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Aviation unions revolt at European liberalisation

• Air France victory • Strikes at TAP, Alitalia



Lisbon Airport, 11:00 on October 29, a TAP striker being removed by riot police.

The union victory at Air France has radically changed the industrial climate in European aviation. European airlines can no longer assume that they can impose airline restructuring, with massive job losses and cuts in conditions without negotiations with unions.

Air France workers have shown that determined union resistance to governments, which do not necessarily have strong public support for their programmes of privatisation and liberalisation, can win.

All the Air France unions, including the ITF-affiliated FETS-FO, FGTE-CFDT, SNPNC and USPNT were united in their opposition to the announcement of Air France chairman Bernard Attali that the airline was to be restructured with the loss of 4,000 jobs.

JOB LOSSES

The company was seeking to save \$910m in costs in its third cost-cutting plan. This amount was the same again as all savings it has managed from its

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Maltese General Workers celebrate "half a century of social justice"

The General Workers' Union of Malta has been celebrating the 50th anniversary of its foundation.

The ITF-affiliated union organises the vast majority of Maltese workers — 41,500 members. The union was founded on October 5, 1943 — in the middle of World War II, when Malta, a British colony, was heroically resisting Nazism and Fascism. The union was granted official recognition as the representative of Maltese



workers by the British colonial authorities on that day.

Maltese trade unionists gathered at a special GWU National Congress on October 5 to celebrate "half a century of social justice".

The union was founded by Reginald Miller — a dock worker who was born in 1898. Miller, commonly known as Reggie, began work as a clerk in the British Admiralty Dockyard and in 1936 became Secretary of the Dockyard and Imperial Workers' Union which was established the same year.

At the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, trade union activity in Malta came to a standstill. In 1940, Miller resigned from the Dockyard and Imperial Workers' Union Secretaryship because, he later said, only 18 workers had retained their membership by paying their fees regularly. There was, in fact, no trade union to administer.

As time went by Maltese workers started to get used to the war and to the bombings, the destruction and the ruins and towards the end of 1941 there emerged once more a growing interest in trade unions. In early 1942 the industrial workers at the British dockyard staged a protest about the delay by the colonial authorities in granting a continuous living wage increase, or war bonus, as it is usually referred to.

During the protest the workers gathered in front of the administration block where the Naval Admiralty Dockyard had their office. The Admiral came out on the balcony in person and

told the workers he was prepared to speak about their complaints and suggested they appoint representatives.

Reggie Miller knew nothing about the protest until some time later the same day when he was approached by the representatives chosen by the workers to form a delegation. He was asked to help them in approaching the Admiralty and he accepted without hesitation, becoming the de facto leader of the delegation.

After many months of negotiations, the bonus was granted to the workers. The negotiating body became the core of the GWU. On Monday, October the 12th 1942, Miller published an article in the *Times of Malta*, saying that he was going to take the initiative in forming a general trade union for all grades of employees in public and private employment. Following his call workers flocked to join the new organisation, and by October the 5th 1943 — when the union was finally registered — vast numbers of Maltese workers had signed up.

Today the General Workers' Union is the largest trade union in Malta, its membership surpasses that of all other trade unions combined by a very long margin. The GWU can celebrate its 50th anniversary with justifiable pride, the achievements of the union are many, and the transport workers in the GWU are an active and important part of the ITF.

Despite the island's status as a Flag of convenience, the GWU through the ITF campaign against Flags of convenience and through the work of ITF Flag of convenience Inspectors (currently Charles Briffa) continues to maintain a strong and effective presence on the Maltese waterfront. Flag of convenience seafarers in need of assistance in Malta can always rely upon the solidarity and effective practical assistance of the GWU.

FPSA is also 50

We send hearty congratulations to the ITF-affiliated Fiji Public Service Association which celebrated its golden jubilee on 22nd September. There were twenty three people present at the FPSA's inaugural meeting in September 1943. Fifty years later, the union now groups over four thousand trade unionists — among them seafarers and civil aviation workers — a tribute to the tenacity of its leadership in the face of the fierce anti-unionism in Fiji during recent years. ITF Acting General Secretary David Cockroft sent a congratulatory message, which was read out at a special jubilee meeting.

ITF Executive Board backs Han

The ITF Executive Board, meeting in London on 19th and 20th of October 1993, expressed its strong solidarity with the Chinese free trade union leader Han Dongfang's struggle to return to his homeland (see ITF News, August and September 1993).

The ITF Executive Board adopted a special motion on solidarity with Han — a former railway worker. The meeting also decided to finance a special maritime expedition and sonar search for the wreckage of the British flag bulk carrier the *Derbyshire* — which sank mysteriously south of Japan in 1980.

The Board also agreed to re-launch the ITF South African Solidarity Fund, which has been exhausted. The Executive Board noted that South African transport unions still need the support of the world's transport workers in the difficult period of the transition to democracy.

ITF CONGRESS

The Executive Board agreed following consultations between the ITF's Secretariat and the Swiss Railwaymen's Union SEV to change the venue of the 1994 ITF Congress from Interlaken to Geneva.

Following consultation with ITF affiliates, the ITF Executive Board has decided to convene an ITF Women Transport Workers' Conference immediately before Congress, on Monday, the first of August, and Tuesday, the 2nd of August. The Executive Board has agreed that there will be a place on the Congress agenda for a discussion of the conclusions and recommendations of the Women's conference; that affiliates should be free to send delegates, both male and female, to the meeting, but that they are reminded of the importance of ensuring that women delegates attend the conference.

ASIA/PACIFIC

The meeting decided to establish an ad-hoc review committee on the ITF's Asia/Pacific Regional activities. This committee will examine a series of questions surrounding the future structure of the Asia/Pacific region, including the question of re-establishing the ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Office in the region as well as the possibility of establishing sub-regional offices.

LATIN AMERICA

The Board discussed the future of the ITF's regional structures and activities in Latin America. Following the closure of the Lima office, the ITF decided in 1987 to establish a series of sub-regional offices in the Latin American region. Only one of these offices has been successfully established, and it is generally agreed that the attempts to decentralise regional structures within the region have not worked in practice. ITF Latin American membership has declined, and there are now a number of countries in the region with no ITF affiliates at all. Acting General Secretary David Cockroft presented a paper to the Executive Board proposing that ITF affiliates be consulted on a series of proposals that include the re-establishment of a regional office, the retention or creation of additional

Following consultation with ITF affiliates, the ITF Executive Board has decided to convene an ITF Women Transport Workers' Conference immediately before Congress

sub-offices, the creation of a permanent regional committee, and the re-establishment of an effective programme of regional education. The Board also agreed to consult affiliates on the question of the possible inclusion of the Caribbean in the regional structure, and the potential further expansion of the region to include the United States and Canada (an inter-American region). Such a broader structure could also foster co-operation between unions who are facing increased inter-American economic integration.

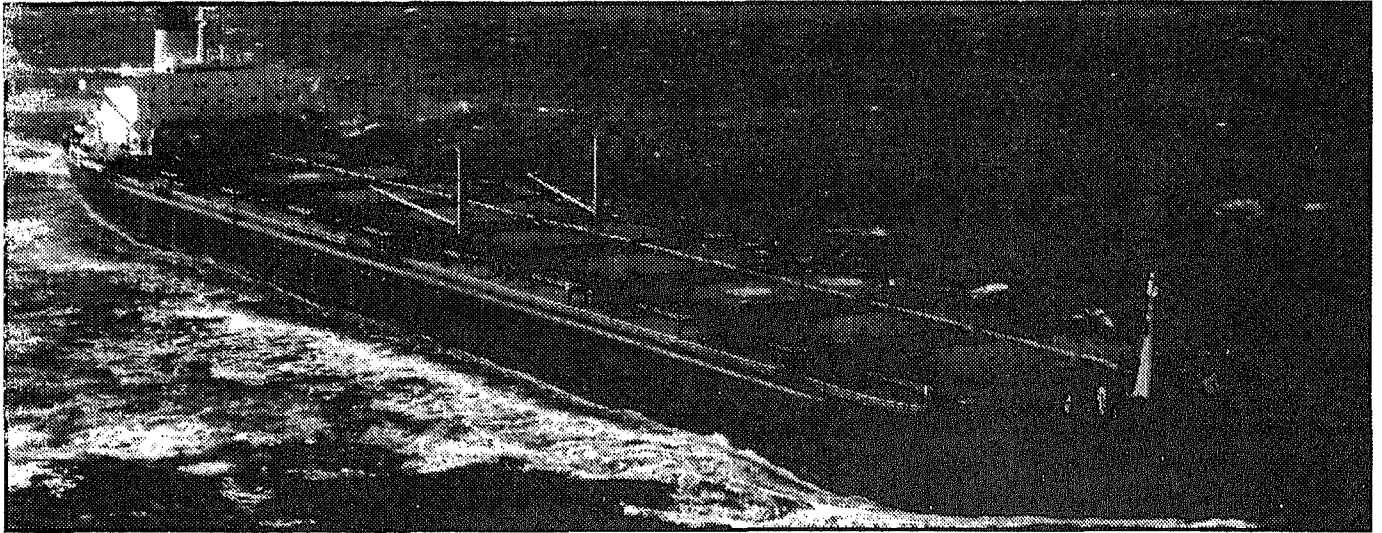
The Latin American Board members warmly welcomed the discussion document and promised to discuss the points raised in it with their members and other unions in the region. Proposals will be presented to the Board's next meeting and to the ITF Latin American Regional Conference in Costa Rica in March 1994.

EUROPE

On the question of Europe, the Executive Board received a report from the European Transport Liaison Committee meeting (held in June in Belgium) and on the agreed position outlining co-operation between the Committee of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Community (the "Brussels Committee") and the ITF. Members of the Executive Board re-emphasised the need to prevent the duplication

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...ITF agrees sonar search for *Derbyshire* wreck



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of transport workers' trade union structures and programmes on a European level, and instructed the Acting General Secretary to seek agreement with the Brussels Committee Secretariat on written guidelines governing co-operation between the two bodies.

THE DERBYSHIRE

After an extensive discussion, the Executive Board adopted a statement on the British flag *Derbyshire*. Taking into account the special circumstances surrounding the loss of the bulk carrier in 1980, and the request from the ITF's UK maritime affiliates for assistance towards a project that seeks to confirm the theory that the ship was lost as a result of massive structural failure in frame 65 that resulted in the splitting of the ship into two sections, the Acting General Secretary had agreed to finance a series of feasibility studies into the technical feasibility of photographing the wreck of the *Derbyshire* (which is believed to be lying south of Japan) as well as into ascertaining the legal and maritime safety implications of obtaining such evidence.

