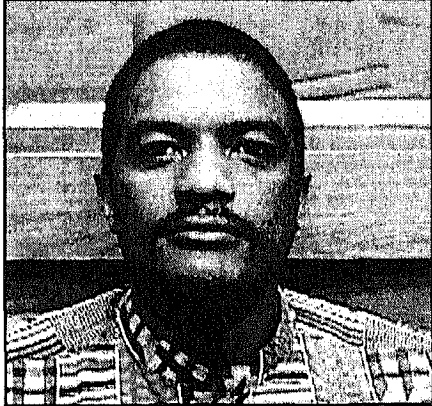
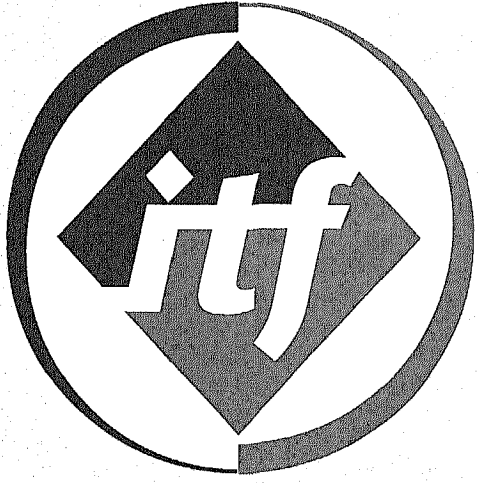


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Meeting the challenge of globalised transport industries

by ITF General Secretary David Cockroft

This final ITF Congress of the 20th century was probably our most important in a generation. The emergence over the past decade of a global economy based on deregulated labour and financial markets poses a grave threat to the effectiveness and survival of vigorous trade union movements both nationally and internationally.

In the industrialised world we are witnessing attacks on trade union organisation and representation unprecedented since early this century.

Unions in developing nations are resisting savage cuts in working conditions and social welfare which are in many cases the consequence of harsh economic policies dictated by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Millions of workers in the transitional economies of central and eastern Europe are suffering the disastrous consequences of laissez-faire capitalist policies devised by right-wing ideologists in North America.

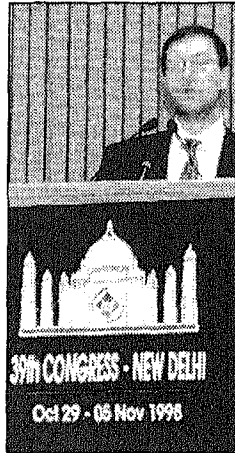
Meanwhile in Asia, Latin America and elsewhere where national currencies have collapsed or are under pressure, workers are being asked to pay the price for the failures of the international monetary system.

So, let us not lose sight of what our main objective must be. We must ask ourselves how best the ITF can maximise international solidarity for transport unions battling to protect the rights and living standards of their members in the face of global deregulation and associated attacks on trade union organisation.

Mobilising Solidarity

The special agenda item, "Mobilising Solidarity", was the focus of this debate, when delegates decided what strategic and practical steps we can take to help affiliates in need of international support. They considered new internal structures and procedures to ensure that the ITF can act speedily when affiliates require assistance.

The Mobilising Solidarity theme was also tackled in the section conferences, when delegates discussed the details of how international solidarity can be delivered in their industries.



Transport workers, as much if not more than any other group of workers, are in the front line of the attacks on trade unionism and working conditions.

In civil aviation, the formation of multi-carrier global alliances heralds a new wave of cost-cutting, while those airlines not part of an alliance will find it harder to survive.

In the railway industry privatisation and fragmentation have provided opportunities for asset-stripping acquisitions and are creating a new breed of global operator, typified by Wisconsin Central.

In road transport, whether haulage or passenger, deregulation, particularly in the form of excessive working hours, undermines workers' safety as well as that of other road users.

In the docks industry, widespread deregulation of employment practices, along with privatisations and the emergence of global port operators, have been accompanied by employer attacks on trade union organisation.

In shipping, which has long been the most globalised of all transport industries, flags of convenience continue to lower standards of employment and safety. The same phenomenon has now spread to the fishing industry.

Recent disputes

We can draw important lessons from recent high profile disputes and campaigns, such as those with United Parcel Service in the USA, British Airways, Patrick Stevedores in Australia and the road transport day of action on working hours. In all of these, cross-border co-operation between unions played a significant role.

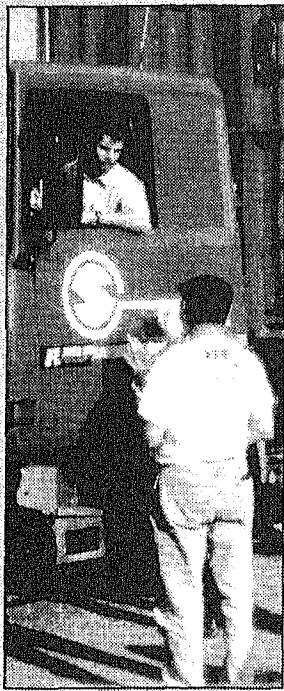
Unions are recognising that they need a global strategy and that they must think globally if they are to be effective in their aims and activities.

Delegates at the 39th Congress did more than complain about the effects of globalisation and instead addressed the question of how they can organise themselves internationally to secure the best deal for their members.

Internationalism in practice

The spirit of internationalism has long been a proud part of trade union culture. It is time for that spirit to be given renewed practical effect.

The survival into the 21st century of a strong trade union movement nationally and globally – one of the essential pillars of any just and democratic society – may well depend on it. Delegates made a start during Congress.



■ On the Franco-Swiss frontier at Basle/St Louis: Cross-border campaigning in practice during the ITF day of action on drivers' working hours on 8 September.

■ 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 11 November 1998.

■ **Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee (second from right) is greeted by ITF President Eike Eulen (second from left) at the opening session of the ITF Congress, which ran from 29 October to 5 November. Also pictured are Indian Railways Minister Nitish Kumar (left) and Umraomal Purohit, of the All India Railwaymen's Federation.**



New President

Congress elected the President of the All India Railwaymen's Federation, Umraomal Purohit, to the office of ITF President for the next four years.

Purohit, who replaces Eike Eulen, of Germany, who retired at the end of Congress, said in his acceptance speech that he would not let the world's transport workers down.

"Thank you very much for the confidence you have placed in me, this is a great honour. Now it's time to mobilise the global solidarity you have so clearly demonstrated during this successful Congress," he said.

Purohit's involvement in trade union activities began when he participated in a strike just 15 days after beginning his service on the Indian Railways at the age of 18. During the 1960 railway strike Purohit was convicted for trade union activities and was imprisoned for 9 months.

The AIRF is the single largest affiliate of the ITF and first became a member of the Federation in the 1920s.

General Secretary David Cockroft was re-elected for a further four-year term of office. ■

Executive Board election results: page 13.

Opening speakers focus on impact of global economy

Welcome to India

The ITF's 39th Congress got under way at the Vigyan Bhavan Conference Centre, New Delhi, with greetings from the Indian Prime Minister and representatives of the Indian and global trade union movement.

More than 1,200 delegates and advisers representing over 300 unions from 90 countries heard the Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee compliment the ITF for its efforts to improve the working conditions of transport workers worldwide. He paid tribute also to the ITF's record this century in fighting colonialism and fascism.

The ITF Congress in Delhi was an important event in the life of the Indian trade union movement, he added.

The sentiment was echoed by Umraomal Purohit, President of the All India Railwaymen's Federation. Reminding participants that this was the first ITF Congress to be held outside Europe and North America, he said it was a milestone in the history of the ITF and an honour for Indian trade unions.

Representing the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Jim Baker said the ITF was a pioneer in global trade unionism. The campaign against flags of convenience had become a model for other sectors.

Bill Brett, Chair of the Workers' Group of the International Labour Organization, called on the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to change their policies in relation to the new liberal economics and the worship of the market.

ITF President Eike Eulen concluded the opening session with a condemnation of the attacks on workers' rights which were taking place around the world. The message of the ITF campaign ship, *Global Mariner*, was to demonstrate the spirit of solidarity to all transport workers facing such attacks. ■

Affiliates and activities on the increase

Introducing the Report of the Secretariat for the past four years, General Secretary David Cockroft pointed to the ITF's growth in influence and strength since the last Congress in Geneva in 1994.

The number of affiliates had risen by 21 per cent, with increases in every region and sec-

The most moving speech at Congress came from Seiko Ikeda, a survivor of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945.

Here, we reprint an extract from her speech, which came during the debate on an emergency motion calling on the ITF to campaign against the testing, deployment, proliferation and use of nuclear weapons.

The motion was carried unanimously with only one abstention.

Other speakers included Umraomal Purohit, President of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, who said that such a campaign would be in the ITF tradition of fighting against injustice and repression in the world.

Seconding the motion, Ashraf Kahn, Chair of the ITF Pakistan Co-ordinating Committee, said nuclear weapons were costly and all available resources should be invested for the betterment of mankind.



■ The ITF co-sponsored with the Japanese national trade union centre, Rengo, an exhibition (pictured left) on the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The exhibition, at the India Habitat Centre, Lodi Estate, New Delhi, was designed to focus attention on the campaign against nuclear weapons.

Congress moved by speech from Hiroshima atom bomb survivor

Testimony of terror

“ I was exposed to the atomic bombing 1.5 kilometres away from the hypocenter in Tsurumi-cho, Hiroshima, at the age of 12 as a student at a girls junior high school. While I was working as one of the mobilising students to clear the site where houses had been demolished to make firebreaks, I was hit by an intense flash which I felt thousands or tens of thousands times stronger than a bolt of lightning, followed by a really loud thump and then by pitch darkness. I may have been blown away from where I was standing by 15 metres.

When I came back to myself, I found my hair scorched and my clothes tattered and noticed that the red flesh was showing with the skins on the surface hanging down from my hands and legs. I never thought of covering my skin, just uttering a shriek to cry for help.

The way a great number of people, badly burnt all over, were crying and walking in the same direction looked as if many ghosts marching. Hiroshima, which once was a lively city, had reduced to a monochromatic city of ashes with debris on the field all around.

There were dead bodies here and there lying close together or one on top of another. They looked like fish broiled too much, and they were so badly burned that it was hard to tell whether they were male and female, or whether they were children or older people. Those who were still alive stopped breathing

covered with blood all over, and there were a great number of people who were not strong enough to utter a voice. We had to walk stepping over dead bodies and the seriously injured. We felt very hot on the body and found ourselves cooling the body in the river water together with our class mates. When I had a careful look at the face of a classmate, the skin on her face was hanging down like wax running down. I suppose my face looked the same.

In river more and more injured people got into the river behind, and the surface of the water was covered by many people, many of whom sank into the water when they died. I hear many of them were swollen in the water and they went up and down the river with the tide for several days.

