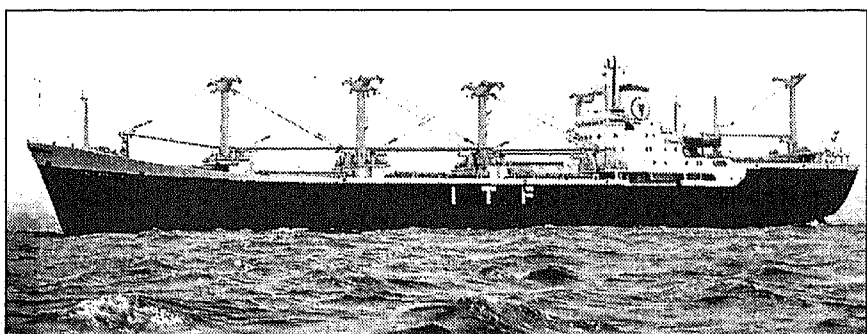


Inside:
**Focus on
the African
Region**



Campaign ship

ITF's Global Mariner begins
round-the-world voyage



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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 8 July 1998.

Australian dockers beat off deunionisation bid Peace deal follows victory on picket line and in the courts

Australian dockers sacked by anti-union employer Patrick Stevedores returned to work in May following a federal court decision in their favour. The ITF immediately told shipowners and operators to use Patrick Stevedores' facilities now that the 1,400 members of the Maritime Union of Australia were back at work.

As this issue of ITF News goes to press, the MUA and Patrick were on the verge of concluding a final peace agreement to end a dispute which had run for over six months.

The union was expected to endorse a peace deal that will see some 700 of the dockers offered voluntary redundancy packages. Under the deal, the union effectively preserves its monopoly for waterfront labour.

Patrick will resume operations at its termi-

'The three-week stand-off was only resolved when more than 160 containers of Patrick-loaded cargo were sent back to New Zealand to be reloaded on another vessel.'

nals with a core union workforce of about 700. A further 150 jobs in security, cleaning and maintenance will be contracted out to companies employing union labour. Union members accepting redundancy will be able to apply for those positions, making the net loss of jobs just over 550. The settlement is conditional on all legal actions, including that launched by the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission, being dropped.

"We have said all along that what ITF affiliates are fighting for is union labour," declared General Secretary David Cockroft. "That's the

situation right now at Patrick, so we are happy to recommend that operators use the facilities."

Shipowners who ignored warnings not to get involved in the bitter political and industrial dispute and used the non-union wharves were targeted during the dispute.

In Osaka, Yokohama and Nagoya in May hundreds of demonstrating Japanese trade unionists met the *Australian Endeavour* to protest about the use of non-union stevedoring labour to work the ship in Australia. The *MSC Singapore* was also met by Japanese dockers in Yokohama.

Meanwhile, in Los Angeles the containership *Columbus Canada* remained idle after 1,500 members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union mounted a picket line supporting the MUA. The Liberian-registered ship had been worked by non-union labour in Australia during the dispute.

The three-week stand-off was only resolved when more than 160 containers of Patrick-loaded cargo were sent back to New Zealand to be reloaded on another vessel.

In India, the *CGM Gauvain* was diverted from Bombay after ITF-affiliated dockers' unions there warned the vessel would be targeted.

The latest twist in the legal battles involving the ITF came late in May when the Australian federal court told the MUA that it cannot call on the ITF to boycott ships loaded by non-union labour. But the ITF shrugged off the ban, arguing that blacking is carried out by affiliates rather than the ITF itself, thus rendering the interim injunction ineffective. ☐

FST Acting General Secretary appointed

Hugues de Villèle, General Secretary of the Brussels-based Federation of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Union (FST), submitted his resignation on 14 May. On the same day the FST Presidium, headed by Rudi Schäfer of the German Railwaymen's Union, took over political responsibility for the direction of the FST and appointed Romolo Vivarelli (FILT CGIL, Italy) to take over the tasks of Hugues de Villèle on a temporary basis.

A further meeting of the

Presidium in June appointed Vivarelli as Acting General Secretary with a mandate to examine the FST's financial situation and to prepare for the election of a new General Secretary early in 1999.

The first meeting of a special ITF/FST working group, established by decision of the FST Assembly in November 1997 to examine future transport workers' representation in Europe has been fixed for 4 September. The ITF General Secretary is a member of the FST Presidium. ☐

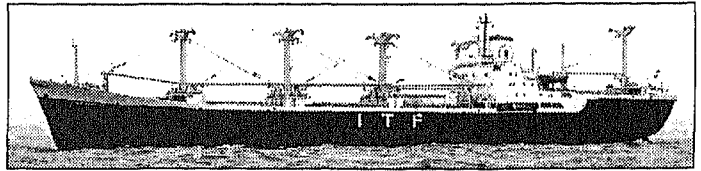
The world voyage of the ITF campaign ship, *Global Mariner*, was formally launched on 1 July in London. At the same time the ITF published a list of the world's worst 20 shipowners, whose activities will be exposed in the exhibition on flag of convenience shipping which will be one of the main attractions of the ship when it calls at ports as it circumnavigates the globe.

As part of the launch ceremony, which was attended by UK Shipping Minister Glenda Jackson, the UK flag was raised on the world's first vessel to campaign globally for seafarers' rights. The 12,778 GT general cargo vessel, built in Sunderland, England, in 1979, was previously British-owned but Hong Kong-registered as the *Lady Rebecca*.

The floating exhibition aims to expose the true face of modern shipping, in which the flag of convenience has condemned tens of thousands of seafarers to a life of danger and hardship.

London was the *Global Mariner's* first port of call before setting off on 8 July on the 18-month tour of the world's major ports to mark the 50th anniversary of the ITF's campaign against flags of convenience. ■

■ **Right:** UK Shipping Minister Glenda Jackson at the renaming and re-flagging ceremony on 1 July, with, from left: ITF Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson, *Global Mariner* master Dave Enever, Brian Orrell, General Secretary of Numast, the British officers' union, Jim Knapp, General Secretary of the RMT ratings' union and ITF General Secretary David Cockcroft.



ITF campaign ship sets sail

Photo: Robert Todd



Ports of call

North Sea/Baltic

Days in port: approximately 60

London (United Kingdom)
Reykjavik (Iceland)
Bergen (Norway)
Kotka (Finland)
Riga (Latvia)
Gdynia (Poland)
Copenhagen (Denmark)
Oslo (Norway)
Hamburg (Germany)
Rotterdam (Netherlands)
Le Havre (France)
Dunkerque (France)
Antwerp (Belgium)
Lisbon (Portugal)

North/Central America East Coast

Days in port: approximately 40

Halifax (Canada)
Montreal (Canada)
New York (USA)
Baltimore (USA)
Fort Lauderdale (USA)
New Orleans (USA)
Houston (USA)
Veracruz (Mexico)
San Juan (Puerto Rico)
Port of Spain (Trinidad)

South America East Coast

Days in port: approximately 20
Vitoria (Brazil)

Santos (Brazil)
Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)
Montevideo (Uruguay)
Buenos Aires (Argentina)

South America West Coast

Days in port: approximately 12

San Vicente (Chile)
Valparaiso (Chile)
Callao (Peru)

