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trade union information

TRADE UNION BULLETIN

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TRADE UNIONS AND OTHER PRIORITY MILIEUX

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1. EUROPEAN WORKERS IN THE FACE OF THE CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY THE WORLD

ECONOMIC SITUATION:

ADDRESS GIVEN BY MR WILHELM HAFERKAMP, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, AT THE 26TH "LABOUR DINNER" (MAHL DER ARBEIT) IN BREMEN ON 29 APRIL

Mr Haferkamp stressed that European trade unions would have to face up to the three major challenges currently presented by the world economic situation, namely, the growing shortage and increasing cost of energy, technological competition with newly industrialized nations (in particular Japan) and competition with developing countries on labour costs.

He described the switch from imported energy to domestic sources of energy as one of the biggest economic challenges confronting us in the decades ahead. At the same time, however, this change opened up untapped opportunities for creating new jobs in areas such as European coalmining, the development of new designs, heating systems, energy-saving engines and machinery and alternative sources of energy.

In the face of the technological challenge presented by newly industrialized nations, Mr Haferkamp called for a bigger research effort not only from medium-sized firms but also from large firms. He said that outstanding achievements in industry and technology were indispensable if Europe wished to continue enjoying the highest living standards in the world. There was little point in closing the door to imports of technically superior products, for example in the field of electronics, as competition in tomorrow's world would be concentrated on third country markets in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

Mr Haferkamp did not think that the gulf between labour costs in Western industrialized nations and developing countries would be closed in the near future. We would just have to live with the fact that labour costs in Europe were as much as five, ten or fifteen times higher than in most African and Asian countries.

It therefore made economic sense that Europe was now importing more than a quarter of its requirements of certain textiles from third countries, in particular from developing countries, as these imports were bought with high-quality industrial products which we could still produce competitively despite high wage costs, which was not the case for shirts or shoes.

Protective measures of the kind taken by the EEC in 1977 to help textiles and steel products could only be regarded as a stop-gap solution to facilitate the process of industrial adjustment.

The prosperity of European workers could only be maintained if we were all prepared to carry out the structural adjustments dictated by the world economic situation or advances in technology. It was true that jobs would always be lost in the process, which was regrettable, but in any normal process of adjustment at least new jobs were created all the time. This aspect was usually ignored!

In the wake to this economically necessary adjustment, the workers affected would have to move to a new place of work and a new firm, change their occupation and settle in a new area. This required an appropriate degree of mobility. Fostering mobility among workers was a decisive factor in

coping with structural changes and it was therefore necessary for our future prosperity.

Mr Haferkamp reminded his audience that European trade unions had always been undaunted in taking up such challenges. Their policies had never been guided by conservatism or a rejectionist spirit. He called upon the trade unions to carry on assuming responsibility for their members and all working people in meeting the challenges posed by the worldwide economic upheaval. The trade unions ought to come out in favour of a Europe that was economically strong and socially progressive but at the same time outward-looking and willing to cooperate with the rest of the world.

2. THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS AND THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC)

At a press conference held in Brussels on 19 April 1979, Mr M. Hinder-scheid set out the main points of the trade unions' programme for the European direct elections.

The ETUC drafted a manifesto for the occasion and published a poster with the slogan "Europe will be what we make of it". Thousands of copies of these documents had been printed in several languages and they would be distributed during the election campaign. According to the manifesto, it was no longer possible to solve most of the problems facing the trade union movement at national level alone. It was no longer a question of "Should one build Europe or not?" but rather "What sort of Europe should be built? What sort of Europe do we want?"

Did we want a Europe unable to solve the problem of the six million unemployed?

Did we want a Europe dominated by a few multinational groups in which special interests and immediate profits took pride of place over the interests of society as a whole? Did we want a Europe which perpetuated discrepancies between men and maintained the gaps between highly developed regions and developing regions?

As far as the ETUC and its 40 million members were concerned there could be no question of accepting such a situation.

The Europe we wanted - and wanted to help create - must meet the aspirations and hopes of the workers.

The fight against unemployment

The chief goal of economic policy, both at national and Community level, should be to achieve full employment.

This objective presupposed the need for a number of concerted measures at both national and European level. The trade union movement should make the most of its influence with national Governments and European institutions to curb unemployment.

The campaign against unemployment should also aim to create new jobs. A policy of this type must, of course, take into account existing needs and attempt to improve collective services such as medical and hospital

facilities, extend the social services, and promote public education and vocational training, the building of low cost housing and environmental protection.

One of the constant concerns of the trade union organizations was to strengthen and extend democracy.

The existence of a political democracy which guaranteed fundamental liberties was an essential prerequisite in effectively defending the rights and interests of the workers.

The public authorities, at national and European level, had to pay an increasing important role in economic life. At the same time it was essential to extend economic democracy.

The level of employment depended on demand.

