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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

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NORWAY

Secret instructions to f-o-c operators come to light

It came to widespread public attention last month - through a news programme on Norwegian TV - that a member of the country's largest firm of lawyers, which is one of the leading authorities in the interpretation of maritime law, had for some time been circulating worldwide among operators of Liberian- and Panamanian-registered tonnage a four-page stencilled document giving advice on how to avoid falling foul of the trade unions in Norway.

In this document, the Bergen law firm advises these owners that they should obtain a written, sworn statement from each crew member at the time he signs on to the effect that he is satisfied with his pay and does not wish any changes made to his contract of employment. The owner is further instructed not to allow any representative of the ITF to come on board, not to have any contact with the ITF and not to allow any crew member to have any contact with the ITF before he puts his signature to these written declarations.

Again according to these instructions, owners should make every effort to avoid being served with notice by the ITF or other unions of proposed boycott action. This course is advised because the position in law is that boycott action would be illegal, even had the ITF been denied access to the ship, if statutory notice had not been duly served.

Owners are warned against entering into a collective agreement with the ITF in the belief that a Norwegian court would subsequently declare the agreement invalid should the boycott itself be declared illegal. The lawyer's advice is that a court would probably not rule that an otherwise lawful collective agreement was invalid even if the boycott that had led to the agreement being signed was itself subsequently declared unlawful.

Commenting on these hitherto secret instructions, Henrik Aasarød, President of the Norwegian Seamen's Union and a member of the ITF Executive Board, says that they give a clear indication of the climate in which f-o-cs operate. The unions in Norway had known for some time that f-o-c owners had 'good' advisers - different companies were employing precisely the same tactics to escape trade union scrutiny. But what was unusual was to be provided with such detailed and unambiguous proof of the methods owners were prepared to resort to in resisting the unions. It was deeply disturbing, Aasarød added, that such a prominent company should be behind this 'good advice'. The existence of the instructions was one more reason why governments should make it more - not less - difficult for shipowners to flag out their vessels.

The ITF agrees with its Norwegian Board member that it is totally unacceptable that crews of f-o-cs should be prevented in such a way from approaching the trade unions that are there to help them. These seafarers are one of the most exploited groups of transport workers and the ITF deplores any attempt - particularly one of this nature, which is by no means unknown elsewhere - to prevent them from exercising their legitimate trade union rights. The possibility of registering a complaint with the ILO alleging contravention of the basic workers' rights enshrined in Conventions nos 87 and 98 is now under active consideration.

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TRANSPORT

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AUSTRIA

Union adds voice to call for transfer of transit traffic from roads to Danube

The ITF-affiliated Austrian Transport and Commercial Workers' Union (HTV) has added its weight to a call from the Danube Steamship Company (DDSG) that more intensive use should be made of the Danube - the country's premier waterway - for the transport of suitable bulk cargoes. Both union and company would like to see a significant proportion of transit freight and import and export cargoes transferred from Austria's overcrowded roads to the water.

The union hopes that the appropriate steps will be taken immediately to enable the advantages that the waterway offers to be exploited to the full - in particular, it is believed that DDSG-operated ro-ro facilities similar to those already offered by several of the foreign companies operating on the Danube would prove very attractive to potential customers. If the venture is to succeed, the company will also need financial assistance to modernise and extend its fleet to cope with the upturn in traffic. The extra jobs that the increased business would generate are naturally welcomed.

In recent months, the Austrian Federal Railways have begun to win more transit traffic and there is no doubt that a switch of other freight to the inland waterways would further ease congestion on the roads and provide companies with a cost-effective method of moving their goods.

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TRADE UNIONS

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GREAT BRITAIN

Merchant navy officers' union merger gets final go-ahead

Following the successful completion of all the necessary preliminaries, a single union grouping all Britain's merchant navy officers is to come into being on 21 June 1985. The new union will be known as the National Union of Marine, Aviation and Shipping Transport Officers (NUMAST). The three previously separate unions which are merging in NUMAST are: the Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association\*, the Radio and Electronic Officers' Union\* and the Mercantile Marine Services Association.