North/Central America West Coast

Days in port: approximately 28

Balboa/Panama City
Manzanillo (Mexico)
Los Angeles (USA)
San Francisco (USA)
Portland (USA)
Seattle (USA)
Vancouver (Canada)

Asia

Days in port: approximately 36

Vladivostok (Russia)
Yokohama (Japan)
Kobe (Japan)
Pusan (Korea)
Kaohsiung (Taiwan)
Hong Kong (China)
Manila (Philippines)
Singapore

New Zealand/Australia

Days in port: approximately 16
Auckland (New Zealand)
Mount Maunganui (New Zealand)

Sydney (Australia)
Fremantle (Australia)

India/Sri Lanka/Pakistan

Days in port: approximately 16

Visakhapatnam (India)
Colombo (Sri Lanka)
Bombay (India)
Karachi (Pakistan)

Africa

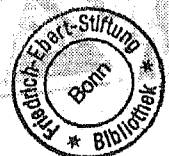
Days in port: approximately 16

Mombasa (Kenya)
Durban (South Africa)
Cape Town (South Africa)
Lagos (Nigeria)

Mediterranean

Days in port: approximately 52

Valetta (Malta)
Haifa (Israel)
Limassol (Cyprus)
Novorossiysk (Russia)
Constantza (Romania)
Istanbul (Turkey)
Piraeus (Greece)
Rijeka (Croatia)
Ravenna (Italy)
Livorno (Italy)
Barcelona (Spain)





Killed, injured and jailed for being trade unionists

Listing a total of 116 countries, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions reports that 299 trade unionists were killed in 1997. Cases of violence amounted to 1,681. Nearly 2,400 people were arrested and detained in 1997 for their trade union activities, and over 50,000 workers lost their jobs for the same reason.

In its latest report on the violation of trade union rights, published in June, the ICFTU reveals that 290 trade unionists received death threats. More than 3,000 activists were placed under police surveillance and 450 strikes were fiercely repressed. Over 80 countries have placed legal obstacles in the way of freedom of association, while in 79 countries the government interferes in trade union affairs.

Singled out for special criticism is Colombia. At least 156 union leaders and members were murdered there last year, and hundreds of trade unionists were forced to flee their homes because of death threats. Union activists continue to be stigmatised as enemies of the state and there is evidence that many of the murders were linked to collective bargaining or industrial disputes. The violence is rarely, if ever, investigated. ■

■ *The opening of the International Labour Organization's conference in June in Geneva was marked by the arrival of the World March Against Child Labour, from all five continents of the world. The conference went on to adopt a new convention, for ratification from 1999, to deal with the most exploitative forms of child labour.*

Indonesia

The ITF has welcomed the announcement by the new government of Indonesia that it would soon ratify Convention 87 of the International Labour Organization which provides for workers the right to form or join trade unions of their own choosing without government interference. The move followed a decision by the government formally to recognise the country's independent labour group SBSI, headed by Muchtar Pakpahan who was freed from jail on 26 May after having spent two years detained on subversion charges. However, the Jakarta military command mounted a heavy presence of troops outside the headquarters of the SBSI, preventing workers from going ahead with a rally in the Indonesian capital. ■

Korea

Tens of thousands of South Korean workers launched two days of nationwide strikes at the end of May with the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, representing 560,000 workers, demanding a halt to mass lay-offs, an increase in unemployment benefits, more reform of large conglomerates and a renegotiation of the International Monetary Fund's aid and reform package. ■

ILO

The ITF has joined the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in welcoming the adoption by the International Labour Organization's conference of a Declaration on Fundamental Principles and

Rights at Work. The declaration was adopted in June by delegates to the conference representing governments, employers and trade unions from the 174 ILO member countries.

The declaration makes clear that all ILO member states have an obligation to respect these fundamental rights, defined as:

- freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining,
- the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour,
- the effective abolition of child labour,
- the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Follow-up mechanisms in the declaration give the ILO important new powers to supervise the performance of all member states in respecting fundamental rights. For the first time the ILO will be able to examine the fundamental rights situation in all countries – even if they have not ratified the relevant ILO conventions. ■

Denmark

A two-week general strike in Denmark ended on 11 May after the government intervened to give workers additional days of paid leave and a small hourly wage increase. In addition, an employee annual sickness tax paid by the employer will be dropped. The Danish LO trade union centre said that the action was an attack on the right of collective bargaining. The unions were requesting a wage rise and additional paid holiday entitlement for workers in the transport, building, service and manufacturing sectors.

The strike brought parts of the country to a standstill, as more than half a million Danish workers, one-fifth of the workforce, stopped work.

Trade unionists in Sweden supported the strike as airport workers in Stockholm refused to service long-haul flights diverted from Copenhagen. ■

Central and Eastern Europe

ITF Sub-Regional Co-ordinators for Central and Eastern Europe held their first joint meeting in Dubrovnik, Croatia, on 15 and 16 June to assess developments in the sub-regions and to consider their future role and ITF activities. The meeting was attended by ITF General Secretary David Cockroft and Education Co-ordinator Mirjam Korhonen. Also present was ITF President Eike Eulen, who discussed progress in the establishment of trans-European transport networks. The meeting agreed on the need to convene regularly, to develop sub-regional approaches on transport issues and ITF work, to strengthen the ITF National Co-ordinating Committees and to educate transport union leaders, shop stewards and members on basic trade union issues as well as on issues like privatisation, globalisation, preparation for European Union membership, and on the work of other international bodies dealing with workers rights and transport policy. All Co-ordinators also emphasized the need to exchange programmes with their Western European sister unions. ■

A better deal for African seafarers?

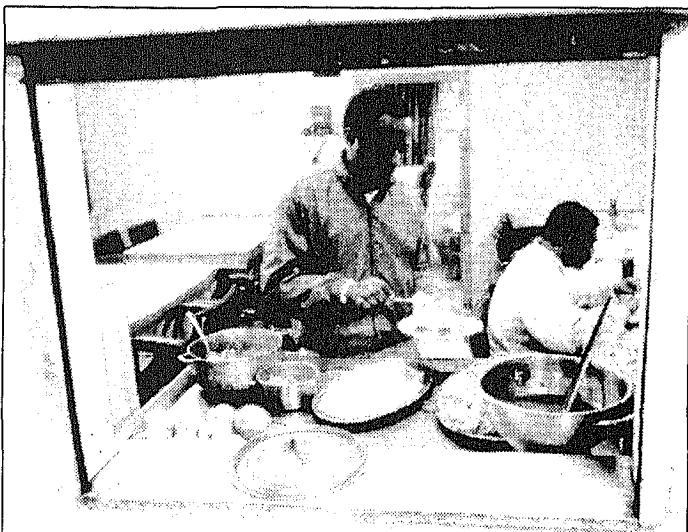
■ *The plight of crew members of the Kifangondo, immobilised in Le Havre for over four years until the end of May this year when the Angolan ship was finally auctioned, came to represent the unfortunate lot of African seafarers in general – badly treated and with few job opportunities at sea.*

The five men were not alone, thanks to the efforts of unions and other groups ashore, and they did not starve. ITF unions in France resolved to promote African seafarers' unions, in particular by pressing for appropriate

training facilities to meet international safety and certification standards.