After getting up to the river bank, I heard someone who got stuck under a house shouting in a loud voice “Help! Help!”. All I, only a girl, could do in my power was to evacuate to a safer place. I tried not to hear the voice and left the place. Then an old man, who was seriously injured and could not move, held me on the ankle, begging water with a reproachful look.

I ran away from him. This remains so vivid even in my memory now. My heart ached later on, wondering what had become of the one who got stuck under the crushed house or the old man crying for help. ”

Affiliates and activities on the increase ▶

tion. And the number of countries where the ITF was represented had gone up by 16 per cent and now stood at over 130. Meanwhile, new ITF offices had been opened in Tokyo, Delhi, Rio de Janeiro, Moscow and Ouagadougou in addition to offices in Nairobi and Washington.

The ITF had expanded its activities not only within the various industrial sectors but also among women transport workers and in areas such as education and communications – with the ITF being the first international trade union body with a presence on the internet.

In the debate following the General Secretary's address, speakers deplored the consequences of the new global economic system.

Anatoli Vasiliev, of the Trade Union of Railwaymen and Transport Construction Workers of Russia, pointed to the disastrous effects of privatisation in Russia. He attacked the international financial organisations which made

monetarist recommendations but bore no responsibility for their outcome, while ignoring the social dimension of their policies.

Roy Chandra, of the Bangladesh Truck Chalok Sramik Federation, described how workers in developing countries were losing their jobs, leading to a growth in the informal labour sector – where they received even less protection than the minimum in the formal sector. ITF unions needed to increase their organising activities among this group of workers. ■

SECTION CONFERENCES AND JOINT MEETINGS

Aviation workers challenge globalisation

The Civil Aviation Section Conference focused on developing a strengthened response to the globalisation of the aviation industry. "This meeting is about mobilising solidarity and setting a clear direction for the next four years," noted the chair of the section, George Ryde, TGWU (United Kingdom).

The meeting reviewed the work of the last four year period and identified key areas for the future section work programme. A major priority will be union co-ordination within global airline alliances, with the section aiming to hold a meeting each year for unions in each global alliance. One affiliate suggested that unions should create world councils of unions in the alliances.

Contracting-out, the international mobility of jobs in airline revenue and accounting departments, the introduction of large numbers of temporary and part-time workers were all areas identified as causing unions major problems. The section is calling for an ITF-wide campaign on international labour flexibility. A "Ground Staff Safety Professionals" campaign



▶ **Henri Popelier, of the Dutch VNC cabin crew union, acknowledges the applause of fellow delegates at the Civil Aviation Section Conference when he was elected on to the Section Committee.**

Complain to ILO when rights are violated, unions are urged

How to use the International Labour Organization (ILO) to challenge attacks on trade union rights was the theme of a Congress workshop "Fighting back: trade union rights in the new millennium". Led by Michael Sebastian and Bert Essenberg from the ILO, the workshop focused on case studies, the experiences of delegates facing problems in their home countries, and how the ILO's complaints mechanism works.

A delegate from the Philippines asked what help the ILO could give to transport workers who are told they cannot join a union because they are regarded as public servants, while another from Zimbabwe reported that railway workers he represented who are promoted to supervisory positions are being denied the right to belong to a union because they have moved to managerial positions.

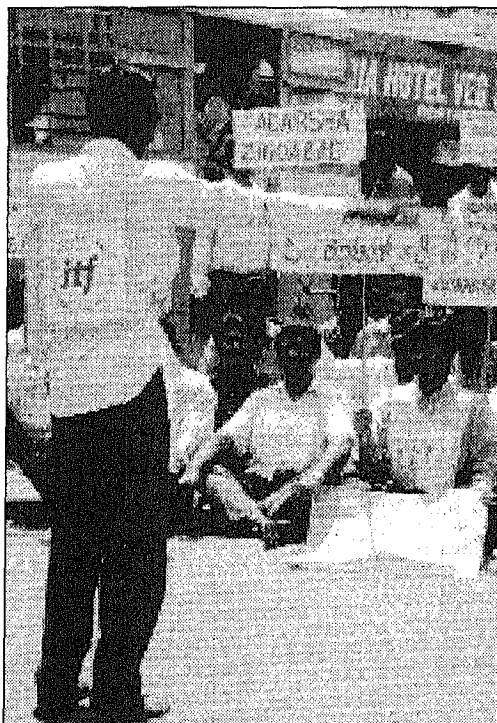
Extensive ILO case law showed that every worker has the right to join a union, said Essenberg and Sebastian. Both examples represented a violation of ILO Convention 87 (Freedom of Association) and a complaint could be submitted to the ILO.

Sebastian explained: "If a state is a member of the ILO, the organisation's guiding principles like freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining will apply whether or not that state has ratified conventions 87 and 98." ■

will aim at keeping contract operators with inadequate standards from entering the industry.

Aviation safety is under constant attack from industry cost cutting. The ITF involvement in international regulatory bodies, setting rules such as those protecting flight and cabin crew from fatigue and ensuring minimum crew complements on board aircraft has become vital to protecting international safety standards. Key future safety battlefields were identified such as the development of new very large aircraft, as well as the increased cost cutting pressures on air traffic control.

A number of campaigns will tackle specific issues such as violence against staff and sexual discrimination.



■ Indian road transport workers demonstrate on the ITF's international day of action on 8 September. The Road Transport Section now wants to build on the success of the worldwide protest over hours and conditions.

Success of road transport action day a blueprint

The widespread success of the worldwide day of action organised by the ITF on 8 September 1998 – aimed at reducing the working hours of professional drivers – demonstrated that properly organised action and campaign plans can bring about victories for road transport workers. That was the clear message from delegates attending the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section Conference.

The success of the day of action was widely praised. Unions from Europe reported that it had attracted major press coverage throughout Europe.

Erasmio Flores (Honduras) said that the "go-slow" action by his union on 8 September had resulted in improved working conditions for lorry drivers, while Kazuhiro Niizuma (Japan) reported that the Japanese government task force discussing bus construction safety had adopted the points that his union had raised.

While delegates pledged unanimously to continue with the campaign, Roger Poletti (France) stressed that future section activity should also investigate the appalling working conditions facing professional drivers engaged in the "just-in-time" system, where some have to work three shifts in a day, while Julien Tahou (Ivory Coast) drew attention to the problems of vandalism and harassment by police that professional drivers face.

The meeting agreed that the ITF should continue its work on the activities of multinational transport companies in co-operation with other international trade secretariats, as well as to focus on activities related to taxi drivers, telematics, non-mobile staff and women.

The section plans to hold a special women's meeting to identify issues of specific concern to women road transport workers.

Motions on women transport workers, the road haulage industry, and the working conditions of truck and lorry drivers in India were unanimously approved by the section conference.

Why ILO role for seafarers must be preserved

The involvement of the International Labour Organization in maritime affairs must be preserved at all costs, delegates at the Seafarers' Section Conference agreed. In particular, the ITF should press for the retention of the ILO's maritime machinery, in the form of specially convened maritime conferences recommending minimum standards of employment for seafarers.

A resolution from the conference also called on affiliates to approach their respective governments and national trade union centres to explain the importance of the ILO's maritime machinery and to request their support in efforts to preserve it.

ITF Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson told delegates that the ILO's involvement in regulating maritime employment standards was under threat, not least from within the ILO itself.

"The message to come from maritime unions at this Congress is that we cannot accept any weakening of the ILO's position

within the industry," he said. "We are a unique industry and our seafarers need the vital support which ILO standards provide."

The ILO currently sets an international minimum wage for seafarers – which, though relatively low, is still regularly found to be flouted by flag of convenience shipowners – and sets other mandatory minimum standards for the industry which are adopted at the ILO's special maritime conferences.

The section conference also unanimously carried a motion supporting the principle of maritime cabotage – whereby local shipping trades are restricted to national-flag ships – and affirming solidarity with unions affected by moves to lift these restrictions. The device is an important weapon for preserving seafarers' jobs on national shipping registers, the resolution noted.

The resolution is seen as backing for the efforts by unions in European Union countries such as Greece, Italy and Spain who are opposing the decision to ban cabotage in EU waters. ■

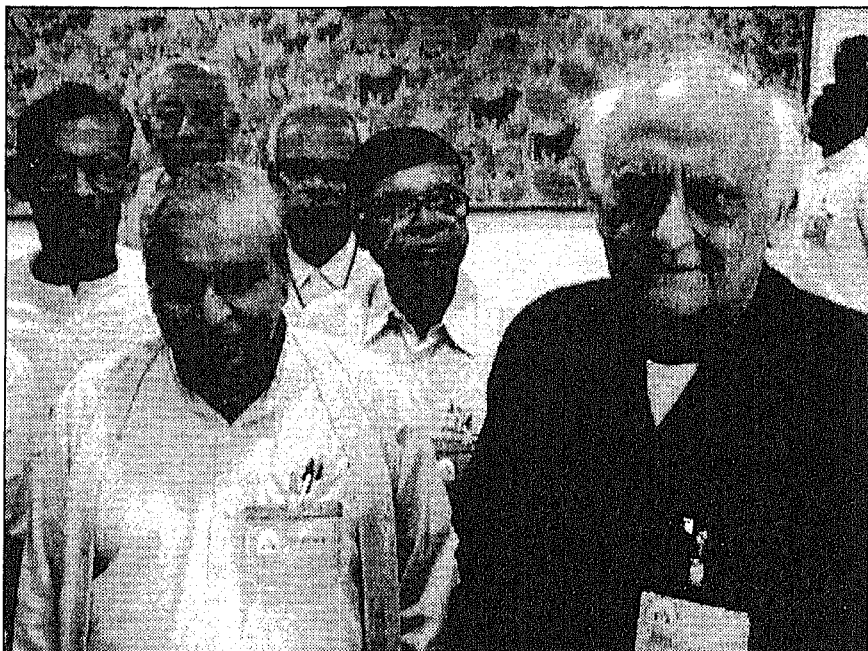
Railway workers face up to challenge of change

The railway industry worldwide is undergoing great changes in structure, ownership and employment practices, making this a difficult time for trade unions, delegates declared at the Railway Workers' Section Conference. But because of differing national circumstances it was not easy to adopt a common position to the challenges they face.

However, prospects for the industry were good, the conference noted. As the most environmentally-friendly mode of transport, trade unions must seize this opportunity to expand the industry and its jobs.

Unions from Great Britain told the conference that the privatisation of the national railways was proving disastrous. The number of complaints by passengers was increasing, yet the government must still give out enormous subsidies to the railway companies with poor records because of the contractual terms of the privatisation sale. A Romanian delegate told the meeting that they were fighting the government's privatisation plan based on the UK model.

Delegates from Korea, Russia and Bangladesh reported that there had been a massive number of redundancies. In Venezuela, public transport was considered as an essential service and workers were prohibited from strike action. Even in a country like Japan, where railway restructuring took place more than 10 years ago, there were problems. The government had increased the debt burden on the privatised



■ **Umraomal Purohit**, President of the All India Railwaymen's Federation (right), leads his delegation into the Railway Workers' Section Conference.

companies and the freight railways were considering job cuts to save costs.

