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African trade unionists issue stowaway warning

The number of Africans sailing as stowaways on board ships bound for wealthy Western European countries to start a new life will increase in the future.

This prediction was made by the ITF African Dockers' and Seafarers' Seminar held in Lomé, Togo from 16 to 18 November 1993. 36 delegates from 19 unions in Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria discussed this and other subjects of major importance during the three day conference organised by the ITF.



The ITF African seafarers' and dockers' conference (Lomé, Togo).

A growing number of Africans are driven to stowaway because of increasing mass unemployment and desperate poverty in their countries. The Seminar accused the World Bank and the IMF of forcing their governments to accept economic "reforms" (Structural Adjustment Programmes), resulting in an increase in unemployment and poverty. The dock workers and seafarers also accused African leaders: Many governments, often military, play games with Western European governments. The result is that these leaders and the rich

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European workers take to the streets against unemployment and austerity

A wave of industrial action and mass demonstrations swept across Europe at the end of November. A general strike over the failure to reach a social pact in Belgium; ten thousand trade unionists on the street in Spain, protesting over similar developments there, and public sector strikes in France and Italy made up the picture of a Europe plagued by record unemployment, job cuts and privatisation.

DIRECTIVES COME INTO FORCE

But the Brussels machinery grinds on. European Labour and Social Affairs Ministers finally adopted the "Working Time Directive" at their meeting on November 23rd, following common agreement in June (see ITF News, July 1993).

The Directive, which lays down a maximum 48 hour week and rest periods, excludes most workers in the transport sectors.

Dock and airport workers, whilst covered by the Directive, will be allowed to work for longer periods than the eight hours envisaged by the Directive, under a derogation which specifies they must be given compensatory rest or "appropriate" protection.

The main provisions of the Directive must be implemented by Member States by November 1996.

The Council also adopted the Directive on minimum safety provisions on fishing vessels (see also ITF News, July 1993). The Directive, regulating shipowners' specific responsibilities for crew safety, applies to new vessels over 15 metres in length and existing vessels over 18 metres.

SAFETY BELTS ON COACHES

Following a fatal coach accident in the UK in November, the Commission has announced its intention to push for stricter legislation on safety belt installation.

Vehicle approval is currently based on a series of Directives operating on an optional basis. It is still possible for Member States to approve coaches according to national requirements.

EC legislation lays down that coach manufacturers must install safety belts on exposed seats — now the Commission hopes to mandate the fitting of lap safety belts on other seats.

DANGEROUS GOODS BY ROAD ADDRESSED

In November the Commission adopted a Proposal for a Council Directive on the transport of dangerous goods by road.

The proposal will harmonise rules for national and international road transport of dangerous goods in line with the rules in the United Na-

tions Economic Commission for Europe's Agreement on the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR).

It envisages a degree of flexibility in allowing national derogations from some of its provisions.

NEW SHIPPING CONSORTIA EXEMPTION ON THE WAY

The Commission has approved a new draft for a block exemption from competition regulations for shipping consortia.

The large-scale investment needed in the modern shipping industry can be offset by the joint operation of maritime transport facilities.

The proposal will allow the joint fixing of sailing times, the exchange of space or slots on vessels, vessel and port facility pooling arrangements, joint operations offices and operation of port terminals, participation in tonnage and revenue pools, joint exercise of voting rights within a consortium and joint marketing strategies.

The proposed five-year exemption will cover both consortia operating within and outside liner conferences.

Consortia with a share of trade in excess of 50 per cent on any particular route will not be automatically granted the block exemption.

...African seafarers and dockers...

Continued from page 1

Western companies take the big profits and the people stay poor.

The conference also decided to request the ITF to intensify the world-wide campaign against Flag of convenience and sub-standard shipping as a matter of urgency. The ITF campaign in Africa should be revitalised with a meeting in South Africa for all dock workers and seafarers affiliated to the ITF, the delegates declared. They also stressed the importance of stepping up government action against sub-standard shipping by creating a regional Port State Control regime, similar to those already in place in Europe and soon to be established in the Asia/Pacific region and in Latin America.

The dockers pledged their support to the seafarers in their fight against Flags of convenience, and the seafarers in return declared their solidarity and support to the dockers in their actions to safeguard their jobs.

What's wrong with the North American Free Trade Agreement?

The US government has adopted the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) — which has already been approved by Mexico and Canada — despite the vehement opposition of the US trade union movement. The following feature article, by ITF News Special Correspondent Bridget Keller (journalist/consultant/translator for the ITF-affiliated International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union) presents the US trade union perspective on this momentous decision.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was adopted by the US House of Representatives on November 17 by a disappointingly close vote.

The trade union movement strongly opposed the pact. In order to ensure its passage, President Clinton "bought off" many undecided legislators, promising even protectionist measures for some, in direct contradiction to what he was supposedly trying to achieve.

WHAT IS NAFTA?

NAFTA seeks to eliminate trade barriers between Canada, the United States and Mexico, creating a single market of nearly the entire North American continent. The implementation of this treaty is supposed to mean a better, brighter future for everyone involved: open markets and streamlined trading bringing prosperity to all.

NAFTA was presented to the American public with a flagrant abuse of statistics and a generous portion of false assumptions by the current political administration and big American business interests.

Opposing NAFTA (at least in its current form) the US labour movement declared that the treaty promises job losses in the US while offering little hope of improving conditions or boosting wages for Mexican workers.

JOB CREATION

The greatest pro NAFTA argument has been that the agreement would create more jobs that it destroys. This assumption is based on the fact that when the government reduced its trade barriers in the mid-80's, US exports to Mexico improved, and since 1991 the US has showed a trade surplus with Mexico. More free trade would thus create more jobs.

This assumption is false for several reasons. The US surplus with Mexico is a result of the overvalued Mexican Peso. The Peso is expected

to fall somewhere between 10 and 20 per cent in connection with the 1994 elections in Mexico. A ten per cent devaluation of the Peso would wipe out any prospective gain from eliminating Mexican tariffs on US goods, which average about 10 per cent. Furthermore, the real source of the current surplus is temporary, based on increased exports of machinery and equipment, supplies and components used to produce consumer products in Mexico being exported back to the US.

