

## **SOLIDARITY**

### Chapter Sixteen

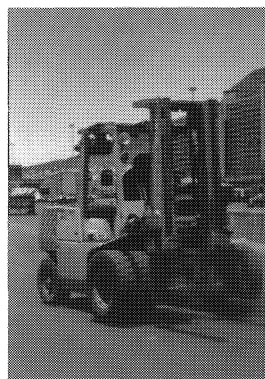
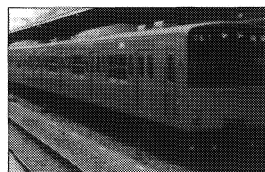
#### **Towards the Next Millennium**

Most of the story told in this short volume is about the first half of the ITF's 100 years. The closer we are to events, the more difficult it is to analyse them and so a comprehensive review of the ITF in the 1970s and 1980s may have to await another generation of historians. Circumstances also have a habit of changing rapidly and sweeping strongly held beliefs away with them. A history of the ITF written during the Cold War would already look quite different from that we are able to write today.

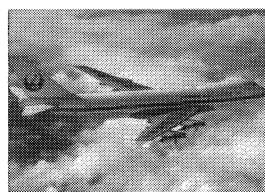
The recent history of the ITF does deserve some mention, however. The post-Imhof era began with the election of Charlie Blyth at the 1968 Wiesbaden congress and continued with the smooth handover of power to Harold Lewis, who had withdrawn from the contest to oust Imhof to avoid splitting the vote. Lewis in turn supported the appointment and subsequent election of his successor, David Cockroft, when he chose to retire in his sixtieth year in 1993. Three decades of British personalities at the head of the ITF secretariat were accomplished with virtually no dissent in an organisation which has always placed political and industrial considerations ahead of national ones.

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Other notable figures in key positions included Fritz Prechtel, of the Austrian Railwaymen's Union, the longest serving ITF president ever (1971-86) who was succeeded at the 1986 Luxembourg congress by Jim Hunter from Canada, the first non-European to hold the post and Knud Mols Sørensen, of the Danish ships' officers' union, who chaired the ITF Seafarers' Section from 1971 until 1994 and who played a major part in building the ITF's Flag of Convenience campaign into a major force in the shipping industry. In Latin America, it is also worth mentioning Ricardo Perez of the Argentine Truck Drivers' Union. Pérez served not only as vice president of the ITF but was also the first non-European chairman of the ITF Road Transport Section. He played an important role in supporting the ITF's work in Latin America in the aftermath of the closure of the ITF's Lima office in 1989. The ITF's work in Latin America, which was largely built up by Jack Otero, took a nose dive following the enforced resignation of the director of the Lima office in 1987. Attempts to establish a decentralised regional structure were unsuccessful and a new start was eventually made with the re-establishment of a regional office in Rio de Janeiro in July 1995.



Activities in the Asia/Pacific region were conducted by regional secretary Donald D'Uren from the ITF office in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia until 1979. That year sparked off a series of events which both demonstrated that the ITF's industrial power stretched well beyond the maritime sector and ensured that the activities of the International Trade Secretariats were regularly discussed at Asian Labour Ministers' meetings. The detention by the government of Dr Mahathir of the entire leadership of the ITF-affiliated Malaysian Airline Employees' Union, together with D'Uren himself and the deportation of ITF assistant general



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secretary Hans Hauf who was in the country to give support to the union, led to the stoppage of Malaysian Airline System aircraft in Australia for a period of nearly three weeks. The dispute was eventually resolved and the unionists released but it came as no surprise shortly afterwards for the ITF to be informed that its presence in Malaysia was technically illegal and that its office had to be closed. D'Uren retired from his position and was replaced by Indian-born ex-railwayman Mo Hoda who was already working at ITF headquarters as secretary to the Civil Aviation Section. Hoda then supervised the affairs of the Asia/Pacific region out of the London office until his retirement in 1993 when he was succeeded by Shigeru Wada, former head of the ITF Tokyo office. Following an extensive search process, a decision was eventually taken in 1995 to base the regional office in Tokyo.

In Africa, meanwhile, the education and organisational activities of the ITF continued to grow under the supervision of Ben 'Roxy' Udogwu, the ITF's regional representative and one of the best known figures in the entire African trade union movement. Partially because of the key industrial importance of transport, but mainly because of the efforts of Udogwu, the ITF is probably the strongest of all the International Trade Secretariats on the African continent.

In Europe, which has always accounted for the majority of ITF membership, the trade union situation has been dominated by the growth of the European Union. Following the success of a large-scale ITF conference on completing the EC internal market in 1989, the 1990 Florence Congress decided to revitalise the ITF's largely moribund European structure. The members of the

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A modern fishing vessel.