In India, although the national railway system was making a profit with virtually no subsidy, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were pressuring the government to commercialise the railways through the back door. Delegates from India stressed the need for international union solidarity because business and multinationals were more united than ever in the global economy.

The German GdED railway workers' union stressed the fact that there was no single solution applicable to the problems faced in all countries, but international harmonisation of competitiveness and standards was necessary and trade unions' international co-ordination was vital.

Participants noted that the accurate exchange of information, trade union education programmes as well as a spirit of mutual support were essential in order to mobilise solidarity. The meeting unanimously endorsed the Congress motion submitted by the Hungarian Free Trade Union of Railway Workers calling for an "Action Day for Railways". ■

Port reforms: still no consultation with unions

Attacks on trade union rights, which inevitably seem to follow the privatisation of the world's ports, is a process which can and will be defeated through international solidarity action. This was the overwhelming message from the Dockers' Section Conference.

Delegates reported how often covert privatisation – in countries as far apart as Australia, Sri Lanka and the UK – resulted in dockers los-

"We must accept that ships on some national registers are worse, in terms of crew pay and physical conditions, than the better managed FOC ships. The Delhi Policy will enable us to target those vessels and to avoid being accused of any inconsistencies."

ing wages, trade union protection, and ultimately their jobs.

Miguel Osés (Chile) explained that the Chilean authorities were undertaking a programme of privatisation disguised as port reform, which was threatening the livelihoods of dockers. Despite union protests, the government was refusing to consider compensation for those who might be affected and was threatening to dismiss workers involved in industrial action.

Tom Dufresne (Canada) updated delegates on the situation in Vancouver, where the port company Sultrans had moved to using non-union labour. He reported that demonstrators protesting against the action had been fined, and in the latest twist, that 20 pensioners who had been protesting at the effect that actions by the company could have on their pensions, had been arrested.

Commenting on the situation at Sultrans, Section Secretary Kees Marges said that this was one example where broad international solidarity action could be made to work. Not only were world transport unions providing increasing support for their colleagues in Canada, but the ITF had been co-operating with ICEM, the chemical and energy international secretariat, to bring pressure to bear on Sultrans' owners Shell to resolve the situation. ■

Co-operation plan for small and large scale fishing workers

A plan to avoid conflict between small scale artisanal fishing workers and their industrial counterparts in bigger ships and fleets was adopted by delegates at the Fisheries Section Conference.

The key feature of the plan is that artisanal fishing workers should be given exclusive access to their country's 12-mile territorial limits or whatever other limit has been established.

Delegates agreed that such restrictions in favour of artisanal fishing workers should be based on a maximum engine size of 200 kW and vessel length of 12 metres.

Exceptions should only be applied if the coastal state has historical or traditional fisheries which are used by larger vessels – provided these vessels fly the flag of the country concerned. Delegates noted too that legislation prevented restrictions in waters under Icelandic jurisdiction.

ITF Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson welcomed the adoption of the policy statement, pointing out that small scale fishing provided considerable employment opportunities and in many cases was a vital economic and social resource for local communities.

"Artisanal and industrial fishing workers share the same interest in preserving fish stocks and the marine environment, so it is a positive step forward for them to agree a formula designed to minimise the potential for conflict and the excessive exploitation of the seas," he added.

The conference – which noted with satisfaction the large increase in unions affiliated to the ITF – reaffirmed opposition to flags of convenience in the industry and support for the extension of the ITF flag of convenience campaign in shipping to the fishing sector. ■

Taking the flag of convenience campaign into the next century

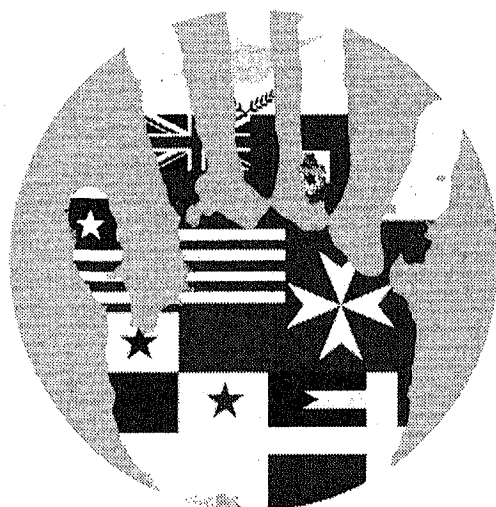
The ITF's high profile campaign against flags of convenience (FOCs) was given fresh impetus when delegates at the Joint Seafarers' and Dockers' Section Conference approved the "Delhi Policy", a statement redefining the aims, tactics and procedures of the ITF campaign.

For the first time there is the prospect that non-FOC sub-standard ships will be included in the campaign, which involves negotiating acceptable wage agreements with shipowners or else targeting their vessels for boycott or strike action.

The new policy is the outcome of an 18-month review, under the heading "From Oslo to Delhi", marking the 50th anniversary of the launch of the campaign at the ITF's Oslo Congress in 1948.

After the meeting, General Secretary David Cockroft hailed the decision as the basis for pursuing the campaign well into the next century. "The outcome of our review is a flexible policy which takes account of the changing nature of world shipping."

He added: "We must accept that ships on



some national registers are worse, in terms of crew pay and physical conditions, than the better managed FOC ships. The Delhi Policy will enable us to target those vessels and to avoid being accused of any inconsistencies in our campaign on behalf of the world's seafarers."

The "From Oslo to Delhi" statement also envisages the growing use of tactics other than industrial action to promote the campaign, for example peaceful protests at sea using inflatable boats in order to attract public and media attention.

In addition, the definition of a flag of convenience has been refined to introduce the concept of "control" when establishing whether a ship has a link between its flag and its country of ownership or management.

The "From Oslo to Delhi" report won unanimous approval at the joint conference, with seafarers' and dockers' delegates voicing support for it.

Kauko Lehtikoinen of the Finnish AKT union said that dockers welcomed the decision to ask seafarers to assist dockers in their efforts to protect cargo-handling rights as part of the overall campaign.

From the Greek Pan-Hellenic Seamen's Federation, Agis Tselentis welcomed the report as a balanced document which took account of all interests – those of unions both in shipowning and labour-supplying countries.

"From Oslo to Delhi" acknowledges that the ITF campaign has failed in one of its fundamental objectives: to drive ships back to their national flags. But the fact that, out of 18,000 or more FOC ships, about 30 per cent are covered by ITF-approved agreements – benefiting up to 90,000 seafarers – is highlighted as a remarkable achievement. ■

Promoting public transport's vital social and economic role

Affiliates should exchange more information on their experiences of privatisation and deregulation. Greater attention should be paid to multinational operators and companies from other industries moving in on public transport systems. And greater awareness among unions themselves of the vital role that public transport systems contribute to society and the economy should be fostered.

These were some of the key conclusions of a well-attended Urban Transport Committee meeting, which brought together ITF rail and road transport affiliates.

As well as calling for action within and between unions, some of the wider environmental and social consequences of transport modes were considered. Delegates called for alliances



■ *Graham Brothers (right), Assistant General Secretary of the ITF and head of the Inland Transport Sections, received the highest honour that the Federation can bestow when he was awarded a 'gold badge' by General Secretary, David Cockcroft, on the last day of Congress. Brothers, who first joined the ITF in 1966, is due to retire in 2000 after a long and distinguished career.*

Gold badges (awarded for dedicated service to the cause of transport workers internationally and the preservation of trade union freedoms and rights) were also given to Dr Leo Barnes, General Secretary of the National Union of Seafarers of India, who was unable to attend Congress due to ill-health, and to the ITF's outgoing President, Eike Eulen (pictured below), of the Gewerkschaft ÖTV, Germany.



with environmental groups to promote public transport as the "greenest" way to travel and for co-operation with workers in the automobile industry to discuss the damage that poorly maintained cars are doing to the environment.

The problem of violence on buses and trains which deters people from using public transport systems was also raised, and requests were made for the impact of excessive working hours and workers leaving the industry before their retirement age to be investigated.

Several delegates raised issues relating to the taxi industry, which is often overlooked when urban transport planning decisions are made. They argued that taxi workers must not be left to become second class public transport workers doing unsocial hours and called for the organisation of all taxi workers, including auto-rickshaw workers.

Many delegates participated in a lively discussion of the main Congress document, "Mobilising Solidarity". The meeting noted that international solidarity should be an integral part of trade union activity and that while co-operation between national leaders was essential, more worker-to-worker contact should be promoted, something that the Urban Transport Committee should encourage. ■

Tourism Services Section: International co-operation points way forward

Tourism is a vast and expanding industry which is of major importance to the economies of many countries, the Tourism Services Section Conference was reminded. Yet the industry has only a small proportion of its workers unionised. It employs a large number of women workers in low paid jobs and poor conditions. At the same time there are significant structural changes taking place, with huge transnational travel companies emerging.

The industry spreads across a wide range of different activities, from travel bureau workers and tour guides to hotel and restaurant workers, whose unions are affiliated to different international secretariats. This has led to a programme of co-operation between three union internationals: the ITF, the IUF (hotel and catering workers) and FIET (clerical workers).

Section chair Richard Rosser (Great Britain) noted that co-operation had significantly increased the effectiveness of international work in the interests of tourism workers. This was particularly the case at European level where



the three internationals and their regional structures had pooled resources to pay for an office and a co-ordinator for a joint body called the European Tourism Trade Union Co-ordinating Committee based in Brussels. The three internationals also held a joint conference in the Asia/Pacific region.

Welcoming this programme of co-operation, the conference also targeted a number of issues for future work, including a focus on the situation of women workers and the impact of technological change and outsourcing, particularly for travel agencies and reservations centres.

Richard Rosser reported to the meeting that a joint survey conducted by his union, TSSA, and a UK-based travel trade magazine had found that 50 per cent of travel agency staff are aged under 26, 80 per cent are women, and 66 per cent work overtime, often unpaid.

Inland Navigation Section: Time to promote this pollution-free transport

The worldwide development of inland navigation as a cheap, pollution-free method of transport should be promoted by the ITF as much as possible, argued delegates attending the Inland Navigation Section Conference.

Encouraging developments were reported by Mohamed Haneef (India), who told colleagues that the Indian government had established a separate ministry for waterways, indicating the importance placed on inland navigation in his country, while Ricardo Ponzi (Brazil) reported there was considerable growth in the use of inland waterways in Brazil, with some areas seeing an increase of over 300 per cent in four years.