Supposedly Mexican workers will take low-skill, low-wage jobs while US workers will move up the ladder to higher wage, high skilled jobs.

PRODUCTIVITY

Another false assumption is that low wages in Mexico reflect low productivity; US firms claim not to move to Mexico for low wages, but to take advantage of the Mexican consumer market. However, many US companies have publicly admitted that they have moved south for lower wages and Mexico openly cites its low wages in advertising for foreign investment. The Mexican consumer market is quite small and is largely already open to US firms. Productivity in Mexican export industries is 80 to 100 per cent of that in similar US industries — wages are 10 to 15 per cent of US levels. In a growing number of industries, labour productivity in Mexico is even higher than in comparable US factories because the Mexican plants are newer and the workers often get more training: where labour is cheap, it is cheap to train.

MEXICAN REGIME

The disparity between wages and labour productivity in Mexico largely results from the policies of the authoritarian Mexican government. Over the last decade, the government has been forcing wages down and keeping environmental regulation lax in order to attract more foreign capital as a way of paying its foreign debt.

In the end, NAFTA will encourage wage competition between US and Mexican workers. It will encourage US manufacturers to compete in the world by attempting to reduce wages — either by going to Mexico or threatening to do so — rather than by upgrading workers' skills and investing in more productive machinery and equipment. The result will not be to bring Mexican wages up to US levels, but to do just the reverse.

Does free trade benefit all and is protectionism

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...NAFTA makes no provision for social dimensions

Continued from page 3

so destructive? NAFTA is nothing more than an instrument designed to make it safer for US companies to shift investments to Mexico.

In addition to economic considerations, there are political implications of agreeing to free trade with Mexico. In fact, it is tantamount to condoning the practices of the authoritarian regime of President Salinas.

Mexico lacks strong independent trade unions, courts, environmental groups and similar institutions that in a democracy keep a check on the government. Wages are held down by an alliance between government influenced labour unions and business associations, which collaborate to set wages. Intimidation and harassment of independent labour unions and those who oppose the ruling party are well known. Few people would deny that the government has immense power to manipulate economic life, and thus to ensure that Mexico will continue to follow an economic strategy of earning foreign currency by attracting investment in unregulated workplaces.

In comparison, it is important to remember that the nations of the European Community rejected membership applications from Spain and Portugal until those countries abolished their authoritarian regimes and established credible democratic political systems. Today, many in Mexico believe that the defeat of NAFTA is necessary to nurture democracy in Mexico. Only on that basis can an economic partnership be built that will raise living standards in all of North America.

NO SOCIAL DIMENSION

The European Community, for all its problems, at least incorporates a social dimension — trade unions are recognised as "social partners" and free trade is, at least in theory, tempered by a stated desire to harmonise conditions.

Nor is there such a massive difference in wealth between EC member states as between the US and Mexico.

Trade agreements must go beyond simply dealing with tariffs, to encompass social and economic standards as well. The EC is extremely sensitive to varying levels of development and the social consequence of change. It provides transition programmes that, among other issues, address basic labour, human rights and environmental protections as a means of bringing equal partners into the trading community.

SIDE AGREEMENTS

NAFTA has, in addition to the main agreement concerning tariffs and trade, a number of so-called "side agreements" which attempt to address environmental and labour issues and are said to be able to "fix" NAFTA. The US proposals make no attempt to set labour or environmental standards nor do they propose a serious process to do so. The labour side agreement fails to protect a worker's right to join and freely participate in democratic labour organisations, to organise and bargain collectively, and to withhold labour through strikes.

It does, however, call for a trilateral commission with a cumbersome, protracted and vague process (that can even be stopped by a vote of the representatives of any two of the countries involved) for imposing unspecified sanctions against any country that has not corrected a "persistent and unjustified pattern of non-enforcement" of its own labour and environmental law. Neither do the US proposals provide for secure and permanent financing of the costs of the North American Free Trade Agreement, e.g., the costs of worker and community dislocation, environmental clean-up, infrastructure etc.

TRANSPORT WORKERS

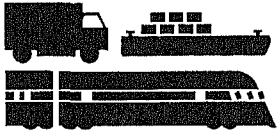
In its report "NAFTA: Taking the US Economy South, An Analysis by Transportation Labor", the Transportation Department of the AFL-CIO sums up the cost of NAFTA for the US transport industry and its workers: "It is inconceivable that US companies and their employees can compete with the substandard wages and working conditions of Mexican transportation workers. There is no scenario in which trade liberalisation does not add up to economic hardship for transportation companies and significant job dislocation on the US side of the border with no associated benefit for the nation as a whole."

US labour is by no means against a North American trade agreement as such, but they propose a "fair trade" agreement, ensuring workers' rights, as opposed to a free trade agreement which only serves to secure greater profits for big business.

ITF News acknowledges the following sources that provided facts and statistics for this article :

Economic Policy Institute, Briefing Paper, Jeff Faux: "The Failed Case for NAFTA: The Ten Most Common Claims for the North American Free Trade Agreement and Why They Don't Make Sense"

"NAFTA: Taking the US Economy South, An Analysis by Transportation Labor", the Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO



INLAND TRANSPORT

Asia/Pacific rail unions denounce bargaining and strike curbs

Strong opposition to curbs on freedom of collective bargaining and the right to strike of thousands of railway workers in the Asia/Pacific region was expressed by railway trade unionists attending the ITF Asia/Pacific Railwaymen's Seminar held in Tokyo on 26 and 27 October.

Forty four leading officials from fifteen railway workers' unions in Australia, Bangladesh,

Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand took part in the two-day seminar.

Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers represented the ITF Secretariat, together with ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Secretary Shigeru Wada. Also in attendance were ITF Tokyo Office Director Masahiko Nakamura, Asia/Pacific Education and Field Activities Coordinator Mahendra Sharma and Asia/Pacific Vice President K Suzuki. Umraomal Purohit, Vice Chairman of the ITF Railwaymen's Section and Chairman of its Asia/Pacific Inland Transport Committee, chaired the meeting and Japanese Deputy Minister of Labour T Nagai addressed the opening session.

It was pointed out that while most rail workers had limited negotiating rights, these often did not include salaries which were fixed by the government along with other public sector staff, with the result that in some countries the average worker did not even earn a living wage.

In contrast to the pessimism over the state of trade union rights, delegates delivered more upbeat reports on future prospects for the railways in the region.

Urban railway systems were being expanded to help ease congestion in Asia's rapidly growing metropolitan areas, with new projects including an urban elevated railway in Bangkok, Thailand and the construction of a light rail transit system for Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. There were also plans by the Philippines government to reverse the line closures of recent years.

Seminar participants condemned the trend for international agencies to demand the privatisation of traditional railway activities as a precondition for loans to assist with restructuring, and urged that procedural agreements be drawn up by the social partners giving adequate protection to employees adversely affected by this process.

In the closing session, participants gave practical expression to a declaration of solidarity by adopting a resolution of support for the Japanese National Railway Workers' Union KOKURO, calling on the government of Japan and the JNR Liquidation Corporation to drop the crippling damages suit against the union. This threatens the very existence of KOKURO by seeking punitive damages of US\$200 million for alleged losses during a railwaymen's strike in 1975.

Pakistan strips rail workers of union rights

The vast majority of Pakistani railway workers have lost their trade union rights.

90,000 of the 131,000 people who work for Pakistan railways were declared by a Lahore court at the end of October to be working on "defence lines".

This unusual court decision, called for by the railway management, effectively strips all affected railway workers of their trade union rights. Under the Pakistani constitution any sector working for "defence" is denied trade union rights. The Pakistan People's Party government under Benazir Bhutto have taken practical measures to implement this court decision. Officers of railway workers' unions have been forcibly evicted by police in many major Pakistani cities.

Leading trade union activists have been suspended from their jobs.

These attacks on railway workers are part of an overall plan to reduce trade union activities in the entire public sector. It is widely believed that the federal government is considering another proposal to restrict and reduce trade union rights in banks and insurance companies.

These undemocratic measures are believed to be in preparation for the privatisation of the railways and other public sector industries and institutions. Since workers are strongly opposed to privatisation and their unions are opposing these measures, weakening the trade unions in these sectors is seen as a useful preparation for privatisation.

UK delays London bus deregulation

In the face of growing opposition, Britain's Conservative government has dropped plans to deregulate buses in London, at least for the lifetime of the current parliament.

The government's change of heart has been welcomed by the transport unions who have been campaigning strongly against its proposals for a free for all on the streets of London which would have added to traffic congestion and meant steep increases in passenger fares, already some of the highest in Europe.

Under government plans to prepare for privatisation and eventual deregulation of bus services in the capital, London's bus routes were first put out to tender in 1985 — so far half of the city's bus routes have been contracted out, with

20 per cent going to private operators.

By putting in low bids, financed in part by pay cuts and longer hours for bus workers, subsidiaries of London Buses have succeeded in retaining 30 per cent of routes. London Buses still runs four thousand of the five thousand buses in the capital.

But the government decision certainly does not mean a halt to the privatisation of the eleven subsidiaries of London Buses, which will start this winter, or the tendering of bus routes. At the same time as announcing that the more radical step of deregulation would not now go ahead, Transport Secretary John MacGregor made it clear that more routes operated by London Buses would be opened up to competition next year.

New Inter Rail card announced

Young Europeans on a tight budget will be able to travel by rail around Europe for even less next year thanks to the new Inter Rail card being introduced on 1 April 1994.

Launched in 1972, the Inter Rail card has been an outstanding success, giving young people under 26 today the freedom of the rail networks of 29 European countries at very low cost.

But the Directors General of the European railway companies felt that after twenty one years it was time to revamp the scheme, bringing it into line with the changed travel needs of

the young in the 1990s.

The Council of Europe and organisations concerned with travel for young people have been closely involved in the work of developing the new card, which offers young travellers greater flexibility in planning an itinerary to suit their pocket and interests.

Details of the new pass, based on seven country zones and four different pass options, were formally approved at a meeting of the Passenger Commercial Committee of the International Union of Railways (UIC) on 28 October 1993.

Norwegian locomotive union celebrates anniversary



Warmest congratulations go to the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Locomotivemen's Union which marked its centenary in October.

It was on 22 October 1893 that engine drivers from all over Norway gathered in the capital — then known as Christiania — for the inaugural meeting of the locomen's union. Those early pioneers, led by Carl Andersen from Drammen, were men with a very strong sense of profes-

sional pride and of the importance of being organised.

They did not have an easy task building up the new union at the end of a long working day against strong employer opposition. It is largely thanks to their dedication and that of the union's officials over the years that the locomen's union today has virtually 100 per cent membership from among their category.



TOURISM SERVICES

ITF Tourism Services conference

One hundred trade unionists from the tourism sector gathered in Granada, Spain, on 17-19 November for the ITF's Tourism Services Section Conference.

The Conference was a historic occasion, as, for the first time, ITF delegates were joined at the Conference by representatives from the other international trade secretariats organising tourism workers — FIET, the white collar workers' international, and the IUF, the hotel and catering workers' international.

The meeting agreed a strategy to deal with the growing importance of tourism employment in the world economy, the low degree of trade union organisation in the industry, and the generally poor wages and working conditions of tourism workers. Proper employment contracts and collective agreements for all workers including seasonal, part-time and temporary workers, were prime objectives.

JOINT STEERING COMMITTEE PROPOSED

Delegates recommended the establishment of a closer working relationship between the ITF, IUF and FIET, agreeing that on approval by the governing bodies of all three organisations, the ITSs should establish a joint Steering Committee as soon as possible.