To achieve full employment, therefore, the economy must be revived by guiding and stimulating demand and providing the necessary means for those who did not have access to the goods nowadays regarded as essential by society. A policy of this type demanded an improvement in the lowest wages and the creation of a satisfactory system of unemployment benefits. In addition, attempts should be made to prevent renewed inflation and maintain purchasing power. To achieve this, it was necessary to establish effective control over prices and profit margins.

The public authorities should also take appropriate measures to encourage the private sector to create new jobs in regions in which the level of unemployment was above average.

To make effective control possible, private companies and undertakings should give prior notification to the public authorities and trade union organizations of all investment projects, stipulating the purpose in terms of real needs. Only in this way would Governments be in a position to implement and plan a genuine industrial policy.

The right of the owners of the means of production to dispose of them totally at will no longer coincided with the aspirations of a democratic society. Workers must be granted the right to influence the economic decisions of capitalists. These decisions affected them directly insofar as they determined their fate and that of their families. For this reason the necessary legal provisions should be created to improve the transparency of the activities of undertakings - in particular multinational groups.

An effective development policy implied the creation of a new socio-economic order. There should also be an increase in development aid; which should be directed first and foremost to the least favoured countries and groups with a view to setting up production units and establishing new markets in developing countries. In this way, the new economic order would also make a great contribution towards reducing unemployment in the industrialized countries.

There was a pressing need to create an effective and permanent training system which provided wide-scale retraining opportunities for both young persons and adult workers to alleviate youth unemployment.

Special attention should be paid to the preparation of young persons for working life. In this connection general education and training systems

should be reviewed and educational and vocational guidance improved, to enable the labour market to operate more effectively.

The democratization of economic life implies the harmonization of the interests of capitalists and the interests of society as a whole. Along the same lines, there should be a check on profit distribution to prevent the payment of high dividends to the detriment of the investment necessary to maintain and create jobs.

The public authorities must understand that uncontrolled growth without planning could have negative repercussions. Economic expansion must, therefore, be programmed to give priority to the production of necessary goods and services and avoid wastage of natural resources whilst protecting and improving the living and working environment.

With an unemployment figure of more than six million and an increase in the demand for jobs, it was essential to reduce working hours by 10 % in the short term.

This could be achieved by:

- a reduction in the working week;
- longer paid leave;
- lowering the retirement age.

The granting of democratic powers of control to workers within undertakings was one particular instrument in the struggle for full employment. In practical terms this should take the form of monitoring working hours, recruitment, dismissals and production methods.

The power of the multi-national groups was so extensive nowadays that they were in a position to neutralize the democratic power of governments and take their own decisions without taking into account national, regional or local needs. Hence the need to subject multi-national companies to democratic control he went on to stress the need to improve social conditions. Alongside the active struggle against the scourge of unemployment and a campaign to democratize economic life, we should conduct a constant battle to improve working conditions, perfect social legislation and eliminate the inequalities which continue to put certain categories of workers at a disadvantage. The interdependence of the European economies made a joint trade union approach more necessary than ever.

Nowadays, in many firms, workers still did not have the necessary rights to exercise an effective influence on the organization of work, particularly as regards production, hygiene, safety and health conditions.

Production should be adapted to the aspirations of Man and not vice-versa.

In order to guarantee workers maximum health and safety protection, very strict safety standards must be framed and totally independent powers given to industrial medicine and labour inspectorate bodies. The authorities should be empowered to halt any work which constituted a real danger to workers.

The European Community had initially concentrated on coordinating in the economic sphere. Attempts should now be made to enable all workers, regardless of their place of residence, to vote for the European Parliament. Every endeavour should be made to grant migrant workers everywhere the

same social and cultural rights as nationals. They should also be granted certain political rights.

Despite constant efforts by the trade unions there were still numerous examples of inequality working to the disadvantage of certain categories of workers.

These involved women, young persons, handicapped persons and migrant workers. There was an urgent need nowadays to intensify the campaign against forms of inequality de facto and de jure.

Mr HINTERSCHIED continued by saying that the Member States of the European Community worked under a system of political democracy. The trade union movement was striving to maintain, enlarge and intensify this democracy. It should be extended at European level, and European institutions democratized at all levels. The direct election of the European Parliament was a major initial step in this direction. One of the tasks of the European Parliament would be to pursue the process of extending and intensifying democracy in Europe.

Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome and the EEC directives on the subject had provided the legal instruments for equal pay for men and women doing the same job. But there were striking examples of discrimination in practice. The trade unions should see that this principle was applied everywhere and combat any discrimination on grounds of sex which was detrimental to women workers. The campaign for equal pay and promotion prospects for men and women should be accentuated. Young people constituted another disadvantaged group of workers. Measures should be taken to facilitate the integration of young people into the working environment by paying special attention to their education, training and guidance. Furthermore, because of their age, they should be granted adequate medical and safety protection.