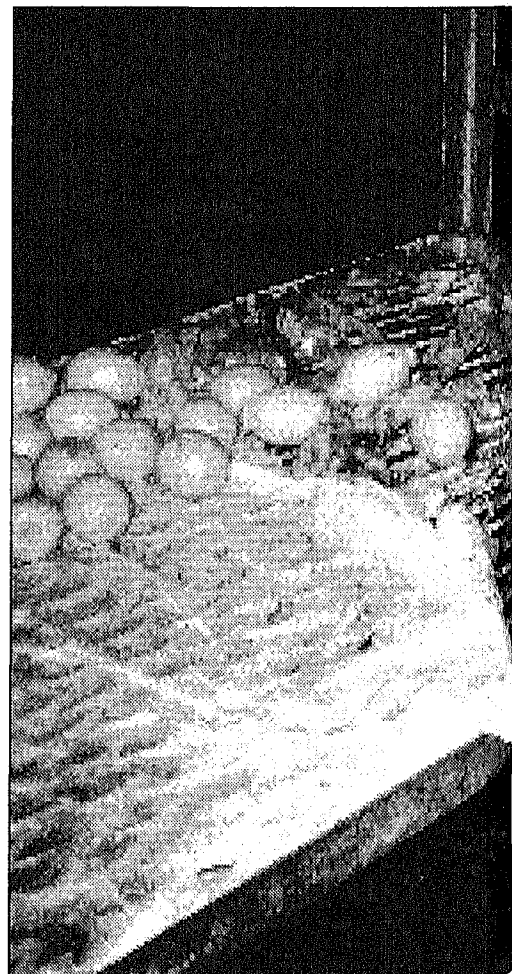
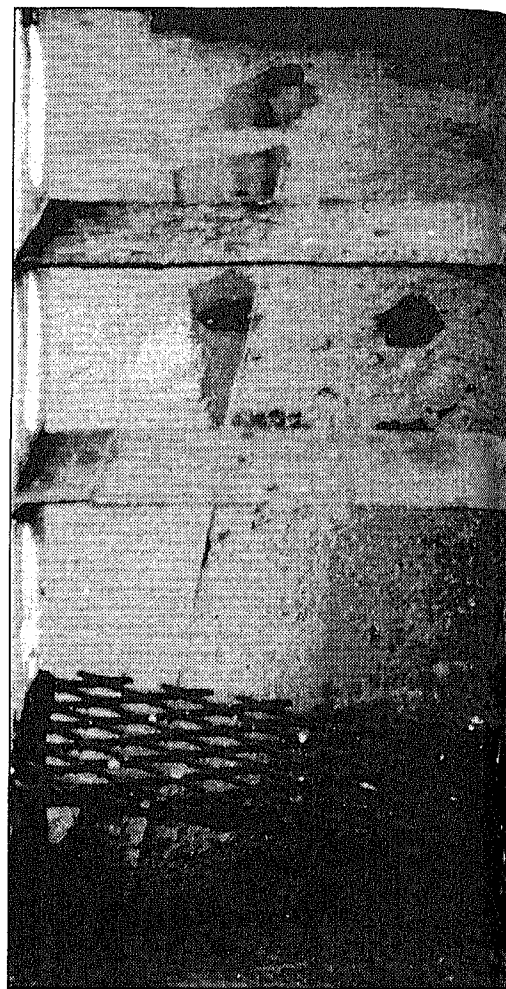
Although inland navigation workers faced mounting problems, with crews and flags of convenience on the increase, and concerns, particularly in Europe about crew levels being forced down to dangerous levels, section chair Alfons Geeraerts maintained that the Indian and Brazilian experiences suggested there were causes for optimism in the industry.

New structure for European transport workers

The Federation of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Union (FST) and the existing ITF European structures are to be wound up and replaced with a new transport workers' structure, it was agreed at Congress.

According to a unanimously carried resolution, the new structure, which will act both as the European region of the ITF and as the Transport Federation of the European Trade Union Confederation, will have a wide degree of political autonomy – particularly in relation to the activities of the European Union – while respecting the overall global framework of international solidarity represented by ITF Congress and Executive Board decisions. ■

More resolutions: page 17.



■ *rusting bridge stairs and rotting food in a galley pantry, scenes typical of the unsafe and degrading conditions which seafarers have to endure on many flag of convenience ships. Now the ITF's campaign against FOCs is to be extended to cover all sub-standard shipping.*

The Delhi Policy: Statement of objectives

Extract from the policy document "From Oslo to Delhi" adopted at the Joint Seafarers' and Dockers' Section Conference, which redefines the objectives and strategy of the ITF campaign against flags of convenience

The ITF opposes the FOC system as a subterfuge and believes that there should be a "genuine link" between the flag a vessel flies and the place where it is beneficially owned and controlled. As a general rule FOC registers fail to enforce minimum social standards and/or trade union rights for seafarers and have demonstrated both an unwillingness and an inability to abide by international standards. Such standards include international safety standards, international maritime labour standards and human and trade union rights. There is as a consequence, a lack of social control over vessels on such registers as exercised by democratic and independent trade unions.

FOCs enable shipowners to minimise their operational costs by, among other things, tax avoidance, transfer pricing, trade union avoidance, recruitment of non-domiciled seafarers and passport holders on very low wage rates, non-payment of welfare and social security contributions for their crews and avoidance of strictly applied safety and environmental standards.

As a result, flag of convenience registers enjoy a competitive advantage over those bona fide national registers which operate with high running costs and are subject to the laws and regulations of properly established maritime administrations in the flag state.

The ITF believes that the consequences of FOCs are manifest in the industry where they have been used to secure short-term competitive advantages with the result that freight rates are being depressed, crews are too cheap and under qualified, ship maintenance is avoided, the ships are too old and shipowners are unable to secure sufficient income to invest in newer vessels.

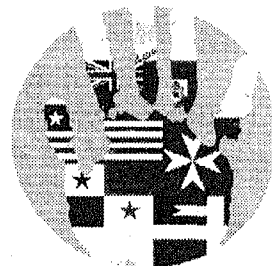
The ITF believes that FOCs amount to unfair competition. Crews are selected on the basis of cost rather than quality and the employment is of a casual nature and little consideration is therefore given to the long-term

sustainable needs of the industry and society as a whole.

The ITF is against the discrimination and abuse of seafarers and believes that the use of FOC registers facilitates direct exploitation and enables owners to pay and to treat seafarers as they see fit. The balance of power is unequal.

In view of the above, the ITF wages a campaign against FOCs and sub-standard shipping with the following objectives:

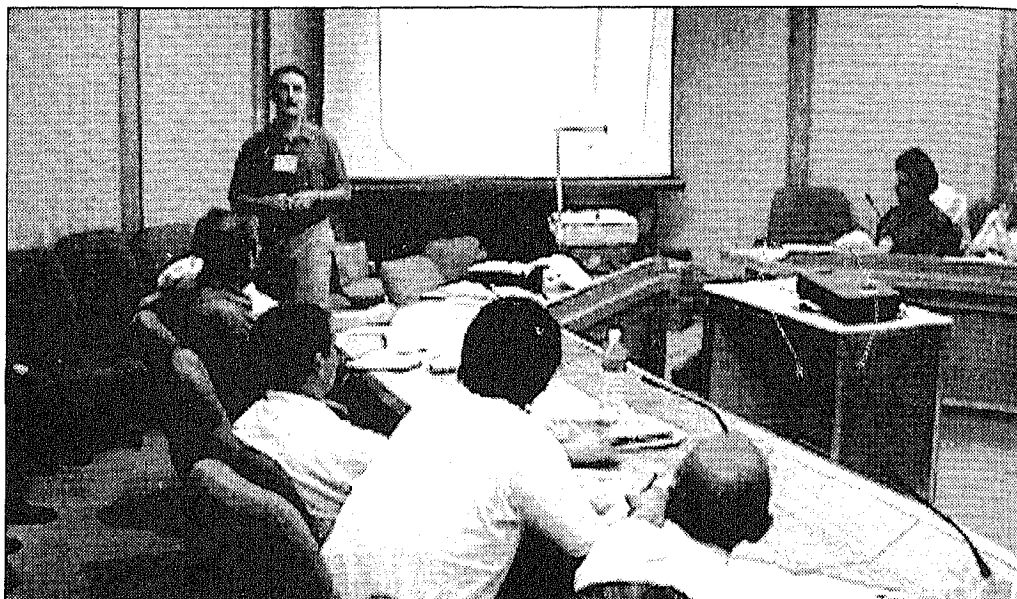
- a) The elimination of the FOC system and the establishment of a regulatory framework for the shipping industry based on the concept of a genuine link between the flag a ship flies and the place where it is beneficially owned and controlled;
- b) To attack sub-standard shipping and seek ITF acceptable standards on all ships irrespective of flag, using all the political, industrial and legal means at the ITF's disposal;
- c) To protect and enhance the conditions of employment of maritime workers and to ensure that all maritime workers regardless of colour, nationality, sex, race or creed are protected from exploitation by their employers and those acting on their behalf; and



- d) To individually strengthen affiliated unions, in all organisational aspects, so as to ensure the provision and delivery of a greater degree of solidarity in waging the campaign.

In order to pursue the campaign the ITF operates on two fronts. Politically, it lobbies governments and intergovernmental organisations to raise standards generally and with a view to persuading them to strengthen the link between the flag a ship flies and the nationality of the beneficial owners and those who control the vessels and exposing the record of FOCs with regard to the ratification and enforcement of international standards. Practically, it co-ordinates industrial action on a worldwide basis with the aim of securing acceptable minimum wages and working conditions for seafarers employed on board FOC and other sub-standard vessels. ■

■ Professor Peter Turnbull explains the findings of the joint ITF/Cardiff University report.



Flexibility: What strategies should unions adopt?

What do employees think about the growing trend towards labour flexibility? How should unions adapt their strategies to deal with the trend?

These were the main topics discussed at a well-attended seminar at which Congress delegates were given a presentation by Professor Peter Turnbull, one of the authors of a new report, jointly published by the ITF and Cardiff University, on labour flexibility in the airline industry.

The workshop presentation demonstrated that the trends of deregulation and globalisation occurring in civil aviation could also be identified in the shipping and docks industries.

The report, which was formally launched at the seminar, is titled "Contesting Globalisation: labour flexibility".

The research on which it is based shows that workers are experiencing an increase in work intensity, a widespread reduction in job satisfaction, job security and earnings.

It shows also that cabin and flight deck crews have been affected in different ways to the ground staff, with crew numbers often expanding, while ground staff jobs have been both cut and contracted out. This requires different kinds of union response for different categories of workers. Both groups of workers have been experiencing a sharp increase in work intensity and pressure on working hours.

The report and its findings will be used as part of a campaign which the ITF Civil Aviation Section is launching early in 1999 to publicise the impact of flexibility on employees' conditions and on union organisation.

The survey conducted by the ITF and Cardiff University – and sponsored by the Leverhulme Trust – is the first attempt at such a worldwide

survey of trends in the industry as they affect employees.

The researchers set out specifically to look at cases where unions had survived the process of restructuring relatively unscathed in order to identify union strategies which appeared to be more successful. The report raises questions such as: When should unions decide to cooperate with management introducing work changes and when should they resist?