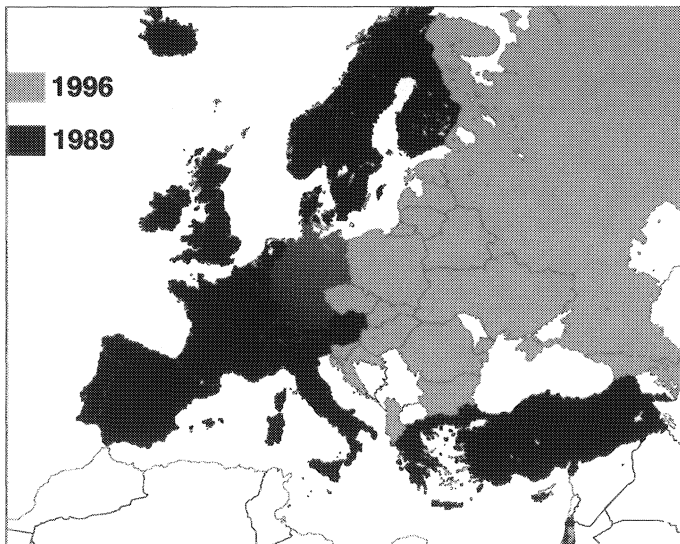
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CTWUEC (the Brussels Committee), a body originally established in 1958 of ITF affiliates in the six original EC states, were demanding a similar expansion in its activities. This led to a degree of competition and confusion which was at least partially resolved by a joint meeting of the two bodies in the summer of 1993. Revived to deal with EC issues, the ITF European structures took on a completely different complexion in the light of the post-Cold War expansion in ITF membership. The dominance of the EU in Europe, its enlargement and relationships between the ITF and the CTWUEC continue to generate lively debate.

The history of the ITF does not end here – this is only the first century and while some of our founders and many of our legendary leaders in the early days adamantly believed that the world would be transformed into a workers' paradise by the time they were old, we have become wiser (and perhaps more cynical) as time has passed.

At the same time as we have witnessed this cataclysmic alteration in the world economy, we have also seen the ending of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet model of socialism. ITF membership has blossomed since 1989 and we have been proud to welcome into membership unions from countries in central and eastern Europe that were forced to leave the ITF after the Second World War. The ITF is also especially glad to welcome into membership the trade union organisations from the former Soviet Union. It should be remembered that the early ITF opposed attempts by the capitalist world to crush the Russian Revolution and in the early days of the Soviet Union the leadership of the ITF attempted to bring the trade union organisations from the then Soviet Union into the ITF.

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ITF European Membership in 1989 and 1996.

The world is also undergoing what is commonly referred to as the information revolution - the development of computerisation in all fields and the headlong dash to connect everyone in the world to the Internet. In a world where the nature of information and the way in which the economy works is changing, the ITF itself needs to re-examine its past and look confidently towards the future. This is where the 'Transport Workers: Beyond 2000' project fits in as a central component of present ITF activities. The basic 'Transport Workers: Beyond 2000' discussion document was adopted at the ITF's 37th congress in Geneva in August 1994. The document attempts to look at developments in the world economy and the transport industries and invites members and sections of the ITF to examine existing structures and policies with a view to

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their relevance in the next century. The history of the ITF is a part of that study and the organisation hopes that ITF members will examine our history with a view to developing new strategies for organising and working in the next 100 years.

The ITF is not confident simply to sit back and relax after 100 years of activities. We need not only to reapply our original founding principles, but also to reach out to sections of the economy and sections of the workforce that we have traditionally ignored or not organised. Female activists in the ITF can rightly ask where they are in the existing history of the ITF.

Unfortunately, it is fair to say that the majority of members, the overwhelming majority of leaders and the decision-makers in the transport industry have been overwhelmingly male. Though women have emerged in significant numbers in specific industries - and throughout transport today - they still remain under-represented in the leadership of their organisations. The ITF is committed to changing this and in addressing the specific needs of women transport workers. The 'Transport Workers: Beyond 2000' project is committed to reaching out to women transport workers and other non-traditional group of workers who are involved in the transport industry (including part-time workers and clerical staff).

Overall the regional and industrial structure of the ITF is changing in line with changes in the transport industry and the world economy. Western Europe, the birthplace of the ITF, still remains the largest single regional grouping, but by far the biggest growth in recent years has been in the Asia/Pacific region. This fact was recognised in the decision

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of the ITF EB in 1995 to hold the 1998 ordinary congress of the ITF in New Delhi, India. This will be only the second time in 100 years that the congress has been held outside Europe (the first was in Miami in 1980) and the first ever to be held in a developing country.



