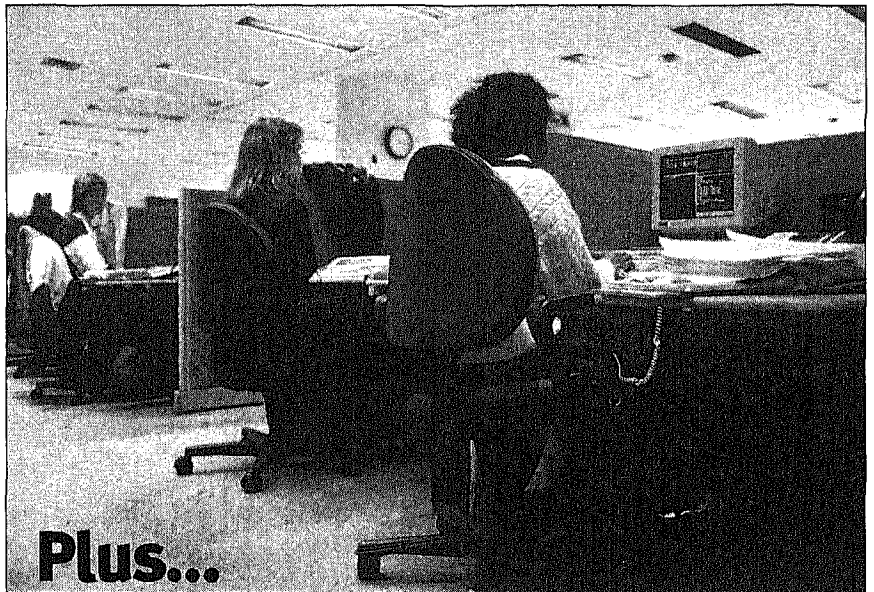
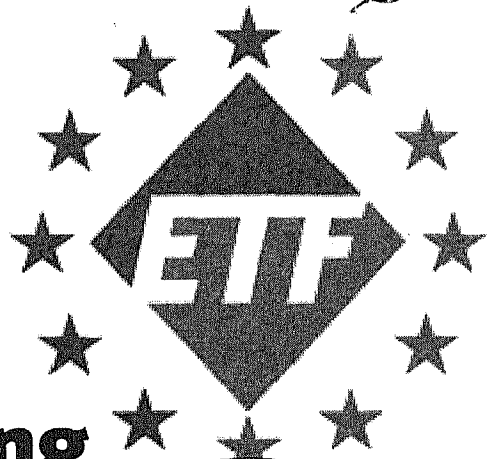


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**A
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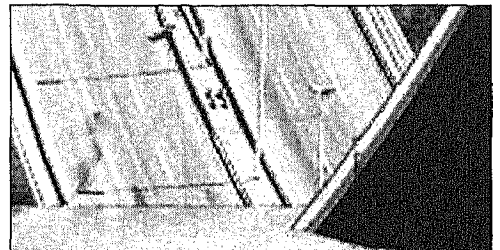


Plus...

SOS for airline call centres

And...

**Rebuilding
the
Balkans**



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■ ITF News is published by the ITF six times a year in English, French, German, Japanese, Russian, Spanish and Swedish.
 ■ This issue was published on 28 June 1999.

Birth of a new transport union federation for Europe



European transport trade unions gathered in Brussels on 14 and 15 June for

the historic founding congress of the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), embracing unions representing some three million workers across the continent.

The ETF will operate both as the European region of the ITF and as the transport federation of the European Trade Union Confederation. Wilhelm Haberzettl

(Austrian railway workers' union and ITF European Vice President) was unanimously elected ETF President, with Graham Stevenson (TGWU, UK) as Vice President.

The management committee will comprise the ETF President and Vice President, the ITF General Secretary and the ETF General Secretary (to be appointed) together with: Julian Jimenez (CC. OO., Spain), Kauko Lehtikoinen (AKT, Finland) and Jacek Cegielski (Solidarnosc, Poland).

The first committee meet-

ing will co-opt a women's representative after consultation with the European members of the ITF Women's Committee.

A job description and person specification for the vacant post of ETF General Secretary will be circulated to affiliates with requests for potential candidates by the middle of August. ■



■ Delegates (left) at the ETF congress and (above) ETF President Wilhelm Haberzettl.

Guyana protest

The ITF has protested to the President of Guyana, Janet Jagan, over the actions of the police during public sector wage negotiations involving, among others, the ITF's affiliate, the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union (ATGWU).

According to the ATGWU, there have been serious violations of trade union rights which included the use of military personnel to replace striking ferry workers and the arrest of union leaders, following their legitimate participation in a lawful demonstration. In addition, there are reports that 17 workers were shot and others tear-gassed during peaceful demonstrations held on 18 May.

"The ITF fully supports its affiliate in its struggle to defend its members' rights and joins the Public Services International in calling on you to ensure full recognition of the right to collective bargaining for unions in Guyana," wrote ITF General Secretary David Cockroft. ■

School for solidarity

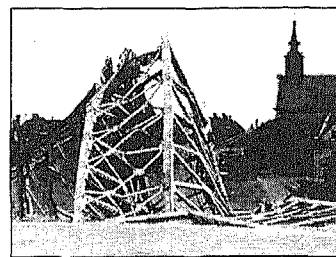
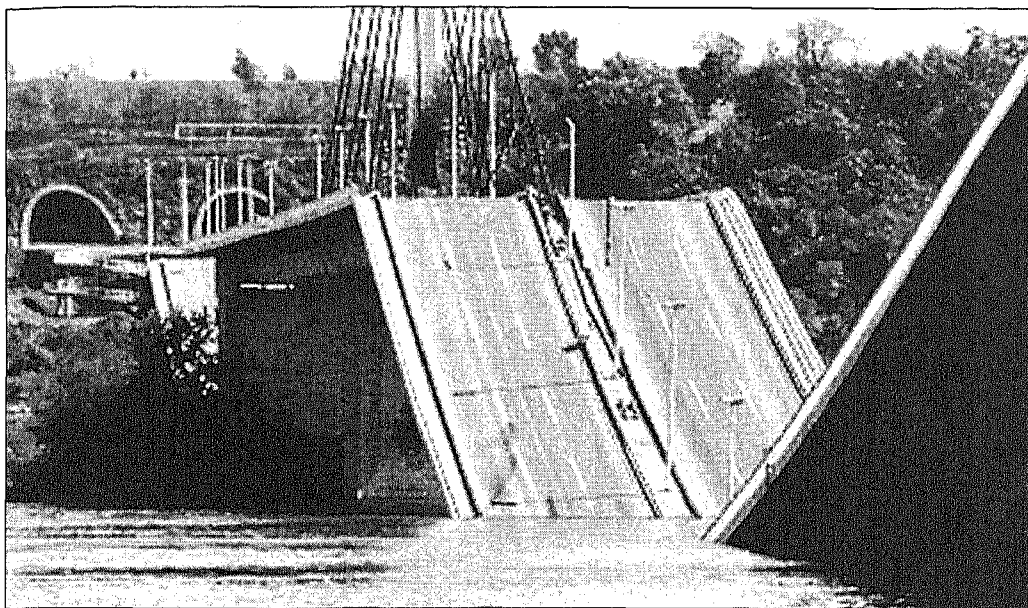
The ITF is organising a five-day international summer school on the theme of mobilising solidarity. It will be held at Ruskin College, Oxford (United Kingdom) from 30 August.

This is the first time that a course of this sort has been held and is a consequence of the adoption of the Mobilising Solidarity Programme at the ITF Congress in New Delhi last year.

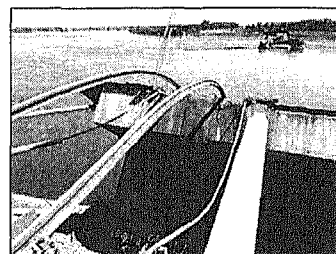
The school will be aimed at key national and regional officers within affiliated unions and will set out to:

- provide training in international issues and trends
- develop new ideas laying the foundation for future ITF activities
- promote solidarity among ITF affiliates.