– A charter for African seafarers: page 8.

Photo: Olivier Aubert



ITF African Regional Secretary Ben Udogwu (above) surveys the main industrial and political developments in Africa and the response of the ITF and its affiliates.

The African Regional Conference is being held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 15 to 17 September.

ITF progress in an era of great change

For over a decade, economic and political issues have occupied the centre stage of Africa's transformation agenda and African workers and their trade unions have made their voice and actions felt.

As far as the ITF and its affiliates are concerned, a great deal has been done to match the demands of the time. A new education policy and the creation of structures including the establishment of National Co-ordinating Committees are key elements of a clear and imaginative approach to encourage the steady development of transport trade unions.

Positive initiatives are also under way on other areas of concern, such as the Aids

'Badly conceived and improperly implemented Structural Adjustment Programmes have impeded economic progress in Africa as both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund pursue their trial and error economics on the continent and as the measures they prescribe have brought woes rather than solutions.'

scourge, the integration of women transport workers into trade union work and leadership, and cross-border traffic and related issues.

Linked to cross-border programme is the encouragement of African affiliates towards integration and co-operation between affiliated unions. Greater awareness is being focused on wider problems including menacing police road blocks, harassment and immigration/customs administrative inefficiency, all of which make the life and work of cross-border road transport workers unbearable.

An important aspect of the integration programme is the impetus it has given to the strengthening of the sub-regional structures for their important role of representing transport workers in the government and non-governmental bodies dealing with transport questions. For example the Southern Africa Transport and Telecommunications Commission (an agency of the Southern Africa Development Community) has granted recognition to the ITF to work as equal partners with its Southern Africa Co-ordinating Committee.

The East African Co-ordinating Committee which was set up in August 1997 is in the process of gaining similar status from the East Africa Co-operation body through the East Africa Trade Union Council.

Badly conceived and improperly implemented Structural Adjustment Programmes

Progress in an era of great change

Nigerians freed

The ITF and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions have welcomed the release of Frank Kokori, leader of Nupeng and Milton Dabibi, leader of Pengassan, two trade unions in the oil industry, which was announced in June. Both were arrested as a result of strikes in the oil industry in July 1994. Neither men were charged and both were poorly treated during their imprisonment. In addition to welcoming the trade unionists' release, the ICFTU is urging the new government to ensure that trade union rights are re-established in the country. While Nigeria has ratified ILO Conventions 87 on Freedom of Association, and 98 on the Right to Organise, these rights are not respected, particularly in the country's vitally important oil export sector. ■

Geared up for safety drive

Roughly 10,000 people die on the roads in South Africa every year. Almost half of these are pedestrians struck by passing vehicles. Commercial drivers and their passengers are not immune from the statistics however. Between October and December 1997 alone, 565 drivers and passengers were killed in accidents involving commercial vehicles.

Looking at the causes of fatal accidents, the statistics show that in October

1997 25 per cent of all road fatalities involved a vehicle which was overloaded either with passengers or goods, and that in 5.6 per cent of fatal accidents fatigue or falling asleep was a factor.

This is the background against which the Transport and General Workers' Union's goods transport national shop stewards council discussed the ITF's hours of work campaign at a meeting on 3 and 4 July.

"Limiting hours of work

is one way of reducing fatigue and improving working conditions," said Thulani Dlamini, national organiser for the goods transport sector. "But we need to tackle the question of the safety of drivers and the road-using public in general also from the point of view of decent vehicle stopping points, better vehicle design and strategies for forcing employers to stop overloading." ■

▶ have impeded economic progress in Africa as both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund pursue their trial and error economics on the continent and as the measures they prescribe have brought woes rather than solutions. At best the measures advocated by the two institutions have driven some African countries into heavier debt, political instability and economic suicide. The transport industry has not been spared privatisation and deregulation, threatening jobs and bringing poorer health and safety standards.

Despite daunting difficulties, the new pragmatic initiatives have led to an expansion in activities and with it dramatic growth of the ITF both in the number of affiliated unions and membership. We have over 85 affiliated unions with some 265,000 members in 38 countries. Our phenomenal growth and spread in all the regions of Africa has extended ITF activities to all Africa's linguistic blocks including lusophone and Arabic.

Swaziland

In Swaziland, the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union has been a major force in the campaign for democracy. Successful work stoppages involving transport workers have taken place with support from the international trade union movement. The situation remains fluid, but the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions is not relenting, despite the formation of a rival centre, the Swaziland Federation of Labour.

Liberia

Liberia's civil war ended with free and fair elections organised and supervised by ECOWAS in July 1997. Liberia's new government under President Charles Taylor is now confronting the process of reconstruction. Along with it will be the reconstruction of the country's trade union movement in which the ITF-backed amalgamated union of dock and port workers

will play a unique role. The ITF is planning a high level mission to discuss maritime issues with President Taylor later this year.

Sierra Leone

Civil rule was restored in Sierra Leone in February 1998 thanks to the intervention of ECOWAS after many months of political and civil strife which followed the overthrow in May 1997 of the country's democratically elected president, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. As in Liberia, the ITF is extending assistance to its four affiliates in the country to help sustain both their trade unions and the membership.

Nigeria

In Nigeria, following the death of General Abacha on 8 June and the subsequent appointment of General Abubakar as the new head of state, some political prisoners were released. But there has been no restoration of the disbanded Nigerian Labour Congress's Executive Committee and the withdrawal of government-appointed administrators of the NLC. The ITF remains committed to campaign not only to restore the full autonomy of the NLC and other unions, but also for the abrogation of decrees limiting trade union rights.

Zimbabwe

Relations between the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and President Mugabe's government have deteriorated as the ZCTU agitated for economic measures to address the harsh effects of austerity measures. The strained relations culminated in a two-day national strike in the later part of 1997. This was followed by a further strike in March this year, called specifically to protest against price rises. ■

Bank pressure on Air Afrique to privatise

Air Afrique has been a rare success story of co-operation between African governments. It was set up in 1961 and involves 11 West African Francophone countries combining to run a single airline and provides vital air links with Europe, the United States and the Middle East.

The airline is struggling with debts of more than \$300 million, mainly deriving from the doubling of debts due to the

'All this is driven by the short term cost savings required by the economic adjustment programmes which the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank demand of African governments. It bears little relation to the air transport needs of African countries.'

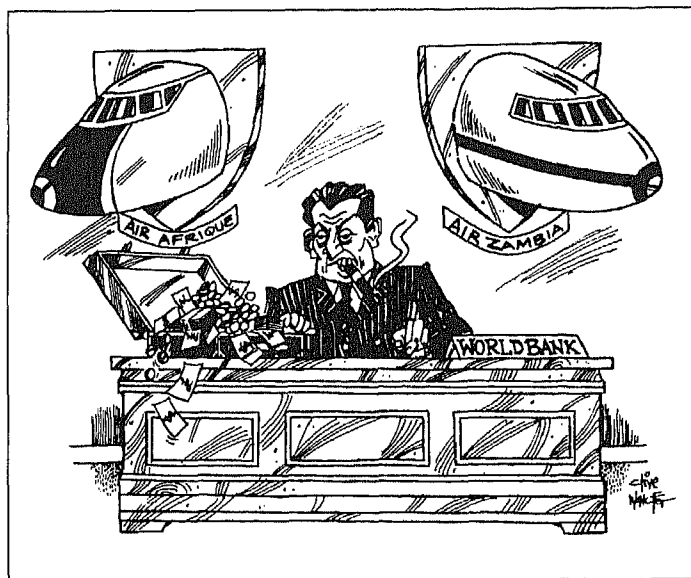
devaluation of the CFA franc in 1994.