In the light of these studies it was agreed to contribute a maximum figure of £320,000 (US\$500,000) towards a side scan sonar search for the wreckage of the vessel.

The ITF has established a management group to oversee the project consisting of members of the Executive Board, together with one representative of each of the UK maritime affiliates (RMT & NUMAST).

The project aims to provide, as a result of the side scan sonar search, sufficient new evidence of the location of the vessel to compel the UK authorities to re-examine the circumstances of the vessel's loss with a view to re-opening the formal enquiry.

If the sonar search establishes that the vessel's remains are in two parts, 21.5 nautical miles apart at the bottom of the sea, this will establish

that the vessel broke into two pieces on the surface. It was also strongly felt by the members of the Executive Board that the results of the side scan sonar search of the *Derbyshire* wreck would have an impact on raising awareness of global maritime safety issues, and that the specific case of the *Derbyshire* may well have an impact on improving safety at sea for everyone.

NEW AFFILIATES

The Executive Board approved, subject to the completion of various formalities, applications for affiliation from 22 unions in 16 countries. The ITF continues to expand and transport unions throughout the world continue to apply for affiliation. The sheer number of applications was, in itself, unusual. Taking together the applications for affiliations and requests for information about affiliation, since the last Executive Board meeting six months ago, the ITF has received nearly 100 enquiries from transport unions.

The Executive Board also endorsed recommendations from the Management Committee to appoint Bruno de Bonis as the new ITF Special Seafarers' Department Secretary, and Richard Flint as the Secretary of the Research and Publications Department. It was also agreed to expand the mandate of the newly appointed Education and Projects Officer Kees Marges to take on responsibilities for the Dockers' Section.

The Executive Board set up a small sub-committee to work with the Acting General Secretary in seeking new premises within London for the ITF headquarters. It was agreed that this sub-committee would have the power to conclude contracts and make decisions between Executive Board meetings. The Executive Board also endorsed the Acting General Secretary's activities with respect to the review of the Seafarers' Section and the Special Seafarers' Department, and the ITF's financial procedures.

ITF prepares education programme for East & Central Europe

Kees Marges, the ITF's new Education and Projects Officer, undertook an exhaustive trip to various countries in Central and Eastern Europe in September.

Marges visited Latvia, Romania, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Croatia and Hungary over the month; he also managed to meet unions from Estonia, Lithuania and the Czech and Slovak Republics.

A meeting of over 50 trade unionists in Rijeka, Croatia, saw Marges holding an impromptu seminar, answering questions asked by representatives from all the transport sections.

During his visit there, Rijeka also hosted a public meeting organised by the Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia national centre, which was one of the first meetings of its kind since independence, and which was attended by 1,500 people.

"In all countries my visit was organised by one or two unions, very efficiently" said Marges, commenting on the welcoming reception he was accorded by the region's trade unionists.

"Several times my visit was the occasion of the very first meeting of unions in a country, for example, in Romania, it was the first time that all the unions came together, and it was the first time representatives of some different unions had met each other.

"In Varna, Bulgaria, I had a joint meeting with

both Presidents of the seafarers' unions, they were working together and were preparing a joint strike" he added.

Many of the discussions held centred around the problems caused by the war in the former Yugoslavia, Marges explains.

"In Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary, especially, transport workers are suffering the consequences of the war because of the decreased movement of goods and passengers, either due directly to the war or due to the United Nations boycott."

All the unions are facing a similar problem, Marges says — that of how to adapt, as trade unions, to the new privatised society, and how to identify the role of the unions during transition.

Privatisation has made much greater inroads in some countries than in others, he reports; but the common problem means that many unions are requesting information and educational support.

Trade union organisation, tripartism, collective bargaining with privatised companies and the establishment of strike fund were some of the subjects unions want to discuss.

"Trade union education is closely connected with the future of the unions, and with their capacity to work and act together in the transport sector nationally," Marges says.

Japanese union denounces Russian nuclear dumping

The Russian government's recent dumping of nuclear waste in the Sea of Japan has been denounced by the Japanese Confederation of Railway Workers' Unions as "arrogant and insolent".

On October 17th, a Russian Navy ship dumped 2,000 thousand tons of low level radioactive waste into the Sea of Japan. The dumping was televised.

The Russian government has been dumping radioactive waste from nuclear submarines and dismantled nuclear vessels into the Arctic Ocean and the Sea of Japan, ignoring protests from around the world. The ITF-affiliated Japan Confederation of Railway Workers' Unions condemned the dumping. The JRU has issued a formal protest against the attitude of the Rus-

sian government and their disposal of radioactive waste:

"The oceans are not rubbish dumps for radioactive waste. We cannot permit such actions of the Russian government that will destroy the global environment and the ecosystem.

"The dumping shows that the Russian government never cares about earth, ecosystems including human beings, but only cares about its own national interest. Rather we should say that it has even abandoned the future lives of its own people. We solemnly denounce this inhuman and selfish deed," said the union in a statement issued on October 18th.

The union has protested to the Russian Embassy and has asked the ITF to pass on their protest to affiliated unions.

Maastricht Treaty on European Union comes into force

Following ratification by all EC member states, the Treaty on European Union, or Maastricht Treaty, finally entered into force on November first.

YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE PROTECTED

A meeting of the European Community's labour ministers on 12 October agreed a common position on the Directive on young people at work. Under the terms of the directive, countries must:

- prohibit work by children (under 15 years)
- ensure that work by adolescents (15-18 years) is strictly regulated

Children involved in cultural, artistic, sporting or advertising activities may work, given that permission is obtained from the relevant authorities, and a limited amount of "light" work may be carried out by children over 13 years provided that it does not harm their health, safety or studies.

Specific provision is also made for health and safety protection, night work, rest, holidays and breaks. The United Kingdom has been allowed a special four-year period from the date of entry into force in which to apply the provisions of the directive.

SOCIAL POLICY DISCUSSED

The meeting broadly accepted the draft "Works Council Directive" (8709/93/Soc 255). Other items discussed included news from the Commission that a Green Paper on Social Policy is soon to be produced, and the adoption of a new Community Action Programme on economic and social integration of the economically and socially less privileged groups in society.

The meeting also debated "non-standard employment" — part-time work, fixed-term work and temporary work, and agreed that such workers should receive wages proportional to those received by full-time workers, that they should benefit from the same level of social protection and should be included in the calculation of the thresholds for the constitution of workers' representative bodies. Workers' representatives should be informed about the use of such workers, ministers agreed.

NEW HEALTH AND SAFETY DIRECTIVE ADOPTED

Ministers also adopted a Directive related to exposure to biological agents (bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi) at work, amending a previous directive (90/679/EEC). A code of practice on vaccination, and risk assessments, must be implemented.

FISHERIES REGULATION APPLIED TO NON-EC FLAGS

A regulation establishing a control system applicable to the Common Fisheries Policy was adopted at the October twelfth meeting. It will replace Regulation 2241/87 from January first 1994, and will establish a community system for the conservation and management of resources. It includes provisions on effective sanctions to be applied against those ignoring measures on the common organisation of the fisheries markets. The Regulation will apply to all Community waters, including those vessels which fly non-EC flags, and to all Community vessels outside EC waters.

CATALAN STATE AID TO GO AHEAD

A funding project by the government of the Catalan autonomous region in Spain, to develop port leisure facilities to the tune of three million Ecus (US\$ 2 million) has been permitted by the Commission.

Improving infrastructure, port access and public use of ports in Catalonia was considered to be of general benefit to the development of ports in the Mediterranean region and of maritime tourist activities.

AER LINGUS

The Commission is to investigate state plans to put funds into the Irish national airline.

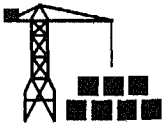
On October 13th the Commission decided to look at the Irish government's decision to inject IR£ 175 million (US\$250 million) into the Aer Lingus Group.

The funding, to be carried out over a period of three years, forms part of a programme aimed at restructuring the core airline business. The Commission considers this planned move as state aid. Given the stiff competition existing on some of Aer Lingus's routes, it believes that any such aid would affect Community trade and competition.

ROAD TAX ADOPTED BY MINISTERS

The Council of Ministers meeting on October 25th adopted a Directive on road taxation, ignoring requests from the European Parliament to be consulted.

Ministers had reached a common position in July on cabotage, which will be completely deregulated from July first 1998. A transition period begins on January first 1994, when the quota of cabotage authorisations for EC hauliers will be increased from the current 18,500 to 40,000, and subsequently by 30 per cent annually.



DOCKERS

Turkish union signs major agreements

The ITF's Turkish docks affiliate, Liman-is, has signed collective agreements with the two major port employers — Turkish Maritime Enterprises (TDI) and the Turkish State Railways (TCDD).

The agreements enter into force retroactively as of January first 1993 and March first 1993 respectively, and are binding for two years, covering a total of 6,323 workers.

The agreements are a great success for the union, one of the many public service unions whose collective agreements came up for renewal this year. Along with other public sector unions, they faced strong opposition from employers, and were forced to call strike action in July.

A subsequent framework agreement between the Turkish trade union confederation, Turk-is, and the government laid down the principles for wage increases, some fringe benefits, subcon-

Spanish job security guaranteed

On 18 October, two Spanish dockers' unions, including the ITF-affiliated confederation FETT-UGT, signed a framework agreement which guarantees job security and the right of registered port workers to carry out dock work.

The agreement, ratified by the biggest Spanish stevedoring employers' body, ANESCO, will cover 85 per cent of employees in the sector — benefiting 6,000 dockers.

Recognising the special nature of port work, and making port authorities responsible for enforcing the provision that such work is exclusive to registered dockers, the agreement aims to provide a framework under which change can be introduced, ensuring employment stability and, as far as possible, avoiding industrial conflict.

For the duration of the five-year agreement, no employment contract will be terminated. Special provisions are made for early retirement, guaranteeing a lump sum payment based on the number of months remaining up to the dockers' normal retirement.

A tripartite body will regulate the enforcement of the agreement at national level.

The agreement entered into force on November first. In addition, its terms include the extension of an existing training programme for workers using new machinery and the creation of union/employer health and safety committees.

tracting and job security. Liman-is continued to negotiate for the other articles in its collective agreements. "These were important for us and we would have called strikes had we not reached agreement on certain issues" said the union.

