

NEWS

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Swedish dock strike wins new port agreement

Swedish dock workers now have a new collective agreement after the ITF-affiliated Swedish Transport Workers' Union imposed a weekly one-day strike and an overtime ban which promptly forced the employers back to the negotiating table.

The Union imposed its sanctions on the weekend of Friday August sixth and announced that the industrial action, which would have effectively closed down the docks for three days every weekend, would continue until October first if the employers did not yield.

This was in response to the employers' insistence that dockers agree to a pay freeze in 1993 and a two-year collective agreement.

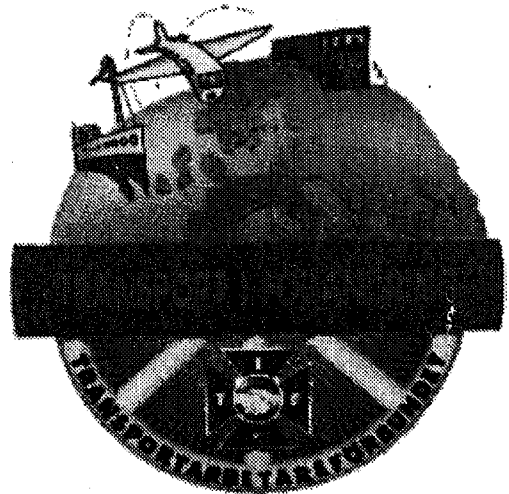
Swedish exports are currently running at record levels and the prospect of serious disruption soon convinced the employers they had no choice but to restart talks.

By the evening of the sixth the dock employers were already weakening and within two days a fresh round of negotiations was underway.

A new collective agreement was quickly hammered out, with concessions being made by both sides in the interests of a speedy settlement.

The employers dropped their demand that the dockers forego a real pay increase, and in return the union agreed to the annual leave entitlement being reduced from 27 to 25 days with a corresponding reduction in the percentage of the annual wage used to determine leave pay. As this only came into effect on July first rather than April first as originally envisaged it will be 1995 before dockers feel the full effects of the change.

Dockers' pay now will go up by between 1.70 and 2.10 kroner an hour under the new 9-month agreement which includes a one per cent increase in local rates, as well as enhanced pay for piece work.



Unions agree on the need to protect the global environment

Three September meetings in the UK city of Manchester underlined the role of the trade union movement in protecting the environment and improving work health and safety.

Trade unionists from around the world gathered at the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions' (ICFTU) conference "From Rio to the Workplace", held in Manchester on September 16th and 17th.

Representatives from national centres and from the International Trade Secretariats, including the ITF, came together to discuss environmental issues.

Brian Orrell, from the ITF-affiliated UK ship officers' union, NUMAST, impressed the Conference with a speech condemning sub-standard vessels and highlighting the health and safety as well as the environmental risks involved in foc shipping.

Non-trade union speakers, from organisations such as Greenpeace and the World Wide Fund for Nature, insisted on the need for trade unionists and environmental groups to cooperate for a better future.

The Conference preceded the UK government's conference "Partnerships for Change", organised as a follow up to last June's Earth Summit in Rio.

ICFTU General Secretary Enzo Friso highlighted the role of unions in preventing environmental disasters.

An ITS/ICFTU occupational health, safety and environment working party, held earlier in the week in Manchester, echoed these concerns.

The meeting called for the ratification of ILO Convention 177 on the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents (which excludes transport) and designated it the "Bhopal Convention".

Countdown to 1996: Istanbul meeting drafts anniversary plans

Planning for the ITF 100th anniversary in 1996 continued with a meeting of the ITF anniversary preparatory co-ordinating group in Istanbul on 13th and 14th of September.

The meeting was attended by 22 people — academics and members of ITF-affiliated trade unions — who form the editorial co-ordination group set up at the initial meeting in London last June (see *ITF News*, July 1993).

The meeting discussed the breakdown of the historical project into five areas, and emphasised that whatever publication work was produced in these areas there must also be a single shorter volume which will be accessible to readers from all over the world. Participants believed it was very important for the history to be accessible to ordinary transport workers.

The meeting also discussed the holding of an exhibition. It is hoped that within a year the ITF will assemble such material and design the draft of an exhibition about the history. Such material will also be able to contribute to the production of a video.

The meeting also considered it a good idea to investigate the production of promotional material, including posters, stickers, scarves, T-shirts and a commemorative badge.



A rough timetable for the project was discussed. Any exhibition would need to be finalised by the spring of 1996. Publications would have to be printed by the end of 1995.

The next meeting of the editorial co-ordination group was recommended to be held in March 1994. It was also felt that the forthcoming ITF Congress in August 1994 should provide an opportunity for the editorial co-ordination groups to explain the work in progress to ITF affiliates.

The meeting concluded with a note of thanks to Hava-Is, ITF civil aviation union, for their work in organising the meeting.

Han Dongfang replies to Chinese government slanders

The Chinese government has attempted to justify its illegal expulsion of former railway worker Han Dongfang (see ITF News, September 1993) with a series of allegations about his behaviour while abroad. Han himself responds to the charges point by point and exposes them all as groundless...

Some people in this world believe that if lies are repeated often enough then they become facts. Imposing a false logic and coherence upon their lies, they cleave ever more tightly to them, continuing to insist upon their correctness even after the entire edifice of deception has collapsed all around them. Lies are lies, however, and can never become truth. Rights and social order are founded upon the rule of law, and no one can be allowed to distort the law, still less to treat it like a piece of tattered old cloth that can be trampled upon at will.

If we examine the course of development of the "Han Dongfang Incident" from its inception down to the present day, it is quite evident which facts have been obscured and which distorted, and abundantly clear which laws have been dismembered and trampled upon.

ENTRY INTO CHINA

Concerning my expulsion from China, the cancellation of my passport and my denial of re-entry at the border:

I entered China via the port of Aotou on August 13, 1993. The following morning, I was seized by police in my hotel room. They forcibly took money from my travel bag to buy me an international air ticket, and I was then thrown back across the border into Hong Kong at the Lowu immigration post. Hoping to avoid media coverage of the event, I then waited outside the Chinese customs point overnight and attempted to re-enter China legally the following morning (August 15); but again I was refused entry. These are the clear and unequivocal facts of the matter, and they are well known to everyone concerned.

Wishing to avoid the emergence of a stalemate situation at the border which might have further reduced the prospects of my return, I took the advice of the officer-on-duty who had been charged with blocking my entry into China and decided to return to Hong Kong to discuss matters directly with the Hong Kong branch of the Xinhua News Agency. As I came out of the Hong Kong immigration area, I was met by a large group of news reporters, to whom I proceeded to recount the whole story of what had happened.

When asked, "Do you think this matter was decided upon by the highest authorities?", I gave what I considered to be a suitably diplomatic answer and one which would allow the government some room to change its mind. "I believe this incident was due to a misunderstanding on the part of the Public Security

Bureau of Guangzhou city or Guangdong province," I said. "And I believe that as soon as the central authorities hear about it, they will straighten out this misunderstanding."

Subsequent events, however, proved that I was wrong. On August 16, the China News Agency reported a Xinhua spokesperson's claim that the refusal to allow me to re-enter China had been decided upon by the "relevant department" of the Chinese government in accordance with law. The reason given was my alleged breach of an earlier pledge to the authorities. I continued to assert my hope that the decision had been made by the local authorities, but in the end this proved to be mere wishful thinking on my part. On August 18, Xinhua issued a second report, announcing that the relevant department of the Chinese government had now decided to cancel my passport. With this, the incident soared to a fresh level of drama. I had totally miscalculated my government's decision-making logic and general mode of operation, and grossly underestimated its capacity for committing blunders.

EXPELLED FROM CHINA

On August 14, I was expelled from China. This is an undisputed fact and also the source of the entire subsequent controversy. In all of the Chinese authorities' so-called news dispatches, however, what stands out most clearly is their strict avoidance of any mention whatsoever of the word "expulsion". Instead, they have foisted the phrase "denial of entry" upon public opinion, and have then tried to justify their actions by identifying the legal basis for this "refusal to allow entry" and "revocation of the passport". The latter phrases, after all, do at least exist in Chinese law, whereas the expulsion of a citizen from China constitutes, without any shred of doubt, a major violation of the law.

From its initial position of refusing to come forward with any legal explanations, the Chinese government eventually — in the form of statements by the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) on August 27 and again on September 7 — began to realise that behaving in an arbitrary and despotic manner simply wouldn't do, and that if it wished to appear dignified and civilized then it would at least have to offer some kind of legal accounting. The rule of law, however, is a complete and comprehensive system, and it

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"I have always believed that the future of China's development will depend upon social détente."

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must be interpreted and applied as such. It does not admit of selective manipulation or as a means merely of confusing public perceptions. Let us therefore now briefly examine all the various laws relating to my case.

Firstly, one can search through the entire body of Chinese law and nowhere will one find a single regulation, article or clause stipulating that a Chinese citizen can be lawfully expelled from the country. There is no such regulation.

* The issuing office, or its higher level, has the authority to revoke or declare invalid a passport in accordance with due legal process.

* The revocation or declaring invalid of a citizen's passport may only be carried out while the citizen is currently inside China.

* The objective of such a measure is to prevent citizens from leaving China; it is not to prevent them from entering the country.

Thus, while the authorities' declaration to annul my passport may have borne a passing resemblance to due process, it is nonetheless clear that it was entirely unlawful.

Conclusions: 1) My expulsion from China on August 14 was an unequivocally unlawful act. 2) The declaration to annul my passport conformed to the authorities' empowerment under Article 13 of the Law on Administration of Border Exit and Entry by Citizens of the PRC, but it violated the strict limitations on such action as laid down in the Implementing Regulations for the Law on Administration of Border Exit and Entry by Citizens of the PRC. As such, it amounted to a serious instance of unlawful administrative behaviour.

Some people talk a lot about "taking facts as the basis and using law as the yardstick". Well, these are the facts in my case — and the laws in question speak for themselves. In full view of all, the law has been topped, tailed and trampled upon, becoming a plaything in the hands of the authorities.

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST ME

According to Article 4 of the State Security Law of the PRC, "Legal action shall be taken against any organisation or individual engaging in activities which endanger the state security of the People's Republic of China". Article 4 continues:

"Activities endangering state security as referred to in this Law mean: activities carried out either by bodies, organisations or individuals outside China, or by individuals instructed or given material aid by them so to do, and also activities carried out by organisations or individuals within China in collusion with foreign bodies, organisations or individuals, which endanger the state security of the PRC, namely:

1) conspiring to subvert the government, split

the country or overthrow the socialist system;

2) participation in espionage organisations or accepting assignments from espionage organisations or their agents;

3) theft, obtaining by stealth, or purchasing or illegal supplying of state secrets;

4) inciting, inducing or bribing state functionaries to engage in rebellion;

5) engaging in other destructive activities which endanger state security."

In addition, Article 4 of the Law on Administration of Border Exit and Entry by Citizens of the PRC stipulates: "Upon leaving the country, citizens shall not engage in activities endangering the security, prestige or interests of the state."

According to the statement made by the spokesperson of the Ministry of Public Security: "After he went to the US, Han Dongfang colluded with anti-Chinese organisations and obtained their support to blatantly assume the leadership role of the illegal Free Trade Union of China. On this pretext, Han then attended several international conferences and relentlessly issued speeches and statements opposing the Chinese government. He engaged in anti-Chinese activities that were detrimental to the international prestige of China."

The MPS spokesperson then listed, in chronological order, a whole series of such "criminal acts" — any one of which could, potentially, have landed me in jail the moment I stepped into China. Let us, therefore, take a closer look at these various so-called facts.

THE FACTS:

1) "In an interview published in issue No. 11 (November, 1992) of the overseas reactionary magazine *China Spring*, Han stated that he had never tried to hide his opposition to the current government."

The article in question was actually entitled "The Future of China Hinges Upon Social Détente". The full version of the quoted passage reads as follows:

"I have never hidden the fact that I oppose the present government. However, I believe that we must replace it through legal means. This will naturally be a long process. Our first task is to convince the Chinese people that the goal can be achieved through proper legal procedures. I have always believed that the future of China's development will depend upon social détente. Revolution and violence might bring some momentary satisfaction, but in the final analysis they will never provide any lasting solution. Such means can only engender mutual hatred among people and a perpetual desire for revenge. They can never bring true peace to society".

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2) "At a seminar entitled 'The Challenge to Democracy at the Turn of the Century', held by the US National Endowment for Democracy in Washington DC on the evening of April 27, 1993, Han claimed that human rights conditions should be attached when the US renewed Most Favored Nation (MFN) status for China. Furthermore, he said that pressure should be exerted on the Chinese government in order to grant Chinese workers the right to establish independent trade unions."