Places are limited to a maximum of 25. There will be an optional extra three-day induction course at ITF headquarters in London. ■



■ Danube bridges at Novi Sad destroyed in the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia.



ICFTU

Dangers of being a trade unionist

The 1999 Trade Union Rights Survey by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) reports that 123 trade unionists were murdered in 1998, 1,650 individuals were attacked or injured, 3,660 were arrested, and a massive 21,427 were sacked for trade union activities.

This year a record number of 119 countries are cited. The ICFTU believes these figures represent the tip of the iceberg.

The report, published in June, shows that Latin America is the most dangerous continent for trade unionists, 98 were murdered in Colombia, seven in Bolivia, and three in Ecuador.

Core labour standards needed

It is no longer possible to separate trade policy from progress on workers' rights, sustainable development and the environment, said the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) in a statement issued in June ahead of preparations for the World Trade Organisation's ministerial meeting in Seattle, USA at the end of November.

The statement "A New Strategy for Trade and Development", which is being delivered by ICFTU affiliates to governments all over the world, says that there must be a start to serious talks on international core labour standards and the environment as well as substantial improvements for developing countries.

Countries in the developing world have direct experience of the way in which trade liberalisation has reduced workers' rights and strengthened the position of multinational companies.

The world financial crisis and the resultant social turmoil have shown how they are at the mercy of globalisation if there are no mandatory provisions to protect their environment or their workforce.

The ICFTU believes that such measures are needed because a rapidly emerging global market must have rules to allow it to function and develop in a way which brings benefit, not economic disaster to developing countries and economies.

ITF calls for urgent reconstruction effort

Balkans transport crisis

The ITF is calling for an immediate start to the rebuilding of the economies of the Balkans, in particular the trade and transport routes of the region, in the wake of the 11-week NATO bombing of Yugoslavia over the future of Kosovo.

A report prepared by the International Monetary Fund towards the end of the war estimated that the six countries bordering Yugoslavia would this year alone require financial help of up to US\$2.2 billion to cope with the damage to trade and economic activity.

This figure excludes the cost of rebuilding the shattered transport infrastructure of Yugoslavia itself, which the European Union and international financial institutions in Washington say they will refuse to fund in the absence of political change in Belgrade.

Speaking after the conclusion of the bombing campaign early in June, ITF General Secretary David Cockroft said he hoped that the task of reconstruction would be urgently addressed and that any political obstacles to repairing the transport infrastructure of Yugoslavia would be overcome.

"The livelihoods of thousands of

transport workers in the region depend on a swift return to normal trading and transport movements," he said. "The ITF will be pressing for immediate action."

Within Yugoslavia roads and railways, many of them used for cross-border transport, have been extensively damaged, and the Danube waterway, which directly links the inland navigation systems of eight European countries, is blocked by bridges destroyed by NATO bombs.

Inland shipping on German waterways alone is likely to lose more than 80,000 tonnes of cargo a month as a result of the blocking of the Danube in Yugoslavia, the German government's statistical office estimates.

During the conflict the ITF's Road Transport Workers' Section annual meeting on 14 May expressed its "grave concern at the effects of the current NATO bombing campaign on road transport targets such as bridges and roads which is resulting in serious loss of life to civilian road users, particularly professional drivers and other transport workers".

The resolution adopted at the meeting also condemned ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and urged a speedy resolution to the conflict under the auspices of the United Nations.

In May the United States rescinded its blanket ban on Yugoslav seafarers and ships entering US ports following representations by the ITF. The restrictions were amended to allow ships from Montenegro to use US ports.



Nightmare on board the Chin Ching No. 12

'The master is then said to have enlisted the assistance of the second engineer and second officer to throw the bodies of the two murdered crew members over board before going on the rampage through the vessel.'

Support for sustainable fishing

The ITF Fisheries Section Committee, meeting in London in June, gave its backing to a major new international action plan for sustainable fishing approved by ministers from some 120 countries represented in Rome at a Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) conference in March.

The plan deals with the management of fishing capacity and calls on nation states to tackle the problem of too many vessels chasing too few fish. Fishing capacity has to be limited to existing levels and then progressively reduced in affected fisheries. Subsidies and other economic incentives which promote overfishing should be phased out.

The FAO also approved action plans for the conservation and management of sharks and the reduction of incidental catches of seabirds in long-line fisheries. ■

When the Taiwanese flag fishing boat Chin Ching No. 12 put into Port Louis, Mauritius on the morning of 20 February after six months at sea a tragic story began to emerge of the worst case of gross abuse of non-domiciled fishermen that the ITF has ever documented.

The Chin Ching No. 12 had left Mauritius on 8 August 1998, with a crew of twenty five (18 Chinese, 2 Filipinos, 5 Taiwanese), but when it returned to port fifteen fishermen were dead – with nine Chinese fishermen the only survivors of an outbreak of violence that had claimed the lives of most of their fellow crew members.

The surviving fishermen, all Chinese nationals, told the Mauritian police and harbour police who had been alerted to the arrival of the vessel of the events of 16 and 17 February when the vessel was 1,000 nautical miles north east of Mauritius, near the Seychelles archipelago,

According to their testimony, the master Keng Tai Yan, aged 42 and Taiwanese, had drawn his pistol and shot two young fishermen, Li Xing Zheng, 22, and Yang Yong, 23, who had expressed concern that the vessel had been so long at sea that the employment contracts of many of the crew were about to expire.

The master is then said to have enlisted the

Dossier on abuse of crews

As part of ITF efforts to combat abuse of non-domiciled fishermen such as assault, sexual harassment, beatings and denial of medical treatment, ITF inspectors will be visiting foreign flag fishing vessels putting in to their ports and talking with the crews.

Both inspectors and fisheries affiliates are also collecting recent and historical information to build up a picture of the extent to which such abuse has become institutionalised and systematic and individual crew members are being invited to report cases of abuse to the ITF.

Future cases of abuse will meet with resolute action from affiliates who will report masters and officers who ill-treat fishermen to local law enforcement officers with a view to prosecution.

Fishing vessel owners and flag states will not be allowed to shirk their responsibility for providing a safe working environment for fishing crews. ■

assistance of the second engineer and second officer to throw the bodies of the two murdered crew members over board before going on the rampage through the vessel. Crew members report cowering in fear as shots were heard at different points on the vessel and nine more crew members were shot dead or pistol whipped and thrown overboard. Four other fishermen threw themselves into the sea in terror. One further crew member was hit in the right arm by a ricocheting bullet.

Crew members were then forced by the master to put their thumb prints to a document attesting to a mutiny on the Chin Ching No. 12.

The official police investigation included a reconstruction of what happened. The police support the crew version of events and reject the captain's allegation that he acted in self defence when faced by the two fishermen wielding knives and iron bars.

The master, who was placed in police detention, is insisting that he be tried in Taiwan, while local diplomatic representatives of the People's Republic want his trial to take place in China. ■



■ The Federation of Korean Seafarers' Unions staged a protest on 31 May, the country's Maritime Day, to press their demands for better redundancy terms for fishing crews. The federation wants improved welfare and training provision, as well as greater consultation before any reductions in the national fishing fleet.

ITF warns that latest wave of technological change puts more dockers' jobs and conditions under threat

The ITF Dockers' Section is waging a campaign to persuade more countries to ratify an international convention dealing with the social repercussions of new methods of cargo handling.

International Labour Organisation Convention 137 first came into force in 1973 at a time when containerisation was being introduced in many of the world's ports – with huge consequences for dock workers in terms of jobs and working conditions.

