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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

SPAIN

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ITF calls for 48-hour boycott of Spanish transport

As a demonstration of its deep anger at the judicial murder of five opponents of the Franco régime, the ITF appealed to its affiliates to boycott all Spanish transport by road, rail, sea and air for 48 hours beginning at midnight on Wednesday, 1 October. Response to the call was immediate all round the world. Although we have not yet received comprehensive reports on action taken by affiliated unions, it is known that Spanish airline services were boycotted at Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen, Athens, Rome, Milan, Paris and Brussels (at the majority of these airports the action also applied to flights to and from Spain by the national airline and air charter operators). Spanish shipping was boycotted at Rotterdam and Amsterdam, throughout Scandinavia, in French Atlantic and Mediterranean ports, at Lisbon, and at several ports in the United Kingdom. Train services between Spain and France and Switzerland were stopped; British railwaymen refused to handle Spanish goods; and a total boycott of Spanish goods and services, including a ban on advertisements for Spanish holidays, applied in Sweden. In Norway, too, a temporary ban on holiday advertisements is still being applied, while a large travel operator is to suspend all future operations to Spain and Mallorca.

INTERNATIONAL

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ICFTU and ITSs adopt draft programme for control of multinationals

A comprehensive draft programme for the control of multinational companies in the interests of the workers and the community as a whole has been adopted by a joint working party of the ICFTU and International Trade Secretariats. The programme, in the form of a charter of trade union demands, is to be submitted for endorsement by the 11th ICFTU World Congress in Mexico during October and will thereafter be presented to the United Nations and various of its specialised agencies as to basis for a number of international conventions which would oblige member states to introduce appropriate legislation.

The areas covered are:

- public accountability;
- social obligations of the companies;
- international direct investment and takeovers;
- restrictive business practices;
- taxation of multinationals;
- transfer of technology;
- short term capital movements.

TRANSPORT

INTERNATIONAL

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International noise measurement standards developed

The International Organization for Standardisation has worked out standards for measuring noise from trains, trams and ships. The guidelines should help countries draw up effective anti-noise programmes by laying down detailed requirements for testing noise; up to now methods of measuring noise have varied from country to country, causing problems for manufacturers and governments wishing to control noise levels.

EUROPE

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Community fishermen's unions call for action

Trade unions - including ITF affiliates - representing fishermen within the European Economic Community met recently and adopted a communique concerning the crisis in the sea fishing sector, action to be taken to deal with it and measures to harmonise social conditions for sea fishermen while maintaining improvements.

The communique notes the serious decline in production in the Community fisheries sector, the main reasons for which are the abnormal rise in fuel prices, imports at dumping prices from non-member countries, overfishing and consequent catch restrictions and the extension of fishing limits. It goes on to point out that, since sea fishermen's wages are generally based on the size and sale price of the catch, the current fall in market prices means that fishermen no longer have a fair income which keeps pace with increases in the cost of living. The fall in market prices has also caused unprofitability leading to closures and unemployment.

In these conditions, the unions demand a considerable increase in the reference and withdrawal prices for the types of fish covered by the Community's fishery products sector, and the extension of the list to ensure that sea fishermen are guaranteed a minimum wage; a ban on low-price dumping of products from non-member countries where sea fishermen do not enjoy fair social conditions; and control of marketing conditions for products, whether from member or non-member countries, in order to avoid distortion of competition.

Finally, the unions call for the speedy proposal of concrete measures to adapt the structure of the sea fishing industry to the existence of a common market and the application without further delay of article 117 of the Treaty of Rome which provides for upward harmonisation of social conditions.

DENMARK

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Fishing found most dangerous occupation

A report drawn up by an environmental consultant, Magnus Demnitz for the ITF-affiliated Danish Transport and General Workers' Union (SID) has found that fishing is the most dangerous occupation in Denmark. It reveals that during the period from 1969 to 1973 562 accidents at sea were recorded, of which 108 were wrecks, in which 76 men died.

The undoubted increase in productivity in the fishing industry in recent years has been due in part to better catch equipment and larger vessels but an equally important factor has been considerably longer hours put in by individual fishermen. This may help to account for the fact that about 20 per cent of accidents are due to mistakes and negligence on the part of the crew - which may be presumed to result from exhaustion, poor instruction, lack of qualifications, etc. The report shows that while at sea fishermen may often have to make do with three or four hours' sleep during a 24-hour day. To this is added the very great pressure of work, both in terms of physical effort and in terms of hours, which becomes even greater as crew numbers are reduced, with the result that the danger of accidents increases.

During the period 1970 to 1972, one in three crew members on board vessels of 100 grt and over suffered an accident at sea; during 1969 to 1973 45 per cent of vessels between 100 and 150 grt and 57 per cent of vessels between 150 and 250 grt were involved in accidents at sea.

The union points out that in Denmark there is no obligatory training in order to be able to go to sea as a fisherman, and this is something which will be urged in future.

