

ITF INCREASES WAGES FOR FLAG OF CONVENIENCE CREWS

ITF wages for seafarers working on flag of convenience (Foc) ships will be increased by ten per cent from the beginning of 1994. ITF rates will then be subject to an annual review, which may well result in annual increases for a number of years.

This first increase in ITF wages was agreed by the annual meeting of the ITF Fair Practices Committee (FPC) — the joint body of seafarers and dockers who run the Foc campaign — meeting in Hamburg, Germany on May 6 and 7.

The largest FPC meeting in recent years was attended by 188 delegates and observers from 47 countries and 62 unions.

The ITF wage rate for seafarers on Foc ships is based upon a formula devised in the 1970s: national wage rates for seafarers are converted into US dollars and then combined into a weighted total based on the true ownership of the Foc fleets. Due to currency fluctuations and the fact that ITF unions did not feel that the campaign was strong enough to enforce a wage hike, the rate has remained unchanged since 1983.

Calculations performed before this meeting indicated that a substantial increase (around 30 per cent) was generated by the formula. After lengthy deliberations, the FPC sub-committee on the collective agreement agreed to recommend an increase of ten per cent, linked to an annual review that would continue to raise wages so long as the agreed formula generated increases. The FPC unanimously agreed the recommendations.

The "benchmark" on the ITF Total Crew Cost (TCC) agreement is raised from US\$1,000 to \$1,100. On the Standard Agreement, the basic rate for an Able Seaman rises from \$821 to \$856. Consolidated earnings under the Standard Agreement (including overtime, improved leave and subsistence allowances) increase ten per cent from \$1,634 to \$1,804.

It was also agreed that the gap between the TCC and Standard rates will be "closed gradually" and that TCC agreements will be streamlined. It was also reported to the FPC that the number of vessels covered by ITF-acceptable Agreements is continuing to rise, and now stands at over 2,300.

The meeting discussed a number of proposals about TCC Agreements, which included a call for all TCCs to be scrapped, and another for them to be replaced by one agreement. Eventually, all the motions were withdrawn and submitted to the FPC sub-committee, who are already working on

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their overall streamlining.

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

The FPC decided to set up an Foc campaign strategy committee, including seafarers' and dockers' representatives and ITF Inspectors, which will be responsible for overseeing and formulating a fresh and innovative campaign strategy. Along with the other decisions at this historic meeting, this move reflects what can only be described as a growing sense of optimism in the campaign.

Cyprus was singled out for a detailed discussion which resulted in the adoption of a ten point resolution which affirms that the Cyprus shipping register will remain on the ITF's Foc list for so long as the majority of ships flying its flag are foreign owned.

The resolution calls upon the ITF-affiliated Cypriot FTPAW to terminate all non-ITF Agreements on non-Cypriot owned Cyprus flag ships, to amend their "yellow certificates" to remove any reference to the ITF and to ensure that only genuinely owned Cypriot vessels are covered by them. The meeting also instructed the ITF Secretariat to make clear that FTPAW



Agreements are not ITF-acceptable agreements.

The meeting further called for a wholesale revision of the ITF "Madrid Policy" guidelines on the application of national standards to beneficially owned vessels.

ITF policy on the "Second Registers" was also discussed, and the FPC adopted a composite motion (from Finnish and Norwegian affiliates) which states that, in general, the ITF

will declare any Second Register Foc unless it meets ITF standards on wages, social conditions and union negotiating rights. On the Norwegian International Register (NIS), the FPC gave the Norwegian authorities one year's notice of intention to declare it an Foc unless the government and owners agree to recognise the maritime unions' jurisdictional negotiating rights (which they are refusing to do).

International union federations agree to merge

A major new global trade union federation will shortly come into being following the vote by mine workers to join forces with the International Trade Secretariat of energy workers.

Meeting in Budapest for their 47th Congress in mid-May, unions belonging to the Miners' International Federation (MIF) unanimously supported a proposal for a merger with the International Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers' Unions (ICEF). The ICEF had earlier approved the merger plan during its 20th Congress held in Bonn last November.

The two Internationals already share a headquarters building in Brus-

sels and work closely together, a fact that should help the merger, due to take effect by 1995, go smoothly.

ICEF General Secretary Michael Boggs and MIF General Secretary Peter Michalzik have hailed the merger as a breakthrough for international trade union strength and solidarity.

ITF Acting General Secretary David Cockroft has written to both Boggs and Michalzik congratulating them on the successful merger and wishing them every success for the future of the joint organisation.

A second major change, this time involving two Geneva-based internationals, is also possible as agricultural

workers belonging to the International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers (IFPAAW) meet later this month to decide whether to come together with the International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF).

If IFPAAW's member unions vote in favour they could be represented in a special agricultural workers' trade group within the IUF structure.

The way has already been cleared for such a move with the decision of the IUF Congress in Stockholm this May to approve the rule changes that could bring former IFPAAW affiliates into a new international trade union federation.

ITF unions welcome Teamsters to Europe

A delegation from the largest trade union in the United States of America hit the European trail during April 1993 visiting ITF affiliates in Italy, Great Britain and Germany. The trip organised by the ITF was arranged as a fact finding mission for the new democratic leadership of the Teamsters as they prepare for their contract negotiations with the American owned multinational United Parcel Service (UPS).

The delegation, which consisted of International Vice-President Mario Perucci (who joined the Teamsters in 1966 when he started work at UPS) and Ron Carver, Director of Strategic Campaigns, met with representatives from the Gewerkschaft Öffentliche Dienste, Transport und Verkehr (ÖTV), including works' council members from the UPS site in Gustafburg, Germany and in Rome met FIT-CISL shop stewards from UPS worksites in Rome, Milan and Bologna. In London, meetings were held with national officers responsible for UPS members from the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) and United Road Transport Union (URTU).

The total Teamsters membership is about 1.5 million, with about 320,000 members in road transport. UPS alone represent over half of the Teamsters' road transport membership. ITF Acting General Secretary David Cockroft said:

"Giant multinational transport companies such as UPS operate on a global basis and the only way to counter this effectively is to strengthen international solidarity. Helping the new Teamsters leadership to prepare for their contract negotiations with UPS management is one manifestation of this solidarity but we need to take it further. This is why the ITF, together with the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International (PTTI), is planning to hold a world conference specifically on the 'international integrators' such as UPS, TNT, DHL and Federal Express."

Cockroft added: "the Teamsters have had their problems in the past but thanks to the tireless work of their new President Ron Carey they are



Pictured from top left to right: Ron Carver, David Cockroft, Bill Morris and Mario Perucci (Photo by Peter Arkell).

coming back into the mainstream by forging renewed links with the international trade union movement — this is a very welcome development."

During the recent Cathay Pacific dispute in Hong Kong, Teamsters members acted swiftly to prevent strike breaking aircraft being drafted in to cover strike bound Cathay Pacific routes (see *ITF News*, January/February 1993).

During their visit to London the Teamsters delegation met with UK TGWU General Secretary Bill Morris and signed an historic co-operation agreement committing their two unions to a programme of information exchange and dialogue on companies and working conditions; to educational exchange of young members; and to regular consultations between the unions' leaders.

Sri Lankan union protests against union rights abuses

Members of the ITF-affiliated Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union (CMU) turned out in force on April 29 to protest against the suppression of trade union rights.

Workplaces and work stations stood idle on the morning of the 29th as CMU members walked off the job to show the government that they were no longer prepared to tolerate the restrictions imposed by the emergency regulations.

The CMU had worked out an astute strategy, exploiting the brief relaxation of bans on marches and public

meetings in the run-up to provincial elections to highlight the difficulties that the trade unions and trade unionists are compelled to work under at all times.

Thousands of CMU members gathered opposite the town hall in Colombo at lunch time on the 29th before marching along a processional route to a recreation ground in Slave Island for a mass demonstration and public meeting, addressed by CMU officials as well as speakers from a number of other unions.

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ITF European Committee meets in Prague

Trade unionists from a score of European countries met in Prague on April 20th to discuss common strategies to address the challenge of an ever-expanding Europe.

The 72 participants — from European countries as diverse as Spain, Sweden, Poland and Albania — were united in their desire to see an integrated and balanced approach to the development of Pan-European transport links, and socially and economically equitable policies.

The last time the ITF met in Prague was the 1932 ITF Congress (which, in turn, was the last ITF meeting before the German trade unions were forced underground) — so Prague was an appropriate venue for the “re-united family” to gather again sixty years later.

The meeting was ably hosted by ITF affiliate, the Association of Czech and Slovak Transport Workers' Unions (a three hundred thousand strong federation that encompasses all ITF sections).

An ITF Seminar on Central and Eastern Europe was held on 21st and 22nd April in conjunction with the

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By holding the workers' rally, the CMU has re-established its right to exercise a fundamental democratic right suppressed by successive governments for well over twenty years.

The only demonstrations officially permitted under the current emergency regulations are on May Day — the traditional day of worker solidarity — although in recent years even these have not always been allowed to pass off without incident.

Sri Lankan trade unionists have strong international backing for their campaign in defence of essential union freedoms.

The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association has recently urged the Sri Lankan government to amend the order banning strikes in essential services, arguing that it has placed too many industries in the “essential” category.

European Committee expressly to provide Western and Central and Eastern European transport unions with an opportunity to share experiences and learn from each other.

Opening the debate on the first day of the meetings, Acting General Secretary David Cockroft said that the aim of trade unions in Europe had to be to develop a set of coherent and effective structures that would reflect the interests of transport workers.

The draft of an updated ITF statement on European Transport Policy was presented to the meeting and after some debate the meeting agreed to formulate a drafting group to finalise the text. Delegates agreed that the group should be made up of the Chairmen of the European Section Committees, with aid from volunteers from the German union ÖTV, the Spanish transport federation FETCOMAR CC.OO, and a representative from the Association of Czech and Slovak Transport Workers' Unions.

Preparations for the European Parliament's Second Pan-European Transport Conference — the first was held in Prague in October 1991 — were discussed. The European Parliament proposes to hold this Conference in the Spring of 1994 in Crete, Greece — given the lack of trade union involvement in the first event, and the obstructive behaviour of the British government, who presided over the meeting and disallowed a trade union speaker, it is vital that the trade union viewpoint be properly taken into account during the Crete Conference.

Delegates mandated the Secretariat to circulate the details of European Parliament documents and details of the preparations for the Conference to all European affiliates.

In the course of the debate on European activities within the sections, the Swedish Transport Workers' Union presented a motion on the case of the Polish ro-ro ferry *Jan Heweliusz* which sank en route from Poland to Sweden earlier this year with large numbers of truck drivers on board.

The motion, calling for concerted action by affiliates to persuade the

Polish government to investigate the case, was referred to the Secretaries of the ITF Road Transport Workers' and Seafarers' Sections.

The following days (April 21 and 22) were then devoted to a general ITF Seminar on East and Central Europe. All transport workers' unions in the region (ITF affiliates, prospective members and non-affiliates) were invited and the vast majority of European Committee members stayed on for the seminar.

Every union from the region was asked to speak to the meeting about their problems and priorities. Many delegates spoke about the legacy of Communist rule, and the continuing existence of the “red mafia” in their country.

Jacek Cegielski, from Polish Maritime Solidarity, told the meeting that ITF membership was about much more than accepting principles — that the application of ITF policies was the most important measure of membership.

This sentiment was echoed by David Cockroft, who explained that unlike other international trade union bodies, the ITF has chosen to reject the notion of an “associate membership” for unions in the region:

“One principle we have always applied,” said Cockroft, “is that you are either in the ITF or out. We don't believe in intermediate membership. We have invited non-affiliated unions to this meeting, and we may invite you to some other meetings, but unless you are in the ITF, don't expect anything from us.”

Emre Kocaoglu (Turkish Seafarers) emphasised that the ITF was based on mutual solidarity. His union had received strong backing from other ITF unions when it had needed it, and now they were prepared to give the same solidarity back.

The Seminar endorsed proposals for the establishment of an ITF Educational Programme in the region, which will involve national and regional seminars. The ITF's new Education and Projects Officer Kees Marges (who starts on July first) also attended the meeting.

Worldwide workers' rights abuses continue

At least two hundred and sixty trade unionists lost their lives last year and a further two and a half thousand were imprisoned as governments around the world ordered a fierce clampdown on organised labour and workers' representatives.

These appalling statistics come from the latest Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights published on May Day by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), which lists union rights abuses in some 87 countries.