Special attention should also be paid to the problem of elderly workers. Any discrimination against them on grounds of age should be **eliminated**. They should be guaranteed working conditions which corresponded to their physical and psychological capacities. It was unacceptable that age should be a criterion for income levels.

The economy of most European countries was greatly dependent on migrant workers, although the latter were often regarded as a "reserve" labour force.

Even more than in the past, we should draw up a policy with the help of and on behalf of migrant workers.

It was not sufficient to combat forms of discrimination against migrant workers as regards employment, working conditions and social security. It would also be necessary to reconsider the very basis of migration policies.

Henceforth, it would be necessary to combat the structural, economic and social causes of migration. With this in mind, a regional development policy should be drawn up at European Community level. This policy should pursue a two-fold objective:

- to change the economic order, which prevented the harmonious development of all the regions of Europe;
- to create an adequate number of jobs to guarantee stable employment for all workers in their region of origin by bringing the means of production to the workers and not vice-versa.

Europe will be what we make of it

Most of the problems which arose in the various countries of Europe could no longer be solved at national level alone. If workers and the people as a whole now hoped that Europe would be able to help to better our lives, improve our living and working conditions, provide stable employment, guaranteed incomes, equal rights and opportunities, we must also become aware of our own responsibilities. We must step up our trade union activities and increase our influence at European level. And we must take advantage of our rights, with all our might and main, and impose our points of view. To this end use must be made of the new right to influence European policy constituted by the direct elections to the European Parliament. We must show our desire to be associated with the creation of Europe, but a Europe devised by and for the workers.

3. 22ND CONGRESS - 15TH EUROPEAN SEMINAR OF THE EUROPEAN UNION OF FILM AND TELEVISION WORKERS, HELD IN MORTSEL, ANTWERP, ON 23-25 APRIL

At this Congress the European Union unanimously adopted the following Resolutions:

1. European vocational training for film technicians

On 23-25 April 1979 the 22nd Congress of the European Union of Film and Television Workers, having heard the reports on the free movement of film workers in the Community and on the vocational training of film technicians and cinematographic schools, regrets to note that since 1967, when reports and proposals on these problems were presented, the EEC has not given any practical follow-up to these proposals nor to establishing occupational cards for workers in the film industry. It requests the competent Directorates-General of the EEC to take the requisite decisions on these matters.

2. Problem of the European distribution of films produced in Community countries

The 22nd Congress of the European Union of Film and Television Workers, meeting in Antwerp on 23-25 April 1979, having heard the report on the problem of the distribution of films produced in the nine Community countries, decided by every means in its power to tackle the problem and find a solution.

To this end, it will pursue this matter through a standing committee, in collaboration with all the European organizations concerned.

3. Collaboration with the work of the Directorate-General for Research, Science and Education

The 22nd Congress of the European Union of Film and Television Workers, meeting in Antwerp on 23-25 April 1979, having heard the report by Otto Sprenger, President of the CESSA, on the work of the Directorate-General for Research, Science and Education of the EEC, confirms its desire to support this action.

4. European Film Industries Bureau (Bureau européen du Cinema)

The 22nd Congress of the European Union of Film and Television Workers, meeting in Antwerp on 23-25 April 1979, having heard and examined the report by Mr Claude Degand on the creation of a European Film Industry Bureau in Brussels (BEC), decided to take any steps that would be helpful with the Governments of the Community countries to ensure the collaboration of their cinematographic services with the EEC.

5. Special situation of the Italian film industry

The 22nd Congress of the European Union of Film and Television Workers, meeting in Antwerp on 24 and 25 April 1979, having been informed of the situation that had arisen in the Italian film industry which was completely paralysed by legal action taken by a group of actors claiming that films made in Italy should be filmed directly and in the Italian language, noting that these legal proceedings are contrary to the Community spirit since they not only limit the freedom of movement of actors in the EEC countries but institute an intolerable principle, protests against this situation and calls the member trade union organizations to condemn this step which could do incalculable harm to the Italian film industry and consequently to the entire European film industry;

Calls on competent European bodies to urge the Italian Government to approach this problem with determination.

6. Prospects opened by new technology

The 22nd Congress of the European Union of Film and Television Workers, meeting in Antwerp on 23-25 April 1979, taking note of the far-reaching changes soon to affect the audiovisual media as a result of new communications techniques, considers that the problem of the film industry and the question of relations between the film industry and television should henceforth be considered in the light of the new cultural climate which will inevitably emerge and where genuine solutions can be found only through close cooperation between European countries.

4. ACTION DAY DEVOTED TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN EUROPE, HELD IN AACHEN ON 17 MARCH

On 17 March 1979, 1 000 militant trade unionists from Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands met in Aachen to attend a European event devoted to the question of women's rights in Europe.

This event had been prepared by the Women's Commission of the Meuse-Rhine Interregional Trade Union Council under the Chairmanship of Mrs Josette Duchesne of the FGTB of Liège.