SCANDINAVIA

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Radio Officers urge continued use of Radiotelegraphy in Baltic and North Sea

The annual conference of the Nordic Radio Officers' Unions, held in Stockholm recently, adopted a resolution opposing proposals to remove radiotelegraph installations and procedures from ships trading in the Baltic and the North Sea. The Conference pointed out that radiotelephony as a sole means of communication leaves much to be desired since training in operation and maintenance is to a much lower level than that for radiotelegraphy, thus offering a lesser degree of safety in emergency situations; and that radiotelephone communication

is exposed to language difficulties which might become acute in a distress situation (bearing in mind that the Baltic and North Seas are surrounded by countries with ten different languages). Further disadvantages of radiotelephony were pointed out: congestion on frequency 2182 kHz, unstable operating conditions on that frequency, etc. against the advantages of the radiotelegraphy frequency 500 kHz which has greater stability and also offers the possibility of simultaneous monitoring of several transmissions.

The Conference therefore urged the Nordic administrations to retain radiotelegraphy as the prime radio safety means on board ships operating in the Baltic and North Seas.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

GREAT BRITAIN

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Railway unions stand firm on no compulsory redundancies

During discussions which have been held between the three ITF-affiliated British railway unions - the National Union of Railwaymen, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association - and British Rail on the latter's plans to reduce services by up to two-fifths on some lines, the unions have firmly rejected any suggestion that the cuts could involve compulsory redundancies among their members. The unions are not opposed to voluntary redundancies; in their view, a policy has to be agreed for the entire service, not a strategy determined at local and regional level. Once a guarantee had been given on the matter of compulsion, the unions would cooperate with management in attempts to reduce the railways' deficit.

IRISH REPUBLIC

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Temporary agreement for deep sea dockers

A temporary agreement on reducing working time in the Dublin Deep Sea Dock Section has been reached between the port employers and unions including the ITF-affiliated Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. Effective from 21 July 1975 to 4 January 1976, the agreement provides for shorter working hours for dockers and checkers. Dockers will

operate a two-weeks-on, one week-off cycle and will be paid about £2.40 per day per man on days attended or worked, Monday to Friday, in the first three-week cycle and £2 per day per man for days attended or worked in the second cycle.

Checkers will operate a three-weeks-on, one-week-off cycle and will be paid £1.60 per day worked in the first cycle and £1.35 in their second cycle, Monday to Friday. The question of payment for the third and subsequent cycles is to be referred to a full Labour Court hearing.

NORWAY

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Economic agreement to curb inflation

An agreement has been reached between the Norwegian government, trade unions and employers to hold down the rate of increase in wages in order to curb inflation. Current agreements provide for large groups of workers to receive index-linked wage increases shortly to compensate for the rise in prices since November 1974. It has been agreed that the unions will accept only 80 per cent compensation for the rise in the cost of living over the past year, and only 30 per cent is to be in direct wage increases. The remaining 50 per cent will be provided by means of fiscal measures including increased family allowances, tax concessions and food subsidies. In addition, a price freeze is to operate from 1 September to 31 December 1975.

UNITED STATES

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Seafarers' contracts ratified

Members of the ITF-affiliated Seafarers' International Union of North America have voted to accept new contracts for tanker and freighter operations negotiated recently with the operators. The agreements, which went into effect on 16 June 1975, provide for increases in basic monthly wages, overtime rates, bonus rates and vacation pay totalling at least 20 per cent in the first year. Further increases have been agreed for the second and third years of the contract, and a cost-of-living escalator clause has been inserted to ensure that seafarers' wages keep their value. In addition, the contracts provide for improved health and pension arrangements.

Clerks' agreement with Western Airlines

The ITF-affiliated Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks has obtained a thirty-month contract for its 3,400 members employed by Western Airlines. The agreement provides for an average wage increase of 25 per cent over the period of the contract, unlimited cost-of-living adjustments, improved medical and pension benefits and greater job security. A 6 per cent wage increase went into effect from 1 July 1975 and further increases of 5 per cent, 5 per cent and 6 per cent respectively apply from 1 January 1976, 1 January 1977 and 1 July 1977.

Agreement for redundant United navigators

Agreement has been reached between the ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union and United Airlines on behalf of the union's members affected by the airline's discontinuance of the use of navigators with effect from 31 December 1975. In addition to receiving \$36,000 in severance pay - to be paid over a period of 36 months - the navigators will be permitted to opt for early retirement on a pension of approximately \$12,000 per annum. They will also be considered as retired employees for the purposes of travel facilities, medical benefits and life insurance.

NEWS IN BRIEF

The People's Republic of the Congo has joined the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, becoming its ninety-first member.

Portuguese pilots in the ports of Lisbon, Setubal and Vila Real obtained satisfaction on their claims for improved conditions following several weeks working to rule culminating in a one-day strike on 12 September.

PERSONALIA

Oluf Anfinsen has retired from the presidency of the Norwegian Locomotivemen's Union on reaching the age limit. He is succeeded by Gunnar Tønder.

John Cousins, a national secretary of the British Transport and General Workers' Union, has been appointed Manpower and Industrial Relations Director of the National Economic Development Office. He takes up his post in November 1975.

Peter W. K ng has been appointed President of the Swiss Transport and Commercial Workers' Union with effect from 1 January 1976.

Fritz Prechtel, the ITF's President, has just been elected as a member of Austria's National Council (Nationalrat).

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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| ITF Executive Board | - | London, 13-14 November
1975 |
| ITF Conference on Women Workers'
Problems | - | London, 18,19,20 Nov.1975 |

AFFILIATED UNIONS REQUIRING
FURTHER INFORMATION ON ANY ITEM
IN THIS NEWSLETTER MAY OBTAIN IT
ON REQUEST FROM THE SECRETARIAT
OF THE ITF

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