Civil Aviation Section Secretary Stuart Howard noted: "The airline industry is full of statistics on airline profits, fleet sizes, and numbers of passengers flown, and there is a whole new industry of airline conferences which get business leaders' views on the trends within the industry.

"Yet try to obtain a picture of how industry restructuring has affected jobs, working conditions, hours being worked and employee rights, and the sources of information suddenly dry up."

Professor Peter Turnbull told the workshop: "Unions are aware of the radical change of conditions in the industry but no-one is really systematically recording the impact on employment, on bargaining, or on the kind of jobs in the industry. We hope this information will be useful to unions who are trying to engage their governments and companies.

"There is one lesson that we all know from experience: to solve the problems caused by competition you do not use more competition."

"There is one lesson that we all know from experience: to solve the problems caused by competition you do not use more competition."

ELECTION RESULTS

Executive Board

Europe and the Middle East

W Habertzettl (Vice President) *Austria*; J van den Rijse *Belgium*; C Veselka *Czech Republic*; P-E Nelin* *Finland*; Y Veyrier *France*; N Hansen *Germany*; W Warburg* *Germany*; J Knapp* *Great Britain*; W Morris* *Great Britain*; R di Fiore *Italy*; E Young *Italy*; W Waleson *Netherlands*; A Vassilliev *Russia*; J Cubillo *Spain*; H Wahlström *Sweden*; V Zubkov *Ukraine*

Africa

J Tahou *Ivory Coast*; U Ukaumunna (Vice President) *Nigeria*; R Howard *South Africa*; C Mandivenga (Vice President) *Zimbabwe*

Asia/Pacific

J Coombs* *Australia*; S Rizwana *Bangladesh*; U Purohit (President) *India*; S Nakanishi* *Japan*; K Suzuki *Japan*; Kwon Eul Ryong *Korea*; Ch Mohammad Ashraf Khan *Pakistan*; G Oca *Philippines*

Latin America and the Caribbean

A Castro *Argentina*; J Palacios (Vice President) *Argentina*; O Gomes *Brazil*; F Mungroo *Trinidad*.

North America

D Hill *Canada*; J O'Neil *Canada*; J Bowers (Vice President) *USA*; R Scardelletti *USA*; W Scheri* *USA*.

* Denotes Management Committee member

Section Committees

The following Chairs, Vice-Chairs and women's representatives were elected to Section Committees...

Civil Aviation Section

Chair: George Ryde (Great Britain)



■ Saki Rizwana (left), nominated to the Executive Board, celebrates at the Congress Dinner at the Taj Mahal Hotel with fellow delegates Sufia Akhtere (right), also from Bangladesh, and Mona Singh from India.

■ Vice-Chair: Jim Sprang (USA)
 ■ Women's representative: Narelle Gill (Australia)

■ Vice-Chair: Alois Weiss (Germany)
 ■ Women's representative: Jane Saethre (Norway)

Road Transport Workers' Section

■ Chair: Peter Baranowski (Germany)
 ■ Vice-Chairs: Hugo Moyano (Argentina), Asbjørn Wahl (Norway)
 ■ Women's representative: Janaina Fernandes (Brazil)

Seafarers' Section

■ Chair: John Fay (USA)
 ■ First Vice-Chair: Brian Orrell (Great Britain)
 ■ Second Vice-Chair: Thomas Tay (Singapore)
 ■ Women's representative: Anna-Beth Skrede (Norway)

Dockers' Section

■ Chair: John Bowers (USA)
 ■ First Vice-Chair: John Coombs (Australia)
 ■ Second Vice-Chair: Bob Baete (Belgium)
 ■ Women's representative: Myriam Chaffart (Belgium)

Fisheries Section

■ Chair: Oli Jacobsen (Faroe Islands)
 ■ Vice-Chair: Hiloyuki Kobori (Japan)
 ■ Women's representative: Anna-Beth Skrede (Norway)

Railway Workers' Section

■ Chair: Jim Knapp (Great Britain)

Inland Navigation Workers' Section

■ Chair: Alfons Geeraerts (Belgium)
 ■ Vice-Chairs: Juan Carlos Pucci (Argentina), Mohamed Haneef (India)
 ■ Women's representative: Juliet Ashibougwu (Nigeria)

Tourism Services Section

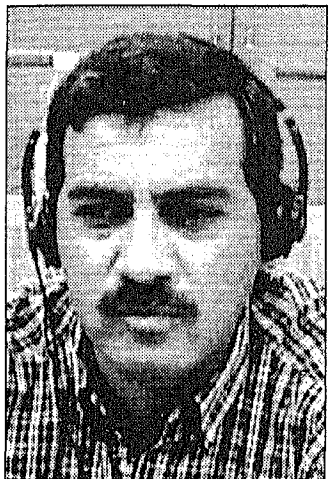
■ Chair: Richard Rosser (Great Britain)
 ■ Vice-Chair: Yutaka Kasahara (Japan)
 ■ Women's representative: Harriet Yeo (Great Britain)

Urban Transport Committee

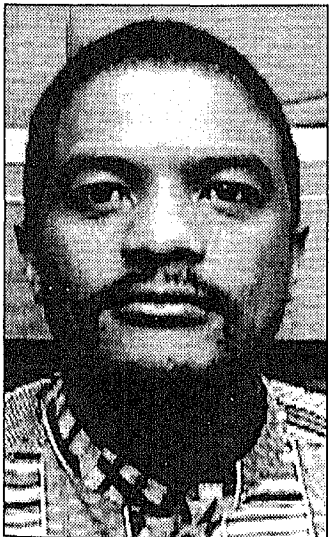
■ Chair: Anders Westin (Sweden)
 ■ Vice-Chairs: G Greivelding (Luxembourg), Persio Duarte (Paraguay)



■ Jane Saethre (Norway), elected to the Railway Workers' Section Committee



■ Juan Carlos Pucci (Argentina) elected as one of the Inland Navigation Section Vice-Chairs.



■ Randall Howard (South Africa), elected to the Executive Board.

New women's structures agreed

Delegates voted to reserve five seats for women on the Executive Board, the main governing body of the ITF between Congresses.

In addition, a constitutional amendment was carried to establish a Women's Committee, which will comprise some 30 representatives from the sections and regions and will include women EB members.

"This is the culmination of more than two years of consultation," said ITF Women's Officer Sarah Finke. "Now it is up to affiliates to make them work by ensuring that women are encouraged to represent their union at national and international level."

■ Congress also voted to revise the method of electing Executive Board members. The General Council, which served as an electoral college, has been scrapped. EB members will now be elected directly from their regions and, in the case of Europe, North America and Asia/Pacific, from constituencies within the region. ■



■ *More than 500 delegates were given an enthusiastic send-off by railway workers on the last day of the ITF Congress.*

At a peace rally organised by the All India Railwaymen's Federation at the Karnal Stadium, delegates were garlanded and then entertained by local musicians before settling down to listen to Indian union and ITF speakers.

Joining General Secretary, David Cockroft (pictured right, on left) and outgoing President, Eike Eulen, on stage, newly-elected ITF President Umraomal Purohit (right) assured crowd of the Indian railway workers' continued support for the ITF. "We love international solidarity" he said.



General Secretary opens debate on Mobilising Solidarity...

Communications and training the key

How can the ITF serve the interests of transport workers' unions in an age of global markets, transnational employers and workplace deregulation?

The debate on "Mobilising Solidarity", the policy document from the Executive Board which sets out to answer these questions, began with General Secretary David Cockroft stressing the need for the ITF and affiliates to modernise their communications and training. They also need to streamline their structures to make cross-border solidarity a reality.

"Mobilising Solidarity" was a document about ideas, about identifying problems and proposing solutions for improvement, he said, "an

agenda for action, a signpost for where we should be concentrating our activities over the next four years".

High on the list of priorities were the twin concerns of education and training. Cockroft told delegates that one of the most important tools that affiliates could be given is education, to give them a better understanding of how international solidarity worked. He maintained that even basic trade union training should include an element of education on international issues in order for all workers to grasp the impact globalisation was having on their daily lives.

On communication, the General Secretary said the internet was extremely important as, for the first time,

it offered trade unions the opportunity to send messages not only quickly, but cheaply. One of the biggest barriers to communication were trade unions themselves. "While they are bureaucratic to ensure the appropriate political control, their structures sometimes make it difficult to do things quickly."

Central to "Mobilising Solidarity" was the need to be proactive, Cockroft told delegates, and the agenda for change within the ITF included making the organisation more campaign-oriented. New ideas were needed and new forms of action were required to make it difficult for those making it difficult for unions, he said.

On the legal front too, the ITF would not stand still. Nationally and internationally, the boundaries of the law must be pushed back. He told delegates that it must

not be used to hamstring affiliates' abilities to deliver international solidarity and called on them to think big and think new. "We are not suggesting that we launch a programme of confrontations with the law, but we must push as far as we can go."

It was important for the ITF to lead the debate about how the world trade union movement could make international solidarity more effective, he told delegates. The ITF Secretariat had been seeking ways to improve how it worked and now it was time for affiliates themselves to take action. "It is your turn to contribute to the process of making international solidarity as effective as it can be - that is our target for the next four years." ■

Worldwide standards would help tackle inequalities, say delegates

The "Mobilising Solidarity" statement was unanimously adopted by Congress amid calls for the new policy to be underpinned by a drive to redress global economic inequalities and establish worldwide minimum employment rights.

Many of the speakers from developing countries said that a fairer distribution of wealth between rich and poor nations should be pursued alongside the aim of strengthening cross-border trade union solidarity contained in the new policy.

Other speakers - out of a total of 28 who addressed Congress during the debate - stressed the need for unions to campaign for greater global social regulation, echoing demands by the international trade union movement for social clauses guaranteeing basic labour rights in international trading and economic agreements.

The "Mobilising Solidarity" policy spells out the need for the ITF and affiliates to adapt their structures and improve communications and training in order to strengthen international solidarity between unions. This is needed to meet the challenge of the global economy, deregulated labour markets and the international dimension of more and more industrial disputes.

Masayuki Kotani (Japan) was one of several speakers to denounce the World Bank and In-

Fight for global workers' rights

ternational Monetary Fund for ignoring workers' rights while promoting privatisation and deregulation in order to assist transnational companies.

On the subject of global inequalities of wealth, Eduardo Chagas (Portugal) quoted a report stating that the combined wealth of the world's 225 richest individuals was greater than that of 40 per cent of the planet's total population.

Tony West (Great Britain) urged unions to engage in constructive self-criticism about whether they were properly geared up to handle international solidarity matters and whether they were educating their members on international trade union issues.

This point was also taken up by Omar José Gomes (Brazil), who said that unions had been slow to adapt to change. His union, the CNTTT transport union, was trying to improve things by devoting more resources to trade union training courses, with a quota of 30 per cent women.

