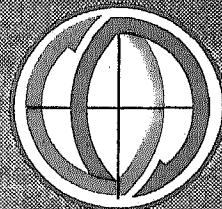


INFORMATIONS : NOTICIAS

ITF NEWS



NACHRICHTEN : NYHETER

ITF FISHERIES UNIONS AIM TO 'ORGANISE THE UNORGANISED'

ITF Fisheries workers — who represent mostly trade union organised workers in large scale outfits — are planning to reach out to the other 12 million workers in the global industry with an aim to “organise the unorganised”.

This conclusion of the ITF Fishermen's Section Conference, meeting in Benalmádena, Spain, from 24-26 March, underlined the delegates' resolve to respond to the current world crisis in fishing with a positive plan for expansion.

Plummeting fish prices and stocks, increasingly complex national regulations, quotas and restrictions, and the poor safety and social conditions in the industry are driving many workers to seek trade union protection.

The increasing use of flag of convenience registers for fishing vessels (allowing owners to exploit crews and evade fishing restrictions) and the growing number of vessel abandonments means that international co-operation is the only way fishermen can survive.

In the USA, small boat owner-operators have approached the unions and asked for representational help (liaising with government, keeping up to date with new regulations and lobbying on their behalf).

TORREMOLINOS PROTOCOL

This representational role is also an international need. The ITF continues to fight for international convention protection for all fish workers, irrespective of how long their vessels are or where they work.

Up the road from the ITF Conference, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) inter-governmental diplomatic conference on the Protocol to the 1977 Torremolinos Convention on Fishing Vessel Safety was taking place. ITF delegates were able to visit the diplomatic conference, and the Spanish government delegation came to meet the ITF Section in the morning before they, and a vast majority of states (20-4), gave public support to the ITF's position on the Protocol. (The conference has not finished as we go to press, and so a full report will appear in next month's *ITF News*).

The proximity of the diplomatic conference also meant the ITF unions were able to invite representatives from the United Nations' International Labour Organisation (ILO) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to address the Section and answer questions.

The conference was organised by the ITF-affiliated FETT-UGT — ITF Executive Board member and FETT

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ITF GENERAL SECRETARY HAROLD LEWIS RETIRES (10-11)

...Fishing vessels are switching to flags of convenience

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General Secretary Vittoriano Sánchez welcomed delegates to Spain. The Spanish Minister of the Merchant Marine, the local mayor, and the regional fisheries minister also addressed the opening session. FETT International Affairs Secretary Miguel de Julian also informed the conference that the King of Spain had agreed to act as honorary president of the meeting.

FISHING INDUSTRY CRISIS

Because Juan Carlos I could not actually attend the meeting, Section Chairman Oli Jacobsen (Faroese Fishermen) presided over the meeting.

Pointing out that desperate times create desperate actions (European owner-operators in France and England have been blockading ports in recent weeks), Jacobsen called upon the ITF unions to seek collective solutions to the world fish crisis.

The conference discussed the developments in the IMO Torremolinos protocol diplomatic discussions. The ITF has never been happy with the fact that, failing to achieve sufficient member state ratifications, the convention is being watered down by means of a protocol which, effectively, removes over 80 per cent of the world's fishing vessels from the provisions of the treaty (by limiting its provisions to vessels over 45 metres in length).

The ITF is particularly concerned about the 45 metre criteria being applied to Chapters 4, 5, 7 and 9. This excludes mandatory provision of lifejackets, survival craft and fire extinguishers from most vessels.

The protocol does make provision for the establishment of regional standards for shorter vessels—failing a change to the protocol these regional arrangements will be crucial to the future of fishing vessel safety.

FSTCW

Work is underway in the IMO to revise the 1978 Standards of Training and Watchkeeping Convention (STCW). Originally, a protocol to STCW which would include training



and certification of fishing vessel crews was drafted.

It has now been agreed to produce a stand alone IMO Convention on Fishing vessel standards—FSTCW.

Peter Sand Mortensen (SiD, Denmark) told delegates that this was a welcome development, because it would accelerate the international approval procedures and allow FSTCW to be in place two or three years earlier than a protocol would have been.

There are, of course, certain crucial questions that the unions will have to try to influence: the IMO's last STCW sub-committee agreed that 24, not 45, metres would be the starting criteria for FSTCW, but there will almost certainly be pressures to extend Torremolinos type exemptions to the Convention.

Sand Mortensen (who is on the IMO working group) identified some additional areas of concern: common language provisions, sole lookout provisions and the expiry of certificates.

The existing draft states that fishermen operating in coastal waters do not need to have command of a common language, and allows a sole bridge lookout in certain circumstances. Sand Mortensen also said that certificates should be valid for a five year period only (as they already are in STCW).

The conference gave its backing to these positions.

CARRIAGE OF IRRADIATED NUCLEAR MATERIAL

ITF industrial sections have been asked by the Executive Board to con-

sider the question of the Carriage of Irradiated Nuclear Material.

The meeting discussed and adopted policy guidelines which affirm the ITF's existing position that Irradiated Nuclear Material should only be transported in purpose built ships. The section also affirmed the willingness of affiliated unions to take industrial action in pursuit of this policy.

ILO FISHERIES PROGRAMME

The meeting then gave the floor to Danny Appave, from the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) maritime affairs section who spoke about the ILO's Fisheries activities.

In reality, the ILO hasn't done much since 1988, and budgetary constraints are a serious problem. Appave appealed for delegates' input about what they wanted the ILO to be doing. He admitted that all the ILO had at the moment was a "token programme".

Section Chairman Oli Jacobsen expressed the ITF's concern that not enough was being done, and he asked what had happened to promises of establishing an ILO standing committee. He also suggested regular meetings between the ILO office and the ITF Fishermen's Section.

Appave acknowledged that there was "little chance" of establishing a standing committee, but said that the ILO was always happy to meet with the unions.

FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE

A more encouraging tone was set by John Fitzpatrick from the United Na-

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ITF Executive Board accepts 21 new unions

Twenty-one transport unions from 14 countries had their applications for affiliation accepted by the ITF Executive Board during its meeting in London on 16-17 March 1993. Those accepted included some unions from Russia, Ukraine and Latvia which were formerly part of the ITF-affiliated USSR Independent Federation of Water Transport Workers' Unions, as well as new unions from countries including Hungary, Chile, Nigeria, Poland, Ivory Coast, Thailand and Romania.

Following a recommendation from the ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Conference (see *ITF News*, March 1993), the Board also agreed to accept into affiliation the exiled Seafarers' Union of Burma, a small organisation currently working out of Bangkok in Thailand which helps seafarers threatened with repression by the totalitarian military junta which currently

holds power in Burma.

Not only is the Burmese government one of the nastiest regimes on earth, it also systematically represses any of its seafarers who have the nerve to participate in ITF action to improve conditions on the flag of convenience ships which it crews at rock bottom wage rates. The affiliation of the SUB to the ITF is designed to demonstrate to the seafarers and to the government that the ITF will give the maximum possible support to Burmese seafarers in such a situation. At the same time the Executive Board endorsed a call for ITF affiliates to take all possible action against Burmese ships and aircraft in order to exert pressure for a return to democratic rule and full respect for human and trade union rights in Burma.

A number of important Secretariat changes were also dealt with at the meeting. Firstly, the Board agreed to

appoint Kees Marges, currently Rotterdam Secretary of the Dutch Transport Workers' Union Vervoersbond FNV, to a newly created position of ITF Education/Projects Officer. As a consequence of the changes in the Secretariat following Harold Lewis's retirement, the Board agreed to advertise the position of Research & Publications Officer and to fill the vacancy at its October meeting. It also agreed to review the procedures for selecting and interviewing candidates for ITF officer positions. The meeting learned with regret that Brian Laughton, Secretary of the Special Seafarers' Department and an ITF employee with 34 years' service, had announced his intention to retire from the ITF in the near future on grounds of ill health. A special resolution of appreciation was adopted in respect

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... Small scale fisheries need trade union protection

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tions' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) who spoke about his organisation's growing importance in fisheries.

The FAO concerns itself with fishing vessel design and safety and also with social and economic factors (with a special emphasis on small scale fisheries).

Perhaps the most significant development in the FAO has been the drafting of a Convention on Fishing Vessel Registration, which explicitly aims to eliminate the growing use of Flags of convenience.

The final text is set to be approved by an FAO conference in September.

Fitzpatrick described the proliferation of the use of fishing Focs as a threat to stock conservation measures and said the FAO are very concerned about the abuse of fishermen under Focs.

The Convention draft calls for a genuine link between the nationality of ownership (defined as "effective control") and the flag of a fishing vessel.

ITF Assistant General Secretary

Åke Selander described Fitzpatrick's contribution as "music to our ears" and delegates resolved to back the new Convention fully.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Delegates approved in principle a policy statement on Marine Pollution and the protection of the maritime environment. The final policy will be agreed by the Section Sub-Committee on the Environment (which will meet in Copenhagen before the end of this year).

EUROPE

Delegates agreed to establish a European Fisheries Regional Committee and elected Peter Sand Mortensen as Chairman.

TRADE UNION ORGANISATION

Conference discussed the question of trade union organisation and ITF membership of fishing organisations.

It was agreed to seek to bring small scale fisheries workers into the ITF, and the Section is now launching a recruitment campaign with the aim of significantly boosting the membership

of the Section.

Jacobsen pointed out that of the world's 13 million fish workers, 12 million were in the small scale sector.

