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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE ITF

INTERNATIONAL

ITF holds first Madrid Congress

Over six hundred and fifty delegates representing transport workers' unions from sixty-three countries have just returned home after attending the ITF's 34th Congress held from 20 to 28 October in the Palacio de Exposiciones y Congresos in Madrid. Also present were a number of invited guests and observers, including former ITF President Roger Dekeyzer and General Secretary Charles Blyth, as well as many delegates' wives.

This was the first time that the ITF has organised a Congress in Spain, the decision to accept the invitation to come to Madrid being taken in a spirit of solidarity with the two Spanish affiliates of the ITF which are both now able to operate without curbs on their freedom after the long and difficult years of the Franco dictatorship.

E Tierno Galván, the city's lord mayor, was the first to welcome Congress to Madrid at the opening session on 20 October. He praised the sacrifices made by the Spanish workers' movement which was actively cooperating with the government in its efforts to bring about full democracy in Spain; the presence of such a large international gathering of trade unionists here in Madrid would, he said, help spur these endeavours.

The welcome election of a Socialist government in last October's elections in Spain meant that the opening session of Congress was also honoured by the presence of two leading ministers - J Almunia Amán, Minister of Labour, and E Barón Crespo, Minister of Transport, who addressed the assembled delegates. The ministers said they were anxious to involve the trade unions more closely in the decision-making processes of government, particularly in the area of transport where many key policy decisions would shortly be taken.

J M Unanue of the ELA-STV Transport Federation, in his address of welcome from the workers in Spain's Basque country, spoke of the need to strengthen the trade union movement if we were to tackle the problems arising from the current economic crisis; too many governments, he said, were making the workers bear the brunt of policies that were geared solely to the needs of capital.

On behalf of the members of the other host union, the Transport Workers' Federation of UGT, V Sánchez M and N Redondo U said they hoped delegates would enjoy their stay in the capital. They spoke of the high esteem in which the ITF was held in Spain as a result of its continuing support of the trade unions, throughout the long years when the movement had been forced to operate clandestinely and in the greatly more favourable political climate of today. Although the Spanish unions were thankfully now free, unions in many other parts of the world faced tremendous pressures and were in great need of our support.

The importance of international worker solidarity in the face of the growing challenges of the 1980s was the keynote of the Presidential Address given by Fritz Prechtl at the close of the opening session. The President also issued an urgent appeal to the superpowers to end the arms race and in accordance with his wishes a message to this effect was conveyed to the Geneva arms control talks from Congress.

One of the highlights of Congress was without doubt the address given on 27 October by the Spanish Prime Minister Felipe González, who found time in a busy schedule to address Congress. In his speech, which received a standing ovation from delegates, González appealed to the international movement to devote its attention to the problem of securing peace in the world. It was also important, he said, that we should not lose our sensitivity to the daily problems of hunger and repression faced by workers in many areas of the world who were in desperate need of international support. He knew ITF affiliates would not fail their fellow trade unionists in the third world, as they had not failed the trade unions in Spain in past decades.

The hallmark of any ITF Congress is its full programme of plenary sessions and conferences of its industrial sections and the eight days of meetings in Madrid were busy indeed. The agenda proved, if anything, even more voluminous than usual and a record number of resolutions - 37 in all - was adopted after thorough discussion and another 12 referred to the Executive Board for further examination.

The decisions taken at this 34th Congress reflected the ITF's growing anxiety - already expressed in Miami - at the effects on the livelihoods of transport workers of the policies being pursued by many governments and the attitude of employers in the face of the current world economic crisis. A motion, adopted unanimously, expressed grave concern at the continuing high levels of unemployment in the majority of member countries of the ITF and went on to call for a concerted ITF campaign to persuade employers and governments of the need to take measures to create more jobs, notably by lowering the age of retirement and eliminating overtime working and reducing hours of work.