Latin and Central America are once again the most dangerous parts of the world to be a trade unionist, according to the ICFTU, with Colombia, Peru, El Salvador and Guatemala, as last year, topping the list of the region's worst blackspots.

Paramilitary groups and terrorists in the pay of Colombia's notorious drug barons are behind the massive rights abuses in that country, with activists of the CUT trade union cen-

tre and rural workers' representatives among the prime targets of the assassins. Forty-five trade unionists were killed in one small port town alone in a five-month period.

Following the "coup" in Peru, scores of trade unionists were rounded up by the military and held in detention centres, while others, including the general secretary of the teachers' union — for long one of the government's principal targets — were the victims of extra-judicial killings carried out by terrorist groups.

Trade union officials in El Salvador have been brutally killed or have received sinister threats from shadowy death squads. In April, leaders of an agricultural workers' union were abducted and tortured following a strike by workers at a Ministry of Agriculture co-operative and in November armed police surrounded several state-owned sugar mills where workers were insisting on their rights under the collective agreement.

The forcible abduction and assassination of union leaders remain shockingly common in Guatemala; active trade unionists also regularly receive death threats and are kept under constant surveillance. Repression of some trade union leaders has been so persistent that they have been forced to flee the country.

Other countries with a long record of harsh union repression include South Africa, where the death toll increased sharply to stand at over 80 by the end of the year, in a violent campaign orchestrated by opponents of democratic reform. This figure includes twenty members of the metalworkers' union NUMSA in the Vaal Triangle.

China, where hundreds of workers arrested in the wake of the brutal repression of the 1989 pro-democracy movement remain in jail, and even those released, like railway worker Han Dong Fang, still face victimisation, is also prominently featured.

Malawian dictatorship keeps Chihana in jail

The Malawi Supreme Court's rejection, on March 30, of the appeal lodged by trade union leader Chakufwa Chihana against conviction on sedition charges has outraged the international trade union movement (see *ITF News*, April 1993).

In a strongly-worded statement, the ICFTU said that the court's decision to cut Chihana's sentence to nine months would remove one of the most influential opposition figures from the referendum campaign and would do nothing to end the suffering of a man unfairly subjected to a harsh prison regime following a farcical trial on trumped-up charges.

The ICFTU repeated its call for the immediate release of the imprisoned trade unionist, while expressing concern that his health was likely to be undermined by a period of imprisonment.

These fears were sadly confirmed when an international trade union delegation was finally granted permission to visit Chihana in early May at his present place of detention in the

bush near the provincial town of Zomba.

Officials of the ICFTU, the ICFTU's African Regional Organisation (AFRO) and the Southern Africa Trade Union Coordinating Council (SATUCC) were shocked by the harsh prison conditions.

Chihana is being held in a tiny cell with not even a bed to sleep on and only a hole in the wall for light and ventilation. He has developed persistent chest pains and has been coughing blood, according to AFRO regional secretary Andrew Kailembo, who is demanding that an independent doctor be allowed to treat the prisoner as a matter of urgency.

Whilst in the country, the delegation also called on the authorities to reopen the SATUCC offices in Lilongwe — closed when Chihana, SATUCC's General Secretary, was arrested in April 1992 — in line with the recent recommendation of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association.

• Faced with the prospect of defeat in the popular referendum on June 14, agents of the ruling Malawi Congress Party (MCP) have been intimidating their pro-democracy opponents, with the official blessing of President for Life Banda who has granted party members and officials immunity from prosecution.

Campaigners for multi-party rule have been dragged to MCP Youth League offices, given a severe thrashing and asked to sign papers indicating their support for continued one-party rule.

Having apparently abandoned hope of winning the cities, Banda has now turned his attention to the rural areas, threatening drought-stricken villages with the withdrawal of food supplies and other sanctions unless they toe the line.

Whole sections of the community thought to favour multi-party rule have also been excluded from the ballot, notably those aged between 18 and 21 (who make up a third of the population).

European unemployment — crisis without solution?

European Community Social Affairs ministers meeting in Luxembourg on April sixth took nearly four hours to discuss measures to stimulate jobs, but found little cause for optimism. Unemployment is not expected to flatten out until mid-1994, at a projected 11.5 per cent — 20 million Europeans out of work.

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY ON JOBS?

Although the Danish President of the Council, Jytte Andersen, emphasised the positive nature of the employment debate after the meeting, the only real current of optimism was flowing from the direction of the Commission.

Summoning “confidence, solidarity and imagination”, Commissioner Padraig Flynn’s contribution was to give the Ministers present encouragement to remember the European nature of the jobs problem, and for the need to seek common solutions.

He stressed the importance of developing a highly-skilled workforce, of sound investment in training, and pointed to the dangers of excessive deregulation.

This contrasted with proposals published by the European business and industrial employers’ federation, UNICE, in April — whilst reaffirming its July 1992 joint statement with the ETUC and making the correct noises about skilling the labour force, UNICE’s ten point plan to improve employment contained measures to downgrade wages and reduce labour costs by deregulation.

UK STEMS SOCIAL DEBATE

During ensuing discussion, the United Kingdom looked likely to block progress on the proposed Works Council Directive and on the draft Directive on the Organisation of Working Time. Most of the time spent on these topics consisted of a debate aimed at convincing the UK of the need for such measures, it was reported.

The British government gained a considerable concession on working hours in June last year, when minis-

ters agreed that the United Kingdom need not fully apply the 48 hour working week by the year 2000. But, under pressure from trade unions, France and Germany backed out of the deal and renegotiations have started. One question on the table still is that of how far employers and employees will be able to opt out by individual agreement — a plan favoured by the UK but opposed by other European governments.

DGV HEAD FLEES BRUSSELS

There were ructions within the European Commission in May as Sigismundo Crespo, the Spanish Director of DG5 (the Directorate General for Social Affairs headed by Commissioner Flynn), left Brussels in a hurry, sending a faxed resignation from Madrid after leaving a farewell note for his secretary.

Although personal reasons have been cited, Crespo was said to have suffered a régime of isolation at the Directorate — although he speaks French, his Irish boss, Flynn, had surrounded him with English-speaking aides and subordinates.

FUSS OVER TRANSPORT AGREEMENTS

The Commission has been threatening since March to take action against the Council of Ministers over the legal basis of its negotiation of aviation pacts with third countries.

In the face of likely discord, the Commission has now diverted its efforts to focus on road transit agreements concluded with Hungary and the Czech and Slovak Republics. It has launched a complaint in the EC Court of Justice to get the agreements amended on a technical point which hinges on which article of the Treaty of Rome governs the agreements.

The Commission’s “hidden agenda” is to bring the agreements under Article 113 of the EC Treaty (they are currently under Article 75), giving the initiative to handle trade and ensuring that they operate under “uniform principles”.

A judgement in its favour would

give the Commission greater power to oversee an integrated and homogeneous Pan-European transport policy. But it could also act as a precedent which would eventually prevent Community airlines concluding liberal agreements with third countries, such as those involving the Netherlands and the United States, to the detriment of other EC national airlines.

SHIPOWNERS ATTACKED

The Commission is taking action against members of the Far Eastern Freight Conferences, it was announced on April sixth. The Commission said all members had breached Article 85 of the Treaty of Rome banning cartel operations.

An enquiry has also been set up to investigate allegations that 13 shipping companies in the North Atlantic are acting together to raise prices by cutting their capacities on Europe—United States routes by 20 per cent. Shipping agents have complained that charges have risen distortionately.

STATE AID CLEARED

A public aid scheme in the Netherlands to promote environmentally-friendly buses has been approved. The 1.5 million dollar scheme will encourage public service operators to purchase diesel buses with low emission outputs.

The Spanish government was given the go-ahead on a three-year restructuring plan to reduce overcapacity in its fragmented road haulage market. The plan includes early retirement, modernisation and retraining measures.

But similar Italian measures were bungled when Italy failed to notify the Commission of its plans. The Commission also objects to the second half of Italy’s two-part plan, which envisages the granting of more licences following restructuring. This measure was likely to increase road haulage capacity, the Commission said.

ILO demands Korean labour law changes

Korean trade union legislation should be extensively amended to allow workers freely to form and join unions of their own choosing.

This the main finding of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association which has been investigating a complaint against the government of Korea submitted by the Korea Trade Union Congress (KTUC) and eleven national trade union organisations on 3 March 1992.

Under a hotly-disputed section (3 (5)) of the current Trade Union Law, no trade union may be recognised if it has been set up in competition to an existing union drawing members from the same category or group of workers. Unions are also prohibited from joining a trade union federation other than one of the federations affiliated to the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU) and no new national centre is allowed other than the FKTU.

This clause has been used to deny official registration to the Korea Trade Union Congress, established in January 1990 as a rival to the FKTU, and treated by the government as an illegal organisation. Federations of con-

struction, professional and technical and hospital workers have also been caught up in the ban.

The committee concludes that the government should not have rejected the KTUC's application for registration and that of a number of other federations as this conflicts with its primary obligation as a member of the ILO to respect the principle of freedom of association laid down in its constitution.

The use of force in breaking up the KTUC's inaugural meeting is also condemned as unwarranted interference with the right of trade unions to hold meetings.

Restrictions on public employees and public and private school teachers are even more draconian. Excluded under the 1987 constitution from the right to organise and bargain collectively, they have become a prime target, especially the teachers who have been dismissed and even imprisoned in large numbers for belonging to the teachers' union CHUNKYOJO set up in May 1989.

After examining the details of the case presented by the International

Federation of Free Teachers' Unions, the Committee concludes that the teachers have been seriously prejudiced in their employment because of their CHUNKYOJO membership and their trade union activities.

Once again, it calls on the government to make the appropriate legal changes so as to permit teachers freely to form and join trade unions and to extend to the educational profession the right to strike.

All 1,500 teachers who have lost their jobs because of their union membership should be reinstated and 83 trade unionists serving prison sentences as a result of their union activities should be released immediately, the Committee says.

While noting that the government has already formed a Committee on Labour Laws to make recommendations on amendments to existing legislation, the Committee reminds the government of the importance of guaranteeing Korean workers complete freedom of association in line with its recommendations.

The report was approved by the ILO Governing Body at its latest meeting.



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

7-9 June	Latin American Seafarers' Regional Committee	Panama City
10-11 June	Ad Hoc Working Party on Cruise Ships	Miami
16-17 June	Working Group of Offshore Standing Committee	London
16 June	History Meeting	London
17-18 June	Communications Meeting	London
30 June - 1 July	Urban Transport Committee	Birmingham
20-21 July	Latin American and Caribbean Civil Aviation Conference	Buenos Aires
10-13 August	Offshore Standing Committee/Seminar	Fremantle (Australia)
6-10 September	Inspectors' Seminar	Eastbourne
17-19 November	Tourism Services Section Conference	Granada



SEAFARERS

Baltic seafarers' unions fight social dumping

Delegates from seafarers' trade unions in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Poland, Germany, Norway, Finland and Sweden met in Jurmala, Latvia from March 30 to April first along with ITF and Nordic Transport Workers' Federation (NTF) representatives. This second meeting was a follow up to the conference held in Gothenburg, Sweden in February 1992 (see **ITF News**, March 1992).

The reason for the meeting is the unique situation around the Baltic. When the representatives from the different unions met in Gothenburg they pointed out the changed political and economic situation in the Baltic region.

Aleksey Kholodnyuk, President of the Latvian Water Transport Unions' Federation, welcomed the participants to Riga and to Jurmala.

The delegates discussed the new trade union situation and identified the risk in the region from "social

dumping" by shipowners. Shipowners have a big advantage because people around the Baltic are living in the same region but in different worlds.

The conference had an extensive discussion about the Baltic Committee, which was established at the meeting in Gothenburg in February 1992. The participants stated that there is a great need for such a committee.

The conference discussed the tasks for the committee and agreed the following subjects for cooperation.

- preventing social dumping in the Baltic area;
- establishing a general policy for the traffic in the Baltic area;
- finding methods where the workers are not played off against each other;
- analysing the need for trade union education, which may exist in eastern European countries;
- identifying the need for technical

assistance in the eastern European countries;

- harmonising wages, working conditions and costs for social insurance in the Baltic area;
- collating information about and comparing wages, other working conditions and costs for social insurance in the Baltic area;
- collecting collective agreements for vessels trading in the Baltic.

The participants agreed that one person from each country would be appointed to become a member of the Baltic Committee. The person will be appointed out of the organisations of the country and he/she will be a common representative from the organisations involved. The travel expenses and other expenses for the representatives are to be paid by his/her union.