Shaun Gehan, from the US Seafarers' International Union, told delegates about his union's successful organising drive amongst small scale fishermen. The union was actually approached initially by groups of fishermen seeking trade union representation and support.

It was agreed by all delegates that the ITF should reach out to this sector.

It was also agreed to refer the formulation of an ITF Small Scale Fisheries policy to the Section Steering Committee.

Resolutions were adopted by the conference on Flagging of fishing vessels, the need for a Latin American Fisheries Seminar, ILO activities, the crisis in the Fishing Industry, and solidarity with fishermen in the Faroe Islands. The final version of the ITF Fisheries Policy was also endorsed.

The conference was attended by 34 delegates from 17 unions in 12 countries.

Niger union leader released from jail

ITF Executive Board member Mohamed Moussa has been released from prison in Niger.

Moussa was made Minister of the Interior in the transitional government which came into being in 1991 replacing the former military government that had been in power for seventeen years (see *ITF News*, November 1991).

He was specially chosen for the post because he was a leading supporter of the Tuareg cause — he is a Tuareg himself — and it was hoped that he would use his influence to help restore harmonious relations with the nomadic Tuareg people, who had been savagely repressed by the armed forces on their return to Niger in the late 1980s.

Prior to leaving the Ministry in March 1992 Moussa had initiated preparatory meetings with representatives of the Tuaregs in advance of formal negotiations which were to take place later in the year.

But, on 28 August 1992, the government ordered the detention of Moussa — by then Minister of Trade, Transport and Tourism — who was arrested at home as part of a swoop on persons thought to be sympathisers or to have close links with the Tuareg rebel organisation FLAA.

Moussa was first held in a prison 1,000 km from Niamey and finally brought back to the capital Niamey before being set free in mid-February.

Reporting the arrest of Moussa and 160 members of the Tuareg community, the human rights organisation Amnesty International said that the men were being held without any evidence linking them to the FLAA.

It believed that they were being detained solely on account of their ethnic origin and issued an appeal for their immediate and unconditional release.

The trade union movement in Niger played a vital role in the transitional stages of democracy and it is a cruel irony that Moussa, as both a government minister and President of the Niger Civil Aviation Union (SUAC), should have been so abruptly removed from the political and trade union scene.

Malawian democracy referendum postponed

Pressure from the international community has forced the delay of the future political system referendum in Malawi.

President Banda had originally intended to hold the referendum on March 15, hoping that with such a short run-up the pro-democracy forces would not have enough time to marshal support in favour of multi-party rule.

The plebiscite had also been timed to coincide with the rainy season, which would have made it very difficult for many Malawians to get to the polls, especially the poor and those living in rural areas.

A new date for the referendum — June 14 — has now been announced.

The postponement has been welcomed by the United Nations which had urged Banda to allow the political

process more time. It also represents a success for the Malawian pro-democracy movement which has been campaigning vigorously for a massive turnout and a decisive vote for political pluralism.

The supreme court decision on Chakufwa Chihana's appeal against his two-year hard labour sentence is expected in the next few days (see *ITF News*, January/February 1993).

However, there are few grounds for optimism as the "President for Life" and his entourage have been seeking to subvert the judicial process. This interference has so angered the Justice Minister that he has resigned.

Banda has finally bowed to growing international concern and has released Vera Chirwa, Malawi's first female lawyer, who has been serving a life sentence in Zomba jail (see *ITF News*, November 1992 and January/February 1993).

Vera has spent the past twelve years confined to a single cell, isolated from her fellow political prisoners and denied medical care.

Amnesty International adopted Vera and her husband Orton as Prisoners of Conscience and stepped up its efforts on Vera's behalf after her husband's death in prison last October.

...ITF Executive Board meeting

Continued from page 3

of Brian as well as of Mo Hoda who will retire from his position of Asia/Pacific Regional Secretary at the beginning of May after 28 years' service.

Concluding a discussion which began at the 1990 ITF Congress, the Board agreed in principle that an ITF Women's Conference will be convened early in 1994. The Secretariat was asked to consult affiliates in writing about whether they would prefer this Conference to be held separately from or immediately before the ITF Congress.

On Europe, after hearing a report from the Secretariat on recent developments within the "Brussels Com-

mittee" (see *ITF News*, March 1993), it was unanimously agreed that the ITF Executive Board should request the "Brussels Committee" to convene an early meeting of the (joint) European Transport Liaison Committee to discuss amendments to the Brussels Committee's constitution as well as future working relations between the two bodies.

The Board paid a special warm tribute to two retiring and long serving members, T Kubo (Japan) and T Bull (Australia) and agreed to consult unions in Asia/Pacific with a view to coopting two new members to replace them at its next meeting, which will be held in London in October.

ITF mission to Baltic States, Russia and Ukraine

A major step forward in improving relations between the ITF and transport workers' unions in the former USSR took place during the week of 28 February to 5 March when a high level ITF mission visited three of the now independent former Soviet republics.

The mission was composed of Assistant (now Acting) General Secretary David Cockroft, Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander, Seafarers' Section Chairman Mols Sørensen, and Nordic Transport Workers' Federation President Anders Lindström. In a hectic five day period it visited Estonia, Russia and the Ukraine and held discussions with large numbers of transport workers, including many for whom it was the first contact with the ITF, in all three countries.

Time pressures meant that the meeting in the Estonian capital Tallinn was organised to include unions from that country as well as the two other Baltic states of Latvia and Lithuania. Hosted by Eiki Nestor of the Estonian Transport Workers' Federation, the mission held one and a half days of meetings with sixteen Baltic transport unions covering railways, road transport, seafarers, inland navigation workers, fishermen, dockers and civil aviation employees. Discussions centred on the role of the ITF in co-ordinating international solidarity and the severe difficulties facing the Baltic states as a result of the heavy integration of their economies with those of Russia and the other former USSR republics. All of the unions present expressed keen interest in closer contacts with, and affiliation to, the ITF. A brief meeting also took place with Raivo Parvoo, President of the Estonian national trade union centre.

Leaving Tallinn on the Monday evening, the delegation travelled on by Estonian Air (the plane still painted in the old Aeroflot colours) to Moscow. During two days of meetings, the delegation met with a wide range of unions including both those which have grown out of the former "official" USSR unions as well as new groupings. On the first morning in Moscow, the group met with repre-

sentatives of the (ITF-affiliated) Railwaymen's and Fishermen's Unions of Russia as well as with the Auto Transport, Water Transport and Civil Aviation unions. In the afternoon, they met the Seafarers' and Dockers' unions which are still members of the International Confederation of Water Transport Workers (which has evolved from a former USSR ITF affiliate) and discussed conditions for regularising their relations with the ITF in the light of the break-up of the USSR. Further meetings also took place with the Russian Water Transport Workers' Union which has withdrawn from the International Confederation.

On the second day, with the assistance of the Moscow office of the ICFTU, further meeting took place with unions representing Flight Personnel, Locomotive Engineers and Airline Pilots as well as with a large group of urban transport workers from the independent union grouping SOTSPROF led by its President Sergei Khramov. At the same time, part of the delegation continued to discuss ITF Flag of Convenience campaign matters with the Seafarers' Union of Russia.

Immediately following the last meeting the mission boarded an overnight train for Kiev, capital city of the Ukraine. Arriving in Kiev at 9.30 the next morning, within an hour they were meeting representatives of one of the two Ukrainian seafarers' unions. Further meetings with seafarers, pilots, urban transport workers and locomotive engineers then took place in Kiev.

Drawing definite conclusions about the development of democratic trade unionism in countries which are undergoing massive political upheavals virtually every day is very hard, but there is no doubt that many of the people who met the mission are dedicated trade unionists who have the support of their members. On the question of ITF affiliation, the mission felt strongly that it is pointless for the ITF to try to evaluate how democratic or representative each union is, and that unions accepted into the ITF

should be judged by their actions rather than their words.

A full report of the mission (in English only) will be available in the near future to interested ITF affiliates.

Australian voters reject anti-union package

The voters of Australia roundly rejected a programme of anti-trade union measures in the federal elections held on March 13th.

Voting resulted in a resounding victory for the Labor party, headed by Paul Keating.

Labor won an overall majority in the House of Representatives—more than doubling its former margin of six seats.

Voters were no doubt swayed by the example of what right-wing government can mean—as experienced by working people in the State of Victoria.

The Victoria state government has carried out a series of measures to dismantle the industrial relations system, introducing individual employment contracts on the New Zealand model and restricting trade union rights (see *ITF News*, January/February 1993).

The right-wing Liberal/National party's programme was a national version of the Victoria government's plan—a manifesto strongly rejected by the Australian public. To prove the point, Victoria's Labor majority was the highest recorded.

This was a victory too for Australian trade unionists, who began celebrating as soon as the results began to show a Labor lead.

Expectations of a right-wing victory by the Liberal/National party had been encouraged by the international press, citing Australia's growing unemployment and slow economic growth—but Keating himself never doubted the outcome.

Danish presidency heralds a new direction for social rights in the European Community

With the Danish Presidency in full swing, the European Community seems set to enter a more positive phase.

DENMARK TO PUSH SOCIAL MEASURES

The Danish EC Presidency looks more promising for workers in Europe than that which preceded it.

Two key directives could benefit from Denmark's declared determination to step up social policy.

Following the "Hoover affair" (the vacuum cleaner company decided to move production from Dijon in France to Scotland, where the workers will be less protected), European trade unions have called vigorously for the urgent adoption of the draft EC directive on European works' councils.

