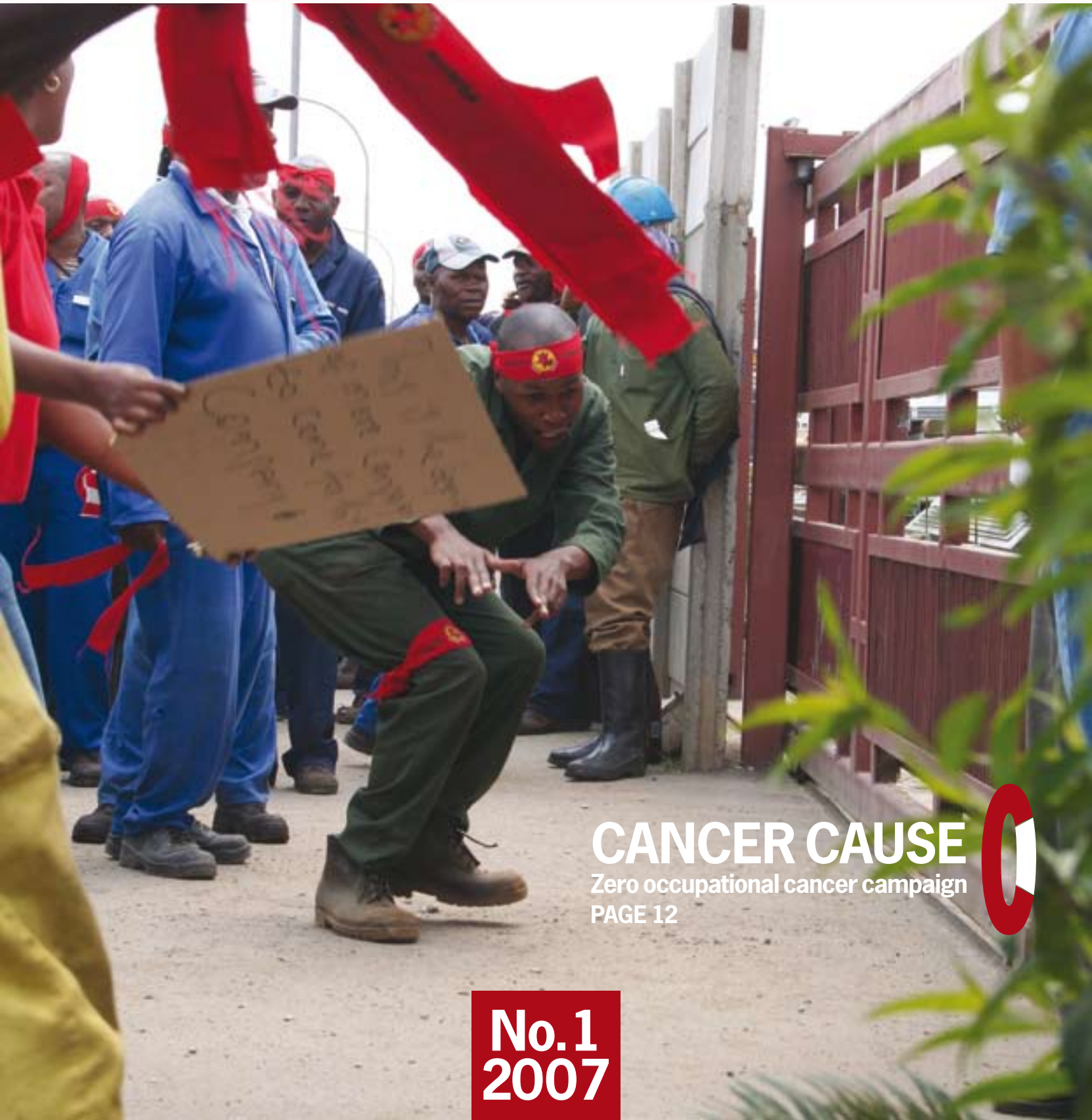


METAL WORLD



THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL METALWORKERS' FEDERATION



CANCER CAUSE

Zero occupational cancer campaign

PAGE 12



**No.1
2007**

Silent killers

One of the first demands formulated by trade unions when defending workers' rights was for decent and safe working environments.

Daily exposure to dust, fumes, long working hours, extremely heavy workloads and noise were just some of the causes of health problems that affected workers and their families.

Industrial workers paid a very high price for the development of modern society.

Progress has been made in terms of preventing accidents at work. In industrialized countries the number of people killed by accidents at work has declined.

However, in countries with a very high level of economic growth, such as China, India and Brazil, the number of accidents, both fatal and non-fatal, is very high.

Many more workers and families of workers are suffering from exposure to silent killers that affect the health of people in the long-term. This applies to both industrialized and developing economies.

Solvents, chemical products, minerals and pesticides can cause diseases 10, 20 or 30 years after the actual exposure.

Results of long and intensive research in many countries have showed that individual substances can cause cancer, allergies and genetic disorders.

Asbestos, benzene, heavy metals such as mercury, lead, chromium, and radioactive materials are just a few of the substances we know to be very dangerous and they should be banned totally or used with particular precaution to protect workers and the environment.

Scientists have worked for decades to find out how harmful a chemical substance is for the health of workers or people in general.

Based on this research, authorities such as OSHA in the U.S. and equivalent agencies in other countries or the International Labour Organisation at the international level have discussed official exposure limits that should not be exceeded to protect against the risks of exposure.

The problem with these exposure limits is that the combined effects of exposure to two or more substances at the same time are not taken into consideration.

For example, if a worker is exposed to benzene and the fumes coming from a blast furnace that contains zinc - even if both substances are under the limit - what are the risks and long-term consequences on the workers' health?

Research to find out the combined effect of different substances even when used at lower levels than established by the official exposure limits, must be done.

This is one of the demands that trade unions at different levels have been making for decades.

How many people are affected? Nobody really knows.

However, we do know that millions of people are exposed to harmful substances all over the globe and we also know that millions of people die of cancer and other diseases each year. I don't think we need to be super intelligent to understand the relation between exposure and effects.

We need to look around us in every workplace and count how many of our workmates are suffering from health problems and ask the company to investigate the reasons. Our experience in many countries tells us that if some or many of our workmates are suffering from the same kind of symptoms, the reason is likely to be found at work and not elsewhere.

Cancer is a serious business and we all should cooperate to eliminate the causes by protecting workers and people in general from exposure to harmful substances. We think this is not only possible but also necessary and indispensable.

On April 28 we all should get together to voice our common demand to make our workplaces safer.



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CONTENTS

Vol. 8 • No. 1 • March 2007



IMF NEWS

Benefits cut in Sweden

On January 1, 2007, Swedish parliament approved plans to raise premiums for unemployment insurance, while decreasing payouts to the jobless. Thousands of workers demonstrated in Stockholm on December 14 against the new conservative government's proposal.

5

Workplace Detective

If you think wearing your hard hat in the break room will give you all the answers about workplace cancer risks, you're wrong. Sadly, even in every 50 chemicals used at work has been experimentally tested.

Putting out a fire in a maintenance shop requires special equipment that means doing your own detective work. Others have been instrumental in this country in a number of workplace cancer cases. Some bladder cancer in dye workers is now cancer in vinyl chloride workers.

Remember, keep an ongoing portfolio. A good discussion at a union meeting might provide all the information you need. Just make sure you provide the workplace - they know their jobs, their work areas and the real hazards of the job.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Ask yourself: Has any part of the workplace got high levels of asbestos abatement? Are you aware of cases of cancer in workers or in workers' families? Are chemical workers all doing similar jobs or using the same substances, the same working in the factory, using tools or handling toxic chemicals? Check with other union reps and colleagues, especially those who have been at the firm for a long time in the industry for a long time.