The conference appointed Malte Segerdahl to be the convenor for the Baltic committee.

'Clay Bill' offers significant improvements in conditions for foreign flag seafarers

A substantial and significant improvement in the wages and working conditions of Flag of convenience (Foc) seafarers serving on vessels calling in US ports will result if the new "Clay Bill" becomes US law — and its chances of success are very good.

The present proposal by Congressman William Clay (Missouri) — HR1517 — is an improved version of the HR1126 proposal which failed because Congress adjourned for the US Presidential election.

That election resulted in a Democrat White House, and President Bill Clinton, unlike his Republican predecessor, is not believed to be opposed to the principle of the Clay Bill.

HR1517 extends two major US labour laws (the National Labor Relations Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act) to seafarers on foreign flag ships visiting US ports. This would extend mandatory US Federal Minimum wage (and overtime) provisions and guarantee seafarers' rights to collective organisation and bargaining.

HR1126 exempted container traffic, limited the labour law coverage to five years and called for the establishment of a special commission to monitor the impact of the Bill on the maritime industry and recommend changes. These concessions to the pro-management Republican Presidency have now been dropped.

The new bill still exempts United Nations Liner Trades, and, in an interesting reflection of ITF Policy, exempts any foreign flag vessel that is 51 per cent owned in the flag state and at least 51 per cent crewed by nationals of that state.

The Bill has strong Congressional support (House majority whip David Bonior is one of the HR1517's cosponsors). The Bill has been introduced to the House of Representatives, and has been referred to the House Committee on Education and Labour, which began hearing in May.

The Bill has the strong backing of the ITF's US affiliates, and the support of most US port chaplains.

Maldives challenged on workers' rights abuses

The ITF continues to campaign for the Maldivian government to stop its blatant abuse of trade union rights and its own seafarers (see *ITF News*, January/February and March 1993).

The US Asian American Free Labour Institute has formally petitioned the government to remove the Maldives from the "Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program" because of their abuses of workers' rights. The GSP is a program that provides tariff free trade for designated developing countries. One of the conditions for GSP status is the respect for basic human (and workers') rights.

"The country's systematic disregard for workers' rights justifies cancelling its present status as a beneficiary developing country under the GSP programme," says the AAFLI submission.

The US Department of State's latest annual survey on human rights contains a partial indictment of the Maldives in three areas of workers' rights:

— Right of Association: "While unions are not expressly prohibited, the Government recognises neither the right to form them nor the right to strike."

— Right to Organise and Bargain Collectively: "This right is neither recognised nor protected by law."

— Acceptable Conditions of Work: "There is no national minimum wage for the private sector.... There are no statutory provisions for hours of work and length of annual leave."

The Maldivian regime actively opposes unionisation. Furthermore, the public and private authorities don't just foster those abuses within the country's own territory. They also export those policies and practices into international commerce, specifically by serving as employment recruiters — manning agents — for foreign flag vessels.

There are between 3,000 and 4,000 Maldivian seafarers serving on ocean-going vessels. The Maldivian manning agents who supply the seafarers must all be registered with the Maldivian Ministry of Transport and

Shipping, and operate under its rules.

To further reassure shipowners, the manning agent, Sanco Maldives, distributes to its clientele a fact sheet that says in part:

"None of the Maldivian seamen will join the ITF (the International Transport Workers' Federation) or any other such union as per our government rules and regulations. In case any seaman joins the ITF and acquires more funds, then we give our full guarantee to the shipowners for remittance of the amount which has been paid by the seaman to the ITF."

The government continues to restrict human rights closely in several areas, including speech and press, religion, the right of citizens to change

their government, and women's and workers' rights. Other problems include instances of arbitrary and incommunicado detention and lack of an independent judiciary.

"It is clear, then, that the repressive actions taken against Maldivian seafarers are not exceptional, but are part of a total environment of repression. Moreover, the documentation shows that the repression is not solely a private initiative, but is based on the explicit, deliberate, and punitive policies of the Maldivian government. Consequently, the designation of the Republic as a beneficiary developing country should be cancelled at the earliest opportunity," says AAFLI.

US maritime unions launch suit against 'Seamen's tax'

US Maritime unions filed a suit in a federal court on April 15 to prevent the levy of a tax on the marine licenses and documents of American seafarers.

In a complaint filed in US District Court for the District of Columbia, the ITF affiliates move against a Final Rule of the US Coast Guard (effective April 19) which imposes a so-called user fee on merchant maritime documents and marine licenses which American seafarers are required to carry by that agency.

The joint action was announced by the Presidents of the unions representing seagoing personnel: Timothy A. Brown, President, International Organisation of Masters, Mates & Pilots; Raymond T. McKay, President, American Maritime Officers District 2 MEBA; Louis Parise, Chairman, Unlicensed Division of District No. 1-MEBA/NMU; Gordon Ward, President, District No. 1-PCD, MEBA and Michael Sacco, President, Seafarers' International Union of North America, who was joined by the SIUNA's Pacific District union President Gunnar Lundberg, President, Sailors' Union of the Pacific, and Henry "Whitey" Disley, President, Marine Firemen's Union.

The lawsuit, which asks the court to negate the fees on the basis that they violate the US Constitution and the Administrative Procedure Act, charges that the unjust taxation scheme is nothing more than a revenue-raising ploy.

The suit maintains that taxing seafarers for the right to employment is unfair and inequitable. The suit notes that the tax is not a one time charge. Under the Coast Guard plan additional taxation takes place each time a seaman upgrades his or her rating or license. The lawsuit points out the work tax on seamen runs counter to the Congress' long history of deeming the issuance of merchant marine licenses and documents to be in the public interest and to promote safety at sea.

The Coast Guard was mandated to implement the so-called user fees on marine licenses and documents by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990, which came about as a result of an agreement between the previous administration and the Congress. Under the Final Rule, the so-called user fees imposes a charge of \$135 for the majority of merchant marine documents for a rating and close to \$300 for an upper level license.

Latvian shipowner jailed for wage non-payment

The ITF campaign against Flag of convenience (Foc) shipping is continuing to gather strength. The number of ships covered by ITF Agreements has increased again (the decline of the 1980s has been reversed, and there are now more vessels than ever covered) and, very significantly, ITF unions have decided, after a ten year gap, to increase the ITF wage rate (see main story on FPC meeting in this edition of ITF News). Work is also underway to bring together all ITF Total Crew Cost (TCC) agreements into a unified agreement (the TCC has increasingly come to represent the voluntary agreement owners sign as opposed to the Standard which is almost always signed in a boycott situation).

In the 1980s many shipowners were calling for the ITF to wind up its campaign, now they are talking about developing a co-ordinated, regional response to the growing challenge of the ITF.

One of the biggest differences between maritime unions, united in the ITF, and shipowners, has been that while we are willing and able to combine globally and pool our strength to act as one body, owners (despite having international bodies like the International Shipping Federation, ISF) are unable to — they are, after all, in commercial competition with each other. The ISF always insists that it is unable to negotiate on behalf of its members. In the last century, the same argument was used by national employers' associations in most industries, but they came round in the end. Now, ISF members are discussing establishing regional negotiating bodies that would have the power to negotiate with the ITF — almost certainly a first in any industry. The longest journey always starts with the first step.

At the end of February, ITF Rotterdam Inspector Gert-jan Harmsen heard that the Honduran Foc *Millsupplier* was under Port State Detention and the crew wanted to



Shipowner Alexander Boborykin pictured here being arrested

contact the ITF. He visited the vessel. The master informed him that they had run out of food three days earlier. One 17 year old crewmember (on board for only three weeks and with no experience) was eating gherkins to take the edge off his hunger. The master had signed on January 9 and the other 3 men on January 30. They had not received a penny. They were owed 4,000 English Pounds (US\$6,500). The master told Harmsen that the vessel loaded soya meal on February 23. She had left Rotterdam bound for England. A few hours into the voyage, the crew found out that a pipe had sprung a leak in the engine room. They returned to anchorage. A tug brought pumps on board and pumped the water out of the engine room. Due to the fact that water had entered into the main engine, the vessel could not resume her voyage and she had to be towed into port on February 24. The mate and Harmsen went to the supermarket to buy food for the weekend. When they returned back on board the master said that the owner had arranged three ferry tickets for the same evening. He ordered and paid for them with his credit card. The master and the 2 A.B.'s left. "On March second, I returned to the vessel. I found her abandoned by the last

crew member and as I found out later, also by the owner. Everything of value was taken off/stolen from the vessel. I contacted the river police. Together we found out what had happened. February 27, the *Pemala C* arrived alongside the *Millsupplier*. February 28, the owner arrived on board. They cleaned the engine room and stripped the vessel. The *Pemala C*, the owner and mate left the vessel and Holland in the morning, on February 29," said Harmsen. He then contacted the master who had returned home. He was furious. Harmsen told him he would try to get his money but by the action of the owner, the value of the vessel would not be more than Dfl. 10,000. Smit informed Harmsen that they had a bill of Dfl. 25,000. Harmsen contacted lawyer André Beker. The ITF could have arrested the vessel. But if other parties arrested her and a public auction resulted, the crew could end up with nothing. Every party would receive expenses, for arrest and auction, before the crew's wages could be paid. "On March fourth, the owner contacted me with the request to do my best for the crew!!!" said Harmsen. A potential "buyer" contacted Harmsen. The owner offered him the vessel for free if he could solve the

Continued on page 11



Continued from page 10

problems. He wanted to tow the vessel back to England. "In the meantime a lawyer representing Smit contacted me. He is now trying to get an agreement with a Mr. Stephenson. As far as I know besides our claim only Smit and the agent have a claim on the vessel." Harmsen will ensure that, whatever happens, the crew receive their wages in the end.

Increasingly, the ITF faces the problem of vessels not being worth the amount of money owed to abandoned seafarers. It's not good enough to simply arrest a vessel if an auction won't raise enough money. One solution, which has made ITF legal history, was the personal arrest of a Latvian shipowner in Bremen, Germany in mid-April. The Russian-flag wood freighter *Kanin* was arrested by the Bremen Labour Court at the request

of the ITF (on April 8th). Bremen ITF Inspector Ali Memon had already helped the ship's 19 Latvian crew with supplies and repatriation (at the ITF's expense) on March 18 (the ship was under detention and the crew were owed DM 37,500). But the vessel wasn't worth the total owed to the crew (DM37,500 plus 20,000 for repatriation etc.). So Memon requested that the Court place a personal arrest on shipowner Alexander Boborykin, Chief of the International Shipping Company Skorpio in Latvia, who had come to Bremen with 14 new crew members. Boborykin was seized and placed in jail on Wednesday April 14. He pleaded to be released in order to raise the money he owed. The Court allowed him out on April 21, with a deadline of a week to produce the cash. But by April 28, he refused (and even boasted on TV that, since he was free, he needn't pay). Under German law, it is not possible to re-arrest him.

It has now been reported that the new crew are hungry and haven't been paid anything. This time, the authorities will have to cope. Memon and the ÖTV are angry about this whole episode, which is but one example of a growing problem. The only solution, the union says, is for the government to act against this sort of sub-standard shipowner and refuse them port access.

We must end on a positive note. Following complaints about wages and conditions, ITF Inspector Ali Memon approached the Japanese owners of the Panamanian flag *Grand Unity* and requested they conclude an ITF agreement and pay backwages to their crew. The vessel arrived in Nordenham at the end of April, and Memon negotiated repatriation and a settlement of US\$75,000 for the Indonesian crewmembers. The crew returned home and have received their money.

ITF FLAG OF CONVENIENCE CAMPAIGN NEWS

Nedlloyd to sack 2,000 employees

Dutch shipping and transport group Nedlloyd has announced its intention to make 2,000 workers redundant (ten per cent of all staff) over the next two years. The Rotterdam based group has announced losses of Fls.58.3 million (US\$32.18 million) in 1992.

The new Conservative government in France has angered maritime trade unions by abolishing the shipping and maritime affairs portfolio in the new cabinet. The areas have now been lumped together with Tourism, Transport and Equipment, under Minister Bernard Bosson. The ITF-affiliated CFDT has stated that this move demonstrates the lack of concern that the new government has for maritime affairs.

The ITF-affiliated ÖTV transport workers union in Germany has con-

demned the German government's "failed shipping policy" which, they assert, has directly contributed to the deteriorating state of the shipping in-



dustry, with attendant increases in catastrophes and disasters on the high seas. The German Second Register (GIS), which has attracted 442 vessels since spring 1989, is nothing more

than a German Foc, say the ÖTV, and it has, anyway, failed to stop flagging out (in 1992 120 German vessels flagged out to Focs, and this year alone 30 vessels have switched).