The directive, which has been held up by the UK for two years, requires employers and employees of multinational groups to negotiate a structure for consultation between trade unions and managers. Even if this fails, a European works' council may be formed.

DIRECTIVES TO BE DISCUSSED

The Commission's draft Directive on workers sent to another member state under contract to provide a given service — the "Posting Directive" — is on the agenda again.

The proposal was conceived to prevent non-nationals of a member state being paid at levels lower than nationals.

Under the draft, laws on the minimum wages and paid holidays in the country where a worker is contracted will only apply to those whose assignments last for more than three months. For example, a worker from Portugal on a three month contract to Germany could be paid the equivalent of Portuguese wages during that period.

MEPs want to abolish the three-month period, and in the Council of Ministers there are strong divisions. Whilst the Netherlands are worried that the measure is a violation of International Labour Organisation

(ILO) Convention No. 94 on Labour Clauses (Public Contracts), the Spanish, Portuguese, Irish, Italian and Greek ministers are in favour of the three month period.

The UK would like to lengthen the period during which workers are not eligible for minimum wages (despite its own refusal to admit the concept of the minimum wage).

Commissioner Padraig Flynn, who is responsible for social affairs, has publicly given support to moves to re-address these issues.

TRANSPORT BACK ON THE AGENDA

The EC Transport Council of Ministers met on March 15th, and gave broad support to the measures introduced in the Commission's White Paper "the Future Development of the Common Transport Policy" (see *ITF News*, January/February 1993).

The paper advocates a gradual transfer from modal policies to a more global approach aimed at evening-out the differences between the different transport modes and at creating trans-European networks.

It emphasises that users have to bear not only the costs of transport infrastructures but also external costs such as those connected with the environment, safety and social protection.

The Council will decide on the paper in June.

The meeting discussed a draft Regulation for an action programme in the field of transport infrastructure, granting loans for land transport and high speed rail networks. Agreeing moves to link isolated areas of the Community with the central regions, Ministers decided to study outline plans for European networks in the roads, combined transport systems and inland waterways.

Road taxation and transit relations with third countries were also discussed.

The meeting looked at EC relations with third countries in air transport, stressing that negotiations should be carried out at Community level with

the authorisation of the Council, and that a working group should be set up to introduce guidelines on bilateral agreements in air transport, to exchange information and to study areas of conflict.

MARITIME ACCIDENTS ALERT EUROPE

Following the *Aegean Sea* and *Braer* disasters, European Commissioners adopted broad measures to address substandard shipping on February 25th.

An official communication, "A Common Safe Seas Policy", was presented jointly by Commissioner for Transport Abel Matutes, Environment Commissioner Ioannis Paleokrassis and Martin Bangemann, Industry Commissioner, to the other commissioners, following the January meeting of transport and environment ministers.

The measures include harmonising the implementation of existing flag state rules in the EC, strengthening of port state control across Europe, the promotion of maritime traffic infrastructures and development of navigational and surveillance aids — especially in ecologically-sensitive areas.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) should be supported, says the communication, and should strengthen its role as an international standard setting body. Crew training should be improved, and minimum standards set, the communication adds.

This year, the document states, the Commission should propose initiatives on the transport of dangerous goods in Community ports, should aim to introduce common rules and standards for classification societies, and should set up a committee on safe seas.

Transport Ministers meeting in Brussels on March 25th took note of the communication and welcomed the Commission's initiative.

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Dealing with multinational companies...

A meeting of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions/International Trade Secretariat (ICFTU/ITS) Working Party on Multi-National Corporations, held in Geneva on 4-5 March 1993, was told that the United Nations (UN) draft Code of Conduct for Transnational Companies was dead and buried with most governments favouring a "less regulatory approach".

One option discussed by the working party was to strengthen the link between the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Tripartite Declaration on Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, adopted in 1977, and ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association. This could be achieved by citing the Declaration in any complaints to the ILO regarding the abuse of freedom of association.

The Tripartite Declaration determines that workers employed by multinational enterprises should have the right to establish and join organisations of their own choosing — a right often denied to workers employed by multinationals.

It was agreed that the ICFTU would submit a comprehensive statement to the UN citing specific examples of the abuse of the Tripartite Declaration and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, in order to highlight the need for some form of regulatory approach.

The meeting, held in conjunction with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development-Trade Union Advisory Committee (OECD-TUAC) Working Group on Multi-National Enterprises, was attended by Mark Dickinson, assistant to the Acting General Secretary. Included on the agenda of the meeting was a review of disputes and organising campaigns involving multinational corporations.

THE ITF AND MULTINATIONALS

Dickinson reported that the ITF was currently involved in two major campaigns involving multinational corpo-

rations — the 45-year-old campaign against flag of convenience shipping in which every Foc ship was effectively a "multinational company" and the campaign against globalisation of the civil aviation industry.

"Encouraging our affiliates in civil aviation to establish international company councils and information exchange networks is one way in which the ITF hopes to maximise the benefits and minimise the costs for aviation workers of globalisation — in much the same way as the solidarity shown by our docker and seafarer affiliates has provided a safety net for seafarers on Foc vessels," said Dickinson.

He went on to stress that it was time for the international trade union movement to secure allies from outside its ranks.

"Both in shipping and civil aviation, and other transport modes, the consumer has been led to believe that they have benefited from de-regulation. This is a myth that needs to be exploded," said Dickinson.

COMPANY COUNCILS

A number of delegates reported various approaches to the problems associated with organising and financing international company councils. The representative of the International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) stressed the importance of having direct links between affiliated unions so that information flows were de-centralised. The involvement of the IUF in such contacts is maintained so as to ensure the co-ordination of decision making, but the union with the most influence in a particular company acts as a co-ordinator for the company councils.

Both the International Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers' Unions (ICEF) and IUF representatives reported that European Community (EC) funding for EC wide company meetings had not prevented the involvement of unions from outside the region in recognition of the fact that the majority of multi-

national corporations were owned in the United States. The meeting subsequently agreed that the experience gained of the functioning of international company councils by members should be reviewed at future meetings.

COMMUNICATIONS

The role played by improved communications systems, such as electronic mail, in improving international contacts and solidarity was highlighted by a number of delegates as were the advantages of establishing company specific Poptel bulletin boards to assist the rapid dissemination of information. Matching the information technology and communication systems of multinational corporations was seen as a priority by some members of the group and it was agreed that at future meetings reports by delegates should include details of progress made with the use of e-mail systems.

...Price agreement in Combined Transport

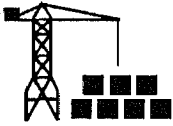
Continued from page 6

The Commission has decided to authorise an agreement which establishes a common price structure to be applied by the twelve main railway companies in the Community.

Rail companies rarely sell combined transport directly to consignors; usually this is handled by specialised operators (either rail subsidiaries or independent companies).

The agreement reached by the twelve companies, members of the International Union of Railways (IUF), defines how prices should be calculated, without actually laying down exact figures.

Whilst the Commission had felt this would restrict competition, it has now recognised that the new structure will aid in setting international prices, and that operators will be able to examine different routes and compare them.



DOCKERS

Port work casualties reveal a record in need of major improvement

Reports by ITF dockers' affiliates in various countries show that the numbers of port workers dying in avoidable work accidents are too high.

In the period 1992-3, eight port workers in Antwerp lost their lives. Four of these workers died in accidents involving vehicles.

Vehicle accidents were also responsible for the near-fatal injuries of two New Zealand workers in the ports of Napier and Port Chalmers this year, reports the ITF-affiliated New Zealand Waterfront Workers' Union.

One port worker was run over by a log loading machine, whilst another narrowly escaped with his life when the vehicle he was driving turned over on the ship's ramp. Neither will work again.

Three members of the union were killed in 1992-3. One, in the port of Auckland, died when he was run over by a large fork hoist, and two workers in the port of Tauranga died in separate log-loading accidents.

Casualties involving crane-grabs and other heavy moving machinery were

reported by ITF affiliates as a frighteningly frequent cause of death.

A member of the UK Transport and General Workers' Union was crushed by a grab this year, and the Spanish ITF-affiliated union FETT-UGT reported the incident of a Spanish worker in the Galician port of Marin who died when he was struck on the head by a crane crab whilst unloading grain from the Dutch-flagged vessel *Barok*.

In August this year a stevedore in the port of Bilbao was killed after he became trapped in heavy winching machinery. In an equally shocking accident in Italy, reported by affiliated union FILT-CGIL, two workers died when they were crushed between two containers.

In the UK, another incident resulted in two fatalities as the result of a crane toppling over.

The ITF's Maltese affiliate, the General Workers' Union, reporting one death, were quick to take action to ensure that such an accident could not happen again. Changes to work-

ing practices were negotiated, meaning that workers are no longer expected to wait under the lift as cargoes are unloaded on to the quayside.

The US East Coast dock workers' union, the International Longshoremen's Association, told the ITF that whilst in 1992-1993 one accident had been fatal, around 50 workers had died in the port of New York since 1972.

These sad accidents, with their tragic consequences for the families of the workers involved, could more often than not have been avoided.

While fatal accidents are shocking, they are part of a wider picture of work accidents. For example, there were 200 accidents in the port of Antwerp this year, according to the ITF-affiliated Belgian Transport Workers' and Diamond Workers' Organisation.

The evidence points to a continuing need for safety awareness from employers. Proper safety planning, coordination and education are processes in which trade unions must be involved if they are to be effective.

