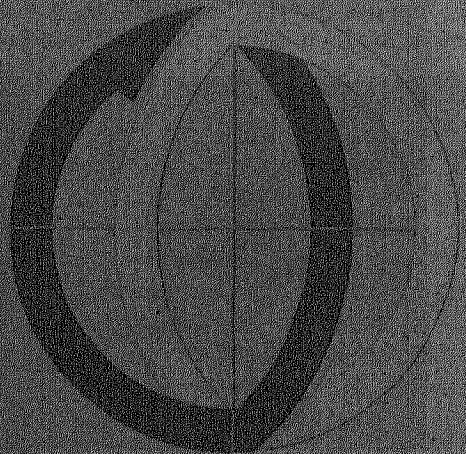


ITF

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS FEDERATION



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NEWS

No. 6 1997



The Americas at the crossroads

What fate for transport workers in the era of free trade?

Towards an inter-American structure

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Cover photo: US-Mexican border at Nogales.

■ *ITF News is published by the ITF six times a year in English, French, German, Japanese, Russian, Spanish and Swedish.*

■ *This issue was published on 12 November 1997.*

When the 39th ITF Congress meets in New Delhi next October, it will be asked to approve a whole series of changes in the way the ITF works. Among the most important of these will be new provisions in the ITF Constitution dealing with the role of the ITF's regions.

In the past few years, ITF regional activities have been growing in importance. This year *ITF News* 4/97 focused on the Asia/Pacific Region which has just held its own regional conference in Tokyo. Africa, a continent which is also undergoing profound change, will feature in a future issue. Europe's political destiny is tied up inevitably with that of the European Union, so it is no surprise that the ITF's future European structures are closely linked to its relationship with the Federation of Transport Workers' Unions in the EU or FST. This may be clearer following the FST's General Assembly due to take place in Luxembourg in mid November.

In the Americas, which are the focus of this edition, radical changes in ITF structures are planned. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, following the removal of the ITF's Regional Secretary for financial mismanagement and the forced closure of our office in Lima, Peru, ITF work in Latin America was reduced to a minimal level, while activity in the (English speaking) Caribbean was non-existent. This phase came to an end in 1994, when the 7th ITF Latin American and Caribbean Regional Conference, held in Costa Rica, agreed on a new plan of action involving the establishment of a regional office, the creation of a new regional committee based on national coordinators, and gradual moves towards the creation of an inter-American regional structure.

When the ITF held a special conference on regional economic integration in Mexico City last September, it was the first time that transport unions from North and South America had ever worked together. Evidently they liked what they saw, because the conference strongly endorsed the idea of permanent inter-Ameri-

'For the first time ITF unions in the United States and Canada will have the opportunity to share their experiences with colleagues from Latin America and the Caribbean. And not a moment too soon.'

can activity. The next stage will be a special preparatory meeting which will be held in Rio de Janeiro at the end of November to be followed, if all goes well, by the first ever ITF inter-American regional conference to be held in Miami in July 1998.

For the first time ITF unions in the United



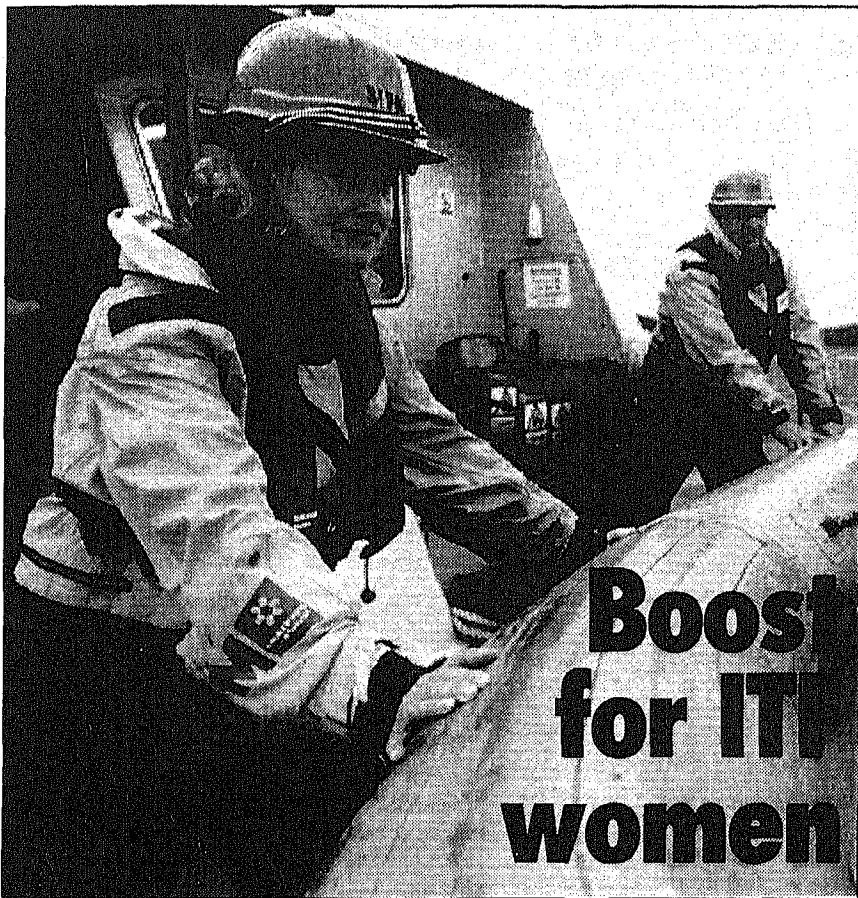
ITF General Secretary David Cockroft writes

States and Canada will have the opportunity to share their experiences with colleagues from Latin America and the Caribbean. And not a moment too soon. As the Mexico City meet-

'Creating an inter-American regional structure will not be easy. Not only will it take time (and money), it will also take some big change in attitudes from many ITF unions which have grown used to dealing with industrial problems nationally. That option is no longer open.'

ing showed, the pressure for liberalisation and free trade in the Americas is growing rapidly, yet there is no provision whatsoever for a social dimension to the process. Building effective international solidarity between all unions in the Americas is therefore the only way of forcing governments and employers to listen to the needs of working people.

Creating an inter-American regional structure will not be easy. Not only will it take time (and money), it will also take some big change in attitudes from many ITF unions which have grown used to dealing with industrial problems nationally. That option is no longer open. Nafta, Mercosur, Caricom and the much talked about Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) all demonstrate the need for practical international trade union solidarity. It is time to fight back and to do it internationally. ■



■ Women transport workers like Claire Holmes (above), a navigating officer with the Scottish Fisheries Protection Agency and member of Numast, the British officers' union, will be represented through their unions on the ITF Executive Board if plans drawn up in October are approved at next year's Congress.

Five seats to be reserved on Executive Board

Women transport workers will be guaranteed representation on the ITF Executive Board if proposals for five reserved seats for women are accepted by next year's ITF Congress.

The Executive Board agreed to recommend the change to the ITF constitution at its meeting in London on 23 and 24 October.

If the Congress accepts the plan, at least one woman from each ITF region will join the existing 30-strong governing body.

The meeting also recommended that a position be created which would give the ITF a woman Vice-President or President.

Currently the ITF's constitution requires the five top positions to be allocated by regional group – a President and four Vice-Presidents. The EB's proposal would extend this number to six.

Five women, from India, Brazil, Zimbabwe, Britain and Sweden, made up a delegation from the ITF Women's Interim Steering Committee which presented proposals to the Board for guaranteed representation. They were: Darshan Paul, Marlene Terezinha Ruza, Caroline Mandivenga, Cathy Agus and Gerd Nyberg.

"This meeting has been truly enlightening for us," said Mandivenga, on behalf of the delegation. "Please debate our proposals seriously.