FEATURE

Cancer Cause

Occupational cancer is the single largest cause of work-related deaths, but the risks have been down-played by governments, health and safety enforcement agencies and employers. Addressing the workplace cancer issue takes a combination of awareness raising and action in the workplace and company-wide.

12



SPOTLIGHT

Precarious Work

Precarious work is typically non-permanent, temporary, casual, insecure and contingent. Workers in these jobs are often not covered by labour law and social security protections. Taking action against precarious work is the focus of the IMF Central Committee. This spotlight poses key questions for affiliates on the issue.

18



PROFILE

Alessandra Mecozzi

Alessandra Mecozzi firmly believes in the importance of acting with others for democracy and social justice and against neo-liberalism and as international secretary of IMF Italian affiliate FIOM-CGIL, she has been an active participant in the World Social Forum process.

24

Zero Cancer

In recognition of International Workers' Memorial Day on April 28, this issue of Metal World features a report on occupational cancer - the biggest cause of work-related deaths. IMF, with the support of the other global unions, has prepared a trade union guide to preventing occupational cancer, which will be distributed to affiliates in the coming weeks and enclosed you will find a Zero Cancer poster aimed at raising awareness on identifying and addressing occupational cancer risks.

Three new IMF publications are reviewed on page 17, including the latest editions of the Auto Report and the international purchasing power survey. You can find copies of these and all IMF publications at: www.imfmetal.org/publications

This issue of Metal World also takes another look at precarious work in preparation for the Central Committee discussion in November.

Welcome to AMWU organisers in the state of Victoria who are receiving Metal World for the first time. This is a trial run in what I hope will become a broader program of supporting international solidarity by distributing Metal World to union organisers. If your union is interested in doing the same, please contact me.



ANITA GARDNER
Editor
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AFFILIATES' NEWS

James Hardie asbestos compensation secured

AUSTRALIA/NETHERLANDS James Hardie's first AUS\$184 million payment to the new Asbestos Injuries Compensation Fund in Australia arrived in February. The payment was made after 99.6 per cent of shareholders voted in support of a AUS\$4 billion (US\$3.1 billion) over 40 years asbestos compensation package at a shareholders meeting in the Netherlands.

James Hardie, which was Australia's largest manufacturer of asbestos products, established a Netherlands-based parent company that took AUS\$1.9 billion to the Netherlands to avoid its legal obligations in Australia.



Asbestos campaigner Bernie Banton (centre) celebrates
PHOTO: AMWU

The compensation deal was negotiated with the company by asbestos victims' groups, unions and the New South Wales state government and was the subject of an international campaign. **AG**

Numsa web wins honours

SOUTH AFRICA Numsa's website was chosen as one of the top ten Labour Websites of the Year 2007 in the annual online competition sponsored by LabourStart.

This year, out of 7,866 votes, The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa received 206 votes, earning its place in the top ten. Among the top ten websites, for the

first time, three were from the developing world and three from the UK. To check



out Numsa's website, go to: www.numsa.org.za **KP**

To check out the top websites of 2007, go to:
<http://www.labourstart.org/lwsoty/2007/results.shtml>

Union merger in Sweden

SWEDEN IMF affiliate Civilingenjörersförbundet, CF (Swedish Association of Graduate Engineers) and Ingenjörersförbundet have merged to form a new organisation on January 1, called Sveriges Ingenjörer (Swedish Association of Graduate Engineers). With roughly 120,000 members, the Swedish Association of Graduate

Engineers is the largest association within the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations.

More information is available at www.sverigesingenjorerer.se **AG**



AFFILIATES' NEWS

Call for better pensions in Russia

RUSSIA Trade union representatives met with Russian government officials in January demanding improvements to pension provisions. The meeting occurred after 300 unionists, including IMF affiliates organising workers in key industrial sectors, held a meeting in front of the Russian House of Government in Moscow calling for the protection of pensioners' rights. Speakers at the rally criticised the pension reform recently started in the country, which is severely reducing the living standards of Russian pensioners.

- Union demands included:
- setting the pension amount to at least 40 per cent of earned wages,
 - returning to the insurance-based system with workers' representatives involved in administering resources, and
 - increasing state control over the timely and full payment of employer contributions.

During negotiations with trade unions on January 31, Deputy Chairman Alexandre Zhukov promised that the Government would set the basic pension



IMF affiliates in Moscow, January 2007 PHOTO: MMWU

at the minimum subsistence level, adding that the Government is not ready to meet the unions' other demands. In response unions are preparing for massive protest action in April. **AI**

Benefits cut in Sweden

SWEDEN Thousands of workers demonstrated in Stockholm on December 14 against the new conservative government's plan to raise premiums for unemployment insurance, while decreasing payouts to the jobless. At his union's extraordinary congress held on the same day, IF Metall president, Stefan Löfven said to the 300 elected delegates present, "The reason we are gathered here is because of the conservative government's attack against our union members, against all trade union members, in fact all workers in Sweden."

Despite widespread public protest, the conservative government used its majority in parliament to approve the proposal, which came into effect on January 1, 2007, although the decrease in payouts will only take effect in March.

The Unemployment Insurance Funds in Sweden were originally established by the trade union movement. Workers got benefits by paying a fee to a fund as part of their trade union membership fee. The funds, however, were mainly financed by the state, and the government



Union demonstration in Stockholm PHOTO: IF Metall

wanted to make the scheme more "self-financing", and to break the link to the unions. **AG**

EU critical of Belarus

BRUSSELS In December, the EU Committee on Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) took the decision to temporarily withdraw trade benefits from Belarus because of the continuous violations of trade union rights by the Belarusian government.

In its report on trade policy and decent work, Peter Mandelson, EU

trade commissioner, addressed the EU member states asking them to back the EU Commission in its recommendations to end trade privileges for Belarus in response to flouted labour standards.

In the history of the EU, this is the first time the Commission cut trade preferences based on violations of labour rights. Belarus stands to lose around €400 million a year

if the new tariffs are imposed on its EU exports of wood, textiles and minerals.

The EU Commission started consideration of the case in 2005, based on the ILO's investigation into violations of trade union rights in Belarus, which resulted in a series of recommendations never fulfilled by the Belarusian government. **AI**

SOLIDARITY

IMF calls on Motorola to act

CHINA IMF urged Motorola International to take action regarding labour rights violations, including the poisoning of Chinese workers, at its supplier, Hivac Startech Film Window.

In August 2006, an investigative report put out by Students & Scholars Against Corporate Misbehaviour, SACOM, exposed gross workers' rights violations at the Hivac Startech factory in Shenzhen, China. Hivac Startech is a second-tier supplier to Motorola, producing acrylic mobile phone lenses for two of Motorola's mobile phones.

Among the violations, nine workers were poisoned with n-hexane as a result of the company's failure to provide a safe work environment.

SACOM, the IMF and other NGOs are urging Motorola to uphold its code of conduct and improve the conditions of its suppliers to prevent future violations of labour rights.

Motorola's response has been to cut orders, which has had a devastating effect on the workers, resulting in layoffs of almost half of its workforce.

"Moving from one supplier to another



Hivac Startech factory

PHOTO: SACOM

to avoid dealing with human and labour rights violations at the supplier level is in direct contradiction to what it means to have a code of conduct," Marcello Malentacchi, general secretary of the IMF said. **KP**

Palestinian union leader escapes attacks

PALESTINE Rasem Al Bayari, general secretary of the metalworkers' branch of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) and deputy general secretary of the PGFTU was the target of a brutal attack in January.

In the early morning hours of January 29, gunmen dispatched a missile on Al Bayari's house

destroying the doors and the entrance, but not damaging the area where his family was sleeping. It was reported that Al Bayari's residence in Gaza was bombed and shot at around 2am and again the following day at 2:30am. Prior to the attacks, death threats were made to Al Bayari and other union officials.