WHAT I SAID TO PRESIDENT CLINTON

In my meeting with President Clinton at that seminar, I did talk about the relationship be-

"I also criticised the unsatisfactory performance... of the official All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU)."

tween Chinese workers' right to freedom of association and the issue of MFN. But the main gist of my comments were as follows: "It is entirely a matter for the US whether or not to award MFN status to China. I doubt whether what I have to say would have any influence over your decision on this issue. I would just like to say that many business people and capitalists from both China and America have reaped considerable economic benefits from China's MFN status, and there is nothing at all wrong with this. However, what have China's peasants gained from it? And what benefit have the workers reaped? The answer is: nothing at all. Out of humanitarian concern and concern for human rights, will the US government not consider whether it can establish some kind of legislation or code of practice to ensure that your nationals will also try to export some of the rights enjoyed by American workers, for example freedom of association, when they export their capital to China?"

In the words of the MPS spokesman, this comment became: "Han vainly tried to compel the Chinese government to allow Chinese workers to organise independent labour unions". In order to gain an insight into the actual social status of Chinese workers today, one need look no further than this one official comment.

ILO ADDRESS

3. "At the 80th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILO), Han made speeches attacking the Chinese government, the PRC Trade Union Law and the [official] trade union. He also spread rumours to the effect that he had been jailed for organising free trade unions."

At the 80th ILO Session, in front of delegates from more than 100 different countries (including China), I did indeed solemnly point out that China's new Trade Union Law infringed upon our Constitution; I also criticised the unsatisfactory performance over the past several decades of the official All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). In addition, I requested that

the National People's Congress should amend the Trade Union Law so that it would truly reflect the principle of freedom of association as endorsed by our Constitution; that China should ratify as soon as possible three important international conventions, namely the International Labour Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 and the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

But I also reminded the Chinese government that the international labour movement bore no ulterior motives in regard to China. I said that the government should no longer suppress the free labour movement and should immediately release all those detained for organising free trade union activities. I have always consid-

ered such comments to be only legitimate and fair criticisms that any citizen should be able to make of his government. Surely, moreover, the legality of a meeting held under the auspices of the United Nations and attended by official delegates from my own government should be beyond all doubt — and any criticisms made by me at such meeting not be seen as a malicious attack.

Concerning the question as to whether or not I was in fact imprisoned [after June 1989] for my free trade union activities: I refuse to waste any time at all belabouring this obvious point.

FACTORY STRIKE

4) "In July 1993, when Han Dongfang heard rumours about a factory strike [in Beijing], he immediately instructed the original members of the Beijing Autonomous Workers' Federation (BAAF) to instigate the workers to go on strike. He seized the opportunity to try to establish an anti-government illegal trade union."

In early July, Agence France Press reported that workers in the Beijing Compressor Machine Factory intended to strike in protest against a planned site relocation. On reading this news in the USA, I phoned up my friend Qian Yumin in Beijing (around 11.00 pm Beijing time; Qian was a standing committee member on the former BAAF). First of all, we paid our customary greetings to the 'third party' whom we knew would be listening to the call. Then I asked whether Qian had heard the news. He replied that he knew nothing, so I told him about the report of the strike and we discussed whether or not it might be true. As people concerned about Chinese workers' rights, we felt that we should look into the matter, and, if it were true, seek further information and if necessary also try to provide some legal assistance. Workers aren't always familiar with the relevant laws, and in such situations hot tempers can often lead to violations of the law occurring. And when that happens, it's the workers themselves who suffer.

The biggest fear of the Chinese political elite is not international capital but free trade unions

Events in Russia are changing so quickly that they render any comment out of date the moment it is made. It is clear, however, that the political conflict between President Boris Yeltsin and the Russian "Parliament" reflects a deeper socio-economic conflict which exists in virtually all of the former Communist countries of Eastern and Central Europe. This conflict divides the enthusiasts for western values, including privatisation and market forces on one hand, and those who feel safer with the certainties of the old state dominated bureaucratic system. Trade unions from outside the region, most of which have a very different historical perspective, feel uncomfortable with both positions.

This division, which is more complex than just being "pro or anti Communist", has posed particularly difficult problems for the various "trade unions" operating in Russia, with shifting coalitions forming and breaking up in response to the changes in the political climate.

The report on Russia in this issue, based largely on material received from the head of the ICFTU's Moscow office, Don Slaiman, highlights this situation very well. For the ITF, and for other ITSs, the ICFTU office has been an invaluable source of information and insight into the Byzantine complexities of CIS trade unionism. The future funding of the office was one issue discussed by an informal ITS meeting which I attended in Geneva on September 21-22.

That meeting looked beyond Europe, to countries such as Vietnam, China and Cuba which are still in the grip of authoritarian governments and state run unions but which are increasingly desperate to attract foreign investment. They are combining capitalist economics with "communist" politics in a way which leaves freedom of association and free trade unions as public enemy number one.

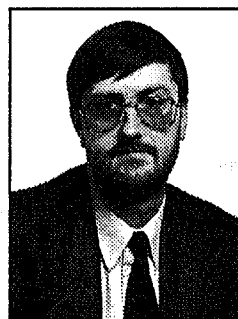
This can be clearly seen in the treatment meted out to Han Dongfang, the Chinese trade union leader against whose expulsion from his own country ITF affiliates worldwide have protested and whose own version of events we reproduce in full. It would appear that the biggest fear of the Chinese political elite is not international capital but free trade unions.

Burma (Myanmar) is another Asian country which systematically suppresses trade union rights as our article on the *Angelic Faith* makes clear. Unless the government of Singapore, on whose territory 11 frightened Burmese seafarers were effectively kidnapped, takes strong diplomatic action against the Burmese dictatorship,

political dissidents may think twice before changing planes at Changi airport.

TNCs

Anti-union governments have much in common with transnational corporations. After many fruitless years trying to secure global binding rules on the behaviour of TNCs one modest step forward — the creation of European Works Councils for certain TNCs in the European Community countries — looks close to achievement. Without careful preparation, however, this Directive could have several undesirable results. One is that companies may create their own 'tame' union free consultative bodies. The other is that purely European TNC structures may weaken global trade union solidarity.



**Comment by
ITF Acting
General
Secretary
David
Cockroft**

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

In September ITS representatives for the first time met representatives of the Workers' Group of the ILO Governing Body. The ILO, which will celebrate its 75th anniversary next year, has come under increasing criticism in recent years for its lack of dynamism in pushing workers' rights and social questions. However, the ILO remains the only international organisation in which trade unions play a constitutional rôle. Unions must therefore strongly resist current employer attempts to water down universal ILO standards or to transform the body into a glorified management consultancy. The ITF attaches particular importance to the ILO's programme of industrial activities. Industrial meetings, particularly maritime meetings which establish standards which are of direct and concrete benefit to hundreds of thousands of seafarers, are the main place in which ordinary trade union activists come into contact with the ILO. While there is certainly room to streamline and modernise ILO industrial work, therefore, the ITF is resolutely opposed to any attempt to downgrade its importance.

Russian union federations disagree over Yeltsin's actions

The dramatic events in Russia have divided the trade union movement and led to the foundation of a new national trade union centre committed to supporting Boris Yeltsin's policies.

Yeltsin's announcement coincided with the Congress of the VKP — the Association of Trade Union National Centres from Russia, Belarus, Khasakstan, Kirgisistan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The VKP regrouped the former official trade union structures, its membership from Russia being the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR). FNPR President Igor Klotchkov condemned Yeltsin for staging a "coup d'état".

Klotchkov denounced Yeltsin's moves and blamed the present political crisis on the intolerable economic conditions. He claimed that the FNPR was ready to fight with not just token strikes but an all out general strike if necessary. He claimed that Yeltsin had violated the Constitution and that the promise of free elections would mean little because they have already been bought by Yeltsin and would eventually result in the decline of Russia into "bloody dictatorship".

The FNPR Executive Council adopted a statement denouncing Yeltsin's moves and calling for simultaneous elections for Parliament and the President. Other trade unions, initially, did not react with such ferocity to Yeltsin's moves.

The SOTSPROF Federation said that they might consider postponing some of their forthcoming strikes so that they could not be used towards political ends.

Vladimir Konnesienko, Chairman of the Air Traffic Controllers, along with the Confederation of Free Trade Unions in Transport, pledged their full support for Yeltsin. Alfred Malinovsky, Chairman of the Association of Flight Personnel, said it was necessary for Yeltsin to cut this knot and that it was the only way to deal with the present situation but he cautioned Yeltsin not to be too aggressive. The new and alternative trade unions met on the evening of Friday, the 24th of September, where they agreed to back early elections and were in support of the extraordinary measures taken by Yeltsin. As a direct result of the meeting a new national trade union centre has been founded. It will be registered next month.

The new body will call itself the United Trade Union National Centre: Trade Unions for Reform and Elections. The founders include the ITF-affiliated Seafarers' Union of Russia, the Confederation of Independent Transport Workers' Unions, the Air Traffic Controllers, the Locomotive Engineers, one of the Pilots' unions, Metal

Workers from one union, and the SOTSPROF trade union organisation.

The FNPR former Metal Worker branch trade union has chosen to join the new formation and the unions issued an open invitation for any FNPR branch union to join so long as it abandons the FNPR and its position of supporting Parliament. Both the Timber Workers and Steel Workers have apparently expressed interest.

The FNPR is concerned about the future of its assets. The government plans in this area are not yet clear. It seems that there is some discussion of a possible decree which will require a new registration of membership and possibly a decentralisation of trade union assets, which would give more control to the FNPR branch organisations.

Privatisation policies slammed by seminar

The politics of privatisation were strongly condemned by a special seminar organised by the ITF-affiliated Hava-Is union.

The meeting, held on September 15 in the International Press Centre in Istanbul, brought together nearly 100 academics, journalists, trade unionists and the representatives of Turkish political parties.

A panel of four people presented papers on privatisation, and subsequently answered questions from the meeting. The panel consisted of three professors (Arslan Baser, Mümtaz Soysal and Toktamis Ates) and Richard Flint from the ITF Secretariat.

Hava-Is had originally arranged for the General Secretary of the ITF-affiliated Transport and Allied Workers' Union in South Africa, Meshack Ramela to speak, but events in South Africa prevented him from attending. The union invited Dr. A.K. Arora from the ITF-affiliated All-India Railwaymen's Federation to present a paper to the seminar. Arora was in Istanbul for the ITF Historians meeting (see story on page 2).

In a move demonstrating the severe limitations on basic trade union rights which still exist in Turkey, the authorities stopped Arora from speaking. Because the union had not given the prerequisite 20 days' notice to the Turkish authorities that a foreign trade unionist would be speaking at an event they were organising, permission was denied by the Security Police for Arora to speak. Arora attended the meeting, but was unable to speak. The text of his presentation has been distributed by the Hava-Is union.

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European opinion on equitable wage

Under pressure from the European Parliament, the EC Commission adopted an opinion on an equitable wage on September third.

In a move that has been dubbed unprecedented, the opinion sets out the problems of low pay and discrimination in the labour market — but allows member states to determine what exactly is a low wage.

A study carried out prior to the drafting of the opinion concluded that low pay was a problem in all the member states, and that no system of wage determination existed in the EC that could serve as an adequate model.

The opinion sets out four principles:

- Fair pay has to be part of the process of achieving greater economic and social cohesion.

- The community's future lies in achieving high productivity and high quality employment. This means increasing investment in training and in good industrial relations.

- Discriminatory wage practices should be eliminated, and equal opportunities should be promoted.

- Attitudes to traditionally low-paid workers should be reassessed.

TRANSPORT MINISTERS MEET

Combined transport, road transport and inland navigation networks were at the top of the European Transport Ministers' agenda when they met in Brussels on September 28th.

Road safety, airline computer reservations systems and a draft Council Directive establishing principles on the investigation of civil aviation accidents and incidents, were also considered. The meeting also failed to take any action to combat the crisis in civil aviation.

AVIATION SAFETY

The basic principles contained in this draft Directive are:

- Mandatory investigation of any serious civil aviation accident or incident, with the objective of preventing recurrences

- Legal investigation to establish responsibility for the accident, and technical investigation, should be kept separate. Technical investigations should be boosted

- Investigation bodies should be permanent and independent

- Mandatory publication of investigation reports

...Privatisation: no justification

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The police keep a watchful eye on all trade unionists who visit Turkey, and state interference and restrictions in areas of basic workers' rights (such as the right to strike) are still in place. The Turkish government must remove these restrictions as soon as possible if it wishes to establish its credentials in the world community as a democratic state.

The seminar was opened by Hava-Is Chairman Atilay Ayçin who presented an overview on the impact of privatisation and globalisation in Turkey, and its negative effects on Turkish workers.