Spanish bulker and port operator Ership has become the third owner to flag out to the Spanish Canary Islands Second Register (which is designated as a Flag of convenience by the ITF). Ership's 11,900 dwt *Manjoya* will be moved to the new register. Ership has already flagged three ships out from the Spanish national register to the Panamanian Foc. Even Spanish owners admit that the Canary Islands register is unlikely to stem the continuing collapse of the national flag fleet — there are only three ships on the register, and there seems little reason for owners flagging out to use the Canaries instead of another Foc.

OBITUARIES

The president of America's agricultural workers, **Cesar Estrada Chavez**, died in San Luis, Arizona, on April 23, at the age of 66. Chavez first started organising California's migrant agricultural workers in the early 1960s with the aim of improving the atrocious living and working conditions of the poor Mexican workers employed by the huge agribusiness concerns. He was the inspiration behind the international union and consumer boycott of Californian table grapes in the late 1960s which backed the grape pickers in their long and ultimately successful strike for union contracts. Despite the international acclaim which his tireless union campaigning brought him, Chavez remained a modest man, still leading the union he founded, drawing only the average union wage and living an austere life, totally dedicated to furthering the rights of agricultural workers and of Hispanic Americans generally.

Bashir Ahmed Khan Bakhtiar,

founder President of the All Pakistan Federation of Trade Unions (APFTU) and veteran trade union leader, died on April 13.

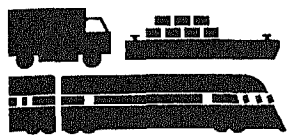
Amos Mabuza, a former President and Vice President of the Transport and Allied Workers' Union of South Africa (TAWU), died on April 30. Mabuza also served on the executive council of the Council of Trade Unions of South Africa.

Elias Mkhize, an active member of the South African Transport and General Workers' Union and a senior shop steward at Umfolozi Transport in Empangeni in northern Natal, was shot and killed on April 29. Mkhize was assassinated by an unknown gunman shortly after leaving the bus depot, where he worked as a driver, to go to the local union office. A second shop steward, who was with Mkhize and tackled the assailant, was shot in the hand. The TGWU reports that the violent death of Mkhize and the shoot-

ing of his fellow shop steward is part of a campaign of intimidation and murder directed at TGWU and COSATU leaders in northern Natal and has called for a full investigation.

D G B Nkombezi, President of the Malawi Railway Workers' Union, died on April 14. Nkombezi has been a deputy member of the Committee of the Railwaymen's Section and a member of its Sub-Committee on Transport Policy since the Florence Congress.

Bhau Phatak, President of the Maharashtra State Transport Workers' Union, died on 20 April, at the age of 70. Phatak, who was also General Secretary of the Indian Road Transport Workers' Federation, had been associated with the road transport workers' movement in his native India for more than forty years and had led many union struggles, most recently against privatisation in the road transport sector.



INLAND TRANSPORT

Social protection victory for navigation workers

A long-standing ITF policy objective was achieved when, at the end of a 5-day conference held in Strasbourg from 22 to 26 March, representatives of sixteen European governments signed an important international agreement intended to extend the social protection of inland navigation workers who, due notably to the completion of the Rhine-Main-Danube link, are required to travel to different countries located in the Rhine and Danube basins in the course of their work.

The European Agreement concerning the Social Security of Boatmen engaged in Inland Navigation, as it is known, is open for ratification by the states represented on the Central Commission for Rhine Navigation, by Luxembourg, by the states represented on the Danube Commission as well as by any other European state whose inland waterways connect with the Rhine or Danube. The Agreement has the objective of guaranteeing the continuity and improvement of social protection for boatmen navigating Europe's waterways.

The Agreement provides arrangements with respect to equality of treatment and with respect to the co-ordination of social security schemes covering illness, maternity, occupational accidents and diseases and death. Assuming that governments ratify the Agreement then, for example, a Romanian inland navigation crew member who falls ill while his ship is navigating a German waterway will be entitled to medical treatment, including hospital care, in Germany. The cost of the care will be paid by the Romanian social security institution. Also, service qualifying for benefits will be cumulative so that, for example, a boatman who works on ships registered in different countries during the course of his career will be able to add together the periods of service under different flags.

The text of the Agreement is deposited with the Director-General of the ILO who will communicate certified copies to the countries concerned. It is hoped that ratification will take place as soon as possible. The Agreement will come into force when it has been ratified by three Rhine and three Danube countries.

The application of the Agreement will be supervised by an Administrative Centre for the Social Security of European Boatmen and the Secretariat of this Administrative Centre will consist of two government, one employer and one employee representative from each country which becomes a contracting Party. Financing of the Administrative Centre will be by means of contributions from the contracting parties, calculated according to gross national product per capita.

The Strasbourg Conference was a follow-up to a first Conference held in Vienna in August 1991, at which the draft and principles of drawing up such an Agreement were originally discussed. The Conference was organised by the Administrative Centre for the Social Security of Rhine Boatmen with the support of the ILO. The ITF was represented at the Conference by Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers and Albert Heintz, representative of inland navigation workers from Force Ouvrière, France. Representatives of other ITF affiliates attended the Conference as members of the national delegations from Belgium, France, Germany and Switzerland. It is intended at a future date to draft a supplementary agreement covering aspects of social security which are not included in the present Agreement.

Argentinian road transport strike suspended as talks continue

Argentinian road transport workers have suspended a two-day national strike originally scheduled for 26 and 27 April to allow for further talks with the employers on union demands for wage increases and changes in working conditions.

The ITF-affiliated Argentinian Road Haulage Workers' Union had been concerned that the government would seek to undermine the effectiveness of the action and had written to the ITF asking affiliates to send urgent faxes to President Menem and the relevant government Ministers calling on them to respect the union's right to strike and not to intervene in the dispute on the side of the employers.

ITF Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers immediately contacted affiliates, informing them that talks with the employers on the un-

ion's claims had broken down and asking them to demonstrate their support for the union at this critical stage. Road transport unions responded with urgent messages expressing their backing for the Argentinian affiliate.

However, on April 16, the employers met with Minister of Labour Dr Enrique Osvaldo Rodríguez and offered to enter into a dialogue in return for the union suspending its strike threat for a month at least.

The union duly met on April 19 when it accepted the employers' offer of pay talks and suspended industrial action for a period of 30 days.

Although he is optimistic of a breakthrough, General Secretary Hugo Moyano is asking ITF unions for continued support as this could be a decisive factor in reaching a satisfactory settlement.

Indian rail workers ballot for strike

Nearly a million Indian railway workers will be balloted over the next two months as the ITF-affiliated All-India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) tests the strength of support among members for strike action to back up its long-standing demands.

The AIRF is demanding an imme-

diately salary review (salaries were last revised in 1986) and the extension of the annual bonus to all rail workers. It is also seeking firm assurances that there will be no privatisation of the national railway system.

Unions belonging to the Federation are currently finalising the arrange-

ments for the strike vote and for informing members of the issues that have led up to it.

If the ballot produces a clear majority for industrial action, the AIRF working committee will meet in August to set a strike date, probably in September.

Rhine-Main-Danube canal traffic exceeds expectations

Traffic on the Rhine-Main-Danube canal has exceeded expectations in the first five months since the opening of the final section, according to figures released recently by the canal construction and operating company RMD AG in Munich.

Shipping on the section between Bamberg and the German Danube port of Kelheim has already reached the volume anticipated for first full year of operation, a welcome sign that despite the recession business on the

newly completed waterway is buoyant.

The figures show that 1,263 vessels carrying 472,000 tonnes of cargo passed through the lock at Kelheim between September 1992 and February 1993. Vessel numbers would have been even higher but for several weeks of low water which hampered the free movement of traffic.

Other statistics reveal that Dutch vessels, with a 57 per cent share, were the most frequent users of the canal, followed by Germany at 34 per cent.

By contrast the east European countries had far fewer ships on the waterway than expected, with the Ukraine, the market leader among this group, accounting for just 0.9 per cent of canal traffic.

In another development which took the canal operator completely by surprise, considering the figures are for the usually quiet winter period, passenger shipping proved very strong, accounting for more than 40 per cent of all shipping movements.

UIC-member world railway statistics published

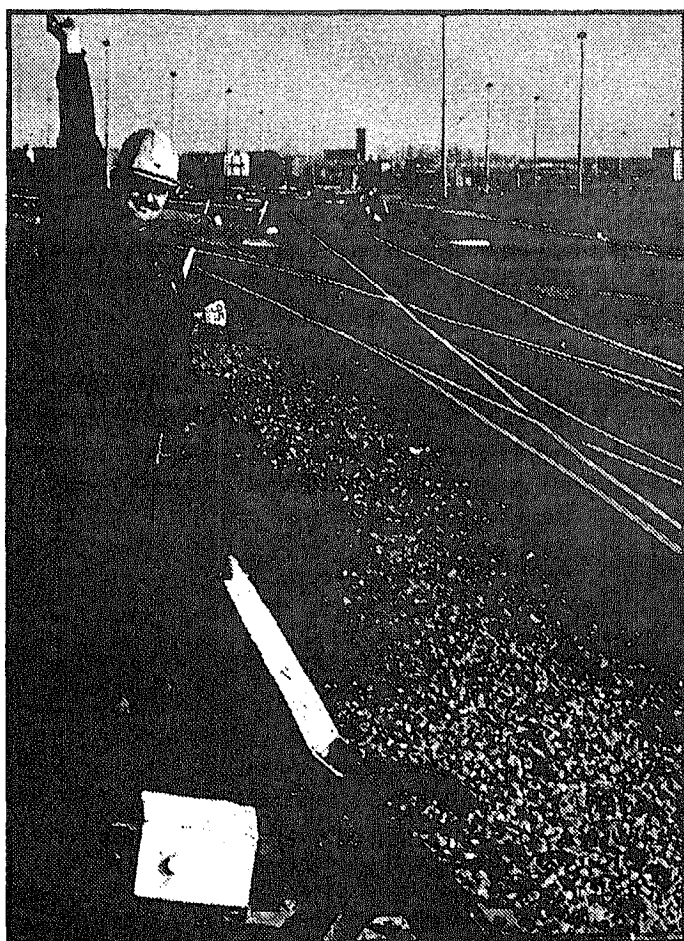
How many people work for the world's railways? What is the financial state of their companies? How much freight and how many passengers were carried?

The answers to these and other questions are contained in the International Union of Railways (UIC) International Railway Statistics 1991, which has just been published.

This trilingual (English, French and German) publication covers only data from UIC members (except for Canadian Pacific), so while Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia are included, the former-USSR is not.

Copies may be obtained for the price of 1,000 French Francs from the International Union of Railways (not, please, from the ITF) at:

16 rue Jean Rey
Paris F75015
France
Fax: +33-1-44-49 20 29



ITF intervenes to assist Croatian rail union in wages dispute

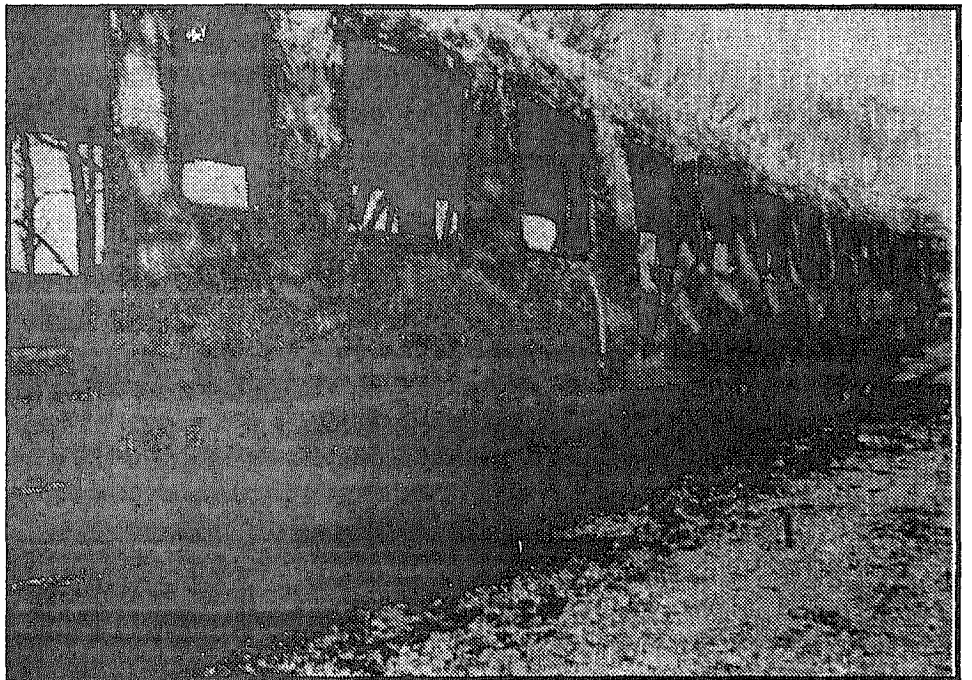
The Railroad Engineers' Trade Union of Croatia (Sindikat Strojnog Osoblja Hrvatske — SSOH) contacted the ITF on May eleventh to say that Croatian railway workers had not been paid their salaries for the month of April.