Other motions of a more general character dealt with in the full sessions of Congress called for steps to be taken to reduce marine pollution and for affiliates to refuse to handle or transport nuclear waste destined for dumping at sea. In the area of women's affairs, a resolution was also adopted advocating the increased participation of women transport workers in the training and education programmes run by the trade unions.

Two motions on matters of topical interest were introduced under the emergency procedures. The first endorsed the action taken by the ITF and its affiliates against Aeroflot aircraft in the wake of the shooting-down of the Korean Air Lines passenger jet and went on to urge the ITF to apply all possible pressure to ensure that ICAO took the appropriate action to prevent a recurrence of this tragic incident. The second, on the continuing strike against Continental Airlines in the United States, pledged support for Continental's workers in their struggle against the anti-union

tactics of the company and sought to alert other affiliates to the dangers inherent in allowing companies to use bankruptcy legislation as a means of destroying the unions and the wages and conditions won by them over many years.

Most of the resolutions, however, adopted by Congress came from the industrial sections and reflected the need to protect the existing conditions of transport workers and to devise new instruments to extend those areas that are currently the subject of international regulation. Typical of these were resolutions emanating from the inland transport sections of the ITF opposing the privatisation of the railways and the deregulation of the road transport industry; drawing attention to the hazards involved in the transport of dangerous goods by road; calling for new ILO Conventions setting minimum standards for road haulage drivers; advocating the harmonization of health and safety provisions for workers in inland navigation; urging an expansion of ILO activities in the port industry and the revision of ILO Convention no 137 to more clearly define the terms "dockwork" and "dock worker".

The early ratification of the International Convention on the Law of the Sea was supported by delegates attending the conferences of the fishermen and seafarers, while the latter meeting - in addition to adopting (after amendment) new scales for safe manning of vessels referred to it by its Manning Committee - also lent its support to resolutions which, inter alia, demanded the inclusion of electricians in ships' manning scales; advocated the increased use of marine pilots on vessels sailing in Baltic waters; and called for tighter enforcement of ILO Convention no 147 on Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards).

A detailed review of the flag of convenience campaign was the main item on the agenda of the joint conference of the dockers and seafarers which adopted new policy guidelines to enable it more effectively to conduct the campaign in the future, while in the civil aviation section conference the working environment of cabin staff formed the background to two resolutions calling on the ITF to intensify its activities in this area and instructing the Secretariat to conduct an investigation into the incidence of certain illnesses among cabin staff.

In response to the wishes of a number of delegates speaking during the customary debate on the report on the activities of the ITF over the past three years, Congress also adopted a statement on South Africa condemning the continued flouting of internationally accepted labour practices in the Republic and pledging support for the transport workers in their efforts to win the right to be represented by democratic unions of their own choosing. The statement further condemned the continued implementation and refinement of the apartheid system as evidenced in the latest amendments to the South African Constitution. There could be no true trade union rights in such a climate of political repression, it stated, and the ITF would therefore continue to support the struggle of South Africa's workers for majority rule in an undivided, non-racial South Africa.

Congress also authorised two important changes to the ITF Constitution: an additional seat on the Executive Board for the Asia/Pacific Region and an increase in the number of ITF Vice-Presidents from

three to four. In accordance with this latter amendment, the President and Vice-Presidents must each come from a different regional electoral group, thus ensuring that all the electoral groups are represented at the highest levels within the Federation.

On the final day of Congress, Fritz Prechtl of the Austrian Railwaymen's Union was unanimously re-elected President by acclamation and received a standing ovation from the assembled delegates. Harold Lewis was also re-elected General Secretary, this too being the united wish of Congress.

As Vice-Presidents for the next three years, Congress elected, again unanimously, D Oyeyemi (Africa - Nigeria Union of Railwaymen); R M Perez (Latin America - National Federation of Road Haulage Workers, Argentina); H Muto (Asia/Pacific - Japan National Railway Workers' Union); and T W Gleason Sr (North America - US International Longshoremen's Association).