Argentinian court ruling on reform ignored

Despite the November findings of an Argentinian appeal court against repressive port reform in Argentina, both port employers and government institutions have refused to comply with the ruling in question, report ITF-affiliated dockers' union, the Sindicato Encargados Apuntadores Marítimos (SEAM).

Instead, the union have been told that the reapplication of collective agreements that were cancelled under Decree no. 817/92 will have to

await the judgment of the country's Supreme Court.

This is in direct contravention of existing legislation, given that the union have now had two court judgments in their favour, declaring decree 817/92 unconstitutional (see *ITF News*, December 1992).

The union has already been told informally by ministerial personnel that the government and employers' stance is all part of a political campaign to continue application of the

infamous decree. There have been suggestions to the union that these political considerations will ensure that the Supreme Court finds against them.

"If this happens, and a politically-based verdict is given, holding up the measure we dispute, workers in this sector will be left with no official recourse to get their rights implemented," said Juan Carlos Avalos, Assistant General Secretary, in a letter to the ITF.



PEOPLE

We extend warm congratulations to former ITF Vice President **Jack Jones** who celebrated his 80th birthday on March 29. Jack is one of the most highly respected British union leaders this century and is still actively campaigning for a number of causes, most notably on behalf of Britain's pensioners. Born in 1913 into a working-class Liverpool family, Jack worked in engineering and on the docks before becoming, at the age of 26, a full-time union official of the Transport and General Workers' Union in the industrial West Midlands. He was given the job of bolstering trade union membership in the region, a task he accomplished with phenomenal success. His organising work laid the basis of a trade union career which saw him rise through Midlands Regional Secretary — in charge of the union's second largest region — to Assistant Executive Secretary and Assistant General Secretary until he was appointed General Secretary designate in 1968 to succeed Frank Cousins the following year. For the next ten years he was to lead Britain's largest and most influential union and as a key figure in the Trades Union Congress was to play a leading role in helping shape the policies of the then Labour government. Jack has been an influential figure in ITF circles for many years and we owe him a deep debt of gratitude for the unstinting service he has always given the international transport workers' movement. He was first elected on to the ITF's two main governing bodies — the Executive Board and the Management Committee — in 1971 and three years later when it was decided that there should be three Vice Presidents he was the natural choice as Vice President representing the European affiliates. He also made an important contribution over many years to the ITF's industrial work, especially within the Dockers' and the Road Transport Workers' Sections. ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis and Acting General Secretary

David Cockroft as well as Asia/Pacific Secretary Mo Hoda and Administrative Secretary Eva Leigh all attended the birthday celebrations to pass on their congratulations and good wishes to a much-loved friend.

The ITF has just appointed the first full-time officer whose job it will be to oversee and extend the range of its educational activities around the world. The new post of Education/Projects Officer goes to Dutch trade unionist **Kees Marges**. Kees comes to the ITF after a union career spanning twenty-five years, first as a deputy secretary in the Dutch Seafarers' Union (FWZ), then as an official responsible for road and urban transport and the ports and most recently as National Docks Secretary of the Dutch Transport Workers' Union FNV. Kees has been a member of the ITF Dockers' Section and Fair Practices Committee for the past twelve years.

René Bauer, Secretary of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union (SEV) and editor of the union's German language magazine *der Eisenbahner*, takes over this summer as the new Acting General Secretary of the Swiss Public Service Workers' Federation (Föderativverband), succeeding Hans Ueli Ruchti, who goes to the Swiss Postal, Telephone and Telegraph Workers' Union (PTT-Union).

Ulf Christiansen, ITF Inspector in Hamburg, has just been elected on to the Board of the German Seamen's Mission. Ulf's experience of assisting foreign seafarers on Foc ships makes him an excellent choice for an executive role in such an important seafarers' welfare organisation. He takes up his post at the beginning of July for a period of six years.

Ruth Dreifuss, Secretary of the Swiss Trade Union Confederation (SGB), has become only the second woman ever to be elected to the seven-member

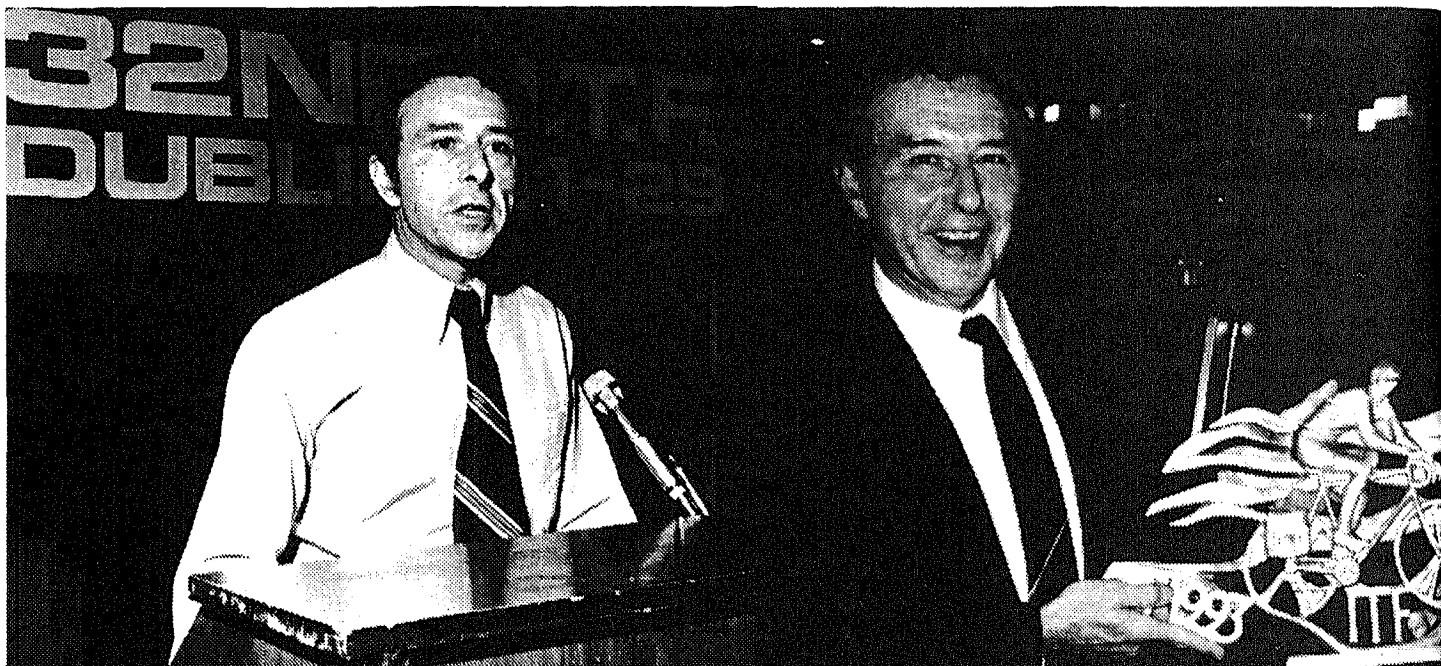
Swiss federal cabinet. Christiane Brunner, a fellow trade unionist, who is President of the Swiss Metal Workers' and Watchmakers' Union (SMUV), had initially been proposed by the Socialists for the seat that became vacant on the resignation of Foreign Minister René Felber. But the liberal and conservative parties in the coalition government rejected Brunner and, on March third, elected Francis Matthey instead. Matthey agreed to withdraw in favour of Ruth Dreifuss when her name was put forward. Unnerved by the wave of popular protest unleashed by their rejection of Brunner, the liberals and conservatives reluctantly fell into line.

Donna Hendrick has been elected as the new President of the Airline Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), succeeding **Richard Nolan**.

Geoff Henman has given up his post as President of the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA) on his retirement from British Rail. Henman, who has been TSSA President since 1987, was previously the union's Treasurer. Henman is an ITF Lay Auditor.

Hans Möllmann has retired from the Vice Presidency of the German Railwaymen's Union (GdED) after deciding not to stand for re-election at the GdED Congress. In a parting tribute, GdED President Rudi Schäfer praised Möllmann for his work in building up the union, especially its youth activities in his earlier years, and thanked him for working so tirelessly to bring rail workers in the two halves of Germany back into the one union.

William Schuman has been elected as the next President of the American Radio Association (ARA) in succession to **William R Steinberg**, who becomes President Emeritus. **Bernard A Stoller** is the association's new Secretary-Treasurer.



Harold Lewis retires after 16 years' service

Harold Lewis, who retired as ITF General Secretary on March 31, was presented by ITF President Jim Hunter with a specially commissioned sculpture depicting him on his favourite form of transport — the bicycle — at a reception held in his honour in London on March 16th. The sculpture, already dubbed the "silver cyclist" by the shipping newspaper *Lloyd's List*, is in fact in aluminium.

As many in the ITF family know, Harold has been a keen cyclist for many years and regularly made a round trip of over 20 miles a day to and from the office, with only the most severe British winter weather or the prospect of a late night at the opera forcing him onto train or car. This habit has also encouraged a fairly informal dress code in the office, with an emergency supply of spare ties kept in his office in case of unexpected visitors.

The reception, held in conjunction with the meeting of the Executive Board, enabled the officers and staff of the ITF as well as Board members and some old friends of the ITF such as former TGWU General Secretary Jack Jones, to pay tribute to a remarkable career which has included 38 years of service to the ITF — 16 years of them as General Secretary.