"It's clear that women are not coming up through the structures automatically, so the ITF needs these measures. We want to work with you, so give us the chance to do it. We hope you want to work with us too," she added.

The details of how the new positions will be elected and other issues relating to women's activities will be decided by the Board at its next meeting.

China delegation on the cards

Other decisions of the Board included an agreement to send a high-level delegation to China next year to investigate the representation of Chinese transport workers and to follow up the condemnation of China by the International Labour Organisation's Freedom of Association Committee for the denial of trade union rights to Chinese seafarers.

Congress plans: full steam ahead

The agenda for the ITF's 39th Congress in New Delhi next year (29 October to 5 November) was approved, with a special item: "Mobilising Solidarity," to be debated.

This agenda item will focus on strengthening ITF unions' input into international solidarity and look at handling global industrial disputes such as the recent ones at UPS, British Airways and in the Australian port of Cairns. ❧

Biggest ever Asia/Pacific meeting

The 4th ITF Asia/Pacific Regional Conference, which took place in Tokyo from 29 September to 1 October, was attended by 270 delegates from 24 countries.

The Conference, the biggest ever, voted to condemn anti union repression in Burma and Indonesia and for a more formalised ITF structure in the region. Meetings of Asia/Pacific unions in several ITF sections were held during the course of the meeting.

● The Dockers' Section condemned the US attack on collective bargaining in Japanese ports and expressed solidarity with the Sri Lankan union CMU in its fight against anti union activities in the port of Colombo.

● The Seafarers' Section adopted resolutions on the involvement of Asia/Pacific unions in ITF decision making, wage rates of non-domiciled seafarers on national flag ships and carriage of desalinators on lifeboats.

● The Railway Workers' Section discussed the growing influence of the World Bank on railway restructuring programmes and attacks on trade union rights.

● The Road Transport Workers' Section endorsed the ITF campaign to reduce drivers' hours and to organise within multinational road transport companies. It addressed issues affecting the taxi sector and concerning violence against transport workers.

● The Civil Aviation Section elected a new female Regional Chair, Darshan Paul, from the Air India Cabin Crew Union. It called for an international campaign in defence of union rights in essential services and adopted conclusions on unruly passengers, contracting-out of services and cross border employment as well as a resolution on sexual discrimination in civil aviation. ❧

FOCUS ON THE AMERICAS

Economic liberalism takes its toll as the sub-continent emerges from the era of dictatorship, writes the ITF's Latin America and Caribbean Regional Secretary, Mauricio Sant'Anna

The 1980s blew fresh winds of democracy over most of Latin America. Dictatorship went out of fashion. But a new fashion caught on, neo liberalism, with a softer and more sophisticated approach to the same objectives of excluding trade unions, eroding wages, creating unemployment and producing inequalities – this time without weapons or tanks on the streets.

Our challenge today is to confront globalised markets and economies with globalised trade unionism. The integration of Latin American and Caribbean transport unions with North American unions will be our answer to this challenge. Education, communications and continuous information between unions in Latin America, the Caribbean and North America are essential to this process.

Mexico

The national meeting of independent unions held in August this year in Mexico City set the date of 28 November for the foundation of a new trade union centre.

Several ITF affiliates are participating in this

New horizons in



new grouping, such as the ASPA pilots' union, the ASSA cabin crew union and the ATM bus transportation workers. Alejandra Barrales, General Secretary of ASSA, is one of its vice chairs.

The ITF is following developments with great interest. The right of Mexican unions to independence and self-determination is essential to protect the interests of Mexican workers.

Mercosur

The integration of southern countries (Argen-



■ US workers protest against NAFTA's destruction of well-paid, unionised jobs.

"The test of any trade agreement is whether it's good for working families. You have to close one eye and put your hands over your ears to say that NAFTA has measured up."

Ron Carey, General President of the IBT Teamsters' Union, USA

The North American Free Trade Agreement – NAFTA – popularised the adage, "The new rising tide will lift all boats", meaning, if the governments of the US, Canada and Mexico will give corporations unbridled licence to ignore workers' rights and environmental standards while pursuing greater and greater profits, somehow the people in all three countries will benefit from the wealth, jobs and investment that would eventually trickle down.

NAFTA promised to create jobs and spur economic growth. But, as North America enters its fourth year under NAFTA, not only has the trade agreement failed to live up to its promise, it has restructured economies, undercut government regulations, and laid the groundwork for a powerful centralised global trade bureaucracy. NAFTA promotes the privatisation of public services, enshrines the intellectual property rights of corporations, and jettisons protective measures for the environment.

Over the last two decades American wages have been dropping for a variety of reasons, but NAFTA has accelerated the problem. The rich are getting richer and the middle class is sinking to the bottom. Although NAFTA has only been in place since 1994, its policies alone are to blame for 15 to 25 per cent of the growth in the income gap that has occurred in the US in the last two decades.

The US and Canada see domestic high paying manufacturing jobs disappear as imports from less industrialised nations increase. Mexico is one of those less industrialised nations that is moving from an agricultural economy to one based on wages.

Instead of industry coming to Mexico and spurring economic

Latin America



■ Above: Argentine truck drivers in one of their protests this year, taken against the background of ultra free market conditions created by Mercosur.

tina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay – with Chile as an associate member) is now a concrete reality, as are the social and labour inequalities within the Mercosur trading group.

The road transport sector has in recent months seen internationally-co-ordinated boycotts and industrial action by transport unions, resulting in border closures. There have also been national strikes of truck drivers, in Argentina on 24 April and 14 August, and in Brazil on 24 July. ITF affiliates played a prominent role in these actions.

Meanwhile, the approval of a second Brazilian register in June undermines several Mercosur shipping agreements, mainly the proposed register of Mercosur vessels.

The implications of this register, the first of its kind in Latin America, will be closely watched by the ITF and its affiliates, particularly its possible repercussions on collective bargaining for national crews.

Peru

The ITF, along with other international trade secretariats (ITSs) in Latin America is concerned about the labour and social conditions in Peru. During a recent International Labour Organisation regional seminar on privatisation, held

in Rio de Janeiro, the Peruvian National Railworkers' Federation gave a dramatic report on the violation of human rights and of ILO instruments, the uncontrolled increase in public service and fuel costs after privatisation and a high rate of inflation that ruins the lives of many poorer people.

Venezuela

A general strike was called on 6 August this year, completely halting public transportation in Venezuela. The strike was in protest at the refusal to apply a rise in the minimum wage to public sector workers and in opposition to rises in fuel prices and public service charges. Our new affiliate, the Sitrameca metro and bus workers' union, played an important role in the protest.

Colombia

More than 60 trade union activists have been killed in the past year and approximately 50 others have received death threats. The ITF has joined national trade union centres and other ITSs in urging the Colombian government to investigate and establish responsibility for these crimes. ■

Nafta: bad for unions across all borders

growth that would be beneficial to raising wages and living standards to equal those found in the US and Canada, Mexico suffers as industries flock to the border just below the US seeking to cut production costs with low-wage labour. Corporations profit from the increased production at the lower wages they pay workers in Mexico, but the profits don't stay in Mexico or go toward raising wages of workers. Wages that were already low remain low, and the government continues to repress independent unions.

As large transnational corporations converge in Mexico they wipe out smaller local industry. Nafta policies are blamed for destroying 28,000 small businesses in Mexico that suddenly had to compete with huge foreign companies.

Canada has suffered because it has historically offered much higher social benefits than its neighbour to the south. Social benefits and compensation, as well as wages, have been cut as Canada lowers itself to America's weaker social benefit structure. Since Nafta, several hundred thousand jobs and many hundreds of manufacturing companies fled Canada to lower-wage America.