Jagdish Lal (India) pointed out that allowance had to be made in international solidarity strategies for differing experiences in non-Western countries. For example, in south India there was a tradition of passive resistance, such as sit-down protests, chain-fasting by off-



■ *Ko Ko Khaing, of the Seafarers' Union of Burma, who spoke of the need for international solidarity to restore trade union rights in his country.*



Fight for global workers' rights

duty employees or wall-poster propaganda campaigns against companies.

From Bill Morris (Great Britain) came a special plea for the ITF and unions to help the communities in Central America, particularly Nicaragua, to recover from the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch which had now hit the region, resulting in up to 10,000 deaths.

Ko Ko Khaing (Burma) described how his union, the Seafarers' Union of Burma, was having to operate in exile in Thailand. International solidarity was urgently needed to restore trade union rights in Burma, currently ruled by a military dictatorship.

Moving a motion on the global economy, Erika Young (Italy) spoke of the need for social regulation in response to the increasing inte-

gration of the world's economy. European social structures represented a good standard to follow.

Many speakers referred to how well placed the ITF is to co-ordinate international solidarity as it had 50 years of doing exactly that in the campaign against flags of convenience (FOCs).

Asbjørn Wahl (Norway) said the FOC campaign gave the ITF a unique vision. The "Mobilising Solidarity" statement was therefore based on real experience and provided unions with ambitious but realistic guidelines.

It was now time to turn the other ITF sections into campaigning organisations like the Seafarers' and Dockers' Sections, he added. ❧

"It is time to turn the other ITF sections into campaigning organisations like the Seafarers' and Dockers' Sections."

Saying it in verse...



John Coombs (left) fittingly chose the "Mobilising Solidarity" debate as an opportunity to publicly thank the ITF and affiliates for their role in securing a "historic and unprecedented" victory in the dispute between Patrick Stevedores and the Maritime Union of Australia.

And he did it by reciting a poem, called "The Union Man", which would sum up the spirit of the sacked dockers in standing up to the company and the solidarity shown to them by others...

One voice to speak
One step to take
A thousand men as one
As like a wall
Lest one should fall
They stand till all is won.

A thousand men
No two alike
And yet they stand as one.
While so they stand
No alien hand
Can bring them down un-
done.

These are the men
Who foot by foot
Beat down the might of
wrong
And now hold fast
In case the past
Should rise again still strong.

MARY GILMORE ❧

RESOLUTIONS

Key decisions taken at plenary session

Transport workers and the global economy

■ Congress rejected the concept of a transport industry based on the free play of the market. Where competition takes place, it must be within a strong regulatory framework and should not be based on the exploitation of labour costs.

■ The campaign to keep passenger transport under public ownership and control is to continue. The ITF will begin talks with international organisations involved in restructuring, such as the World Bank, to ensure that the interests of ordinary workers are taken account of.

■ Affiliates are to be encouraged to campaign at national level against restructuring programmes in the transport industry which do not provide guarantees on jobs, union rights, wages and working conditions or which threaten transport safety.

Trade unions and trans-nationals

■ The ITF is to oppose by all possible means any imposition of the draft treaty for Multilateral Agreement on Investment, negotiated by representatives of governments in the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries.

Globalisation and the economy

■ Congress called for a world government project which

would challenge the destructive aspects of globalisation. Growth in social development and living standards must catch up with economic expansion and the social regulation of the transport system must be a key priority for the Federation over the next four years.

Union membership

■ The ITF is to launch a campaign to recruit new types of workers in the transport industry. Key target groups will include the young, women, and white collar workers who are less well organised than those in traditional transport professions.

Working hours and job security

■ Reduced job security and worsening conditions of employment resulting from changes in working patterns will continue to be challenged by the ITF. The federation will work with other international organisations at every opportunity to raise its concerns with international bodies.

Equal opportunities

■ The ITF is to undertake a wide-ranging programme of action aimed at eliminating sex discrimination and promoting equal opportunities. Within the ITF this will include evaluating all of the Federation's activities in terms of the participation of women, detecting the reasons for their non-participation and taking the necessary measures to eliminate any obstacles. This work will be supported by a strengthened Women's Department acting as a kind of "equality auditor".

■ As part of this process of increasing the representation of women in decision-making bodies within the ITF and its affiliates, the Federation is to place additional emphasis on education in equality in its strategic planning and in the process of developing leaders.

Final facts and figures

Updated attendance statistics confirm that the 39th Congress was the ITF's biggest ever. It was attended by 588 delegates and 628 advisers representing 294 unions from 84 countries. At the previous full-length Congress, in Geneva in 1994, there were 581 delegates and 531 advisers representing 278 unions from 85 countries. ❧

Record-breaking excursion

The outing to Agra on 1 November broke records as well as winning the gratitude of all those who went for the welcome provided by the All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF).

All 850 seats on the specially-chartered ITF train from Delhi were taken, an additional 214 people took the scheduled express service, and more than 80 others travelled on the four overspill coaches laid on for those who did not have seats.

The ITF excursion was not only the biggest at any Congress, it was also the largest party to visit Agra in the past five years.

A fleet of 40 buses transported the 1,150 Congress participants and visitors to the Taj Mahal, where garlanded AIRF members greeted them with fire-crackers and chants, then on to the Mughal Sheraton Hotel for lunch and afterwards to Agra Fort. ❧

Women want to play their part

"Women transport workers want to play their part in shaping the next century of the ITF," said Diana Holland (Great Britain), introducing the item on women transport workers to plenary.

"The unanimous support of this Congress for creating a women's structure demonstrates a spirit of unity in the ITF we can all be proud of.

"Pregnant women transport workers should not be sacked. They need to know health and safety hazards for themselves and for their babies... every new child and every mother should have basic rights; but we have a very long way to go to achieve this.

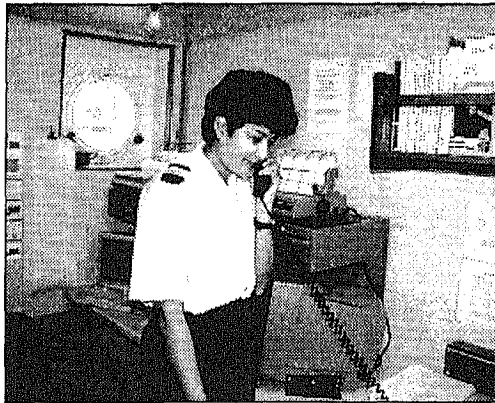
"As trade unionists we all need to organise to end discrimination against women transport workers, prevent sexual harassment, bullying and violence at work and support women particularly when they are isolated in the workplace.

"As birds are born to fly, so are women born to be free," she concluded. ❧

2002 Congress invited to Canada

The first ITF Congress of the new millennium may be held in Canada in 2002. The invitation to stage the event in Canada (which needs to be approved by the ITF's Executive Board) came from Jim O'Neil (CAW-Canada) on the last day of Congress. He told delegates that he had consulted other Canadian affiliates who supported his proposal.

■ *The ITF Women's Conference in Delhi tackled the issue of violence to transport workers, especially women.*



Most transport workers carry out their normal tasks or duties under conditions that place them in a high risk group for violence or harassment, explained Dr Duncan Chappell, guest speaker at the ITF's 2nd Worldwide Women's Conference which concluded in Delhi on 3 November.

Men are more likely than women to respond in an aggressive way to many workplace situations, but women are also at much greater risk of some types of victimisation at work than men, he added.

Dr Chappell, a lawyer and criminologist, cited the murder of a 59-year old woman taxi driver in Sydney, Australia – only months after she told a colleague: "If I don't get out of Sydney soon, I'll be dead." The co-author of the International Labour Organization book "Violence at Work", published earlier this year, said: "The facts and figures which are available about violence in the transport workplace are at best fragmented; restricted to particular transport systems, localities or regions; and often very difficult to obtain or interpret."

Preventive action

Working alone, with the public or with money made transport workers vulnerable to attack, Chappell explained, advocating preventive action, changes in the working environment (such as protective screens, alarms and design of stations) and the participation of workers and their representatives in identifying problems and implementing solutions.

Why women face more risks at work

"The first error many organisations make is failing to plan and prepare for traumatic incident management. After this, the most striking error is a failure to take appropriate action after the event because staff problems are not grossly evident or observable," commented Chappell.

In response to this speech, women in the meeting debated the linked problems of violence and harassment.

"There are call centre staff who sit all day with earphones on, listening to unrepeatably insults from customers – things they would never dare say face-to-face," said Harriet Yeo of the TSSA, Great Britain, about verbal harassment.

Cabin crew often have to deal with unruly passengers on their own, said Pornpimon Ahrens of the Thai Airways International State Enterprise Employees' Association, and they have problems reporting incidents of violence and harassment in foreign airports.

Sue Gadjos of the Maritime

Union of Australia reported on the harassment of women dockers by seafarers, asking whether the ITF could develop means to deal with this.

"The gender dynamic in violence, harassment and bullying is power," concluded Peggy Nash, CAW Canada. "The problem won't go away until we can redress the balance in broader society."

Working time

A panel debate took place during the conference on flexibility in working time – an essential issue for unions wishing to negotiate family-friendly policies but preserve secure employment.

The conference's conclusions set out a clear topic-led work programme for women's activities in the ITF over the coming four years, including an initiative on basic maternity rights, campaigns and surveys.

The conference agreed a view on candidates it supported for positions on the future Executive Board – Congress was due to consider a proposal to create five reserved seats – and ITF Women's Committee. ■

"Working alone, with the public or with money made transport workers vulnerable to attack."



"The day of action is one of several events this year marking the 50th anniversary of the ITF's FOC campaign."

Action day against flags of convenience

December 4 has been chosen by the ITF as a worldwide day of action against flag of convenience (FOC) shipping.

The theme of the day will be "flags of convenience and deregulation - no thanks", and will promote the ITF's campaign against deregulation in the ports industry as well as in shipping. Activities could take many forms, including industrial action, stop-work meetings, demonstrations, press conferences and leafleting.

The day of action is one of several events this year marking the 50th anniversary of the ITF's FOC campaign. In fact the day is a double anniversary, as 40 years ago on 4 December the ITF called the famous PanLibHonCo Boycott (named after the main FOC registers of the day) which effectively launched the ITF's high-profile industrial campaign against FOCs.

Don't deport, ITF urges airline crews

The ITF is calling on affiliates to refuse cooperation with inhumane methods of forcible deportation. The plea follows the death of a Nigerian national, Sémira Adamu, at the hands of the Belgian authorities on board a Sabena aircraft during the process of her deportation from Belgium on 22 September.

Writing to Louis Tobback, Belgian Minister of the Interior, the ITF has urged a review of Belgian laws and police practices to ensure they conform to UN Convention 51 on the Status of Refugees.

Croatian strike protest

Croatian inland navigation workers employed by Hidroput, Sisak, have been on strike since 2 September, protesting against the company's refusal to conclude negotiations on a collective agreement.