IMF sent a letter to Palestinian

Prime Minister, Mr. Ismail Haniya, calling on the Palestinian Authority to immediately investigate the savage attacks and ensure the protection of the PGFTU and its leaders.

In its communiqué on the attack, the PGFTU stated that the Israeli national trade union centre, the Histadrut Administrative, sent a letter to the PGFTU condemning the bombings. **KP**

Tristar workers fight IR laws

AUSTRALIA Tristar Steering and Suspension is attempting to use the new Australian industrial relations laws to save hundreds of thousands of dollars by keeping "redundant" workers on the payroll until the terms of the union agreement expire.

The workers and the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union have been fighting a public campaign against the company, so far forcing it to payout John Bevan, who was with the company for 43 years and died of cancer in January, leaving three dependent children.

Tristar's remaining 35 workers, who have been with the company for up to 45 years, continue on the payroll despite having had no work since June 2006. The collective agreement, which included four weeks of pay per year of service for forced redundancies, was terminated in February. The company was waiting for the terms of this agreement to expire so it would only be required to pay 12 weeks of wages to the redundant workers.

After months of pressure, the Office of Workplace Services, the Howard government's workplace relations

'watchdog', began proceedings against Tristar in the Federal Court in February over its refusal to offer redundancies to 26 of the workers. **AG**



Empty Tristar factory

PHOTO: AMWU

SOLIDARITY

Delegation meets Mexican Minister

MEXICO Meeting in Mexico City, an international delegation of the IMF, the United Steelworkers, and a representative from the AFL-CIO, met with Mexican Labour Minister, Javier Lozano Alarcón, to discuss the Pasta de Conchos crisis and the need to respect union autonomy in Mexico.

During the meeting, the delegation addressed three main issues:

- bringing in specialized recovery operations to assist in the ongoing effort to recover the 63 miners still buried in the Pasta de Conchos mine.
- allowing for an impartial investigation to be conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to examine what led to the explosion, adopt preventive measures to avoid future accidents and identify those responsible for the accident, and their prosecution.
- respect union autonomy and recognize Napoleón Gómez Urrutia as the democratically elected leader of the National Miners' and Metalworkers' Union (SNTMMSRM).

The minister assured the delegation he would go to all lengths to retrieve the bodies of those killed in the mine explosion and agreed to work with the ILO on an investigation and would encourage the company to comply as well. **KP**



IMF delegation meets Labour Minister

Metalworkers travel to Mexico to honour the dead

MEXICO An international delegation of the IMF, the United Steelworkers (USW), together with the AFL-CIO met with the Mexican miners' union (SNTMMSRM) on February 19 in Mexico to mark the one-year anniversary of the Pasta de Conchos explosion that left 65 miners dead.

Over 400 people crowded into a SNTMMSRM labour hall, near the Pasta de Conchos coal mine, which was guarded heavily with local and national security.

"Lucharemos de norte a sur y de este a oeste, cueste lo que cueste," men shouted shoulder-to-shoulder with fists raised in the air. "From North to South to East to West, we will fight no matter what the cost."

Members of the SNTMMSRM have been the target of repeated attacks by the Mexican government, including the illegal removal of their democratically elected general secretary, Napoleón Gómez Urrutia.

On February 19, 2006, methane gas caused an explosion in section 8 of the Pasta de Conchos mine. Since that day, union members and families of the miners killed have been calling on the company to recover the 63 bodies that remain missing and urge the government to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the blast.

For more information see www.imfmetal.org/mexico **KP**



Grieving family members



Miners meet at Pasta de Conchos, February 19, 2007

INDUSTRY NEWS

Airbus workers mobilise

EUROPE Airbus' restructuring announcement to cut 10,000 jobs has German, French, Spanish and UK metal unions ready for action.

On February 2, 10,000 IG Metal members protested in Hamburg, Bremen, Varel and Laubheim in an effort to secure their jobs and sites at Airbus.

Meanwhile, five French metal unions, released a public joint statement calling

on President Jacques Chirac to fight for Airbus jobs in France and maintain social integrity towards the workers during the restructuring process.

Airbus is controlled by EADS (the European Aeronautics Defence and Space company) and has suffered extreme losses this year unlike competitor Boeing who just reported record plane sales for 2006. According

to news reports, the restructuring could lead to the closure of seven of the company's 16 production sites in Europe.

The European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF), together with its European member organizations, is developing a common platform of demands with a view to safeguarding all Airbus sites and jobs. **KP**

OECD on shipbuilding

FRANCE/GLOBAL The IMF Shipbuilding Action Group presented a trade union report at the OECD Shipbuilding Workshop in Paris in December. The workshop, attended by all the major shipbuilding economies and employers, discussed issues such as the future prospects of the industry, the impact of technological and environmental developments and changes to the policy landscape since 2001.

Union delegates from Europe

and Asia took part in the meeting and presented a paper entitled, *The global shipbuilding industry: A trade union perspective*, which included recommendations that the OECD working party on shipbuilding:

- develops analysis on the impact of overcapacity and the likely impact on employment and working conditions,
- provides information on the types of employment in the industry,
- promotes respect for human rights

and ensures employers respect international recognised labour standards, and

- continues to work towards stable development of the world shipbuilding industry.

Rob Johnston, IMF director for shipbuilding, said, "the work of the shipbuilding action group meant we were able to put forward a comprehensive alternative vision for the industry that will lead to sustainability of jobs and skills." **RJ**

Agreement reached at Asarco

USA More than 1,600 Asarco workers at five plants in two states in the U.S. voted in February to ratify a contract with the copper mining company.

The agreement is the result of two and a half years of national and international trade union action, including cross-border support from the Mexican miners' union (SNTMMSRM) against Grupo Mexico, the parent company of Asarco.

The deal, supported by Asarco's current management, awaits approval of the U.S. court in Asarco's bankruptcy case and if accepted will include:

- a single master agreement, replacing seven separate contracts with varying language and expiration dates,
- a (US)\$3,000 signing bonus and substantial wage and benefit improvements,
- restoration of health care benefits for retirees to previously negotiated levels,
- stronger corporate protections against the sale of the company or plants, and
- agreement on the company staying neutral in future organising campaigns.

"Our new labor agreement is a fair



The message on the vacant Rex Theater sits across from USW Local 886 union hall in Arizona as a monument to the 21-day strike against Asarco in 1991. **PHOTO: JACK KURTZ/USW**

and just contract that serves both the company and its workers well," said Terry Bonds, director of United Steelworkers District 12, who led the negotiations for trade union members. **AG**

AUTO INDUSTRY NEWS

Ford Vsevolozhsk workers strike

RUSSIA Production at the Ford Vsevolozhsk plant outside of St. Petersburg stopped for 24 hours on February 14 as 1,500 workers downed tools in an effort to improve their wages and conditions and ensure full respect for their rights.

Members of the local union of Avtostroyprof (ASPR) occupied the Ford assembly plant during the 24 hour sit-in strike. The union, which has been struggling to establish a collective bargaining process with the company, is demanding that Ford improve wages and conditions, including health and safety protections and adjustments on working time. The strikers resumed work at midnight, but the union cautioned that more strikes could take place.

The average monthly salary for Ford Vsevolozhsk workers is between 16,000 and 19,000 rubles (US \$600 to \$720). After a long struggle in 2005 the local union and company negotiated a pay increase of between 14.25 and 17.5 per cent. Thereafter, Ford began to increase production, putting added strains on the workforce.