The ITF also has a new Lay Auditor. Brothers Mill and Kitson were re-elected to the position, but Brother Kiely (USDAW), to whom thanks are due for his long service in this capacity, has now retired and his place is taken by G Martin (also of USDAW).

Unfortunately, Congress also had to bid farewell to a number of old and trusted friends, whose counsel will be sadly missed. Five of these, all recently retired after long and distinguished union careers, were awarded the ITF's highest honour, its Gold Badge, in recognition of the major contribution they have made to the work of the Federation over many years. They were: Charles Fitzgibbon (Australia), Chairman of the ITF Dockers' Section and Co-Chairman of the ITF Fair Practices Committee since 1974 and an Executive Board member since 1977; Bill McGregor (Canada), an Executive Board member since 1971; Ben Kok (Netherlands), an Executive Board member for the past three-and-a-half years and a leading figure in the ITF Civil Aviation Section; Peet Mol (also of the Netherlands), Chairman of the ITF Inland Navigation Section since 1974; and Don Nicholson (Canada), a Board member and a member of the ITF Fair Practices Committee for the past six years.

A warm tribute was paid by the President to outgoing ITF Vice-President Siegfried Merten who had served the ITF well during his period of office. Fortunately, his services remain available to us as he will continue to hold his seat on the Board. The President went on to express his thanks to the following outgoing Executive Board members: E Vanegas B (Colombia), also an outgoing ITF Vice-President; E Baudet (Belgium); J Grönberg (Sweden); H C Bang (Korea); M Morikage (Japan); D C Fanuele (Argentina); and S Weighell (Great Britain).

The present composition of the Board is as follows:

Europe and Middle East: F Prechtl* (Austria); P Potoms (Belgium); Y Lequoy (France); E Haar (Germany); S Merten (Germany); A M Evans* (Great Britain); J Knapp* (Great Britain); L Mancini (Italy); A D Drenth (Netherlands); H Aasarød* (Norway); V Sanchez M (Spain); A Karlsson (Sweden).

Africa: D Oyeyemi^x (Nigeria); A J Mhungu (Zimbabwe).

Asia/Pacific: H Muto^x (Japan); Lim Boon Heng (Singapore); L Barnes^x (India); T I Bull (Australia).

Latin America and the Caribbean: R M Perez^x (Argentina); R Comacho (Bolivia); M Sant'anna (Brazil).

North America: J Hunter (Canada); R C Smith (Canada); T W Gleason Sr^x (USA); J F Otero (USA); J F Peterpaul^x (USA).

It now only remains for us to express our gratitude to our Spanish hosts for the hospitality extended to delegates throughout our stay in Madrid and for their assistance in helping Congress run smoothly. On behalf of all present at Congress, our most grateful thanks to all concerned.

EUROPE

ITF celebrates Urban Transport Day

The hard work and careful advance planning put in by members of our road and rail affiliates in Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Luxembourg, and Switzerland made the ITF's first Urban Transport Day - celebrated simultaneously in these countries on 28 September - a day to remember.

The aim of the Day was to draw public attention to the threats to the urban transport services they use every day and to attract others back from private to public transport in the interests of reduced road congestion, increased safety and a better quality of life for all city dwellers. It was hoped in this way to win support and understanding for ITF efforts to persuade governments and political decision-takers that they should preserve and expand urban passenger services which the ITF sees as a social necessity, to be supported by increased subsidies and financing and not subjected to the public spending axe or sacrificed on the altar of privatisation.

This was achieved by a vigorous publicity campaign, with adverts placed in national newspapers and the trade union press; thousands of leaflets printed on union presses; badges and stickers produced for distribution to the travelling public, public transport employees and union members; and slogans devised to get the message across (in Britain, the slogan was You'll miss the bus - if you don't support it, in Luxembourg, You're better off travelling by bus or rail).