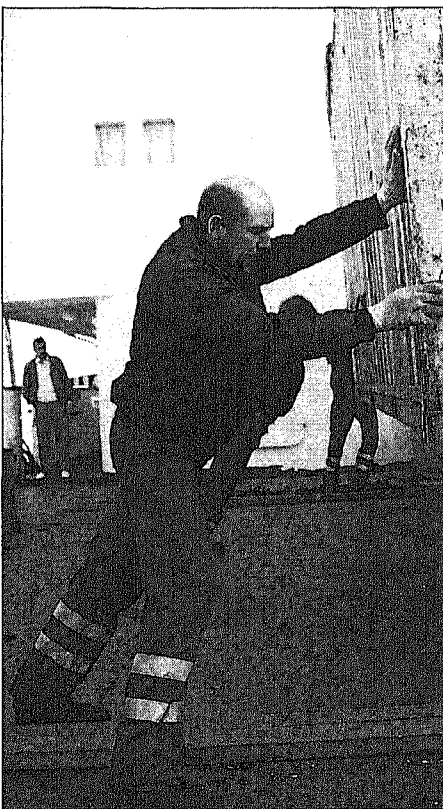
Dockers' Secretary Kees Marges points out that ports are now confronted with a new wave of automation, with new technology, notably in container handling, certain to change the industry dramatically.

"It is essential that changes are only introduced with the involvement of the workers," he adds. "Unfortunately terminal employers in many other countries are likely to try to enforce the new technologies on the workers without consulting or informing them in advance."

Convention 137 and associated ILO Recommendation 145 give workers certain rights when new cargo handling methods are introduced. This was why the ITF had revitalised its campaign for the ratification of Convention 137, with affiliates being sent documentation to help them in discussions in their own countries.

Affiliates in Greece, the United

New push for the right to be consulted



Kingdom, Canada, Cape Verde, Honduras and New Zealand have been among the first to join the campaign and press for ratification in their countries.

In some terminals, such as ECT/Hutchison in Rotterdam, container stacking and transport has already been automated. AGVs (automated guided vehicles) move containers without drivers and they are stacked by robots controlled from an air-conditioned control room. Scientists and technicians were also investigating the possibility of introducing automation in the operation of container cranes.

"It is essential that changes are only introduced with the involvement of the workers."

Arrests in Chile docks dispute

ITF Chilean dock workers' affiliates report that strike action undertaken in the ports against the impact of privatisation has been halted following intervention by the military and police forces.

In retaliation to a peaceful protest made by dockers on 21 May – a national holiday – arrests and raids were carried out on dockers' homes by the police. Two dockers were detained, one of whom, despite being hospitalised due to severe injuries sustained as a result of police violence, was still handcuffed and in police custody four weeks later.

The ITF has sent letters to the President, the Labour

Minister and the Minister for Internal Affairs protesting at the detentions and requesting the immediate release of the two individuals concerned.

The port unions are demanding compensation for what they predict will be significant job losses following the privatisation of Chile's ports, a process

which is now in its final stages.

The government has said that it has no duty to provide compensation as the workers concerned have contracts with the private sector.

See ITF website for more details.



■ Right: Chilean dockers continue their campaign against the effects of the government's privatisation plans.

Consensus forming against flags of convenience

ITF expects proposed new IMO guidelines will put pressure on sub-standard registers

ITF officials are expressing quiet satisfaction with the advances being made in the fight against the flag of convenience (FOC) system within international agencies regulating the shipping industry.

The ITF believes that signs of progress are now clear, with an international consensus now forming around the principle that FOCs are by definition inimical to the aim of ensuring that the industry behaves in a safe and responsible fashion.

Success has been especially evident in the London-based International Maritime Organisation (IMO) which is currently producing various sets of guidelines on flag state implementation (FSI) – the term describing the way that the maritime administration of a shipping register enforces internationally-approved standards.

The draft guidelines are expected to be published over the next two to three years and the ITF is hopeful that many of its demands will be incorporated in their texts.

In March this year the FSI sub-committee of the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee accepted two key ITF arguments:

- The need to standardise the accident databases of flag registers so that the true cause of a casualty at present blamed on, for example, "adverse weather" or "disappearance" can be ascertained;
- The need to tackle the practice of "flag-hopping" where a ship barred from one register merely transfers to another flag of convenience.

Another success this year was the strong support expressed at the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development, which met in New York in April, for action to take immediate steps to eliminate the scourge

of flags of convenience which, it was noted, had detrimental effects in sectors ranging from fisheries to holiday cruise ships.

ITF General Secretary David Cockroft is delighted with the achievements of the ITF's lobbying in international agencies. "The political and diplomatic campaign against flags of convenience is an essential adjunct to the ITF's more high-profile industrial campaign in which we do our best to improve the pay and conditions of seafarers on FOC ships."

He especially welcomed the fact that the practice of flag-hopping was being challenged, "Most countries in the IMO now recognise that it is not enough for a flag state to remove a vessel from its register in order to fulfil its obligations under IMO-set international standards – that merely exports the problem, especially after an inspection in a foreign port finds defects." What was needed, he told ITF News, was the enforcement of Article 94 of UNCLOS (UN Law of the Sea) requiring a rigorous survey before such a vessel could be accepted on to the register in the first place.

The ITF Seafarers' Section official who does much of the behind-the-scenes work on these matters, Jon Whitlow, is also pleased with the way things are moving. "Ten years ago we would have been laughed at for putting forward our ideas on flags of convenience and flag state implementation," he says. "But now our arguments are becoming mainstream." ■

Psst... want to set up an FOC register?

Extract from the London-based daily shipping and business newspaper Lloyd's List on 10 June...

You might as well ask Amnesty International how to establish a death squad, or seek Greenpeace's opinion of the best way to dump toxic chemicals at sea...

One of the world's smallest nations got it spectacularly wrong recently, when it wrote to the ITF for advice on how to become a flag of convenience.

A government bureaucrat from Kiribati appeared not to realise that most jurisdictions would rather avoid the tag.

And the ITF – which ultimately rules on which countries are branded FOCs – has waged a campaign for their eradication for over 50 years.

In a letter to the union federation's London HQ, Miteti Abete writes: "My minister has asked me to brief him on the prospects of becoming another FOC country."

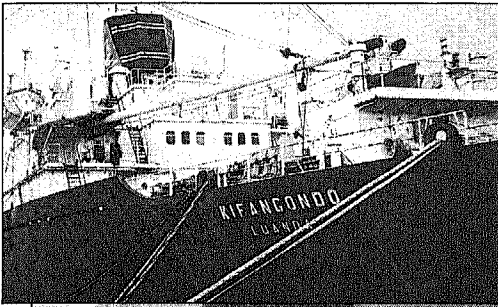
Apparently oblivious to this extraordinary faux pas,

he continues: "I have a limited knowledge of the subject so I have written to my colleagues in Vanuatu, Marshalls and Tuvalu in December 1998.

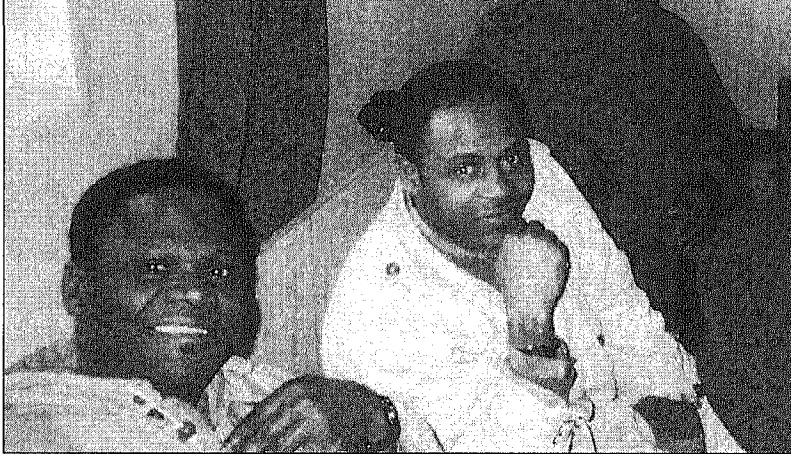
"To date I have not received a single response. I fear that I may have asked too much from them to expose themselves in a market which is quite competitive." ■

Slovenia drops second register plan

The ITF-affiliated Seafarers' Union of Slovenia has persuaded the Slovenian government to drop proposals to introduce a second register for shipping. Following protests by the union – backed up by a strongly-worded letter from the ITF saying that such a register would infringe the rights of Slovenian seafarers – ministers removed the proposal from the draft new Maritime Navigation Act. ■



They're going home at last



■ The three remaining crew members of the abandoned Angolan cargo ship, the *Kifangondo* (inset), returned home in May after spending more than two years guarding the vessel in the French port of Le Havre. Their plight made local and national headlines in France, and French ITF affiliates, as well as giving them direct support, used their case to highlight the scandal of abandoned seafarers worldwide. Their air tickets were paid for by local collection but, according to French reports, it was the French government which paid their FF450,000 (US\$73,000) salary arrears. The vessel was towed into Le Havre in January 1994 after suffering a generator failure. Her owner, the Angolan state-owned company, Angonave, has declined to take responsibility for her and, so far, attempts to auction her have failed despite a starting price of only FF560,000.