The union reported that it was doing all it could to support its members and reduce the hardship they were suffering. Soup kitchens had been set up to make sure that rail workers and their families did not go hungry and it was backing the strike called by members in protest at their plight.

President Neman Mrgan said the SSOH had made numerous approaches to the authorities but they had refused to meet a union delegation to discuss the non-payment of salaries.

At the union's request, ITF Acting General Secretary David Cockroft sent urgent faxes to Croatian President Nikica Valentic and Vice President Mate Granic urging the authorities to honour their obligations under the railwaymen's contract.

Within hours a further message was received from the SSOH President with the news that the authorities had caved in and that rail workers would get their April salaries on 12 May. He added that the ITF's prompt intervention had tipped the balance in the union's favour and passed on the thanks of all union members.



These photographs graphically demonstrate the damage inflicted on Croatian railways by the civil war in former Yugoslavia. The ITF-affiliated Railroad Engineers' Trade Union says that over US\$300 million worth of infrastructural damage has been done. "It is impossible to repair the damage and keep the existing capacities on minimum function. The result is that workers are being dismissed every day." The union believes there must be a major aid programme to restore the transport infrastructure — "Apart from the humanitarian aid for which we are grateful to everyone, it is indispensable to have financial aid and support by loans, in order to secure repair and modernisation."



CIVIL AVIATION

Portuguese TAP suspends union contracts

Portuguese airline TAP has declared war on its unions. In response to the new conditions of aviation liberalisation in Europe, the government has put the airline under its privatisation programme and has closed down its domestic operation Air Atlantis.

All labour contracts agreed with unions have been suspended and all forms of dialogue with unions closed down, according to the ITF-affiliated SNPVAC. In their place TAP's Board of Administration has issued regulations which reduce pay and conditions.

While planning drastic re-organisation the airline has chosen to impose new conditions on unions rather than to seek dialogue.

The unions say that "a climate of fear has been created in order to drive out the senior employees and impose

the new conditions of employment".

The company is also intending to get rid of its Air Atlantis operation and to sack 120 cabin crew. It has also withdrawn the employees' medical insurance scheme.

In protest against these actions, on April 16 the twelve unions in TAP organised a one-day strike involving 10,600 employees (90 per cent of the workforce), including both permanent and temporary workers.

According to Portuguese law some form of air links to the Portuguese island territories such as Madeira and Azores have to be maintained. The union offered to operate one flight each to the islands, but the government insisted that all flights to Madeira and the Azores were essential services.

69 crew who refused the orders to

operate a full schedule of flights are now facing disciplinary action from the company, which aims to dismiss them. They include the President of the SNPVAC, José Bras.

On April 29 tension was further increased in the company when TAP management announced that it was only able to pay two thirds of employees' monthly salaries. The announcement resulted in mass demonstrations by employees the following day. As a result the company announced it was able to pay the full salaries for April.

The unions in TAP are planning further one-day strikes in the airline (May 12, May 14 and May 18) until the company restores union agreements, job security and provides guarantees that full salaries will be paid.

The ITF and affiliates have protested to TAP about its actions.

BA unions ballot for action against "cost-cutting"

20,000 members of the ITF-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), including both ground staff and cabin crew, are balloting on national strike action over British Airways' intention to transfer routes to its subsidiary airline recently created at Gatwick (European Operations Gatwick).

The first transfer of routes (to Frankfurt, Copenhagen and Malaga) was scheduled for May 2nd, but was immediately hit by a short haul cabin crew strike.

The strike led to the cancellation of at least 22 European flights.

The union has recently won battles to restore conditions for existing BA employees transferred into the new operation (see *ITF News*, April 1993). But BA still intends that the Gatwick operation will be a cheap labour carrier, able to undercut other European short haul competitors. New employ-

ees at the Gatwick airline will be on pay and conditions 30 per cent below those of full British Airways rates.

BA is one of the most ruthless airline competitors in the newly liberalised environment of European aviation. BA has an aggressive strategy of global expansion stretching west into the giant US market by buying into USAir, and east into Asia-Pacific by buying into Qantas. Both airlines now largely come under BA direction.

This has been matched by a strategy in Europe of buying into small airlines, or creating regional subsidiaries of existing BA operations. These are run at lower costs than main BA operations. BA has bought Deutsch BA in Germany, TAT in France, and Dan Air in the UK, which formed the base of the new Gatwick operation. BA also formed BA regional out of existing operations based in Birmingham

and Manchester, which now runs with lower pay and conditions while operating some transatlantic routes.

The company builds up operations where labour costs are low by switching routes to them. Some TAT routes have already been switched to Deutsch BA in Germany. This strategy not only undermines the conditions of workers in the main BA operations, but conditions of workers in other European airlines which are in direct competition with BA's low cost subsidiaries. Deutsch BA is non-union. Its lower costs, particularly salaries, give it a unit cost advantage of around 30-40 per cent over Lufthansa in the intra-Germany market.

The TGWU dispute involves the biggest ever industrial ballot of British Airways staff. If, as expected, workers vote to strike, the action will hit the airline during the peak holiday period.

Some practical steps forward were taken towards improving the information available on occupational health and safety for civil aviation workers when the ITF Civil Aviation Section Health and Safety Working Group met for the first time at the offices of the Danish ITF affiliate SiD in Copenhagen on April 26-27.

The meeting brought together 16 union representatives from 14 unions in 12 countries. All the participants had union responsibilities in occupational health and safety.

The meeting tackled the useful job of pooling information on unions' current work and priorities in health and safety, looking for areas where unions might wish to co-operate on research or gathering information.

During the meeting participants were able to hear about the health and safety at work activities in such areas as protecting ground staff from injury by aircraft and vehicles on the airport apron area by making workwear more visible (conspicuity); the role of training in preventing accidents and injuries; along with information about hazards in the cabin environment from cosmic radiation, ozone and humidity. One particular theme which emerged during the meeting was the health problems created by stress resulting from an environment of intense airline competition.

There was discussion about health and safety laws in different countries, with some countries like Argentina having virtually no legal protection, and many of the participants reporting that where there were national health and safety laws they frequently do not apply to working conditions on board an aircraft.

The meeting set itself the task of identifying specific issues about which participants would take responsibility for collating more information. Priority areas included: baggage handling (ergonomics), cosmic radiation, mental stress, fatigue and flight and duty times, conspicuity, cabin air quality and many other issues.

Airport staff must be visible

When airlines pursue a corporate image, they pay little attention to the safety needs of workers, reported a health and safety representative from the TGWU (United Kingdom) to the ITF Health and Safety Working Group Meeting in Copenhagen.

In the new environment of competition airlines have become more conscious of corporate image. Many have redesigned the liveries of aircraft and airport vehicles and the working uniforms of ground staff.

The problem is that the colours chosen are not always those which make workers conspicuous on the airport apron. Colours such as grey even camouflage workers in an area of grey vehicles and grey concrete.

Furthermore research has shown

that tabards (a waistcoat-type overgarment) using fluorescent and retro-reflective materials have serious limitations in showing up workers. Tabards also snag easily when workers are working in confined spaces such as the aircraft hold.

Numerous injuries and incidents at airports prompted a campaign by the TGWU and the UK government Health and Safety Executive to get airlines to change the colour of ground staff employees' work wear.

The union says that full length white overalls are the most effective means of making workers visible to airport vehicles and aircraft on the ground. One airline has already agreed to change its ground staff uniform to white.

Baggage handling health study

62 per cent of baggage handlers loading intermediate range or small aircraft (which is still mainly carried out manually) report low-back pains, according to a study by the SAS Occupational Health Department.

In a presentation by members of the Department, participants at the ITF Health and Safety Working Group meeting in Copenhagen heard how the study showed that in a survey of more than 800 baggage handlers at three Danish airports 11 per cent of the workers surveyed had been forced to seek alternative employment or had been transferred to different work as a result of low-back pain; 15-20 per cent had been forced to reduce their physical activity at work or in their leisure time. Aircraft baggage handlers are shown to suffer back pain far more than other industrial occupations, including railway workers (who also handle baggage).

The problems of the height of aircraft holds and the confined space of the doorways and inside the hold itself add to the problems of airport baggage handlers.

The SAS Occupational Health De-



partment has been involved in designing technical aids for baggage handling. One has been the "sliding carpet" which helps move baggage inside the aircraft hold. A more recent development has been the "compilift", a vehicle which both pulls baggage trailers and raises trailer and handler to a height which makes it much easier to load baggage into the aircraft hold.

US President's commission to study aviation industry

The Clinton administration in the USA has appointed a National Commission to Ensure a Strong Competitive Airline Industry. Leaders of two ITF-affiliated unions, Randy Babbit of ALPA and John Peterpaul of the IAM, are on the 15-strong Commission team. Both unions have long pointed out the problems caused to the industry by deregulation.

Other members are drawn from the airline and aircraft industry and financial analysts, though the major airlines have complained of under representation.

The panel is chaired by Gerald Bailles, former Governor of Virginia.

The Commission has been given 90 days to produce recommendations for how to save the ailing US aviation industry, currently plagued by bank-

ruptcy and financial losses. It began its work on May 3.

The Commission represents an implicit government recognition that airline deregulation in the United States, introduced by a Democrat administration in 1978, has gone drastically wrong.

Deregulation has resulted in massive airline concentration, without providing financial security for the survivors. Workers have suffered massive job losses and deterioration in their conditions, while passengers have been saddled with a hub and spoke route system which makes routes to many destinations less direct and travel times longer, and many communities have lost their air links.

Unions recognise that all out re-regulation of the industry is probably

an unrealistic goal, but are likely to concentrate their fire on certain areas where there is a strong case for some form of re-regulation. Peterpaul has already put forward some preliminary ideas such as "to establish pricing floors and ceilings to eliminate predatory pricing and avoid further failure of our remaining airlines", and to provide tax relief or special funds for airlines.

Another question is whether there is any budget available for implementing any recommendations that come out of the panel.

Robert Crandall of American Airlines, in the meantime, has already made one public speech as part of an airline campaign to pressure the panel away from any form of re-regulation.

New US law against hiring strikebreaking workers

Aviation unions are squaring up to airline employers over new legislation (HR5) which will ban employers from hiring permanent replacements for striking workers.

Randy Babbit, President of the ITF-affiliated Air Line Pilots' Association

(ALPA), told a hearing on the legislation: "Of course it is illegal to fire an employee for going on strike during a labour dispute. But if employees cannot return to their jobs at the end of a legal strike because those hired during the strike have permanently replaced them, are they not just as unemployed as if they had been fired?"

Needless to say airline operators oppose the bill. "In our view this leg-

islation is unneeded and unwarranted in the airline industry," said James Landry of the Air Transport Association of America.

• The Clinton Administration in a welcome symbolic gesture toward labour has re-opened federal employment to 11,000 air traffic controllers sacked and banned from further government employment by former President Reagan twelve years ago.

FAA sets flight time limitations

In a breakthrough which finally recognises the need for cabin crew protection against excessive duty periods, the US Federal Aviation Administration has proposed limits on flight attendant duty time to ensure that they are "adequately rested in order to perform vital routine and emergency safety duties prior to and during flights".

The FAA proposals would allow cabin crew to be on duty for a 14 hour maximum within a 24 hour period, followed by a rest period of at least nine hours. Every seven days cabin crew would receive a rest period of at least 24 hours.

The FAA does not explain why it has spent several decades avoiding providing such vital protections for aviation safety.

Air India strike victory

The two month old strike of flight engineers in Air India was called off on April 23 after the management acceded to union demands. The company withdrew its suspension of 14 flight engineers and agreed to provide a new training programme for flight engineers (see ITF News, April 1993).