The Ford Focus model produced in Vsevolozhsk is the country's most popular car. The plant currently assembles about 300 units per day. **KP**



PHOTO: ASPR

VW restructuring in Europe

BELGIUM Workers in Belgium took to the streets on December 2, in response to Volkswagen's announcement to cut 4,000 jobs at the VW Forest plant in Belgium. Four days earlier, trade union reps of VW workers at operations in Belgium, German, Spain, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Slovakia and the UK met under the auspices of the European Metalworkers' Federation and called on the company to produce alternative models at VW Forest and



PHOTO: CCMB/EMF

for socially responsible measures for workers affected by restructuring. **AG**

Strike ends at Hyundai

SOUTH KOREA Hyundai Motor Co. has agreed to pay full bonuses to its workers, officials said, ending a three-week dispute between management and the union, KMWU.

The agreement was reached after the union accepted the company's proposal to delay full bonus payment until workers meet the production target. Officials projected that the production goals will likely be met by the end of February 2007.

Labour tensions started when the country's largest automaker refused to pay the full amount of end-of year bonuses to its employees.

The company cut the bonus from 150 per cent of a workers' monthly salary to 100 per cent, a decision that was made without the union's input. The announcement of the cuts sparked walkouts, sit-ins and threats of strike at Hyundai operations. **KP**

DC cuts in North America

NORTH AMERICA The Chrysler Group, the U.S.-based division of the DaimlerChrysler Corporation, announced on February 14, it would cut 13,000 jobs or 16 per cent of its workforce in North America.

Speaking about the cuts, UAW president Ron Gettlefinger said, "[The] action by DC is devastating news for the thousands of workers, their families and their communities."

In a joint declaration from the UAW, CAW and the IG Metall Employee Representatives on the DC Supervisory

Board, the unions demanded a strategy of sustainable growth that emphasizes job security from the company.

The unions also demanded that, "The staff reductions be carried out with a socially responsible attrition program that respects the collective agreements and takes into consideration the needs of workers and their families."

Employee representatives on the Supervisory Board of DC also stated that they have approved the necessary financing to support a socially responsible attrition program. **AG**

WTO-ILO study on trade and jobs

GENEVA IMF called for a focus on assessing the expected impact of trade liberalisation on jobs following the release of the WTO and the ILO joint study on trade and employment in February.

Trade and Employment. Challenges for policy research, examines the relationship between trade liberalisation and jobs. While this study identifies many of the major problems faced by workers and trade unions, it neglects other problems such as the impact of trade on women workers and workers in export processing zones.

“The report focuses more on measures to ensure protection of workers against the bad impact of trade liberalisation, rather than on the search for development-oriented trade policies that include assessing the impact on jobs as a pre-condition for trade liberalisation agreements,” said IMF general secretary Marcello Malentacchi.

“The IMF has been and continues to be very critical of international institutions of trade and finance agreeing on policy independently from those dealing with social and labour policies, so we can only welcome the closer cooperation between ILO and WTO,” he said. “However this needs to be further developed so that we can better identify the impact of trade on employment and development.”

A copy of the study can be found at: www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/ilo_e.pdf

AG

IMF at World Social Forum

KENYA The IMF and several of its affiliates participated in the seventh edition of the World Social Forum, January 20 to 25, held in Africa for the first time, in Nairobi, Kenya.

At the WSF, the labour movement launched a campaign on Decent Work for a Decent Life and held a number of seminars on themes ranging from precarious jobs to migrant labour. The Building Workers' International hosted a labour rally marking the build up to the World Cup 2010 campaign.

IMF, represented by affiliates from Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Italy, Germany, France, Belgium and Brazil joined with other civil society groups,

intellectuals and trade unions, and participated in various events, including the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung organised seminar on the role of multinationals in Africa. Unfortunately the double-booking of the venue resulted in the IMF seminar on Jobs for Sustainable Development being cancelled.

Speaking after the event, IMF regional representative Stephen Nhlapo said, “It was wonderful that this important event took place on African soil for the first time. In itself this was an important statement at a time when rich countries continue to make empty promises while they continue to plunder our continent’s resources.”

SN



PHOTO: BWI

Masters programme for trade unionists

GLOBAL Trade unionists are invited to apply to two different Masters programmes on labour and globalisation at the Global Labour University hosted in Germany and South Africa.

The University of Kassel and the Berlin School of Economics in Germany are offering studies in September 2007 on Labour Policies and Globalisation. The South African programme, Labour and Development, starts in January 2008 and is offered by the University of Witwatersrand.

Students can break up their study and take courses offered by both programmes in Germany and South

Africa, or take a semester in Brazil at GLU-partner, Universidade Estadual de Campinas.

The deadline for submission to the Germany programme is April 1, 2007. The deadline for the South Africa programme is October 1, 2007. Scholarships are available to a limited number of applicants. Courses are taught in English.

GLU is a joint project of the ILO, international trade union movement and a number of international academic institutions.

For details go to: www.global-labour-university.org

KP

IMF ACTIVITIES

Targeting non-manual workers

LATIN AMERICA IMF affiliates from Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico met in Buenos Aires in November 2006 to discuss strategies for organising non-manual workers in the region.

Several reasons for the low rate of union members among professionals in the private sector were identified, including:

- fear of reprisals for joining a union,
- lack of, or inadequate, trade union communication with non-manual workers,
- management strategies of hiring workers not covered by collective agreements, and
- professionals not relating to “traditional” unions.

The meeting decided to undertake research in the region on the needs and expectations of non-manual workers, with special emphasis on women and young workers. The unions participating in the meeting also agreed on establishing a network to continue developing the capacity of unions to recruit non-manual workers. **AG**



Indonesia project empowers women

INDONESIA Increases in the number of women members, shopstewards and leaders of Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia (SPMI) are the result of a three-year women’s organising project.

The project, launched in 2004 after a pilot program in 2003, aimed to organise more women workers and increase their role in the SPMI.

Despite rapid turnover of women workers due to widespread precarious employment conditions, SPMI managed to increase the number of women members from 29,780 in 2003 to 42,272 in 2006 by organising new plants and enlisting others into the union.

SPMI also focused on changing its

union structures to enable increased participation of women. At its Congress in December 2006, SPMI adopted rule changes for a minimum of 30 per cent representation of women at all levels and elected women onto its National Board for the first time. The number of women leaders at the branch level also increased from 18 per cent in 2003 (8 out of 43) to 25 per cent in 2006 (27 out of 108). In addition, SPMI established a Women’s Directorate to cater for the needs of women members.

This IMF project was funded by the Swedish trade union centre LO-TCO with support from IMF affiliates Sif and IF Metall. **AG**

14th IMF Communicators’ Forum

GENEVA An invitation to participate in the 14th IMF Communicators’ Forum on June 20 and 21 has been issued to all affiliates. The meeting will be held at the ILO in Geneva, Switzerland.

The central theme of the two-day meeting will focus on how communications work can assist unions in achieving their industrial and political goals and look at how unions are influencing public opinion in their campaigns for political change and trade union gains.

Subjects for discussion will include international solidarity campaigns, creative and new media and labour publications.

In addition to our discussions, the IMF will hold a Night of Labour Film Shorts, presenting affiliates’ work as well as a few award-winning labour films. Applications to attend the Communicators’ Forum are available on the IMF website and must be returned to the IMF by April 16, 2007. **KP**



Cancer Cause

What's most likely to kill you at work? An accident? An infection? Wrong. Worldwide, cancer is the single biggest cause of work-related deaths, claiming one life every 52 seconds.

BY RORY O'NEILL

You don't expect work in a chocolate factory to be deadly. But it killed William Webster. He spent 28 years employed as an electrician at the Cadbury's plant in Somerdale, England. His death from the cancer mesothelioma, caused by exposure to asbestos used as lagging on pipes and boilers, came in August 2005, aged 80.