\* ITF affiliates

PAKISTAN

ITF to lodge complaint with ILO against permanent ban on trade union activity within Pakistan International Airlines

The government of Pakistan has announced that martial law regulation no. 52 banning trade union activity by employees of Pakistan International Airlines is to be lifted after three and a half years. The regulation is being replaced by an amendment to the PIAC Act under which trade unions will be permanently banned from functioning within the national carrier.

The situation of PIA employees has substantially worsened as a result of this latest government move which has deprived the airline's workers of any hope of one day resuming active trade union membership and - through their own freely chosen workers' organisations - exerting an influence on conditions of service within the company.

In response to the various complaints lodged by the ITF since the ban was first introduced, the ILO has declared the Pakistan government's action a serious infringement of Conventions nos. 87 and 98 and has repeated - at intervals - its call to the authorities to revoke the regulation at the earliest possible date. Throughout this unhappy period, the ITF has vigorously supported the right of PIA staff to be represented by their former unions and we will shortly be lodging a renewed complaint with the ILO requesting that its Committee on Freedom of Association be asked to investigate the present situation within PIA.

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SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

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DENMARK

Private sector pay strike

Protracted contract renewal talks being conducted by the Danish Trade Union Confederation (LO) on behalf of employees in the private sector ran into difficulties after the failure of the third round and went to mediation in mid-February. The various LO member unions (including several ITF affiliates) gave notice of a strike from 4 March by certain key sections of their memberships, although industrial action was subsequently postponed twice by order of the official mediator while the mediation sessions continued. Eventually, however, the attempt at mediation collapsed when both sides rejected a proposed settlement within minutes and the strike went ahead from midnight on 23 March, with 300,000 workers either answering the strike call or locked out by the employers - the first time since 1973 that Denmark has faced a strike of this magnitude.

The private sector has been virtually paralyzed by the stoppage: distribution of food and fuel supplies has been halted, the country's ports are at a standstill, ferry services are extensively disrupted, and SAS has suspended international flights out of Danish airports following a walkout by ground personnel.

Throughout the negotiations for a new two-year agreement the unions have been pressing for a substantial reduction in the working week and for a continuation of their solidarity pay policy which is geared to improving the relative position of the lowest-paid. The employers, under strong pressure from the right-wing coalition government, failed to concede any of these demands during the initial negotiations and also took a tough line in the mediation proceedings.

As we went to press the government was already preparing to intervene - almost certainly within the week - to impose a settlement. This is expected to include a general 2% pay increase for 1985, with a further 1.5% in March 1986, and a one-hour reduction in the present 40-hour working week from December 1986.

## FINLAND

### New agreement for ratings in overseas trade

The ITF-affiliated Finnish Seamen's Union has reached agreement with the shipowners on a new one-year agreement for ratings in the overseas trade. This entered into effect at the beginning of March and provides for increases of 7.4% in pay and monetary allowances (subject to a minimum of 300 markka) plus an increase of 6.1% in benefits in kind.

The union's long-standing desire to see the pay of seafarers keep pace with that of workers in commerce and industry has come a step closer with a commitment from the owners to base next year's award on the percentage figures these two groups will by then have settled for. A further adjustment would be made to bring seafarers' pay closer to that of land-based workers.

## FRANCE

### Cabin crew strike threat causes Air France to review decision to remove overwing exits on its B 747s

The threat of a strike by Air France cabin crews - members of the ITF-affiliated French Cabin Crew Union (SNPNC) - has led the airline to delay plans to remove two overwing exits from aircraft in its B 747 fleet to enable six additional passenger seats to be installed. The SNPNC had criticised the company's intentions on the grounds that fewer exits would make emergency evacuation of the aircraft more difficult, thereby compromising passenger and crew safety.

In the United States, aviation unions are currently opposing a Federal Aviation Administration proposal that airlines operating jumbos with less than 440 seats should be permitted to remove these two forward exits.

## ITALY

### New three-year contract for railwaymen

Italian railwaymen's unions (including ITF affiliates) have signed a new three-year collective agreement providing for increases of 40,000 lire on monthly rates of pay in the first contract year, with rises of 42,000 and 38,000 lire being applied in the second and third years. The working week will also be reduced to 38 hours as long as this can be achieved at no extra cost.