These efforts were aided by a five point Memorandum submitted by affiliates to governments calling for priority treatment for public urban passenger transport over the private motorist; public financing instead of one-sided demands for viability; attractive

^x denotes member of Management Committee

and social fares; improved transport services for schoolchildren, commuters and the elderly, and for leisure and recreation purposes; and greater job security and improved working conditions for public transport employees.

Special events took place in towns and cities in all six countries ranging from bus-top rallies and bus cavalcades (Great Britain); flag-bedecked buses and trams and TV appearances by trade union leaders (Switzerland); an information kiosk (Luxembourg) set up in the capital on the occasion of the large street market held in connection with the traditional harvest celebrations; and a central rally in Frankfurt, at which ITF Assistant General Secretary Johann Hauf put forward the ITF's case for additional support for public urban passenger transport, assisted by speakers from our two German urban transport affiliates.

The success of the Day was evaluated at the Conferences of the Road and Railwaymen's Sections held in conjunction with our recent Congress and as a result of these deliberations it was decided to nominate an Urban Transport Committee to help coordinate further joint action in this area.

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL NEWS

INTERNATIONAL

Blacking threat by Australian aviation unions results in Continental Airlines offer to resume negotiations with IAM

On 17 November, our US affiliate, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW) informed us that it had been approached by Continental Airlines with an offer to resume negotiations on its current contract dispute with the company, and that a resumption of bargaining was therefore anticipated.

The background to the offer, made by the company's Vice-President (Personnel), is as follows:

Earlier in the month, airline industry unions belonging to the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) had decided unanimously to impose an indefinite ban on all handling, servicing, fuelling and catering of Continental aircraft in Australia, starting at midnight on 10 November. The ban decision was taken in response to requests from the ITF, the IAMAW and the US national centre, AFL-CIO for support for United States unions in their strikes against Continental. It will be recalled that our own affiliate's members have been on strike against the company since 13 August. Two other non-affiliated organizations, the Air Line Pilots' Association (ALPA) and the Union of Flight Attendants (UFA), took strike action after Continental suspended its domestic operations,



filed for bankruptcy and then immediately re-organized its operations, repudiating existing agreements, employing non-union labour and cutting salaries, wages and conditions (for further details see Newsletter Nos 9-10 of September/October).

The 10 November ban threat was in fact the second time that Australian aviation unions had been prepared to take action in support of their US colleagues. The first occasion was on 11 October, when ACTU organized a highly effective 72-hour total ban on handling Continental aircraft at the request of the ITF and the IAMAW.

However, before the second ban could be put into effect, representatives of Continental management met with ACTU officials and agreed "to re-commence meaningful discussions" with the US airline unions concerned aimed at resolving the dispute. Pending the outcome of this promise, the Australian aviation unions agreed not to proceed with their ban for the time being.

Although there then followed a period of uncertainty as to whether Continental would stick to its undertaking or was simply trying to buy time, the information now received from the IAMAW clearly indicates that it anticipates that a new round of bargaining will in fact take place.

When the ITF Congress met in Madrid, it unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the use of bankruptcy laws for anti-union activity, drawing particular attention to the dispute between Continental and US aviation unions. The Congress pledged "its complete support to the airline unions in the United States who are at present engaged in fighting against this practice, recognizing that if they do not win their battle then unions in other countries may find themselves in turn threatened by similar tactics". The Congress resolution also drew attention to the actions of Continental Airlines as being yet another example of the damaging effects of deregulation in the aviation industry.

The 10 November blacking threatened by Australian unions also had its origins in talks held during the Madrid Congress.

BELGIUM

Early pension scheme introduced for Sabena workers

Robert Geldof of the ITF-affiliated Belgian Metal Workers' Union has recently informed the Secretariat of the early retirement scheme operated by the national carrier Sabena. We reproduce below details of the scheme as we believe they would be of interest to readers of the Newsletter.