The principal speaker, Mr Heinz-Oskar Vetter, President of the European Trade Union Confederation, stressed that the trade unions sought to combat discrimination against women at work and in society on a European level. Mr Vetter said that at the third Congress of the ETUC in May, participants would discuss an action programme to abolish the division of the labour market between men and women and discrimination between men and women with respect to access to employment, occupational and social advancement and would seek to upgrade activities mainly performed by women.

Mr Vetter energetically condemned feminist strategies whose only aim in his view was to bring about a confrontation between men and women which did nothing to reduce discrimination between men and women in the working world.

The position of women would be improved by a general improvement in all workers' circumstances. Mr Vetter also called on trade union organizations to keep a careful watch in the future on militants occupying key posts.

Mr Vetter strongly criticised the media for again placing more emphasis on the role of women in the home, which did not correspond to the role of women today in our evolved industrial and democratic society. The meeting closed with the unanimous adoption of a resolution emphasising the problems of equality at work for men and women. This document was forwarded to the various Community bodies.

5. **COLLOQUIUM ON THE WORK OF THE INTERREGIONAL TRADE UNION COUNCILS, HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 22-23 MARCH**

In collaboration with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the Trade Unions Division of DG X, Spokesman's Group and Directorate-General for Information brought together in Brussels on 22 and 23 March 1979 representatives of the Inter-regional Trade Union Councils of the Meuse-Rhine and Saar-Lorraine-Luxembourg and of trade union organizations in the Netherlands and the lower Saar (WENN) who plan to set up a similar Council in September.

This meeting, the first of its kind, was devoted to a wide-ranging discussion of Community regional policy, the economic and social problems of frontier workers and the coordination of the financial instruments of the Community.

6.A THE CGT-FO (FRENCH TRADE UNION FEDERATION) AND EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION

An interview with Mr J. Rouzier and Mr A. Laval, Secretaries of the FO (Force Ouvrière) by Mr R. Michaud.

Question: What kind of Europe are you hoping for?
This is the question Europeans in the Community are asked to think about before choosing their representatives to the European Parliament. In Force Ouvrière what kind of Europe are you hoping for?

Jean Rouzier: For me and for all of us Europe means keeping faith with the great international trade union tradition. After the second World War, we were in favour of a United States of Europe which alone could put an end to the centuries-long conflicts across the Rhine. Three wars in 75 years, millions of dead and wounded, we did not want any more of that. And we knew that we had to strengthen democracy which was still weak in Germany and Italy then emerging from Nazism and Fascism. In addition to faithfulness to our ideals, we were well aware that the conflict had expanded the dimension of our trade union problems. Relationships between States could no longer be regarded in terms of conflict but in terms of concertation.

Antoine Laval: We were moved not only by a vague romanticism, but by the conviction that the economic and practical problems had to be tackled if future conflicts were to be avoided. As Jean Rouzier has just said, the enlarged dimension would facilitate the use of techniques developed in the war. We agreed to the Marshall Plan, the American aid offered to all European nations. We agreed to the Schuman Plan, setting up the first Iron and Steel Community of the Six to control these resources essential for war.

Question: From coal and steel, the Community has been expanded to include the entire economy. Today a great deal of criticism is levelled against a Europe of merchants and technocrats.

Antoine Laval: It's true. The Coal and Steel Community was more "social", more supranational than the European Community created by the Treaty of Rome. The high authority of the ECSC had more power than the Commission in Brussels.

Jean Rouzier: I would like to call attention to this Article of the ECSC Treaty: "The Community shall progressively bring about conditions which will of themselves ensure the most rational distribution of production at the highest possible level of productivity, while safeguarding continuity of employment and taking care not to provoke fundamental and persistent disturbances in the economies of Member States".

The Treaty of Rome was perhaps less ambitious but it should promote harmonization and progress.

Antoine Laval: Today we are experiencing a worldwide crisis, but no one can deny that the Community has achieved considerable expansion of trade and economic development which has brought about a great leap forward in the standard of living for Europeans. The growth of the Six was so dynamic that even the United Kingdom requested accession, impelled rather by necessity than feeling.

Question: All the same is it true to say that the treaties have brought about all that could be expected?

Jean Rouzier: No. We have not yet exhausted the possibilities. We have kept too strictly to the letter (and even that leaves something to be desired) and not closely enough to the spirit.

Antoine Laval: Harmonization has not been taken far enough. All the same, in the social field one thing has tended to lead to another. Towards 1960, the Benelux and the Federal Republic of Germany began to reduce the working week to forty hours whereas in France it was still forty-five to forty-six hours. Foreign examples have enabled us to achieve substantial reductions by stages. On the other hand, France was ahead as regards equal pay for men and women and our neighbours had to follow the same track. Thus there has been some interaction, too slow in our view, but genuine, even if European collective agreements have not yet come into being.

Question: Are you not going against the trend by emphasizing the positive aspects of the Community at a time when some are ready to blame the European Commission, particularly for the iron and steel crisis?