Although William lived a long life –he should have lived a longer life and he should have had a better death. As in this case, most occupational cancers strike retired workers because of the time-lag between exposures and development of disease.

James Davies, a solicitor acting for Mr Webster's family and provided by William's union, Amicus, said, "Before his death, Mr Webster was an active, physical man. During the last six months of his life he was in a lot of pain and was unable to play any golf or drive a car. Prior to this he had been very independent and very healthy." He added, "Sadly, it appears that he has become the latest innocent victim of mesothelioma - a tragic illness which is caused by the negligence of employers like Cadbury."

A January 2007 report from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated the global toll from

occupational cancer to be 609,000 deaths each year. This puts occupational cancer at the top of the work-related deaths league table, causing almost a third of all occupational fatalities, and nearly double the number of deaths worldwide attributed to occupational accidents.

Asbestos is the biggest single industrial killer, but is probably only responsible for in the region of one in six of all occupational cancer deaths. There's every indication the problem – an occupational cancer epidemic – is increasing. And now cases are also emerging in younger workers in unexpected jobs.

Deadly emissions, deadly omissions

"Despite being the single largest cause of work-related deaths, occupational cancer risks have been downplayed in a display of criminal neglect by governments, health and safety enforcement agencies and employers," says IMF health and safety director Rob Johnston. "The end result has been a wholly preventable epidemic of cancers."

Johnston says the most commonly cited figure for the proportion of cancers caused by work – four per cent – has seen the problem dismissed in prevention priorities. "The only problem with this figure, which is quoted by

Occupational Cancer  **Zero Cancer**
International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) www.imfmetal.org/cancer

IMF's occupational cancer awareness campaign banner

governments worldwide as fact, is that it is blatantly nonsense.” The four per cent figure is based on a single study written over a quarter of a century ago and based only on industrial workplaces in the U.S. It concluded “lifestyle” factors like smoking and diet were the root cause of the great majority of cancers.

“The lead author on that study, Sir Richard Doll, was receiving substantial and undeclared payments from chemical companies and the U.S. chemical industry trade body,” says Johnston. “The study missed most causes of cancer, ignored risks to women, discounted risks in many industries, excluded African-American workers and did not count cancers in workers aged over 65, at a stroke ruling out the great majority of work-related cancers.”

He says the ILO’s “cautious” estimate would put the real proportion of cancers linked to workplace factors at one in every ten cases. “Our investigations suggest at least eight per cent and possibly more than 16 per cent of all cancers are the result of preventable exposures at work.”

World renowned occupational cancer expert Dr Samuel Epstein agrees. An emeritus professor of environmental and occupational medicine at the University of Illinois in Chicago and the founder of the Cancer Prevention Coalition, Epstein says “based on minimal estimates” work exposures are responsible for ten per cent of overall cancer mortality, with much higher rates in some jobs.

He added, “Lifestyle academics have consciously or unconsciously become the well-touted and enthusiastic mouthpiece for industry interests, urging regulatory inaction and public complacency.”

Whole categories of cancers are being missed, says Professor Andy Watterson of the occupational and environmental health research group at Stirling University, Scotland. “Lung cancers caused by asbestos exposure are not picked up and other occupational cancers simply do not show up on the official radar; the contribution of work to breast cancers is widely neglected and there are a number of carcinogens that attack humans – brain, nervous system, soft tissue sarcomas, cancer of the larynx, kidneys, stomach, bone – which are not adequately regulated.”

Cancer campaigns

In Canada, Bud Jimmerfield’s family and colleagues know the human cost of this failure to recognise and address a workplace epidemic. After an 18-month fight, the husband and father of eight died on January 31, 1998 from cancer of the oesophagus. The disease was caused by inhaling machine oils during 31 years working in a car parts factory in southern Ontario. He was 49.

Addressing a union meeting barely a month before his death, he said, “If I look back at it, if I ask, would I rather



Bud and Diane Jimmerfield

PHOTO: CAW

have my life back than a dollar, I’d rather have my life back.”

Bud, though, left a legacy. A Canadian autoworkers’ union (CAW) local president and long-time health and safety activist, he was instrumental in the launch of the union’s high profile and on-going national ‘Prevent Cancer Campaign’.

“Bud was the catalyst for our Prevent Cancer Campaign,” explains Sari Sairanen, the union’s national health, safety and environment director, adding, “We wanted to start discussions amongst our membership that cancer it is not strictly a lifestyle issue but could be related to workplace exposures.”

Over the last decade the union has produced detailed materials for use by local union representatives and has run several cancer prevention conferences. CAW’s ‘Devil of a poison’ pamphlet was distributed to 80,000 concerned citizens.

But the most telling changes have come in improvements negotiated in Canadian workplaces. A mix of training, campaigning and collective bargaining has seen a dramatic reduction in exposures to carcinogens – cancer

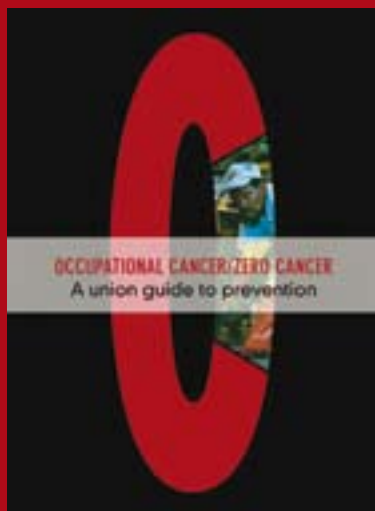


CAW campaign badge

KEY WORK CANCER FACTS

- Occupational cancer is the top work killer worldwide, ahead of all other work-related diseases and work accidents.
- Over 600,000 workers die of occupational cancers every year, according to the ILO – that's one death every 52 seconds. The true toll is almost certainly higher.
- More than one in five workers faces a cancer risk from their work.
- Between eight and 16 per cent of all cancers are the result of exposures at work.
- Almost 100,000 chemicals are used in workplaces worldwide. Barely one in a 100 has been thoroughly tested for health risks.
- Over 50 substances are rated by the United Nations' International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) as a definite or probable cancer risk at work. Over 100 more are IARC rated as a possible cancer risk.
- Most causes of cancer were identified in studies of workers.
- It is not just industrial workers that are at risk. Hairdressers, teachers, nurses, doctors, farm and office workers and workers in many other jobs have also died of occupational cancers.
- Tens of thousands of workers generally have to die before scientific studies identify a workplace cancer problem. A precautionary approach is always the safe and healthy option.

More information about occupational cancer and its prevention can be found in *Occupational Cancer/Zero Cancer: A trade union guide to prevention*, a new global union publication being released for activities on April 28, 2007 and on the IMF website at: www.imfmetal.org/cancer



causing substances – in workplaces covering in total more than 100,000 CAW members.

“The Cancer Prevention Campaign brought together for the first time the union’s health and safety, environmental and compensation activists,” explains Sairanen. “Between them they were encouraged to: identify cancer-causing exposures in the workplace; insist the potential cancer cause be removed and substituted with less hazardous substances, or at an absolute minimum insist the process be enclosed; file compensation claims for all workers who may have work-related cancers; and ensure community support by making sure the public knows about air emissions and hazardous waste from workplaces which may cause cancer.”

The most important aspect of the CAW Prevent Cancer Campaign has been pollution prevention, she says. “If we can eliminate carcinogens from our workplaces and replace them with less hazardous substances, then we can both prevent the incredible incidence of cancer among blue-collar workers and among their family members - since they won’t be bringing carcinogens home on their work clothes - their neighbours and others in our communities and among the animals and plants exposed to these same carcinogens.”

CAW has had some startling successes, including negotiating wide-ranging bans on cancer-causing substances in Canada’s car plants. “In addition to the contract language that we negotiated with Ford, Chrysler and GM to remove all of the carcinogens, a number of small workplaces have negotiated better language,” Sairanen says.