The final agreements represent successes on 26 different subjects where the union either secured new rights or developed existing ones. In particular, working time has been reduced from a five and a half to a five day week, most temporary workers are now guaranteed continuous employment and the shift system has been improved.

Argentine privatisation to go ahead

Bids for Buenos Aires port's six terminals, which include proposals from P&O, existing stevedoring companies in the port and the local shipper Maruba, are being considered.

The port authority is to look at the finances of the bidders in the first phase, starting from October 27th, with final proposals being submitted six weeks later.

Meanwhile, funding amounting to US\$ 200 million from the Intra-American Development Bank has been agreed for Argentina's ports. Private and public sectors are being asked to match the sum.

The money will be used for port infrastructure, dredging and lighting over a five-year period.

ITALIAN STRIKE

Italian transport unions took staggered industrial action on October 20th and 21st over a delay in introducing the government reform bill on port organisation.

The bill, which the unions have agreed with Italian transport minister, Costa, will privatise a large chunk of Italy's port operations and restrict labour practices. But Italy's anti-monopolies body said in September that the involvement of port authorities in operations under the bill would not allow sufficient competition to comply with EC regulations, which has caused the current delay.

Genoa dockers, concerned about port authority debts, were also demanding a guarantee that their wages would be paid for the rest of the year. The authority has so far only guaranteed October's wages.

— Ports Round-up —



PEOPLE

Bruno de Bonis — one of the ITF's long-serving Italian Inspectors — is to succeed Brian Laughton as Secretary of the ITF Special Seafarers' Department. As the ITF Inspector covering the northern Adriatic ports, Bruno has gained practical first-hand knowledge of how the Foc campaign works at a local level, while his participation in Fair Practices Committee meetings and Inspectors' seminars has given him a valuable insight into the international workings of the campaign. He also brings to his post getting on for twenty years of seagoing experience as a Radio Officer, most of this time spent on Foc ships. An active trade unionist while still at sea, Bruno has also worked as regional secretary and national offshore coordinator of the maritime section of the Italian Transport Workers' Federation FIT-CISL. During the thirteen years he has spent with FIT-CISL Bruno has been closely associated with the Seafarers' Section, through his membership of the Standing Committee on Maritime Mobile Offshore Units, the Training Committee and most recently the Maritime Safety Committee.

Richard Flint is the new Secretary of the ITF Research and Publications Department. Richard joined the ITF in 1986. He was closely involved in the creation of the ITF Seafarers' Bulletin and has since worked on a wide range of ITF publications.

Education and Projects Officer **Kees Marges** has also been appointed as the ITF's Dockers' Section Secretary. Kees brings to his new job a wide experience of issues affecting dock labour gained during thirteen years as Docks Secre-

tary of the Dutch Transport Workers' Union FNV. Whilst working as a national officer, Kees was closely involved with the introduction of new technology in the ports. He also headed up the sector's collective bargaining unit and took a special interest in dockers' training.

A new leadership team has been elected to head the Sierra Leone National Seamen's Union. They are President: **Abdul Sesay**; Secretary General: **Parker Kamara**; and Assistant Secretary General: **Mohamed T Kamara**.

Alphonse Meli was elected Deputy General Secretary for International Relations of the Malta General Workers' Union (GWU) at the GWU's National Congress in October. He succeeds **Harold Walls**.

Per Østvold was elected as one of the two Vice Presidents of the Norwegian Transport Workers' Union at the union's Congress in September. **Arne Semmerud** was re-elected as the second Vice President and **Walter Kolstad** was re-elected for a further term as President.

Richard Mulkern leaves his post as Welfare Secretary at the London headquarters of the Missions to Seamen at the end of this year in order to take up other work for the Missions. He will be succeeded by **Canon Ken Peters**, who is currently chaplain to the Mersey Missions to Seamen in Liverpool. Richard has been closely associated for some years now with the ITF and its work on behalf of seafarers on flag of convenience ships. He has won many good friends in the ITF and among the seafarers he has helped who will be sorry to see him go.

OBITUARIES

Walter L Sullivan, former Secretary-Treasurer of the US International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), who served under four different ILA Presidents, died on 28 August, aged 83. The ILA's first welfare director — a post he took up in

1948 — Sullivan served as Secretary-Treasurer of the union's Atlantic Coast District for 28 years before being elected Secretary-Treasurer of the International. He retired from the ILA in July 1991.



INLAND TRANSPORT

African rail unions oppose privatisation

Fierce opposition to the privatisation of the railways in developing countries was expressed by delegates gathered for the 5th ITF African Railwaymen's Conference which took place in Accra, Ghana from 5 to 7 October.

Twenty two officials from unions in Benin, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zimbabwe attended the three-day conference.

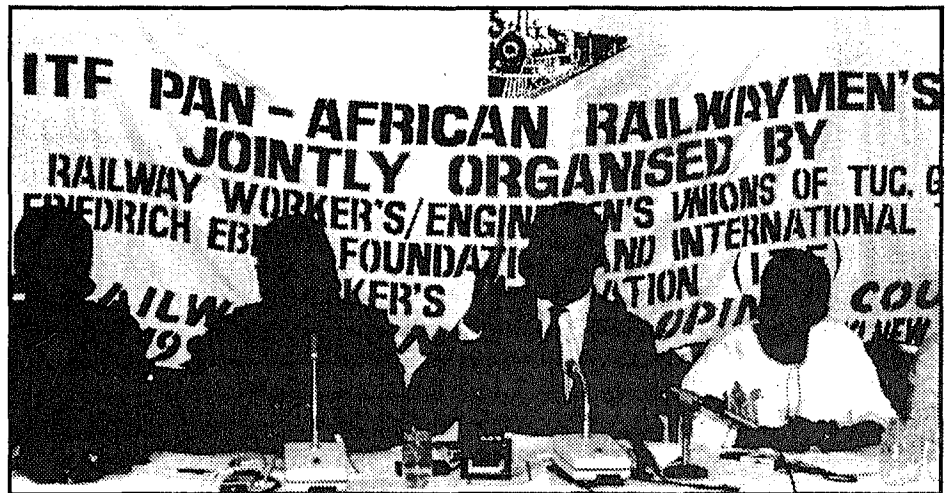
Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers represented the ITF together with ITF African Regional Representative Ben "Roxy" Udogwu and the ITF's Francophone Coordinator Kokou Fantognon.

Conference delegates stressed the need for investment programmes to rehabilitate and modernise the railways in the developing world, while urging governments not to impose unacceptable conditions in connection with financial assistance for restructuring. Railway affiliates in developing countries resisting moves to privatise or break-up their railways were promised the full support of their African colleagues.

Delegates backed up this appeal for the railways to remain in the public sector by adopting two resolutions with specific reference to Africa: one, warning that privatisation of certain aspects of railway operations was often the price demanded for outside financial assistance, and that this was totally unacceptable and must be firmly rebuffed by African governments; and the other pointing out that loss of rail jobs was a further consequence of the involvement of international financial institutions and encouraging governments to seek agreement with rail managements and unions on procedures that would help alleviate the impact on displaced rail workers.

After hearing reports from delegates citing instances of interference with collective bargaining and of attempts to set up non-representative and compliant "unions", the conference, in two further resolutions, demanded that African governments observe the principles enshrined in ILO Conventions on relations between trade unions and employers and respect the basic rights of unions to negotiate on behalf of workers and protect their interests.

A particularly blatant instance was Tanzania where the rail management, angered by the



success of the Tanzanian Railway Workers' Union (TRAWU), was promoting the growth of "pseudo-unions".

In the face of this interference with trade unionism in Tanzania, the conference adopted a special resolution of support for TRAWU, calling on the Tanzania Railway Corporation (TRC) to stop flouting the law on the formation of trade unions.

Delegates were agreed that firm action was needed to promote the railways which were often faced by unfair and unequal competition from other transport modes, especially road transport.

A case in point was Benin, where goods traffic was being switched from the rails to the roads in defiance of contractual agreements to an extent that could lead to the demise of the Benin-Niger Railway.

Recalling an earlier resolution from the 4th African Railwaymen's Conference on improving health and safety, the conference, in a further resolution, asked governments and international bodies active in the railway industry, including the ITF and the Union of African Railways, to examine ways of introducing forms of rail insurance that would guarantee adequate compensation for rail workers and passengers who suffer accidents.

Echoing the call made by Edward Salia, the Ghanaian Minister of Transport and Communications, in his opening address for closer collaboration between African countries in developing rail transport, a further resolution called on African governments to consult with the Union of African Railways (UAR) with a view to exploring the possibilities of cooperation between the railways of neighbouring countries.

Central European railway workers' unions discuss restructuring

A round table conference, held in the Hungarian capital Budapest on 27 and 28 September, brought together railway workers' unions from five Central European countries to discuss the problems facing the new independent unions in the region and to plan strategies for protecting the job security of their members.

Delegations from seven unions in Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia responded to an invitation from the ITF-affiliated Free Trade Union of Railway Workers (Vasuti Dolgozók Szabad Szakszervezete) to attend the conference, which is the first positive result of an earlier meeting in mid-May when the foundations were laid for closer contacts between unions in the region (see *ITF News*, July 1993).

Representing the ITF at the meeting were Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers and Education and Projects Officer Kees Marges.

Restructuring of the railways was progressing only slowly, delegates informed the conference. Meanwhile traffic levels are falling steeply throughout most of the region, cost cutting measures have been widely introduced and hundreds of jobs have been lost or are under serious threat.

The situation was at its worst in Croatia where much of the track and rolling stock had been destroyed in the continuing war, seriously hampering railway operations, while the Hungarian railways MÁV were suffering serious economic consequences as the result of the Serbian UN embargo.

Another casualty was Slovakia where the recent break-up of the Czech and Slovak Federated Republic had left the country with a railway company bereft of management expertise (the

railways had been previously managed from Prague) and starved of resources.

A number of unions reported strained relations with the railway managements and their governments. Typical of these were the Slovakian railway trade union, which complained that there was very little cooperation, and the Croatian locomotivemen who had called a strike to obtain a collective agreement. However, there were notable exceptions, with the Hungarian host union VDSzSz reporting that the new unions were treated as equal partners and fully consulted on all important decisions.

At the close of the two-day conference the unions adopted a set of conclusions stressing the need for on-going cooperation between the rail unions in the region.

Delegates urged their respective governments to take account of the views of the independent rail unions when drafting new labour legislation and drawing up employment and transport policies and called for the railways to be treated on equal terms with the road transport sector. Job security and improved living standards for their members were cited as the main objectives of union policy.