"They are hanging the people and giving them the freedom to kick the bucket," said Ayçin.

"We wish to discuss the dimensions of this disaster and determine our joint aims for our fight and solidarity," he said.

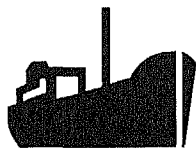
The union — by organising this seminar and other events against privatisation — is reaching out to the rest of the Turkish trade union movement and to the Opposition to create a broad front against the policies of privatisation. The academic papers presented to the seminar were unanimous in their condemnation of the politics of privatisation. The academics who spoke clearly condemned privatisation as a philosophically groundless myth.

The seminar heard from Richard Flint about the ITF's experiences of privatisation worldwide in all the transport industries.

"Of the hundreds of example of port privatisation, railway privatisation, urban transport privatisation and civil aviation privatisation, I can clearly say that none of them has been beneficial to workers in that industry," said Flint. He concluded by comparing the developments in the world of shipping with what is happening in other transport industries today. The ITF's experience of total deregulation and privatisation in the maritime industry (the flag of convenience system) have clearly provided us with a grim picture of the potential future for the other transport industries. Flint called upon the trade unions to seek alliances with the environmental movement and other forces within society to fight for regulation and public involvement in transport.

Ultimately, he said, these alliances must be backed up by the willingness of workers in the transport industries to defend their own interests through industrial action and to support workers in other countries.

A question and answer session followed, in which participants discussed macro-economics and the many barriers that exist to trade between Turkey and the European Community.



SEAFARERS

Junta kidnaps Burmese seafarers in Singapore airport

What happened to the former crew of the *Angelic Faith* in Singapore airport on July the 3rd?

The eleven Burmese seafarers serving on board the Greek flag bulk carrier *Angelic Faith* had received assistance from the ITF when their vessel docked in Dalrympoe Bay, Queensland. Industrial action by the ITF-affiliated Maritime Union of Australia resulted in a backpay settlement, in line with the Greek collective agreement, of nearly US\$100,000.

As is all too common in such cases, the crew were threatened by the Burmese authorities with forcible repatriation to

Burma. Their backpay was put in a safe account for them, and repatriation was arranged from Australia to Thailand via Singapore.

The crew arrived in Singapore, on Australian Qantas airline flight QF051, on the 3rd of June.

What then happened has now become an international diplomatic incident, with the Government of Singapore publicly accusing Qantas airline and the Burmese dictatorship of infringing its sovereignty. It is clear that the crew members were effectively kidnapped and returned forcibly to Burma.

On the 31st of August, Mr. Lau Ping Sum, a member of the Singaporean Parliament, asked the Minister for Home Affairs to inform the House if the government was investigating the circumstances under which 11 airline passengers were intercepted at the airport and sent to Burma.

The Home Affairs Minister S. Jayakumar told Parliament that the Burmese Embassy had persuaded Qantas airways staff in Singapore and private airport security guards to help seize and hold the 11 seafarers on the 3rd of June. The government said that the seafarers were kept at the airport until June 7th, when they were put

on a flight to Rangoon, Burma's capital.

The Singaporean government claimed to have known nothing of this incident until they held a subsequent investigation. Even though the seafarers were held at the airport for four days, the Singaporean police, immigration officers and civil aviation authorities "were not involved" and weren't aware the men were being held.

The Minister told the Singaporean Parliament that the day before the flight arrived, the first secretary of the Burmese Embassy in Singapore had received a request from the Chairman of the Star Corporation Shipping Company,

representing the seafarers' employers, asking him to help in repatriating the seafarers to Burma. The first secretary subsequently received instructions from the Burmese Foreign Ministry to assist in repatriating the seafarers, the Minister told Parliament. He stated that when the seafarers arrived, the first Secretary got the Qantas airport duty Manager to assist him to detain the passports of the eleven seafarers and to hold the men until their departure to Rangoon.

The Singaporean Parliament were told that the actions of the first secretary were illegal. "The seamen had not been prohibited by Singaporean immigration from landing in Singapore, they would have been allowed to enter Singapore had they wished to do so."

The Minister stated that the actions of the airport security officers, who he stated acted solely on the request of Qantas and the Burmese Embassy were unsatisfactory and that they will be reviewing their future procedures. The Singaporean government "takes a very serious view of this incident. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has formally protested to the Myanmar

"The seamen had not been prohibited by Singaporean immigration from landing in Singapore, they would have been allowed to enter Singapore had they wished to do so."

Continued on page 10

Spanish unions protest at Moroccan stowaways' treatment

Spanish trade unionists from the ITF-affiliated federations FETT-UGT and FETCOMAR-CC.OO. have been involved in an unusual stowaway case.

Ten Moroccan boys, aged from ten to 16, stole aboard the Spanish-flag cargo ship *Eva del Mar* when she called in the port of Casablanca.

The eleven crew members found six of them huddled amongst the container cargo some hours later, and on the vessel's arrival in the port of Valencia, the Spanish police found four more.

Two of the boys tried to throw themselves overboard, but were quickly pulled out of the water.

"They had only been given pieces of bread and sausage to eat. They can't eat pork, so they'd been surviving on dry bread," said a spokesman for the FETT-UGT.

The boys had been enclosed in a room four square metres, and when they tried to escape, the crew had soldered the door.

The boys, who originally claimed to be Palestinians, eventually said they wanted to escape the terrible living conditions they suffered at home.

Despite the boys' situation, the ship's master decided to sail for Barcelona, eight hours away. The trade unionists staged a protest, to no avail.

Local government representatives affirmed that they would allow the ship to return to Casablanca from Barcelona as planned.

Remembrance service for seafarers

Serving and retired seafarers are reminded that an inter-denominational service of remembrance and thanksgiving, at which seafarers of all nations are heartily welcome, will be held in Liverpool on Sunday November 14.

Included in the order of service will be a special act of remembrance for all those merchant seafarers who have given their lives in the course of their profession, in times of peace and war.

Those wishing to attend should note that the service will be held in Liverpool's *Roman Catholic* cathedral, starting at 3pm.

...Qantas denies involvement

Continued from page 9

Embassy over the actions in conduct of their first secretary in this affair."

Qantas, on the other hand, deny involvement in the incident. In a letter to the Australia-Burma Council, the airline states that on the basis of a verbal request from the Burmese officials to assist the group with some documentary irregularities prior to their arrival in Singapore and also a copy of a letter to the Singapore Immigration Authorities, Qantas allowed Embassy officials to talk to the passengers before they disembarked from the aircraft. Before the Burmese officials could enter the Singapore airport terminal, Qantas says that they were issued with an appropriate security pass by the airport police.

Qantas claims to be an innocent bystander in the entire affair. The airline states categorically that it did not assist the officials of the Burmese Embassy other than by allowing them on the aircraft to speak with the passengers. They say that they did not pay for any confinement of the seafarers in Singapore. According to ITF civil aviation affiliates in Australia, the crew serving on the Qantas flight report that on arrival in Singapore, the aircraft was met by airport security officers and was asked that the group disembark together and enable officers to speak to

them. This was arranged by the air crew. The men congregated briefly in the aero bridge and were then escorted away by security. There was no Qantas manager in attendance, according to the crew. And the men did not appear agitated. The crew report no other official types being in the area and did not consider the incident unusual as such procedures occur often in Singapore.

Reports appear to agree on one point, that is the involvement of the airport security officers. The Singaporean government appear to be stating that the officers acted without proper authority and such behaviour will not be permitted in the future. The fact that such a well-organised government as Singapore could allow such freelance activities by its own security staff, does, however, seem highly unusual.

The ITF continues its worldwide campaign against the Burmese dictatorship and support for the opposition in that country.

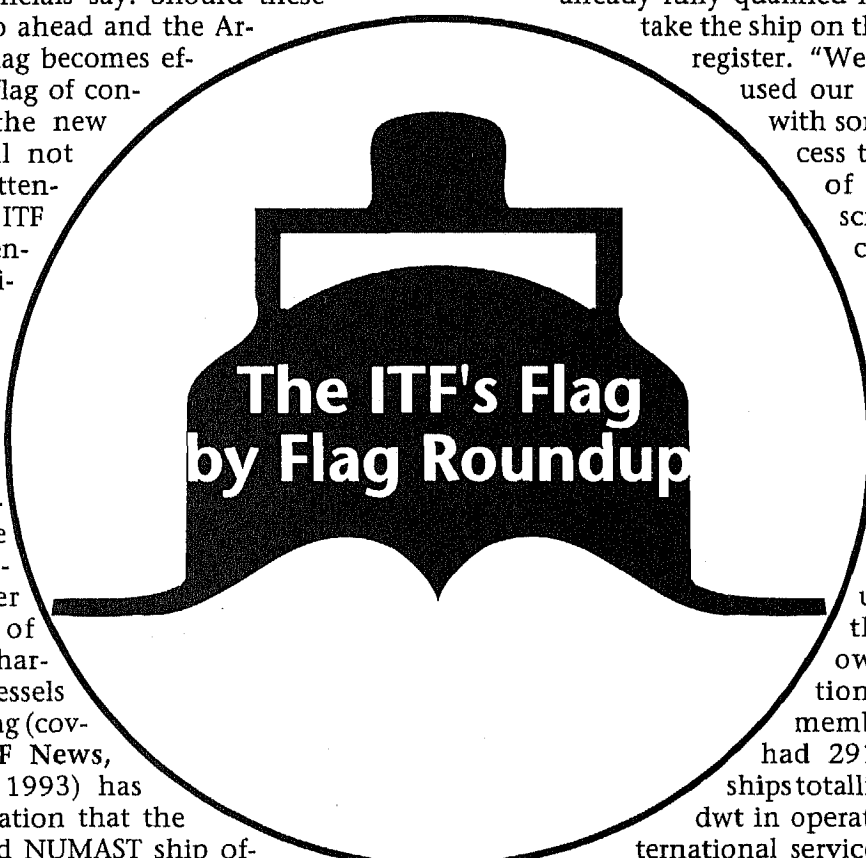
*NB *Myanmar* is the Junta's official name for Burma, and *Yangon* their name for the capital city, Rangoon. The ITF — in solidarity with the Burmese opposition — refuses to use this new name which has been selected solely by the military dictatorship.

Argentinian register to become a flag of convenience?

The Argentinian administration is proposing, as part of the marine restructuring, new regulations that will allow foreign owners to register their ships easily under the Argentinian flag. Restrictions on crew levels, insurance, tax and other regulations will, apparently, be lifted, government officials say. Should these measures go ahead and the Argentinian flag becomes effectively a flag of convenience, the new register will not escape the attention of the ITF and its Argentinian affiliates.

The British government plans to introduce flag of convenience type operations under the guise of bareboat chartering of vessels in the UK flag (covered in ITF News, September 1993) has been a situation that the ITF-affiliated NUMAST ship officers' union has been very active in combating. NUMAST Deputy General Secretary Derek Bond has written to the ITF about his union's actions regarding this draft legislation. Although the union has been unable completely to block this legislation, in liaison with Opposition Shipping Spokesperson Joan Walley, they were successful in getting an amendment to the law which prevented owners from obtaining dual registration of vessels that bareboat charter out. This amendment was sought to prevent the avoidance of UK safety requirements. At NUMAST's instigation, Joan Walley also sought and obtained assurances from the Minister concerned that full UK safety requirements, including manning, would be applied to ships bareboat chartered in and being placed on the "secondary" UK register. The draft regulations stemming from the Bill which has introduced this registration provision are now subject to a consultation process. NUMAST comments have been sought by the British Department of Transport, and they have sought specific assurances that the

health and safety measures contained in the draft legislation will be interpreted in accordance with the Minister's undertaking. The proposed regulation that is currently drafted would only permit the placing of the bareboat chartered ship on the UK register if the owner was already fully qualified in all respects to take the ship on the "primary" UK register. "We have therefore used our best endeavours with some concrete success to avoid the sort of problems described in the article," says Bond.



The Japanese flag component of the Japanese controlled shipping fleet has fallen below 30 per cent for the first time, according to figures released by the Japan Shipowners' Association (JSA). The 67 members of the JSA had 291 Japanese flag ships totalling 24.28 million dwt in operation for their international services on the 1st of

April 1993. These vessels represented 29.9 per cent of the total merchant fleet in operation by the companies. According to the JSA, the association members control a total of 1,793 vessels. Panamanian flags of convenience top the list of foreign registered ships with the total of 766, followed by Liberia with 214. There were also 165 ships of Filipino registry and 65 Singaporean flag ships.