The ITF-affiliated Seafarers' and Dockers' Union of Croatia says that most of the company's vessels are not covered by the Croatian ship register and that living and working conditions are appalling.

Hidroput has tried to break the strike by hiring replacement labour but they have joined the ranks of the 67 strikers instead. The company is also refusing to transfer union membership fees to the union's bank account. The ITF believes such action constitutes a fraudulent act.

Russians demonstrate

An estimated 25 million workers joined a general strike in Russia on 7 October to protest over the non-payment of wages - totalling about US\$15 billion - and the government's economic policies. Trade unionists

are also calling for the resignation of President Boris Yeltsin.

Protest to Zimbabwe on rail restructuring

The ITF has protested strongly to the government of Zimbabwe about the way the country's rail unions, including the ITF-affiliated Zimbabwe Amalgamated Railwaymen's Union, are not being consulted on proposals for the restructuring of National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ).

Though formally represented on the Tripartite NRZ Restructuring Committee, the unions have found that their concerns have been ignored and that reports prepared by private consultants have superseded those of a joint union/management sub-committee.

"The ITF has consistently maintained its position that all stakeholders, including trade unions, must be allowed to participate fully in structural changes in an industry," ITF General Secretary David Cockroft said in October in a letter to the Minister of Transport and Energy. He also cautioned against the separation of NRZ's infrastructure and operations, pointing out that this had proved unsuccessful when implemented in other countries.

Welcome for Croatian court ruling

The ITF has strongly welcomed a decision by Croatia's constitutional court to annul an article in the country's railway law, thereby extending the right to strike.

The ruling is a major victory for the ITF-affiliated Autonomous Trade Union of Communication-Transportation Workers of Croatian Railways which referred the matter to the court after a strike in December 1996 when the government declared that 85 per cent of railway traffic was essential and therefore must be exempted from industrial action. The strike was later ruled to be unlawful.

The court's decision, which takes effect from 15 December, annuls Item 4 Article 23 of the Law on Croatian Railways which gives the Minister of Maritime Affairs, Transportation and Communications the authority to decide which traffic is essential during a railway strike. While the court said it recognised the need to limit the railway workers' right to strike, such conditions should not significantly restrict the rights guaranteed by the Croatian constitution and international conventions.

Transatlantic dockers' alliance

US and Dutch dockers' unions have agreed on regular bilateral meetings, specifically

"Transport unions say violence against their members rose by more than 30 per cent in the first eight months of this year."

aimed at checking the influence of major container lines operating in and out of New York and Rotterdam.

Signatories to the pact are the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's Association, which covers the US east coast, and FNV Bondgenoten. The ITF's Dockers' Section is also a party to the deal.

The move is being heralded as the first example of a trade union "global alliance" mirroring the link-ups between leading container carriers.

Union concerns have been heightened by the recently concluded deal between Maersk and Europe Combined Terminals to develop a major new facility in Rotterdam. ■

French strike against rail violence

Suburban rail commuter traffic in Paris was paralysed for four days in October as railway workers protested against assaults on public transport staff. The protest was joined by workers in the northern region around Calais, hitting mainline and local services.

The strike prompted Prime Minister Lionel Jospin to make a rare live television appearance on 8 October to outline measures aimed at protecting rail workers. These included increasing penalties for violence on trains and in stations, and giving transport employees limited police powers to help them fight back.

Transport unions say violence against their members rose by more than 30 per cent in the first eight months of this year compared with 1997 levels. Among recent concessions for the strikers has been a pledge to provide an additional 400 police officers to patrol railway stations and the buses. The SNCF national rail company has also promised to take on 800 more staff next year to boost security. ■

Support for Turkish union

The ITF has donated UK£10,000 (US\$16,500) from the International Solidarity Fund to support Turkish affiliate, the United Trade Union of Transport Employees (BTS), in its fight against proposed government legislation to restrict the right to strike and bargain collectively.

Earlier this year the union organised three days of protests against the legislative plans, which resulted in the government taking legal action against protesters, in some cases cutting their wages. Sixteen members of the union's executive committee are under threat of compulsory transfers to remote areas of Turkey.

Meanwhile, a new report on trade union rights in Turkey says that country's respect for many labour rights is poor, despite strong and persistent criticism from the

International Labour Organization.

The report by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, published in October, concludes that there are continual violations of trade union rights, and the government should take urgent action to change the law and examine how it is being abused by employers. ■

Plight of stranded East European truckers

Some 10,000 professional truck drivers from Eastern Europe are stranded in France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Great Britain and Ireland as a consequence of the Eastern European financial collapse. Some have been in this predicament for over two months.

According to the French road transport workers' affiliate, the FO National Transport Federation, who initially alerted the ITF to the problem, the truck drivers are very reluctant to talk, even to representatives of ITF-affiliated unions.

The ITF estimates that, based on information provided by major import and export shippers plus intelligence from ITF unions and media contacts in Western Europe, the number of truck drivers abandoned is:

- up to 5,000 in Germany
- 2,000 in France
- up to 1,000 in Holland
- between 1,000 and 1,500 in Great Britain and Ireland
- up to 800 in Belgium.

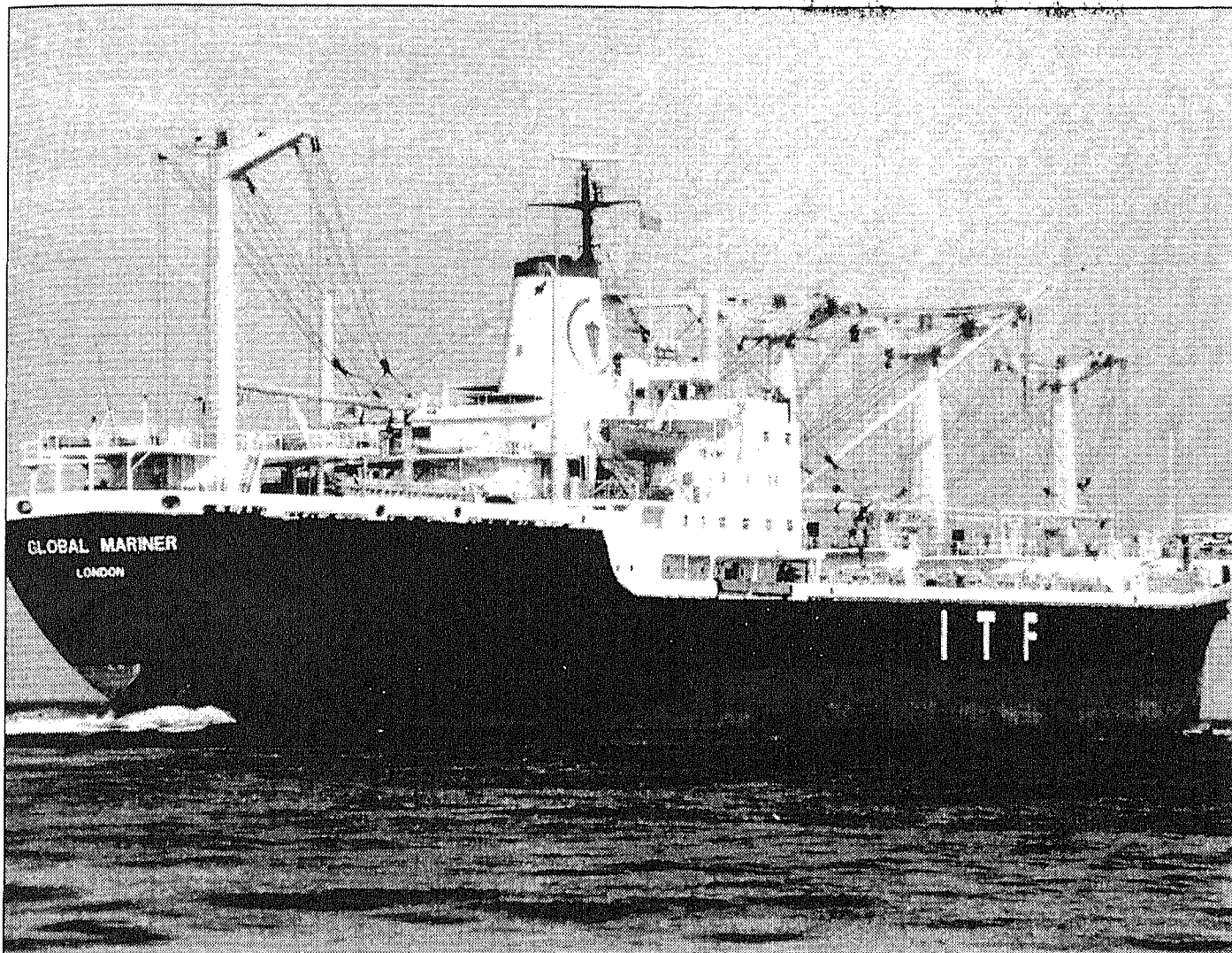
"We are still trying to establish how many abandoned drivers there may be in other Western European countries such as Spain, Italy and Denmark," says Graham Brothers, ITF Assistant General Secretary.

The drivers have been effectively exiled and most are left to fend for themselves by their haulage company employers in the Eastern European countries who have ordered their truck drivers to remain in Western Europe and not to return home with empty trucks. Western European producers are not prepared to export to Eastern Europe as they fear that they will not be paid for the goods.

"The governments of Russia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Latvia and other countries have to take responsibility for the welfare of their citizens," says Brothers. Transport companies including Sovtransavto, one of Russia's biggest, are immediately responsible.

Drivers caught by the financial collapse in Eastern Europe are by and large destitute and the ITF and the IRU (International Road Transport Union) say that the situation can only be resolved by the prompt repatriation of the drivers with or without their vehicles.

The ITF took up the issue in Geneva when the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe held its Working Group on Road Transport from 19 to 21 October. Graham Brothers called on all parties to direct the



attention of government representatives towards a positive resolution of this situation in consultation with the IRU. ❧

Global Mariner to the rescue

Appalling conditions on ships owned in Britain and Syria were caught on camera by Portuguese unions during an ITF week of action which coincided with the visit to Lisbon of the ITF campaign ship *Global Mariner* towards the end of September. Ships boarded by ITF Inspectors and union officials were found to be unsafe, lacking in food, or withholding pay from seafarers.

Essential supplies of food – meat, milk and vegetables – had to be delivered by the crew of the *Global Mariner* to 14 seafarers from Egypt, Romania and Syria on the Panamanian-flag *Daisy 1*, the worst case documented during the week. The Syrian-owned ship discharging grain in Lisbon was found to have hardly any fresh food on board and some crew had reportedly not been paid for 10 months. Pay rates were much lower – US\$300 for a qualified able seaman (AB) – than those set by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Portuguese dockers unloading the grain stopped work on 23 September while the ITF

“Essential supplies of food – meat, milk and vegetables – had to be delivered by the crew of the *Global Mariner*”

and Portuguese unions confronted the master. Now a list of conditions has been given to the owner and Portuguese unions have blocked unloading of the cargo until they are met.