As a result, Air Afrique governments have had to seek assistance from the World Bank, which has taken on a powerful and highly directive role in African aviation. It has its own agenda of privatisation and deregulation.

All this is driven by the short term cost savings required by the economic adjustment programmes which the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank demand of African governments. It bears little relation to the air transport needs of African countries.

The World Bank is preparing its own proposals for the future of Air Afrique. It is understood that these may include conditions for assistance which will dismantle the structures of regional co-operation set up to run the airline and transform it into a feeder for a European or North American airline. The plan is likely to lose up to 30 per cent of jobs at the airline.

The Air Afrique trade unions organised in ISTAA (Air Afrique Staff Inter Syndicale)



are opposing any such strategy. They have already held their own meeting with the World Bank and are lobbying their own governments with a number of demands.

The unions say that the Air Afrique governments must provide all necessary immediate assurances and credit guarantees to prevent the seizure of any of the airline's assets, including aircraft. All member states should pay their capital

contributions. There should be a full and meaningful tripartite dialogue involving governments, management and unions to discuss the plan proposed by the World Bank. No protocol should be signed before this dialogue has taken place.

— From *flag carriers to feeders?* page 10. ✪

Ten years ago the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) employed 18,000 people. Now it employs 11,000 with 7,000 jobs having been eliminated through the non replacement of retired, deceased and dismissed workers. NRZ intends reducing staff by a further 3,000. The company has announced its intention to retrench 410 workers in the near future.

According to the Zimbabwe Amalgamated Railwaymen's Union (ZARU) the reduction of staff numbers has led to high levels of stress amongst the remaining workforce, and a serious deterioration of safety standards. Where there used to be 21 people in a track maintenance gang, there are now nine.

The incidence of accidents involving track maintenance workers has rocketed. And in the context of a deteriorating infrastructure, with many signals inoperative, train delays are long and frequent. A reduced train driver staff is unable to cope with the resulting ever-longer driving hours.

In November 1996 the Zimbabwe government passed the Railways Amendment Act which makes provision for the separation of railway infrastructure from operations, allows for access of private operators to the infrastruc-

Zimbabwe railway workers face structural adjustment

ture, and makes provision for the franchising of certain services including rolling stock repair. Freight and passenger operations are also to be separated into separate business divisions.

The Zimbabwe government and the World Bank, which has advised the government on these changes and which has lent money for certain modernising projects, argue that these changes are necessary in order to bring in private investment to the railway system.

The union sees this as a sure route to massive profits for a few, deteriorating working conditions for the workforce, and an unsafe journey for commuters.

The union has repeatedly requested a meeting with World Bank officials to discuss the implications for job security, working conditions, trade union membership, railway safety and economic efficiency. Despite assurances by a World Bank official at the ITF Railway Workers' Section Conference in Berlin in November 1997 that the Bank would want to consult unions, it has so far failed to respond to ZARU's request. ✪

Studying for solutions

One man who is trying to tackle the problem of why there are relatively so few



jobs for African seafarers is Parker Kamara (left), General Secretary

of the Sierra Leone National Seamen's Union. With the help of an ITF scholarship, he is researching at the University of Wales, Cardiff, the causes of this imbalance.

"The main problem is the lack of a maritime infrastructure," he says.

"In general in West Africa there is no effective legislation covering ship's crews, few training facilities and only private crewing agencies," he adds. "All this leaves seafarers at the mercy of flag of convenience operators, so seafarers are forced to accept inferior conditions."

Parker intends to submit the conclusions of his 12-month studies, which began in March this year, to the Sierra Leone government as well as to the ITF and his own 3,000-strong union, the oldest seafarers' union in Africa.

"It might be that the ITF can help, especially in helping to meet our training needs," he suggests. "For example, Sierra Leone seafarers currently have to go to Ghana to receive STCW (training, certification and watchkeeping) training." ■

ITF drawing up charter for African seafarers

A Charter for African Seafarers is being drawn up by the ITF as a first step in tackling the problem of lack of job opportunities with proper working conditions for African seafarers.

Consultations are taking place with the unions concerned on the scope of the charter, but already a number of key principles are apparent, says ITF Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson.

"Its purpose will be to set standards to be accepted by all affiliated African seafarers' unions in order to avoid undue competition between various countries," he adds.

"What is clearly wrong is that Africa, in Liberia, has the largest shipping register in the world in terms of tonnage, yet relatively few Africans are employed at sea."

"What is clearly wrong is that Africa, in Liberia, has the largest shipping register in the world in terms of tonnage, yet relatively few Africans are employed at sea."

The charter is expected to cover topics such as training, safety, wages and relations with national and international authorities.

The decision to draft the charter was taken at the most recent African Regional Seafarers' Committee meeting held in October last year. The same meeting agreed to press African governments to implement without delay the International Maritime Organization's STCW (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping) Convention.

"Without a full commitment to train seafarers to STCW standards, the seafarers will be unable to compete on equal terms with others," says Dickinson. ■

Ports restructuring process begins

ITF Dockers' Secretary Kees Marges writes:

Africa is behind, though not unaffected by, the restructuring changes sweeping the global ports industry.

That could be excellent news, as deregulation and privatisation can mean fewer jobs, worse conditions and union derecognition.

'Africa cannot avoid the port reforms which other countries and regions are going through. In some ports there are already early signs of such developments'

But Africa cannot avoid the port reforms which other countries and regions are going through. In some ports there are already early signs of such developments:

● Kenya: Hutchison signed a two-year operational contract in Mombasa, but ran into problems because of not implement-

ing agreements and corruption, and now might pull out.

● Mozambique is, perhaps surprisingly, ahead of most countries as a result of its geographical position, close to South Africa, and thus attracts foreign capital, notably from South Africa itself.

● Nigeria: Ports are going through a process of "commercialisation", which is usually a preliminary phase in the privatisation process. It allows private capital to participate in terminal operations by owning minority share holdings.

● North Africa: A container hub is being planned in Tangiers, Morocco, as a competitor for southern Spanish and Italian hubs. The Egyptian government has launched plans to develop ports on the Mediterranean.

● South Africa: Tough negotiations are still under way on the introduction of a labour pool system. Plans for building a new containerport near Durban and to expand Richards Bay bulkport by adding a container terminal are being discussed. ■

Unions admitted to Eurocontrol

Trade unions have finally been admitted to Eurocontrol committees in which vital discussions are being held on air traffic management in Europe.

Eurocontrol is the organisation which plans, assists and co-ordinates the management of air space controlled by the national aviation authorities of 26 countries.

It took several years of persistent lobbying, in particular in conjunction with the FST (Federation of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Union) before the unions won the right, in May, to be included in Eurocontrol working groups.