Jean Rouzier: The steel crisis is worldwide and everyone knows that world steel production capacity is greater than present needs. I would criticize the Community on another count. If the Community had had real decision-making power it would have promoted reasonable and concerted growth of the iron and steel industry through the control of investment. It is because each country has continued to act on its individual policies that the situation has risen.

Antoine Laval: Yes it is the emergence of new producing countries that has upset the iron and steel industry. It is certainly regrettable that a Davignon Plan was not evolved earlier to organize and harmonize the European iron and steel industry, reform its market position and discipline its investments, but the Brussels Commission no longer had the means. In spite of what is said, difficulties are mainly due to the fact that the EEC is subject to the will of the governments, the Council of Ministers of the Member States who deprive the Brussels Commission of the means of carrying out a genuine Community economic policy ...

Jean Rouzier: ... and unfortunately the crisis has had the effect of reinforcing the tendency of Member States to fall back on themselves whereas they should unite us. Some say that the Brussels Commission does too much, for my part I think it does not do enough!

Question: That is the subject of the elections to the European Parliament - I beg your pardon - The European Assembly, since some dispute that it can be a genuine Parliament.

Jean Rouzier: Europe must be relaunched. For that reason it is a matter of urgency to rediscover the spirit that launched European construction, develop greater cohesiveness and creative solidarity. I have hopes that this election by universal suffrage will give new impetus to the idea of Europe. The election will be both a test of solidarity and an important step in the democratization of the institutions. I am convinced that the citizens and workers will be more concerned about Europe as a result of the election.

Antoine Laval: Rouzier has just mentioned the workers, and I would like to revert to the question of European social policy. I will never forget that the first Community, for coal and steel, originated the first European conversion instrument for miners, before our unemployment insurance, ASSEDIC, "the 90 %", on the national and regional programme we have today.

At that time the European Community was in the van, in some ways it was the leader of national social policies.

Today the reverse is true, Brussels now follows the Member States, it does not lead, since the governments begrudge it any power of decision or initiative.

Question: Lastly, Europeans hear most about "green" Europe, agricultural Europe, and always in connection with difficult negotiations.

Antoine Laval: It is bound to be difficult, especially where an acceptable compromise has to be found between nine countries with different structures and economies. But despite the difficulties, agricultural Europe exists, I would even say it is the only sector where there is a genuine Community policy, apart from that we have a free trade area rather than a Community.

Jean Rouzier: Yes, the common agricultural policy exists. It is always said to be in crisis yet it is alive. One could even say that there are no longer national but European agricultural prices. Obviously, some sectors have found it difficult to adjust. But we are certain that even without the EEC, French agricultural structures would have been disrupted, perhaps more radically and more quickly, and above all in a more disorderly fashion. Probably our producers would not have had guaranteed markets. They cannot deny the importance and necessity of the EAGGF, the fund for intervention and adaptation in agriculture which has rendered considerable service to producers.

The major proportion of the Community budget goes on agriculture. We know that overall the common agricultural policy is beneficial to farmers - even if they deny it at times - and to consumers. It is a matter of regret that the other sectors have not followed, and that there has been no Community industrial policy. As Antoine Laval said the iron and steel industry needed it badly and textiles too.

Question: Am I right in thinking that the Brussels Commission is being arraigned for something for which it is not responsible.

Antoine Laval: At all events it is not the only body responsible. All too often the governments are unwilling to follow the Community lead until one or other sector is in crisis. Too often, action is taken too late and without any real prospects. So it was that the Community failed to set up a genuine European aerospace industry, a European electronics industry or a data processing industry.

Question: All the same there has been Concorde, and above all the Airbus...

Antoine Laval: Yes, but there are bi-or trilateral agreements which owe nothing to the Community. The Community is not to blame for this lack but the governments that refuse to cede any part of their authority. And I should not forget the employers who remained true to the capitalist market economy, the free economy.

Question: When driving about Europe, and the French do so freely during their holidays, one is always surprised to find that Europe of the Community has preserved its customs men and frontier posts. The classical reaction is what is the use of Europe?

Jean Rouzier: Let us be fair. It is easier to drive about. Customs duties are no longer in question but rather the harmonization of taxation on the movement of goods. Every European in the Six, now the Nine countries, can establish himself wherever he wishes and can exercise his occupation. We even have a European tax with the 1 % of national VAT. It is partly by means of this levy that the Brussels and Luxembourg institutions operate. This levy provides funds for the European Regional Development Fund which helps regions in difficulties, the European Social Fund which, with the governments, finances social operations (adaptation and conversion) and the EAGGF for the common agricultural policy.

Yes, there is already a European budget supervised by the European Parliament in Strasbourg which allocates the funds to the various chapters. At present this is even a bone of contention with the French Government which is protesting because the Parliament has overstepped its powers by authorizing too large an increase in the Regional Development Fund.