Another ship was boycotted after essential safety measures were found to be lacking: the Cambodian-registered *Saadoun*, which is managed by British company, IM Marine Services. Vital food supplies stored in the lifeboats in case of emergencies were found half submerged in water; the canister used for the emergency water was riddled with holes; no fire hoses were in place, and when the ITF Inspector uncovered one of the ship's alarm bells the hammer was so rotten it broke away at the touch of a hand. On top of this wages on board ship were well below ILO and ITF standards – US\$500 per month for an AB.

On 24 September the *Saadoun's* owners signed an agreement with the ITF, and the local port authorities were called in to inspect the vessel.

Relief was also brought to the crew of Maltese-flag, Greek owned *Pella*. This ship has been arrested in Lisbon since May when the crew, from Greece, Ukraine, Sri Lanka and

"The ITF had documented reports of crew members being punched, head-butted, kicked in the back, bitten on the cheek, throttled, hit by a bottle, and, in the case of a KLM cabin crew member, stabbed."

the Philippines, went on strike for non-payment of wages.

While they wait for court action to settle their claim, they are stranded with no money and no way home. When the *Global Mariner* arrived in Lisbon they were offered a few days work. The ITF crew also made a collection.

"The ITF will pursue this case to have the vessel auctioned as soon as possible so that these seafarers can receive all they are owed," said ITF Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson.

In the meantime the ITF is to repatriate the entire crew with an advance of 25 per cent of their outstanding wages, estimated to be US\$280,000. ■

Next ports of call...

Details of the itinerary of the ITF campaign ship *Global Mariner* around Latin America have now been finalised...

- Port of Spain: 28 November to 1 December
- Vitoria: 10 to 14 December
- Rio de Janeiro: 15 to 18 December
- Santos: 19 to 22 December
- Rio Grande: 24 to 28 December
- Buenos Aires: 29 December to 5 January
- Montevideo: 6 to 11 January
- Punta Arenas: 15 to 18 January
- San Vicente: 22 to 26 January
- Valparaiso: 27 to 31 January
- Guayaquil: 6 to 8 February
- Balboa: 12 to 18 February
- Mazatlán: 24 February to 1 March. ■

ITF raises violence issue at ICAO

The ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) Assembly, meeting in Montreal from 21 September to 2 October, has for the first time recognised that unruly behaviour of passengers on board aircraft is a threat to aviation safety, after its Legal Committee heard presentations by the ITF and IATA, representing the world's airlines.

The government of Canada welcomed the working papers from the ITF and IATA and noted that there was a widespread problem of local police forces being unwilling to take jurisdiction for such incidents upon the aircraft's arrival. The ICAO Legal Committee was urged to give this topic a high priority.

The Legal Committee noted that there was a problem concerning the response of the judicial authorities in the destination countries concerning incidents which may not have been regarded as a serious threat to aviation safety. It noted that the Tokyo Convention gives states the authority but not the obligation to deal with this issue.

ITF Civil Aviation Secretary Stuart Howard, presenting the ITF Working Paper, said the

ITF had documented reports of crew members being punched, head-butted, kicked in the back, bitten on the cheek, throttled, hit by a bottle, and, in the case of a KLM cabin crew member, stabbed. "This is what is now being called air rage," he said. "It is also a threat to flight safety."

Cabin crew in one airline had reported around 100 incidents of verbal or physical abuse per month, he added. A survey of ITF unions indicated that these incidents affected all airlines and were on the increase. American Airlines reported 296 incidents in 1994. This rose to 882 in 1995. Incidents in United Airlines went from 226 in 1995 to 404 in 1996. ■

Ports privatisation: No opposition in principle

It is not privatisation in principle but privatisation in practice which ITF affiliates oppose, two international conferences of port employers were told in October. Most unions have dropped their ideological opposition to private ownership of ports, ITF Dockers' Secretary Kees Marges told the Terminal Operators' Conference in Dubai from 5 to 7 October. But they would strongly defend the rights and conditions of their members and resist attempts by employers to bypass them and unilaterally impose new working conditions.

Marges went on to expound the same argument at the International Maritime Convention on Exchange and Contracts at Réunion from 14 to 16 October.

"I grew up in the port of Rotterdam and I know from my own experience that privately owned stevedores, or distribution centres, or tugboats, or any other privately owned business, are not by definition against the interests of workers, and neither are they guaranteed to destroy trade unions," he told the Dubai conference. He went on to urge employers to consult unions fully before initiating any programme of change and urged that it was in their long-term best interests to maintain trade union negotiating rights in order to create good industrial relations.

He told conference participants at Réunion: "Attempts to impose reforms unilaterally or to use labour sub-contracting arrangements which exclude trade unions altogether will always be bitterly resisted. Workers are only prepared to accept compromise and to support the proposed restructuring if the introduction of the restructuring is based on agreements reached after negotiation between the authorities, employers and trade unions." ■

Action to combat piracy

An initiative to bring south-east Asian countries together to combat piracy is being or-

ganised by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) together with the ITF and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS).

An exploratory mission visited the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia in September and October, made up of ITF Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson, officials of the IMO and ICS.

The mission impressed on the countries the magnitude and seriousness of the piracy problem which in the last 15 years has become a major threat to the safe operation of ships and the safety of seafarers. ☞

Give IMO more power, says ITF

The 50th anniversary of the International Maritime Organization – celebrated on World Maritime Day, 24 September – was marked by a call from the ITF for the IMO to be given sweeping enforcement powers. Writing in the London-based shipping daily, *Lloyd's List*, ITF General Secretary David Cockroft said the IMO should be given the right to audit implementation of international minimum requirements by member states. "If substandard shipping is to be eliminated, then the IMO must be able to deliver punitive measures against companies and flag states which do not meet their obligations," he added. "They must not be allowed to compete with those that do." ☞

European pact on seafarers' hours

European Union shipowners and trade unions have agreed a pact on maximum working hours for seafarers in EU waters.

The deal between the European Community Shipowners' Association and the FST (Federation of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Union) was signed in Brussels on 30 September, the day before an EU directive on working time took effect.

Seafarers are excluded from the general directive, which introduces a 48-hour week for most industries. Now the two sides of the shipping industry have become the first exempt sector to voluntarily reach agreement.

The terms of the deal, which must now be approved by the EU states, enshrine the provisions on seafarers' working time agreed at the International Labour Organization maritime session in Geneva two years ago.

Under the ILO guidelines, a standard working week is defined as six eight-hour days and one day off. A maximum of 14 hours can be worked in any one day, and no more than 72 in a week. Breaks must be taken in no more than two periods in a day, of which one must be at least six hours. ☞

Stalemate in drivers' hours talks

Talks on professional drivers' hours broke up on 30 September in Brussels as European

employers remained hostile to fixed standards for all road transport employees.

According to ITF Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers, the road transport employer body, the International Road Transport Union (IRU), insisted on an unreasonable number of exemptions, undermining the possibility of reaching an acceptable standard for the whole of Europe. Drivers' trade unions affiliated to the ITF regretted that the intransigence of road transport operators had led to this, said Brothers.

The talks, centering on the demand for a 48-hour week, were held under the auspices of the European Union's Joint Committee for Road Transport.

The European Commission has announced it will now prepare its own proposal for a legally enforceable directive – which will have to pass through the lengthy procedures required by European Union legislation.

"Only by imposing such limits could the European Union fulfil its obligation to pursue social progress and ensure public safety," commented Brothers. ☞

Thanks from Romania

Romanian rail union Federatia Nationala Drum de Fier has thanked the ITF for the messages of support sent to government ministers and the management of the SNCFR rail company during its difficult negotiations over pay and the restructuring of the country's railways. Union President Gabriel Craciun reports that the union succeeded in securing a 26 per cent rise, but restructuring has still not been resolved. "The solidarity messages received from the ITF and its affiliates strengthened our position in negotiations with the Romanian government," he wrote to the ITF. ☞

European crews for ferries

European Commission proposals to promote the employment of European seafarers on board ferries trading in EU waters have been welcomed by the Federation of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Union (FST). If they are agreed, the proposals would eliminate the practice of paying non-EU seafarers less than European ones. The number of EU nationals employed on EU-flagged vessels fell by 37 per cent between 1985 and 1995, while the number of third country seafarers rose 14 per cent during the same period, according to figures supplied by the European Commission. ☞

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The internet: Spreading information at high speed and low cost

ITF Systems Operations Supervisor Paul Neve reports on the internet workshops which he ran at Congress

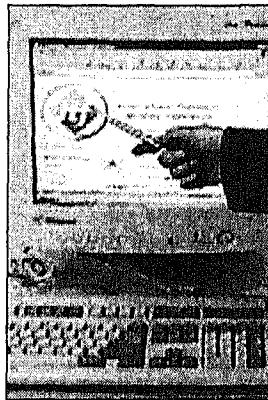
"When mobilising solidarity, communication is essential, and there are few methods of communication more efficient than the internet."

The ITF was one of the first organisations within the trade union sector to make use of the internet as a means of maintaining round-the-clock links with regional offices and field workers. Today, the internet has become crucial to the ITF and many of our key campaigns and activities would not function without it.

With this in mind, two workshops on the internet were held at Congress. The aim was to try to remove some of the mystery that surrounds the subject. So, the workshop started with a brief history lesson: where the internet came from, how it works, and how it evolved. Today the system spans the globe, uniting people and allowing the exchange of information regardless of national borders.

The ITF's use of the internet was also discussed. An important part of this use is our World Wide Web page (<http://www.itf.org.uk>) which contains all the latest ITF information and news. Usually, the latest stories will be seen on the web page before they are seen anywhere else. There is also a variety of other ITF material and publications from the many sections of the ITF, and like everything else this can be accessed at the touch of a button.

Perhaps the most important part of the ITF's web page is the way it reaches a global audience, many of whom would ordinarily have no concept whatsoever of the ITF or its work. Nothing has served to illustrate this as well as the recent dockers' dispute in Australia. The ITF received hundreds of messages of solidarity from Australians, and many of them came from people who ordinarily would have no contact with the ITF. Students, professors and doctors sent their goodwill messages to us via the internet; some continue to maintain links with us to this day.



The ITF uses electronic mail, or e-mail, to keep its regional offices in touch with headquarters in London. E-mail also links our many field-workers, and without e-mail it would be extremely difficult to co-ordinate effective worldwide activities. A good example of this is the flag of convenience campaign, which has become more and more efficient as ITF Inspectors adopt the new technology.

With information becoming the new worldwide currency, anyone who is not connected to the internet could be left behind and the ITF strongly urges affiliates to get connected. If you are unsure about how to do this we will be happy to give advice, and you should contact the ITF Systems Department in London for further information. If you already have access to the internet and we don't know about it, why not make contact with us? When mobilising solidarity, communication is essential, and there are few methods of communication more efficient than the internet. ☛