Born in Acton, West London in 1933, Harold's family had close links

with the London Underground and were strong trade unionists and Labour Party supporters. An active trade unionist from the age of 21, when he was elected a branch Chairman of the British Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union (CAWU), Harold answered a newspaper advertisement for a job and joined the ITF Secretariat on 17 March 1955, as an Editorial Assistant.

After a short period as a translator, he became Personal Assistant in turn to three General Secretaries: Omer Becu, Pieter de Vries and Hans Imhof.

In 1966 he became Secretary for the ITF's Regional Activities and in 1967, the Executive Board appointed him as Assistant General Secretary. He was elected General Secretary at the 32nd ITF Congress in Dublin in July 1977 on the retirement of Charlie Blyth. His retirement, shortly after his 60th birthday in February 1993, makes him the second longest serving of the seven full time General Secretaries (beaten only by Edo Fimmen) who have directed the ITF's affairs.

It was absolutely typical of Harold that once having declared his intention to retire at 60, that is exactly what he did, and no amount of persuasion could change his mind. In the international trade union movement,

he has developed a world-wide reputation as someone who, whenever he speaks, does so with extreme clarity, sincerity and force and as someone who never promises what he cannot deliver but always delivers what he promises. As ICFTU General Secretary Enzo Friso said at the end of his address to the ITF Executive Board: "Harold is a very unusual person in the trade union movement — he only speaks when he has something to say!"

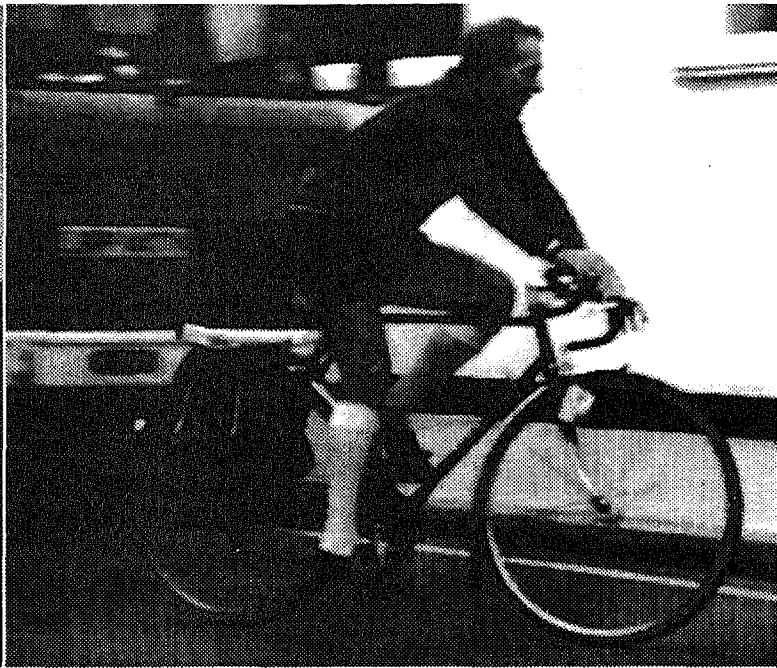
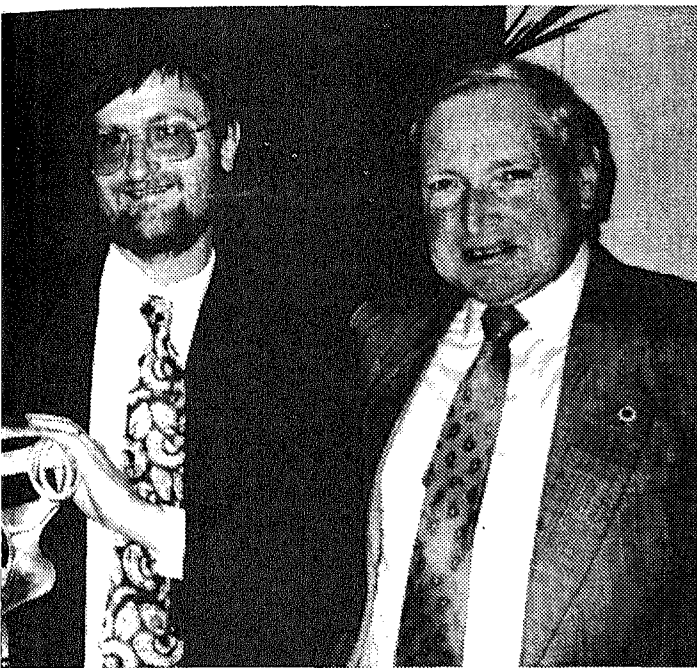
His colleagues in the ITF Secretariat, the members of the ITF Executive Board, and his many thousands of friends spread across the globe in the ITF's vast (and growing) family all join in wishing Harold and his wife (and long time personal assistant) Andrea a very long and very happy retirement.

ITF General Secretaries

Edo Fimmen	1924-1942*
Jacobus H Oldenbroek	1946-1950**
Omer Becu	1950-1960
Pieter de Vries	1960-1965
Hans Imhof	1965-1968
Charles Blyth	1968-1977
Harold Lewis	1977-1993

*From 1896 till 1924, the ITF only had an "International Secretary". Fimmen was elected to the post of full-time GS in 1924.

** Oldenbroek was appointed Acting General Secretary (1943) following Fimmen's death and was elected GS in 1946.



Dear Friends

As you know, I shall be retiring at the end of March.

It has been a privilege to be the ITF's General Secretary for almost sixteen years and to have worked for the ITF for twenty-two years before that in other capacities.

I hope and believe that for all the tremendous problems which transport workers and their unions face these days, the ITF is in good health and good heart.

If I have played some part to that end, then I am content. I certainly could not have done so without the unstinting support of the ITF's affiliates.

I am sure that David Cockroft, who has my total confidence, can look to you for the same backing and consideration that I so much appreciated over the years.

Thank you once more for all your help and many personal kindnesses. I wish you and your members every success in the future.

Yours fraternally,

Harold Lewis
General Secretary

New Acting General Secretary

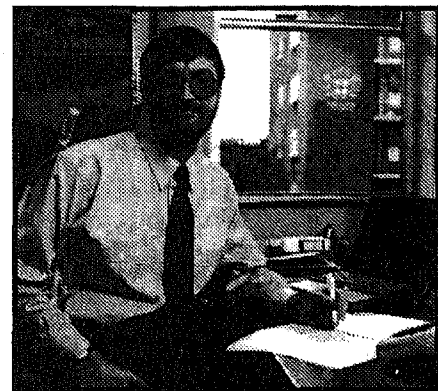
David Cockroft, who takes over as Acting General Secretary of the ITF on April first, also came, like Harold Lewis, from a Labour Party and trade union family background. After leaving university, he started work in 1974 as an economist responsible for collective bargaining policy in the British national trade union centre, the TUC. In 1978 he was appointed head of Research of the British white collar workers' union APEX; and in 1979 he moved to Geneva to work for the white collar workers' international federation FIET. At FIET he had responsibility for industrial employees, professional and managerial staff, and new technology.

In October 1984 he was appointed by the ITF Executive Board as Secretary of the Research and Publications Department and later took on responsibility also for the Dockers', Civil Aviation and Tourism Services Sections.

He was appointed an ITF Assistant General Secretary in October 1991 and in October 1992 the ITF Executive Board named him as Acting General Secretary. (Under the ITF Constitution the position of General Secretary can only be filled by election by the ITF Congress. The next one takes place in Interlaken, Switzerland in August 1994.)

Commenting on his appointment, Cockroft said: "Harold Lewis has said on more than one occasion that being ITF General Secretary is at the same

time the most difficult and the best job in the International Trade Union Movement. Taking over from someone like Harold would not be easy at any time, but the massive changes facing the ITF and its affiliates at present make it an even bigger challenge. The ITF is a family. I am sure I shall make mistakes in this job, but equally sure there will be members of the family ready to tell me when I do so. I can only promise to do my very best to respond to the needs of our affiliated unions — old and new, big and small — in every region. In return, I hope that affiliates will continue to provide me and my colleagues in the Secretariat with the kind of support which they have given Harold and which has been the reason for the ITF's effectiveness throughout its almost 100 years of existence."



David Cockroft



CIVIL AVIATION

Argentinian cabin crew continue campaign

The Argentinian Cabin Crew Union AAA came up with yet another original idea in February to keep its long-running dispute with Aerolíneas Argentinas in the headlines (see *ITF News*, January/February 1993).

For the second time in two months, cabin crew refused to carry out on board service while seeking the support of passengers for their campaign in defence of the national airline.

Passengers reporting at Buenos Aires' Jorge Newbery airport for the first early morning domestic flight at 0600 on February 16 were handed a frugal meal of biscuits and mineral water as they queued to board.

For the rest of that day, passengers on all internal flights of less than three hours were met by cabin crew mem-



bers wearing T-shirts emblazoned with the message "let's save Aerolíneas Argentinas", who offered them the same "slimmer's" pack and a leaflet stating the reasons for their action.

The leaflet pointed out that while major European airlines such as Air France and Alitalia and even Iberia, the company that now operates Aerolíneas, have fifteen cabin crew per plane the Argentine carrier employs only eleven.

"They are flying with the minimum emergency number of workers, and no company in the world does that," AAA spokesman Luis Retta told the local press, adding that to comply with even these standards Aerolíneas needed to employ at least seventy extra staff.

The choice of food given to passengers during the one-day protest was especially apt. Aerolíneas cabin crew are angry that their numbers were excessively "slimmed down" when 146 of their number were served with redundancy notices in December.