Many companies in the US and Canada threaten to close up and move to Mexico when workers demand wage increases and unionisation. Even the Nafta Labor Secretariat's own survey of US firms facing union organising and contract campaigns found that over half of the firms threatened to shut

down operations to stop unions from organising. When forced to bargain with a union, 15 per cent of the firms actually closed part or all of a plant – triple the rate found in the late 1980s, before Nafta.

Last year a "Truckers' Summit" was organised where representatives of the Teamsters' Union and of independent trucking associations and unions in Mexico and Canada agreed on an action plan to fight trucking regulations written into the Nafta trade deal.

"Our fight is not with each other," said Ron Carey. "Our fight is against corporate greed that is destroying jobs and lowering wages and benefits in all three countries."

Speaking to US workers at the summit, Alfredo Dominguez of Mexico's independent labour federation, the Authentic Labour Front, said: "Mexican workers don't want your jobs. We want good jobs in Mexico that pay a decent wage."

There are labour and environmental side accords to the Nafta trade deal. These need to be strengthened and enforced. Enforceable global workers' rights to minimum wages, health and safety standards, the right to organise in unions, and prohibitions on child labour must be a part of any trade agreement.

Labour, environmental and community activists are building coalitions to combat the negative effects of Nafta. The Council of Canadians has put together a declaration of citizens' rights in a global economy. Early next year, hundreds of citizen leaders will present the US Congress with the Fairness Agenda for America, which demands that trade agreements offer and enforce new protection for workers, communities and the environment and adequate social investment. ■

Article supplied by the IBT Teamsters' Union.

Banana trade alarm

Transport workers will be among the casualties of a ruling by the World Trade Organization (WTO) that the European Union's banana import licensing scheme violates fair trade rules. Caribbean islands such as Jamaica, St Vincent, Dominica, Martinique and St Lucia whose economies depend substantially on their banana exports to Europe are likely to suffer most in terms of increased unemployment. The WTO decision came in September after a US complaint that the banana import regime unfairly discriminated against Latin American producers. Caribbean islands such as St Lucia, where 70 per cent of its national income derives from banana exports, will be devastated, many experts fear. Farmers, truck drivers and dockers could see their jobs disappear in a matter of months. ■

**by Buzz Hargrove,
President, National
Automobile,
Aerospace,
Transportation and
General Workers
Union of Canada**

Low wages and social conditions in Caribbean

Despite a historically low level of affiliation, the ITF considers the Caribbean to be strategically, socially and politically of major importance in the planned integration of transport at inter-American level.

Underlining this commitment, Regional Secretary Mauricio Sant'Anna visited five Caribbean countries earlier this year in May, meeting unions and some government representatives.

The region is characterised by low wages, attractive fiscal incentives and low health and environmental standards and other conditions favourable to lowering production and operational costs.

It is therefore no coincidence that nine flag of convenience registers are based in the region, some of them among the worst flags in terms of losses and casualties.

Competition between the ports of Central America and the Caribbean is becoming increasingly fierce. Many of the 24 container ports could soon be phased out with disastrous consequences for dock workers.

In spite of the nine FOC countries, there are only some 5,000 seafarers employed in the shipping industry, and most of them on cruise ships.

Trade unions emerged out of struggle, and the unions we built became our primary vehicle for continuing our struggles.

The truth, however, is that for much of the past two decades working people have confronted particularly aggressive attacks from the right and unions have suffered major defeats. Workers have been left demoralised and uncertain. In some cases, this meant passively hoping that a change in government or an upturn in the economy would solve their problems. More often, it meant that workers no longer believed that significant change was possible.

But it's certainly become clear that even as the economy improves, our lives won't improve unless we fight to influence and share in the potential gains. And given the pressures they face, no government will side with us unless it is backed by – and pushed – by a mobilised movement.

Fighting back really does make a difference

When we fight back, we discover that we actually do have some power. In spite of all the talk about globalisation, auto workers in Canada and the United States have shown that as corporations restructure to increase profitability through specialisation and lean inventories, those same corporations also become more vulnerable to a militancy intelligently used.

At the computer retailer PC World, in spite of the "global" product, court supported scabbing, and a massive show of police power, CAW workers successfully got an agreement after taking over the plant and mass picketing from workers.

And in a series of trade union "Days of Action" in Ontario we forced an intensified public

The ITF and its affiliated Caribbean unions must be prepared to meet the challenges of the next millennium, says Sant'Anna. "We have made our choice. We must co-ordinate actions with other social partners in the Caribbean at international and inter-regional levels to overcome inequalities, create jobs and improve the quality of life."

He adds: "We need to expand the FOC campaign and perhaps set up a Caricom office also to maintain close contact and liaison between port workers.

"If unions do not participate in inter-governmental bodies like Caricom, the outcome for transport workers will be to observe the arrival of transnational groups as a silent and inoperative spectator."

Caricom (Caribbean Community and Common Market), established in 1973, includes as full members: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and Grenadines, Surinam and Trinidad Tobago.

In 1995 Caricom countries joined the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) with a broader membership of 25 Caribbean basin states, including Spanish-speaking countries such as Honduras and the Dominican Republic. ■

debate over the issues, brought thousands of new people into the movement, put the government on the defensive, and made it increasingly clear that we (working people and their social partners) and not they (corporations, bankers, and right-wing governments) speak for the community.

When we fight back, we show the concrete relevance of our unions, develop new alliances, develop our organizing capacities and skills, and above all build the strength of our union and movement for future battles. When we stop fighting back, we betray our past, lose hope, and lose relevancy. Fighting back matters! ■

■ *MUA members in Cairns celebrate their reinstatement on union contracts.*



De-unionisation attempt blocked with ITF help

Victory for Australian dockers

In a stunning demonstration of the effectiveness of international solidarity, the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) and the ITF have joined forces to prevent a shipping company from introducing non-union dock labour.

The action represents a significant victory in the campaign to resist efforts by the conservative government in Australia to weaken the organisation and influence of waterfront trade unions.

The dispute centred on a ship called *Java Sea*, whose owner, International Purveyors, came under pressure from the government to implement plans for de-unionising dock work.

In the middle of September, the company announced that it was sacking its existing unionised cargo handlers in the port of Cairns and would be seeking the unloading of the *Java Sea* by unorganised labour on individual employment contracts.

The MUA organised a demonstration picket line and publicly called upon the ITF to support the sacked union members.

The ITF Seafarers' and Dockers' Sections accused the company of allowing itself to be used as a political pawn by the government. The ITF also

warned the company that worldwide actions would be organised against ships calling at ports such as Cairns where de-unionisation had taken place.

Following this intervention, the company instructed the captain of the *Java Sea* to anchor outside Cairns and await further instructions.

Intensive negotiations were then held between the MUA and the company which resulted in an agreement to rehire the unionised dockers.

The ITF's involvement in the victory was prominently covered by the Australian media, and the country's Transport Minister, shortly before resigning, reaffirmed the government's intention to pursue "waterfront reforms" – in other words MUA-busting. The Minister also stated that the government would have won the dispute had it not been for the ITF.

The MUA also used the Cairns dispute to strengthen trade unionism locally. Having discovered that truck drivers delivering goods to the wharves were not unionised, the union assisted in the creation of a new section for the drivers in the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union.

In a joint circular to seafarers' and dockers' affiliates, ITF Dockers' Secretary Kees Marges and ITF Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson stated that the Cairns victory was "a concrete example of the benefits of joint co-operation between seafarers and dockers".

The Cairns dispute took place against the background of legal changes which have outlawed solidarity action between Australian unions. ■

'The ITF also warned the company that worldwide actions would be organised against ships calling at ports such as Cairns.'