There haven't been many photographs of women transport workers in this book – but the ITF is committed to redressing the balance in the next 100 years. The 'Transport Workers: Beyond 2000' project commits our organisation to reaching out to women transport workers.



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### Appendix I: ITF congresses 1896 – 1996

number	year	date	place and country
	1896	10 June	London: conference of dockers and seamen decides to set up the International Federation of Ship, Dock and River Industries
	1896	27 and 30 July	London: extended meeting of the Central Council or first international conference of the International Federation of Ship, Dock and River Workers
	1897	24–26 February	London: second international conference of the International Federation
	1898	14–16 June	London: third international conference renamed organisation as International Transport Workers' Federation
1st	1898	14–16 June	London, Great Britain
2nd	1900	19–21 September	Paris, France
3rd	1902	4–7 July	Stockholm, Sweden
4th	1904	14–17 August	Amsterdam, The Netherlands
5th	1906	25–28 June	Milan, Italy
6th	1908	26–29 August	Vienna, Austria–Hungary
7th	1910	23–27 August	Copenhagen, Denmark
8th	1913	26–30 August	London, Great Britain
	1919	29–30 April	Amsterdam: international conference of transport workers' organisations
9th	1920	15–19 March	Christiania (Oslo), Norway
10th	1921	18–22 April	Geneva, Switzerland
11th	1922	2–6 October	Vienna, Austria
12th	1924	7–12 August	Hamburg, Germany

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13th	1926	15–21 September	Paris, France
14th	1928	19–24 July	Stockholm, Sweden
15th	1930	22–27 September	London, Great Britain
16th	1932	7–13 August	Prague, Czechoslovakia
17th	1935	18–24 August	Copenhagen, Denmark
18th	1938	31 October–5 November	Luxembourg, Luxembourg
19th	1946	6–11 May	Zurich, Switzerland
20th	1948	19–24 July	Oslo, Norway
21st	1950	21–29 July	Stuttgart, Germany
22nd	1952	16–23 July	Stockholm, Sweden
23rd	1954	16–24 July	London, Great Britain
24th	1956	18–26 July	Vienna, Austria
25th	1958	23 July–1 August	Amsterdam, The Netherlands
26th	1960	20–29 July	Bern, Switzerland
27th	1962	25 July–4 August	Helsinki, Finland
28th	1965	28 July–6 August	Copenhagen, Denmark
29th	1968	28 July–3 August	Wiesbaden, Germany
30th	1971	28 July–6 August	Vienna, Austria
31st	1974	7–15 August	Stockholm, Sweden
32nd	1977	21–29 July	Dublin, Ireland
33rd	1980	17–24 July	Miami, USA
34th	1983	20–28 October	Madrid, Spain
35th	1986	31 July–8 August	Luxembourg, Luxembourg
36th	1990	2–9 August	Florence, Italy
37th	1994	4–11 August	Geneva, Switzerland
38th	1996	30 June–2 July	London, Great Britain

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### Appendix II: ITF Presidents and General Secretaries\* 1896–1996

President	period	General Secretary	period
Tom Mann (British)	1896–1901	Ben Tillett (British)	1896
		Robert Peddie (British)	1896
Tom Chambers (British)	1901–4	Tom Chambers (British)	1896–1904
Ben Tillett (British)	1904	Ben Tillett (British)	1904
Hermann Jochade (German)	1904–16	Hermann Jochade (German)	1904–16
		Edo Fimmen (Dutch)	1919–42
Robert Williams (British)	1920–5		
Concemore Cramp (British)	1925–33		
Charles Lindley (Swedish)	1933–46		
		Jaap Oldenbroek (Dutch)	1942–50
John Benstead (British)	1946–7		
Omer Becu (Belgian)	1947–50		
Robert Bratschi (Swiss)	1950–4	Omer Becu (Belgian)	1950–60
Arthur Deakin (British)	1954–5		
Hans Jahn (German)	1955–8		
Frank Cousins (British)	1958–60		
Roger Dekeyzer (Belgian)	1960–2	Pieter de Vries (Dutch)	1960–5
Frank Cousins (British)	1962–5		
Hans Düby (Swiss)	1965–71	Hans Imhof (Swiss)	1965–8
		Charles Blyth (British)	1968–77
Fritz Prechtel (Austrian)	1971–86		
		Harold Lewis (British)	1977–93
Jim Hunter (Canadian)	1986–94		
		David Cockroft (British)	1993–
Eike Eulen (German)	1994–		

Sources: Various ITF and Northrup compiled by Rob Reinalda (Nijmegen University).

\* Until 1924: International Secretary.

## Appendix II



Harold Lewis, ITF General Secretary from 1977 to 1993, at the ITF Dublin congress in 1977 where he was elected General Secretary.

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