The Committee would focus on the development of an agreed policy on the Tourism Industry, and develop joint strategies to raise the quality of tourism jobs and of tourism services to consumers.

The development of joint strategies to deal with multinational tourism companies would come under the scrutiny of the proposed Committee, as would the development of policy for the car-hire industry.

WOMEN WORKERS

Enhancing the role of women workers in the tourism industry and securing general equality of opportunity at all levels was seen to be an essential part of its work.

Visitación Morán, of the host union, the Federación Estatal de Transportes y Telecomunicaciones — UGT, reported on the large numbers of well-qualified women in the travel agency sector working below their professional capacity. These conclusions were borne out by the Japanese experience, where, delegates reported, company policies meant that female

graduates could often only gain employment by ignoring their qualifications.

ORGANISING DRIVE

Delegates called for a campaign to target tourism employees for trade union membership.

Unions presented examples of strategies they had developed to deal with the special difficulties of organising in the sector. Of special interest was a report by the ITF's Japanese affiliate, Kanko Roren, of its "Forum Japan" initiative to organise self-employed tourism workers into the trade union.

SOLIDARITY MESSAGES AGREED

Representatives at the meeting gave resounding support to a resolution of solidarity with the IUF's affiliate in Finland, the Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union, over the employers' organisation's attempts to undermine minimum working conditions and reduce pay by up to 20 per cent (we are glad to report that since the conference the dispute has been resolved).

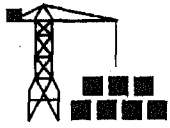
A solidarity resolution, demanding job security and the payment of 13 months' unpaid salaries for Spanish employees at the troubled travel agency Viajes Meliá, was also agreed.

The meeting sent a message supporting Kanko Roren in their case against the Indonesian national carrier, Garuda Airlines, over the dismissal of 17 union members.

In contravention of Japanese labour regulations, the employees — all women interpreters — were employed by a personnel supply agency and not directly by the airline. They were dismissed in 1990 when they joined the union in order to press for their right to direct employment. The union has lodged a complaint with the Japanese authorities.

Closing the meeting, ITF Tourism Services Section Chairman Richard Rosser, of the UK Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA), summed up the principal message of the conference.

"Tourism workers suffer some of the worst working conditions, are paid the worst salaries and are amongst the worst-organised sections of the workforce. Above all, we must remember that even if our task seems enormous, that is not important. If we work together, we can succeed in our efforts to benefit trade union workers and thus, trade unionism itself," he said.



DOCKERS

New Dutch agreement grants job security

The Dutch Vervoersbond FNV and the Rotterdam port employers' organisations reached a new long-term agreement in November.

As part of the agreement, voluntary retirement provisions will be widened.

Workers will be able to retire voluntarily at the age of 55 (a two-year reduction) if their dates of birth fall between 1937 and 1942.

Those born between 1942 and 1949 will be able to retire at 60, with retirement benefits of 80-85 per cent of salaries being paid in both cases.

A three-year freeze on above-inflation salary increases offsets the new provisions.

This is the most recent in a chain of agreements of this type. The process started in the 1980s when automation and containerisation meant rationalisation was needed in the general cargo section of the port. In 1990 the dry-bulk terminals and the facilities for container shipment on ro-ro ferries were brought into the

scope of the agreement.

The new agreement affects all port workers in Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and, for the first time, several small ports in the south-west of the country.

Rotterdam employed 20,000 dockers in the early 1970s. By 1990 this had been reduced to 12,000. These reductions were achieved without compulsory redundancies; in the near future, the figure may well be down to 5,000.

It is hoped that if sufficient numbers of workers take advantage of the plan, then there will be room for fresh recruits to the industry.

"If the implementation of the new agreement is a success, the Vervoersbond FNV can look back on a period of 15 years in which, on the one hand, the union played a militant role in organising many strikes, but on the other hand, accepted that modernisation of the port would result in fewer jobs," said Kees Marges, ITF Dockers' Section Secretary.

Tilbury dockers lose appeal

Twelve British dockers from the port of Tilbury have lost their fight to be reinstated as the result of a Court of Appeal judgment at the beginning of November.

The twelve shop stewards were made redundant during the abolition of the National Dock Labour Scheme in 1989 — Thatcher's port reform. In 1991 and again in 1992, industrial tribunals found that the men, originally 19 in number, had been dismissed because of their

trade union activities and that they should be given their jobs back.

UK industrial tribunals, however, have no powers of enforcement and the Court of Appeal overturned the judgment, ruling that it would be impractical for the Port of London Authority (PLA) to reinstate the men.

Compensation payments are also likely to be reduced. The case was the longest-running industrial tribunal case in Britain.

Brazilian deregulation goes ahead

Brazilian transport minister Alberto Goldman announced on November 24th that the legal machinery is in place to begin the privatisation of the ports of Cabedelo, Laguna, Itajaí and Porto Velho.

Interested companies have been invited to contact the relevant government department in the capital, Brasilia.

A week previously Goldman had met with union leaders including ITF-affiliated CONTTMAF president, Mauricio Sant'Anna, to

discuss the way the deregulation would be handled.

The next stage of privatisation will be a technical and financial review of the interested companies, including a review of current tax status, scheduled for January fifth. Following that, companies will have a 90-day period in which to submit proposals.

The process should be completed by the middle of 1994, said Goldman.



CIVIL AVIATION

Union resistance to globalisation grows

"Trade unions are fighting back against the tide of aviation liberalism and globalisation which has assaulted working conditions and collective bargaining rights in the last few years" was the message heard by nearly 100 participants from more than fifty unions from 27 countries attending the 1993 ITF Civil Aviation Section Committee meeting held in London on 9-10 November.

The meeting was chaired by George Ryde, TGWU (United Kingdom).

In his summing up of two days of reports by unions and committees and reviewing events since the last Section Conference, David Cockroft, ITF Acting General Secretary, noted that:

"While the gloom of recession, and the devastation of restructuring continues to drag the industry into crisis, and while no one can doubt there are still very difficult times ahead, aviation unions have scored some landmark victories in defending union rights and conditions, during the last twelve months."