Meeting on Aids

The ITF hosted a meeting in London in November of international and national agencies concerned about the prevention of HIV/Aids infection among seafarers. The meeting agreed to work towards the creation of an alliance of agencies to fight the epidemic. It was decided that the International Committee on Seafarers' Welfare would co-ordinate the work. Among other organisations represented were the International Labour Organisation, the International Shipping Federation, UNAIDS, the International Christian Maritime Association and the International Maritime Health Association. ■

Liverpool offer rejected

Liverpool dockers have rejected Mersey Docks and Harbour Company's final UK£28,000 (US\$45,000) severance offer – designed to end the two-year industrial dispute at the UK port – by a majority of more than two to one. A postal ballot organised by the Transport and General Workers' Union in response to a company ultimatum saw 213 votes cast against the offer and 97 for, out of a total of 329 men directly involved in the dispute which arose after they were sacked in September 1995 for refusing to cross a picket line. In addition to the severance payment, the package included temporary reinstatement, with the offer of an interview for around 40 jobs and inclusion on a register for future vacancies. Formation of a labour supply unit was also proposed, which would have created an additional 28 jobs. ■



Asia-Pacific Rim week of action

As this issue of *ITF News* goes to press, plans were in hand for a week of action against flags of convenience in key Asia-Pacific Rim ports between 20 and 26 November. Co-ordination centres have been established in Tokyo, San Francisco and Delhi, and ITF Inspectors have been sent instructions on tactics for the week. The action follows on from a highly successful similar exercise in Europe earlier this year, which recovered over US\$1.5 million in back pay for seafarers. ITF Assistant General Secretary Mark Dickinson said the aim of the Asia-Pacific Rim action was to demonstrate to ship operators the risks they run if they try to avoid trade unions and refuse to adopt ITF acceptable minimum standards. "We want to make Asia and the Pacific Rim no-go areas for sub-standard flag of convenience ships," he added. The action would also highlight the ITF's cargo handling campaign which aims to resist shipowners' attempts to force seafarers to do work traditionally done by dockers. A full report of the week of action will appear in our next issue. ■

Russian peace deal

The end of a long and bitter confrontation between Russian maritime trade unions was signalled at the conclusion of discussions which took place in Moscow on 15 and 16 September. More than 100 participants from local and regional union organisations, as well as the central governing bodies of nine water transport and fishing workers' unions, attended a unity conference sponsored by the ITF. A resolution was adopted expressing a clear commitment from those who took part to the creation of a Federation of Water Transport and Fishing Workers uniting all maritime unions in Russia. The resolution also set out the principles of independence, justice, solidarity and democracy, as well as the right to voluntarily join and leave the Federation. ■

Delegation to go to Liberia

Seafarers' Section wants dialogue with flag of convenience register

A top level delegation to Liberia, whose flag of convenience shipping register is, after Panama, the world's second largest in tonnage terms, was agreed by the ITF Seafarers' Section Conference at its three-day meeting in Singapore from 8 to 10 October.

In one of a series of resolutions dealing with safety and related issues, the conference, which was attended by 160 delegates and advisers, also urged action to promote the scrapping of over-age and sub-standard ships.

It was agreed that the delegation to Liberia would seek a meeting with the country's newly elected President, Charles Taylor, in order to highlight the complete lack of benefit for African seafarers from the operation of the register.

Ways in which the register could be better administered should also be discussed, conference delegates urged.

Among other resolutions agreed by the con-

ference, which was hosted by the ITF's two affiliates in Singapore, SMOU and SOS, and chaired by John Fay of the US-based SIU seafarers' union, was one expressing concern at the loss of life suffered by Indian seafarers as a result of the recent collision in the Malacca Straits between the *Vickraman* and *Mount 1*. Delegates also adopted new ITF guidelines on dealing with stowaways.

ITF General Secretary David Cockroft said after the meeting that it had been the most productive and unified Seafarers' Section Conference he had attended.

"Delegates from all regions of the world realise that only by working together can they defend jobs and raise living standards for seafarers," he added. "Sub-standard ship operators and sub-standard shipping registers must be eliminated, and the ITF is ready to work with anyone who is committed to lifting standards in the industry."

The conference pledged its full support for the struggle being waged by dock workers' unions against deregulation and de-unionisation in ports around the world. ■

Korean shipowner tries to renege on ITF crew agreement

In April this year Samsun Shipping, which runs a fleet of 15 ships flying a mixture of the Korean flag and flags of convenience, agreed to an ITF standard agreement to cover its vessel, the St Vincent-flag *Samsun Unity*, following negotiations with the ITF Inspector in Brisbane, Australia, Bob Carnegie.

Arrangements were made to conclude the paperwork and the vessel set sail with the crew sharing \$55,000 in backwages. However, once the ship had left port the company reneged on its undertakings, and the ITF found that when the vessel arrived in Taiwan the mainly Filipino crew had been threatened with a variety of reprisals if they did not return the backwages to the company.

A sistership of the *Samsun Unity*, the St Vincent-flag

Samsun Spirit, arrived in Vancouver at the end of August and the crew were anxious to have the vessel covered by an ITF agreement, so contacted ITF Inspector Peter Lahay. He found that the company had applied for an agreement for this ship and another sistership the *Samsun Light*. No agreement had been signed and the salaries paid were some 50 per cent below ITF benchmarks. Peter successfully pressed the company to sign an agreement, after issuing a warning of what might happen if it did not do so.

The *Samsun Spirit* sailed for Immingham, England. But when it arrived in Immingham the crew decided to go on strike as they were still being paid only half of their wages. ITF Inspector John Wood was on hand to meet the vessel in order to ensure that the

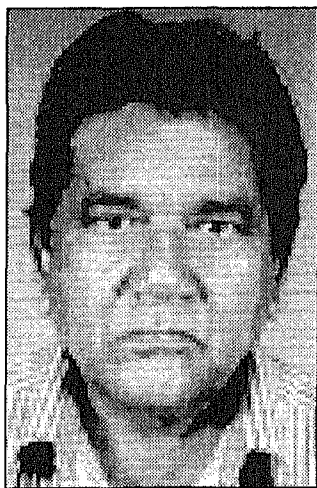
agreement signed was honoured. There was intense local interest in the plight of the crew. The berth they were occupying was needed for a large operation and the strike effectively closed down the whole terminal.

The final settlement gave the crew, who were to be repatriated, protection against any reprisals and the company was faced with a total bill of \$90,000 in backpay and compensation.

However, this is only a fraction of the claims that have been made against the company for the disruption to the terminal. This should ensure that they understand immediately the folly of cheating seafarers and should also be, the ITF hopes, the start of positive negotiations to resolve the problems on the other ships in the fleet. ■

Abdulgani Serang and the case of the fake ITF Inspector

The ITF Inspector in Bombay, ABDULGANI SERANG, describes here how he did some successful detective work while on a visit to Calcutta and tracked down the notorious VS Murthy – the fake ITF Inspector who has been taking cash from seafarers and shipowners. Despite repeated official warnings to the shipping community in India from the ITF, he boards vessels in Calcutta, Haldia, Madras, Visakhapatnam and asks the master to see an ITF certificate and, if one is not on board, he settles for cash under the table.



■ VS Murthy, the ITF imposter, as snapped by Abdulgani Serang.

I traced him to his house at around 7pm. He answered the door wearing only a small towel round his waist. I introduced myself as representing the Bombay ITF office. The moment he heard that he excused himself and came out dressed in a two-piece suit and a bow. He is around 50 years of age, 5 feet 2 inches tall, weighs around 95 kgs with dark features and dyes his hair black.

I made up a story which involved me asking him to give me his latest photograph. I needed it as there was something very good in store for him. He

readily obliged. I told him that I would come to his office the next day to collect it.