The participants made clear that they would welcome the participation of other rail unions in furthering these aims and expressed the desire to extend these initial international contacts.

In a special communiqué the unions expressed their solidarity with the Croatian rail unions in their present difficulties and urged all parties to the conflict to work towards an early end to hostilities.



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

8-10 November	Civil Aviation Section Committee	London
11 November	Ground Staff Technical Committee	London
16-18 November	African Seafarers' and Dockers' Seminar	Lomé, Togo
17-19 November	Tourism Services Section Conference	Granada
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
16-17 December	Fair Practices Sub-Committee	Copenhagen



CIVIL AVIATION

...Union action against cost cutting and mass redundancies

Continued from page 1

previous cost cutting exercises since 1990. The figure was double its previous target for cutting annual operating costs by 19 per cent by 1995.

The bulk of the burden of job cuts was to fall on ground staff with 3,000 jobs to go by the end of 1994. These were to be in addition to the 4,600 ground jobs already eliminated in the last three years out of a total of 35,800 ground personnel employed in 1991.

1,000 jobs were to go among pilots and cabin crew (a cut of 11 per cent of all flight crew) along with attacks on cabin crew rest periods and a number of benefits.

Savings were also to come from productivity improvements, a three year pay freeze and cutbacks in benefits. In addition, there were plans to axe 30 routes and close 15 bases (the proposed route cuts

would leave several African cities without direct air services to Europe, while the aircraft were to be deployed on more profitable routes elsewhere).

The plan included selling off the Meridian hotel chain as well as the Air France shares in the Servair catering operation, contracting out Air France coach services between the city and the Paris airports, and moving data processing operations to countries with cheaper labour.

The Air France Plan was announced with a fanfare of justifications about the need to make Air France competitive in the new environment of European liberalisation, and the need to make it attractive to buyers in the run up to privatisation.

Air France has already shed 5,000 staff since 1990, and this time the company was giving no guarantee that there would be no compulsory

redundancies. The company which has always claimed to be committed to social dialogue with unions took a new hard-line stance. The new conditions were to be imposed. It was this refusal to enter any meaningful negotiations with the unions that left them little choice but to organise industrial action.

BARRICADES

Company intransigence and inflammatory government statements during the strike on the future of the airline and further deregulation of French civil aviation only fuelled union opposition.

During the strikes, human barricades of ground staff blocked aircraft on the runways at Orly and Roissy airports during ten days of industrial action which the French Transport Minister Bernard Bosson eventually described as "a revolt such as we have not seen since 1968".

When riot police using water cannons and tear gas were sent to attack the runway pickets at Orly airport, it brought fresh workers who had not previously joined the pickets, out onto the barricades. At Charles de Gaulle airport strikers blocked the A1 motorway for two days causing huge traffic jams. On October 26 workers at Air Inter joined the strike. This was also the day that Air France cabin crew and pilots chose for their strike action. On this, the eighth day of the strikes, Air France was forced to cancel all of its 500 flights out of the two Paris airports. Half of Air Inter's 400 flights were grounded.

With the Paris airports besieged, Air France, using its recent purchase of Sabena, moved flights to Belgium, only to find Sabena workers

The new conditions were to be imposed. It was this refusal to enter any meaningful negotiations with the unions that left them little choice but to organise industrial action.

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...Air France victory sends a message

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refusing to handle Air France planes. According to Philippe Lefort of Force Ouvrière, "the practical strike solidarity demonstrated the new link between workers in Air France and Sabena. We are proud to say this has been possible thanks to ITF co-operation between trade unions".

Air France unions and Sabena unions have been holding regular meetings ever since the French carrier bought into Sabena.

It took ten days of industrial action, at a cost to the airline of US\$120 million, to show the French government that dialogue with unions has its advantages.

The French government agreed to withdraw the Air France plan and Bernard Attali resigned.

This backdown represented a stunning victory for the unions, and an extraordinary climbdown by the government.

But French unions have few illusions about the commitment of the conservative Balladur

government to workers' conditions.

Transport Minister Bosson has said that 4,000 jobs still need to be cut (though there will be no compulsory redundancies, and social dialogue must be restored). On October 15 Bosson made a statement to the media apparently announcing a government plan to strip Air France of routes and offer them to regional airlines. The government's replacement for Attali is Christian Blanc, former head of the RATP, the Paris bus and metro system, where he imposed a number of cuts in working conditions on employees. The government still believes in the "economic realities" of the Attali plan and Prime Minister Balladur still says the austerity plan is necessary for the company's survival.

The victory of the Air France unions has also sent a message to other unions facing similar situations.

On Thursday 28 October, as Air France workers began to return to work, the workers at TAP

Lufthansa and UAL unions forge links

Cabin crew unions in Lufthansa and United Airlines have been quick to respond to the alliance announced between their companies on October fifth. Lufthansa and UAL have signed a bilateral co-operation agreement which will start with code sharing and move on into other areas.

Co-operation between the cabin crew unions in both airlines (ÖTV, Lufthansa and AFA, United Airlines) has already been long established through the ITF. Cabin crew representatives of the two airlines Ingo Marowski (ÖTV) and Kevin Lum (AFA) organised a special meeting on October 26, during their attendance at the ITF Cabin Crew Technical Committee meeting, to exchange information on collective bargaining agreements, crew scheduling and a range of working conditions.

According to Marowski "It was important for us to compare the working conditions in each company as in some cases they are quite different. Of course the possible consequences resulting from the company's co-operation agreement made up a major part of the meeting. Both unions agreed that no matter how different the company structures might be, the interests of the unions are the same. Neither union is going to accept a deterioration of their established working conditions, social dumping or the loss of jobs by the company exporting them elsewhere. We have agreed to continue to co-operate on this matter and to keep each other imme-

diately informed of any moves made by either company which will affect employees. We also want to keep the ITF informed".

• On November fourth the AFA (United States) and the TGWU will be holding a meeting in London to discuss British Airways and USAir.

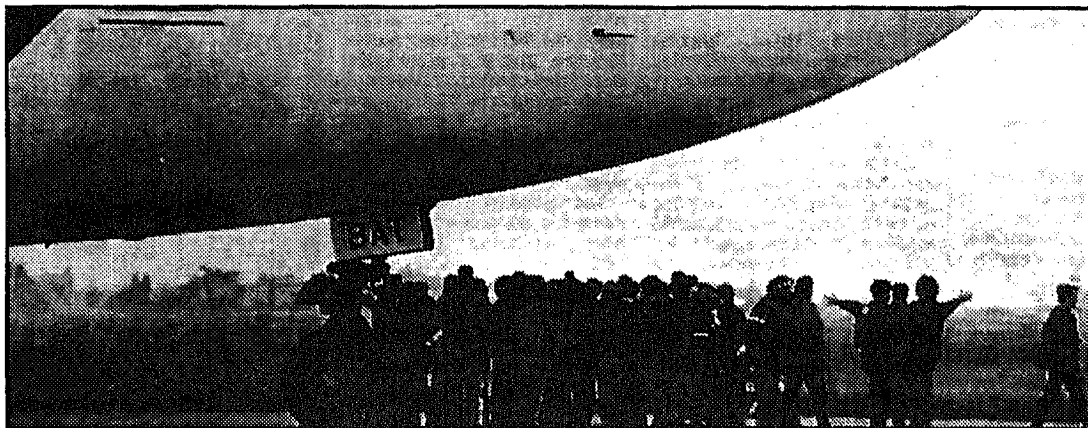
Air Malta dispute goes to mediation

An all-out strike by the ITF-affiliated General Workers' Union against Air Malta, scheduled for 20 October, was called off as mediation talks continued on the union's outstanding claims. While agreement has been reached on some of its demands, the GWU insists that the threat of industrial action will remain until a final settlement is concluded. There are a number of issues in dispute, the principal among them being the interpretation being given by Air Malta to the terms of reference of an independent appeals board set up in 1988 between the company and the union and the unwillingness of the Air Malta management to abide by a grievance procedure relating to promotions. A letter from ITF Acting General Secretary David Cockroft to Air Malta Chairman Joseph Tabone urging "speedy and meaningful negotiations" was given wide publicity in the Maltese press and according to our affiliate has been of great help to it.

to European airline managements

in Portugal occupied airport terminals in their continuing fight against an imposed restructuring and privatisation of the company.

On October 26 unions at Alitalia held a one day action in protest against proposed privatisation, but held off from a full strike when the government asked for talks (these will take place on November 5). If the unions are not satisfied by the outcome a 48 hour strike will be held on November 11-12. The Italian unions say that they have been paying close attention to the Air France strike.



Air France strikers in Orly, Paris

The Air France victory, coming only four months after the British Airways strike victory, raises the confidence of European aviation unions. The Italian unions are also aware that their own government is far weaker than the French.

What the European Commission should learn from this dispute

The European Commission's recently appointed Comité des Sages should also take note of the Air France strike. Unions have repeatedly called on the European Commission to act upon its promise that the industry restructuring, which would inevitably accompany liberalisation, would be accompanied by social protections for employees.

The leaders of the Air France unions made it quite clear during their strikes that the militancy of their action came in a situation in which the European Commission has initiated a complete change in French aviation policies without providing any of the much vaunted social protections meant to differentiate European liberalisation from US deregulation.

Instead unions have seen liberalisation accompanied only by massive job losses, cuts in pay and conditions and attacks on collective bargaining rights. They have had to fight against the attempts by some airlines such as BA and Lufthansa to set up low cost/low wage operations specifically for European routes. One of the impelling reasons for Air France to cut costs is that BA intends to run its recently acquired French airline TAT as a low cost competitor.

Many of the European airlines themselves, not least Air France under Attali, have called for some form of European regulation against the anarchy of fares wars and overcapacity. Yet the Comité des Sages appears more ready to listen to the liberalisers, such as Colin Marshall of British Airways, who told the committee that any airline that cannot compete should be allowed to go out of business (this is their solution to overcapacity). The liberalisers want to set up a situation in which airlines force down numbers of employees, wages and conditions in an ever more ruthless spiral of cost cutting.

Unless the Comité des Sages is ready to make some proposals which offer something more than just leaving aviation to market forces and in particular recommendations for some strong social measures to accompany the effects of liberalisation (and there appears to be no sign that it is) the only message currently coming from the Commission to the unions appears to be that terms such as the "social dimension" have little or no meaning.

It is lack of any progress on this front which is now forcing conflict out onto the runways and airport terminals of France, Belgium, Portugal, Italy and other European countries.