The strike had started on February 27. It grounded 80 per cent of Air India's overseas flights and is estimated to have cost Air India \$10m.

Flight engineers are concerned about their long term future as Air India replaces its ageing fleet. Flight engineers had wanted their work and status to be more closely aligned with that of pilots.

GLOBAL CREWS

Airlines increasingly view cabin crew as a global workforce. **Martinair** has started to recruit French cabin crew in Strasbourg who work outside of either French or Dutch union agreements.

Iberia have signed a code sharing agreement with a small Florida airline, **Carnival**, giving Iberia links from Florida to a number of other US cities. Iberia cabin crew are used on Carnival flights.

British cabin crew members of the ITF-affiliated TGWU are in dispute with **British Airways** over the airline's intention to recruit cabin crew from any country and under inferior conditions to British union agreements. BA has been displacing British-based crew with overseas-based crew on 747 aircraft. According to the union's newsletter BA have stated: "We are prepared to make British crew the bar operators on the LHR-SIN (London-Singapore route) provided they can undercut the cost price of a SIN national."

Japan Airlines has extended its early retirement scheme to 35-44 year olds in an attempt to encourage voluntary redundancies. It has a recruitment freeze on cabin crew and administrative staff and delayed training of cabin crew. It will continue to hire lower cost foreign cabin crew to take the place of Japanese cabin crew. A number of employee benefits are being withdrawn and cabin crew are being asked to extend duty hours.

All **Nippon Airways** has indicated that it is likely to follow JAL's policy of employing cheaper foreign cabin crew. ANA is Japan's largest airline.

GROUND STAFF PROTESTS

Ground staff workers in ITF-affiliated **Philippine Airline Employees' Association (PALEA)** have filed a notice of strike, following the breakdown of the current round of collective bargaining negotiations on pay and conditions with **Philippine Airlines**.

Ground staff at **Orly** airport near Paris went on strike in April against increased workloads and the length-

Airline Roundup



ening of the working day. According to the ITF-affiliated CFDT accident rates among workers have already increased in the last few years due to increased work load and unsocial hours. Similar stoppages have occurred in five other French airports.

The ITF-affiliated FETS-FO reports that **Air Zaire** has been failing to pay salaries to its employees in France. The UK union MSF says staff in London have suffered the same problem.

US CUTS AND DEALS

Unions organising in **United Airlines** have formed the United Airlines Union Coalition to resist the airline's cost cutting measures. The group is opposing United's plan to contract out its airline catering and its "sky cap" portering service.

Delta Airlines has asked its pilots to take a 5 per cent wage cut.

The AFA has signed a 45 month agreement for a 2.9 per cent pay cut at **USAir** for one year with industry standard pay increases to take effect over the remaining contract term.

The IAM and the Teamsters have signed an agreement with **Northwest Airlines**. The unions are giving wage concessions and other cost savings over a three year period. The unions are getting 30 per cent of the company

shares and representation on the board. The deal was substantially better than that first offered to unions. Northwest has eliminated 3,000 jobs over the past year.

UNION BUSTERS

Frank Lorenzo is trying to re-enter the airline business with a new start up called **Friendship Airlines**. ITF-affiliated ALPA and IAM have launched a campaign against the government granting the airline the right to fly on the grounds that Lorenzo is not fit to own and operate another airline. Lorenzo previously owned (and mismanaged) Eastern Airlines, Continental Airlines, People Express and New York Air. At Eastern Airlines Lorenzo fought out a bitter dispute with unions when he tried to slash pay and conditions. IAM Vice President John Peterpaul has vowed "Wherever he goes, no matter where, we'll follow him".

L. Vasudev, chairman and managing director of **Indian Airlines**, has resigned. Vasudev was responsible for hiring aircraft and crews from Uzbekistan Airlines during the 1992 pilots' strike. In January 1993 these aircraft were withdrawn after one of them crashed at Delhi airport. The pilots won their strike.

NEW MEGA-CARRIER

KLM, Swissair, SAS and Austrian Airlines have formally announced that they are to merge their companies. A memorandum of understanding could be signed as early as June 1993. Full integration is set for 1997. The deal would create the world's second largest airline in terms of sales. James Halstead of the Swiss Banking Corp has estimated that the deal would cut 5-15 per cent off labour costs. Cabin crew unions in the airlines continue to meet regularly to co-ordinate a union response. They have issued a joint statement declaring that all the labour laws and collective agreements in the countries and companies involved must be respected, particularly concerning the protection of job security and working conditions, otherwise cabin crew unions will oppose the merger.

Globalisation campaign document now available

The ITF Civil Aviation Steering Committee agreed to urge affiliated unions to conduct active membership campaigns on the globalisation of the aviation industry when it met in London last March 29 and 30.

The ITF's educational booklet *The Globalisation of the Civil Aviation Industry and its Impact on Aviation Workers* was recommended as a valuable resource material for such campaigns.

Some unions have translated the document into their own languages. SITAVA in Portugal have produced 7,500 copies in Portuguese and Hava-Is have made a Turkish translation in preparation for an educational seminar on globalisation and privatisation.

The amended English version of the booklet is now available for free from the ITF Secretariat in London. Unions can place individual or bulk orders.

Versions in Spanish, French, German and Swedish will be available soon.



PEOPLE

Mo Hoda, who has now retired as Asia/Pacific Regional Secretary, held a reception at ITF headquarters on 28 April. ITF officers and staff as well as representatives of affiliates gathered to honour a much-loved colleague and old friend and wish him all the best as he embarks on what we all know, given the wide range of his interests and community involvement, is likely to be a very active retirement. Leading the tributes was ITF Acting General Secretary David Cockroft who presented Mo with a specially inscribed clock and crystal sculptures of a train and aircraft (the transport modes with which he was most closely involved) as a parting gift from the Federation. As he takes his leave of the ITF, Mo can look back on an outstanding trade union career lasting over forty-five years, the last twenty-eight of them as an ITF official in various capacities. He first joined the union while still a young railway apprentice in his native India. From the very first he was an active member, improving workplace facilities for his fellow apprentices and before long being elected to office in the local branch. His talents were quickly recognised and in due course he be-

came an official of the influential All-India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF). When Indian railwaymen staged a national strike in 1960, Mo collected funds for victimised railway strikers and by this time a member of the Railwaymen's Section, came into regular and close contact with the ITF. His trade union activities led to him losing his job on the railway in 1962. But India's loss was very much the ITF's gain. After coming to England as AIRF International Representative, Mo was hired at the beginning of September 1965 as special technical assistant, in charge of the production of the ITF Technical Bulletin. When the ITF urgently needed a new Civil Aviation Section Secretary in 1967, Mo was the obvious choice. After a period as Acting Section Secretary, affiliates were so pleased with his performance that when they met in conference at the Wiesbaden Congress the following year they unanimously recommended that he be appointed as Secretary. In 1980 Mo was appointed Secretary of the Asia/Pacific Region. During the thirteen years he has looked after our Asian and Pacific affairs, activities have expanded enor-

mously and he has been responsible for a number of important initiatives including the first ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Conference in New Delhi, the first regional committee and the creation of national coordinating committees. Of even greater significance was the long-term education programme which he set up and which has been responsible for a major improvement in the ability of Asia/Pacific transport unions to represent their members' interests. All this would have been more than enough to fill the time and energies of most men, but Mo has still found time in a busy schedule, which in recent years has taken him on long foreign trips, to be a leading member of the Socialist International and of the Intermediate Technology Development Group and more recently General Secretary of the Gandhi Foundation, among many other outside interests. His friends and colleagues join in wishing Mo many more happy and productive years. Acting General Secretary David Cockroft adds: "The ITF Executive Board at its last meeting adopted a special resolution of appreciation for Mo's long work

Continued on page 21

at the ITF. He has gained many friends both in the Civil Aviation Section and in the Asia/Pacific region. He has been a good friend and a loyal colleague, and I hope that we shall long still be able to draw on his experience and knowledge. I wish Mo, his wife Elizabeth and son Mark all the very best for a long and busy (I don't believe he will ever take it easy) retirement."

The ITF and its affiliates around the world have conveyed warmest congratulations to US Executive Board member **Jack Otero**, International Vice-President of the Transportation-Communications International Union (TCU), who has been appointed Deputy Under Secretary of Labor with responsibility for International Affairs in the new Clinton administration. Jack is an old friend of the ITF, having been closely associated with its work for well over thirty years, as well as one of America's leading labour figures. After becoming one of the youngest officers ever of the then Brotherhood of Railway, Airline and Steamship Clerks (BRAC) in Illinois back in 1958 at the age of 23, Jack soon came to the notice of the ITF. Shortly after opening the ITF Lima office serving Latin America and the Caribbean, the ITF asked the young Cuban-born railwayman to be its special representative in Brazil, a post which he took up in August 1961. Here he was the driving force behind a number of highly effective organising campaigns amongst transport workers in the different regions of this vast country. He was so successful in his task that in 1964 when the ITF was looking for a new Regional Director Jack was the natural choice. He moved to Lima where for the next two years, with the help of two assistants, he greatly expanded the range of ITF activities in the region. On his return to Washington in July 1966, BRAC drew on Jack's by now extensive international experience by appointing him first Assistant Director and then in January 1969 Director of International Affairs. Just over two years later, in May 1971, he was elected to the position of a BRAC International Vice-President, a post he will hold until he starts his Labor Department job on June 1. Throughout his time with BRAC, Jack still kept close links with the ITF. He served on the Railwaymen's, Travel Bureau and Civil Aviation Section Committees and was elected to the ITF General Council in the early 1970s. In 1977 he was elected to the ITF's governing body, the Execu-

tive Board. As a prominent member of the US Hispanic community and President of the Council of Hispanic Labour, Jack's most recent achievement was to become the first ever representative of Hispanic workers on the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO, America's national labour centre. Jack has asked us to convey to all his friends in the ITF his very best wishes for continued success in advancing the well-being of transport workers throughout the world. In return, we would also like to wish him every success as he takes over this important office of state and hope that our paths will cross from time to time. Jack is succeeded as the TCU's Director of International Affairs by **Howard W. Randolph**. Jack's departure from the Executive Board will leave a vacancy, which the ITF's US affiliates have nominated TCU International President Robert Scardelletti to fill. ITF Acting General Secretary David Cockroft adds: "It is hard to imagine a more positive way for the ITF to lose one of its oldest and closest friends from the Executive Board. I have only known Jack for a small fraction of the 32 years he has spent connected with our international, but it didn't take me long to realise that here was someone who always had the ITF's interests at heart. This was just as evident when he was criticising the Secretariat as when he was praising it. Having a former member of staff sitting on your Executive Board is a very good way of keeping you on your toes! Jack's appointment is not just good news for the ITF, however, it is good news for the entire international trade union movement. His first task after taking up his job on June 1 will be to lead the US government delegation to the International Labour Conference in Geneva. I am sure that, as a result, we shall see a major shift in the anti-labour stance within the ILO and other organisations which has marked the Reagan and Bush administrations. President Clinton could simply not have chosen anyone with a better understanding of international labour for this key post, and I look forward to many more years of close association with Jack Otero."

Michal Ivasienko has been elected as the new President of the Trade Union of Seafarers in the Czech Republic.

Siegfried Merten, Vice President of the ITF from 1980 to 1983 and former Vice President of the German Public Service and Transport Workers' Union (ÖTV), has announced his retirement. Merten, who has been President of the Europa Automobile Club (ACE) for nearly ten

years, is retiring at ACE's forthcoming extraordinary Congress. Acting General Secretary David Cockroft and recently-retired General Secretary Harold Lewis have both sent Merten their best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

John Newman retired as General Secretary of the National Union of Marine, Aviation and Shipping Transport Officers (NUMAST) at the union's biennial conference held at the beginning of May. Newman, who has been NUMAST General Secretary since August 1989, leaves the union after working for it for well over thirty years. He currently serves on both the Section and the Cruise Ship Committees of the ITF Seafarers' Section and has been closely involved in the ITF's Foc campaign as the British seafarers' representative on the Fair Practices Committee and as a member of the Sub-Committee on the ITF Collective Agreement. He is succeeded by **Brian Orrell**, who was previously Assistant General Secretary responsible for industrial relations.

Darina Todorova was elected President of the Seafarers' Trade Union of Bulgaria at an extraordinary union conference held on April third. Todorova, who helped found the seafarers' union in 1990, replaces **Dimitar Damianov**. **Plamen Simov** was re-elected as General Secretary.

