



Australia Asia Worker Links

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Stop the Race to the Bottom

27 November 2007

Report on the labour movement program of the
International Solidarity Forum (ISF)
held from 8 to 14 October in Melbourne Australia

This report was prepared from meetings and discussions held during ISF:

Solidarity visit to Morwell unions and workplaces on Monday 8 October

Solidarity visit to Melbourne unions and workplaces on Tuesday 9 October

Migrant Workers Organising workshop - held on Thursday 11 October

Meeting with VTHC Executive - held on Friday 12 October

Workers Struggle, Global Fight - ISF Plenary held on Friday 12 October

International Industrial Action & Solidarity - workshop held on Friday 12 October

Indigenous Struggle & Resistance - ISF Plenary held on Saturday 13 October

Stop the Race to the Bottom - workshop held on Saturday 13 October

AAWL Evaluation - workshop held on Sunday 14 October 2007

*“Workers in each industry in different countries
have much more in common with each other
than with employers in their own country”*

(Comment at AAWL Evaluation workshop)

Solidarity

We came and met together from many different countries.

We came because we are some of those who have to struggle.

We have to fight the capitalists. We have to fight and win.

To fight we need to meet, and talk about our problems.
The ways we get defeated, the ways in which we are winning.

We have to talk together about our common struggle:
The issues that unite us, and where we don't agree.
We need to make a plan that is a clear way forward.

The world is really ours. But capitalists have stolen it.

They steal the land, they steal the sea.
They steal the deserts and the forests. They even ruin the climate.
They steal resources, and the products of our work.
They steal our time, our health, our money and our lives.
They steal our freedom and our rights.
They steal our families and cultures.
They steal our dreams and smiles.
They steal our houses, our factories, our villages and cities.
They smash whole countries. They stop the chance of peace.
They steal the future from all children.

We have to stop this plunder.

Today we talked together. Today is a step forward.
Today we said together: United we can win.

We send our message out to comrades who are far, to say we'll talk again:
We will build our plans - to win the biggest struggle.
We send out our commitment to stand with you again.

Another world is possible. Another world is ready.

Together we will win.

*Motion carried at Closing Plenary
Latin America & Asia Pacific International Solidarity Forum - Melbourne Australia
14 October 2007*

International Solidarity Forum 07

This year AAWL organised its annual Open Day activities within the International Solidarity Forum. The ISF was officially opened by Brian Boyd, Secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC). In his welcome to the delegates, Brian remarked that it was significant that the meeting was taking place in Trades Hall in Melbourne, within sight of the 8 Hour Day Monument. Trades Hall in Melbourne has been one of the cradles of the organised genuine workers movement, and today it continues to stand on the front line of the struggle for workers' rights and justice, in Melbourne, Australia, the Asia Pacific region, and globally.

Brian Boyd asked the ISF to have a serious meeting, and to developed significant proposals for the union movement in Melbourne and internationally, to address some of the critical social and industrial issues that face workers across all countries.

ISF 07 was very successful, and we brought together over 30 international activists and trade unionists, and upwards of 500 Australian activists and trade unionists participated in different meetings and events. All meetings and discussions were very fruitful and reports from all international guests have been extremely positive.

The Labour Movement Program at ISF 07

It is important to note that this international meeting happened and was successful largely thanks to the support of the Victorian Trades Hall Council, the VTHC Health Safety Unit and the Australian unions that are AAWL affiliates. It is thanks to their continuing support for international solidarity activities for many years that ISF 07 and this report was made possible.

The labour movement program developed by AAWL at ISF 07 was the culmination of three years of discussions organised by AAWL on the labour movement demand to Stop the Race to the Bottom. These discussions have been extremely fruitful and valuable.

While many international meetings have been held in many countries, this is the first time in a long time that genuine labour movement organisations conducted such a comprehensive set of discussions on our response to the worldwide capitalist offensive against workers' rights and living standards.

AAWL will continue to develop projects, campaigns, education materials and solidarity visits focusing on the demand to stop the global race to the bottom in workers' wages and conditions.

We have developed a proposal to begin dealing with our problems globally. We know that this report is just an initial step. But we hope and expect that with the support and active participation of genuine unions, our future steps will be very important and valuable for all workers in the Asian Pacific region and globally.

A Global Labour Movement Charter

AAWL will support the development of a global labour movement charter that includes demands for:

1. The right to organise as a union and take collective action including industrial action and participate in solidarity actions
2. The right to work that is without risk to health or safety, including the right to organise for the prevention of accidents and diseases, for workers' rights to compensation and rehabilitation
3. A global minimum wage for each industry, based on purchasing power
4. A set of minimum conditions that define decent work, including appropriate hours of work and paid vacation
5. Permanent residence with full employment rights and the right to organise, for all refugees and all migrant workers in all countries
6. Full rights for women workers

We acknowledge that the main concepts of this charter have come from different organisations and meetings of the labour movement, in India, in China Hong Kong and in Australia. We thank our comrades for their exemplary work, and we hope that this charter will continue to be developed through discussions with genuine unions and genuine labour movement organisations in the region and globally.

Australia Asia Worker Links - 27 November 2007, Melbourne Australia



Report endorsed by AAWL Executive - 27 November 2007



Report endorsed by VTHC Executive - 7 December 2007