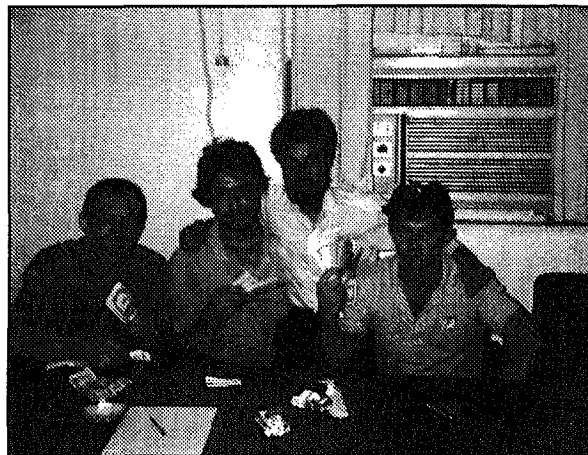
The head of the Panamanian Flag of convenience register, Luis Fabrega, has resigned mysteriously. It is rumoured that Mr. Fabrega has political aspirations. Under Panamanian law, an individual must be a private citizen for a period of six months before announcing a candidacy for electoral office. Sources cited by the American based International Ship Registry Review claim his resignation was mainly prompted by personal considerations, but add that frustration with "the bureaucracy and multitude of special interests associated with the flag" had hastened his decision.

Bombay action delivers US\$16,555 to Croatian crew

— ITF FOC CAMPAIGN NEWS —

The Croatians on the St. Vincent flag *Losinj* had not received any pay for between two and four months when they arrived in Bombay, India on the 7th of August. Abdul Gani Serang from the ITF-affiliated National Union of Seafarers of India (NUSI) visited the crew on the 7th of August. He talked to the crew and was assured that, apart from the non-payment of wages, other conditions on board were satisfactory. On Monday the 9th of August, Serang visited the vessel again. Three crew members came forward and expressed their faith in the ITF and their desire for backpay and repatriation as soon as possible. They had completed their contracts. Serang entered into discussions with the Captain and the owner's representative. He asked them to arrange the backpay and repatriate crew members from Bombay. The owner's representative initially stated that he was unable to do so, because it was, he claimed, very difficult to get money out from Croatia (where the owners are from) and that it was easier to pay the crew in the next port (Dubai). Serang instructed the crew members to close the hatches and asked the port workers to stop loading the vessels. When this was done, and the owner's representative realised that his ship would not leave until he had settled, and he gave in. On Tuesday, 10th of August, the three crew members were signed off the vessel and put up in the five star Intercontinental Hotel. In the meantime the agent was asked to arrange for the backpay and the repatriation. On Wednesday, the 11th of August, the crew was paid a total of US\$16,555 in back wages and flown back to Croatia.

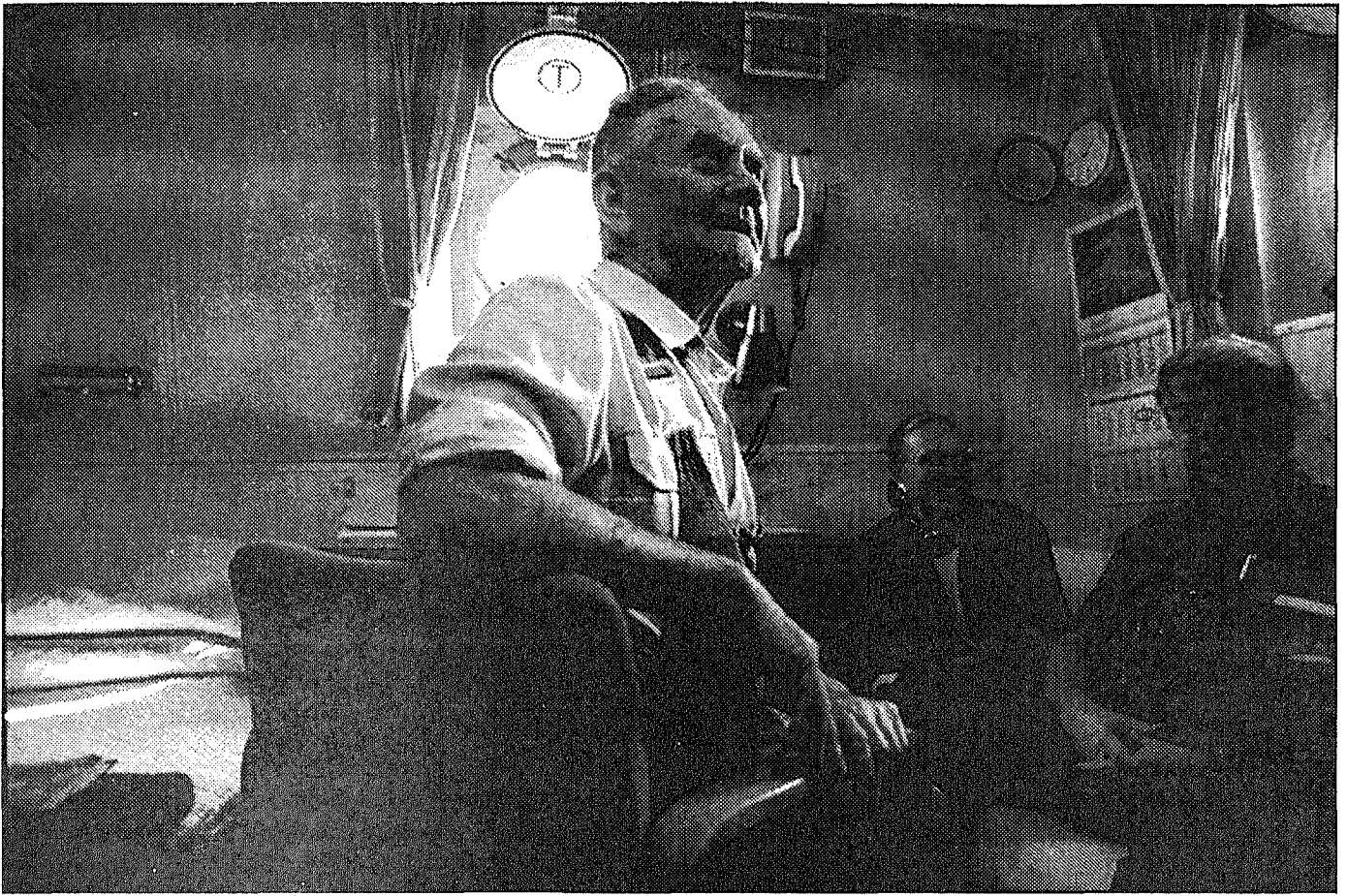
The ITF is having to deal increasingly with the problem of bankrupt and abandoned Russian crews from vessels with questionable ownership. The Russian flag *Lira* is currently laid up in Kotka, Finland, where it has been for four months. A court in Murmansk, Russia, has decided that the vessel is owned by its previous company, due to the fact that the company who purchased the vessel did not pay the selling price. The case is now being appealed. ITF Finnish Inspector Lauri Heinonen is handling the crew's wage claims and is sceptical that there will be a court decision in the near future. The Finnish Seamen's Union is now trying to secure the arrest of the vessel in order to obtain the wages for the crew. This process of confiscation would be a precedent in Finland due to the fact that no Russian or Soviet vessel has ever faced such a procedure. The process is complicated because of a mutual agreement that such confiscations are forbidden, unless they are taken within 30 days time limit of the vessel arriving



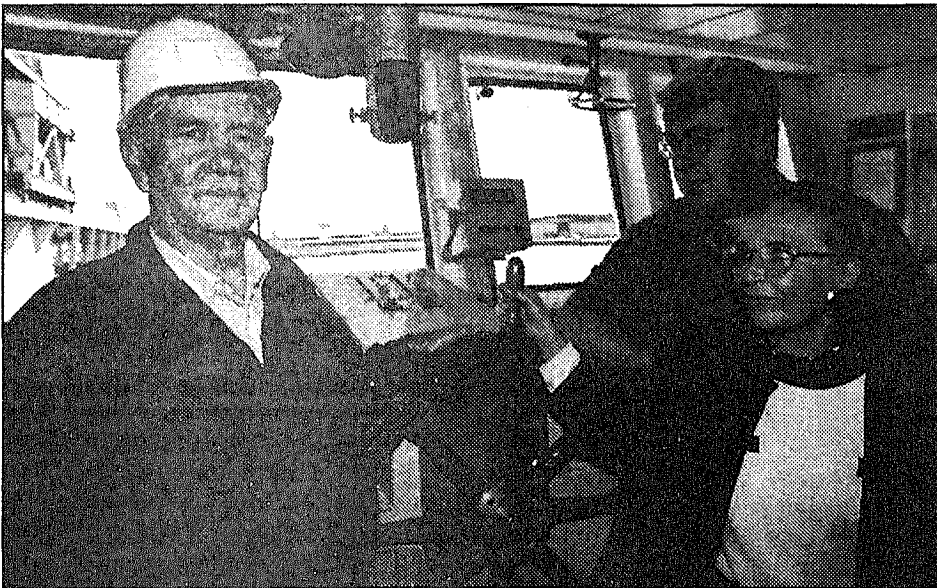
The *Losinj* crew and Abdul Serang in Bombay.

in port. The only crew on the ship are the captain and the second engineer. Captain Ivan Skorbiche has been having a lonely time since they arrived. The captain has not received any wages, but he is determined to stay on board until the matter is settled. "My wife in St. Petersburg asked me to come home regardless of the money, but I will stay put. The *Lira* is worth over \$1 million and it cannot be left without a watchman," said Skorbiche. The vessel was built in Yugoslavia in 1988. Unfortunately, the case of the *Lira* is all too common. Heinonen says that Russian vessels are now occupying more and more of the time of the ITF Inspectorate in Finland.

Dimitrios Mitas, a Cypriot shipowner, who is Managing Director of BSR Ship Management, and also operates a Latvian company called Mit-Ocean Shipping, is attempting to make a name for himself as a major champion of shipowners. Earlier this year he wrote a long letter to the British Archbishop of Canterbury (the Head of the Anglican Church) in which he accused the Anglican Church of "living off immoral earnings" because Anglican Seafarers' Missions accepted grants from the ITF Seafarers' Trust. In his opinion, accepting money from the ITF trust, constituted dealing with the devil. Mitas claims to have begun an ITF blacklisting service for shipowners. In May 1993 he circulated shipowners with a letter in which he stated "in our desire to offer shipowners and managers maximum possible protection from prospective ITF troublemakers, we are initiating a warning service of all such troublemakers who may come to our attention". He invites shipowners to provide him with information about seafarers who had used the ITF in any way and offers to circulate their names and photographs free of charge to 3,904 shipowners on his mailing list. "Please send us your contributions and letters to