UNION ACTION

"In particular," he noted, "the union action at Air France has fundamentally altered the climate in Europe, in which governments and airline managements have come to believe they can impose restructuring and privatisation, at will, and without consultation. The Air France strike has forced the French government to rethink its plans for massive job cuts and restructuring plans".

He noted that the USAir dispute had similarly shown that the days of Eastern Airlines have gone in the United States. The British Airways strike last June had demonstrated that even the most aggressive privatised airline can be forced to sign an 'employees' charter' of social dialogue with unions.

The Cathay Pacific dispute, while not exactly a union victory, had been important as a major dispute against cuts in conditions by an Asian "dragon" airline. Furthermore ITF unions had undertaken an impressive solidarity action against strike-breaking by international charters which had made such an attempt at union busting a very costly exercise for the company.

Workers at TAP have been facing riot police being used against their protests. Workers at Alitalia in the United States were facing a determined attempt to de-unionise. Air mechanics in Hungary had faced strike breakers flown in from

abroad. Union leaders in Turkish Airlines and Cathay Pacific have been victimised as the result of their union activities.

The meeting called on unions to renew their efforts to provide effective solidarity to unions in dispute.

The meeting noted that the ITF had considerably increased the level of work on behalf of its civil aviation affiliates during the last year. The ITF issued more solidarity appeals, reaching more ITF affiliates than in any other previous 12 months.

The ITF has significantly extended its participation in the JAA.

The Section held its first ever Health and Safety Conference, and its first Air Traffic Services Conference. It held the first Latin America and the Caribbean Civil Aviation Meeting for five years; and the first Africa Regional Meeting for six years is due to be held in December.

All this has meant that the Secretariat has organised more conferences and activities involving more unions in this period than at any other time.

ITF POLICIES AND ACTION GUIDE

The meeting noted another important development during the year which indicated that governments themselves were questioning the results of unrestrained liberalisation and globalisation. This was the setting up of the National Commission to Ensure a Strong and Competitive Airline Industry in the United States, and the Comité des Sages by the European Commission.

It was agreed that there was an urgent need for unions to put forward a strong, united and coherent policy on re-regulation for civil aviation, and that the ITF should, therefore, produce a clear policy document on the regulatory system needed for air transport.

This would make up a key part of the *Beyond 2000* ITF transport policy which would be prepared for the 1994 ITF Congress.

It was also agreed that the ITF should follow up its publication on globalisation with a handbook for unions which would bring together all the existing ITF policies on aspects of an international union strategy in response to the globalisation of the industry, including ITF guidelines for inter-union co-ordination on these issues, along with an international directory and contacts list of aviation unions.

ITF to target "unfair flyers"

"The airline industry is highly competitive, and airlines spend millions of dollars on building their image. We can use the ferociously competitive nature of the market against airlines that violate trade union rights and publicise a list of Unfair Flyers," Stuart Howard of the ITF Civil Aviation Section told the 1993 Ground Staff Technical Committee meeting held on November 11 in London.

The meeting was attended by 50 participants from 31 unions in 26 countries.

The proposal for an "Unfair Flyers" campaign, which would target anti union carriers with bad publicity, while explaining the link between unionised employees and good and safe services, came in a discussion paper on how to make international solidarity more effective.

The paper also proposed that unions need to be more selective in calling for international solidarity, especially in calling for industrial

action, and that cases of serious violations of union rights should be the priority.

The paper said that one well-targeted effective solidarity action would have more impact and effect in helping all disputes than a constant stream of calls for solidarity demanding an unrealistic level of response from affiliates.

At the same time it urged that more imaginative actions need to be developed, including actions short of strike action. The "Unfair Flyers" campaign would harness union pressure, short of strike action, to pressure airlines to accept basic union rights.

The meeting welcomed the proposal and asked for the "Unfair Flyers" campaign proposal to be developed further by the Secretariat.

The meeting heard also reports on sub-contracting, including EC plans to liberalise ground handling, and reports from the health and safety working group and the air traffic services group.

European JAA aviation authority unions discuss coordination

Many trade unions have only a vague notion about the Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA), yet the JAA is determining regulations which influence the basic conditions of work for thousands of aviation employees in Europe, and influence those in many countries beyond.

This is not helped by the fact that the JAA itself does little to explain or publicise its work.

The JAA is responsible for drafting harmonised air worthiness standards and operational rules for civil aviation in European countries. Its rules are sent to the EC Council of Ministers to be scrutinised for passing into EC legislation.

It also co-ordinates much of its work with the US Federal Aviation Administration. These bodies therefore set aviation rules which set or influence safety standards throughout much of the world.

Key areas under current discussion are harmonised flight and duty time limitations; personnel licensing, including aircraft maintenance engineer licensing; and training standards and procedures.

On November 8, 1993 the ITF organised a meeting for affiliates in London to look at the significance for unions of the current activities of the JAA, and to review and report back on ITF participation in various JAA bodies. The meeting was attended by 80 participants.

The ITF participated in a JAA Working Group for the first time four years ago. It has always

sought to gain more access to JAA processes, and in the last twelve months managed to extend its representation into some of the top JAA consultation structures.

Nevertheless, as Stuart Howard of the ITF Secretariat noted, the process of consultation and participation for unions is extremely limited. The JAA is not bound by working group discussions, and rule drafts are frequently changed in meetings in which only national aviation authority representatives are allowed to take part.

In order to participate effectively in what are usually highly technical bodies the ITF has relied on the expertise of its affiliates. These experts gave reports on their work in various JAA study bodies.

The meeting endorsed the work done so far and agreed on ITF representatives to carry on this work in the JAA bodies.

SAS dispute

The ITF-affiliated HTF union in Sweden is enforcing an overtime ban against SAS after the company announced it wished to delay wage increases until March 1994 and introduce a new pay structure.