ITF Cabin Crew unions meet in Berlin

The 1993 Cabin Crew Technical Committee meeting took place at the ÖTV trade union education centre in Berlin on October 26-27 against the background of the Air France strike and the Alitalia dispute.

Although a number of participants were unable to attend due to these industrial actions the meeting was attended by twenty nine delegates from sixteen unions in fifteen countries. Danièle Jullien (SNPNC, France) the chairman of the CCTC managed to get to the meeting by train and to provide participants with a first hand report of the strike by her union and the other Air France unions.

Stuart Howard of the ITF Secretariat reported on the growing number of major disputes, and in particular the Secretariat's concern at the increasing number of attacks on basic trade union rights and noted, in particular, the cases of the sacking of Courtney Chong of the Cathay Pacific Flight Attendants' Union (CPFAU); the downgrading of officers in the Hava-Is cabin crew union at Turkish Airlines, along with further sackings largely targeting union activists; and the sacking of flight attendants in the Flight Attendants' Association in Papua New Guinea; and the abrogation of union contracts and victimisation of union leaders in TAP.

The meeting launched a new ITF campaign on cabin crew licensing, targeted at the ICAO General Assembly in 1995. The ITF will submit another working paper aimed at getting member states to agree to set up an ICAO Study Group to look at cabin crew licensing.

The meeting reviewed the failure to win such a study group at the last ICAO assembly in September 1992. However, it was felt that there had been changes in the political environment since then.

In particular the United States, the most influential country in civil aviation, had changed its government to one which was clearly more open to union lobbying on this issue. Canada and Australia were also mentioned as countries which had voted against the ITF proposal in 1992, but where there has since been a change in political climate.

Fred Casey (AFA, United States) reported on the US union reaction to the Federal Aviation Administration's proposed rules on flight and duty time limitations for cabin crew. The rules are a first for US cabin crew but the unions are not satisfied with the measures proposed (see opposite). It was reported that European FTL rules are about to reach their final draft and will be discussed further at the special ITF meeting on the JAA to be held in London on November eighth.

Participants heard reports of further cases of cross border employment of cabin crew and re-

endorsed the ITF guidelines on this issue. Unions agreed that this practice represents a serious threat to conditions and union strength among cabin crew and that stronger union co-ordination is needed to stop airlines seeking the cheapest crews in a global labour market. Bilateral agreements were proposed to back up the ITF guidelines (see opposite).

Participants heard reports about a number of international meetings between unions in the same airline group or alliance. These included unions in Air France and Sabena, cabin crew unions in the proposed Alcazar merger (KLM, Swissair, SAS, Austrian Airlines) and unions in the Iberia Group including Viasa and Aerolíneas Argentinas. Planned meetings included those between union representatives in Lufthansa and United Airlines (see page 12) and British Airways and USAir.

Unions also discussed means by which international solidarity could be improved, including the possible setting up of an "Unfair flyers" campaign to target anti-union airlines.

Unions criticise US flight time limitation

US cabin crew unions have waited a long time for the US Federal Aviation Administration to include cabin crew within rules governing flight and duty times, Fred Casey of the AFA United States reported to the ITF Cabin Crew Technical Committee meeting in Berlin. However, while the introduction of such rules marked some progress the rules were not yet good enough.

US cabin crew unions have maintained the coalition which fought to obtain the rules and now aims to ensure that these rules provide adequate protection.

The unions are particularly critical of the definition of duty time which does not include ground duties. They also point out that under the proposed rules in some circumstances cabin crew can be scheduled for a duty lasting 20 hours. The rules deal only with scheduled duty time and not actual duty time performed.

According to Casey: "While the Coalition of Flight Attendant Unions is pleased that the FAA has finally promised to establish rules on maximum duty time periods and minimum rest periods for flight attendants, the proposed rule falls far short of assuring that flight attendants will be well rested and not fatigued when they work."

The unions have submitted their comments in a consultation period. The final rules are expected in the next few months. Casey says:

"If that final rule does not correct the problem

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Cross border hiring is increasing

Airline companies are continuing to seek to employ overseas cabin crews when they are cheaper than their own nationals. This cross border employment is also used to undermine union representation.

The issue of cross border employment came under discussion at the Berlin Cabin Crew meeting when unions came to review the ITF guidelines drawn up at the last CCTC meeting in Washington on 19-20 May 1992 to assist unions in handling this situation. At that time an ITF survey revealed the trend of airlines to employ foreign cabin crew based overseas and paid according to local conditions. In almost all cases these crew were employed under inferior conditions to the airline's own nationals and without any form of union representation. At this year's meeting it became obvious that the number of airlines using cross border employment continues to grow.

Chris Green (TGWU, United Kingdom) informed the meeting that cross border employment had been a key issue in strikes at British Airways in May and June 1993. BA had started to increase the number of overseas based cabin crew around four years ago, significantly at a time when the union had been weakened by a split. He reported that more than 10 per cent of cabin crew in British Airways were overseas based crew. The company had become so dependent on employing cheaper cabin crew at overseas bases, that when they were halted from expanding this strategy by the strikes, they suffered a cabin crew shortage. Up to now overseas based crew have operated only on BA routes directly out of the base where they are domiciled. Now, however the airline wants to use

foreign crews across the whole BA network.

Green also described the new BA strategy of franchising BA routes to other BA-owned airlines. Under such a franchise USAir were flying BA routes in USAir aircraft in BA livery and with USAir crews in BA uniforms, but paying these crews under (inferior) USAir contracts. From the passengers' point of view they were "on a BA plane with US accents".

This also meant that despite a fully supported strike in June this year, BA were able to keep flying on transatlantic routes in BA colours using USAir aircraft and crews. Attempts by British unions to picket such flights would have been in violation of UK trade union laws.

Ingo Marowski (ÖTV, Germany) reported that Lufthansa were setting up bases to employ cabin crew in Hong Kong and South Korea. He traced this development as a direct progression from an initial process of the airline first employing Korean interpreters as an addition to the crew complement, then integrating them as part of the full crew complement, and now developing overseas bases.

Mary Webb (FARSA, New Zealand) reported that in Air New Zealand interpreters were now integrated as crew and the union had no power to represent them because of the New Zealand system of individual contracts.

Kiyoku Nishino (JCAL Japan) and Katsuo Iwata (JCAU, Japan) both reported that JAL was increasing the proportion of cheaper overseas crew while freezing recruitment of Japanese crew. JAL aims to have around 30 per cent of crew non Japanese.

Kevin Lum (AFA, United States) reported that in addition to its Paris and London bases UAL had opened a base in Taiwan. While cabin crew in London and Paris were placed on AFA contracts by the company at conditions lower than those prevailing among cabin crew in Britain and France, the Taiwanese were to be put on local wage rates. The company intends to set up another base in Hong Kong and has conducted feasibility studies for bases in other countries including Korea. The union was still in the US courts fighting the legality of the Paris base.

Participants agreed to re-endorse the ITF guidelines and to maintain closer contact between unions in the countries affected by these arrangements. Unions agreed that while they opposed companies setting up overseas bases, they should also develop bilateral agreements aimed at making union assistance to cabin crew members in overseas bases more effective. For example the TGWU in the UK could join the AFA in assisting AFA members at United Airlines' London base. Bilateral agreements should fall within the guidelines on cross border employment agreed at the 1992 Washington CCTC meeting.

...FTL regulations

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of flight attendant fatigue or if no rule is released in the next few months, the Coalition will return to the US Congress and lobby for passage of our duty time legislation (H.R. 14 and S. 611)."

• European rules on flight and duty times are about to pass through what is supposed to be the final consultation process after the last Joint Aviation Authorities Operations Committee meeting was held in Berlin on October 19-21. This meeting was attended by Sebastian Roovers (VKC, Netherlands) on behalf of the ITF. The ITF will be sending a copy of the final draft to all unions in JAA member countries when these become available, and will be submitting a response to the JAA's NPA consultation process. ITF unions will be briefed on this and other JAA developments at a special meeting in London on November eighth.



SEAFARERS

ITF endows Human Factor Chair at World Maritime University

A grant of US\$1 million has been made by the ITF Seafarers' Trust to the World Maritime University. The cheque was presented on November fourth to William O'Neil, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization and Chancellor of the University, by ITF Assistant General Secretary Åke Selander.

The presentation took place at the 18th session of the IMO Assembly, the Organization's governing body.

The money will be used to endow an ITF Chair in the Human Factor in Maritime Safety.

The World Maritime University, which was founded by the IMO in 1983, is situated in Malmö, Sweden. Its purpose is to provide advanced post-graduate training in such subjects as maritime administration and environmental protection, port and shipping management, maritime education and training and maritime safety administration.

Since 1983 nearly 1,000 students from 120 countries have enrolled at the University.

Despite its achievements, the University has recently been troubled by financial uncertainties. It depends for its income on voluntary

donations and over the years the biggest have been provided by the host country Sweden and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

In recent years, however, the contribution from the UNDP has been substantially reduced. It fell from US\$1.2 million in 1991 to US\$542,000 in 1992 and might even come to an end this year.

On the question of the endowment, O'Neil said: "There could be no greater tribute to the University than this extraordinarily generous donation. The ITF participates actively in the work of the IMO and ensures that the voice of seafarers is heard. But by endowing a new chair at the World Maritime University, the Federation has demonstrated in the clearest possible fashion that it values the work of the IMO and the role of the WMU in particular.

"The role of the seafarer is crucial to maritime safety and if something goes wrong, the seafarer is often the one who gets the blame.

"But we often forget that the seafarer is also the one who suffers the worst consequences when an accident takes place."

Swedes abandon second register plans

There will be no Swedish second register. Instead, the Swedish conservative government has announced a new package of state aid for shipping. The return of seafarers' tax to the owners plus lower social costs mean that the crewing costs of Swedish flag ships will fall by twenty five per cent. The costs of the package are estimated at around 400 million kroner (US\$ 49.5 million) a year.

"This is a big victory for the Swedish Seafarers' Union. A conservative led government has finally taken the Swedish special register off its agenda," commented union SSU President Anders Lindström.

There has been a fierce struggle over Swedish shipping policy these past two years. A conservative led government, headed by Prime Minister Carl Bildt, came to power in the autumn of 1991.

But the Swedish Seafarers' Union conducted an intensive campaign against a convenience register with demonstrations, meetings and lobbying of MPs and other decision makers. The

battle over Swedish shipping policy was featured in hundreds of newspaper articles and letters to the press as well as in many TV and radio news items.