To ensure that safety at Aerolíneas is not affected by the staff cuts passengers are being asked to show understanding that it will not always be possible to offer a full on-board service.

The AAA leaflet signed off with the union slogan adapted to fit the new situation at Aerolíneas. Instead of "the best of us, more every day" it now reads "fewer of us every day".

The company has recently taken on new cabin staff on temporary contracts while dismissing permanent employees.

Indian flight engineers strike

Air India's long haul flights have been severely disrupted for the past four weeks as the result of a walkout by its flight engineers.

The flight engineers, members of the ITF-affiliated Indian Flight Engineers' Association (IFEA), struck on February 27 to back their long-standing demands concerning the augmentation of flight deck crews on international flights over nine hours.

Air India has all along refused to hold talks on the union's case for augmented crews or its other grievances and an attempt at conciliation in the first week of the action also failed.

Angered at the loss of revenue, the national carrier is now attempting to break the stalemate by having the government declare the strike illegal.

If its bid succeeds the airline will be free to take disciplinary action against the striking engineers. The IFEA fears for union officials and strike leaders.

A resolution of support for the strikers was adopted by the ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Conference last month in Singapore when delegates urged

the Air India management to open serious negotiations on the dispute.

As we went to press, the IFEA informed us that the strike remained solid, even though Air India is hardening its attitude in a bid to force the strikers back to work. Fourteen striking flight engineers (all of them union officers) have now been suspended and one union official has been dismissed.

A few B 747 flights are still operating manned by "executive" F/Es who have been brought in to help maintain a skeleton service.

But with most inter-continental flights failing to get off the ground Air India would be well advised to get round the table with the representatives of the IFEA and hammer out a settlement.

The ITF has sent letters of protest to the company and the government.

* This is the second major strike to hit Air India in recent months, coming only shortly after a protracted pilots' strike.

Agreement reached in Nationair dispute

The international boycott of the Canadian charter company Nationair ended in February following a settlement with the ITF-affiliated Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE).

What was one of the longest and most difficult disputes in Canada began on 19 November 1991 when the Nationair management suddenly broke off negotiations for a new contract and locked out 450 CUPE-organised cabin crew (see *ITF News*, January/February, June/July and November 1992).

Nationair owner Robert Obadia — one of the foremost advocates of Canadian deregulation — then went ahead and recruited totally inexperienced strikebreakers to crew the airline.

CUPE had fought hard to get representation rights at Nationair and was not prepared to give these up without a fight. It had taken two full years



Turkish union victimisation

Turkish Airlines is victimising union organisers in the ITF-affiliated HavaIs union. Two pilots, two dispatchers and seven cabin crew have been sacked, among them are the Chairman of the Pilots' Association, and the Chairman and members of the executive board of the Flight Attendants' Association (members of HavaIs). Two other pilots, who are senior union members, and a pilot shop steward have had their right to fly taken away and transferred to ground services. Three cabin crew shop stewards have also been transferred to ground duties.

This attack on the union follows the settlement of a recent pay dispute, during which the union threatened strike action and the company conducted an intensive campaign of intimidation against employees (see *ITF News*, March 1993).

The ITF has sent letters of protest to the company.

after the airline was created in 1984 for CUPE to be certified as the bargaining agent and another sixteen months to win a first collective agreement and this was only the first contract renewal.

An impressive national and international campaign was launched in support of the locked-out employees. Pickets were set up at airports and Nationair passengers were met off planes and asked to fill in questionnaires on the quality of service and safety during the flight.

These revealed a number of serious safety breaches, including no or inadequate and rushed safety demonstrations, pre-departure checks not carried out, and no proper pre-landing checks. Many passengers reported that cabin crew were very nervous — some were on their first flight — and could certainly not have coped in an emergency. Seat belt and no smoking signs were also not observed.

In the early summer of 1992 representatives of the locked-out workers made an extended trip to Europe, visiting six countries in an ITF-organ-

ised tour to gain international support for the Canadian workers.

The months went on with still no signs of progress. Hopes of a settlement were raised in October when a federal mediator suggested that Nationair end its lockout in return for CUPE agreeing to suspend its boycott campaign and that the two sides then get together round the bargaining table.

But these hopes were dashed when the airline management rejected the proposal even though the union had voted narrowly in favour of accepting it as a move towards resolving the dispute. A special mediator was then appointed to adjudicate.

Financially weakened by the long boycott, Nationair finally sought federal government funds to help it survive.

Under strong pressure from CUPE, the federal government responded by tying economic assistance to the settlement of the dispute. Talks were hastily resumed and agreement reached with CUPE on terms for ending the lockout.

Union busting by Alitalia in USA

US politicians, community leaders and trade unionists have declared their support for the IAM in its efforts to fight off union busting at the Italian state carrier Alitalia.

Talks that began over two years ago have failed to make any headway because of the company's insistence on new contract wording that gives it the right to contract out the entire range of jobs previously performed by IAM members.

This means that IAM-organised traffic, reservations, sales and passenger service agent employees at airports throughout the US could all lose their jobs as their work is turned over to low-wage non-union operators.

Alitalia has a poor industrial relations track record in the US — over the years it has repeatedly sought to undermine the right of its employees to belong to the IAM and to cut back collective bargaining gains.

The last serious challenge came in 1984 when the IAM took the company to court to enforce its

right to represent Alitalia employees in the US.

Though it lost the court case, there was no let up in Alitalia's war of attrition against the IAM, with the result that today the airline's IAM-organised labour force has far fewer rights and benefits than workers at its Italian home bases.

IAM International President George J Kourpias has written to all US Congressmen complaining that, at a time when thousands of jobs are being cut at loss-making US airlines, foreign carriers like Alitalia with the advantage of big government subsidies are expanding into the US while ignoring the most basic requirement of US labour law — the obligation to engage in good faith bargaining.

It is surprising that a company which maintains that it has a "right" to abuse its US workers in a way that would be against the law in Italy has been allowed to get away with its anti-union stand for so long, says Kourpias.

For the US Department of Transportation's routine approval of re-

peated Alitalia requests to add to its US routes because its applications have been judged to be "consistent with the public interest" is surely to give it a nod and a wink that such behaviour will be tolerated.

The previous administration's willingness to turn a blind eye to Alitalia's treatment of its workforce has enabled it to build up a commanding position on transatlantic routes between the US and Italy, at the expense of the four US carriers flying these routes which have had to settle for less than half of this important traffic. Exploitation of a code sharing arrangements with US-Air has been the key to this expansion.

Faced with growing "liberalisation" in Europe the company is now determined to sacrifice the IAM-represented staff to its global network ambitions.

"Why should Alitalia be permitted to exploit the US market while mistreating US workers?" asks Kourpias.

Mass demonstration of German air workers

Five thousand aviation workers employed by the national carrier Lufthansa and other German airlines gathered in Bonn's Münsterplatz on March 20 for a mass protest against the government's failed aviation policies which threaten thousands of jobs.

In an unprecedented display of unity all five German aviation unions — led by the ITF-affiliated Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (ÖTV) — had joined forces in staging the rally.

A contingent from the British union MSF — all of them Lufthansa employees — also attended the rally as a practical expression of solidarity with their German colleagues.

The demonstrators had come to Bonn to demand that the German

government take immediate action to rescue Lufthansa and its fellow German carriers.

Lufthansa employees argue that they have done all they can to help the national airline survive by accepting deep job cuts and agreeing to forego wage increases. What is needed now is for the government to realise the urgency of the situation and take the appropriate steps.

Top of the unions' list is the negotiation of a new and equitable traffic agreement between Germany and the United States that would give Lufthansa a fixed share of traffic between the two countries and thus enable the national carrier to re-establish itself on north Atlantic routes.

The unions complain that the current agreement shuts Lufthansa out

of much of the US market in contrast to its European competitors which have succeeded in negotiating bilateral agreements with the US on far more generous terms. The British aviation authorities, for example, allow only two US airlines to compete with its national carrier British Airways out of London Heathrow, while Lufthansa is exposed to the full force of deregulated competition from US airlines with unrestricted German landing rights.

The unions are also urging the government, which owns 51.4 per cent of Lufthansa, to inject more capital into the airline to protect jobs and to relieve Lufthansa of the full burden of air traffic control costs as happens in other countries in Europe and the US.

Air traffic services unions meet

Workers in air traffic services (ATS) still suffer from lack of union representation, according to ATS unions.

44 participants representing 24 unions in 20 countries attended the joint ITF-PSI (Public Services International) Conference on employment and trade union organisation in Air Traffic Services, held at the ILO Building in Geneva on 18-19 March. The meeting brought together once more the ITF and PSI, the two international federations with union affiliates which organise among air traffic services employees.

The conference was opened by Hans Engelberts, General Secretary of the PSI, who reminded participants that the ITF and PSI had represented the workers' side in 1979 when the ILO drew up a set of recommendations concerning working conditions for air traffic controllers.

Armand Pereira, an ILO industry expert on civil aviation, also spoke to the conference, explain-

ing ILO procedures.

Reports by participants at the meeting showed that after fourteen years many of the ILO recommendations are still not being implemented in many countries.

Key concerns identified included:

- union recognition: many governments still refuse to recognise genuine unions for air traffic controllers and other air traffic service staff
- Workers' health, particularly the problem of stress related illness
- working hours
- lack of mechanisms for mediation in industrial disputes
- early retirement requirements
- the relationship between civil and military administration of air traffic control, including the use of military controllers to break strikes
- protection of employees against legal liability in the event of air accidents
- training and retraining of employees, especially when displaced

by new technology or reorganisation.