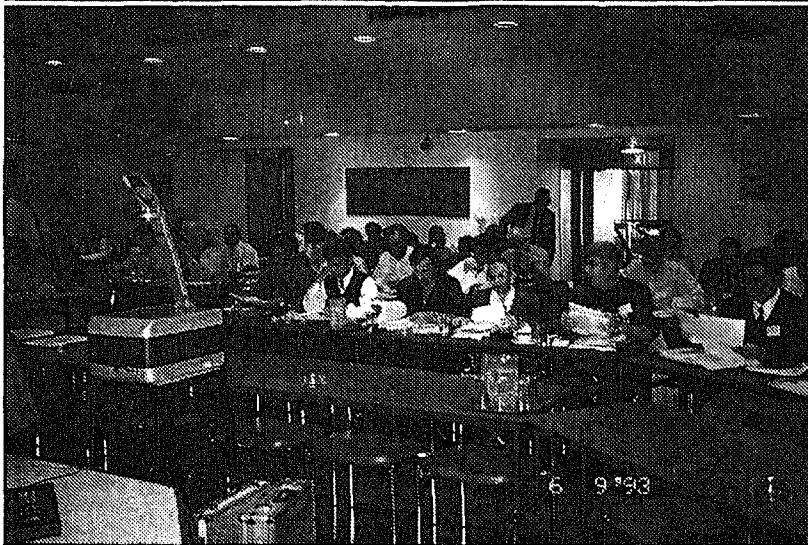
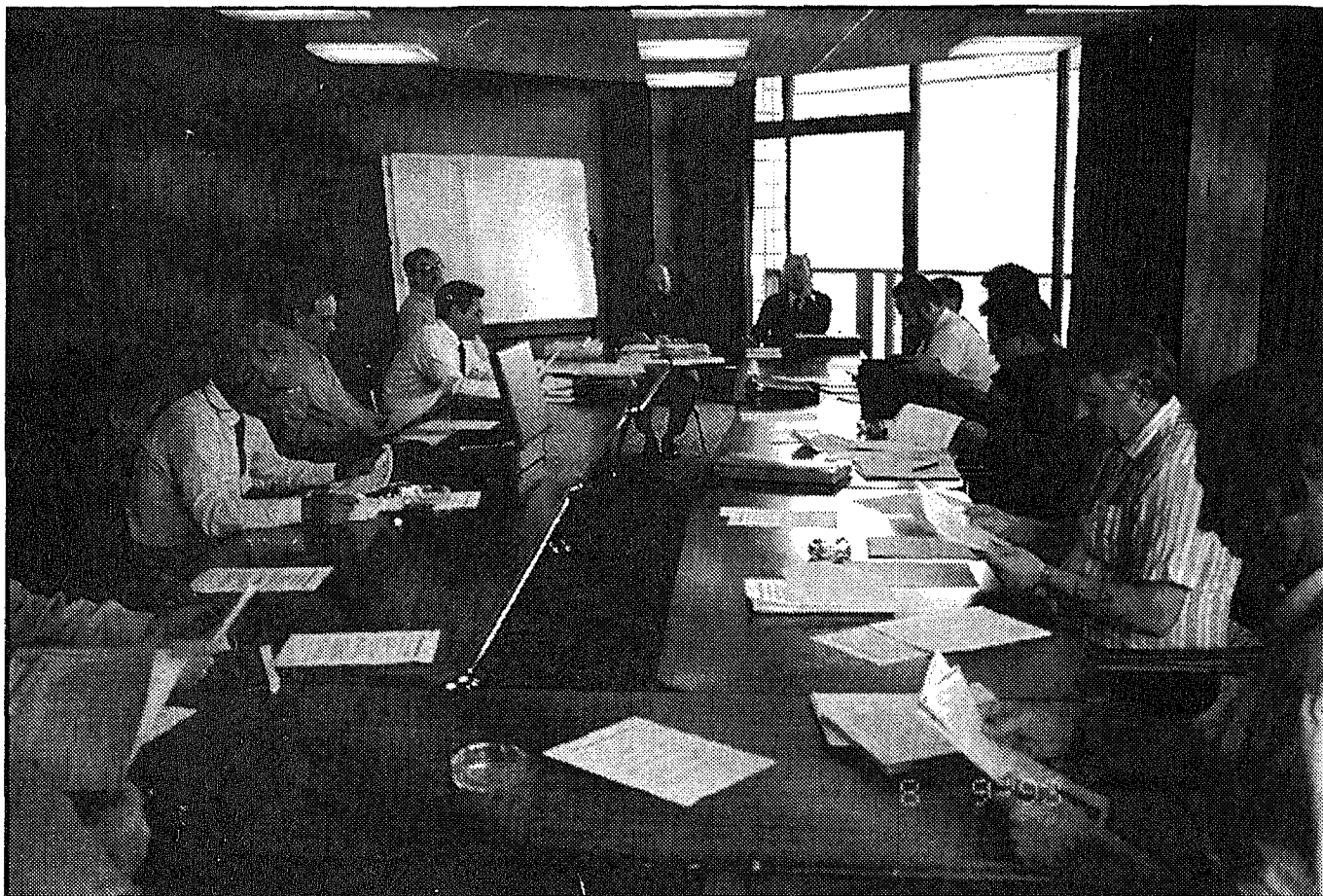


Above and left, Captain Ivan Skorbiche on the *Lira* in Kotka with ITF Inspectors Jatta Moilanen and Lauri Heinonen.



protect our mutual interest from known dangerous elements," he says. At least one of these circulars contains inaccurate information, in which a number of seafarers who have requested repatriation in line with their contract and received it, without any ITF action in respect of a new agreement or conditions, were cited as being "ITF troublemakers". Mitas has told *Lloyd's List* newspaper that he is prepared to go to court or submit to arbitration and pay compensation to the seafarers if he is proved wrong. Respectable shipowners are completely opposed to the principle of blacklisting which is a fundamental violation of the freedom of association — the right to join a trade union and to engage in collective action for the purposes of improving

wages and working conditions is a right enshrined in International Labour Organisation Conventions 87 and 98. The International Shipping Federation (ISF) — the international shipowners' organisation — is firmly opposed to blacklisting and opposes restrictions on freedom of association. Mitas is no stranger to the ITF. He has concluded ITF acceptable agreements for a number of his ships which it would appear he has not honoured. He promised the Polish crew of one ship that he owned an ITF Solidarity agreement, but, in the end, failed to pay them full rates. He has also applied to the ITF for ITF agreement coverage on a Cyprus flag ship that he operates.



ITF Inspectors' seminar

The ITF Inspectorate — comprising representatives from most of the world's ports — met for the annual ITF Inspectors' seminar in Eastbourne, England from 6th to 10th of September.

The annual seminar provides an opportunity for ITF Inspectors and members of the Special Seafarers' Department to meet, discuss, and exchange views about the ITF Flag of convenience campaign. The seminar is an educational experience, and provides a vital and practical link between ITF Inspectors and to the Secretariat. Participants met in plenary sessions and workshops, where they dealt with various aspects of the interpretation of ITF policy. Practical implementation of the campaign in various areas was discussed in detail. Inspectors were also provided with a view of the prototype of the new ITF computer system, which, eventually, will provide direct access for inspectors worldwide to ITF ship information. The photographs appearing with this article on the seminar were taken by ITF German inspector Ali Memon — well-known to regular readers of ITF News.



INLAND TRANSPORT

AIRF victory: strike called off as Indian government backs down

Indian railway workers have won an important victory, wresting major concessions from the government on their key demands, and have called off a national rail strike set for October twelfth (see *ITF News*, August 1993).

Faced with the threat of an indefinite stoppage by 1.6 million rail workers, the government has finally agreed to set up a Fifth Pay Commission with the task of revising rail pay scales.

This move has been welcomed by the ITF-affiliated All-India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) as setting a timetable for much-needed improvements in the industry's pay structure. It is also pleased with the decision to grant most railway workers an extra Rupees 100 a month as an interim payment pending the Commission's report.

Rail pay has fallen back sharply over recent years and AIRF General Secretary J P Chaubey had complained bitterly that the Fourth Pay Commission recommendation in 1986 that wage rates should be revised periodically had never been implemented.

As part of the settlement, more rail employees are to receive an annual productivity bonus. Previously it was paid only to those earning below Rupees 3,500 a month.

While a ceiling remains, this has been raised to Rupees 4,500, bringing more employees within its scope.

Older rail workers nearing retirement are also beneficiaries as twenty per cent of the cost-of-living allowance will in future be counted as pay when calculating the end of service gratuity.

Croatians strike for prompt wage payments

Croatian train drivers went on strike on September first to press for prompt payment of their wages, insisting that with high inflation it was vital that they were paid on time.

Their union, the ITF-affiliated Railroad Engineers' Trade Union of Croatia (Sindikata Strojnog Osoblja Hrvatske — SSOH), was also demanding negotiations on a separate collective agreement for Croatian Railways, taking its members out of

the public sector agreement.

The strike was called off after three days when the rail management gave the union certain assurances, which will now be carefully monitored.

Meanwhile, the SSOH has asked us to thank all the many railwaymen's affiliates who sent messages to the Croatian authorities urging them to help promote a speedy settlement.

British Rail privatisation begins with Gatwick Express service

The privatisation of British railways has begun

From next month the first "shadow franchises" will begin operation as separate financial entities in preparation for complete privatisation within the next year.

One of the first services to be hived off will be the London Victoria to Gatwick airport shuttle service, known as the Gatwick Express. This new "shadow franchise" will employ 420 workers and a new management team.

The Gatwick Express service has been chosen for primary privatisation because it has been

considered as a "profitable" service. In fact, the Gatwick Express link makes a modest profit, because it pays nothing for the use of track from British Rail, and needs to pay none of the overall infrastructure costs. With privatisation this will change.

The Gatwick Express service will have to pay for track and signalling to British Rail until next April, when the new Railtrack Authorities come into existence.

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Integrated urban transport approach for Stockholm region agreed

A committee appointed in 1988 by the Swedish Ministry of Transport to research the effects of traffic on public health and the environment in metropolitan areas agreed that automobile traffic in large cities leads to congestion and air and noise pollution. The work of the Metropolitan Traffic Committee resulted in the establishment of a five point interactive programme aimed at improving city environments. Necessary measures include: reinforced regional and municipal planning, upgraded and expanded public transport, new traffic routes to solve local problems, restricting car traffic, and more stringent exhaust requirements for cars and heavy goods vehicles.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT IN STOCKHOLM COUNTY

Since the end of World War II, the greater Stockholm region has experienced a rapid increase in the use of private cars, a trend not likely to decrease in the future, according to current studies. This has led to inner city environmental problems, especially polluted air, but also to such things as limited accessibility, overloaded access roads, and a growing need for reinvestment in both public transport as well as in road maintenance, and a diminished confidence in public transport. In view of the current situation, and following the guidelines established by the Metropolitan Traffic Committee, the Social Democratic, Conservative and Liberal par-

ties of the Stockholm region reached a region-specific agreement in 1991 designed at ameliorating the area's environmental and traffic congestion problems, with the long term goal of enhancing the region's potential for economic development.

Initial costing of the agreement called for an investment of Skr 36 billion in the region's traffic system over a 15 year period, with the regional municipalities and the State government sharing the financial responsibilities. Expansion and enhancement of the roads will be financed through fees imposed on motorists using these roads, while the upgrading of the public transport system will be secured by a State government investment of Skr 3.8 billion.

At the beginning of September, the Swedish National Road Administration presented new figures calculating a 20 per cent increase on original estimates for road costs. This complicates the agreement because it means road costs will be higher than public transport — a basic point in the original agreement was equality between road and public transport costs.

The local authorities in the region have now decided to ask an external consultant to check the new figures and propose how to finance the extra costs.

The agreement is the most comprehensive transport package ever decided upon as a single

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...Privatisation of service may fail

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It is estimated that there will need to be at least 150 legal agreements concluded between the Gatwick Express service and British rail. Passenger fares will increase, and services will deteriorate on the line.

British Rail had trouble in convincing railway workers to transfer to the new service. They are having to train new drivers, because according to the ITF-affiliated ASLEF drivers' union, British Rail drivers have failed to volunteer for transfer to the new company. "It is completely ridiculous to think that we have trained drivers to do the job, while Gatwick Express is having to train young inexperienced people," said Lew Adams, Assistant General Secretary of ASLEF.

The prospects for this new service under privatisation are grim. The Gatwick Express service has been specifically selected by the government as a first trial of privatisation because it is seen as an ideal candidate for privatisation,

currently generating a small profit of around two million Pounds a year. Once it has to pay for its infrastructure, and once it has been competing with cheaper suburban services from the airport, it is highly likely that the service will no longer be profitable. Opposition British Labour Transport spokesman Brian Wilson points out "at present it is profitable because passengers are guided towards it. But if all that is thrown up in the air, the likely first consequence of privatisation is that the Gatwick Express would require a subsidy before anyone will take it over".

Few companies have expressed any interest in purchasing any parts of British Rail. The British Airports Authority — the private company which runs Britain's airports — has already categorically stated that they are not interested in the Gatwick Express service.

The Opposition Labour Party have already pledged to renationalise British Rail if they come to power.

...Union opposes introduction of road tolls

Continued from page 16

decision in the Stockholm region — a long term agreement, all projects are defined and there exists for the plan a time schedule, financial support as well as a broad political majority.

Improvement in traffic conditions in the greater Stockholm area is aimed at ultimately leading to increased economic development, not only in the intermediate region, but for the entire country. With a population of 1.6 million inhabitants, the greater Stockholm region (Stockholm County) plays a vital part in the national economy. It is the centre for the development of knowledge and new technology, especially for the significant company orientated service sector. The regularity of land transport operations to and from sea ports and airports is dependent on the region's traffic system.

UPGRADING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The improvement of the public transport system is the cornerstone of the agreement. Planned improvements include the enhancement of rail traffic in the Mälars Valley (greater Stockholm area) through regional train systems with commuter trains running at a 15 minute daytime frequency rate; the modernisation and expansion of the present underground rail system; the establishment of a light rail system around the inner city with the expansion of cross-connec-

tion possibilities; the implementation of a core network in the centre of Stockholm where public transport will be given exclusive street space and priority at signal-controlled intersections (originally designed for bus traffic, new constructions will be devised to facilitate future development of trolley buses or light rail services), and the refurbishment of stations, stops and transfer terminals, including the creation of more "Park and Ride" facilities.

Upgrading the road structure includes the construction of an orbital route around the inner city as well as external cross-links, connecting important regional points. The construction and maintenance of these roads will be financed through the collection of tolls and other road fees along the routes, beginning in 1996.