Union consent has been obtained for the scheme under which men are now compulsorily retired at age 57 and women at 53. (Previously, employees were able to take voluntary early retirement at age 57.) A total of 1,400 former Sabena employees are now on early pension - a situation the union views as being preferable to the upwards of a thousand compulsory redundancies that would otherwise have been

forced on the company's workers and that would have hit ground staff organised in the Metal Workers' Union particularly hard.

Serving employees pay a contribution of 2% of pay and allowances to help finance the scheme, which protects the level of earnings even after retirement. The majority of those retiring early have over 20 years' service and as a result have found that their net income remains the same, as can be seen from the following example:

Employee aged 57, with 20 years' service, earning a final salary of 55,000 francs gross per month

Final net salary after deductions = 36,200 francs

On pre-pension, he is entitled to:-

26,700 francs per month from social security, plus a payment from Sabena of 20 x 1% of final gross salary = 11,000 francs

Total entitlement = 26,700 + 11,000 = 37,700 francs (reduced to 36,200 francs in order that he should not receive more than he was when last earning).

The pre-pension years are treated as working years for the purpose of calculating the old-age pension and Sabena continues to pay contributions to the state scheme on behalf of its former employees until they reach pensionable age.

GERMANY

3% pay increase for dock workers

The ITF-affiliated German Transport and Public Service Workers' Union (ÖTV) has just signed a new one-year agreement on behalf of the country's dock workers. This provides a 3 per cent hourly rate increase, effective 1 October for first shift and from 1 January 1984 for second and third shift workers. Negotiations on a new basic agreement will take place in the new year, to be followed by efforts to conclude an agreement giving workers job protection when computerised information systems are introduced in the dock industry.

GREECE

Promises made to ITF representatives on early solution to Greek cabin crew dispute not kept

Since our last Newsletter, the situation in the above dispute has worsened dramatically due in part to the failure of the Greek Minister of Labour to fulfil undertakings given to the Chairman of the ITF Cabin Crew Technical Committee, Eddie McDermott, when he visited Athens in August in an attempt to help bring about a quick and peaceful settlement, and in part to the intransigence of Olympic Airways.

Central to the conflict was a long-standing claim by our affiliate, the Greek Hostesses' and Stewards' Union (EISF), for promised improvements in their pension arrangements. When Bro McDermott was in Athens, he was assured by the Minister of Labour that there would be no problem in settling this issue quickly, given the fact that the Chairman of Olympic Airways had already agreed to fund the pension improvements and had the support of the Minister of Aviation for them. The Labour Minister also agreed to intervene personally in the dispute (he is the supreme arbiter in labour conflicts) to this end.

A further undertaking, which has now become the major issue in the current situation, was that no disciplinary action would be taken against seven Olympic cabin crew members who had refused to take a flight from Athens to Heraklion during the evening of 3 August. If they had done this, they would have exceeded their maximum flight duty time. Heraklion is not a night-stop; no stand-by crew was available at Athens. In addition, the original aircraft which the crew took out had to return to Athens due to malfunction and be replaced, causing considerable delay, and the same crew had already taken a flight from Athens to Salonika and back.

None of these undertakings was in fact kept, and the issues in dispute were simply submitted to mandatory mediation, with the courts finding against the EISF on all of them. As a result of this situation, a further ITF mission went to Athens during the period of 5 to 8 November, consisting of the Vice-Chairman of the ITF Civil Aviation Section, Hans-Bernhardt Beyertt, together with a German lawyer.

He also met with the Minister of Labour and reminded the latter of his earlier promises. At first the latter denied these, but when shown a letter written by Bro McDermott following his visit, setting out the points of agreement, agreed that they were correct. He then went on to claim that he would support the proposed pension improvements; that the disciplinary measures against the seven cabin crew had already been withdrawn; and that he would write to the Minister of Transport (who had refused to meet Bro Beyertt) concerning another issue in dispute, namely the claim by our affiliate that 200 additional seasonal cabin crew had been recruited by Olympic without following the proper legal and other procedures.