The unions will now be able to provide their input on key issues of concern such as controller work load, working hours and fatigue, work load orientation, training and licensing.

Air traffic authorities in European countries are under severe pressure to increase air capacity to cope with massive projected traffic growth. Employees in air traffic services are being faced by a range of radical technical, organisational and cultural changes.

At the same time there are cost cutting demands by governments and by airlines; moves towards the commercialisation and privatisation of air traffic services; and an increasing trend to fragment and out-source various air traffic control functions. Strategies are also being developed for the regional integration of air traffic management.

At Eurocontrol it appears to have been slowly accepted that these changes will have a major impact on the conditions and the required skills of air traffic service employees, and that they cannot possibly work unless they have the co-operation of employees. ■



■ The double-deck Airbus A3XX offers the possibility of extremely long range travel with upward of 650 passengers. The ITF dialogue with Airbus will address the new concepts of aircraft evacuation and safety management on board.

Dialogue with Airbus

A newly established dialogue with Airbus will give cabin crew and ground staff trade unions direct contact with senior engineers and policy makers at the European consortium's Toulouse headquarters. The Airbus link follows earlier tie-ups with Boeing and McDonnell Douglas and means that the ITF now has formal links with the manufacturers of all the large commercial airliners flying worldwide.

During a two-day meeting in Toulouse at the end of May, the ITF team talked with company specialists on subjects as diverse as human factors, Airbus accident investigation, and an extensive technical and engineering agenda. The visit included an opportunity to view a number of A340s in a variety of cabin configurations.

Alain Garcia, Senior Vice President of Airbus, emphasised the value of developing a constructive dialogue with the ITF and the benefit of exchanging ideas. He outlined Airbus safety initiatives, emphasising the need for a global approach to reducing the number of crashes and major accidents. Airbus was at the forefront of research on cabin safety, he said, while emphasising that there was no competition between manufacturers on safety matters – the aim was to collaborate and exchange best practice. Crew training and human factors activities would become increasingly important in aviation safety strategies, Garcia said.

Improved training

He raised the prospect of improved cabin crew training in relation to technical issues; such as dealing with minor systems breakdowns during flight, for example in relation to air conditioning, water supply or toilet blockages.

The ITF welcomed the proactive approach to safety that the company was clearly demonstrating, but emphasised that survivability when accidents do occur was an essential complementary activity to trying to prevent accidents in the first place. This meant that cabin

Technical issues discussed with Airbus:

- Cabin environment and air quality
- Cabin crew training
- Crew stations
- Crew seat design and location
- Crew rest facilities
- Direct view (of passengers)
- Cabin evacuation issues and procedures
- Doors and slides
- Cabin design issues (eg galleys)
- Overhead bin design and baggage safety

crew needed to be equipped and ready to deal with emergency situations onboard.

During the technical discussions much attention was focused on the Airbus A3XX programme. The A3XX will be a new family of airliners, with full-length twin decks which will accommodate from 555 to 656 passengers in the versions under active development, but which may grow to up to 1,000 passengers in future models. These new long-range aircraft raise new issues for cabin crew, not only in relation to safety and evacuation issues, but also in terms of crew functions and activities on board aircraft which will be so large that they are being compared to cruise liners in company promotional literature.

The ITF delegation comprised members of the ITF's Aircraft Cabin Design Task Group. It was agreed that further meetings would be fruitful, and the ITF will be preparing specific proposals for aircraft design for presentation in the near future. A meeting next year at the A3XX mock-up in Hamburg will provide an opportunity to discuss cabin safety issues more concretely once the A3XX basic design blueprint is fixed. ■



From flag carriers to feeders?

Governments should recognise that air transport links are too important to be left to market forces, writes ITF Civil Aviation Secretary Stuart Howard

PAL attacks unions

Philippine Airlines has sacked all 660 members of the pilots' union ALPAP who have been on strike since 4 June. The ground crew and cabin crew union PALEA has issued a strike notice to start their own industrial action after the company arbitrarily announced the dismissal of 5,000 workers. Those who have not been laid off are being asked to shift to temporary contracts.

The company has attempted to split the unions by blaming ground staff and cabin crew lay offs on the pilots' strike. The unions showed their response to this by holding joint protest rallies outside the company offices.

The pilot strike began after the company announced the enforced retirement of all pilots over the age of 45. The move would have involved the dismissal of more than 200 pilots.

Philippine Airlines was privatised in 1993. Since then the airline has become notorious for its anti-labour attitudes. In January this year the company announced that it planned to make staff cuts of 20 to 40 per cent.

The company is proposing to reduce its fleet from 50 aircraft to 14 with massive job losses. The unions say that Philippines aviation deserves better and are demanding that the government, which owns 28 per cent of the shares, intervenes. ❏

Debt and financial crisis are forcing some governments to take rash gambles with their air transport, despite the fact that the economies of some of these countries depend vitally on their domestic and international air links.

The Philippines government appears ready to stand aside while its Security and Exchange Commission decides whether to allow Philippine Airlines to go bankrupt. In June, 11 African governments who have maintained the longest and most substantial experiment of multinational co-operation through Air Afrique are currently discussing plans to privatise the airline and to stop flying outside Africa (see report on page 7).

Large parts of Indonesia are currently cut off from each other because the government has dropped many domestic air links in this huge country.

How vital is international air transport? Powerful governments are in no doubt. When the US National Airline Commission made its report in August 1993 the chairman's summary stated: "The air transportation system has become essential to economic progress for the citizens and business of this nation. Without it our country will be hamstrung in its ability to participate in an increasingly global community and market place." The European Union reached a similar conclusion the following year: "A genuine European air transport industry is a key industry for the overall economic welfare of Europe."

If air transport is vital for the economic health of Europe and the US, how much more so for developing countries which desperately need to develop their domestic markets and keep themselves linked in to the global economy.

Privatisation has proved a false panacea as the cases of Viasa in Venezuela and now PAL in the Philippines have

demonstrated. Private airlines have been no less hit by financial crisis than state-owned airlines.

However, while governments appear to be convinced enough about the importance of air transport that they are ready to resist strikes by airline workers with legal bans, they do not seem so ready to resist plans put forward by such institutions as the World Bank, or private owners, which put the future existence of their national airline at far greater risk.

It is clear that the situation for airlines in some countries has been made worse by external factors such as exchange rates. Airlines generally require large amounts of credit for fleet renewal. PAL's debts have been made far worse by the rapid devaluation of the south east Asian currencies.

This puts some responsibilities on the international community. If the answer to poverty is development, and if air transport is a vital element of national economic development, then why are international institutions such as the World Bank hindering rather than supporting the efforts of developing countries to sustain their air services? And why do proposals for special aviation development funds such as that put forward by Latin American countries at the last ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) Assembly in 1995 receive such short shrift?

It is now a matter of urgency that this year's ICAO Assembly should be used by governments to discuss how participation in air transport by ICAO member states can genuinely be maintained. ❏

On 7 June Mexican cabin crew sealed a key victory for union rights.

When the leading Mexican carrier Aeromexico threatened to impose new conditions, including longer working hours and fewer crew members, the cabin crew union ASSA knew it would be faced with a tough fight. Companies in Mexico have regularly been able to rely on support from the government.