The creation of an independent international body which will seek reform of the rules governing global shipping was announced by the ITF on 21 June in a major new initiative designed to improve employment, safety and administrative standards in the industry.

The new body – to be known as the International Commission on the Regulation of Shipping (ICRS) – was unveiled by David Cockroft, ITF General Secretary, in an address to the Mare Forum conference in Amsterdam.

A brainchild of the ITF, the three-member commission also has wide-ranging support within the shipping community and reflects a growing consensus that firm action must be taken to force the increasing number of low quality flag administrations to accept their moral and legal responsibilities.

The ICRS is to be led by Peter Morris, a widely-respected former minister in the Australian government, who has previously chaired two independent Australian parliamentary inquiries into shipping. His first task will be to consult extensively within the industry over the next two months with a view to appointing his fellow commissioners.

Although the exact terms of reference of the commission have yet to be finalised, it will conduct hearings worldwide and take evidence from all interested parties with a view to making concrete proposals for change. It is

ITF in new bid to raise shipping standards

Former Australian minister heads commission to investigate the regulation of shipping

hoped that these proposals will be taken up and pursued by all those who have an interest in a profitable, sound and decently-run shipping industry.

A number of individuals and organisations with a stake in the industry have already shown positive interest in participating in the ICRS – which will aim to complete its work by the end of 2000 – and it is hoped that both political and financial support from governments, international institutions and industry organisations will be forthcoming. The commission's launch is being funded by the ITF.

Commenting on the announcement David Cockroft said: "A radical overhaul of the regulation of the shipping industry is long overdue. The current system lacks teeth and is not only failing seafarers but reputable shipowners and flag states as well. We hope this new commission will become a driving force for those changes which are so desperately needed. I hope it will receive the maximum possible support from all those committed to quality shipping." ■

"A radical overhaul of the regulation of the shipping industry is long overdue. The current system lacks teeth and is not only failing seafarers but reputable shipowners and flag states as well."

British Airways leads the way in switching to non-union and low wage sites

'In India the transfer of work from a unionised workplace to a cheaper non union site in the same city goes under a local project name HOPE (Help Ourselves to Profit Enhancement).'



Call centres

on the move

British Airways is planning to shut down its telephone sales operations in New York with the loss of around 600 jobs in three years time. The decision has caused uproar in the city. BA is one of the largest employers in the Queens district, and many employees have worked for BA for more than 20 years in what have been considered relatively high paying and stable jobs.

According to the machinists' union (IAM) many of these jobs are being moved to a non-union site in Florida while other work will go to India. According to a BA spokesperson John Lampi, BA has "decided to outsource telephone sales to lower costs".

That decision follows a BA cost-cutting plan locally called Project Hope and Rise. This puts into place the US end of a worldwide strategy for the globalisation of BA's facilities for handling reservations and ticketing which centres on a wholly-owned BA subsidiary called World Network Services (WNS) in Bombay. Already "overflow" calls from the United States are transferred to the facility in Bombay.

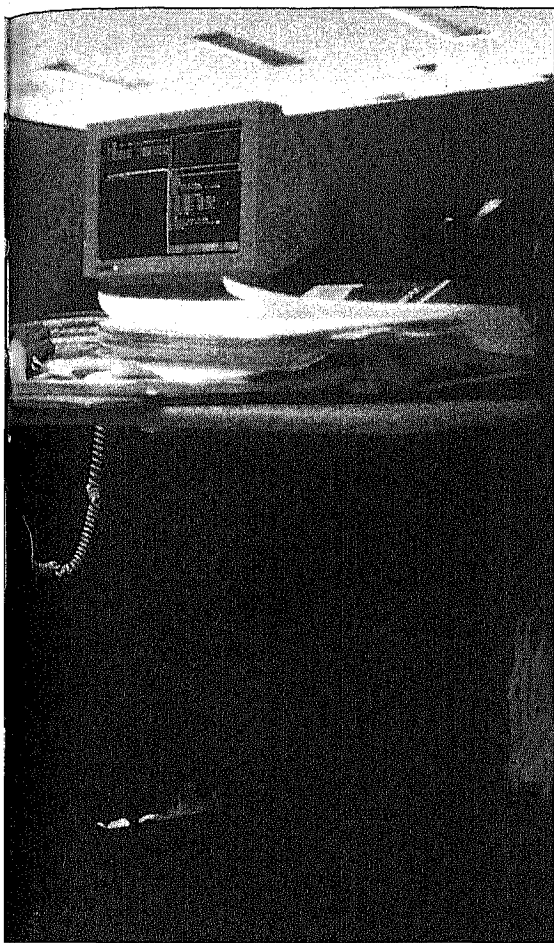
BA recently told the IAM, which represents unionised BA reservations and call centre staff, that it wants the unlimited right to direct US "flow calls" anywhere in the world at any time. The threat of a dispute by the IAM forced BA to improve its deal for workers affected by this decision.

BA's strategy has already lost jobs at its home base in the United Kingdom. In 1995 BA transferred work from the passenger revenue accounting centre at the Odyssey business park in Ruislip, near London, which employed around 1,000 people. There are now only about 170 jobs left as work has been transferred to WNS in Bombay.

According to BA chief executive Bob Ayling, "many of our competitors have already transferred activities overseas, where costs are significantly lower than at home. We cannot continue to compete effectively on this basis without facing up to the need for change".

Yet far from having to respond to its competitors' strategies, BA has long been recognised as an industry leader, pioneering such changes. BA began transferring electronic and data entry work to India as early as 1991.

The WNS centre in Bombay is not only being used to undermine conditions and union organisation in Britain and the United States. It is being used in just the same way to undermine union organisation and working conditions in India. In October 1998 the British Airways Employees' Union in Bombay wrote to their local BA management to complain that "the company has been using this



subsidiary (WNS) to create a workforce parallel to the unionised workforce of British Airways with the intention to destroy the organised and collective strength of the workmen of British Airways".

Work done by BA reservations staff in Bombay has been steadily transferred to the WNS subsidiary. This is at a time when the union is in negotiations over working conditions with BA, leading the union to assert that "the company is aiming at demoralising the permanent workmen of British Airways in order to bring pressure on them to accept the unconscionable offer made by the company".

WNS is non-union and employs staff on fixed term contracts. The union is likely to take the company to court for breaching existing Indian laws which ban the transfer of permanent jobs to temporary contract workers.

In India the transfer of work from a unionised workplace to a cheaper non union site in the same city goes under a local project name HOPE (Help Ourselves to Profit Enhancement). BA has certainly never been slow to help themselves to profit at the expense of employees all around the world. ■

NEWS ROUND-UP

Unions co-ordinate rulemaking strategies

The ITF organised a meeting in Rome on 8 and 9 June to continue the process of co-ordinating a trade union response to safety rulemaking within the European Joint Aviation Authorities and the US Federal Aviation Administration.

High on the agenda was a discussion on the proposal of Airbus to build the new stretched 600 version of its popular widebody aircraft, the A340, with a distance between exits of up to 74 feet. This is well beyond the limit of 60 feet set in the existing safety regulations.