The union has also filed notice of strike action on December 2, 6 and 9.

Landmark intervention in US strike

The strike by 21,000 flight attendants at American Airlines in November must mark an important turning point in the US airline industry.

Twelve years ago the Reagan administration declared open season on aviation unions with the sacking of 11,000 air traffic controllers. The role of the government was to actively assist companies in assaulting their unions. Anti-union employers such as Frank Lorenzo were urged on. The US bankruptcy courts became a kind of agency for union-busting.

Now times have changed a little.

After 14 years of deregulation US aviation is in a mess, and at last there is a government which recognises that industrial peace is a key element in the well being of an industry which is vital to the national economy.

The American Airlines action brought the personal intervention of President Clinton. With this intervention Clinton marked out a new landscape for industrial relations in the aviation industry in the US.

The words he used in doing so are highly significant:

"This company and its employees are a very important part of the American economy, a very important part of the airline sector that has been troubled for the last couple of years and that is a very important part of our high-tech future."

Clearly the government was helped to this position by the sheer level of support given by employees to the American Airlines strike.

The strike came after the failure of negotiations for a new contract between the Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA) and the company.

The company's deal of inadequate pay, tougher scheduling rules, a cut in vacation pay, crew complements reduced to the legal minimum, along with a reduction in the union's right to take up grievances, coming after years of concessions by employees, was simply too much to swallow.

A 93 per cent strike vote for an eleven day walk out which included the peak travel period of the Thanksgiving weekend was followed by a 97 per cent level of support for the strike.

The company issued threats to fire returning strikers, and to sue the union.

It prepared teams of strike-breakers ready to take over strikers' work. It began recruiting new workers with minimal training to take over strikers' jobs on key routes.

Yet these tactics and intimidation failed to bring about any return to work.

After three days of strike American was still flying planes, but without any passengers on them.

The company for its part was trapped by its own intransigence and by the merciless laws of airline competition.

The company refused the union's proposals to put the dispute to an independent tribunal, but when exactly the same offer was made by President Clinton one strike day later, the company was ready to accept.

This intervention is rightly regarded as an important victory by the union, and confirms the end of Lorenzo-style industrial relations in the US aviation industry.

The union and the company are now back in negotiations. Any matters which cannot be resolved will go to binding arbitration. Under this arrangement all the workforce will be back at work under the conditions prior to the dispute.

• The APFA is not an ITF affiliate. However, information on their impending strike and its importance was brought to the ITF Civil Aviation Section Committee meeting in London by the AFA, the ITF flight attendant affiliate in the US. The meeting agreed to urge all ITF affiliates to give practical support to the APFA and in particular to assist any APFA crew members stranded at foreign airports. The ITF secretariat co-operated directly with the APFA over this assistance during the strike.

Unions form airline alliances

Three ITF affiliates, the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) from the United States; the TGWU from the United Kingdom; and the Flight Attendants' Association of Australia issued a joint statement at the 1992 ITF Civil Aviation Section Committee meeting on November 10 announcing the co-operation of the three unions organising respectively in USAir, British Airways and Qantas.

The statement declared "in anticipation of a stronger alliance between these three airlines, the flight attendant unions have agreed to establish joint policies to protect the airlines' most

important assets, their employees".

Under the agreement the unions will establish a formal communications system, develop a co-ordinated bargaining strategy, and discuss the union response to employee exchanges between the airlines.

The agreement comes close after co-operation discussions between the AFA and the ÖTV (Germany) in response to the alliance between UAL and Lufthansa. Last July the ITF organised a meeting of Iberia Group unions in Buenos Aires. A follow-up meeting is set to take place in Madrid in January.



PEOPLE

Olav Bjørklund has been chosen by the executive of the Norwegian Seamen's Union to take over as President from **Edvin Ramsvik**, who has been on sick leave since the autumn of 1982. Ramsvik was elected President and Bjørklund Vice President in 1988. Replacing Bjørklund as Vice President is **Erik Bratvold**, who was previously negotiations secretary.

Chinese railwaymen's trade union leader **Han**

Dongfang is the 1993 recipient of the AFL-CIO's George Meany Human Rights Award for his bravery in fighting for the rights of Chinese workers.

Maurício Monteiro Sant'Anna was re-elected as President of the Brazilian Confederation of Maritime, Aviation and River Transport Workers (CONTTMAF) at the union's national congress on November fifth.

OBITUARIES

Philip Pato Pyaso, President of the National Airline Employees' Association of Papua New Guinea, died on 21 November. An active trade unionist with a special interest in trade union education Pyaso had been Chairman of the Coordinating Committee of ITF affiliates in Papua New Guinea for a number of years.

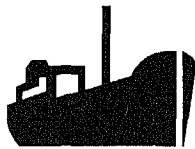
Lindsey Williams, Vice President from 1965 to 1979 of the Gulf Coast District of the Seafarers' International Union of North America, died on 12 September, aged 79. Williams began his working life aboard the towboats on the Mississippi

river, and it was not long before he was organising river tug and towboat crew members. His talents were swiftly recognised by the union which made him an organiser in the Gulf area and later appointed him Director of Organising. One of most highly regarded and respected associates of the late President Paul Hall, Williams served as the Gulf Coast area director of the Inland Boatmen's Union (IBU) from 1961 to 1976 when the IBU merged with the SIU. In a funeral tribute, SIU President Michael Sacco hailed Williams as a "fierce fighter for seamen and boatmen" and a "keen strategist and superb union organiser".