Obviously, since each regional programme must be jointly financed by the Community and the national government, the more finance is provided by Europe, the more must be provided by the Government. All too often the Governments block European Regional Development Fund funds in their own treasury.

With much still to be done to reduce inequalities in development between European regions, it is desirable that the Regional Fund should have sufficient resources, but this is far from being the case.

Antoine Laval: A tourist crossing a frontier in the Community still guarded by customs men wonders whether Europe exists. It does, even if it does not yet fulfil our expectations. There is still no European collective agreement as I said, but there are some achievements: the free movement of goods and persons as Rouzier mentioned, agreements concerning migrant workers, social security in the case of sickness abroad, etc. From this there is no going back.

Jean Rouzier: In the area of transport, substantial progress has been achieved, by road, rail and sea, in respect of working conditions, social legislation, signs, vehicle safety, the European driving licence will exist tomorrow as will the identity card.

For example, it was a great struggle to oblige transport employers, particularly the English, to accept the tachograph, the famous black box. I am certain that sooner or later the English will have to drive on the right like the rest of the world, just as they have had to accept the metric system under the pressure of circumstances.

Question: With respect to transport, you have been requested by the Economic and Social Council to prepare a report on flags of convenience.

Jean Rouzier: Recent sea-going catastrophes, wrecks of oil tankers in particular, have pointed up the harmful results of flags of convenience used by vessels that are not always safe, operated by under-qualified, makeshift crews. My report will concentrate on safety in navigation and the protection of the environment.

Question: All the same employment, or rather unemployment, is the predominant concern in Europe. With over six million unemployed of whom 40 % are under 25, the situation is potentially explosive.

Jean Rouzier: Yes this figure is unprecedented. Clearly, if there is no change in the growth rate of the European nations, it will be insufficient to absorb unemployment or even to check its increase. At present there are not even any common solutions proposed to this crucial general problem. This is why the European Trade Union Confederation is demanding worksharing, and a concerted, gradual but significant reduction in working time. Since the Member States have not chosen to give the Brussels Commission sufficient power to act itself, the European trade unions and their confederations will have to adopt a direct approach to the Member States to make sure that they take the workers' claims into consideration.

The ETUC will hold a Congress in Munich in the spring. Among other measures it will stress the 35 hour week to be implemented by stages throughout the Community. This is the workers' Europe.

Antoine Laval: Before the European Summit held in Paris, an ETUC delegation headed by its President, Mr. O. Vetter, met Giscard to make the Heads of State aware of their Community responsibilities. They considered that the economic and social situation was unsatisfactory. That's the least that can be said. From my experience of a discussion of a report on employment policies in Europe at the European Economic and Social Council such a timid approach will not bring us out of the crisis.

Earlier we were talking about agriculture. About 60 % of the budget is devoted to the EAGGF, 4.36 % to the Social Fund and 4.25 % to the Regional Development Fund which is proof enough that Europe has come to a standstill as regards social and industrial policy.

Question: What is the position of Force Ouvrière with respect to the European authorities and how much influence does it have?

Jean Rouzier: We enjoy a sort of long-standing credit rating. Force Ouvrière has always been held in high esteem in Brussels for having participated from the beginning in European construction, in the ECSC. Many of our militants are on Joint Committees dealing with their respective occupations (services, transport, communications, etc.).

Antoine Laval sat on the ECSC Consultative Committee (coal and steel). Today, in another context he is a member of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Committee, and for four years he was Chairman of the section on regional development. I am a member of the same Committee. We each sit on three Committees. Laval on Social Affairs, Industry and Commerce and External Affairs (that is, foreign policy to some extent) and I am on the Economics and Finance, Transport and Agriculture side.

Antoine Laval: We are appointed to this Committee by the French Government, but there are bodies such as the Tripartite Conference or the Standing Committee on Employment of which we are members on behalf of the ETUC trade unions. As representatives of the workers we are less and less national and more and more European.

Question: Apart from the next elections, another subject is being hotly debated by the politicians, I mean the enlargement of the Community to take in Portugal, Spain and Greece. What is to be expected or hoped from such enlargement, despite the difficulties?

Jean Rouzier: These three countries have barely emerged from totalitarian regimes and democracy is still fragile. We remember only too clearly the Weimar Republic and the chaos in Germany following the first World War and which gave rise to Hitler. Force Ouvrière does not believe it would be right to refuse these countries entry to a Community which can only contribute to easing the way for freedom and democracy there. By helping them, we are also working for ourselves, for our own liberty, by strengthening democracy against totalitarian regimes of the right or the left.

Question: The Community of Europe is not a world closed in on itself which would be equivalent to extending the economic self-sufficiency of the six to the nine member countries.

Antoine Laval: Correct. That is why we attach great importance to relations with non-member countries, particularly developing countries. Now suffering from a recession, but for a long time buoyed up by growth derived from the low cost of raw materials and energy, Europe (and the other industrialized countries) cannot remain an island of prosperity in a world of poverty or famine.