SWEDISH TRANSPORT WORKERS' UNION RESPONSE

Hans Wahlström, President of the Swedish Transport Workers' Union reports that the Union agrees on the necessity of the orbital routes being built around the city: "Currently we are experiencing heavy congestion in many parts of the inner city, which leads to poor working conditions for transport workers and difficult accessibility, not to mention the ill effects of city traffic on the environment." The Union declares however, that they are not in favour of toll fees imposed on cars coming into the city.



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

5-7 October	African Railway Workers' Conference	Accra
18 October	Management Committee	London
19-20 October	Executive Board	London
26-27 October	Asia/Pacific Railway Workers' Seminar	Tokyo
26-27 October	Cabin Crew Technical Committee	Berlin
1-2 November	Maritime Safety Committee	London
5 November	Offshore Steering Committee	London
8-10 November	Civil Aviation Section Committee	London
11 November	Ground Staff Technical Committee	London
16-18 November	African Seafarers' and Dockers' Seminar	Nairobi
17-19 November	Tourism Services Section Conference	Granada
30 November	Inland Navigation European Regional Committee	Geneva
1-2 December	Inland Navigation Section Conference	Geneva
6-8 December	African Women's Conference	Abidjan
9-10 December	ITF/Brussels Committee/PTTI Meeting on International Integrators	Berlin
14 December	Channel Tunnel	Coquelles
14-16 December	African Civil Aviation Conference	Kampala
27-28 January	Asia/Pacific Civil Aviation Conference	Hong Kong



CIVIL AVIATION

The state of European aviation

Crisis is a popular word to apply to the aviation industry, but how else could European aviation be described?

Airline strategies for dealing with a drop in demand have been to enter destructive fares wars and discounting (this may all sound very familiar to workers in the United States).

A bitter transatlantic fares war pushed earnings on these routes down by 12 per cent in 1992, according to the Association of European Airlines.

Discounted fares account for an increasing proportion of passengers on all routes. 68 per cent of passengers flying on routes within Europe are riding on discount fares, a rise of 3.5 per centage points.

There is massive overcapacity. Unsold capacity in Europe last year was double the level of the mid eighties. Over all airline losses for 1992 were \$2.5 billions. It is under these conditions that

the European Community has introduced liberalisation.

Aviation workers in Europe know the effects of this crisis. AEA member airlines cut their workforce by 15,500 in 1992. Much worse is to come. Sabena, Aer Lingus and TAP are struggling for survival. Air France announced in September that it is to cut 4,000 more jobs as "a first step". The majority of European airlines are calling for some form of re-regulation, though notably not in the area of social protection. Nevertheless, Sabena Chairman Pierre Godfroid told the European Commission's Comité des Sages that demands for cutting employee costs are becoming "indecent".

Yet the response of the European Commission and the European governments to combat this indecency is a set of committees and emergency meetings which attract a high level of media attention while doing nothing.

The trade union response

The world aviation industry is in crisis. This has led to a rash of investigating commissions aimed at solving the industry's problems.

In the United States a 90 day National Commission has already come out with its recommendations. In Europe, the European Commission's Comité des Sages (Committee of Experts) on aviation has been holding hearings in Brussels.

On September 9 the Comité des Sages invited union organisations to speak at their hearing. Presentations were made by ITF Acting General Secretary David Cockroft, and the Secretary of the Committee of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Community Hugues de Villèle.

Below we reproduce an abridged version of the presentation made by David Cockroft, which puts forward concrete proposals for the European Commission to use its powers to assist the industry and protect working conditions.

It is obvious to any informed observer that there is something very wrong with the state of the civil aviation industry today and that the problems are far from being restricted to the consequences of creating a single internal aviation market for EC carriers. The financial situation of most major EC airlines is disastrous, and the workers in the industry face an unprecedented series of attacks on their employment security, working conditions and basic social rights.

The aviation unions have never opposed the principle of open and fair competition, but they have consistently warned the Commission and the Council of Ministers about the dangers of liberalising the market without taking adequate steps to harmonise the conditions in the industry. The result is competition based almost entirely on the reduction of labour costs using a range of ever more innovative measures, all of which are based on the principle of social dumping.

SOCIAL DUMPING IS GLOBAL

The ease with which aircraft crews and aircraft are able to move across national boundaries makes social dumping easier in civil aviation than in almost any other industry, with the single exception of shipping, an industry in which the ITF has over 50 years experience in fighting the most evil and exploitative labour practices on the face of this planet. Social dumping in aviation, is like the industry itself, global.

Indeed in reality it is nonsense to talk of a European Community civil aviation industry when most EC carriers have already completed or are in the process of negotiating major alliances and mergers with important carriers in the US, Australia, Latin America, East and Central Europe and elsewhere.

Continued on page 19

...Global "open skies" is nonsense

Continued from page 18

Any solution to the aviation crisis cannot be found in the Community alone but must also involve Community level negotiations with governments in the other key regions of the aviation world. Such negotiations must firmly resist the pressures in favour of the idiotic notion of a global "open skies" policy.

US and European carriers have many grounds for mutual complaint, but neither can ever hope to match the lower labour costs of most of the carriers in South East Asia nor to compensate for that difference by constantly boosting their labour productivity.

Global "open skies" is a dangerous nonsense. Intergovernmental negotiations and reciprocity have been the cornerstone of aeropolitics since the signature of the Chicago Convention and will remain so for many years to come. The gradual substitution of Community for member states' competence in relations with Third World countries is needed in order to provide more equal bargaining power.

A social clause in bilateral agreements, something which the international trade union movement has long argued should be included in GATT agreements, would be one area in which the Community could have a world lead in developing the concept of fair competition.

BINDING CODES OF CONDUCT

You asked in your invitation to this hearing for concrete medium term proposals. As you have already heard, the most pressing response of the aviation trade unions in the Community to this crisis is the declaration of a moratorium on liberalisation measures. Yet even this needs further clarification. Simply freezing the regulatory system as it is today would leave many of the worst problems untouched. Yet returning to the position pre 1 January this year may be considered by some at least as unrealistic.

Let me suggest a third possibility. Let the Commission establish, with the backing of the Council of Ministers, a new small reserve regulatory body charged with intervening whenever prima facie evidence of unfair competition exists. Let that body exercise the powers currently available under the third package to deal with fare dumping, to limit capacity or to restrict market entry.

Let that body have the right to intervene not only in cases of possible environmental damage and infrastructure congestion, but also in cases of potential social disruption. Let the basis of fair competition without social dumping be defined by a series of binding codes of conduct, negotiated between employers and trade unions with the assistance of the Commission, which would

lay down the minimum social conditions applying not only to air carriers but to their subsidiaries and their sub-contractors.

Let such codes of conduct apply to cases where carriers attempt to undermine existing employment conditions by the use of cross border recruitment of aircraft crews or cross border contracting of maintenance, ticketing or other functions, and let them also lay down the minimum entry conditions into the industry.

The ITF and the CIWUEC have presented a coordinated trade union response to the Comité de Sages hearings, aimed at proposing measures to alleviate the industry crisis and protect social conditions. The main measures that unions have called for are:

- an immediate moratorium on all further liberalisation measures
- urgent immediate intervention at both state and Commission level to eliminate the worst effects of liberalisation on the financial condition of a number of airlines
- no further aircraft capacity to be allowed on certain routes
- regulatory measures to prevent suicidal airline price wars
- Community structural funds to assist fleet renewal
- binding codes of conduct to guarantee minimum social conditions and safety standards. Codes of conduct should apply to airline subsidiaries and subcontracted operations and services
- third country air agreements to be negotiated at Community level

SURVIVAL AND GROWTH

Without an effective framework of minimum social conditions, and without urgent action to eliminate the worst effects of liberalisation, there seems little doubt that we shall encounter in aviation, more and more of the evil labour practices of the kind that my organisation does battle with every day in the world's shipping industry.

Faced with the increasing globalisation of the aviation industry, ITF aviation affiliates have been developing their own strategies to ensure that there is a unified response from workers to global alliances and mergers.

They cannot do this alone, however. They need support from public institutions with an interest in the survival and growth of an industry which provides high quality public transport services safely and economically and which provides stable, high-skill, high-wage employment.

Iberia opens dialogue with ITF

Iberia, the Spanish national airline, which also owns large stakes in Viasa in Venezuela and Aerolíneas Argentinas in Argentina, has opened a dialogue with the ITF to discuss aspects of its international labour relations.

Iberia director of International Labour Relations Mr. José Romero met with ITF Acting General Secretary David Cockroft and Stuart Howard of the ITF Civil Aviation Section on September 13 at the ITF office in London.

The meeting followed the ITF-sponsored Iberia Group meeting held in Buenos Aires on July 22 (see *ITF News*, September 1993) which involved all the major unions in the Iberia Group with union representatives from Argentina, Venezuela and Spain. The Buenos Aires meeting was part of the new ITF strategy, set at the 1992 Civil Aviation Section Conference, of responding to airline globalisation by holding international airline group meetings. At Buenos Aires the unions called on Iberia management for a discussion meeting with all Iberia Group unions concerning the future strategy of the company.

The meeting in London between Mr. Romero and the ITF Secretariat allowed both sides to clarify a number of issues. During the meeting, the company offered to open, for the first time, a direct dialogue between unions in the Latin American subsidiary airlines and top level Iberia group management, though only on an airline by airline basis. Up till now the Latin American unions have only been allowed to deal with the local management of Viasa and Aerolíneas Argentinas.

The Iberia management has initially rejected the call for a meeting with all the Iberia Group unions.

However, the company has agreed to a continuing dialogue with the ITF Secretariat in which no option is totally closed off. It was agreed that there should be another meeting between the ITF Secretariat and the Iberia management in Madrid.

The ITF is currently consulting with the unions in the Iberia Group concerning a response to the Iberia management.

European ground handling liberalisation threatens security

The European Commission may use controversial powers to deregulate ground handling services at EC airports.

Karel Van Miert, the European Commissioner in charge of competition, is considering using Article 90 of the EC Treaty which allows the Commission to impose liberalisation on member states.

This would be the first time that Commissioner Van Miert has backed the use of Article 90 in a specific industry sector.

The move comes after a number of airlines have issued complaints against ground handling monopolies at Frankfurt airport, Milan and at Spanish airports.

It would open all EC airports to a rush of competitive bidding for ground handling services. Even airline self handling services would be affected.

Unions say that such a move would bring in to airports sub contract companies, which would have to force down their costs in order to win contracts. This would be done by employing the cheapest most casual labour. Cost cutting would also mean sacrificing aviation security. How many subcontract companies are likely to give baggage handlers any training about the security aspects of their work in an airport? And the presence of a multitude of contractors in the

airport area creates a nightmare for security staff.

The Transport and General Workers' Union in Britain which has experienced this kind of deregulated environment at airports for many years says:

"Contract companies win tenders for such airport services as baggage handling and cleaning by putting in the lowest bid for them. They will not, therefore, willingly take on the extra financial burden imposed by a security culture, such as training for staff.

Private contractors do not have the resources to properly vet their employees. Journalists have demonstrated how easy it can be to gain access to restricted airport areas. In every case they have done this by getting jobs with contract cleaning companies using false references.

Private contract companies are a breach of security. We believe they should be banned from operating in airports or on airlines."

Manfred Maertzke of the ÖTV in Germany where Frankfurt airport is situated says that his union has the same concerns:

"We have real fears that we are going to see contractors whose only concern is to keep costs down. Both employee conditions and airport security are going to be squeezed by the need to win a contract and make a profit."

Aer Lingus unions demand agreement on restructuring

Aer Lingus unions are now in talks with the management and government over the Cahill Plan — a major restructuring exercise. The Irish national carrier is in crisis, currently losing £1 million per week.

After the plan was announced the ITF-affiliated SIPTU demanded that there should be no changes in work practices in the company without union agreement. This was agreed by the company in a letter to SIPTU Civil Aviation Branch Secretary, Paul O'Sullivan, on the structures for negotiations on the company's future. The Labour Relations Commission's Chief Executive, Kieran Mulvey, proposed that:

"Any matters agreed locally, centrally or at conciliation level should be implemented where practicable. Changes, therefore, will not be implemented until they are agreed."

Aer Lingus workers had earlier warned that an attempt by management to steamroll change or to impose compulsory redundancies would result in an immediate ballot for industrial action.

Acceptance by management of this point cleared the way for negotiations to begin on building a viable future for the national airline.

A further obstacle to the start of talks was also removed when the Government reaffirmed its approval of the concept of an employee share-holding in the company along the lines proposed by the Aer Lingus unions.

This had earlier been in doubt when comments by the Minister for Transport, Brian Cowen, were interpreted to indicate a weakening in the Government's commitment to the proposal.

Although negotiations are now in process, the gulf between the two sides remains immense. When management unveiled the detailed implications of the Cahill plan for each department, Aer Lingus staff responded with justifiable anger at the proposals — which includes wage cuts of around 35 per cent for some workers as well as massive job losses.