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

9-10 December	ITF/Brussels Committee/PTTI Meeting on International Integrators	Berlin
13 December	European Fishermen's Regional Committee Steering Committee	Copenhagen
13-15 December	African Civil Aviation Conference	Kampala
14 December	Channel Tunnel	Coquelles
14 December	Fishermen's Section Sub-Committee on the Protection of the Marine Environment	Copenhagen
14 December	Fishermen's Section Sub-Committee on Safety and Health	Copenhagen
15 December	Fishermen's Section Steering Committee	Copenhagen
16-17 December	Fair Practices Sub-Committee	Copenhagen
27-28 January	Asia/Pacific Civil Aviation Conference	Hong Kong
31 Jan - 1 February	Asia/Pacific Regional Committee	Manila
2-3 February	Asia/Pacific Seafarers' Regional Committee	Manila



SEAFARERS

Port State Control grows stronger: Canada joins MOU, Asia/Pacific agreement set for signing

Regional implementation of port state control — coastal states enforcing minimum safety criteria on foreign flag ships — will soon cover most of the world.

The November meeting of the 15 member European Port State Control organisation in Rhodes decided in principle to accept the application for membership of Canada.

There was widespread industry criticism of the port state control authorities' failure to accept Canada at their last meeting. This controversial meeting (see *ITF News*, June 1993), last May, in Bonn, was unable to accept the Canadian application because the European Commission was opposed to the principle of a "European" regional organisation

Swedish officers win strike

A three week strike by members of the ITF-affiliated Swedish Ships' Officers' Association (SFBF) and the Engineer Officers' Union (SMBF) on board fifteen Swedish flag ships ended on 25 November when the two unions reached agreement with the Swedish Shipowners' Association on the details of a new pay and conditions agreement for 1994.

Industrial action began on November fifth over the unions' claim for "decent wages". According to the SFBF and the SMBF, newly qualified officers on some Swedish ships have been earning less than ratings.

This grievance has been addressed by the settlement, which provides for a three per cent general pay rise from 1 January 1994.

tion expanding its membership to include a North American country.

The membership of the Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control includes coastal states from the European Community, the European Free Trade Area states, and Poland.

The Rhodes meeting, after an extensive discussion, decided that Canada's application was "an exceptional case" and agreed in principle to admit Canada at the May 1994 meeting in Bonn, where they will be a formal, final decision.

The Canadian authorities are already cooperating with the European Port State Control states in sharing information about ship inspections. Canada has ratified ILO 147, and the Canadian coast guard has been doing an effective job of maintaining port state inspections within Canada. Membership of the Memorandum of Understanding will strengthen the practical cooperation between the Canadian coast guard and the European authorities.

Later this month, in Tokyo, an Asia/Pacific Port State Control accord will be signed. Following the *Viña del Mar* agreement for Port State Control in Latin America, a meeting will be held in December in Barbados to begin the process of establishing a Port State Control regime for the Caribbean. Representatives from the European and Latin American Port State Control organisations, as well as the International Labour Organisation and the International Association of Classification Societies, will also attend.

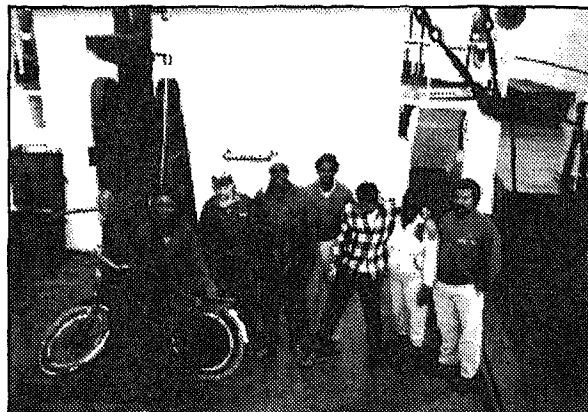
This will mean that, very soon, the only part of the world not covered by Port State Control regimes will be Africa and the Indian Ocean.

Captain Lucas III charges dropped and Korean seafarers released

Following the intervention of the ITF-affiliated Federation of Korean Seafarers' Unions (FKSU), the charges against the crew of the *Captain Lucas III* (see ITF News, November 1993) have been dropped and the money has been returned to them. According to FKSU President Cho Chun Bok, the union got in touch with the relevant Korean manning agent as soon as they heard about the charges. The union demanded that the charges against the seafarers be dropped, and they were. All the money paid to the seafarers by the US court was returned to the seafarers and the commitment was given that the seafarers "shall not be subjected to any disadvantage in getting re-employment on account of this". Furthermore, the vessel itself will be renovated and the living conditions improved. The union has been in touch with the seafarers involved and none of them are being subjected to any discrimination and they have all thanked the ITF for its positive cooperation.

The Honduran flag *Sea Bianca* is under arrest in Flushing, the Netherlands and will be auctioned by the court of Middelburg. Rotterdam ITF Inspector Ruud Touwen was contacted by the crew of the vessel in September to be informed that they had not been paid for four months. The vessel was covered by an ITF collective agreement. The ship was arrested, but unfortunately the arrest was only made for the individual employment contracts, not the full ITF agreement. The owners and charterers paid an amount of US\$45,000 to the crew, but, under the ITF agreement, the crew were owed an additional US\$170,000. A second arrest has now been put on the vessel, and it will be auctioned for the full wages. The vessel, which is docked at Flushing, was effectively abandoned by the owners. The ITF arranged repatriation for three of the crew members and has provided food and supplies to the remaining crew. Conditions on board the ship were very poor. The engine room bilges were full of water and oil, which could not be pumped out. Over 20,000 tons of water needed to be removed from the engine room. The air compressor was broken and needed to be replaced.

The Panamanian flag *Ocean Express II* (see ITF News, November 1993) left San Francisco for Manzanillo, Mexico after giving an undertaking to the US Coast Guard. ITF Inspector Ray Familathe made a total of four trips by water taxi to the vessel, two with Port Chaplain John Heaney who assisted him and performed church services on board the ship. Familathe also



The *Sea Bianca* crew.

brought supplies and clothing to the crew members, since the owners had not provided personal hygiene items. Because the vessel's cargo had already been unloaded, there was no possibility of industrial action in support of the crew.