The meeting was concerned that the ILO recommendations should also be extended to cover ATS employees other than air traffic controllers. Other international organisations with a regulatory role on conditions in air traffic services, such as ICAO, were also discussed.

Other major areas of discussion focused on the employment effects of the re-organisation of air traffic control in Europe, the increasing worldwide trend of privatisation, the introduction of new technology and licensing of air traffic controllers.

The conference set up a panel of union representatives to take forward future work on ATS. The panel consisted of Barry Gibbs (IPMS, United Kingdom), Howard Johannssen (PASS, USA), John Dawson (PSU, Australia), Roger Barrault (FGTE-CFDT, France) and Vernon Dowlath (PSA, Trinidad and Tobago).

TGWU forces British Airways to back down

The threat of militant action by members of the TGWU at Heathrow and Gatwick airports in London has forced British Airways management to abandon the cuts in pay and conditions it imposed upon former Dan Air employees now working in its European regional operation at Gatwick. The company bought out Dan Air in October 1992, and at the same time set up a new Gatwick-based European regional airline.

Originally BA tried to demand that BA workers at Gatwick had to transfer to the new regional airline

and take cuts equivalent to a 30 per cent reduction in conditions. But the company underestimated the mood of the unions. The threat of major strike action last December forced BA to retreat and the transfer became voluntary and on existing BA pay and conditions.

The abandonment of the pay cut on former Dan Air employees is to be backdated to their signing of contracts last October.

The TGWU, however, is still demanding full parity with BA conditions for former Dan Air employees, and for new recruits whose

pay remains 30 per cent lower.

George Ryde of the TGWU says "What is basically a three tier pay system is not acceptable to the unions. People doing the same job should work under the same conditions for the same pay".

Conflict may occur in the future when BA tries to transfer routes away from operations in the main carrier undertaken by BA workers on full BA rates, to the lower cost Gatwick regional operation partly staffed by workers on much lower pay rates.



INLAND TRANSPORT

European road transport committee meets

Possible items for inclusion in its future programme of activities were considered at the first meeting of the European Committee of the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section held in Geneva on 3 and 4 March 1993.

Delegates gave a warm welcome to the representative of the Romanian road transport workers' union and the Belgian Transport Workers' and Diamond Workers' Organisation who were attending their first ITF meeting.

Twenty unions from twelve countries had sent delegates to the inaugural meeting which laid down the basic ground rules for the Committee.

It was agreed that membership should be open to unions in all the countries of Europe, including Israel, and that each union should be entitled to send one voting delegate as well as an adviser or a substitute to committee meetings.

K Gustafsson (Swedish Transport Workers' Union) was elected as the first Chairman of the Committee and J Moore (Transport and General Workers' Union, Great Britain) and A de Kie (Belgian Transport Workers' Union) as the joint Vice Chairmen.

As the discussions got underway, delegates were given full details of the structure and scope of the various existing European organisations and less formal sub-regional grouping of road transport workers (such as those in the Nordic nations and the countries bordering the Mediterranean) to help them decide on a programme that would not duplicate efforts that were already being made elsewhere.

JAN HEWELIUSZ SINKING

In response to a request from the Nordic Transport Workers' Federation (NTF), the meeting also examined the circumstances surrounding the sinking of the Polish ferry *Jan Heweliusz* while en route to the Swedish port of Ystad (see *ITF News*, Janu-

ary/February 1993).

Committee Chairman Kåge Gustafsson explained that though no reason for the sinking had yet been found it was feared that the shifting of the rail wagons and trucks that were being carried on deck could have destabilised the vessel and led to its capsize.

He understood that IMO rules for securing road transport vehicles and their cargoes on ferries had been adopted but had yet to be ratified by many countries and that an EC Directive on the subject was some years away.

The Swedish Transport Workers' Union and the Swedish Seafarers' Union were currently conducting a joint survey on current lashing practices on board ship in Europe and would welcome any information that road transport unions could let them have on the situation in their respective countries.

Once they had the necessary information they intended taking up the matter with the European authorities as a matter of urgency.

It made no sense, he said, that countries like Sweden should have stringent standards for lashing of trucks on the road, with severe penalties for infringement, and that no control should be exercised when the trucks were loaded on board ship.

Brothers undertook to contact the Polish Transport Minister regretting that the maritime authorities of countries with nationals on board the *Jan Heweliusz* had not been allowed to take part in the investigations into the tragedy and urging them to provide opportunities for all the countries with an interest in the case to participate in the on-going inquiry.

Time had been set aside at the meeting so that consultations could be held with the International Road Transport Union (IRU) on future cooperation between the two organisations.

Secretary General A J Westerink

and the other key officers present gave a detailed presentation of the structure and current work of the organisation in areas such as road safety and vocational training, reminding delegates that the two organisations were already working together on improving cross border clearance and could perhaps join forces to press for tougher action on lorry thefts. A number of other areas of potential collaboration were also raised by various members of the Committee.

Slavnik sacks bus workers

Ninety-eight striking bus workers from Koper in Slovenia were handed dismissal notices by the new managers of the bankrupt Slavnik International Limited at the beginning of March (see *ITF News*, January/February and March 1993).

The scale of the job losses and the fact that Slavnik has once again singled out union activists and strike leaders for retaliatory measures has angered the ITF-affiliated Union of Maritime Employees of Slovenia, which organises the bus workers in their own special section.

An emergency session of the union's executive convened in Portoroz on March third issued a strong statement deploring the sackings and calling on the government to ensure respect for international conventions on employment safeguards.

Slavnik's new management should immediately resume talks with the union on paying redundancy compensation and protecting the rights of the company's remaining staff, the executive demanded.

Collective agreement clauses and state redundancy provisions must be respected, the executive insisted, and all Slavnik's employees treated fairly during the bankruptcy process.

Bulgarian urban transport workers victimised

Urban transport workers in Sofia are being victimised by the municipal authorities since taking effective strike action in July 1992, reports the Union of Transport Workers' Syndicates in Bulgaria (CITUB), which was recently approved for affiliation to the ITF.

The July strike ended in the signing of an agreement between the Sofia municipal authorities and the trade unions.

The transport workers had been demanding negotiations over a salary review and improvements in working conditions.

However, soon after the conclusion of the agreement — which was concluded within the boundaries of labour legislation — the transport com-

panies began a claim for damages against the strikers.

Under the umbrella of the newly-formed *Sofia Urban Transport*, the city's transport employers are penalising workers who took strike action by depriving them of one month's wage apiece, and resorting to the wholesale dismissal of trade union activists and members of the strike committees.

"The illegal proceedings instituted against the transport workers on the part of the respective authorities must be immediately stopped," said union president Atanas Stanev.

"Our union is calling for international solidarity to protest the assault on trade union rights in Bulgaria."

Protest messages from ITF affiliates should be forwarded to the following addresses:

**Council of Ministers
Republic of Bulgaria
Fax number: +359 2 80 34 18**

**Sofia Greater Municipality
"Moskovska" str.33,
1000 Sofia
Fax number: +359 2 31 71 24**



TOURISM SERVICES

ITF section conference in November

Workers in tourism from all over the world will meet at an ITF meeting in November, to be held in Spain.

ITF affiliates in the Tourism Services Section will be joined by colleagues from the International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) and the white collar workers' international federation FIET at the ITF Section Conference this year.

At the invitation of the Spanish affiliate, FETT-UGT, the Conference will be held in the historic city of Granada — a town which has learned to deal with being a popular tourism destination without sacrificing its character.

Over two days, 18th and 19th November, delegates will discuss a variety of topics, including multinational companies in the tourism industry, health and safety problems, problems

related to the European Community's single market and ways of providing assistance to tourism workers abroad.

The Conference will also take into account those workers in other transport industries involved in tourism — civil aviation, for example.

Delegates at an ITF Tour Managers' Working Group in London on March 26th welcomed the Conference as an opportunity for workers across the industry to get together and talk about their common problems and common employers.

Delegates from unions in France, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Germany and Hungary participated in the working group, as did representatives of the IUF and FIET.

Other items discussed at the meeting included a draft job description

for Tour Managers. It was agreed that all measures should be coordinated with the Tourist Guides' Working Group.

The unregulated nature of the tourism industry was emphasised, and delegates took part in an animated discussion on the problems of organising unqualified and seasonal workers employed as tour escorts.

Health and Safety issues were highlighted. The problem of stress in particular should be addressed, delegates decided. Tour Managers are on duty 24 hours a day when it comes to the daily care and supervision of the tourists they lead and are often prone to exhaustion and fatigue.

Physical complaints such as back problems, arising from undertaking long and repeated journeys on coaches, were also discussed.



SEAFARERS

Union accord brings Swedish ships back to national flag

Twenty-four Swedish flag ships belonging to leading Swedish shipowner Bylock & Nordsjöfrakt will be covered by a completely new agreement from mid-April.

Separate crewing arrangements have been negotiated by the ITF-affiliated Swedish Seafarers' Union (SSU) for each of Bylock & Nordsjöfrakt's ships as part of the rationalisation exercise agreed between the union and the shipowners' federation last autumn in return for which the industry has been promised continuing government financial assistance (see *ITF News*, November 1992).

Seven other B & N general cargoships that had been flagged out to the Bahamas but had retained

Swedish crews will be switched back to the national flag when the B & N agreement — to be known as the Europe agreement — enters into force on April 14.