The detailed implications of the Cahill plan — which have now been tabled by management for negotiation — include:

- the virtual elimination of overtime
- reduced rates of overtime pay
- reduced shift payments and rostered duty allowances

- freedom to use temporary and part-time staff

- further major concessions on flexibility in working patterns; and

- the breaking of a prior commitment to pay an already deferred award of 5.25 per cent — with a complete pay freeze until the end of 1995 (which is to include the non-payment of increments for 1994 and 1995).

These proposed changes in pay and conditions are being sought in addition to the 1,280 redundancies already outlined in the Cahill plan.

It already looks like enough workers have not volunteered for redundancy. Just over 700 workers put themselves forward by the September 24 deadline.

Current talks also include discussions on the contracting out of catering and other ancillary services, as well as a review of overtime and shift payments.

WORKERS' AGENDA

In an initial response to management's "shopping list", the general Branch meeting adopted its own staff agenda, which includes:

- protection of basic pay, overtime rates, shift pay, rostered duty allowances, credit payments and working conditions

- payment of the award and increments

- improved voluntary redundancy/early retirement scheme

- savings to be made in all costs other than members' payroll

- even-handedness in the application of savings — including full disclosure of management's contribution

- no contracting out of services

- agreement with Government on the convertible participating stock in exchange for payroll savings with the Government to honour its full commitment of June 16

Commenting on the detailed proposals from management, Civil Aviation Branch Secretary, Paul O'Sullivan, pointed out that in February Executive Chairman, Bernie Cahill, had described previous proposals — which were only half as severe as the current package — as the absolute maximum beyond which the quality of service and ticket sales would suffer. Yet now the same man maintains that cuts of far greater magnitude are necessary for Aer Lingus' survival.

Unions unite in strike against Air France job cuts

Air France has announced proposed staff cuts of 3,000 ground staff and 1,000 pilots and cabin crew. The carrier has already shed 5,000 staff since 1990. The announcement immediately sparked protest strikes in different parts of the airline. The company is seeking to cut \$910m in costs.

As part of this latest cost saving plan, Air France also intends to seek productivity improvements, a pay freeze and cutbacks in benefits. In addition, there are plans to axe 30 routes and close 15 bases.

Three of the airline's unions the ITF-affiliated FETS-Force Ouvrière, SNPNC and FGTE-CFDT have announced they will not accept compulsory lay offs. The SNPNC is still involved in an ongoing dispute with the company over its violation of a bonus agreement only signed by

the management last March. According to Jean-Paul Meheust of SNPNC "This plan axes jobs but gives no insight on where the future lies", while for the FGTE-CFDT "jobs are an absolute priority, and Air France must safeguard jobs".

One strategy Air France is likely to adopt is to develop Air Inter as a cheap labour short haul subsidiary on the lines of BA's Gatwick operation, by transferring Air France routes to it. The new restructuring plan is the third since 1991.

All Air France unions have called a 24-hour strike for 12 October 1993. They are also seeking a meeting with the Transport Minister on the same day.

"The future of Air France and its employees is at stake. We must put all our efforts into setting an alternative economic and social policy" say the unions in a joint strike communiqué.

"Air traffic controllers re-hired, Frank is retired"

There have been two recent welcome signs that aviation labour relations may improve under the Clinton Administration.

Firstly, the Clinton Administration has removed the ban on the permanent hiring of 11,000 air traffic controllers fired during the controllers' strike of 1981. The air traffic controllers' strike was the first major labour confrontation of the Reagan administration and set the anti-labour tone of the next few years.

It gave a signal from the government to US airline operators that an integral part of airline deregulation was airline de-unionisation. As two US labour academics have noted "...the August 1981 firing by the Federal government of 11,000 striking air traffic controllers and its adamant refusal to rehire them altered the attitudes of unionised employers sharply away from accommodation to unions toward outright opposition or even hostility".

Lane Kirkland AFL-CIO president says Clinton's action "sets a positive tone for labor-management relations" in the 1990s.

Secondly, that other symbol of 80s anti-unionism Frank Lorenzo may be banned from re-entering the airline business.

Lorenzo has been trying to get US Department of Transportation approval for a new start up airline, ATX Inc. (previously named Friendship Airlines). Lorenzo owns 77 per cent of the airline

which wants to fly between Baltimore-Washington and Boston and Atlanta.

His application is already bitterly opposed by US unions who claim he is not a fit person to run an airline.

At hearings last June judge Barton had already ruled that ATX had demonstrated financial fitness and management technical competence. This, however, is not enough and it seems to be Lorenzo's personal arrogance which will cause his downfall.

The judge has complained of frivolous and vexatious motions in Lorenzo's applications. Lorenzo, among other things, has been blaming in court the failure of his previous airlines on union intransigence.

The judge got so tired of Lorenzo's attitude in court and his refusal to accept warnings about his behaviour in the proceedings, that he adjourned the hearings before completion.

The judge says: "If, as I have found, ATX cannot be trusted to comply with the department and the judges orders during the course of this proceeding, it certainly cannot be trusted to comply with federal laws regulating the transportation of passengers and cargo."

James Lindasya a lawyer for ITF-affiliated ALPA says: "It's a hopeful sign for the '90s that the labour warfare of the 80s may be passed. Just as the air traffic controllers were re-hired, Frank is retired."

Alitalia US lock out: Italian unions in solidarity call

An ITF solidarity action has been launched to support members of the IAM involved in a lock out by Alitalia in the United States. ITF-affiliated unions in Italy have asked their members to take action against US-bound Alitalia flights.

Alitalia has locked out 308 cargo handlers and ticket sales personnel employed by the airline to service its operations at US airports.

The lock out affects Alitalia operations in New York City, JFK Airport, Chicago, Boston, Miami, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

The lock out came after the management broke off negotiations with the IAM and announced it would impose cuts in working conditions,

which the union had rejected in a ballot.

Alitalia are insisting that unions accept wage and benefit cuts of 40 per cent; increases in medical insurance deductibles of up to \$1,000 per year, per family; an increase in the number of part time employees by 60 per cent, and the company's unlimited right to subcontract work performed by union members.

Problems between the IAM and Alitalia are not new. The IAM won rights to represent virtually

all of Alitalia's non-management employees in the US in 1952. Since then Alitalia has repeatedly challenged the IAM's representation rights, and repeatedly refused to bargain. The National Mediation Board has several times had to intervene and order Alitalia to treat with the IAM. In

1984, the IAM was forced to take Alitalia to the Federal Court to enforce the terms of the 1952 certification. The current negotiations broke down after eight months of federally mediated contract bargaining.

The IAM says that Alitalia has now made it abundantly clear that it intends to do away with IAM representation entirely. The company has declared its intention to subcontract work. As the IAM says, "This is a familiar death warrant for unionised workers. The company has made it clear that it will use this

"The company's proposals would not give you any pay increase for three years and would lower your standard of living by freezing your wages, cutting your benefits and allowing the work of almost half our members to be contracted out....Why is Alitalia still paying thousands of dollars, per month for management's apartments and homes? Why is Alitalia still paying for management's children's private schooling and, why is Alitalia not cutting management's fully paid medical coverage? Can you afford to live on Fifth Avenue? Can you afford private schooling for your children? Shouldn't you have the same right to medical coverage as Alitalia's management?"

Extract from IAM District 142 notice to union members

'right' to eliminate all union work at its earliest opportunity".

The ITF has given its full support to the IAM and ITF affiliates in Italy have been actively involved in putting pressure on the Alitalia management.

Joseph Adinolfi, chairman of IAM District 142, says: "We stand ready to resume negotiations at any time, but Alitalia's offer and recent actions are clearly unacceptable."

SAS strike in Denmark

The Cabin Attendants' Union (CAU) in Denmark went on strike on August 29 after being presented with 31 pages of demands from the SAS management amounting to cut backs of 30-40 per cent.

The CAU reports the SAS management as saying that "if cabin and flying staff are provoked

into a conflict, we could close the airports and break them once and for all".

In fact the strike prompted the company to settle with the union in a deal which agreed to no salary increases for two years, no increase in working hours and some changes to hotel arrangements.

Airline crew members suffer high rate of occupational injuries

A 1992 US report has found that the injury rate per 100 full-time workers for US airline employees was 13 per cent, compared with an average of 8.6 per cent in private sector industries, "an indication of the hazardous nature of the airline industry".

The report, entitled "Safety and Health Experience of Pilots and Flight Attendants", says that during the period between 1978 and 1988, there was no significant change in the rate. The report, which examined 1988 statistical data on occupational injuries and illnesses of pilots and flight attendants, said that the lost work-day rate and the injury-severity rate were each nearly double that of the average in the private sector; typical recuperation time in the airline industry was 17 work days per case.

The 1988 data (the most recent year for which data were available) were compiled by the US Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS) on workers in the "transportation by air" category, and included an analysis of lost work days in workers' compensation claims from 14 states; complete data from other states were not available.

The report noted a variety of limitations in the data that prevented descriptions of the injuries

and illnesses with "great precision". The data included aircraft crash-related injuries and illnesses, but, because crashes were and — remain — rare, the vast majority of lost work-day cases were caused by everyday on the job factors, said the report. The report also said that "the same conditions that cause occupational injuries and illnesses in the airline industry may prove harmful to passengers".

The report says that sprains and strains are the most common (46 per cent) form of injury to cabin crew.

The most common injury source is from handcars. "Air pressure" was the second most common source of injury. The most common cause of injuries was "overexertion" resulting from pushing and pulling objects and lifting objects. The body parts most frequently injured are back and shoulders and hand and neck.

The report notes that a crew member who is preoccupied by preparation for an upcoming flight or who has just disembarked following a full day (or night) of flying, may, through diminished alertness, be more susceptible to an accident. Inattention, fatigue and poor lighting contribute to accidents.

Airport workers suffer acute levels of hearing injuries

A recent study in Madras has found that nearly 60 per cent of employees working in a high-noise environment at Madras airport have varying degrees of hearing loss.

Dr. P.V. Rajender Kumar, professor of audiology and Dr. G. Arjun, retired professor of neurology at the Government General Hospital tested 14 persons from a large number of workers such as catering staff, crew and handlers, who are regularly exposed to the loud noise of aeroplane engines during take-off and landing.

Details of the age, period of service and length of exposure to the noise were analysed, followed by exhaustive ear, nose and throat (E.N.T.), neurological and audiological examination.

While no noise-related ENT or neurological complications were reported, the audiological

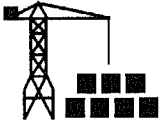
study recorded abnormalities in the audiograms of eight of the 14 tested.

All had hearing loss confined to high frequencies from 4 kilohertz (KHZ) to 8 KHZ, indicating noise trauma which was higher in those with longer years of service.

EAR PROTECTORS

The study also noted that though the workers were advised by their employers to wear ear protectors, most of them did not do so. The doctors also cautioned persons with symptoms of early trauma not to continue working in the same environment.

The Madras team is conducting another study on a group of 3,500 people constantly exposed to noise.



DOCKERS

Baltic dockers agree strategy for port training

A strategy for port training in the Baltic has been developed by trade unions from the region.

Portworkers from the Baltic Sea's cargo and fish terminals gathered in Nykøbing, Denmark on 8-11 September at a meeting organised by the ITF's Danish affiliate Specialarbejderforbundet i Danmark (SiD), in collaboration with the ITF-affiliated German union ÖTV, and supported by the ITF.

TRAINING PROJECT LAUNCHED

Polish, Russian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian, German, Danish, Swedish, Finnish and Norwegian port union representatives attended the meeting. The ITF and the Nordic Transport Workers' Federation (NTF) were also represented.

The delegates from the region agreed to establish a Baltic ports cooperation group, to meet every two years. A three-person steering committee, charged with coordinating the group, was elected.

The steering committee is also to be responsible for developing a Copenhagen-based port training project to provide vocational education.

SOCIAL DUMPING TO BE AVOIDED

The SiD's Knud Hansen opened the meeting, welcoming delegates and introducing the agenda.

Manfred Rosenberg, of the ÖTV, pointed to his union's experience in Eastern Germany following the break-up of the Communist bloc. He emphasised the need for solidarity in the region and underlined the dangers of social dumping — a recurrent theme throughout the meeting.

A strong speech by representatives of the Norwegian transport union, Norsk Transportarbejderforbund, exposing the abuses on board Norwegian second register (NIS) ships, was enthusiastically received.

Highlighting the serious levels of pollution in the Baltic Sea, many delegates insisted on the need to address environmental issues.

The trade unionists listened to a presentation from Copenhagen port director, Eric Schäffer.

Explaining the role of the regional employers' body, the Baltic Ports Organisation (BPO) which has its secretariat in Copenhagen, Schäffer pre-

dicted that rising standards of living would lead to a port traffic boom.