Faced with the protests against its plans, the Bildt government backed down in the autumn of 1992 and pledged that it would not introduce an open register. But the government demanded that the owners and the seafarers' trade unions should negotiate rationalisation agreements for Swedish flagged ships and that the talks should lead to cost reductions of around fifteen per cent. The Seafarers' Union subsequently concluded agreements for some 70 ships.

"It is good thing and important for the entire Swedish trade union movement that we have stopped the open register," says Malte Segerdahl, the union's international officer.

"But we would never have succeeded without the fantastic support we had from our members and had we not from the very beginning had the support of the Swedish LO and TCO trade union centres," he added.

ITF cruise ship campaign begins

ITF unions meeting in Miami at the beginning of October agreed a strategy to combat exploitation on the world's cruise ships, which is to include the signing of ITF-acceptable agreements for all onboard employees.

The ITF Cruise Ship Committee, comprising 21 representatives from leading cruise fleet countries, developed a series of key objectives for the ITF's campaign to stamp out substandard practices and unacceptable working conditions on these ships.

"Cruise ship operators continue to post record profits and the industry is set to continue its expansion...despite this profitability many cruise ship companies exploit their seafaring personnel and ignore established national and international standards," concluded the meeting.

The very low salaries paid in the sector should be addressed in conjunction with common recruitment practices, delegates said — cruise operators and agencies often charged recruits for medical examinations, visas and air fares.

Repatriation at the owner's expense, sick pay and holiday pay — standard conditions in other parts of the maritime sector — were rarely found.

To redress the balance and target companies condoning such practices, the ITF unions have developed a three-point strategy, to consist of

- applying minimum standards for collective agreements
- building on the information already available on the ITF's cruise ship database

- launching a publicity campaign to encourage passengers to use companies that do not exploit crew.

The ITF's minimum standards for catering crew mean that the basic pay for a steward/ess will be the ILO minimum of US\$356, and US\$215 for the lowest staff rank. Total guaranteed monthly wages, including overtime, leave pay and holiday working, when based on these figures, would be US\$720 and 435 respectively.

Tips may be included in the wages but there must be a built-in wage guarantee through a legally written undertaking by the owner-operator, through collective agreement and employment contracts.

Ten months is to be the maximum duration of employment, and normal working hours are limited to 40 hours. After 127 hours monthly, overtime must be paid at time and a half.

Minimum holidays, rest periods and free medical attention are also to be guaranteed, as are death in service benefits and disability compensation.

All cruise ship employees are to be encouraged to join ITF-affiliated unions, and ITF-acceptable collective agreements signed.

Seafaring crew are to be covered by ITF-approved agreements and ITF policy on Foc cruise ships is to come into line with the policies of the Foc campaign.

Minimum safe manning scales, a common language requirement for all crew, responsible training and operating policies are also required.

Chinese crew arrested for union action

The denial of basic trade union rights to Chinese transport workers will come as no surprise to regular readers of ITF News. The dream of many Chinese seafarers working on foreign flag ships is the right to form free trade unions. Chinese crew are informed that contacting the ITF or its affiliated unions constitutes a criminal offence. Before they leave China to embark on foreign flag ships, jobs that are arranged for them by the government controlled manning agency, they are given pre-departure lectures where they are told that they must behave themselves and if they have any problems they should direct their complaints to the manning agent, the Chinese government or the company.

It is only when Chinese seafarers are driven to the brink of desperation by the abject failure of the authorities to respond to their legitimate requirements that they become involved in contacting local unions. One such case involved the crew of the *Arcadia*, which called in Ravenna, Italy, on April the 2nd 1992. The crew became

involved in taking protest action against the shipowner and the local ITF unions intervened against the ship. Back wages and repatriation were obtained for the seafarers and they were sent home to China. In August 1992 the crew were imprisoned and charged with the crime of "disclosing state secrets". The court hearing took place on August the 8th.

Normally, the ITF would not publicise this case because it is felt that attention may actually endanger the individuals concerned. However, in this case the ITF has received a newspaper article from the *South Daily Newspaper*, the regional Chinese newspaper in the Province of Guangdong, that was published on the 17th of September.

This article is quite surprising, given the political censorship within China. The article is not only an accurate account of the tale, but it clearly makes substantial editorial comments in

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...Arcadia crew "beaten and humiliated"

Continued from page 17
favour of the seafarers concerned.

Whether this means that the press in China is becoming more free, is a question that cannot be answered clearly. It does seem, however, that certain segments of the Chinese establishment are concerned about the treatment of Chinese seafarers on foreign flag ships.

LIFE WAS HARSH ON THE ARCADIA

The article states that the crew were abused, assaulted, humiliated and beaten.

"On the *Arcadia* those Chinese seamen were leading a hard humiliating life once lived by their past generation. They worked twelve hours a day otherwise they would fail to get their monthly salary stipulated in the contract. They were forced to keep working either under fiery sunshine or under freezing cold. The crew captain even reported time taken by the Chinese seamen to drink and eat and then ordered them to make up the time," the article stated.

The article states the crew had no protective clothing, there was no medical provision on board the ship or first aid devices, and that when crew members were seriously ill, they were not even given time off.

When the crew complained, they were told by the master that they would be treated in line with their contracts, and if they had any problems, they should talk to their Chinese company. Finally, on April 2nd, the Chinese seafarers insisted on seeking help from local ITF unions. As they hoped, they were helped.

HARBOUR WORKERS ACT

"Other harbour workers in Ravenna expressed their support for the Chinese seamen, they sent their 'ultimatum' to *Arcadia*, stating that if the shipowner failed to meet the Chinese seamen's demands and fails to improve the treatment of the Chinese seamen, they would stop the water, oil and commodity supply to the ship, and stop unloading and loading shipments."

The crew members returned to China in April after receiving backwages and repatriation — "the eleven Chinese seamen eventually came back. They felt released, their eyes filled with tears.

"As soon as they got off the plane, they saw

their manager from their Chinese company waiting for them. They were excited and ran towards their manager, but suddenly they found that behind the manager stood policemen and police cars. Their feet were numb and without giving any reasons, policemen immediately approached them and pushed them violently into police cars as if they were catching the most serious internationally perceived criminals. The seamen could not understand what happened. They were forced to take off all their clothes, were body searched and all their earnings were taken away," said the newspaper.

CHARGED WITH "DISCLOSING STATE SECRETS"

The crew were released, but in August were arrested and charged with "disclosing state secrets".

"The three well experienced seamen were shocked by that charge, how could they imagine that their monthly payment given by the Greek shipowner was confidential information and a state secret? How could they know the action which they brought to a foreign trade union against a foreign captain constituted "disturbing the normal working order of our State

**"Our dignity
deserves to be
respected. We
should always
defend our basic
rights against any
humiliation or
insults made by
anyone at any time
in any place"**

and breached their country's confidentiality? How could they have disclosed 'state secrets' which sounded more like what spies do?" The families of the arrested men engaged lawyers. These lawyers according to the newspaper uncovered a telex to the Chinese company from the London based shipowner. This telex stated "we are waiting for your response. If we fail to see that these eleven seamen are put in jail, we will never allow any opportunity to seamen on board our ships".

If this is true, then the company, which has told the ITF that it had nothing to do with the case, has many questions to answer. The court case was heard on August the 8th in the People's District Court. No decision has been made by the Court, judgement has been reserved.

"These days are not days of a hundred years ago during which the Chinese were trampled on by the eight allied forces. Although we send out our labour force, we never sell our personal dignity. Our dignity deserves to be respected. We should always defend our basic rights against any humiliation or insults made by anyone at any time in any place," said the newspaper.

Cyprus Foc register continues to grow

The Cyprus registered Flag of convenience fleet continued to expand during the first half of this year, according to figures released by the Cypriot Maritime Administration. On June 13th, the total tonnage of the flag stood at 22.9 million gross registered tons, a gain of more than 400,000 tons and some 50 ships since the beginning of the year. In 1992, the fleet grew by more than 1 million gross registered tons, a rate of increase of about 6 per cent. According to the Director of the Department of Shipping, the possibility of Cyprus ratifying ILO convention 147 within this year are fading.

French Transport Minister Bernard Bosson has announced cuts in social charges for seafarers aimed at reducing flagging out from the national register. The rate at which owners are levied by the Seafarers' Welfare Organisation is to be reduced from 35.5 per cent of gross salary to 17.6 per cent. The necessary legislation will be made in the current session of Parliament. Bosson claims that the move will bring shipowners using the main French register into line with those using France's second register in the Kerguelen Islands. Owners using Kerguelen benefit from a rate of 11.6 per cent for their French crew members, but this rate is only available for the 35 to 70 per cent of the crews which are French. Mr. Bosson has said that the decision taken to eliminate the unfair advantage of Kerguelen owners was taken "in the name of a certain idea of France".

The largest ever single intake of newly built tonnage to the Hong Kong register has been confirmed by World-wide Shipping Agency Ltd, one of Hong Kong's largest operators. Four 150,000 dwt capesize bulk carriers ordered at the beginning of this year from a South Korean shipbuilder will be registered in Hong Kong when they are delivered in 1994-1996. The first of this group will be handed over in the third quarter of 1994 and the remainder in the following years. Total growth tonnage on the Hong Kong register is expected to pass a million tons this year with over 230 vessels on the books.

Norwegian shipowners have rejected a government offer of money to employ Norwegian

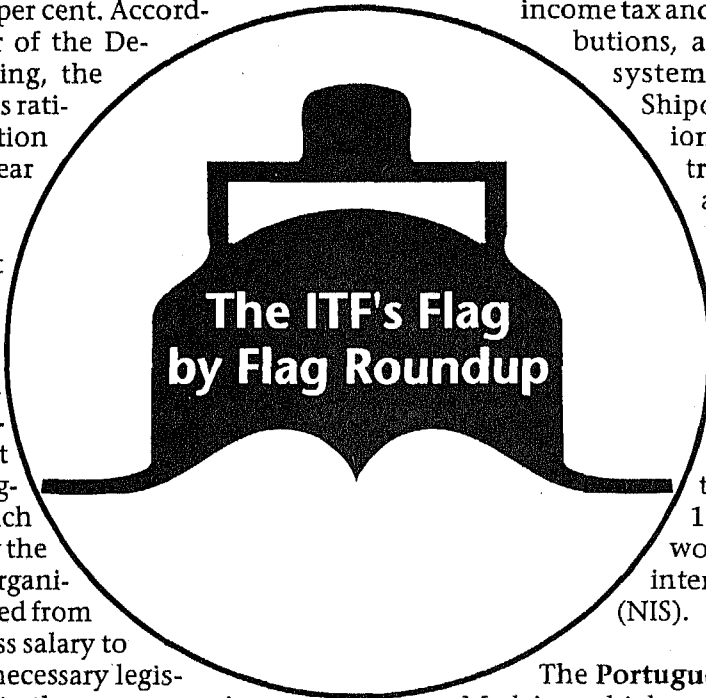
seafarers because they claim they do not want to be subsidised. The government indicated to owners that it is prepared to make a cash contribution to companies for every Norwegian they employed, but Arild Wegener of the Norwegian Shipowners' Association (NSA) has said "it was of no interest to us whatsoever". The NSA has called for a different form of subsidy so that Norwegian seafarers would be exempted from

income tax and social security contributions, along the lines of the system used in Denmark.