The ITF supports the right of Airbus to ask for the rule to be reviewed through an appropriate open and transparent rulemaking process. But it is insistent that the existing safety standard must be respected unless and until it can be demonstrated that an alternative rule would provide greater safety.

The distance-to-exits rule was just one of many evacuation issues and cabin safety topics discussed at the meeting. Participants also shared views on the proposed US Advisory Circular which would allow computer modelling to replace the current evacuation certification demonstration required before new aircraft types and models are allowed to fly. The ITF will be joining with US and European unions in objecting to the change. ■

HAVA-IS signs new collective agreement

After five months of negotiations and numerous protests, Turkish affiliate HAVA-IS reached agreement in May with Turkish Airlines management on a new collective agreement. As well as improving pay and allowances, the new agreement also increases annual leave from 25 to 30 days. New clauses also extend union recognition – with the result that over 500 pilots and cabin crew have now joined the union.

The union has thanked the ITF and worldwide affiliates for the support they gave. "This support showed us the importance of international solidarity," said the union. ■

Aviation rulemakers focus on safety

ITF-affiliated unions once again played a prominent part in the annual meeting of safety rulemakers which brings together officials from the European Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA) with their counterparts in the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The five-day event – the 16th Annual JAA-FAA Harmonisation Conference – took place in Rome from 31 May to 4 June.

Sobering statistics were presented which made it clear that if the existing global accident rate of about one fatal accident per 2 million flights continues unchanged, the strong and continuing growth in air

traffic means that by the end of the first decade of the new millennium we would expect to see one major fatal crash each week.

The accident rate is not uniform in all regions, as shown by figures presented at the conference. In Europe the fatal accident rate among Western-built jets is about 0.3 per million flights, in the USA the figure is about 0.2/m flights. Africa, however, has a rate 10 times higher of about 2/m and Asia a rate of almost 1/m – the same level as Central and South America, and five times worse than the rate in JAA and FAA countries. In this context it must clearly be a priority to promote an upward harmonisation of safety standards and infrastructure in Asia, Latin and Central America and in Africa if any meaningful reductions in the global accident rate are to be achieved. ■

Unions take action on cabin contamination

A worldwide meeting for aviation trade union health and safety experts took place in Los Angeles, USA, from 2 to 4 June to discuss the urgent problem of contamination of aircraft cabin bleed air by organophosphates and other components of hydraulic fluids and lubricating oils. The meeting, which was organised by the ITF co-ordinator on cabin air quality, the Association of Flight Attendants of the USA, was the second event organised to address this potentially serious hazard. The work programme agreed will be carried forward under the auspices of the ITF and a further meeting is planned for later this year. ■

Victory for locked-out workers in Fiji

Five hundred Fijian civil aviation workers who were locked out on 12 April have now all returned to their jobs. The members of the ITF-affiliated Fiji Public Service Association (FPSA) have also retained their former terms and conditions and their collective agreement – which their employer, the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji (CAAF) – wanted to amend. The general election in Fiji on 10 May brought the Fijian Labour Party to power and FPSA General Secretary, Mahendra Chaudhry, became the country's new Prime Minister. One of his first executive directives was to order the CAAF to allow the locked-out 500 to return to their employment. The ITF has thanked the many affiliates who sent letters of protest to the authorities and letters of support to the FPSA. ■



INLAND TRANSPORT

■ Victims of fatigue (right): photos of loved ones killed in road accidents in the USA involving tired truck drivers. The campaign group Parents Against Tired Truckers has forged links with the ITF and affiliated unions in its efforts to end excessive working hours among truck drivers – the central demand of the ITF's international road transport day of action in October.



On Tuesday 5 October 1999, ITF road transport affiliates will be participating in the third annual action day. Road transport workers from all over the world will join together to fight the excessive working hours which are imposed on too many of those who drive for a living.

Last year on 8 September thousands of truck and bus workers in thirty countries across the globe joined together in a massive international protest against excessive working hours.

Under the slogan "Fatigue Kills!", ITF affiliates from Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Estonia, France, Germany, Ghana, Great Britain, Honduras, India, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Uganda, United States and Zimbabwe blocked border points, organised go-slow convoys, mass rallies and demon-

Join the
international
road transport
action day
5 October 1999

strations, undertook lobbying, ran workshops and press conferences, leafleted the public as well as road users and implemented measures such as overtime bans on the day and on-the-road inspections. Fatigue in road transport is an urgent

issue for road transport workers, public authorities, governments and the public alike. That's why ITF unions all over the world will take action on October 5. The Annual Road Transport Workers' Section meeting held in May 1999 unanimously agreed to further promote our Day of Action Campaign. We are asking you to join in. Remember, you are not alone — this is a worldwide event. Your participation on October 5 counts, and it will encourage others to fight for decent, safe working hours.

For more information about this year's Action Day, please contact the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section.

'Fatigue in road transport is an urgent issue for road transport workers, public authorities, governments and the public alike.'

Romanian strikers targeted by transport minister

The Romanian Transport Minister, Traian Basecu, has done it again. He was the man who issued an emergency ordinance last July to interfere and change the direction of Romania's railway restructuring after the unions and the government had reached an agreement on the issue. It was done in six hours without any consultation with any interest group.

This time, he has intervened in a legitimate strike organised by the ITF-affiliated Bucharest Metro Workers' Federation (USLM) against their employer, Metrorex.

Prior to the industrial action by USLM, Basecu publicly announced his intention to transfer the Bucharest metro system to a commercial company which would sack all the striking metro workers and replace them with former railway workers. He also threatened to terminate the existing collective agreement and replace it with individual labour contracts.

USLM, however, successfully conducted the planned strike and paralysed the capital, Bucharest, on 31 May. The union's demands centred on wages and working conditions.

USLM argues that a lack of investment is seriously jeopardising the health and safety of metro workers. The reaction of Metrorex management, however, was to appeal to the country's supreme court calling the strike illegal.

Basecu continued to attack the union by announcing his "commercialisation plan" and preparing an emergency ordinance which the government endorsed four days after the strike. A few days later, he was in Washington DC meeting World Bank officials. Basecu is in fact Romania's main contact person with the bank.

Meanwhile, ITF General Secretary David Cockroft sent a letter of protest to the transport minister, condemning his anti-trade union stance and warning that his government would end up in a serious confrontation with the international trade union movement should his threats be implemented.

The founding congress of the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) in June unanimously adopted a motion calling on ETF members to protest against the Romanian government and in particular the transport minister. An impressive number of ITF unions in all sectors from every region have already done so.

As ITF News goes to press, Metrorex has agreed to meet USLM. The first round of negotiations took place on 14 June. Important development will be posted on the website (<http://www.itf.org.uk/PRESS/romania.htm>).

'Basecu publicly announced his intention to transfer the Bucharest metro system to a commercial company which would sack all the striking metro workers and replace them with former railway workers.'

NEWS ROUND-UP

Subway strikers sacked

Korea's Seoul Subway Corporation announced in May that it had decided to fire 24 subway union leaders and 22 members who were absent for more than seven days helping to organise a strike in April in opposition to public sector restructuring plans. In addition the corporation would apply the no work no pay formula to participants in the strike.

Paris protest

Paris public transport ground to a halt at midday on 7 June as the RATP transport authority allowed its

38,000 staff to attend the funeral of a colleague who had died in the Metro a few days earlier. Transport workers also walked off the job in Lille and Strasbourg in sympathy with their Paris colleagues. Strikes crippled transport in Paris, Marseille and Lyon for periods of up to two days in the previous week as unions protested at the death of controller Eric Douet after he was beaten up while checking on unlicensed vendors in a Metro station.

French reject rail access

France is maintaining its opposition to European Union plans to open up rail freight to greater cross-border competition and in June blocked a potential agreement on the subject

among the 15 EU countries. The European Commission had been hoping to win approval for an outline agreement to allow foreign rail companies increased access to national networks, to set up pricing arrangements for infrastructure use and ensure that rail operators were separate from the companies running railway infrastructure. France objects to rail liberalisation, fearing it could mean job losses in the industry.