Infrastructure and well-trained ports personnel would be needed, he stressed; cooperation between trade unions and employers, on training in particular, was seen by employers as vital.

UNIONS BUILDING STRENGTH

Trade unions in the Eastern part of the region have been building up their activities since 1990. An important number are now achieving a significant degree of success in their negotiations with employers. All are keen to strengthen trade unionism in the region.

Social problems caused by port restructuring included the disappearance of a whole series of facilities, such as kindergartens, previously provided by port administrations.

Representatives also underlined the problems of motivating and educating members.

NEW TECHNOLOGY ADDRESSED

Many delegates pointed out the challenges of technological change. The ITF's resolution on technology in the region, born at the ITF's port technology conference in May this year (see ITF News, May/June 1993), was adopted by the participants.

Ratification of ILO Conventions was vital, delegates agreed; some unions, such as the Latvian water transport workers' union, had been campaigning hard for the new governments to ratify conventions signed by the previous administrations.

Sarah Finke of the ITF Secretariat explained ITF policy on seafarers handling cargo — any port union whose traditional jobs were undermined in this way should contact the office in London, she said.

International cooperation was vital; "the multiplicity of joint ventures for maritime development internationally, and the involvement of overseas consultants, investors, port authorities and multinational companies in the Eastern part of this region means that now, more than ever, unions need information and advice on an international level," she said.

"Port companies are working on a worldwide scale, and unions must do, too."

Australian dockers strike against compulsory redundancies

Waterfront workers from the ITF-affiliated Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) took industrial action in September in protest against 317 compulsory redundancies at the port company Australian Stevedores (AS).

The company claimed the redundancies were necessary to guarantee competitiveness following its formation in July through a merger between Strang Patricks and National Terminals.

Workers imposed bans on overtime and the use of supplementary labour, followed by strike action at terminals across the country. Fifty ships in 14 ports were affected.

The unions were demanding job security and conciliation. There have been no compulsory redundancies in Australian ports since 1971. The whole Australian waterfront reform programme was based on the principle of job security.

"The employer has pulled that foundation stone from the structure and as a consequence the structure has collapsed," said the union.

Arbitration proceedings were instigated, but adjourned when transport minister Bob Collins personally intervened, agreeing to participate in a meeting between the employers, unions and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU).

A settlement, which allowed the company to make savings and offered retirement and redundancies under agreed terms, was reached on September 29th. The meeting set a deadline of October 29th for finalising the agreement.

CROATIAN STRIKE

Dockers in the port of Split are on strike over the legal right to appoint their representatives at management level.

The dockers are also demanding that a freeze on the company bank account is lifted and are protesting against the illegal appointment of a general manager.

The case is being processed in court, but from previous experience (it took four months for the ITF-affiliated Seafarers' and Dockers' Union of Croatia (SDUC) to settle a back wage claim in court), the union does not believe that a solution will be found fast enough.

In addition, the SDUC's newly-elected docks' section president has just received army orders, five days after being involved in strike action.

According to ITF-inspector Predrag Brazzoduro, this practice is often used to discriminate against trade union activists.

UK PRIVATISATION CONDEMNED — AGAIN

A report published on September 23rd by the UK

government's Departments of Employment and Transport points yet again to the failure of port privatisation.

The report states that while Britain's ports have become more productive and competitive, benefits predicted before privatisation have not been achieved.

Lower costs have not been passed on to port users, and employment has fallen dramatically — not increased, as forecast. In addition, the anticipated US\$226 million increase in Britain's gross domestic product has not materialised.

John Connolly, ITF Dockers' Section Chairman, and TGWU national secretary for the sector, said that the report confirmed union fears of a rise in accident rates and a significant increase in the use of casual labour.

Connolly underlined the report's finding that benefits in cost savings had been retained by port authorities.

PORT SALE SCANDAL

Bearing out these conclusions, the UK sale of Medway Ports to Mersey Docks and Harbours, 18 months after Medway's privatising management buyout, has caused a scandal.

Shares bought at £1.00 (US\$1.60) by Medway Ports' Chief Executive Peter Vincent have escalated in value to £37 since March 1992, leaving him £12 million (US\$ 20 million) better off.

Employees who bought shares have also made money, but at the end of last year, 269 of Medway's 300 dockers took redundancy rather than work under the unacceptable conditions that were being forced on them post-privatisation. They were obliged to sell their shares back to the company at £2.50 (US\$4.00).

PERUVIAN PRIVATISATION

The port of Ilo is to be tendered by May 1994 as a precursor to privatisation, the Peruvian government's privatisation committee has announced.

The committee intends to award a sixty year concession to a private group, probably made up of Bolivian and Peruvian investors in conjunction with an overseas port company.

US EAST COAST AGREEMENT RATIFIED

The four year Master Contract Agreement that covers dockers at 36 US East Coast ports has been extended for another two years.

John Bowers, ITF Dockers' Section Vice Chairman, and International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) President, said that the extension was valuable to both union and management.

Grenada contracts out union work

The Grenada ports authority announced that it was contracting out all port work in St. George's Pier to a recently-formed, non-union company, Grenada Port Contractors Ltd, at the end of September.

Three hundred port workers, members of the ITF-affiliated Seamen and Waterfront Workers' Union, stand to lose their jobs. No compensation is being offered. The members of the union have taken industrial action, but are currently unable to do so, due to the provisions of new arbitration legislation.

Following threats to cut the union out of the hiring process, and to tender the work to a non-union contractor, the Grenada Ports Authority presented the union with an unworkable "contract" in June 1993. The union responded with a Collective Agreement containing alternative provisions, but the Ports Authority refused to negotiate, supported by the Prime Minister.

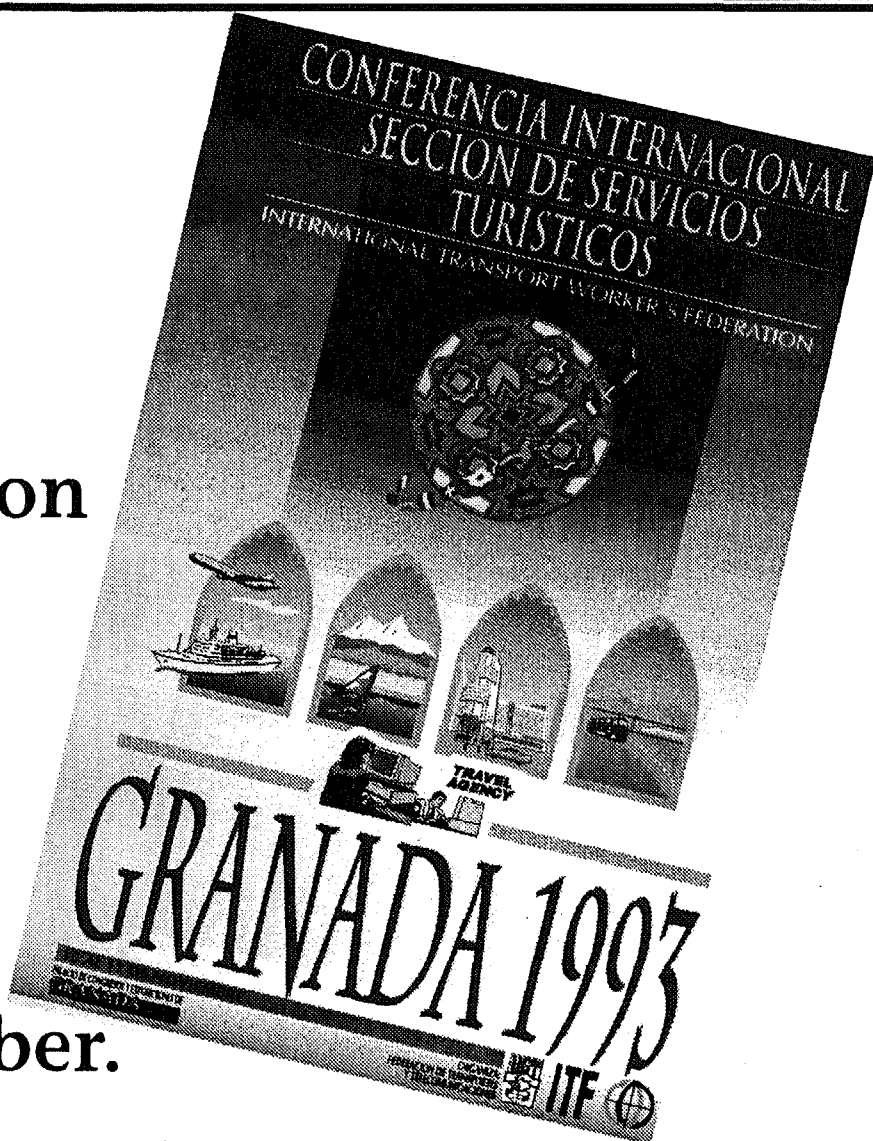
The Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) has asked all its affiliates to protest against the situation, warning that a total boycott will be carried out in the region if the government does not intervene to ensure that an agreed solution is found.

The ITF has repeatedly called upon both the Prime Minister and the Ports Authority to enter into negotiations with the union, and has written to affiliates in Grenada's major trading partner countries — Barbados, Canada, Japan, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom and the US — advising them of the situation. Details of any vessels loaded by non-union labour will be sent to these affiliates, who have been asked to write to the Prime Minister protesting about the situation and warning of the potential problems which could arise with vessels loaded by such workers.



TOURISM SERVICES

The official poster of the forthcoming ITF Tourism Services Section Conference, which will be held in Granada, Spain from 17-19 November.



OBITUARIES

Börje Heggstad, former President of the Swedish Commercial Employees' Union (HTF), died on 23 August, at the age of 74. Heggstad came to the HTF in 1945 working first on the union journal and later taking charge of its training and information activities. He also masterminded the restructuring of the HTF in the 1960s before being elected — in 1966 — to the Vice Presidency. On the retirement of Harald Lindholm in 1975 Heggstad became President, serving until 1982.

Andoni Lecertúa, who a few months ago was unanimously elected as General Secretary of the maritime section of the Spanish transport workers' federation FETCOMAR-CC.OO, died on September 5. Lecertúa dedicated the latter part of

his working life to the union movement, serving from 1980 as joint General Secretary of the Spanish seafarers' union SLMM. It was Lecertúa who in 1985 took the SLMM into the CC.OO (where it now forms part of FETCOMAR) and who also united port and fisheries workers in the strong maritime division of FETCOMAR.

Paul LeRoy "Roy" Siemiller, former President of the US International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), died on 2 June, aged 89. A former machinist with the Missouri and Arkansas Railroad, Siemiller joined the IAM field staff, rising through the ranks to become Vice President in 1949, a post he held without a break until elected IAM President in the mid-sixties.



PEOPLE

Lew Adams is to succeed **Derrick Fullick** as General Secretary of the British Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) when the latter retires in January. Adams is currently Assistant General Secretary.

René Bucher, Vice President for the past ten years of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union (SEV), retired at the 1993 SEV Congress in Basle. Bucher has been an active member of the ITF Railwaymen's Section, serving as a deputy on its Committee.

Brenda Hanks is the first woman President of the British Transport Salaried Staffs' Association. Hanks has been TSSA treasurer since 1987 and was also the first woman to hold this post.

Thomas Hanley is the new Director of Organisation of the US Hotel Employees' and Restau-

rant Employees' International Union (HERE). He takes over from the late Vincent J Sirabella, who retired in March. Hanley was previously a HERE Vice President at large.

Diana Holland is the newly appointed national secretary for women of the British Transport and General Workers' Union, taking over from Margaret Prosser, who is now TGWU National Organiser. Holland was previously the TGWU's women's officer in London.

Kim Bu Ung resigned from the presidency of the Federation of Korean Seafarers' Unions (FKSU) at its annual congress earlier this year. Incoming FKSU President is **Cho Chun Bok**. Kim Bu Ung, who was elected on to the ITF Executive Board at the 1990 Florence Congress, has served on the Committee of the ITF Seafarers' Section, the Maritime Safety Committee, the Asia/Pacific Seafarers' Regional Committees and the ITF Fair Practices Committee.

Heikki Nurmi has retired after eight years as president of the Finnish Locomotivemen's Union. The locomen's new leader is **Markku Hannola**, who was previously in charge of the union's largest district of Kouvola. Nurmi was a member of the Committee of the ITF Railwaymen's Section until the Florence Congress.

Cornelia Wermuth has been appointed as the new editor of the *Eisenbahner*, the German language magazine of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union SEV. Wermuth comes to the paper from the *Tessiner Zeitung* published in Locarno where she has been Chief Editor for the past two years.

Acting General Secretary: David Cockroft

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