Shipowners who sign ITF contracts for fleets of ships, often at more competitive rates than the standard ITF agreement, should take note of this case and remember that failure to comply with any ITF agreement may end up with shipowners having to pay more in the long run. German owners Sprante Schiffahrtsverwaltung had a TCC agreement for their fleet of seven ships. All the vessels flew the Antiguan flag of convenience. The agreement was monitored by ITF German Coordinator Hans Kreitlow. Kreitlow discovered that on at least one vessel of the fleet, the *Groden*, the full rates of the ITF TCC agreement were not being paid. In July of this year the *Groden* called into the Swedish port of Kristinehamn where, following Kreitlow's request, ITF Inspector Johann Skottborn visited the vessel. Underpayment of all crew was established and following negotiations, which Kreitlow conducted from Germany, a total over 76,000DM was paid to the crew. Kreitlow wrote in July to a Mr. H. Mussehl of Sprante Schiffahrtsverwaltung renewing a request for full contractual documents on board the ships. He gave a formal warning to the shipowner that if there was evidence of another violation of the agreement, all the agreements for the seven ships would be annulled. Kreitlow never received a reply to these letters. Because of the failure of the company to observe the agreements made when the vessel was in Sweden — further evidence of underpayment had come to light — Kreitlow wrote to the company on the 19th of October informing them that all con-

Continued on page 15



The dismal view from the *Ocean Express II* — the crew were stuck on board for months in a sub-standard ship with this spectacular view of San Francisco — but the seafarers were unable to leave the ship.

Continued from page 14

tracts between them and the ITF had been terminated with effect from that day. Outstanding claims, however, for the vessels that had been under agreement are still valid. At the end of October the *Groden* arrived in the Dutch port of **Ijmuiden**. ITF Inspector Ruud Touwen visited the vessel and obtained over US\$4,000 in back wages and repatriation for one officer. Because the ship was no longer covered by an ITF TCC agreement, Touwen informed the owners that they would have to conclude an ITF standard agreement — at higher rates of wages — for the vessel. A new special agreement covering full ITF wage rates was signed for the vessel on the 1st of November. As a direct result of the company's failure to observe ITF negotiated wage rates, they have ended up having to pay more money under an ITF standard agreement.

The ITF receives many letters from seafarers all over the world. The following extract is taken from a letter from one of the crew members on the Bahamian registered flag of convenience *Igloo Finn*, which was boycotted in Norway last month: "Let me start my unforgettable story at sea when we were sailing from Piraeus, Greece to Norway. I was working as x on board a reefer ship, a 1,239 gross tonner, a Bahamas registered ship named *MV Igloo Finn*. During that time we

were sailing beyond the vicinity of Biscay Bay where there was very bad weather which kept cheating us, this gave me a sense of an idea that if we ever survived this pitiless storm, there will be a really good fortune for us from the good will of our loving God. Behind us we also had a feeling of depression, anger and challenge due to the miseries that occurred to us since we only recently arrived on board from the hands of a Greek captain. At sea I spent my vacant time reading and studying the idea of how to reach the International Transport Workers' Federation from the good details in the ITF magazine and I was happy to know we have got the right move and sent a letter to the ITF in London in which we explained our problems and information regarding our ship and the ship's owner. The storm was increasing, the temperature was decreasing each day which went by until we arrived at the port of **Alesund** in Norway. There we met our trusted Foc inspector Steinar Eduard Garberg on 11 November 1993. Because of the lack of time in Alesund as the stevedores did their job quickly, we preferred to arrange our final move for the next loading port. So on the next day, 12 November 1993, we arrived at the port of **Maløy**, Norway and the strike began. Not having a week, the Greek shipowner decided to provide all for our needs and to give in

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The crew of the *Igloo Finn* — [Inset] ITF Inspector Steinar Garberg arrives with their money.

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to our demands as long as we could bring the ship to the port of destination in Istanbul, Turkey, on 18 November 1993. The dispute between the shipowner and the crew members of *Igloo Finn* ended. We are very thankful for the full support of the ITF affiliates in Norway and most of all to the ITF in London." On November 13, an ITF Standard Agreement was signed, US\$34,330 in back pay was obtained for 7 crewmembers and a TV and washing machine were bought for the vessel.

In late September, the ITF German office received a message from Swedish ITF Inspector Johann Skottborn requesting an investigation of the 37 year old Bahamian flag passengershship *Albatross*. The ship was destined to take 1,500 passengers from Bremerhaven to Spain, and was clearly a ship in need of attention. Whether or not a 37 old vessel should be carrying passengers is also a question worthy of attention. Port State Control in Stockholm had briefly checked the vessel, but were unable to conduct a full examination because they only came on board

two hours before the ship was destined to leave. The ITF German office in Bremerhaven contacted the local Port State Control authorities. The ITF was informed by M. Meyer from the Bremerhaven authorities that the Port State Control inspectors were of the opinion that it was not necessary to inspect the vessel again as it had already been checked in Stockholm. The German Inspectorate told Mr. Meyer that Port State Control were obliged to inspect a ship if newly justified complaints from a party were available. Nevertheless an inspection was refused. The German trade unions have made representations to the relevant Ministry of Transport, and the ITF is pursuing the matter with the Secretariat of the Memorandum on Port State Control in the Netherlands.

The crew of the Greek-owned Maltese flag *Spyridoula* were happy to have their vessel detained in the United Kingdom by the Port State Control authorities on the 17th of November. Apart from the fact that they had not been paid properly during the six and a half months from signing on (they had only received advances), the food was inadequate and supplies were poor. The Port State Control authorities detained the vessel because the navigation and radio equipment was sub-standard. Additionally, the Port Health authorities detained the vessel on the basis of the poor state of the galley, store rooms and toilets. The crew were a united nations of nationalities — Greek, Russian, Egyptian, Sri Lankan, Ghanaian and Nigerian. When the ship arrived in Tilbury, England in November a number of the crew provided power of attorney to Bryan Allen, the Tilbury official of the ITF-affiliated Rail, Maritime and Transport Union (RMT). In the end the company settled for a payment of over US\$51,000 to the crew members who were repatriated. A new crew joined the vessel on the 23rd of November.

Acting General Secretary: David Cockroft

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