If we maintain a solid front with the poorest European countries, Greece and Portugal, we should also extend help to the poor countries in the Third World. This is our duty in the name of solidarity and justice and I would even say it is a necessity. Like Jouhaux, I would say that poverty - wherever it exists in the world - constitutes a permanent source of conflict for the rest of humanity. And when he was on the rostrum at the United Nations, he was one of the first to denounce the pillage of raw materials of the new member countries by the rich countries; he foretold the Lomé Convention.

Question: On looking through my notes, I see that there has been some criticism of Force Ouvrière support of Europe.

Jean Rouzier: We are well aware of the gaps in the Treaties, particularly the Treaty of Rome which is a step back from the Coal and Steel Community. We are well aware that the letter and the spirit of these instruments are not always observed. We know that the blame lies with the countries and governments who refuse to transfer part of their responsibilities to a Community authority which is nevertheless essential if we are to drive forward and coordinate. But we are also aware of the positive aspects, even if we are irritated by the slowness of progress.

It will take more than one generation to eradicate the prejudices based on centuries of suspicion and hostility, both actual and figurative. At the same time we realize there is no alternative and we are sure that the great majority of the younger generation do not understand and want no more of these outdated conflicts.

The revolution in transport has opened up the world to them and to the spirit of fraternity.

Question: If one supports a United States of Europe one is exposed to the ultimate insult: that of selling out one's own nation.

Jean Rouzier: I repeat I see no alternative; all that is left would be to fall back on ourselves and the crisis would be still more severe, with all the attendant risks to freedom and democracy. Europe is peace. I see no major incompatibility between the necessary European dimension and the nation. Particularly in the proposed present framework which is that of a confederate Europe.

Interview by Roger Michaud

6.B **XIITH NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE FEDERATION FORCE OUVRIERE DES CHEMINOTS (RAILWAYMEN'S UNION), HELD IN CLICHY, ON 24-26 APRIL.**

The Fédération Force Ouvrière des Cheminots held its 12th national congress in Vichy on 24-25 April 1979.

For three days over 500 delegates discussed the problems associated with the transport and social protection policy of the national railways and the contractual policy as regards wages and salaries, prices and taxation.

Mr Daniel Iarovay, who replaced Mr Louis Buonaccorsi as Secretary-General of the Federation between two congresses, was confirmed in his office.

The Congress ended with a European day on the afternoon of 26 April when Mr Louis Buonaccorsi, former Secretary-General of the Federation, gave the following address on the question of European construction.

At the close of this Congress, I would like to take the opportunity to make a few personal comments on the elections to the European Parliament on 10 June 1979. We in the Fédération Force Ouvrière des Cheminots, were forerunners of European unity. Perhaps we came to the right conclusions too soon but all the same I would like to say a few words about our concept of Europe.

Certainly our statute does not allow our organization to give instructions on how to vote. But, on 10 June 1979, for the first time in their history, citizens of the European Community will be able to exercise a direct right to vote for their representatives to the European Parliament. Certainly, through this election, citizens of Europe will have an opportunity to become more familiar with the Community, its institutions and how they operate. It is up to the European trade union movement and also the national movements to familiarize their members with the Community. We will endeavour to do this through our publications and we would request participants at the Congress to print this information in their own publications.

Through the direct election of the members of this Parliament, democratic participation by the citizens of European in Community affairs is recognized and organized. In the dialogue to follow between the European institutions, a directly elected Parliament will have greater moral weight as a result of this election.

The same can be said at constitutional level in view of the enlargement of the Community to Greece, Spain and Portugal. But, contrary to what may be said elsewhere, let us speak plainly and clearly; we are in favour of this enlargement as the entry of these countries into the Community provides another opportunity for democracy in Europe. It is our duty to help these comrades who have lived through dictatorships - in some cases for several decades - to reinforce democracy in their countries, even accession may lead to economic problems.

At present I have noticed a tendency in France to use arguments to sway people in an undesirable direction. Certain politicians in France have attempted to give an unacceptable bias to this election.

For this reason, we railwaymen in Force Ouvrière must take up arms and counter-attack and not let people get away with unfounded remarks about Europe.

Of course, the problem is fundamental and there must inevitably be some fallout at national level, but care should be taken to see that the issues are not so clouded that citizens can no longer see clearly.

I would urge all militants to ensure that this election becomes a massive demonstration in favour of Europe: Europe for the workers.

6.C. Meeting of the CGT Executive Committee in Paris on 23 April

The National Executive Committee of the CGT-FO, meeting in Paris on 23 April, examined the international economic and social situation and noted the continuing employment problem. Although a slowdown can be seen in the rising trend in the number of registered unemployed receiving benefits, it is unlikely that there will be a significant improvement in 1979. The Committee was particularly aware of the problems of long term unemployment, due to the limits laid down by the law of 16 January 1979. It could not accept that unemployed workers would be left totally without resources.