Shipowners, seafarers' unions and government are trying to come up with a package of measures which will enable shipping companies to continue employing nationals on the domestic register. Around 6,315 Norwegians are employed on the domestic register out of a total of 11,500 crew. The rest work on the Norwegian international ship register (NIS).

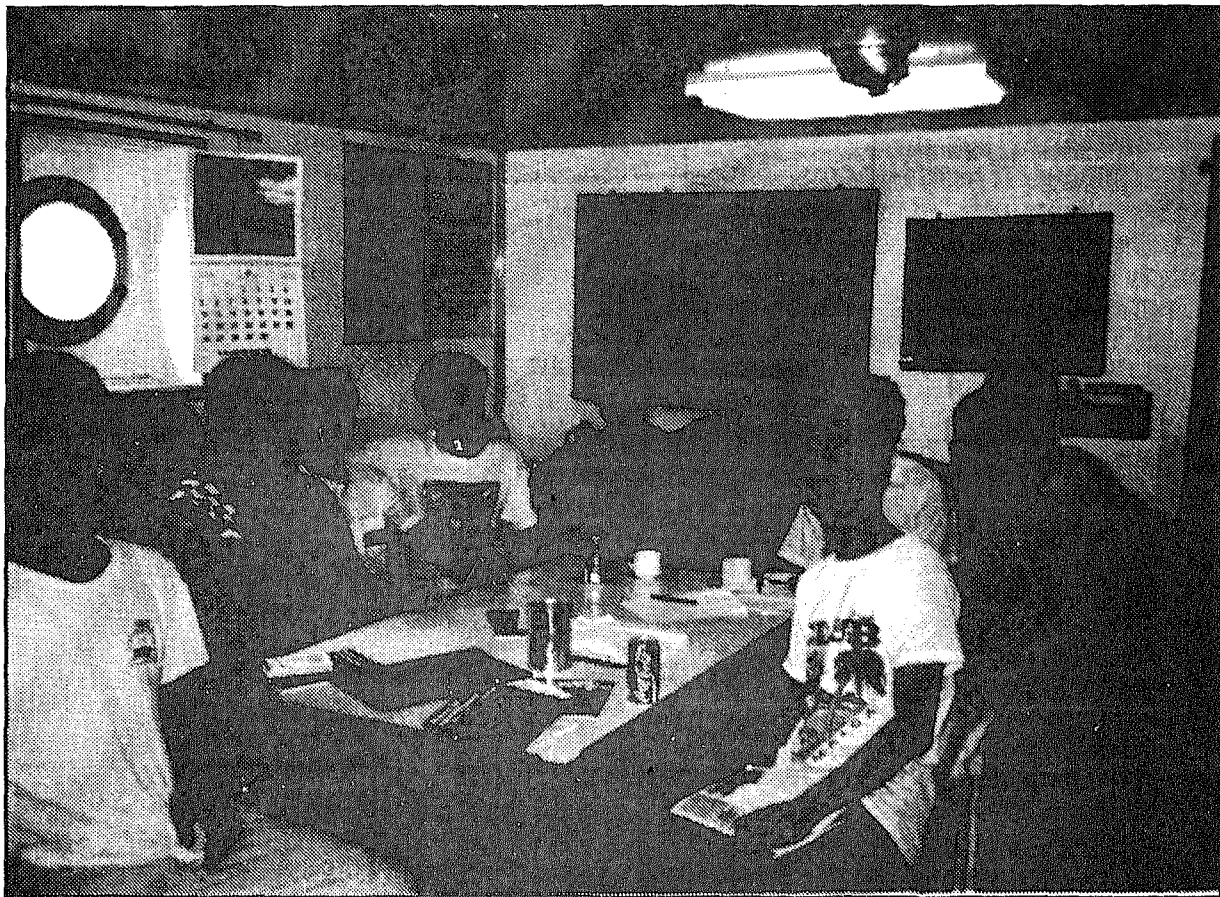
The Portuguese Second Register of Madeira, which was founded in 1989, is now being marketed vigorously for non-Portuguese owners by the Madeira Development Company whose officials went on a recent tour to the Far East. According to Madeira officials, the total net registered tonnage of the register will probably increase to around 2 million tons by the end of next year, compared with the existing level of 1 million tons and the 400,000 tons registered at the end of 1992. Any Madeira registered vessels not owned by Portuguese owners will, of course, be treated by the ITF as Foc.

The USA controlled foreign flag fleet consisting of 313 vessels totalled 26.3 million dwt on July 1st, according to the US Maritime Administration. The figures represent a drop from 332 vessels last year. The 'Foreign Flag Merchant Ships Owned by US Parent Companies' report noted that the largest single segment of US controlled shipping comprised tankers, with 208 such vessels totalling 22.86 million dwt. The leading flag of convenience was Liberia (150 vessels), next, in terms of numbers of ships registered, was the Bahamas (51 vessels), followed by the UK (20), Panama (19), the British Dependent Territories (15), and the Isle of Man register (15).



Korean crew face criminal charges for ITF legal action in USA

— ITF FOC campaign news —



The Captain Lucas 3 crew with ITF Inspector Charlie Stewart

The Korean crew of the Panamanian Flag of convenience *Captain Lucas 3*, which is owned by Greek shipowner Adriatic Tankers, went on strike at the end of September when their vessel arrived in New Orleans, USA. The crew had not been paid for twenty months. ITF Inspector Charles Stewart visited the vessel at the beginning of October. The crew did not wish to remain on board the vessel because of its unsafe condition. The air conditioning was not working, the sewage wouldn't drain and was blocking up the toilets and various other appliances. There were no washing machines, and the crew had no toilet paper. The Coast Guard were notified about the living and working conditions and Stewart arranged with lawyers for the arrest of the vessel. Before the court hearing on the arrest case, the company settled with the ITF. A total of over US\$170,000 was received in payment comprising legal fees, full back pay and a penalty wages element covering approximately six months' wages for the crew. The crew were repatriated at the company's expense to Korea.

The crew arrived back in Korea without any difficulty, but were immediately informed by the Korean agents that they would be arrested and charged with blackmail and intimidation

and were ordered to pay their wages back. On November the 3rd, the crew answered a summons to Pusan Jon Do police station where the detective in charge arrested them and charged them with "extreme expression and intimidation". This outrageous and offensive behaviour by the Korean authorities is very serious. Apart from representing a blatant violation of international trade union rights and ILO conventions, this unprecedented legal action raises serious doubts about the company involved. The ITF is providing full support for the crew, and as we go to press, efforts are under way to have the men released and the charges dropped.

FOC ABANDONED IN SAN FRANCISCO

On November third, accompanied by a local news team, San Francisco ITF Inspector Ray Familathe boarded the Panamanian flagged *Ocean Express II* to investigate the on board conditions for the 23 man crew, stranded on the ship in San Francisco Bay since October 16.

Originating in Manzanillo, Mexico, the vessel reached its destination of the port of Sacramento on October 13 and discharged its cargo of Chilean nitrate fertilizer. During the course of a

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...Crew abandoned in California

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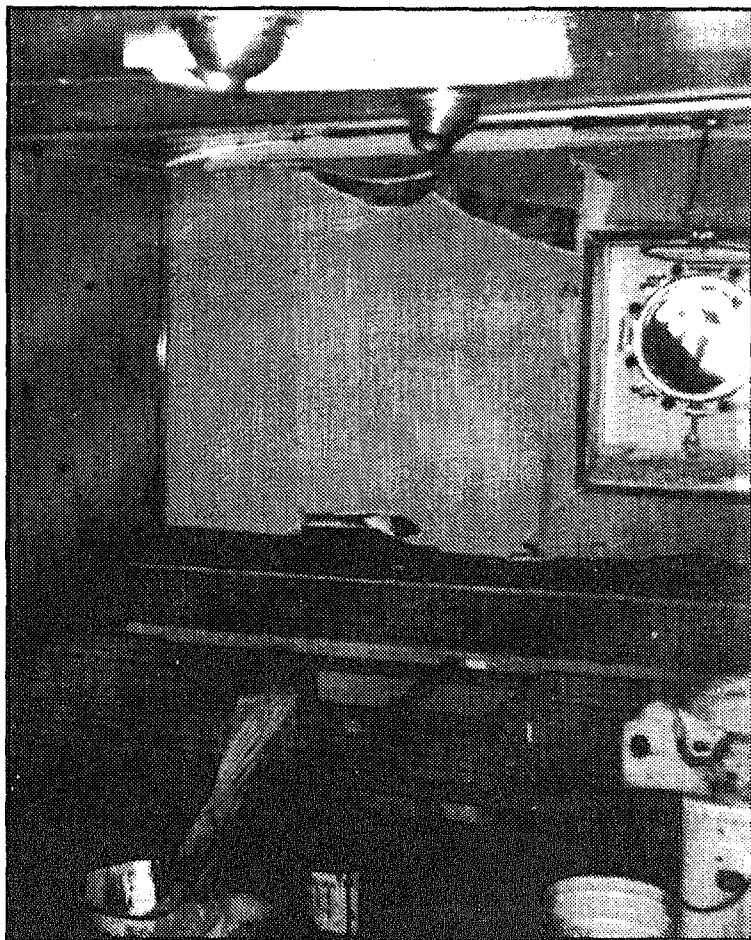
routine inspection, however, the United States Coast Guard found several safety deficiencies, including improper charts and publications and no echo depth sounder or echo depth sounder recorder. Furthermore, it was discovered that the ship's marine sanitary device was pumping sewage overboard. The Coast Guard escorted the ship to San Francisco Bay, where it is being detained at anchorage awaiting the posting of a \$50,000 letter of undertaking (LOU) from the Panamanian owner.