I duly arrived at his office to find Murthy surrounded by some shady looking people. I held my nerves and entered. He seemed happy to receive me and introduced me as the big man from the Bombay ITF. As his questions became more and more inquisitive I said that I was in a hurry. He gave me his latest photograph and also photographs of two of his associates.

He became a bit uneasy and repeatedly asked me what I would be doing with his photograph. I told him that he

should expect a surprise in the coming days.

Later in the day, when I returned to my hotel, the lobby manager informed me that four persons had been calling by regularly and frantically asking about me, trying to get as much detail as possible. I checked out immediately and headed for the airport even though my flight did not depart for five hours.

As I checked out and was seated in the cab I could see four of Murthy's cronies barging into the hotel.

I eventually arrived safely to Bombay, elated by the experience and satisfied that I had been able to hoodwink Murthy and now had his photograph. This would help the ITF put an end to his nefarious activities. ■

On 17 October the dispute between Japan and the US Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) regarding Japanese port practices nearly ended in a nightmare scenario.

On the instruction of the FMC, the US Coast Guard was preparing to stop Japanese ships from entering or departing from US ports. Japanese seafarers would have been taken hostage.

ITF General Secretary David Cockroft – as well as the ITF's Japanese and US seafarers' and dock workers' unions – expressed their strong condemnation of the measures threatened by the FMC. The ITF asked US President Clinton for the immediate resignation of FMC Chairman Harold Creel and his replacement by someone with better diplomatic and negotiation skills.

Just one hour before Japanese ships were to be stopped in – or just outside – US sea ports, the FMC gave in as a result of – among other things – the intervention of the US President who had expressed his concern about the direction in which the dispute was heading.

The dispute came to a head in November last year when the FMC decided to impose sanctions on ships owned by three major Japanese shipowners unless the Japanese government agreed to amendments to the so-called "prior consultation" procedures in the dock workers' collective agreement. In line with International Labour Organisation Convention 137, these re-

Why ITF supports Japan in row with US on dock work rules

At its meeting in October the ITF Executive Board described attempts by the US authorities to amend union-negotiated rules on dock work in Japan as an outrageous and unwarranted interference in collective bargaining. Here, ITF Dockers' Secretary KEES MARGES explains the background to the dispute.

quire full consultation with unions on any changes in working practices and the introduction of new technologies.

The amendments being proposed by the US were designed to allow US shipping lines, notably American President Lines and SeaLand, to set up their own terminals in Japan and to hire their own – most probably non-unionised – port labour, by-passing the current employment and labour supply regulations.

The sanctions – which included a penalty of US\$100,000 for each Japanese ship entering a US port – did not have the effect the FMC had hoped for. The Japanese shipping lines refused to pay. Negotiations followed the threat on 17 October, which resulted in reduced penalties – and the US President's intervention.

However, this does not mean that the dispute is over. The ITF has already expressed its support for Japanese dock workers' affiliate, Zenkoku-Kowan, and if necessary will call on affiliates to organise solidarity actions to show the shipowners, governments and notably the FMC and the Commission of the European Union – which has expressed similar ideas about Japanese port practices – that deregulation should never lead to a violation of the freedom to negotiate. ■

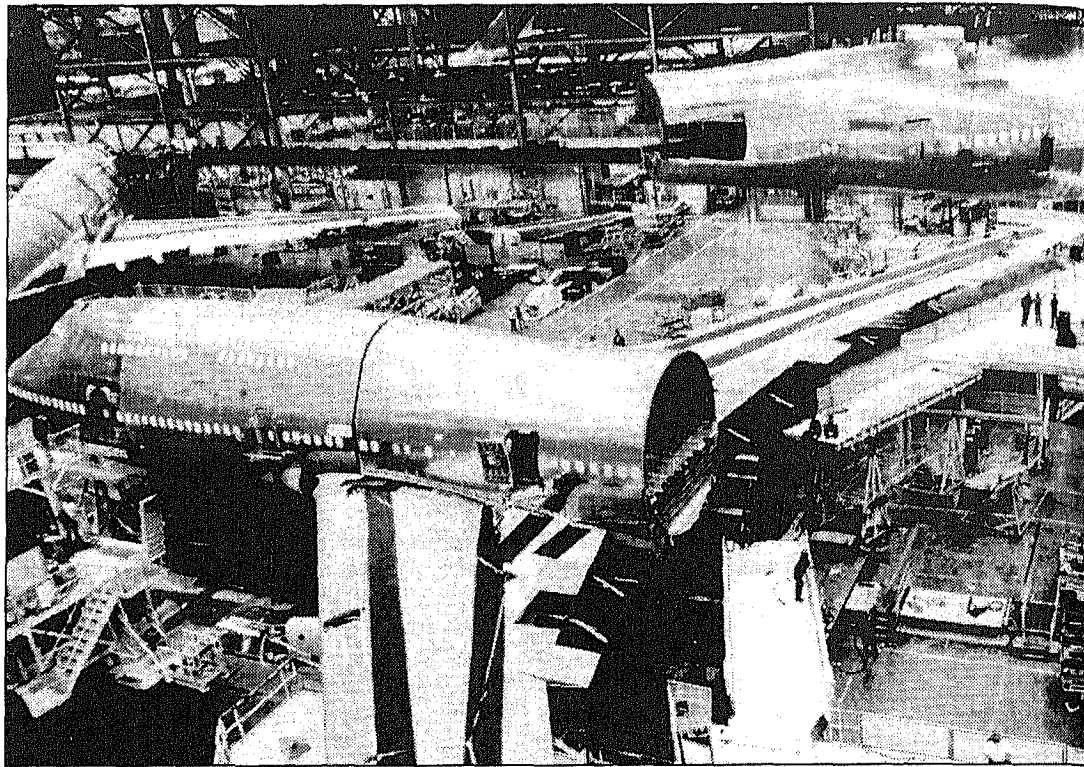


PALEA members re-instated

The Philippine Airlines Employees' Association (PALEA) has successfully gained the re-instatement of 18 officers and union members who were suspended by the company following a strike action on 16 June 1994. The victimisation was seen to be a major attempt by the company to break the union. The ITF launched a solidarity appeal in support of the suspended PALEA members during August 1994. The union has been fighting for the rights of its members within the court system since that time. The PALEA strike was held in defiance of a return to work order by the Secretary of Labour. A 1995 order had instructed the company to reduce the dismissals to suspensions, but the company challenged this ruling in December 1996. However, a court ruling delivered on 10 October this year found that PAL also "contributed to the volatile atmosphere" and ordered the reinstatement of the 18 suspended officers and members, with full back wages and other accrued benefits. ■

Tackling discrimination

Issues affecting women in the civil aviation industry featured prominently in a seminar of women transport workers from 26 to 28 September in Tokyo. The seminar, which attracted 35 women participants from Asia/Pacific affiliates, called on transport unions to make policy priorities of equal opportunity issues, education for both sexes and regulations protecting women. As a result of information gathered at the meeting, the ITF will focus on eradicating discrimination in civil aviation, such as the existence of different retirement ages for men and women cabin crew. In the meantime, a worldwide survey which examines examples of both direct and indirect discrimination in aviation will be carried out. ■



Strengthening links with manufacturers

ITF affiliates are to have a stronger voice in aircraft cabin design and safety issues as a result of formal links being established with aircraft manufacturers. The strategy to build partnerships for safety directly with aircraft manufacturers, agreed at a worldwide cabin crew committee meeting, is already beginning to pay dividends.