The Executive Committee of Force Ouvrière was more than ever convinced that it would become increasingly difficult to find a remedy to the crisis at national level alone. In the United States of America, thanks to its continental dimension, unemployment had been reduced by half, whereas in the Community countries it had risen from 6 to 6 1/2 million.

For this reason, a few weeks away from the election by universal suffrage to the Strasbourg Parliament, the Executive Committee of the FO reiterated its belief in the need to reinforce Community structures to enable the old industrial nations of Western Europe to hold their place in a world which was being shaken in a way never before experienced in the long history of mankind.

The Executive Committee requested those responsible in the departmental unions of the FO to expand on this subject at the forthcoming May day meetings. It also asked them to emphasize that the problem of Europe was also one of democracy and peace.

The Confederation of the Force Ouvrière was aware of the need to revive investment to avoid a decline in industrial potential and the aggravation of unemployment. But it was also aware that although such investment might increase productivity it did not always create jobs. Sometimes the contrary happened. For that reason, the Executive Committee approved the steps taken by the Bureau of the Conseil national du patronat français (CNPF) and the Government to reduce working time through collective agreements on actual time worked and the law on maximum working time.

With this in mind, the delegation representing Force Ouvrière in Munich in May at the ETUC Congress had been instructed to support the resolution calling on all the affiliated confederations in Western Europe to take steps to promote simultaneous and significant reductions in working time, aiming at 35 hours in the medium term.

7. **CHANGES IN THE SECRETARIATS-GENERAL OF THE CISL AND THE CGIL (ITALIAN TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS)**

In May, important changes were made in the Secretariats-General of the CISL and the CGIL.

Mr Macario, Secretary-General of the CISL and Mr Bonaccini and Mr Dido, Secretaries of the CGIL, resigned from their respective organizations to stand for election (in Italy office cannot be held in a trade union and the political world at the same time).

Mr Macario will stand as candidate for the Christian Democrat Party both for the elections taking place in Italy on 3-4 June 1979 and for the elections to the European Parliament.

His post as Secretary-General of the CISL has been filled by Mr Carniti, formerly Assistant Secretary-General.

Mr Bonaccini will be one of the Communist Party's candidates for the European Election.

He was the confederate Secretary responsible for the international policy of the CGIL, and Mr Militello, former Assistant Secretary-General of the CGIL chemical workers, has been appointed in his place.

Mr Dido, who in the CGIL was particularly concerned with the policy for the Mezzogiorno, will stand as Socialist Party candidate for the European Election. He was replaced by Mr Ceremina, former Secretary-General for the Lazio region.

8. IMPROVING THE WORKING METHODS OF THE TRIPARTITE CONFERENCES

Acting on a proposal from Vice-President Vredeling, the Commission has adopted a draft Council Resolution introducing arrangements designed to improve the working methods of the Tripartite Conferences.

The draft Resolution implements the mandate given by the European Council to the Community institutions on 4 December 1978. It meets the European Trade Union Confederation's demand for an improvement in the procedures to be followed in the preparation of the Conferences, their work and the drafting of the conclusions, without which the ETUC would decline to attend future Conferences.

The arrangements set out in the conclusions were worked out in collaboration with the ETUC and the Union of Industries of the European Community.

In accordance with the draft Resolution, the Tripartite Conferences will henceforth be organized on the following lines:

1. The subjects for discussion will be adopted by the Council after consultation with the Commission and the two sides of industry. The Standing Committee on Employment and the Economic Policy Committee could carry out in depth studies on certain topics in preparation for the Conference. The Commission will on its own initiative draw up a working document based on the topic chosen by the Council for the Conference.
2. The Commission will also draw up preliminary draft conclusions which will be submitted to the other parties present at the Conference. The Council (or, where appropriate, representatives of the Governments of the Member States) and the two sides of industry will adopt their respective positions and inform the Chairman, who in liaison with the Commission, will draw up a proposal for conclusions for submission to the Tripartite Conference.
3. At the Conference, when each of the parties involved (i.e. the Council, the Commission and the two sides of industry) has informed the meeting of its views on the draft conclusions, the Chairman will examine, with the representatives of each party, any amendments which should, in the light of discussions, be made to the conclusions which he submitted to the Conference. The final wording of the conclusions will be adopted by the Conference. Where necessary, it will be accompanied by comments by the participants.
4. Each party should contribute to implementing the conclusions thus adopted in accordance with its own structures and spheres of responsibility.

5. The Commission will make proposals or suggestions which it considers appropriate for the implementation of these conclusions.
Depending on their nature, these proposals or suggestions could be transmitted to the Community Institutions or discussion and consultation bodies, or to the organizations of the two sides of industry.
6. Reports could be drawn up by the parties concerned on the fulfilment of the commitments made, to be examined, as appropriate, by the Economic Policy Committee and the Standing Committee on Employment, or possibly at the following Tripartite Conference.