Bro Beyertt also had a meeting with Capt Kanellopoulos, Director-General of Olympic Airways, but found him to be completely uncooperative, claiming that the EISF was wrong on every issue in dispute and insisting that the 200 extra cabin crew had been properly recruited.

Since Bro Beyertt's return from Athens, Olympic has taken a further step towards escalation of the dispute by setting a disciplinary hearing against the seven cabin crew members already referred to above for 22 November. The disciplinary court is heavily weighted against the EISF, which has only one vote compared to the company's four, and the most likely outcome is that the cabin crew members will be dismissed. The ITF has sent a strong protest to Olympic against its action, as well as to the Minister of Labour, reminding him of the promises which he made on two separate occasions to ITF representatives that the disciplinary measures would be withdrawn.

The EISF has also informed us of a resolution unanimously adopted at a conference of the Federation of Greek Aviation Unions (OSPA) held on 18 November by 100 representatives of the 9,000 Olympic Airways employees. The resolution condemns the company for taking the seven EISF members to the disciplinary court for following their working regulations and refusing to violate them. It describes this as being aimed at terrorizing Olympic employees. It also condemns the company for hiring seasonal cabin crew without following the legal procedures, as well as agreements between it and OSPA providing that representatives of both OSPA and the EISF should participate in the hiring process. Finally it calls upon the company to stop immediately all unlawful and anti-labour acts and to begin talks on a solution to the problems set out in the resolution. If that is not done, OSPA pledges itself to take any kind of measure or industrial action necessary to their solution.

NETHERLANDS

Public service workers protest over threatened pay cuts

Public service workers in Holland - spearheaded by the railwaymen in an action that was later joined by city and provincial bus crews - staged a series of strikes and go-slows in the latter half of October in protest at government plans to cut public sector pay from 1 January next. Talks between the unions and the governments were resumed on 2 November, but these failed to produce an acceptable compromise and the protests were stepped up.

NORWAY

Engineers on trawlers and factory ships win higher pay

Revised pay agreements giving ships' engineers working on trawlers and factory ships a 6.8% pay rise (subject to a minimum increase of 200 kr) have been concluded by the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Ships' Engineers' Union. The new rates are backdated to 1 March 1983.

Other improvements negotiated as part of the factory ships agreement include: victualling allowance - daily rate raised from 29 to 45 kr; and increased accident and life insurance cover. In the event fish remains unsold two months after a voyage ends, engineers on factory ships will be entitled to a payment of 3/4 of the anticipated share of the catch.

SPAIN

Unions voice criticisms of Iberia management

All the unions with members employed by the Spanish national airline Iberia have joined forces - the first time they have ever done so - in an effort to devise an alternative strategy for dealing with the company's mounting losses. This reaction was

prompted by a recent announcement from Iberia that it was planning to cut salaries and freeze staff numbers at existing levels - an announcement that angered the unions not least because they had not been informed of the plans or given an opportunity to discuss them in advance of their being made public.

The unions are highly critical of the management of Iberia and accuse it of having failed to heed the misgivings they have voiced repeatedly over the past few years. As examples of the unsound management of the company's financial affairs they quote: routes operated for political reasons that are not economically viable; maintenance work carried out for other airline companies at very low cost; and failure to take effective fuel-saving measures. The unions point out that staff costs have fallen each year as a percentage of total costs since the late 1970s and that staff levels have remained virtually unchanged, leading to an increase in overtime working which costs Iberia 1,000 million pesetas in the last financial year.

Iberia's workers say they would be prepared to accept limited and selective pay cuts only if the company were to undertake reforms in certain areas. Their demands include: the adoption of a rational policy for purchasing and maintaining equipment; the democratisation of labour relations, including the introduction of co-determination; and an independent audit of Iberia's books. A UGT spokesman said that staff pay cuts were "irresponsible" unless preceded by efforts to come to grips with the company's serious structural problems.