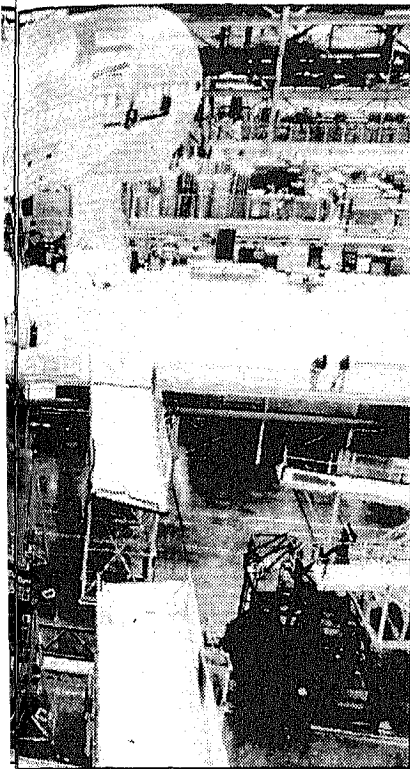
The attitude of aircraft manufacturers towards cabin crew trade unions has changed dramatically in recent years. Until recently, the only employee groups who were systematically consulted on ergonomic or safety matters were pilots' organisations. Consultation with cabin crews was typically limited to individuals hand-picked by the airline to comment on minor matters once new aircraft orders had been placed and all the key issues about cabin configuration had been determined.

Thanks in part to the growing involvement of civil aviation trade unions in the certification and regulatory processes, attitudes are beginning to change and aircraft manufacturers have begun to appreciate that cabin crew, who collectively accumulate many

millions of hours of experience of operating their products, have valuable and influential views about cabin layout, operational and evacuation matters.

Boeing has been the pioneer in developing a direct relationship with the ITF. A delegation visited the company's Seattle headquarters in February (see *ITF News* 2/97) and ties were further strengthened by a subsequent visit to the company in October. Discussion has begun in earnest on a set of guiding principles for aircraft design (see box on facing page) which are aimed at influencing the design of new aircraft. These principles, which are based on a checklist developed by the USA affiliate, the Association of Flight Attendants, have been endorsed in a worldwide consultation exercise with cabin crew affiliates. Boeing has already agreed to a set of recommendations relating to galleys, and these have been passed on to the key production engineers responsible for this area of design. Meanwhile, the ITF team, lead by the AFA, had moved on to other topics on the checklist.

'Until recently, the only employee groups who were systematically consulted on ergonomic or safety matters were pilots' organisations.'



■ An ITF delegation visited Boeing's headquarters and main manufacturing base in Seattle (above) earlier this year to discuss cabin safety and design.

ITF unions have continued to press manufacturers and regulators on cabin environment issues such as air quality, noise, vibrations, and ionising radiation. Although aircraft manufacturers and cabin crew trade unions hold very different views about the impact of such factors on crew and passenger health, all sides acknowledge the need for further research.

The ITF has therefore welcomed a decision by Boeing to carry out a multi-million US\$ cabin environment health study in co-operation with independent research organisations to try to answer some of the many unsolved questions about the potential health effects of the unique aircraft cabin environment.

For the first time ever, the ITF is being invited to play a lead role in the management of the project and in establishing the parameters of the studies to be undertaken. Recommendations and guidelines on operations, maintenance and cabin design arising from this research are due to be issued in 1999.

The certification of new aircraft types continues to be a subject of considerable contention between crew trade unions, industry regulators and manufacturers. Nevertheless, crew organisations are now insisting on taking a proactive approach with manufacturers on such key issues as emergency exits, exit access, and evacuation procedures in advance of formal consultations through rulemaking processes. While Boeing and other manufacturers place an understandable emphasis in their safety plans on the avoidance of accidents and incidents, the ITF will ensure that survivability issues remain central in manufacturers' and operators' strategies.

The ITF's cabin design guiding principles cover the following topics:

- jumpseats,
 - exits and exit access,
 - cabin interiors,
 - toilets,
 - galleys,
 - lighting,
 - stowage,
 - communications systems,
 - environment quality,
 - certification procedure,
 - crashworthiness/survivability,
 - emergency equipment,
 - crew rest facilities,
 - evacuation procedures.
- The guidelines have been developed for large aircraft. Equivalent guiding principles will be developed for small commuter and regional aircraft.

The visit to Boeing in October was also an opportunity for the ITF to extend its dialogue with the company to include McDonnell Douglas aeroplanes following the merger earlier in the year between the two companies. Though Boeing is still in the process of deciding which of the aircraft models in its Douglas Products Division are to continue in production, ITF affiliates will now be able to raise issues directly relating to these aircraft with the company.

Airbus Industrie, the European consortium that has a growing share of both the narrowbody and widebody markets over recent years, has also responded positively to an approach from the ITF to establish a worldwide forum between cabin crews and the company. A commitment to developing a pragmatic and positive dialogue with the ITF has been taken at the highest level within the company, and the Secretariat visited Airbus headquarters, also in October, to lay firm plans for a delegation to visit the company early next year. It is expected that this initial

visit will lay the foundations for an ongoing relationship with the company, which has already proved itself enthusiastic to share ideas and designs with cabin crew trade unions.

The aim of all these initiatives is to complement rather than substitute for carrier specific dialogue or discussions at a national level between manufacturers and trade unions. These will continue to be crucial for cabin crew organisations. ■

The ITF is making available at cost price video copies of a programme made by a Belgian film company focusing on airline sexism.

The film has been shown on Dutch and German television, and is entitled "Nice Girl Like You". It features cabin crew ITF affiliates from Thai Airways International talking about their successful campaign against discriminatory retirement ages. The film also analyses Singapore Airlines' use of their trademark "Singapore Girl" image.

Sexism video now available

The film can serve as an excellent educational tool for unions. It examines in a stimulating way issues of stereotyping, sex and age discrimination.

If you would like a copy, please write to Stuart Howard, Civil Aviation Section Secretary, stating how many copies you would like, ideally, and which video format you need (PAL, NTSC,

VHS). The price of each copy is expected to be around US\$25, but this will depend on the number of copies ordered overall.

The video is in English only, with some Dutch commentary which is subtitled. ■

■ Right: "Singapore Girl", criticised by the ITF in the anti-sexism video.



Privatised rail firm imposes pay cuts

Employees of the former national passenger unit of Australian National Railways are facing pay cuts of up to 40 per cent and a transfer to individual employment contracts following the start of privatisation of Australia's railways in August. The passenger unit has been sold off to Great Southern Railway, a consortium of an Australian merchant bank, Macquarie Bank, and two British rail operators: GB Railways and Serco. Now the consortium is refusing to enter into collective negotiations with the ITF-affiliated Australian Rail, Tram and Bus Industry Union (PTU) and is seeking to exploit recent labour legislation by placing these workers on workplace agreements. ■

US unions benefit from co-operation

Close union co-operation between two US rail unions, the Transportation-Communications International Union (TCU) and the United Transportation Union (UTU), is paying handsome dividends. The TCU and the UTU — whose application for affiliation was accepted at the October ITF Executive Board meeting — recently set up a jointly run Union Pacific Union Yardmaster Council (UPUYC) which has just won the right to represent 540 yardmasters (marshalling yard supervisors) working for the merged Union Pacific/Southern Pacific railroads. "This vote shows how union members and the labour movement win when union leadership works together," UTU International President Charles Little commented on the overwhelming vote for representation. ■

Vote for union representation

Train drivers and conductors employed by Wisconsin Central and two associated rail companies in the US have voted decisively in favour of union representation. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) has won the right to represent the drivers, while Wisconsin's conductors will be organised by the United Transportation Union (UTU). Between them the two unions — the first to win representation elections at Wisconsin — will represent 562 workers or 28 per cent of the company's 2,030 employees. ■

Mac Urata, of the ITF's Tokyo office, reports from the Railway Workers' Section Conference in Berlin

The railway industry is rapidly changing and unions must adapt to the challenges which this poses for them. In addition, the World Bank, the instigator of much of this change, should discuss restructuring programmes with the unions.