PEOPLE

■ **Mahendra Pal Chaudhry**, General Secretary of the Fiji Public Service Association (FPSA) and leader of the Fijian Labour Party, was elected Fiji's first ethnic Indian Prime Minister in the May elections. **Nirbhay G Singh**, currently senior national vice president and a long-standing aviation official, has been appointed as the public service association's General Secretary for the remainder of Chaudhry's term of union office.

■ **Marián Grác** has been elected President and **Anton Neuvirth** Vice President of the Independent Trade Union of Public Road Transport (ITUPRT) in Slovakia.

■ **Mitsuharu Shibata** has been re-elected President of the Japan Confederation of Railway Workers' Unions (JRU). **Minoru Kato** was elected Vice President and **Yuji Oda** was elected General Secretary.

■ **Abu Sillah**, President of the Sierra Leone Amalgamated Transport Workers' Union (ATWU), has been elected as the new chair of the ITF Sierra Leone Co-ordinating Committee.

■ **Pantelis Stavrou** is the new General Secretary of the Federation of Transport, Petroleum and Agricultural Workers of Cyprus (FTPAW). He replaces **Homer Neocleous**, who has retired.

OBITUARIES

■ **FA Brima**, Secretary General of the Sierra Leone Fishermen's Union (SALFU) and chair of the ITF Sierra Leone Co-ordinating Committee, died on 20 April.

■ **Joop Verroen**, former National Secretary of the Dockers' Section of the Vervoersbond FNV, has died, aged 50. He twice succeeded Kees Marges: as National Secretary in the Dutch union in 1990, and then as the FNV representative on the ITF Dockers' Section Committee in 1993 when Marges became the ITF Dockers' Secretary. Verroen retired early in 1997.

PUBLICATIONS

The following new publications are available free from the ITF...

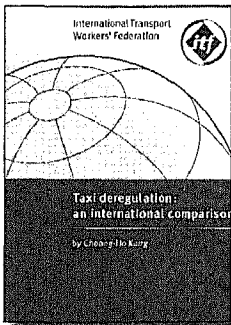


Message to Masters

A4 leaflet, published May 1999

Low or unpaid wages, excessive working hours, and sub-standard shipping affect all those on board a vessel, not just the crew. Aimed primarily at ship captains and senior officers, Message to Masters seeks to explain the work of the ITF and how it

can help ensure – through its network of inspectors, impartial legal advice and understanding of the pressures and problems facing those working at sea – that all seafarers get a fair deal, whatever their position.



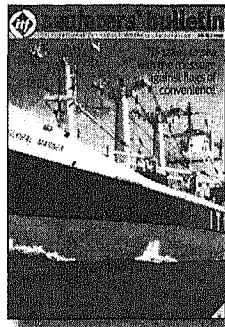
Taxi deregulation: an international comparison

A5, 32 pages, published 1999
Deregulation of public transport was a worldwide phenomenon in the 1980s. For the taxi industry, relaxing licensing arrangements,

removing fare controls and lifting limits on the number of operators frequently resulted in a fragmented service, declining quality, and for drivers, longer hours for less pay.

In this summary of his recent research paper, Choon-Ho Khang, former Director of Policy and the International Department of the Federation of Korean Taxi Workers' Unions, examines the forms that taxi deregulation took, reviews its impact on the industry, including its effect on fares, the number of operators, and competition, and argues that for quality and safety in taxi services to be assured, re-regulation is necessary.

The booklet is available in French, German, Japanese, Spanish and Swedish. The full research paper is available from the ITF Secretariat.



Seafarers' Bulletin 1999

A4 magazine, 48 pages, published May 1999

The inhumane treatment of many crews on flag of convenience ships and the terrible on-board conditions they must endure are highlighted in

this year's edition of the only publication aimed at all the world's 1.5 million seafarers.

The new ITF Seafarers' Bulletin draws on recent reports by maritime authorities in Europe, Australia and Japan to show that the physical state of much of the world's shipping is deteriorating at the same time as violations of seafarers' employment and human rights are on the increase.

The ITF has for the past 50 years been waging a campaign against flags of convenience and, with the help of affiliated maritime trade unions around the world, takes action to secure decent pay and conditions for crews. In 1997 for example, a total of US\$37 million in back pay and topped-up wages was recovered by the ITF.

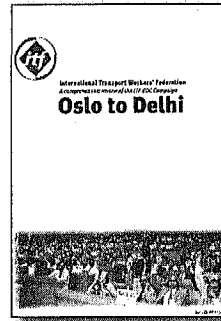
The 1999 bulletin, which appears initially in six languages (English, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish and Tagalog), contains a series of shocking pictures taken by the ITF in a Quebec port showing the substandard living and working conditions on a Cypriot-flag cargoship, the *Maria A*.

The fact that seafarers can often face hostility from the authorities ashore when standing up against abuse is underlined in the bulletin's letters page. A Ghanaian seafarer gives a harrowing account of how he was brutally beaten up by the police in Egypt after complaining that his wages were not being paid in full.

The front of the 48-page bulletin features a picture of the ITF ship *Global Mariner* and inside there is extensive coverage of the ship's current world voyage which is bringing the message of the ITF campaign against flags of convenience to a wider audience.

Writing in the foreword, ITF General Secretary David Cockroft says: "The sad truth is that the safety, welfare and well-being of seafarers are too often taken for granted or even ignored completely. As long as this remains the case, our campaign, despite its many successes, must continue into the next century."

The ITF Seafarers' Bulletin has a total print run of 300,000 and is distributed free through ITF-affiliated unions and via seafarers' missions in all the world's major ports.



Oslo to Delhi: a comprehensive review of the ITF FOC campaign A5, 60 pages, published 1999 'Oslo to Delhi' equips its readers with a definitive assessment of the ITF's campaign against flags of convenience (FOC).

Using last year's 50th anniversary of the campaign's launch as a starting point, it reviews the FOC system, the condition of national flag shipping and the impact of globalisation on the industry. The importance of providing education and assistance to affiliates, democratic control of the campaign and its financing are also assessed in order to provide a set of proposals for carrying the campaign forward to a successful conclusion which are coherent, workable and which command the widest possible degree of support from within the ITF family.



■ One of a set of full colour safety posters for seafarers produced by the ITF last year. Copies are still available free of charge for affiliates.

To order any of the above, or for a full list of materials available, please contact the Information and Policy Department, International Transport Workers' Federation, ITF House, 49-60 Borough Road, London SE1 1DS.
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Email: mail@itf.org.uk

SHIP'S LOG

The ITF campaign ship continues its world voyage to highlight the scandal of flag of convenience and sub-standard shipping...

Thanks...

I am writing to thank the ITF, the crew of the *Global Mariner* and all involved in the operation of this vessel for the support and solidarity that was provided for the workers at the Avondale shipyard during the *Global Mariner's* visit to New Orleans.

We have been faced with a most intransigent management at Avondale, who have refused to acknowledge the result of the ballot held more than five years ago for trade union recognition.

The AFL-CIO (US trade union centre) has accorded this dispute the highest priority and launched a campaign to secure improved working conditions at the Avondale shipyard. The massive increase in major publicity brought to this struggle by the visit of the *Global Mariner* had a huge impact on the morale of the workers at the shipyard and all involved in the campaign.

The *Global Mariner* represents the most visible expression of international trade union solidarity and the ITF is to be complimented for its innovative and unique approach to trade union campaigns.

Marcello Malentacchi
General Secretary
International Metalworkers'
Federation



■ A local bald eagle keeps an eye on the *Global Mariner* in Dutch Harbour, Alaska.

Across the Pacific

Vancouver, Canada, 8 April

Marchers from the ITF-affiliated International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) converged on the *Global Mariner* on the morning of 9 April, demonstrating over a long-running dispute which began when a contract for work in the port was awarded to a non-union firm. This led to widespread protests and picketing. The picketing were deemed to be illegal and many of the pickets have been fined. Eight ILWU pensioners also charged were due to appear in court that morning. They were acquitted of the charges, as the judge ruled that they were not properly informed of an injunction. Local ILWU members waited outside the court for the verdict and then marched to the ship in celebration.