SWEDEN

Pay improvements for engineer officers in overseas trade

The ITF-affiliated Swedish Engineer Officers' Union (SMBF) signed a new pay agreement in the summer for its members in the overseas trade. Under the agreement, which runs from 1 January 1983 to 31 May 1985, rates of pay were increased by 8.65% with effect from 1 June 1983 and will be further increased by 3.15% on the same date next year. A lump-sum payment of 3.65% of pay and allowances has also been paid in lieu of retroactivity for the first five months of 1983.

Engineer officers earning over 10,800 kr per month are excluded from these pay rises. An appropriate adjustment will be made in their rates of pay following further negotiations between the union and the shipowners' association.

Pay rises for SAS flight engineers and ground staff

The ITF-affiliated Swedish Transport Workers' Union informs us that it has recently negotiated a pay rise of 450 kr per month plus a 1,750 kr lump-sum payment for its ground staff members employed by SAS, while union-organised flight engineers benefit from a 7% increase under an agreement which expires in February 1984.

UNITED STATES

Eastern Airlines settlement averts threatened strike

The ITF-affiliated Transport Workers' Union of America reached a contract settlement with Eastern Airlines last month, shortly before a threatened strike of the company's flight attendants was due to take effect. The agreement provides for the following increases: 13% backdated to 1 January 1983, 3% from 1 November 1983, followed by 6% from 1 January 1984. The union has also obtained assurances from Eastern that any new South American routes would be crewed by US flight attendants, and the airline has also agreed to cancel the variable earnings contribution and to pay the money back to the flight attendants by 1986 with ten per cent interest.

The contract is subject to ratification by the union membership.

ADDENDUM

Belgian public sector workers' strike (page 82 of last issue)

Brother Potums, General Secretary of the Railwaymen's Section of the Belgian Public Service Workers' Union (CGSP) has asked us to point out that although it agreed its members should return to work on 24 September the CGSP did not in fact sign any compromise agreement.

In the English edition, due to a typing error, the railwaymen were not included in the list of public service workers taking action in defence of their conditions. We trust that our Belgian colleagues will also have understanding for this oversight.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Argentinian workers staged a 24-hour general strike on 4 October to demand immediate pay rises to counter the worst effects of the country's crippling rate of inflation. Transport workers played a key rôle in the national stoppage.

Great Britain: the London Transport bus and Tube Travelcard will be extended to British Rail's Greater London commuter services from next June, marking a further step in the integration of London's public transport services.

Negotiators from the ITF-affiliated British National Union of Seamen have rejected the owners' improved offer of a 5.1% increase on basic rates for 1984. NUS members will now be balloted on the offer, with selective strike action the probable outcome if it is turned down.

Overseas trade ratings belonging to the ITF-affiliated Norwegian Seamen's Union have been awarded a 3.8% pay increase from 1 November 1983.

The Peruvian Confederation of Labour called a 24-hour strike in late September to press wage demands.

Members of the Railway Workers' Union of Zambia are currently on strike following the unsatisfactory outcome of pay negotiations with the management of the state-owned railway company.

PERSONALIA

Vernon Hince has been elected an Assistant General Secretary of the British National Union of Railwaymen following the recent retirement of Russell Tuck. Hince has been a full-time official of the NUR since 1975, most recently as its London Transport Divisional Officer.

Hisashi Muto was elected President of the Japanese National Railway Workers' Union (KOKURO) at the union's recent annual Convention.

Norman Docker has been elected General Secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia in succession to C H Fitzgibbon, who retired earlier this year from his union post. Tas I Bull replaces Docker as WWF Assistant General Secretary. Brother Bull was elected to the vice-chairmanship of the ITF Dockers' Section at our Madrid Congress last month.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

ITF Flight Operations Officers'/Flight Dispatchers' Working Group - London 18 January 1984