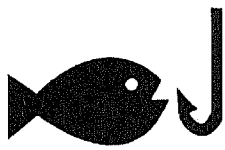
Thank you!

I have been very touched by the many messages from friends around the world wishing me well in my retirement. One of the most rewarding things about working for the ITF has been the opportunity to know and like so many people from so many places.

I hope they will understand that it is a practical impossibility for me to thank them all individually for their kind thoughts and past comradeship.

I therefore have to ask ITF News please to pass on to all of them my warm thanks and good wishes.

Harold Lewis



Torremolinos protocol adopted by conference

Fishing unions throughout the world will have to fight for the establishment of viable regional safety standards now that governments have agreed to exempt the vast majority of the world's fishing fleet from even the most basic standards.

Following the failure of the 1977 Torremolinos Convention on Fishing vessel safety to attract sufficient state and tonnage ratifications to come into force (see *ITF News*, April 1993), it was agreed to water the treaty down by the adoption of a "protocol".

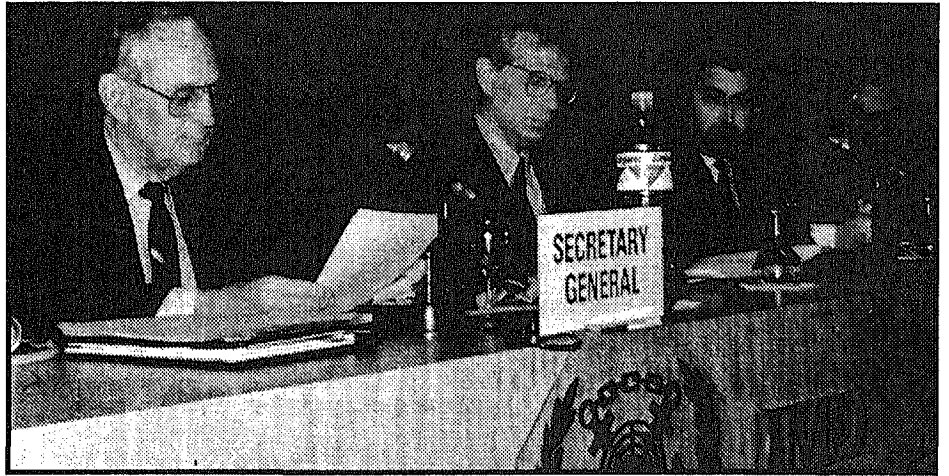
The proposed text exempted all vessels under 45 metres in length (less than one per cent of the world's fishing fleet) from the provisions of the Convention. This agreed text was then presented to an International Maritime Organization diplomatic conference held in Torremolinos, Spain from March 22-2 April. Despite the fact that such conferences are generally unwilling to alter the previous agreed draft texts, the ITF made a major effort to highlight some of the glaring deficiencies in the protocol.

The ITF proposed certain minimum standards on vessels between 24 and 45 metres in length. Specifically, provision of fire fighting appliances, crew life jackets and survival craft.

The ITF proposal was supported by 20 out of 24 governments present, but had to be withdrawn because of legal complications (which would have prevented the formulation of workable regional standards). The ITF then submitted a draft resolution, which, after various changes, was adopted and will now be attached to the protocol. The resolution urges states to develop uniform regional standards.

The protocol was adopted without any substantial changes, and so trade union attention must now focus on Article 3 (5) which states that:

"Parties shall endeavour to establish, as a matter of high priority, uni-



form standards to be applied... to fishing vessels... operating in the same region or area... Such uniform regional standards shall be communicated to the Organisation and the Organisation shall circulate them to other parties for their information."

In a circular to ITF Fishermen's unions, Assistant General Secretary

Åke Selander says:

"The ITF cannot overstate the importance of ensuring that meaningful regional standards are formulated and will therefore be ready to supply affiliates with any technical assistance they may require in order to participate in and to secure meaningful regional standards for their area."

IMO includes fishing vessels in statistics for first time

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has included fishing vessels in its analysis of serious casualty statistics for the first time.

The fishing vessel statistics cover a ten year period between 1982 and 1991 inclusive, but only pertain to vessels over 100 grt. The figures show that 1,186 lives were lost and 756 fishing vessels reported as totally lost over the period.

For every year recorded, on a comparison of oil/chemical tankers (6,000 grt+) and fishing vessel lives lost, fishing vessels are consistently higher.

Whaling moratorium maintained

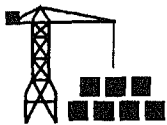
The 45th meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), meeting in Kyoto, Japan from May 10-14, didn't decide to do anything.

The moratorium on whaling continues, a move to declare Antarctic waters a "Whale Sanctuary" failed.

A report by the IWC scientific committee clearly stated that there appeared to be sufficient stocks of Minke Whales for small, sustainable harvest-

ing in the North Atlantic and Antarctic.

Iceland, which left the IWC last year, attended as an observer. Both Japan and Norway have announced their intention to review their membership of the IWC, while Norway has announced that it intends to harvest just over 200 Minkes next year, in defiance of the IWC. Norway has also announced a ban on whale meat exports to Japan.



DOCKERS

ITF Technology and Section conferences

Representatives of over 130,000 port workers from all over the world met in Hamburg on 3-5 May at the ITF's Dockers' Section Conference and at a specially-organised Ports Technology Conference.

DOCKERS FIGHT BACK

Around 90 delegates from over 30 port unions worldwide assembled in the port city of Hamburg to address the problems of job security and deregulation which face workers in the ports industry and to explore strategies to address the potential advantages and disadvantages of technology for workers in the industry.

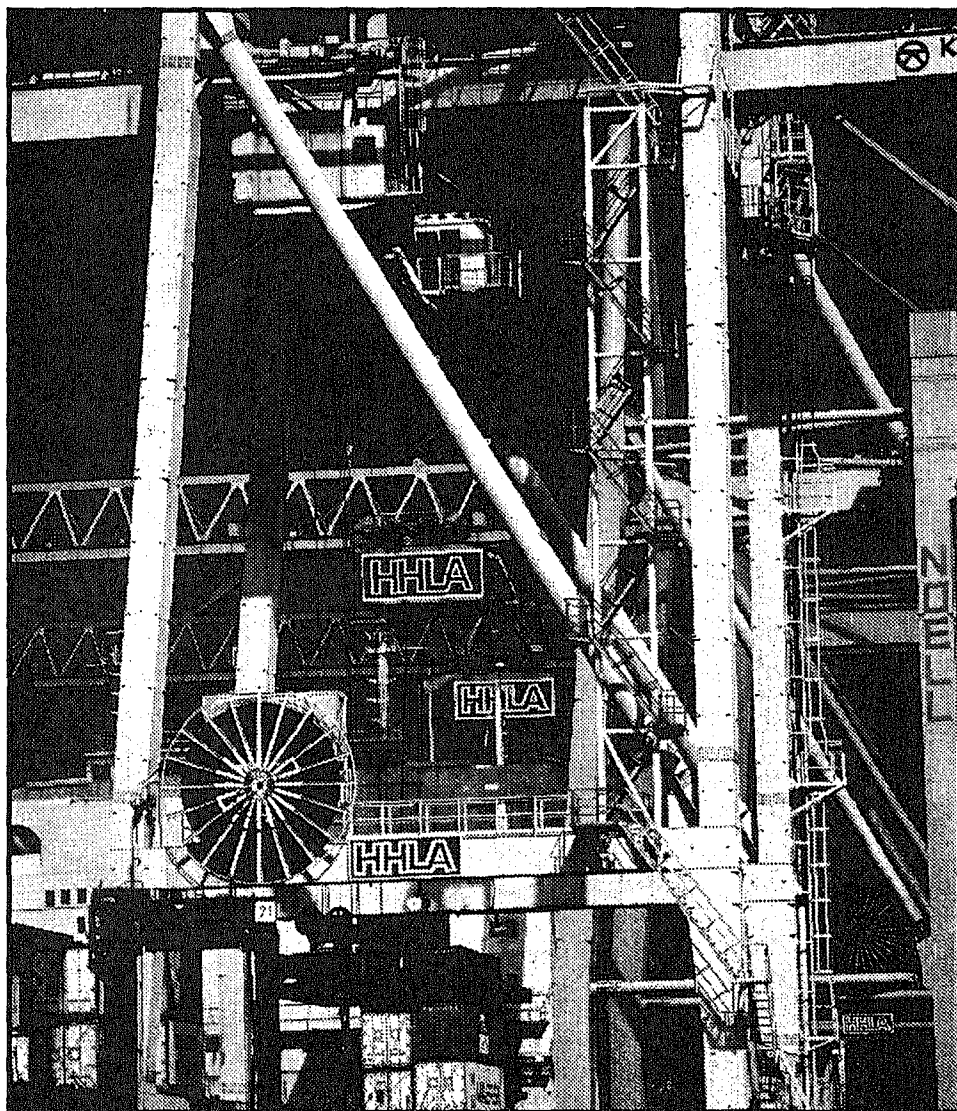
To fuel the debate, the ITF Ports Technology Conference kicked off with presentations from Dutch and German experts.

Van Klaveren, from the Amsterdam trade union research institute, STZ Advies & Onderzoek, presented the case of Rotterdam port. He pointed to the need for prompt action by trade unionists to present demands for work enhancement as well as improved pay and conditions, avoiding the pitfalls of new forms of work organisation — authoritarian and centralised management, solitary jobs and unacceptably high workloads.

ROTTERDAM HAS MANY PROBLEMS

Rotterdam port still had many problems to solve, he said; financial pressure arising from the high cost of new terminals meant job quality and safety were neglected. In contrast, planning departments to oversee terminal functioning had bloomed.

Workers in the labour pool were now contracted only for the lowest grade jobs, he said, adding that the increase in port-related transport and distribution services demanded new collective bargaining strategies from the port unions, including cooperation with service and industrial un-



ions.

From the University of Bremen, expert speaker Degenhardt pointed to the need to rationalise data collection in the new systems and to standardise international transport documentation. The dehumanisation of work, the wide use of VDUs, and management potential to control work patterns were problems to be addressed by unions, Degenhardt stated. The roles of Works' Councils and of collective bargaining should be more effectively developed by unions.

EMPLOYER HIGHLIGHTS UNION ROLE

A Hamburg port employer, Körs of

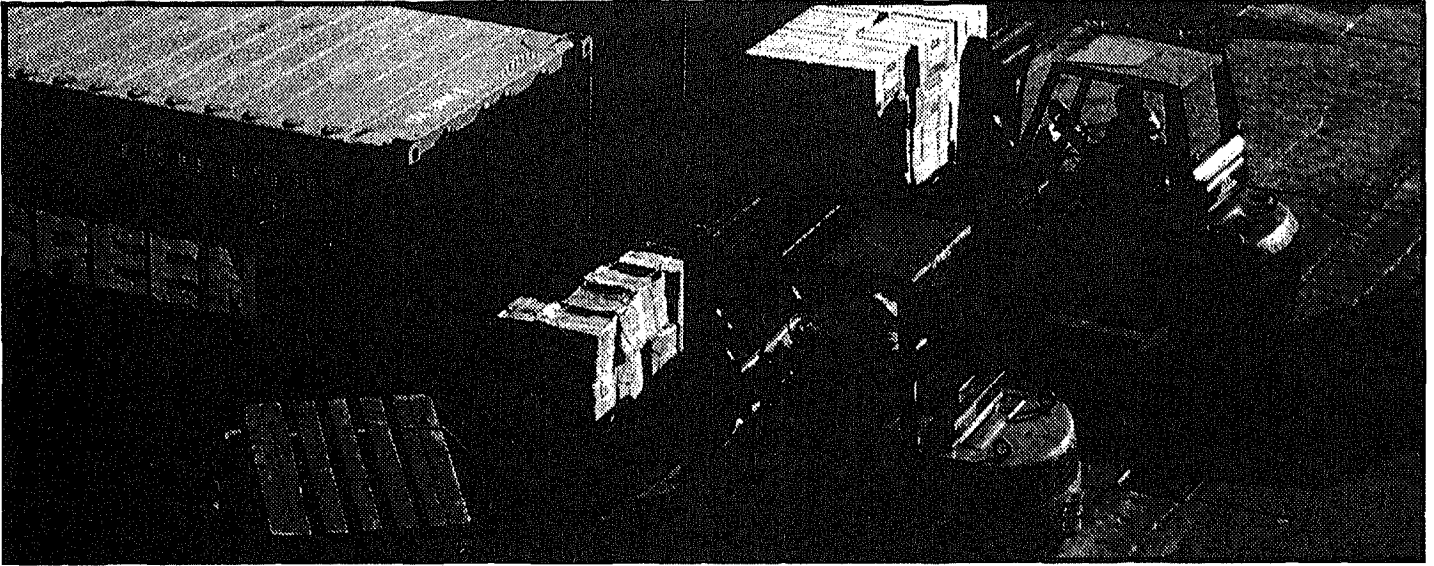
the Hamburg Port and Warehouse company (HHLA), gave a distinctive presentation on the use of new technology at HHLA, underlining the role that the union works' council had taken in the implementation process.