This was the clear message of the ITF Railway Workers' Section Conference held from 5 to 7 November in Berlin. Some 130 delegates from 40 countries attended the meeting, which was chaired by Jim Knapp (RMT, UK).

For the first time, the conference was addressed by a senior official of the World Bank. Introducing its Railway Advisor, Louis Thompson, ITF General Secretary David Cockroft said: "The World Bank has a pretty terrible reputation among many trade unions for what they have done, but it is not going to disappear."

He added: "We need to know what the Bank is doing and have to change its policy on railways as well as influence the governments which run the Bank."

Thompson, who is responsible for railway restructuring programmes, said: "We support the railways and we have to find solutions to current problems although there is no panacea. The Bank and the trade unions have not spent enough time in communica-



■ Rudi Schäfer, of the GdED German railway workers' union, which hosted the ITF conference, addresses delegates.

Rail workers debate role of World Bank

tion, but unions should play a more positive role in economic development."

Brendan Martin, of the UK-based pressure group Public World, who has just conducted a research project on structural adjustment and railway privatisation in the Ivory Coast and Ghana, told delegates: "Private sector options have been emphasised too much by the World Bank and diversity of options is not well-assessed." ■

■ Unions from Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the US met in Berlin to discuss the multinational operator, Wisconsin Central. It was agreed that the ITF would co-ordinate closer contacts between the unions. The conference later agreed to support the Australian union PTU in its confrontation with the new owners of Australian National Railways (see story on left).

Delegates renew call to keep integrated rail networks

Section Vice Chair Umraomal Purohit (AIRF, India) emphasised the importance of trade union involvement in railway restructuring.

"We are not allergic to efficiency and modernisation," he said. "But when the World Bank seeks economic development, we have to ask, who do these plans benefit?"

He went on: "The Bank wants a reduction in workforce levels at a time when a massive number of people are already unemployed in developing countries."

The opening session of the conference was addressed by Dr Heinz Dürr, Chair of the Community of European Railways, who voiced extreme scepticism over political

pressure to split railway operations from the management of infrastructure.

Delegates strongly reaffirmed the Section's support for the maintenance of railways as integrated networks. They also called for the return of privatised assets to public control.

The conference stressed the importance of all transport modes bearing their full costs, such as pollution, accidents and congestion. It also requested the preparation of a statement on this issue, along with the need for energy efficiency in transport, paving the way for a debate at the 1998 ITF Congress. ■

ITF defends right to strike

European road transport unions will vigorously oppose political or legal interference in their right to strike. This was the clear message sent by the ITF and the Federation of Transport Workers' Unions in the European Union (FST) to governments and European institutions during the recent strike by French drivers' unions.

This position was expressed in a speech by ITF General Secretary David Cockroft and in an emergency resolution adopted by the FST General Assembly in Luxembourg on 10 and 11 November. It followed letters from EU Transport Commissioner Neil Kinnock to the French unions requesting their members "to eliminate without delay the obstacles to international transport" caused by the 150 plus barricades which had been erected.

The idea that the European Commission can intervene in a national strike whenever it affects cross-border trade could have implications for trade union rights in the EU, says the ITF. Ironically, it was the cuts in wages and conditions brought about by the liberalised EU internal market which prompted the strike in the



first place. The unions had no real alternative faced with the refusal of employers to implement agreements reached at the end of a similar 12-day strike last year.

Members of drivers' unions began blockading roads from 2 November. The ITF, together with the FST, co-ordinated solidarity messages and information on the dispute to European road transport unions. The strike, which paralysed much French and European commerce, ended on 7 November with a partial agreement signed between some unions and employers, the details of which were hotly contested.

■ Above: Striking French truckers demonstrate on the Bordeaux ring road, blocking rush hour traffic around the city on 5 November.

■ Inset: Pickets in action outside the Calais ferry terminal.

Photos: Reuters

Stricter enforcement of hours limits in Europe

2 per cent of daily record sheets to be checked annually

The ITF has welcomed a move by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) to promote the enforcement of the AETR (European Agreement on the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport).

The AETR applies to international journeys by trucks and buses between European countries which are not members of the European Union and to journeys between EU member countries and non-member countries.

In October the ECE's Principal Working Party on Road Transport agreed proposals which will require that during each calendar year the national authorities check a minimum of 2 per cent of the daily record sheets of drivers of vehicles to which the AETR applies.

The checks must be divided as equally as possible between roadside checks and checks on the premises of transport undertakings, with no less than 30 per cent of the checks performed by each of these methods.

It was as a result of an ITF proposal in October last year that a working group, comprising government and industry representatives, was established to draw up proposals for amending the AETR to achieve effective implementation.

The need for regulations to control road transport drivers' hours and to ensure adequate rest periods is the current focus of activities of the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section to improve working conditions in a notoriously cut-throat industry and to enhance health and safety measures.

The mere existence of regulations, however, is insufficient to ensure that road transport operators will respect acceptable hours limits. In both goods and passenger road transport abuses of the hours limits have been commonplace, putting at risk not only the health and

"Increases in the levels of checks on drivers' records would show a new determination to prevent unfair competition at the expense of honest operators."

ITF welcomes move to enforce hours limit

lives of professional drivers but also of the public at large. Effective policing of the regulations and enforcement of the hours limits are therefore an essential component of measures to improve working conditions and road safety.

The working group has also made a number of other recommendations, which would require European countries to:

- take appropriate measures to ensure that penalties act as a deterrent;
- adopt effective means of prosecuting non-resident drivers committing breaches of the hours limits;
- possibly suspend or withdraw an undertaking's transport authorisation in the case of serious and repeated breaches of the regulations;
- the possibility of temporarily immobilizing vehicles in breach of the AETR which are likely to present a risk to road safety.

In addition, it was accepted that checking 2

per cent of drivers' records may be insufficient to ensure a high level of compliance. It was therefore desirable that this figure be increased to 5 per cent within a relatively short period of time, for example five years.

The new enforcement proposals will be submitted to the ECE's Inland Transport Committee at its next meeting in January 1998 for formal approval, after which the procedure for amending United Nations' agreements will come into effect.

ITF Assistant General Secretary Graham Brothers commented: "Effective enforcement measures are a welcome advance to protect all professional drivers against the rogue operators. Furthermore, increases in the levels of checks on drivers' records would show a new determination to prevent unfair competition at the expense of honest operators." ■

PEOPLE

■ Captain **Peter Bryan** has been appointed Deputy Secretary General of the Missions to Seamen, an international welfare organisation caring for seafarers worldwide.

■ **Bjørn Helge Degerud** will take over as Acting General Secretary of the Norwegian Union of Marine Engineers from the beginning of next year. He succeeds **Frode Gross**, who is moving to the new position of union consultant.

■ **Jaromír Dusek** and **Jiří Kratochvíl** were re-elected President and Vice President respectively of the Railway Workers' Union of the Czech Republic at its 2nd Congress in October.

■ **Asbjørn Furnes** has resigned as chair of the executive board of the Norwegian Maritime Officers' Union to take up a new post in charge of the union's newly established office in Ålesund. He is succeeded by **Finn Tronstad**.

■ **Rikke Carøe Mikkelsen** has been elected as the new Vice President of the Danish Ship's Catering Association.

■ **Rita Gassmann**, the first woman President of the Swiss

Transport and Commercial Workers' Union, VHTL, has handed over to another woman, **Beatrice Alder**. A new post of General Secretary is filled by **Robert Schwarzer**.

■ **Slavko Kmetić**, President of the Slovenian Railway Workers' Union SSSLO, has been elected as the new chair of the Neodvisnost - KNSS national trade union centre.