The Coast Guard contacted Familathe on November second, voicing concern for the wellbeing of the multinational Central and Southern American crew. The Coast Guard officers reported having heard that crew salaries were deficient and that food and water stores were diminishing. In addition, they reported extremely unsanitary conditions on board, including a garbage riddled deck, where maggots were sighted.

The following day, to the obvious joy of the stranded crew, inspector Familathe boarded the ship, joined by a local reporter and camera man. They were greeted by the crew members calling out "ITF! ITF!" in Spanish to each other. Inspector Familathe spoke with crew members, visited the kitchen and food stores while the news team shot footage of the garbage piled up outside the kitchen door. ITF literature was distributed to the crew and many crew members disappeared quickly to hide it away in their quarters.

Soon enough the master arrived at the scene, at once altering the previously open mood of the crew members. He forbade further filming or picture taking, and requested that all visitors gather in his office. Familathe asked to see employment contracts, ship's articles and portage bills. The master claimed that he was not obliged to give out such information, but did nonetheless show employment contracts when it was discovered that there were no contracts on board for six crew members, one of whom had been on the vessel for an entire year. The master did not, however, show any other pertinent documentation, with the exception of a payroll sheet, which did indicate that the crew had not yet received their October pay.

The ship's owner has informed the Coast Guard that money for the LOU, bunker fuel, ship stores and removal of the garbage will be provided by November fifth. Inspector Familathe has contacted a port chaplain to see if arrangements can be made for a visit to the crew and he continues to monitor their situation



Accommodation on the *Captain Lucas 3*

OWNERS LIED TO CHARTERERS ABOUT AGREEMENT

When the Swedish charterers OK Petroleum contracted the Cyprus flag tanker *Trans Minerva* they were under the impression that the vessel had an ITF agreement.

Transoil Shipmanagement, who manage the vessel, had said the ship had an ITF blue certificate when they were offered OK Petroleum's business.

So when the ship, arriving with a cargo of oil from Nigeria, at a refinery in Gothenburg in mid October, was boycotted for an ITF agreement, OK Petroleum was understandably angry, saying that it had been "cheated".

In fact, Transoil, a joint venture between Greek shipowners Kappa Maritime and Transman, has six other tankers, none of which are covered by ITF-approved agreements.

The Gothenburg action meant US\$218,000 for the crew in backpay, which was deducted from the original pay agreement for the charter.

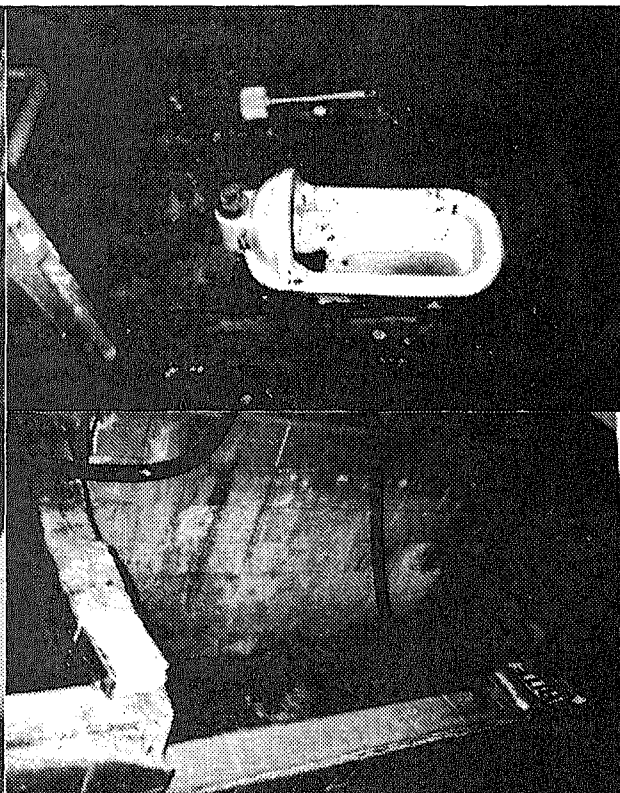
"In the future we will have to be more careful about choosing owners we don't know," declared an OK Petroleum spokesperson.

SHIP IN SHOCKING STATE

The Greek owned Cyprus Flag of convenience *Elena A* was visited by ITF Inspector Ruud Touwen

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...Terrible conditions on the *Elena A*



Conditions on the *Elena A*: washing and toilet facilities (above) were a disgrace, and many safety certificates were out of date.

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in the port of **Sluiskil**, Netherlands on the request of the Sri Lankan crew members, at the beginning of October. Following Touwen's intervention, the company agreed to sign an ITF acceptable agreement for the vessel backdated to the middle of September. Conditions on board the ship were appalling. The ropes were very thin, and evidence appeared to point to a leak in the aft-peak tank. The light bulbs were in poor condition, medicines for the crew were not available or out of date. One anchor was missing a proper stopper. The emergency fire pumps were also not working. Safety certificates were out of date and no medical record existed of an accident which had happened earlier this year. The vessel made certain initial repairs according to the instructions of Port State Control, and left for Italy and Greece.

FOC RUNS AWAY FROM LEGAL ARREST

Dutch ITF Inspector Gerd-jan Harmsen supervised the arrest of the Antiguan Flag of convenience *Haithabu* on the 19th of October. The vessel was arrested for a substantial wage claim for five of the crew; the Chief Officer, Chief Engineer, Cook and two AB's were all owed in excess of US\$7,000 each. In an unusual manoeuvre the vessel illegally departed from **Holland** and sailed to the United Kingdom. The vessel was visited by ITF Inspector John Wood on October 28th. The crew were clearly being put under pressure to withdraw their claims. Wood offered to negotiate a settlement with the owners. An agreement was reached, which would have been acceptable to the crew, but the owners eventually backed out of it because they claimed their financial situation was so bad. The vessel has now been arrested under UK legislation for back wages.

ITF insurance scheme for Flag of convenience seafarers signed



The agreement being signed on Monday November 8. Left to right: Jan Ihlemann (PFA Skade), ITF lawyer John Miles, ITF Acting General Secretary David Cockroft and Torgny Wännström (Folksam).

A new no-fault insurance scheme for seafarers serving on ITF covered vessels will begin in the new year.

Despite the fact that ITF collective agreements for Flag of convenience vessels (currently numbering 2,700) specify compensation for death in service and accidental disability, the ITF and its affiliated maritime unions have over the years spent substantial time and money in having to enforce these contractual clauses, sometimes unsuccessfully.

The ITF has now, in collaboration with two trade union linked Scandinavian insurance companies, formulated an insurance policy that covers death in service and accidental disability for seafarers serving on ITF covered ships. Because this policy will eliminate the question of fault and will be administered via the ITF, there should be no need for litigation or lengthy negotiations in order for eligible crew members to claim their entitlement which will be without prejudice to any further legal claims.

The policy, with PFA Skade — Agentur A/S and Folksam Ömsesidig Livförsäkring, provides for a loss of life payment of US\$60,000 to the next of kin and an additional US\$15,000 for each dependent child, up to a maximum of four. Disability (50-100% and/or loss of profession) pays US\$80,000 to officers and US\$60,000 to ratings.

Certain shipowners and certain nationalities of seafarers will not be covered by the insurance scheme because of existing comparable or better conditions in national legislation, social security provisions or company insurance arrangements approved by the ITF.

The scheme will be funded by the payment of annual premiums by the shipowner which will cover all members of the registered crew complement on a particular vessel. New crew who join the vessel during the year will automatically be covered by the policy and the loss of life provisions will extend for 180 days after seafarers have left their vessel if they remain in the employ of the company. The insurance scheme will come into force on January 1st, 1994.

Clay Bill passes first hurdle

A proposal to extend labour law to seafarers on foreign flag ships calling in US ports has passed the first legislative hurdle in the United States House of Representatives.

The US House of Representatives' labour standards, occupational health and safety sub-committee passed the Clay Bill at the end of October. ITF Acting General Secretary David Cockroft, who was attending meetings with affiliates in the US, attended the session to see the vote taken.

The sub-committee approved the bill after defeating an attempted substitute proposal for a two year study into the effects of International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 147.

The Clay Bill now moves to the Education and Labour Committee, where if it is approved it will then go to the full House of Representatives for a final vote.

Similar versions of the bill have passed committees before, but have never gone to the full House.

The Clay Bill would extend both the US National Labour Relations Act (NLRA) and the Fair Labour Standards Act (FLSA) to seafarers on foreign flag ships "regularly engaged" in US trade.

This would effectively guarantee collective bargaining rights for Foc seafarers calling in US ports. The Fair Labour Standards Act prohibits sex discrimination on wages and mandates a minimum wage of US\$4.25 per hour. The bill has the strong support of the ITF-affiliated maritime trade unions in the USA. If the Clay Bill were to become law, it would become an important vehicle in the implementation of the ITF campaign for seafarers on Flag of convenience vessels.

Under the United States system, a bill requires passage in the House of Representatives, the Senate, and signature by the President in order to become law. The position of the Clinton Administration will be crucial in determining the Bill's future chances of success.

North Sea seafarers and dockers discuss joint strategies

European seafarers' and dockers' unions meeting on 4-6 October in Rotterdam decided a Common Policy for European Ferry Services.

At the first meeting of its kind, unions involved in the North Sea and English Channel ferry trades reaffirmed that Foc vessels should not be used on European routes.

But where this could not be prevented such vessels should be covered by European conditions under ITF acceptable and nationally-acceptable agreements, representatives said.

Crews on regular routes between two European countries must benefit from provisions equal or superior to national conditions in at

least one of the countries.

As well as decent working conditions, crews should be guaranteed optimum living, social and recreational facilities, the meeting concluded.

Second-register ships must be covered by the same, or better conditions.

To achieve this end, ITF affiliates are to cooperate in developing a European framework agreement covering crews on European ferry trades.

Unions will lobby at national level and present a united front on ferry policy to governments and employers. Policy on crewing and safety requirements will be given particular emphasis.

Information exchange, the establishment of a database and the convening of regular ITF European ferry conferences, were other elements unions agreed.

Dockers' and seafarers' cooperation in applying the policies was vital to success, delegates underlined; future meeting would cooperate with the European Regional Committees of each of these ITF Sections.

Future meetings are to look at means of safeguarding the jobs and working conditions of European seafarers, of especial concern given the imminent lifting of cabotage restrictions within the European Community.

The role of Works' Councils, the development of a European safety strategy and policy planning will also be considered.

Acting General Secretary: David Cockroft

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