MALAYSIA

Pay rise for Port Kelang tally clerks

Following an extremely difficult contract round, the ITF-affiliated Union of Employees of Port Ancillary Services Suppliers, Port Kelang has succeeded in concluding a new three-year collective agreement for tally clerks employed by the local port employers. Under the new contract, wages and salaries are increased by 16½% with effect from 1 January 1985 and a lump-sum payment of \$ 300 has been agreed for 1984 when it proved impossible to negotiate pay rises for staff. The employers have also agreed to make an extra contribution to the employees' provident fund to finance improved retirement benefits and to raise the annual leave entitlement of workers with over 5 years' service from 21 to 24 days. They have further conceded a union demand for a transport allowance to be paid to each worker (this is worth \$1.50) and have undertaken to provide launch services where necessary to get employees to their workplace in the port.

NORWAY

Higher pay for engineers in overseas trade

New rates of pay came into operation on 1 November last for engineers in the Norwegian overseas trade. The following monthly salary ranges (according to vessel horsepower and length of service) are now in force on vessels over 2,000 grt:

<u>Chief engineer</u>	(tankers)	15,555 - 18,060 kr
	(dry cargo vessels)	15,110 - 17,490 kr
<u>1st engineer</u>	(tankers)	9,230 - 11,000 kr
	(dry cargo vessels)	8,970 - 10,650 kr
<u>2nd engineer</u>	(tankers)	8,310 - 9,900 kr
	(dry cargo vessels)	8,070 - 9,590 kr
<u>3rd engineer</u>	(tankers)	8,095 - 9,645 kr
	(dry cargo vessels)	7,865 - 9,345 kr

PORTUGAL

Union resistance to shipping company closures continues

Employees of the two Portuguese state-owned shipping companies CTM and CNN reimposed their strike\* earlier this month and only called off their action when the government gave assurances that efforts would be made to rescue more jobs and to offer compensation to workers displaced by the proposed closures. At the time of writing, the unions were awaiting detailed proposals on these matters from the shipping ministry. Meanwhile, President Eanes has asked the government to clarify certain points in the liquidation decrees sent to him for promulgation.

Company workers staged a day of protest on 27 February to manifest their opposition to the closure plans, with demonstrations being staged in Lisbon and several coastal cities.

\* see page 13 of last issue of Newsletter for details

SPAIN

UGT welcomes commitment to investment and job creation in new economic and social accord

We are now in a position to give further details of the two-year economic and social accord signed last October by the Socialist government, the employers' associations and the UGT General Workers' Union.\*

Since the return to democracy, broadly similar accords have been entered into each year (with the exception of 1984) and have proved a valuable instrument for maintaining real earnings, keeping down inflation and reducing the number of industrial disputes. Most importantly, they have established a new system of labour relations based on dialogue and negotiation rather than the policy of confrontation that had been the hallmark of the Franco years when the union had been compelled to operate clandestinely.

The contents of the 1985/6 agreement are marked by a desire to stimulate investment and promote job creation in a nation that has the highest level of unemployment in Europe. To that end, it includes vital measures such as:

- new fiscal incentives for investment;
- a 50 billion pesetas increase in funds for public investment;
- the earmarking of additional funds for labour-intensive projects that should lead to jobs for between 160,000 and 190,000 unemployed workers;
- new and more flexible regulations governing the hiring of labour; and
- the establishment of a 60 billion pesetas Solidarity Fund, financed and controlled equally by the employers, workers and the government. This fund is a forerunner of the European Social Fund which will take over when Spain joins the European Community.

Of major importance to those for whom jobs still cannot be found, unemployment benefit will be expanded to cover 43% of those registered unemployed by the end of 1985 and 48% a year later. At present only 26% of the unemployed are entitled to benefit.

One of the salient features of the current agreement is the expansion of the participation of the social partners in decision-making on key issues that affect Spaniards as citizens and workers, with a number of working parties (nine in all) being set up to deal inter alia with tax reform, the adaptation of Spanish law to that of the European Community, the reform of the social security system and vocational training.