Global problem, global solution

In South Africa, metalworkers’ union Numsa has faced its own occupational disease fight. “In steel companies, fettlers – the workers who use chipping hammers to remove excessive metal from castings – die on average two years after retirement,” says Numsa international officer Hlokoza Motau, adding members exposed to vanadium complain of problems including lung cancer. “We know the jobs are deadly, but the companies blame HIV/AIDS,” Motau says.

Many of Numsa’s members work for multinationals, like BHP-Billiton and Anglo-American, processing metals including manganese, chromium, iron and vanadium.

Numsa has linked up with CAW to develop health and safety training for its union reps and to introduce innovative approaches in the workplace. “We have pioneered the right to refuse dangerous work,” says Motau. “And we have managed to set up committees composed of both management and shop stewards to look into occupational diseases and deaths attributed to manganese, chrome, vanadium and other toxic substances. Numsa is involved in developing joint training for health and safety reps.”

The problems extend beyond traditional industrial

FEATURE

OCCUPATIONAL CANCER

workplaces. In the UK, Rebecca Little, a nurse, died aged 53 of cancer caused by her job. Her union, Amicus, fought to prove her death from the cancer mesothelioma was caused by exposure in the 1960s to the asbestos that insulated pipes in a London hospital. The Department of Health eventually admitted liability. In August 2005, her husband, Dr Julian Little, was awarded £175,000 (US\$340,000) in compensation, in a case run with legal support from Amicus.

Amicus national officer Gail Cartmail commented, “We would advise anyone who is concerned about symptoms such as breathlessness or chest pains to consult their doctor. Amicus members who are worried that they may have been exposed to asbestos at work can add their names to an Amicus database that registers details of buildings with a confirmed presence of asbestos.”

Cartmail highlights another major challenge facing unions. Two working generations – some in work, some retired - have already faced exposure to a workplace cancer risk, and could go on to develop the disease. Nothing can compensate individuals and families for that eventuality, but compensation may be the closest to justice they can get.

This year James Hardie Industries, a multinational that was once Australia’s largest asbestos company which had resisted finalising an asbestos compensation deal, finally put pen to paper after a six-year, high profile trade union campaign. In February 2007, the company signed the



Julian and Rebecca Little



Numsa organiser Shadrock Simelane (right) reads a memo to management demanding a healthy and safe workplace at Transvaal Galvanisers in South Africa
PHOTO: Numsa

FEATURE

OCCUPATIONAL CANCER

AUS\$4bn (US\$3.1bn) 40-year deal. It will make an initial payment of around AUS\$185 million (US\$144m) into an Asbestos Injuries Compensation Fund, with further regular payments to be made over the life of the agreement.

Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) New South Wales state secretary Paul Bastian, whose union was prominent in the campaign, welcomed the agreement. He said, "The deal will ensure current and future victims of James Hardie asbestos products are properly compensated."

Boycotts of James Hardie products and protests in Australia, the Netherlands and the U.S., with the support of unions worldwide, were just some of the activities that eventually forced the company to the negotiating table.

IMF's Rob Johnston says addressing the workplace cancer issue takes a combination of awareness-raising and company-wide and workplace level action. "Trained, informed and properly supported union reps are the key to identifying and remedying problems at work," he says.

"And we need to make sure official safety agencies clampdown on those employers who expose workers to risks. At the moment many are allowing companies to get away with murder."



James Hardie campaign rally in 2004

PHOTO: AMWU



PREVENTING OCCUPATIONAL CANCER

Occupational Cancer/Zero Cancer: A union guide to prevention addresses the growing epidemic of occupational cancer and outlines steps unions can take to protect workers in the workplace.

"At least 1 in every 10 cancers - probably many more - is the result of preventable, predictable workplace exposure," the report states. "More people today, face a workplace cancer risk than at any other time in history. It's just that most of them don't know it." The guide provides practical advice on what workers and unions can do to identify and reduce the risk of exposure to cancer causing substances.

The Zero Cancer awareness campaign launches on April 28 in honour of International Workers' Memorial Day. A campaign poster (pictured left) is included

in this edition of Metal World. Copies of the guide will be sent out to affiliates and are available in English, French, Spanish and Russian. The publication is also available on the IMF website.

The report has been prepared by the IMF with the support of all of the Global Union Federations and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). For more information about the Zero Cancer campaign or occupational cancer, go to: www.imfmetal.org/cancer

IMF Auto Report 2006/07

The latest edition of the IMF Auto Report provides a trade union perspective on the ongoing restructuring by transnational companies that dominate the automobile industry, how trade unions are responding and what is required from employers and governments.

As documented in the report, metalworkers continued to experience plant closings, job dislocations and

losses of livelihoods in recent years.

The *IMF Auto Report 2006/07* takes a closer look at the ongoing integration of motor vehicle sectors in India and Russia.

The report also includes updates and trends on employment, production and sales in the motor vehicle industry.

IMF Auto Report 2006/07 is printed in English, French, German, Spanish and Russian and is available on the IMF website.



2006 purchasing power survey

The IMF released its 2006 edition of the Purchasing Power of Working Time, examining metalworkers' purchasing power worldwide, based on net hourly earnings in 2005.

The publication surveyed the purchasing power in more than 60 countries and shows the working time needed for the purchase of a range of consumer items including clothing, food, rent and other basic expenses.

More than 180 pages of tables, graphics and explanatory notes

covering 66 countries, seven industrial sectors and some 32 products enable readers to do a vast number of comparisons.

The *Purchasing Power of Working Time 2006* is printed in English, French, German and Spanish. Pdf-versions in these languages are available for downloading under "Publications" on the IMF website. Translations into Japanese and Russian will follow. It is available on the IMF website at: www.imfmetal.org/purchasingpower2006

Lifelong Learning Report

In *Organising the Unorganised: Career Development and Lifelong Learning* the IMF publishes a series of presentations and reports given at a seminar on this issue held in Paris on October 24-25, 2006.

Lifelong learning is fundamental to empowering workers in the knowledge-based economy and in facilitating their career development. The reports at the seminar looked at developments and current practices in various countries and examined the way in which unions have been advancing lifelong learning through the bargaining agenda.

Mari-Ann Kranz, Sif general

secretary and president of the IMF non-manual workers department, said that adopting new perspectives, like lifelong learning, is crucial when it comes to organizing new members.

"Unions have an increasingly important role to play when it comes to supporting members in their professional career. To me, the meeting in Paris showed the vitality and creativity among IMF affiliates around the world," she said.

The IMF publication is available in English and is available for downloading under "Publications" on the IMF website.



Global Action Against Precarious Work

Taking global action against precarious work is the focus of the IMF Central Committee debate in November, 2007. To prepare for the debate, affiliates are being encouraged to consider the issue of precarious work and, where possible, develop regional positions and inputs on taking action against precarious work in advance of the meeting.

Precarious work is typically non-permanent, temporary, casual, insecure and contingent. Workers in these jobs are often not covered by labour law and social security protections. Precarious work is caused by employment practices designed to maximize employer profits and flexibility and to shift risks onto workers. In highly-industrialised countries full-time jobs are being replaced by precarious jobs, while in developing countries precarious work has always been the norm.

Employment practices often associated with precarious work include the following:

- Direct hire on temporary labour contracts,
- Hiring in labour via employment agencies or labour brokers,
- Contracting out functions to other companies,
- Personal labour contracts as bogus 'self-employed' workers,
- Abusive probationary periods,
- Disguised employment training contracts,
- On call / daily hire,
- Illegal or involuntary part-time work, and
- Homeworking.