ASSA, however, is part of a growing movement which

Aeromexico strike victory

rejects the passive culture which has affected much of the labour movement.

ASSA filed notice that they would go on strike at midnight on 31 May.

When the strike was about to begin the government banned strike action with a return to work order.

The cabin crew did not give up, but resorted to more

imaginative tactics. Check-in desks were strewn with union banners and pickets informed passengers of the strike ban.

The ITF agreed to hold a day of international action to extend the check-in protests to every Aeromexico destination. Unions were urged to deluge the government with protest letters.

The government decided to settle. The company agreed to keep working hours as they were. Crew complements were not only

not reduced but increased by one crew member per aircraft. Salaries were increased in line with inflation (around 18 per cent) and for the first time employees gained provisions for pensions and early retirement.

Alejandra Barrales, ASSA General Secretary, wrote to the ITF to thank affiliates for the international pressure which had been a major factor in ensuring victory. ❏

Rail workers demonstrate over threat to jobs and safety

■ Representatives of railway trade unions from European Union countries took part in a mass demonstration organised by the FST (Federation of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Union) in Luxembourg on 18 June to protest against European Commission proposals to liberalise the railway industry. More than 2,000 demonstrators rallied in front of the parliament building where EU Transport Ministers were holding a two day meeting



to discuss EU railway policy. Jim Knapp (RMT, UK), President of the FST Railway Workers' Section and Chair of the ITF Railway Workers' Section,

addressed the rally and stressed that the unions had not been fully consulted on policy proposals that could lead to massive job losses and a threat to safety.

Road transport unions prepare for 8 September campaign day

Give us safer working hours

Road transport unions will be taking action around the world on 8 September in their long-standing campaign for shorter working hours and safer roads. For the first time taxi drivers will be joining truck, bus and coach drivers to demand sensible limits on working time and adequate rest breaks.

The ITF will be placing open letters in the world's press to the growing number of multinational companies in road transport urging them to ensure that their employees do not have to work excessive hours.

On the day approaches will be made to governments and the governing bodies of regional trading blocs seeking effective national and international regulations to curb driver fatigue

and hence reduce road accidents and road deaths.

There will be a special focus this year on trade union rights and road transport workers taking part in various actions will be pressing transport employers to respect the human rights and dignity of their employees and not expose them to unsafe working conditions.

Unions are holding a series of meetings in the different regions – these started with a European meeting on 3 June – to plan the details of their activities. Actions in each country will depend on national circumstances but are likely to include road blockades, co-ordinated union actions at border crossings, information pickets and round table discussions, as well as protests and demonstrations.

Banners, leaflets and stickers will be used to get the message across to the public that tired drivers at the wheel are a threat to themselves and to all who use our increasingly crowded roads.

Drivers will make clear that any attempt to lift Sunday driving bans will be strongly resisted, as a weekend rest enables drivers to enjoy a more normal family life and helps reduce the build-up of stress.

They will also seek to involve non-driving staff, such as the logistics workers who plan their journeys, in their campaign to persuade employers that drivers deserve special consideration and proper health protection.

'Banners, leaflets and stickers will be used to get the message across to the public that tired drivers at the wheel are a threat to themselves and to all who use our increasingly crowded roads.'

Norwegian bus and truck drivers have now returned to work after the country's biggest transport strike in 50 years.

Bus drivers in Oslo and Trondheim walked out on 14 May after contract talks between the Norwegian Transport Workers' Union and employers collapsed. They were followed by drivers in four trucking companies. At the height of the four week action over 10,000 drivers had walked off their jobs.

Attempts by the truck employers to get round the strike were thwarted by European transport unions alerted by the Nordic Transport Workers' Federation and the ITF to the possibility of unorganised drivers being brought in to carry strikebound goods.

The effectiveness of the dispute was strengthened because the Norwegian Bus Workers' Union – a breakaway from the Transport Workers – brought its members out on strike.

On 16 May, the strikers were joined by road transport drivers employed by Norwegian State Railways and its sister companies (members of

Pay deal ends Norway's biggest strike in 50 years

the Norwegian Railway Workers' Union). The action was called off after 12 days when the union concluded a separate settlement.

Eventually renewed talks under the national mediator led to a settlement of the main disputes with the employers' bodies and the ending of industrial action on 10 June.

Goods and passenger transport drivers receive a general increase of 9kr per hour, with an extra krone for skilled workers, and the bus employers have agreed that future levels of pay will reflect the general movement of wages.

A national tourist bus agreement has been concluded and pensions provision will be extended to all bus workers.

While it proved impossible to achieve a fixed hourly rate for truck drivers, the employers agreed that in future around 25 per cent of drivers' pay will depend on distance covered (previously between 40 and 55 per cent). ❊

N-waste by rail protest

Following the contamination of railway wagons after the transportation of nuclear waste from Switzerland to France and England, the Swiss Transport and Railway Workers' Union SEV has lodged a formal complaint against the nuclear companies and the authorities who authorise these transports. The consignments have been suspended but may well be resumed in the absence of adequate inspection measures or action to protect rail staff. Meanwhile, the SEV is organising a trade union meeting of the countries concerned (Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland) in Bern from 20 to 22 August to co-ordinate the trade union response and

invitations have already gone out to the relevant unions. If any other ITF unions have any relevant information which they would like to share with the SEV would they please contact Jane Barrett or Mac Urata at ITF Head Office. ❊

Philadelphia walk-out

5,600 public transport workers employed by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority and represented by the Transport Workers' Union of America (TWU) walked off the job on 1 June after a gridlock in their contract negotiations over issues such as work rule changes as well as wage and working conditions. Bus, train, tube and trolley services staff of TWU's Local 234 in Philadelphia had

been working without a contract since mid-March. As this issue of ITF News goes to press one month later, management has not changed its intransigence towards the union. More information can be obtained electronically on the Internet: TWU International Office (<http://www.twu.org/>) and Local 234 (<http://www.twu.org/local234/index.html>). ❊

French truckers strike...

Truck drivers belonging to the FO transport workers' union set up road blocks on trunk routes and motorways across France on 26 May to coincide with a fresh round of pay talks. The drivers, who are seeking a rise in basic pay, are angry that the haulage firms are still refusing to honour

a deal struck last year following a five-day strike. ❊

... and so do rail workers

Rail services in Paris and on main lines in the provinces were badly hit by a 36 hour strike from 4 June involving train conductors and shunting yard drivers from the French FO and CFDT unions in support of demands for a pay rise, an extra 20,000 staff and an immediate 35 hour week. ❊

Give us safer working hours

A longer term objective will be to fight for higher rates of pay in an industry where too many drivers are forced to work long hours to make a "living wage".

– There was a notable success as a result of the campaign action day last year in Bangladesh where a new law has been introduced requiring companies to use a second driver after eight hours' driving time.

– In Europe, the action is being carried out in close co-operation with the Federation of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Union (FST). An ITF/FST press release will be issued and a joint approach made to European

'The cumulative effect of stress and fatigue means that too many truck drivers die young.'

Union institutions on working hours.

– The cumulative effect of stress and fatigue means that too many truck drivers die young. In Great Britain, 19 truck drivers died prematurely in one regional area over eight months, mostly of heart attacks. This is not surprising when some British drivers regularly work a 19-hour day.