The Europe agreement — reached on April 29 — represents a major breakthrough for the SSU which is cooperating with the owners on bringing down overall costs to levels that will enable ships to be retained under the national flag.

"If we had not reached an agreement with B & N there would have been no basis for continued state support for the sector," says SSU negotiating secretary Roger Sjöstrand, adding that in the long term this would have meant that Sweden would have

had no foreign-going national flag merchant fleet.

Central to the agreement is the introduction of a fixed 61-hour week, with the master and the union representative on board each ship deciding when these hours are to be worked.

It is estimated that the new agreement will lead to cost savings in the range of 16 to 22 per cent a year and that total savings will probably exceed 40 per cent when government subsidies are taken into account.

Other Swedish owners are expected to follow B & N's lead and a number of companies have already been in contact with union headquarters seeking talks.

Playtera case embarrasses Port State Control

When the 24-year-old Greek-owned, Maltese flag of convenience bulk carrier *Playtera* arrived in Rotterdam on February 15, she was clearly in no state to sail. Port State Control Inspectors visited the ship and demanded a myriad of repairs. Clearance to leave Rotterdam and sail to Tilbury in England was then, incredibly, given by classification society Bureau Veritas.

The ITF was notified, and ITF Inspector John Wood visited the vessel on February 24 where he met the crew (all Filipino, except for three Greek officers). "The ship was filthy, rusty and unseaworthy," says Wood. The after peak tank was completely wasted away, the toilets were unusable, crew quarters had water in them, and food in the galley was either rotten or had been re-frozen a number of times. The crew had no union agreement, and the master refused to discuss negotiating one. Wood immediately phoned the British Port State Control authorities, who sent three surveyors down the next day.

The British Port State Control inspectors were shocked to find that many of the repairs ordered in Rotterdam hadn't been done. The surveyors told the press that it was one of the worst ships they had ever seen. Detention orders were placed on the ship, and the crew decided to demand repatriation (their right from an unseaworthy ship under Filipino regulations), their unpaid allotments, leave pay and severance pay. Initially, the company tried to accuse the crew of desertion. With Wood's assistance, the company finally agreed to repatriation and payment of the missing allotments. The crew flew home on March fourth. Repairs on the ship (which included rebuilding the after peak tank with a tonne of steel!) continued for over a week. ITF Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander wrote to the Secretary General of the Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (MOUPSC) Henk Huibers on March tenth stating that the ship "was clearly a navigational and safety hazard". Selander asked how the ship

was allowed to leave Rotterdam — "Is it the practice of Port State Control to release ships on the word of a classification society alone?"

Deputy Secretary of the MOUPSC Richard Schiferli replied on March 15, stating that it was the Netherlands Shipping Inspectorate that "raised the detention" on the *Playtera* ("all deficiencies rectified"), but he does acknowledge that "during the inspection in Tilbury it also became apparent that several items which were rectified in Rotterdam were not in a satisfactory condition". Not much of a "rectification"!

Schiferli disagrees that the consistency of port state control in Europe is at stake, but does "share your concern on the role of some classification societies which act on behalf of certain flag states". He also states that the MOUPSC is now collecting data on the performance of classification societies with a view to identifying those which "do not perform surveys according to international standards".

Shipowners demand state aids

Owners worldwide have been pressuring governments to invest in the shipping industry.

Finnish shipowners are locked in conflict with the government over a plan to reduce compensation for seafarers on second register vessels (FIS). They say the measure would mean disaster for the register, and more flagging out. But the Ministry of Finance wants to make budget cuts which include the chopping of the US\$13 million allocated for seafarers' compensation this year.

The **German** coastal states have presented a motion to the German parliament which would oblige the government to reduce income tax paid by German seafarers working internationally by 80 per cent. A Hamburg state government representative said the resulting reduction in crew costs to owners would counter the trend to flag out. The measure would be especially welcomed by German shipowners as the 50 per cent reduced business tax for shipping is about to be lifted. The parliament's state chamber, the Bundesrat, decided not to vote on the proposal, and transferred it to its finance committee. At the end of March, the ex-East German state shipping company Deutsche Seereederei Rostock (DSR) announced that it will postpone the flagging out of 28 of its vessels, a move which was announced at the beginning of the year for April. DSR management decided that saving jobs was a priority.

In a move which contradicts the current European preoccupation with safety, **Greece** has decided to cancel its law prohibiting the registration of cruise ships over 20 years old. The untimely and regressive measure will ultimately lead to a rise in the age of the Greek cruise fleet. The most likely reason for the otherwise inexplicable move is that the Greek marine administration has been pressurised by one or two large cruise companies serving the Greek islands — making other

owners in the same zone who have spent considerable sums on modernising their vessels very unhappy. "It will devalue the reputation of Greek cruise vessels but it also represents unfair competition," said Argiris Angelopoulos of Dolphin Hellas Cruises, which had just spent \$26 million on buying and refurbishing a modern vessel, the Greek-flag *Aegean Dolphin*. The new move is said to be the result of the Greek majority-owned company Carnival Lines' wish to operate its 32-year-old vessel *Mardi Gras* in Greek waters, transferring to the Greek flag in order to do so. It does seem that the scrapping of the 20-year-old limit is having the effect of attracting sub-standard Greek owners back to the flag. The Greek fleet is the largest deadweight fleet in the world (Japan is the largest in gross tonnage), but it is also 3.2 years older than the world average. Greek shipowners control 14.1 per cent of the world's fleet, with Foc tonnage registered mostly under the Cypriot, Liberian, Maltese and Panamanian registers, in descending order.

The **Netherlands** Transport Minister Hanja Maij-Weggen has quashed rumours that considerable numbers of Dutch shipowners are preparing to desert the national flag. Citing measures introduced last year to make the national registry more attractive (see **ITF News**, January/February 1993), she said there would be a "stabilisation of the fleet under the Dutch flag", and rejected calls for the Netherlands Antilles Foc register to be developed as a second register for Dutch shipowners. Maij-Weggen refuted suggestions that her Ministry was considering allowing Dutch flag shipowners to hire non-EC seafarers, pointing out that she was bound by EC regulations on the employment of European officers.

The **Swedish-owned** Stena Lines have announced that 500 jobs are to be cut on six of their vessels operating in Scandinavia and Germany, as well as

a reduction in shore-based personnel. The company have said that they will seek negotiations with the Swedish unions on the job losses. No vessels are being withdrawn, nor are services being reduced. This means that onboard working procedures will have to be changed considerably. The job losses will be concentrated mainly in catering onboard. Stena cites drops in passenger numbers and freight units as the reason for the cuts, but is set to announce increased profits for 1992, following losses in 1991.

Some **Portuguese** tanker operators are threatening their government with flagging out if the state insists on making owners on the second register based in Madeira pay social security contributions for their crews. Soponata, which has five vessels on the Madeira register, already has its three other ships under Foc flags, and other companies are threatening to do the same. However, João Bebianno, Maritime Secretary of State, has pointed out that unless owners pay these contributions crews will not have the proper social security cover demanded by the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention 147, and added that the adjustments would not mean exorbitant payments, being based on the national minimum salary. Other owners have said that the move is a positive one.

The fate of the bankrupt **Brazilian** shipping company, Lloyd Brasileiro, is to be decided soon. Brazil's transport minister is holding a series of meetings after last month's emergency, when all remaining ships in the fleet were ordered back to Brazil by the ministry, to avoid the danger of arrest. The *Rio Negro*, in Dunkirk since last year, remains held up despite the granting of funds by the government for its release — the money — rightly — paid the crew's wages instead. Apart from four ships on charter, the only Lloyd Brasileiro ships still operating are doing cheap coastal work, and the future looks bleak.

OBITUARIES

Erwin Kristoffersen, former International Secretary of the German Trade Union Confederation DGB, died on February 14, at the age of 60. Kristoffersen, who had been in charge of the DGB's international affairs department for nearly twenty years, retired recently.

I B Syed, former General Secretary of the National Union of Seafarers of

India, died on 15 October 1992, at the age of 75. Syed came to the Indian trade union movement during the 1950s when seafarers had no effective trade union organisation. His skills as a conciliator (he had previously been a social worker) were much in evidence as he brought together the various splinter groups and created under the NUSI banner a united and effective seafarers' organisation capable of negotiating on

equal terms with the government and maritime authorities. By the time he retired in 1967 the NUSI had become the strong union that it is today. In a tribute to his predecessor, NUSI General Secretary Dr Leo Barnes said Indian seafarers had lost a dynamic leader who had dedicated his life to the service of seafarers. He personally would greatly miss a man who had been a friend, philosopher and guide.



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

31 March- 1 April	Steering Committee European Seafarers' Regional Committee	London
20-22 April	ITF European Committee/ Meeting on Central and Eastern Europe	Prague
26-27 April	Civil Aviation Health and Safety Working Group	Copenhagen
3 May	Seminar on New Technology in the Ports	Hamburg
4-5 May	Dockers' Section Conference	Hamburg
5 May	Fair Practices Committee Sub-Committee	Hamburg
6-7 May	Fair Practices Committee	Hamburg
26-28 May	Railwaymen's Section Conference	Luxembourg
16 June	ITF History Meeting	London
17-18 June	Communications Meeting	London
28-30 June	Latin American Regional Conference on Civil Aviation	Buenos Aires
30 June - 1 July	Urban Transport Committee	Birmingham
10-13 August	Offshore Standing Committee/Seminar	Fremantle (Australia)
6-10 September	Inspectors' Seminar	Eastbourne

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