Precarious work is an increasing problem on every continent, undermining wages and conditions of work and threatening to divide working people. It flourishes wherever there is a labour surplus and workers are driven to accept work at any cost – conditions that exist in many, if not most, parts of the world today.



Is this person precariously employed?
Dongpil KIM (right) is a member of the Korean Metal Workers' Union and has been working at Hyundai Motors for three years as an outsourced worker inside the factory. Including allowances, his wages amount to only about 60 per cent of a regular Hyundai Motors worker. Hyundai workers and irregular workers usually wear the same-looking uniform but the logo is different.

PHOTO: KMWU

SPOTLIGHT

GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST PRECARIOUS WORK



Are these workers precariously employed?

These workers are employed by Pinuspel, a supplier company to DaimlerChrysler, in São Bernardo do Campo. They are outsourced workers who are located within the plant removing waste from the assembly line. They earn less money and have lower working conditions than equivalent employees of DC.

PHOTO: CNM/CUT

ILO RECOMMENDATION ON EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) conference in June 2006 adopted Recommendation R198 proposing that governments formulate and adopt national policies that establish the existence of an employment relationship, distinguishing between employed and self-employed workers and combating disguised employment relationships.

The question of whether an employment relationship exists is important as most legal systems link workers' rights and access to social benefits to the existence of such a relationship. A copy of the ILO Recommendation can be found at this link: <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?R198>

The rapid increase in precarious work is being driven both by corporations and governments. Across the world, national labour laws are being amended to better enable employers to create yet more precarious jobs at the expense of stable employment. In 2006, the Australian government introduced new labour laws that immediately plunged millions of workers into precarious employment by taking away their right to protection from unfair dismissal. The laws also encourage contract and temporary work.

Now the European Union has launched a consultation paper promoting 'flexicurity', the idea that employment growth is stimulated when employment protections such as unfair dismissal laws are reduced and casual employment is increased. UK affiliate Amicus has responded by pointing out the negative impact that Britain's weak labour laws have had on manufacturing jobs. General Secretary Derek Simpson says that, "well paid secure jobs can only be protected by stronger employment laws than we currently have in the UK."

SPOTLIGHT

GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST PRECARIOUS WORK



Is this person precariously employed?

Shirley Matuludi, aged 24, was employed as a temporary operator stamping dates on door locks at an auto components factory in South Africa for four months. She earned R16.85 (US\$2.30) per hour, R1 less than permanent workers doing the same job. The employer paid Shirley's unemployment insurance but not into her industry retirement fund.

PHOTO: William Matlada/Numsa

Precarious work and women

Precarious work has a disproportionate impact on women workers. Women are overrepresented in precarious work throughout the world. Access to full-time permanent jobs for women has always been low and is reducing further.

For example:

- In Australia one in three women workers are non-permanent, paid 21 per cent less than permanent workers and have no access to holiday leave, sick leave or public holidays;
- In Canada 40 per cent of women's jobs are considered non-standard, or precarious, employment; and

DISCUSSION POINTS

The following questions are to stimulate debate in your union on the issue of precarious work.

- What forms does precarious work take in your country/region?
- How does precarious work differ in nature from permanent employment in terms of rights, protections and entitlements?
- How does precarious work impact on women workers?
- How does the content or enforcement of labour laws contribute to the problem of precarious work?
- How can the ILO Recommendation on the Employment Relationship be used at a national level to improve rights for precarious workers?
- How does precarious work impact on workplace health and safety?
- What is the impact of precarious work on sustainable development?
- What impact, if any, does precarious work have on your union's capacity to bargain collectively with employers?
- How can the impact of precarious work be reduced through collective bargaining?
- What legal or practical barriers exist to organising precarious workers?
- What actions has your union taken to organise or otherwise improve conditions for precarious workers?
- How can unions build solidarity between permanent and precarious workers?
- What role can other actors play in addressing precarious work, such as the International Labour Organisation, non-governmental organisations, national trade union centres, International Trade Union Confederation, national governments, courts?



Are these workers precariously employed?

Only five per cent of the workers at the Kiryung Electronics factory (pictured above) are permanent employees. Thirteen per cent are employed on contracts of typically six months or a year in length and 82 per cent are dispatch workers. A contract worker earns 73 per cent and a dispatch worker only 53 per cent of a regular workers' salary. All the permanent workers are men while nearly all the precarious workers are women.

PHOTO: KMWU

- In Japan about 30 per cent of metal workers are atypical or contract workers and women form a high proportion of such workers.

Increasingly precarious employment compounds existing gender discrimination. Working time insecurity creates enormous difficulties for women with child care responsibilities. For some women, secure part-time work with predictable hours may be the most desirable employment option, yet most part-time work is temporary and the availability of permanent part-time work is decreasing.

Precarious work makes a large contribution to the pay gap between men and women. In Japan, women part-time workers earn a mere 54.3 per cent of the hourly wage of regular women workers, a gap which has widened in the last decade. In Korea, 69 per cent of women workers are precariously employed, known as irregular workers. In 2005, irregular women workers in Korea earned 43 per cent of the salaries of the regular male workers.

Not only are women in precarious employment paid less than their male, full-time counterparts, the majority of such women are not covered by collective agreements that could be used to address pay inequalities. The nature of their employment also excludes them from the reach of equal pay legislation designed to reduce the gender pay gap.

The additional unequal burden that is placed on women in respect of childcare, household work and other caring responsibilities mean that their children, families and

communities also suffer the consequences of their precarious work. This is further compounded by governments reducing social services such as childcare and health care, which provide support principally to women in their caring roles.

In a number of countries trade unions have been fighting against the trend of precarious work. International solidarity can and should play a role in trade union strategies to tackle the issue.

IMF affiliates are encouraged to come forward with proposals for action against precarious work for consideration at the IMF Central Committee 2007. These proposals should reach the IMF Secretariat no later than 21 September 2007.

EXPORT PROCESSING ZONES

EPZs make a significant contribution to women's overrepresentation in precarious work. Women dominate the EPZ workforce throughout the world and are preferred by employers as they are perceived to be compliant and willing to accept lower working conditions. Precarious work is just about the only type of employment available in EPZs where an up to 90 per cent of the female workforce is employed on temporary contracts. EPZs operate either beyond the reach of labour legislation or the legislation is not enforced. Unions are virtually non-existent in EPZs.

Valter Sanches



Valter Sanches, responsible for international relations, also took up the position of acting general secretary of CNM/CUT in December.

Born in the state of Parana, Brazil in 1964, Valter commenced work as a metalworker and active trade union member in São Paulo (SP) in 1981. In 1988 he began working as a production processing planner at DaimlerChrysler (former Mercedes-

Benz) in São Bernardo do Campo, SP, where he was elected first onto the health and safety committee, then as a member for the DC Works Council, becoming its co-ordinator between 1997 and 2005. Valter became the Brazilian representative at DC's World Company Council in 2000. He was a member of the executive committee of the São Paulo ABC Metalworkers' Union, affiliated to the CNM/CUT, between 2002 and 2005.

Valter has actively participated in the popular and union struggles of Brazil and the building of a strong and militant union movement. Valter speaks Portuguese, English, German and Spanish.

Fernando Lopes



Fernando Lopes, aged 46, joined the IMF head office in Geneva in February to work on international framework agreements, organising and solidarity.

Formerly the general secretary of CNM/CUT, Fernando has a long history in the labour movement in Brazil, first getting involved in the workers' party (PT) while studying mechanical engineering in the northern state of Maranhão during the 1970s. After 13

years of political work in Maranhão, Fernando was forced to move to Bahia in 1987 due to political persecution. Here he began working as a maintenance engineer at the Bahia Steel Mill and with the local union, becoming a member of the executive committee of the metalworkers' union of Bahia and then of the National Confederation of Metalworkers (CNM) of the national trade union centre CUT.