– Taxi drivers will be joining the action for the first time this year. The ITF is giving its full backing to their demand for stronger regulation of a sector marked by low pay, long hours and poor working conditions. Thousands of taxi drivers rely on commission or receipts for their pay and this inevitably means long and irregular hours. ❊

Bulker safety under discussion

A round table discussion on bulk carriers at the ITF's London headquarters in May, which attracted key players from the shipping industry, agreed on the need for co-operation to drive forward safety measures.

Participants at the event included government regulators, classification societies, shipowners, port representatives, the insurance industry and trade unions.

The group looked at:

- ways to push forward the International Maritime Organization (IMO)'s current work on bulker safety
- the need to increase and improve port state control enforcement and inspections
- the need for flag states to properly discharge safety responsibilities.

The meeting examined new information available both from the recent spate of casualty investigations and from research by the International Association of Classification Societies. Some of the topics discussed were:

- the fact that life saving appliances often did not function in bulk carrier losses
- the need to train seafarers better to identify dangers
- the relationship between reduced crewing levels and lower levels of maintenance
- the need to resolve legal problems which can hinder casualty investigations and for greater transparency
- the need to base new measures on actual casualty investigations. ■



■ The crew of the Cypriot-flag Epta celebrate winning US\$161,142. Their backpay was negotiated by the ITF's Houston-based Inspector, José Ybarra, after a three-week strike in the Texas port. See page 15 for more news of the ITF's campaign against flags of convenience.

Six-day Greek docks strike

A six-day Greek dockers' strike was held in June in protest at plans to privatise partly the port authorities of Piraeus and Thessaloniki next year.

While refusing to back away from the scheme, the government has promised to draw up safeguards for jobs and workers' pensions, though this was not enough for the strike to be called off. ■

Fisheries flag of convenience campaign ready for launch

Preparations to extend the ITF's flag of convenience campaign to fishing vessels are well advanced, with the formal launch of the campaign planned for this summer following the approval of a standard ITF collective agreement by the Fair Practices Committee early in July.

Meanwhile a detailed questionnaire has been sent to affiliates representing fisheries workers and to ITF Inspectors worldwide to find out more information about fishing vessel activities in various countries and ports. The results of the survey will help the ITF draw up an action plan for the campaign.

Delegates at the Fisheries Section Conference last September decided to launch the campaign. Initial plans were drawn up by a work-

ing group of affiliates which met in St John's, Canada, in February this year.

Preliminary research by the ITF suggests that the main fisheries FOC registries are Panama, Honduras, Belize, St Vincent, Vanuatu and Cyprus. A significant number of the vessels are beneficially owned in Spain, the United States, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan.

More information is being gathered on the trans-shipment of catches. For example, catches destined for the Japanese market are landed in ports as far apart as St Vincent, Dacca, Las Palmas, Singapore, Pago Pago and Cape Town. ■

ITF-affiliated unions have decided to increase the ITF minimum wage for flag of convenience (FOC) vessels.

The ITF Fair Practices Committee, which brings together seafarers' and dockers' unions involved in the FOC campaign, confirmed an increase of US\$200 a month for an AB (able seaman) from 1 January 2001.

The increase, which was recommended by last year's FPC meeting, will take the benchmark rate for an AB to \$1,400 a month.

In line with a decision taken

\$1,400 a month to be new ITF benchmark rate

two years ago, the benchmark rate rose to \$1,200 on 1 January 1998.

This year's FPC meeting, held in London in July and attended by over 200 delegates, also discussed the aims and strategy of the ITF's FOC campaign.

"The 50th anniversary of the campaign is a good time to go back to basics and rethink

what we are doing," said ITF Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson.

"We have to ask ourselves whether the purpose of the campaign is to drive ships back to national registers, or is it to combat unfair competition from whatever source," he added.

The debate will resume at a special meeting of seafarers' and dockers' affiliates, and be concluded at the ITF Congress in October and November. ■

South America ports face change

ITF Dockers' Secretary Kees Marges visited four ports on a two-week fact-finding visit to Argentina and Brazil in June to discuss port reforms with trade unionists:

- Rosario, in Argentina, where global terminal operator ICTSI has won a concession to operate the port for 30 years,
- Buenos Aires' Puerto Nuevo, where improvements are being introduced alongside a reduction in jobs,
- Paranagua, Brazil, a bulk port about to be privatised, where the number of dockworkers has been reduced by 2,000,
- Sepetiba, a bulk port south of Rio de Janeiro, which is being transformed into South America's biggest container hub. ■

Threat to health and safety highlighted in new survey

ITF wants stricter limits on hours of work at sea

Urgent reform of the international regulations on seafarers' working hours has been recommended by the ITF following in-depth research into the dangers of fatigue.

A study of 2,500 seafarers of 60 different nationalities found a disturbing trend of excessive working hours, particularly among watchkeepers. Medical studies have shown that those going without sleep for between 25 and 26 hours have a similar performance to those with alcohol levels twice the limit laid down for seafarers.

The ITF wants to see a speedy reassessment of the principles used to determine the issue of safe manning certificates to reduce pressure on watchkeeping officers. It also calls on flag and port states to enforce existing regulations on hours, which are commonly ignored.

And it wants a confidential system for seafarers to be able to report shipowners who are deliberately not complying with the system.

The report "Seafarer fatigue: Wake up to the dangers" highlights cases where respondents were involved in serious accidents, collisions, and near misses when working while exhausted through lack of sleep.

One-third of those questioned said they had an average working day of more than 12 hours and two-thirds had a working week of more than 60 hours, including 25 per cent who worked more than 80 hours a week. Just five per cent reported a decrease in working time over the past 10 years compared with 60 per cent saying hours had increased.

It is clear that hours on many ships exceed those laid down in the Standards of Training, Certification & Watchkeeping Convention (STCW), the main regulation covering working hours at sea.

A further problem has been the gradual increase in the length of tours of duty to six months and more. This has led to a greater cumulative impact of disturbed sleep and long periods on duty.

"The threat to personal health and safety and the safety of ships, passengers and the marine environment should not be underestimated," says the report. ■

PEOPLE

Obituary

■ **Gunnar Erlandsson**, President of the Swedish Union of Service and Communications Employees SEKO, died suddenly on 23 May at the age of 58. Erlandsson started his trade union career with the Swedish State Railways (SJ) before moving in 1972 to Stockholm, first to the Social Democratic party and then to the State Employees' Union (the forerunner of Seko) where he became Vice President in 1989 and then President in 1995. He served on the board of the Nordic Transport Workers' Federation (NTF) and the Swedish LO trade union confederation.

■ **Sven-Olof Arbestål** was elected as the new President of SEKO, the Swedish Union of Service and Communications Employees, at its annual meeting in Stockholm. **Sören Hellström**, formerly the department's deputy secretary, replaces Arbestål as head of the negotiations department.

■ **Per Fallentin** is the new chair of the Danish Flight Personnel Union (part of the Danish Salaried Employees' Union) following the retirement of **Leif Hellqvist**.

■ **Honest K Ndamana** was elected President and **Benson L Ngula** General Secretary of the Railway Workers' Union of Zambia at the union's quadrennial congress in Kabwe.