German state policy making took into account human factors, said Dr. Ernst of the Bonn advisory body Arbeit und Technik. Future policies would take account of the ageing workforce and of the increased numbers of women in the workplace.

In discussion, delegates agreed on the overriding importance of guaran-

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... Unions must be partners in port planning



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teed trade union rights, of job security arrangements and of the full involvement and agreement of port workers and their unions in the process of introducing new technologies.

Unions worldwide should establish *Technology Agreements* governing the introduction of new technologies and changes to working methods, practices and skills, delegates said, mandating the ITF to draw up a model agreement for the use of affiliates.

The ITF's role in supporting trade unions by acting as a centre for the exchange of information between unions, by making contacts with external experts with the aim of building a network of contacts, and by providing material support for regional and local seminars on new technology, was essential, they concluded.

SECTION HAS NEW VICE-CHAIRMAN

Manfred Rosenberg of the German union ÖTV, hosting the meeting, opened the Section Conference by welcoming delegates and presenting a report on the situation in Germany.

Following the retirement of Dockers' Section Vice Chairman Tas Bull, of the Australian Waterside Workers' Federation, the Conference elected Johnny Bowers of the International Longshoremen's Association, United States, to the position. Delegates recorded a warm vote of

thanks to Tas Bull.

As a follow up to debates in 1992 on the subject of cargo-handling by seafarers, the Section Conference noted the adoption by the ITF Fair Practices Sub-Committee of a clause for inclusion in ITF-approved agreements covering seafarers on Foc vessels, and of overtime provisions and an anti-victimisation clause in the ITF Standard Agreement.

WORLDWIDE CAMPAIGN ON ILO 137

Following a debate on the continued attack on port workers' employment worldwide, the Conference approved the extension of the European Port Workers' Charter (based on ILO Convention 137 on social protection of dock workers) to the worldwide sphere. It was agreed that as part of the campaign for the implementation of the Charter, unions should lobby local and national government politicians, press and other relevant organisations and interest groups at national and local level.

ITF Acting General Secretary David Cockroft emphasised the role of the ITF in co-ordinating international activities, and advised the meeting that both manpower and expertise may be available with the support of the ITF, from affiliates with experience of reform to other affiliates going through similar restructuring crises.

Francis Mungroo, of the Trinidad

and Tobago Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Trade Union, thanked affiliates for their support in the form of protest letters during the recent jobs crisis in the Port of Spain.

Although the redundancies had gone ahead, said Mungroo, some 113 jobs had been saved as a result of ITF solidarity action.

ILO MEETING PLANNED

Delegates agreed to forward information to the Secretariat for the International Labour Office in connection with the ILO's Tripartite Technical Meeting on the Social and Labour Effects of Structural Adjustment in the Ports Industry, scheduled for November 1994. The Secretariat also reported on health and safety work taking place within international organisations, and delegates agreed to submit reports and documentation on health and safety in the industry to the Secretariat.

The Conference agreed to send a message to the Brazilian government protesting at the attack on trade union rights under the present restructuring crisis and urging it to seek rapid ratification of ILO Convention 137.

A motion of solidarity with the Spanish trade union federations FETT-UGT and FETCOMAR-CC.OO was adopted, as was a resolution condemning the spread of right-wing and racist elements in Europe and opposing all forms of discrimination.

Romanian dockers win fight for integrated port administration



Dock workers in the port of Constanza, Romania, engaged in a courageous fight for effective job protection and improved social and economic conditions, achieved a victory on their demands for integrated port administration in May.

"New free trade unions have been functioning in Constanza harbour since December 1989, following the abolition of the communist centralised system," said Gheorge Caraiani, General Secretary of the Trade Union Federation of Constanza Harbour, which is in the process of affiliation to the ITF.

"On Monday 17th September 1990 the union began the biggest general strike in the history of Constanza harbour. At that time, trade union members resorted to the ultimate form of

protest against poverty, unemployment, inflation and Mafia control at management level. All the claims existing at that time were still without solution. A general strike was the only way to call attention to them," he added in a letter to the ITF.

Industrial action in 1993 started on 16th March when the Constanza local unions organised a protest meeting. About 10,000 workers took part in this action. Simultaneous protest meetings were held in 15 Romanian cities, demanding action on poor working conditions, on falling standards of living, and against the bankrupt government's economic policy which promotes unfair competition and is riddled with corruption and inefficiency.

The port workers took action again in mid-April, highlighting the specific

problems faced by dockers, when they joined a national protest against government economic policies, organised by the national centres FRATIA and NTUB.

The use of black market casual labour is increasing in the port under the regime of uncontrolled competition. Joint ventures between individual port staff as shareholders and with some capital from state companies have been set up, sub-contracting equipment and labour in competition with the wholly-owned state companies.

The Romanian export market is controlled by private firms dominated by interests dating from the communist period, who were making huge

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Japanese dockers ban weekend working

Japanese dockers took action from March 24 in a dispute over pay and working hours.

A boycott of weekend working was to continue in April said the national dockers' federation Zenkoku Kowan,

after talks with employers broke down on March 26th.

Apart from an eleven per cent pay rise, the union wanted the introduction of a five-day week and eight hours

day — a very moderate demand by most countries' standards.

Nearly a hundred ports were due to be involved in the action, which would obstruct container movement and hold up ferry services.

...Solidarity from other transport unions aids dockers

Continued from page 25

profits by driving down labour costs.

A protest letter was given to the government representative in Constanza, but the union received no answer so decided to continue with the industrial dispute.

The Romanian government's wage policy is to maintain a miserable average wage of US\$ 40 per month — made worse by high income tax.

The workers' demands to the Constanza Port Administration and Employers' Organisations were an improvement in working conditions, with the provision of proper working equipment, safer working conditions (including measures on contaminated and dangerous cargoes) and the provision of meals to which dockers were legally entitled.

They were demanding a regulated, single and integrated co-ordinated labour distribution system, facilitated by the creation of a port labour agency to register, licence and train the port workers, a minimum wage of the equivalent of US\$ 400 per month, proper provision of information by management to the union and consultation on plans for privatisation — which should include the granting of shares to employees.

Many of the demands were in line with the provisions of ILO Convention 137 on social protection for dockworkers — which Romania ratified in 1975.

The union wanted port tariffs to be negotiated which take into account the contribution of the port operators, and supported the transference of the Constanza Port Administration to the city council, in conjunction with proper budgeting by the national government for local administration.

Government proposals to create an



export processing zone or tax-free area to win foreign capital in Constanza harbour and along the Danube-Black Sea Channel were supported by the union, as long as the zone's administration was to be held by share societies, not by central government.

When the government and port administration refused to answer the unions' demands for negotiation, the dockers decided to join a general pay strike supported by all the important trade union organisations in Romania, representing seven million of Romania's ten million strong workforce.

The dockers renewed their action on May fifth, and in concert with other transport unions in Romania, such as the ITF-affiliated Drivers' Trade Un-

ion, were successful in paralysing the country. Ten thousand dockers and port administration employees stopped work in the Black Sea ports and along the Danube, whilst 100,000 drivers abandoned their trucks, threatening to set up road blocks if the wage question was not settled. Subway workers in Bucharest also abandoned their posts in protest.

By May 8th agreement had been reached on both points. Whilst the national union's demands on wages were quickly settled by May sixth, dock workers held out two days longer on their demands for a regulated port system.

As a result of the strike, the government has now agreed to the creation of a Constanza Port Authority.

Indian dockers strike over pay and conditions

The All-India Port and Dock Federation, to which the ITF-affiliated Transport and Dock Workers' Union in Bombay belongs, took strike action over pay and conditions at the end of April.

The union submitted a Charter of demands to the Indian transport ministry in February.

The workers' major complaint was that wages have not been increased since 1988.

The last wage agreement expired in December 1992 — and to rectify the considerable loss in real earnings experienced by dockers, the union demanded a doubling of basic pay rates.

The Consumer Price Index, to which wage settlements have been attached in the past, was at 607 in 1988 when dockers received their last increment. Now the index has risen to 1214.

Other allowances, such as bonuses, compensation for those living in cities and transport subsidies have also been up for renegotiation since last December.

Port workers demanded too a series of social measures, such as the provision of creches, education allowances, and adequate health facilities.

Emphasising the importance of the ports industry in the national economy, the federation is demand-

ing that the industry be recognised as an export industry, which would enable the ports to retain foreign exchange earnings for modernisation and development.

However, the transport ministry has shown little interest in talking to the unions in the period between December and April, when industrial action was called.

The Federation expressed regret that the government has been less than enthusiastic about maintaining bipartite relations, despite many attempts by dockers to have their problems raised at ministry level.

Panamanian ports to be privatised

Panamanian port workers are the next in line to suffer rapid port privatisation.

The ITF-affiliated dockers' union in Panama, the Federación Industrial de Trabajadores del Transporte Terrestre, Aéreos, Marítimos, Portuarios y Similares (FITTTAMPS)

have been informed that various terminals in the major Panamanian ports are to be transferred to two United States stevedoring companies and one Panamanian company over the next few months.

Unions have not been consulted on these measures, despite representa-

tions made to the government by FITTTAMPS.

The union reports an atmosphere of uncertainty as workers await the takeovers.

The ITF has sent a message of solidarity to FITTTAMPS General Secretary, Luis Amaya.

Bangkok port blockade paralyses 100 vessels

A March blockade by port barges at the use of a Russian LASH (lighters aboard ship) vessel in Bangkok port brought over 100 other cargo vessels and a Norwegian luxury liner to a standstill.

A LASH vessel is a barge-carrying ship. Barges are loaded at a variety of places and brought to the "mother ship", which is equipped with a gantry

crane that can lift barges on and off at anchor as well as in port.

The concept was designed to eliminate the need for special port equipment and to avoid transshipment, with the resulting lighter cost.

Barge operators in Bangkok port, members of the River Transport Labour Union, said that the Russian ship, in Bangkok to transport 12,500

tonnes of rice to Russia under a governmental agreement, entered the port to carry out illegal operations.

The LASH ship was being used to undercut local prices to transport the cargo between Bangkok Port and Si Chang Island, the union said.

After a day of protest, the blockaders agreed to make way for the Norwegian liner, *Seaborne Spirit*.

This issue of ITF News has had to be combined into a joint May and June edition because of massive pressures of work and the fact that we are short handed (note that we are advertising our vacancy on the back page of this issue). We hope readers will understand, and ITF News should appear every month for the rest of the year (we promise!).

Editorial assistant vacancy in ITF Secretariat

The ITF Research and Publications Department is looking for an Editorial Assistant to work in the London Secretariat. This job involves writing (mainly in English), editing and publications production work using an Apple Macintosh based Desktop Publishing system for page make up, primarily on the monthly ITF News, but also on ITF industrial, regional and general publications as well as general promotional and public relations work related to the ITF's work.

Candidates should have a knowledge of and sympathy for the trade union movement (experience in a transport industry is particularly welcome), a proven ability to write and edit in the English language, and experience in page make up and design (preferably computer based).

The working language of the Department is English, and applicants should also be fluent in at least one other ITF official language (French, German, Spanish and a Scandinavian language). Aptitude in other major world languages is also welcome.

The ITF is striving to be an equal opportunities employer and working conditions are governed by a trade union collective agreement that sets out a 35 hour working week with flexible working hours, four to six weeks' paid annual leave and an annual adjustment of salaries at least in line with inflation.

The Editorial Assistant II post pays in a range of £16,798 to £19,941 (British Pounds Sterling). Relocation expenses for successful candidates from outside Britain will also be paid.

Applications should be addressed to the ITF Research and Publications Department, 133-135 Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 1PD, Great Britain, fax: +44-71-357-7871) by July 16th, 1993. Applicants should enclose a Curriculum Vitae, and samples of their previous work.

GENERAL SECRETARY : HAROLD LEWIS

PUBLICATIONS OFFICER : DAVID COCKROFT

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Internationale Transportarbeiter-Föderation
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