Fernando was elected general secretary of CNM/CUT in 2001 and served on the IMF Executive Committee from 2003 to 2005. Fernando speaks Portuguese, English and Spanish.

IN MEMORIAM

Herman Rebhan



Herman Rebhan, former general secretary of the International Metalworkers' Federation, died December 16 at the age of 86.

Herman started in the labour movement at Chrysler and General Motors in Chicago, and soon became administrative assistant to Walter Reuther, then-president of the United Auto Workers. Herman

went on to run the UAW's international affairs department before being elected to lead the IMF in 1974.

His legacy to the IMF includes setting up the IMF auto department and establishing a World Auto Council as well as taking a strong stance against dictatorial regimes throughout the world including South Africa, Latin America and Poland.

The son of Jewish parents and born in Poland, Rebhan will be remembered as a straightforward guy and tough trade leader who "fought like hell" to support workers struggling to organize around the world.

IN MEMORIAM

George Becker



Former United Steelworkers' union president George Becker died in February at the age of 78.

George led the USW from 1993 to 2001 and is recognized as a remarkable union leader who saw the Steelworkers through two mergers and brought Ravenswood Aluminium Company to its knees, winning a historical fight against

the company that locked out 1,700 union members and hired non-union replacements.

The son of a steelworker, George grew up literally in the backyard of Granite City Steel, where his father worked, and where he would begin his career as a steelworker at the age of 15.

A former IMF Executive Committee member, George is remembered as being a strong leader for the Steelworkers at a time when the union needed international support.

This is the IMF

The International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) represents workers in the metal industry. The IMF was founded in 1893 and has its head office in Geneva, Switzerland. Currently the IMF represents the interests of 25 million metalworkers in 200 affiliated unions in 100 countries.

The IMF endeavours to build a strong metalworkers' movement throughout the world. The Action Programme adopted by the last IMF Congress, in 2005, presents four major areas of activities: working for an alternative economic programme, organising the unorganised, promoting solidarity and fighting for human and trade union rights.

The highest decision-making body of the IMF is the Congress, which meets every four years. Between Congresses, the Central Committee, consisting of the delegates of all affiliated unions, meets every second year. The Executive Committee consists of 25 members elected by the Central Committee and usually meets twice a year.

The IMF head office, where the Secretariat is located, is in Geneva, Switzerland, where world-wide activities are coordinated with a network of regional and project offices:

- East and Southern Africa - Johannesburg, South Africa;
- South Asia - New Delhi, India;
- Southeast Asia and the Pacific - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia;
- Latin America & Caribbean - Santiago, Chile and Mexico City, Mexico;
- CIS - in Moscow, Russia (project office).

The IMF has also developed regional and sub-regional structures for Africa, Asia and Latin America. In some countries, the IMF-affiliated unions have formed Country Councils.

To coordinate activities in specific industrial sectors, the IMF has industrial departments for the following sectors: aerospace, automotive, electrical and electronics, mechanical engineering, shipbuilding, and iron, steel and non-ferrous metals.



For the address of the IMF head office in Geneva, see page 2. The addresses for regional and project offices are:

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Calendar 2007

MARCH

- 26 - 28** World Conference Boeing, Portland, USA
29 Asian regional workshop on women and atypical work, Hong Kong
30 - 31 12th Sub-regional committee meeting for East Asia, Hong Kong

APRIL

- 03 - 04** 9th Sub-Regional Committee Meeting for Central America, Dominican Republic and Mexico, Ciudad de Panamá
09 - 10 9th Sub-Regional Committee Meeting for Andean and Caribbean, Caracas, Venezuela
16 - 18 Tripartite ILO conference on manufacturing in the electronics industry, Geneva, Switzerland

MAY

- 2 - 4** Meeting of Regional Women's Committee, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
10 - 11 IMF Executive Committee meeting, Seville, Spain
30 - 31 LACREC Coordinating Committee Meeting, Buenos Aires, Argentina

JUNE

- 20 - 21** IMF Communicators' Forum, Geneva, Switzerland
26 - 28 IMF workshop on Chinese presence in SADEC countries, Johannesburg, South Africa

NOVEMBER

- 28 - 29** IMF Central Committee, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil

**For the latest updates, go to:
www.imfmetal.org/events**



Making another world possible

Rallying to the call of 'another world is possible' the seventh edition of the World Social Forum (WSF) was held for the first time in Africa in Nairobi, Kenya at the start of this year. Activists, social movements and trade unions from around the world converged for five days of cultural resistance and celebration. Alessandra Mecozzi, familiar to many in the IMF, actively participates in the WSF process and was in Nairobi.

ROME ITALY Alessandra Mecozzi is passionate about acting with others against neo-liberalism and war, for democracy and social justice. As the international secretary of Italian trade union Federazione Impiegati Operai Metallurgici (FIOM-CGIL), Alessandra believes the world social forum provides an ideal environment for this to occur.

"One of the best aspects of the WSF, I think, is finding ourselves in a common space with many very different actors, big associations and unions and small groups, debating and willing to build together a common social and political agenda," explains Alessandra.

"After the anti-globalization protests in Seattle and the protests in Davos against the World Economic Forum, it was a very attractive project - the first forum in Porto Alegre in 2001 - to go far from Davos, in the south of the world, in order to build alternatives and not only protests," recalls Alessandra. "It felt like neo-liberal globalization and its 'pensiero unico' (monolithic) ideology was finally attacked in a very peaceful and positive way, also by a new generation," she adds.

"We live in a world and in a time where we have to rethink theories

and practices, such as the meaning and value of "work", including against precarisation, and the way to organize it. We have to raise new questions and try to answer them together with new actors and actions. And the WSF is the right place to do this," says Alessandra.

Alessandra's interest in participating in and supporting the process of the WSF follows on from many years of practical engagement in trade union work at both the local and global level. After completing a thesis on CGIL's history as part of her studies for a bachelor of philosophy, Alessandra spent four months working in Algeria, the first of many stays in a southern Mediterranean country. However, it was during this first time in Algeria that Alessandra decided, "If I wanted to be engaged socially and politically it had to be in my own country."

Alessandra returned to Rome and began working at the national office of FIOM-CGIL in 1970. Quickly realizing she wanted to be closer to problems and workers at the grass-roots, she asked to be transferred to the city of Turin, a capital of politics, culture and manufacturing in the north of Italy. Here, Alessandra began organising members and collective bargaining in small and medium sized factories, eventually becoming responsible, from 1981 to 1984, for organising Fiat workers who were temporarily laid-off.

Meanwhile, Alessandra became very involved in the women's movement and continued to travel to other countries, including to the U.S. in 1984 on a fellowship to study women and unionism and participating in the United Nations women's conference in Nairobi in 1985. In 1989 Alessandra returned to Rome and coordinated the electrical appliances and shipbuilding sectors, before taking up the post of international secretary in 1996. In this capacity Alessandra



Alessandra Mecozzi - working towards making another world possible

has been actively involved in the WSF process, including participating in organising the "Genoa social forum" during the G8 in 2001.

Reflecting on the most recent forum in Nairobi, Alessandra said, "I was very happy about the Nairobi WSF. Although there were many organizational problems - mistakes in asking high fees of the Nairobi people, too many international non-governmental organizations taking too much space because of their economic possibilities - I felt that even in the most difficult continent the WSF process can put roots."

When asked if another world is possible, Alessandra replies, "It is more and more necessary, or we will fall in self destruction and the ones who will survive will not be the better!" **ANITA GARDNER**

ALESSANDRA MECOZZI

Country: Italy

Position: International Secretary

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Interests: Books, foreign languages and cultures, movies, travelling and swimming!