■ **Ricardo I Patalingjug** has retired as National Vice President of the Philippine Seafarers' Union (PSU) and has been succeeded by **German N Pascua Jr.**

■ **Fazal Waheed** and **Bashir Khan** have been elected

President and General Secretary respectively of the Organisation of Karachi Port Trust Workers.

■ **Thomas R Chisakaniza** has been elected President and **Macdonald Luwanja** General Secretary of the Railway Workers' Union of Malawi.

■ **Claus Larsen-Jensen**, International Secretary of the Danish Transport and General Workers' Union (SiD), has been elected to the Danish parliament. **Sune Bøgh**, international adviser to the Danish LO trade union centre, takes over as the union's new international Secretary.

ITF MEETINGS

■ ITF/FES Seminar on Public Transport in Economic Crisis in the Asia/Pacific Region, Bangkok, 3-5 August

■ Francophone African Road Transport Seminar, Nairobi, 8-9 August

■ African Road Transport Seminar, Nairobi, 10-12 August

■ African Regional Conference, Nairobi, 15 to 17 September

■ Asia/Pacific Regional Committee, New Delhi, 26-27 October

■ Women's Conference, New Delhi, 26-27 October

■ Executive Board, New Delhi, 27-28 October

■ 39th ITF Congress, New Delhi, 29 October to 5 November

Flag of convenience campaign round-up

■ The Bombay High Court has ordered the auction of the containership *Flamingo*, which is registered in Antigua and Barbuda and owned by Moscow-based Markos Shipping, in order to pay about US\$200,000 owed to the crew. The sale of the ship, anchored off Mumbai for the past eight months, was due to proceed as this issue of ITF News went to press. The ITF has been sending provisions to the seven Russian crew members on board. Another four have been repatriated.

■ Romanian and Indian crew members of the *Nasaud* marched alongside the banner of Sri Lanka's CMU union for this year's May Day rally in Colombo. The crew were grateful for having received US\$193,247 in back pay negotiated by the ITF. They were repatriated later in the month.

■ A two-day strike by the crew of the Latvian-flag *Victor* in Novorossiysk, assisted by the New Russia Marine Workers' Union, ended with the crew winning US\$43,817 owed to them by their employer, Interjuraservis, of Riga.

■ A six-day strike by the mainly Filipino crew of the Panamanian-flag *Arcadia 1* in the Italian port of Taranto concluded successfully with a total of US\$96,517 being paid to the 22 seafarers. Assistance from local ITF Inspector Gianbattista Leoncini was crucial in ensuring the stoppage was effective, thus

forcing Athens-based owner World Carrier to settle the crew's claim.

■ Gianbattista Leoncini also organised solidarity from dockers and port workers in Taranto during a six-month stoppage by the Israeli crew of the Marshall Islands-registered *Leon*. Owners El Yam Ships, of Israel, eventually agreed to pay the US\$400,000 owed to the 11 crew members in a dispute over their replacement by foreign seafarers.

■ The Filipino, Greek and Ukrainian crew of the Maltese-flag bulk carrier *Sea Pearl II* received US\$38,000 in back pay after they contacted local ITF Inspector Jim Given when their ship, owned by Neo Bulk Shipping, of Greece, arrived in Windsor, Canada, to complain about their conditions and treatment. The cash settlement, plus an ITF agreement, was negotiated by Given and Don Thornton, the ITF Inspector based in Algonac, across the US border.

■ The 11 Filipino crew members of the Bahamas-flag *Giem* shared back pay totalling US\$17,955 negotiated by Joan Mas, the ITF Inspector in Barcelona. The crew went on strike to claim their wages, while Mas ensured that the two-day strike was respected by the local port authorities.

Most seafarers must speak a foreign language when at work

About half of all merchant seafarers earn less than the ITF's benchmark wage (currently US\$1,200 a month) while as many as 15 per cent earn less than \$500 a month. They also work long hours, often speaking a foreign language, and are subject to a high risk of accident and physical abuse.

The results of the most comprehensive survey of seafarers' living conditions ever carried out show the multinational character of ships' crews. Only 30 per cent of seafarers serve on vessels with a crew of the same nationality.

The survey of 6,000 seafarers in 93 countries was carried out by the polling organisation Mori, assisted by ITF Inspectors and port chaplains. There was a high response rate and 44 per cent of those questioned worked on flag of convenience ships.

Seafarers were asked about all aspects of their working lives. A quarter said that they had been unfairly treated because of their race or nationality in the previous year, 10 per cent reported incidents of physical abuse and 14 per cent had been told not to make contact with trade unions.

Conditions aboard some FOC vessels are superior to national flag states in a number of categories, but it is likely that the differences between FOC fleets and those of national flag states would have been greater had it not been for the poor records of the Russian, Romanian and Ukrainian fleets.

Analysis of the survey, which took place in the middle of 1996, is continuing and the ITF is developing much needed follow-up action in a number of policy areas.

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ITF Congress to act on nuclear threat

Indian affiliates join international condemnation



The decision by the newly elected nationalist BJP-led Indian government in May to launch a series of nuclear tests, followed by similar action in Pakistan, sparked off worldwide protest action by trade unions and anti-nuclear campaigners.

In the immediate aftermath of the tests, ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) General Secretary Bill Jordan condemned them, warning that they would divert funds desperately needed for economic and social development. The ICFTU's position is strongly supported by the ITF.

In response to growing concern by a number of ITF affiliates that holding the 39th Congress in New Delhi might be seen as condoning the Indian government's actions, the ITF President and General Secretary called an emergency meeting of the ITF Management Committee in London on 4 July.

After being assured that the ITF Indian affiliates are strongly opposed to the government's nuclear policy, the Management Committee members unanimously reaffirmed the decision to hold the Congress in New Delhi and agreed to organise a series of protest actions against nuclear weapons and in favour of peace in conjunction with the Congress.

Actions planned include an emergency resolution to be placed at the beginning of the Congress agenda combined with other measures such as public demonstrations and an anti-nuclear exhibition.

Transport trade unions have long opposed the use and spread of nuclear weapons, and also have a clear industrial interest in nuclear questions arising from the controversial world trade in nuclear waste. The last two ITF Congresses in Geneva and London adopted resolutions on the subject, and the ITF Seafarers' and Dockers' Sections were deeply involved in the negotiation of the INF (Intermediate Nuclear Fuel) Code by the International Maritime Organization.

The ITF Management Committee fully sympathised with the desire of many affiliates to make the strongest possible protest against the Indian government's decision. It felt, however, that the best way to do this would be to focus an important part of the Congress on the campaign to eliminate all nuclear weapons worldwide.

The Management Committee therefore calls on all ITF affiliates to support the Indian trade union movement's fight for peace and social justice by ensuring maximum participation in the Delhi Congress. ☼

ITF archives

ITF-affiliated unions may not be aware that they can use the ITF's archive, located at the Modern Records Centre, Warwick University, England. The archive forms a complete record of the ITF's activities from its beginnings in 1896 up to the end of 1997. Included are publications, documents, circulars, correspondence, videos, tapes and photographs. The list of ITF archive material will soon be on the Internet at <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/mrc.html>

For further information and to access the archive, contact the ITF Librarian. ☼