In the judgement of the UGT, the existence of the working parties and of the monitoring machinery that has been created to ensure implementation of the accord is evidence of the firm commitment of all the signatories to the objectives it contains. The fact that each of the parties has undertaken to maintain an active negotiating stance over the two-year life of the agreement is also warmly welcomed.

\* see ITF Newsletter No. 10, 1984, page 101

Higher pay and more jobs for railwaymen

The UGT Transport Workers' Federation (together with other railway unions) cancelled plans for further industrial action on the RENFE network this month\* after reaching agreement in principle with the management on a new collective agreement which will remain in force for two years. Salary increases of 6.8% and 4.5% have been negotiated for 1985 and 1986 respectively and 6,000 new jobs are to be created (3,500 in 1985 alone). The company has also indicated that it is prepared to look again at staffing needs next year.

The settlement represents a substantial improvement on the company's original offer and goes a long way towards meeting union demands for higher pay and an increase in the workforce to obviate the need for excessive overtime hours.

\* see page 14 of last issue of the Newsletter

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NEWS IN BRIEF

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Canada: the Federal Appeal Court in Ottawa has ruled that Air Canada's policy of refusing to hire pilots over the age of 27 is discriminatory and must end.

The German government has temporarily abandoned plans for the partial privatisation of the national carrier Lufthansa (see page 12 of last issue).

British Caledonian Airways employees have been awarded increases of 5% or £7 per week (whichever is the greater) from 1 January 1985, plus a further 2 per cent (on 1984 rates) from 1 November.

Great Britain: Shell tanker drivers have received a 6 per cent salary increase, raising the base rate to £160 for 40 hours, from 1 March. The basic holiday entitlement has gone up from 4 to 5 weeks, with an extra day being granted after 10, 15 and 20 years' service.

Ratings on Greek cruise ships have been awarded an eighteen per cent increase in pay and allowances.

Icelandic fishermen have ended their strike after accepting a 30 per cent pay increase (see page 13 of last issue). The government has also undertaken to reduce fishermen's income tax.

South Africa: the Western Greyhound Bus Service has agreed to sign a recognition agreement with the ITF-affiliated Transport and Allied Workers' Union (TAWU) after a half-day strike by about 500 company drivers. The strike brought to a successful conclusion a six-month battle by TAWU to get the company to concede recognition.



Spain: ground staff employees of the state airline Iberia have been awarded a 6.5% pay rise for this year.

United States: Provincetown-Boston Airline, the Florida-based commuter airline which was grounded briefly for safety violations last year\*, has filed for bankruptcy under chapter 11.

\* see ITF Newsletter issues of November and December

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OBITUARIES

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One of Belgium's leading trade unionists, Louis Major, died on 19 February, aged 82. Major, who had headed the pre-war national union centre, the CGTB, was one of the small group who helped create the Belgian Trade Union Confederation (FGTB) at the end of the Second World War, becoming first Assistant General Secretary and then FGTB General Secretary some six years later. During a long career with the Belgian Transport Workers' Union (BTB), which he served as Vice-President for many years, he was closely associated with the dockers' section, which he helped build up after a bitter strike, and was also responsible for adding new transport groups to the union's membership. On his retirement, he became Belgium's Labour and Employment Minister, serving with distinction in two successive governments, during which time he brought about major improvements in Belgium's social legislation. He was also active in the wider international movement, as a founder member of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, of which he was a Vice-President at the time he retired.

Frank A Mongelli, Vice-President of the Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship in Piney Point, Maryland, died on 11 January, aged 73. As an official of the Seafarers' International Union of North America, Mongelli was responsible for developing the training programme for seafarers that is carried out at the union's Piney Point establishment.

Johannes Nielsen, President of the Danish Seamen's Union for two years in the late sixties and the union's representative in New York, died recently in New York, after a long illness. He was 61.

Julian H Singman, a prominent US maritime lawyer and President of the Maritime Institute for Research and Industrial Development, has died, aged 56. Singman was for many years the Washington Counsel of the International Organisation of Masters, Mates and Pilots and during this time he attended many ITF seafarers' meetings as well as sessions of the IMO, UNCTAD and the ILO. He was particularly noted for the contribution he made to the work of the IMO Legal Committee.