■ **Ernst Leuenberger** is the new President of the Swiss Railway and Transport Workers' Union (SEV), succeeding **Charly Pasche**, former Vice Chair of the ITF Railway Workers' Section. **Michel Béguélin** is the new Vice President.

■ **Curt Persson** retired as President of the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International (PTTI) at the PTTI's Montreal Congress. Persson is a former President of the Swedish State Employees' Union (now known as SEKO). He is succeeded by **Kurt von Haaren**, President of the German postal workers' union, DPG, who was elected at the PTTI Congress when the PTTI changed its name to the Communications International.

ITF MEETINGS

- **Civil Aviation Section Steering Committee**, London, 8 December
- **Airline Alliance Meetings**, London, 8 December
- **Cabin Crew and Ground Staff Committees**, London, 9-10 December
- **Fair Practices Committee Collective Agreements Sub-committee**, London, 9-10 December
- **Civil Aviation Section Conference**, London, 11 December
- **Flag of Convenience Campaign Steering Group**, London, 11-12 December
- **Seminar for Central and Eastern European Civil Aviation Unions**, London, 12 December
- **Worldwide Inspectors' Seminar**, London, 9-13 February

■ Professor **Tony Lane** has been appointed Director of the ITF-funded International Research Centre for Seafarers' Safety and Occupational Health at the University of Wales in Cardiff. An experienced seafarer, Tony has held posts with the British Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association (MNAOA) (now NUMAST) and the Transport and General Workers' Union. He has been a member of staff in Liverpool University's Department of Sociology for nearly thirty years and is well known as an industrial relations specialist and a modern maritime social and economic historian. He is currently engaged on a study on the consequences for seafarers of the globalisation of the shipping industry. He succeeds Professor **Alastair Cooper**, the Centre's first Director, who has now retired.

OBITUARIES



■ *Chris Pate.*

"Chris was quite simply one of the nicest people I ever met... He was genuinely committed both to the principles of trade unionism and to the idea of internationalism. We were lucky to have him in the ITF."



■ *Frisco-Per.*

■ **Chris Pate**, General Secretary of the International Graphical Federation (IGF) and former ITF staff member, died of cancer on 15 September at the tragically early age of 37.

As well as holding a doctorate in industrial relations, Chris was a teacher before he came to the ITF and he put his talent for communication to good use as a senior editorial assistant in the ITF's Research and Publications Department. He was also a staggeringly good linguist, able to speak and write fluently in all ITF official languages and several others, including Russian.

Always good natured, cheerful and supportive of his fellow colleagues, Chris was a very popular member of staff and many ITF colleagues kept up close friendships with him after he left in August 1991 to work as Education Officer for the IGF in Brussels.

As a former teacher, he became an energetic and resourceful Education Officer, helping to spread the IGF's influence beyond its European and North American base to cover the entire world.

In 1994, Chris won a bitterly contested election for the post of General Secretary at the IGF's Budapest Congress.

In the three years following, despite being subjected to an

■ The legendary Swedish seafarer and trade union stalwart **Per Eriksson**, Frisco-Per, died quietly in his sleep on 26 October 1997, writes *Lennart Johnsson of the Seafarers' Branch of SEKO*. Only a few weeks earlier, Per had celebrated his 90th birthday.

The nickname Frisco-Per was bestowed from 1941 to 1945 when he was the Swedish Seafarers' Union official in San Francisco, providing assistance to the thousands of Scandinavian seafarers prevented by the war from returning home.

Per tells in his memoirs how when he first went to sea he stuck the ITF badge into his membership book as a reminder of his fellow trade unionists around the world.

Per was also one of the many

unprecedented series of personal attacks from within the IGF's membership, he worked tirelessly to establish the IGF as a truly international organisation, setting up regional offices in Latin America and Asia and actively supporting affiliates in the former Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

ITF General Secretary David Cockroft, who attended Chris Pate's funeral, writes: "Chris was quite simply one of the nicest people I ever met. He never got angry and he always acted on the basis of strongly held beliefs. He was genuinely committed both to the principles of trade unionism and to the idea of internationalism. We were lucky to have him in the ITF but he was always destined for higher things and he had my full support when he went to work for the IGF. The progress he made in three short years as General Secretary will stand as a permanent testimony to his energy and enthusiasm. His tragically early death is a great loss not only to his family and his partner Maggie, but to the IGF and to the entire international trade union movement."

Swedish seafarer volunteers who went to Spain and fought with the democratic forces against Franco's fascism. Towards the end of his time in Spain he was a bodyguard to the legendary Spanish anti-fascist La Pasionaria, Dolores Ibarruri. Back in Sweden at the end of the 1940s Per became chair of the Association of Spanish Veterans.

One of his proudest moments in his latter years was the invitation to attend the ITF Centenary Congress in London in 1996. "I experienced in London how international union solidarity is being kept alive by the ITF's work," Per Eriksson told me when I visited him a few months later.

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■ *Kim Hye Kyung (left) of the Federation of Korean Seafarers' Unions and Women's Officer Sarah Finke at the first ever ITF meeting for women seafarers.*

Women make a splash ... before the Seafarers' Section conference

The Seafarers' Section Conference (see main report on page 8) agreed to urge negotiators to include clauses aimed at preventing sexual harassment and bullying in all collective agreements for seafarers.

It also adopted a resolution dealing with maternity rights for women seafarers.

The decisions were welcomed by delegates who had attended the ITF's first ever meeting for women seafarers, held just before the Seafarers' Section Conference.

The meeting, which attracted representatives from 12 unions, agreed that the ITF should focus on how to fight sexual harassment and the health problems of women at sea.

The meeting's chair, Kim Hye Kyung, of the Federation of Korean Seafarers' Unions, said afterwards: "It is clear that the problems experienced by women who work at sea are very much the same the world over."

Susanne Willemo, of SEKO, Sweden, said that both sexes should be involved in discussions on equality at sea.

Naomi Hodby, of the Australian Maritime Officers' Union, described how her union had worked with men to promote an understanding of the consequences of harassment.

Although the initial reaction to union policy on harassment had been suspicion, members had become very supportive once they had understood the issue, she explained.

Together with Australian shipping employers, the Australian seafaring unions have implemented a policy on

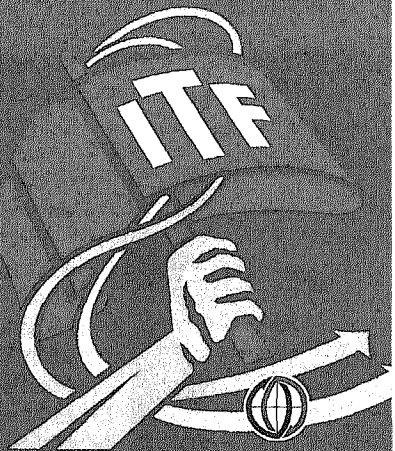
sexual harassment on which the ITF is basing its own policy guidelines.

Ylva Bexell, of the SSOA Swedish officers' union, and a chief officer with Gorthon Lines pointed out that it was rare that women went to their union with their problems. "This is especially true when they have been sexually harassed."

She added: "This, I believe, has many explanations. Some words that I took to my heart at the conference came from the Latvian delegate. She said something like 'you don't turn to the union if you don't expect this to improve your situation'. I think that is quite true." ❧



■ *Ylva Bexell: why women don't turn to their unions.*



FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES
OUVRIERS DU TRANSPORT

FEDERACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE LOS
TRABAJADORES DEL TRANSPORTE

INTERNATIONELLA
TRANSPORTARBETAREFÖDERATIONEN

國際運輸勞連

INTERNATIONALE
TRANSPORTARBEITER-FÖDERATION

МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ
ТРАНСПОРТНИКОВ