Crew members from the ship also offered their support to the British Columbian Projectionists' Union, in dispute over a proposed 60 per cent wage cut. Crew members joined the protest outside the main cinemas in Vancouver and appealed to prospective film-goers not to go to the cinemas. Some were persuaded and spent the evening elsewhere – perhaps in one of the independent cinemas not involved in the dispute. Glenn Clark, Premier of British Columbia, came to the ship on



■ Piped greeting in Vancouver.

12 April. He was so impressed he came back again later that day with his family. The weekend in Vancouver was busy, with 10,638 visitors – the largest number in any port in Canada or the US.

Prince Rupert, Canada, 15 April

The *Global Mariner* stopped for one day in Prince Rupert and, despite being open only for a matter of eight hours and the relative smallness of the town, the ship attracted almost 1,000 visitors.

Dutch Harbour, USA, 19 April

The *Global Mariner* arrived in the Aleutian Islands and the last US port of the tour to be greeted by local civic and union representatives – and the resident bald eagle population. The derricks and booms made convenient observation posts and at one point there were 27 eagles on the ship. Their curiosity and patience paid off, as one of the stewards, Derek, fed the eagles by hand as they sat on the aft deck outside the galley. The first visitors arrived at 9 am promptly on the following day: a bus full of children from the local school. Throughout the day the whole school came to see the ship and view the exhibition. Despite the fairly constant drizzle, 786 visitors came on board in Dutch Harbour – almost one quarter of the population of Dutch Harbour, and certainly not the smallest number of visitors in a US port.

Vladivostok, Russia, 28 April

The crew of the *Global Mariner* came to the help of seafarers on one of the ships in port, the *Lakhta*, very badly rusting and with apparent serious structural problems. Her crew had been on strike since February, demanding payment of their salaries for the previous seven months. The 32-year-old vessel changed flag last year, from the Russian to the Belize registry. The owner is believed to live somewhere in the US but has not yet been tracked down. The strike is not the owner's only problem, as the *Lakhta* is also being detained by Russian port state control for 32 deficiencies.

The captain and crew of the *Global Mariner* visited the vessel to show solidarity with the striking crew, accompanied by the local ITF inspector Petr Osichansky. They donated US\$ 800 and also brought food to help replenish the strikers' depleted stores.

On the second day in port the Russian shipowners' federation held a seminar on board with speakers representing the unions as well as shipping and

ITF MEETINGS

- Fair Practices Committee Steering Group, London, 5 July
- Seafarers' Section Committee, London, 6 and 7 July (am)
- Dockers' Section meeting, London, 6 and 7 July (am)
- Fair Practices Committee, London, 7 July (pm) and 8-9 July
- Trustees of the ITF Seafarers' Trust, London, 10 July
- Maritime Safety Committee, Oslo, 27-29 September
- Ratings Task Force, Piney Point, 20-22 September
- Interamerican Seafarers', Fisheries and Inland Navigation Workers' Sections meetings, Santiago de Chile, week commencing 4 October
- European Ferry Conference, Stockholm, 5-6 October
- Asia/Pacific civil aviation planning meeting, Bangkok, 11-12 October
- Star Solidarity Alliance cabin crew meeting, Bangkok, 13-14 October
- Urban Transport Committee, London, 14-15 October
- Women's Committee, London, 25-26 October
- Management Committee, Rio de Janeiro, 27 October
- Executive Board, Rio de Janeiro, 28-29 October

SHIP'S LOG

fisheries. The seminar focused on the need to unite against the flag of convenience system and increase the salaries paid to Russian seafarers. The average wage of a Russian AB is just \$300 a month on board Russian-flag vessels.

The number of visitors to the ship was overwhelming, almost 15,000 in just three and a half days, with queues stretching the length of the ship. Friendships were forged and there were tearful good-byes as the local union volunteers left the ship.

Yokohama, Japan, 6 May

In the first port of call in Japan, the total number of visitors to the *Global Mariner* so far was pushed over the 300,000 mark. This means that the original target for visitors (calculated at the beginning of the trip) has been exceeded by 100 per cent. The 300,000th visitor was Nami Yasutani. Nami means wave, which was considered to be a sign of good luck for the ship.

The ITF Japanese Co-ordinating Committee organised a reception for the crew and many trade union representatives from Yokohama. In addition, all 13 Japanese transport unions affiliated to the ITF were represented. President of the All-Japan Seamen's Union, Shoshiro Nakanishi, gave a rousing speech in support of the *Global Mariner* campaign and tour.

Encouraged both by the excellent weather in Yokohama and the entertainment, almost 4,000 people visited the ship.

Kobe, Japan, 10 May

The ship was given a rousing welcome on the quay by the Kobe Fire Brigade brass band. There was a long line of union officials and port representatives waiting to come aboard, including local ITF inspector Hideo Ikeda.

At a reception held on board the following evening, representatives from all the transport unions affiliated to the ITF welcomed the ship and crew. A beautifully presented Japanese buffet of sushi, sashimi and other traditional dishes was accompanied by Japanese beer and Kobe wine.

The crew members of the *Global Mariner* were offered free health checks by the staff of the Seamen's Relief Association Hospital in Kobe. Many of them took advantage of the offer and had check-ups.

The visit of the ship was greatly helped by the involvement of a team of volunteers who were on board both in Yokohama and Kobe. Brother Shoji Yamashita, ITF Co-ordinator in Japan, worked with other ITF staff from the Tokyo office of the ITF to provide interpreting, translations and keep everything running smoothly. At the end of the visit in Kobe, almost 2,500 visitors had been on board the ship.

Ulsan, Korea, 17 May

In the first of two stops in Korea, the *Global Mariner* spent six days in Ulsan. The intended visit to Shanghai had been cancelled because, according to the authorities, no berth was available, which at least meant that there was time to visit a shipyard for some maintenance work.

The *Global Mariner* berthed in exactly the same spot that she had occupied just over a year before as the *Lady Rebecca*.

Without a full cargo, the *Global Mariner* is very light and sits high in the water. This can exaggerate the effect of a rough sea. To compensate for the lack of cargo, steel and sand ballast were taken on last year. More sand ballast was taken on in Ulsan - 1,100 additional tons loaded into one hold and 750 tons more into another.

Apart from all of this, tanks were cleaned, some welding work done, engine repairs made and several certificates for safety equipment renewed.

Pusan, Korea, 23 May

The *Global Mariner* berthed at the maritime university, which has over 10,000 students training for careers in the shipping industry. The ship was formally welcomed by Park In Sang, President of the Korean Federation of Trade Unions, Jo Chun Bok, President of the Federation of Korean Seafarers' Unions (FKSU) and Oh Moon Hwan, President of the Korean Federation of Port and Transport Workers' Unions (KFPTWU).

Bad weather did not seem to put visitors off and by the end of the day there had been over 2,000 on board. The following day saw hundreds of schoolchildren on board. Marine cadets from the university also came in droves. The total for the day stopped at just short of 5,000. The total number of visitors for the three days was 9,026.

Hong Kong, China, 1 June

With no berth available in Hong Kong for the *Global Mariner*, the ship stayed out in the harbour tied to a mooring buoy. The ITF affiliates' Co-ordinating Committee, headed by Captain Yu of the Merchant Navy Officers' Guild (MNOG), came on board the ship in the afternoon to welcome the *Global Mariner* and crew to Hong Kong. They arrived by ferry, one of the many to be used over the next few days by the public and crew to get to and from the shore.

Many maritime students, as well as members of the general public, boarded local ferries to visit the exhibition, the bridge and the engine room, and on leaving Hong Kong, the new running total of visitors to the ship was 314,622.

Kaohsiung, Taiwan, 4 June

On arrival in Kaohsiung the forecast predicted that the typhoon would cross the island in the following days. So, the *Global Mariner* had to prepare for the worst.