Alex J Toft, President since 1982 of the Danish Masters' Association, died on 13 February, at the age of 62, following a long illness. Prior to his appointment as union president, Toft served for thirteen years as Secretary of the union.

James Yoffie, General Chairman of the Norfolk and Western System Board of Adjustment of the US Brotherhood of Railway, Airline and Steamship Clerks (BRAC), died on 15 February, aged 54. Yoffie led the 82-day strike by BRAC members against the Norfolk and Western Railroad in 1978.

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PERSONALIA

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Jeannot Schneider, President of the Luxembourg Federation of Railway and Transport Workers (FNCTTFEL) and ITF Railwaymen's Section Chairman, is relinquishing both these positions on being appointed to the post of Chairman of the Board of Directors of Luxembourg State Railways (CFL), which he assumed at the beginning of this month. The executive of the union met at the end of February to take leave of their outgoing President and to wish him luck in his new job where he will be actively engaged in shaping Luxembourg transport policy and in charting a new and more positive course for the country's railways. His successor will be elected at an extraordinary Congress of the union on 28 March.

Schneider first became a member of the FNCTTFEL executive in July 1963, before being appointed, after six months, the first chairman of the railwaymen's section of the union. In 1966, he was elected Senior Vice-President and succeeded to the presidency some ten years later on the retirement of Fons Hildgen. He served both as Vice-President and General Secretary of the Luxembourg national centre, the CGT, to which his union is affiliated. At the ITF's Madrid Congress, he was elected Chairman of the Railwaymen's Section, marking the culmination of many years of active work within the Section on behalf of the world's railwaymen. While regretting the loss of his advice and counsel the ITF has written to Brother Schneider congratulating him most warmly on this new appointment.

Dan F Cole has been appointed Secretary Treasurer of the Canadian Area of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union in succession to Frank Kennedy who resigned at the end of last month.

Arne H Hansen has been appointed to succeed Bjørn Sivertsen as General Secretary of the Norwegian Navigating Officers' Association when the latter retires at the end of this year. Hansen, who has extensive sea-going experience as a deck officer, is currently chief personnel officer with a Norwegian shipping company. He will take up employment with the union shortly in order to work for a time alongside the outgoing General Secretary.

We extend hearty congratulations to former ITF Vice-President Heinz Kluncker, who celebrated his 60th birthday on 20 February. Kluncker was President of the German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (OeTV) from 1964 to 1982 and is currently President of the Public Services International.

Joseph Marson, former General Secretary of the Luxembourg Federation of Railway and Transport Workers (FNCTTFEL), celebrated his 70th birthday on 20 February.

Rudolph Pöder, President of the Austrian Municipal Employees' Union, celebrated his 60th birthday on 3 February.

Ron Spruhan, National Secretary of the British National Union of Seamen, has been compelled for health reasons to retire prematurely, at age 60. Spruhan has worked for the NUS since 1950, initially in the London district and since 1965 at national headquarters, where he served first as Special Organiser, before being promoted to National Organiser and then, in 1970, to Assistant General Secretary (deck and engine), a post later retitled National Secretary.

Roger Wilkins has been elected Deputy National Secretary of the British National Union of Seamen in a membership ballot. A second ballot is to be held to fill the remaining post for a Deputy National Secretary.

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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Marine Engineer Officers - Dania' (Florida) ..... 1-2 April 1985  
European Railwaymen's Conference - Vienna ..... 16 April 1985  
Fair Practices Committee Collective Agreement Review  
Sub-Committee - London ..... 17-18 April 1985  
Fishermen's Section Steering Committee - Boulogne ..... 23 April 1985  
Fishermen's Section Conference - Boulogne ..... 24-25 April 1985  
Asian Seafarers' Regional Committee - Solo (Indonesia) ..... 8-10 May 1985  
Civil Aviation Section Conference - Stockholm ..... 13-15 May 1985  
Seafarers' Section Maritime Policy Committee - London ..... 6-7 June 1985  
Fair Practices Committee - London ..... 10-11 June 1985  
Travel Bureau Section Conference - San Diego ..... 17-18 June 1985  
Railwaymen's Section Conference - Nuremberg ..... 17-19 September 1985  
Road Transport Workers' Section Conference - Rome ..... 6-8 November 1985

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