

World News - N° 12 , 2002

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Take part in the global action to release jailed Koreans 27 June
All PSI affiliates and regional offices should have received an urgent request from the General Secretary, Hans Engelberts, to support the global day of action on 27 June. The action, including protests outside Korean embassies, is aimed at the release of jailed unionists in Korea, and for recognition of the right of freedom of association. The action is timed to maximise media exposure during Korea's hosting of the football World Cup. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and all other global unions, led by the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) and PSI support the campaign. Materials, including posters, letters and model media releases in several languages, can be downloaded from the global unions website at www.global-unions.org. In Geneva, Korean unionists joined with their Japanese colleagues at a successful PSI seminar at the ILO on 7 June. Hans will meet with the Korean Ambassador on the morning of the 27th. Hans has asked affiliates that intend to take part in the action to let PSI know what is planned. Contact psi@world-psi.org, or nora.wintour@world-psi.org for more information.

New PSI logo
PSI has adopted a new logo for formal launch at the September Congress. The world Executive Board meeting in Geneva this month approved the logo that was developed after extensive consultations and input from many people. This is another step in the linked Communications and Information Technology strategy that was endorsed at an earlier meeting of the Executive. The logo is represented by a red symbol that is derived from the previous logo, and features a central I, for International in its official languages. It has 3 variations of a semi-realistic global background in grey - an Eastern hemisphere, a Western hemisphere and an animated rotating globe for the Website. This issue of PSI World News carries the logo and a revised title heading. Other PSI publications, as well as the Website, will be changed leading up to Congress to reflect the new logo. PSI acknowledges its Finnish affiliate KTV for the design inspiration, and consultants Anton de Gennaro and

Keith Williams for its development. Contact dain.bolwell@world-psi.org.

Deluge at World Bank

PSI and over 100 allied organisations want the World Bank to change its approach to water. The Freshwater Caucus has written to the World Bank seeking a redraft of its water strategy paper before it is adopted by the Bank. The Caucus wants an improved consultation process based on discussions at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in September, and on further regional consultations. The Caucus points to major concerns with the current draft strategy. These include an over-emphasis on privatisation and the need to remove privatisation as a condition of funding. The Caucus also wants to see more emphasis on sanitation, a review of the large dams approach, more account of ecosystems and removal of any promotion of genetically modified crops. PSI instigated the approach to World Bank President Wolfensohn. Contact david.boys@world-psi.org

Spiderman launches UNISON campaign

Spiderman and a friend abseiled down the face of UNISON's 10-storey London headquarters last week and unfurled two giant banners displaying the message Keep Public Services Public. A new series of national newspaper advertisements were also launched this month to support the campaign. Secretary Dave Prentis and the union's political committee - all public service workers - met with the Prime Minister to outline their position. Dave Prentis said that the Government must listen to members who are front line public service workers. Privatisation will not deliver world class public services. The only people to gain will be the shareholders of multi-national companies who will siphon off taxpayers' money to put into their pockets - money that should be spent on front line services. Our campaign will carry on into the autumn and we are certain that the public will be on our side, he said. The campaign coincided with the start of the union's pay strike ballot of its 800,000 local government members. UNISON is the major affiliate of PSI in the UK. See www.unison.org.uk.

PSI lobbying pays off

PSI President, Bill Lucy, is furthering his efforts to re-direct US policy on privatisation and labour rights. As reported in PSI World News #11, Bill lobbied in support of the Corzine amendment in the US Senate last month. The amendment aimed to prohibit US negotiators from pressing for the privatisation of public services in trade agreements. Bill has also been lobbying support for a proposed law called HR2604 in the House of Representatives. HR2604 obliges the US Executive Directors of the regional development banks (arms of the World Bank) to oppose any privatisation project that lacks transparency, violates workers' rights, or lacks an adequate regulatory environment. It also obliges the US Executive Directors to work to ensure openness of the meetings of the Banks' Board of Directors meetings, and it obliges them to report to the Congress on what they have done. The Treasury Secretary is required to oppose any loan that includes user fees for primary education or primary health care. The House of Representatives passed HR2604 unanimously this month. The US Senate is the next step. Contact Beatrice Edwards at the PSI Washington office (bedwards@igc.org).

Twentieth ratification imminent

Indications are that the United Nations Migrant Workers and their Families Convention may soon be in force. The Convention requires 20 countries to ratify it before it becomes operational. At present 19 countries have ratified. Lately, Peru, Burkina Faso and Cambodia have indicated that they are looking favourably at signing the Convention that was adopted by the UN

General Assembly in 1990. The UN estimates that there are 120 million people living in countries other than their own - or 1 in every 50 human beings. PSI is part of the Steering Committee of the global ratification campaign. Contact Patrick Taran - taran@ilo.org.

Quality Public Services campaign

The PSI world Executive Board has endorsed the beginning of a research phase for the long-term Quality Public Services campaign. The campaign is linked to the draft PSI Program of Action (POA) for consideration by the PSI Congress in September. It aims to promote the need for quality public services in all regions and will build on existing practical and theoretical work in this area. Executive Board, meeting in Geneva 6-7 June, underlined the need to take account of universality, equality and access issues. The need for strong links to the interests of users of public services was also discussed. One significant issue is the difficulty of basing the campaign on universal standards that can apply to both developing and developed countries. Contact ros.harvey@world-psi.org.

Parliament held in contempt by GATS

A public hearing in Finland has shown that national parliaments have no say in negotiations on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). The hearing was organised by Public Service Unions (FIPSU), Attac and Friends of the Earth on 31 May. During questions, the Chairperson of the Finnish parliament's WTO committee admitted that Parliament had not yet been told of the EU requests on trade in services, even though the requests will be formally presented at the end of this month. Further, it was admitted that not even the 133 members of the EU WTO committee know of the requests. Leaked documents in possession of the unions and NGOs suggest that the EU is asking for privatisation of water services in India, contrary to a Finnish parliament declaration that public services must be excluded from GATS. The request-offer process is central to the negotiations on GATS. Contact mike.waghorne@world-psi.org.

Crossfire at Africa Energy Forum

PSI will be doubly represented at the Africa Energy Forum in London on 2 July. The Forum is sponsored by major corporate interests and will be attended by many African Ministers and heads of utilities. PSI's David Boys will argue that only a public service can meet everyone's needs for water. PSIRU's Dave Hall will outline the scope for public finance. See www.energynet.co.uk.

A better Website

PSI has drawn up a list of requirements aimed at producing a better Website, Extranet and Intranet. The list is displayed on the Website itself. It includes the requirement for it to be fast - and especially accessible by a variety of users with slow modems and less powerful PCs. The general structure and appearance of the Intranet, Extranet and Website should be identical and navigation between them simple. If you have comments on features, graphics, navigation, layout, structure, accessibility, content or anything about the Website, please email your comments to caroline.taleb@world-psi.org.

PSI World Congress: If your union wants to use a display stand during Congress, please contact sonia.sanchez@world-psi.org before 1 July.

We guarantee your comments on PSI World News will be listened to.
Send to psi@world-psi.org.

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