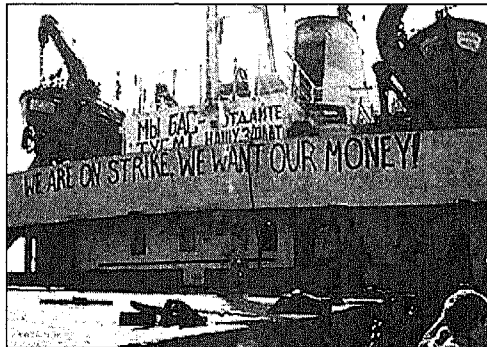
The ropes attaching the ship to the quayside had to be reinforced, steel wires were put out and everything made as secure as possible. The engine was left on standby, so that if a rope broke it could be used to move the ship or to keep it in position.

As Typhoon Maggie approached, it became clear that the exhibition would have to be closed on the day that it was due - Sunday. The typhoon arrived early in the day, bringing very heavy rains and rough seas. However, thanks to the crew's advance preparations, the *Global Mariner* remained securely fastened to the quayside.

Other ships in the harbour were not so fortunate.

The warm (pre-typhoon) welcome from the local affiliates was in stark contrast with the position of the harbour bureau, which had allowed the ship into port but stressed that it was not welcome.

Speakers at a welcoming reception included Chang Kai-Fong, President of the National Chinese Seamen's



■ Vladivostok.



■ **Protest in Manila against the blacklisting of seafarers.**

Union (NCSU), and other union and civic dignitaries.

Even though the ship was eventually open for only a few hours there were still some 650 visitors.

Manila, Philippines, 10 June

While in Manila, the ITF put pressure on the Philippines government over the practice of blacklisting seafarers for trade union activities. If a seafarer takes action to demand due wages or better living conditions, many crewing agencies in the Philippines consider this a reason for blacklisting. Just the fact that the seafarer has contacted the ITF is usually enough to earn the label "ITF activist", which leads to blacklisting by the agencies and the official Philippines Overseas Employment Agency (POEA).

The visit of the *Global Mariner* to Manila saw the screening of a new ITF video on the problem. The video contains footage of crewing agency representatives admitting that they blacklist seafarers. It also looks at the other side of the problem – the plight of the seafarers who find that no agency will employ them. They face long-term unemployment and they and their families suffer real hardship.

Blacklisting appears to be sanctioned by the POEA, the government body dealing with seafarers and other workers overseas. This is despite the fact that the Philippines constitution clearly states that workers have the right to join a union of their choice, and to take industrial action to protect their interests.

Some of the blacklisted seafarers and their families have formed a self-help group, *Marino*, and many of its members were present for a press conference and a discussion forum on board the ship which included government and POEA representatives along with Mark Dickinson, ITF Assistant General Secretary, Susan Cueva of the ITF Manila office and Milton Unso, President of *Marino*.

On the final open day in port, the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Dr Benjamin Domingo, visited the vessel. He was given a tour of the ship by Mark Dickinson and showed great interest in the exhibition and the plight of so many seafarers. He has already earned himself a reputation for taking action in support of land-based Filipino workers abroad and is also apparently determined to improve the situation for Filipino seafarers. Mark Dickinson offered the ITF's support and both agreed to keep in touch.

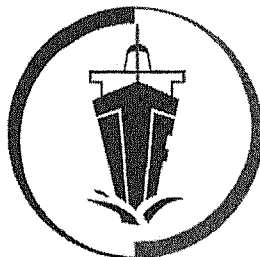
The ship was busy with visitors throughout the stay, despite the difficulty of travelling in Manila. Lack of a

proper public transport system and the often stationary traffic makes travel difficult and slow. By the end of the stay over 5,000 had been on board, including many seafarers and cadets.

Cebu, Philippines, 16 June

As the *Global Mariner* berthed, local union groups and cadets from the local marine colleges and schools gathered on the quay. A local cadet band played enthusiastically for almost two hours. Members of the unions and other groups had marched to the dock from outside the port area and presented crew members with a welcome necklace of shells.

The exhibition opened in the afternoon and over 1,000 visitors came. On the second day open to the public, over 600 maritime students came on board within half an hour. By the end of the day almost 3,000 visitors had been through the exhibition, most of them marine students. On the final day the ship had 1,365 visitors. This brought the total for the port of Cebu to 5,415 and the running total for the tour so far to 326,456.



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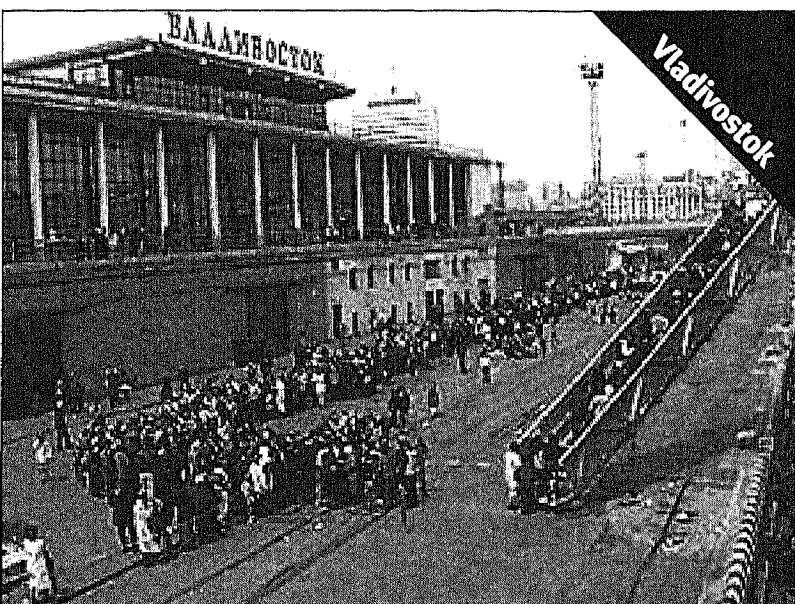
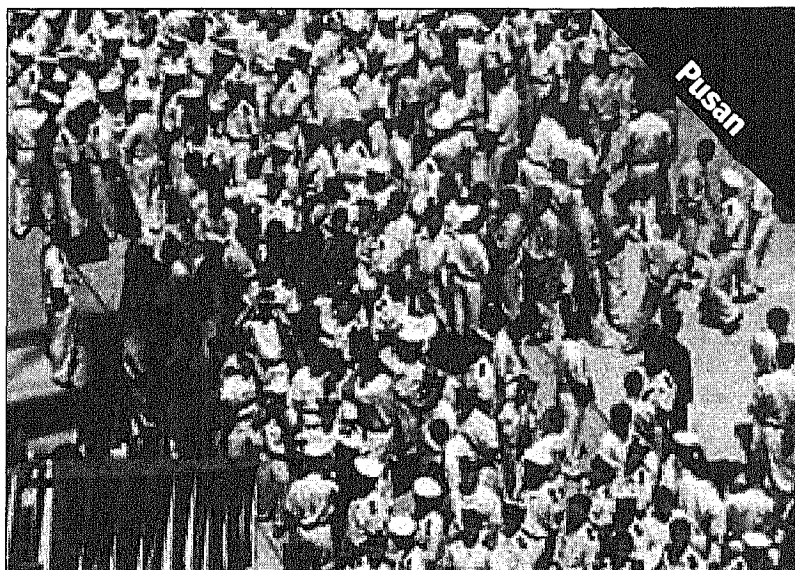
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GLOBAL MARINER

■ The ITF campaign ship has been greeted enthusiastically as she continues her world voyage in Asian and the western Pacific ports. Below, shipping cadets waiting to board the ship in Pusan, Korea, a welcoming banner in Yokohama, Japan, and some of the crowds beside the gangway in Vladivostok, Russia. See report inside, on pages 13 to 15.



**International Transport
Workers' Federation**

**Fédération internationale
des ouvriers du transport**

**Federación Internacional de los
Trabajadores del Transporte**

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国際運輸労連

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ТРАНСПОРТНИКОВ**

