

PSI World New 04-2004

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THAI UNIONISTS PROTEST PRIVATISATION IN WATER AND ENERGY

Unionists in Thailand were sprayed with pepper spray during a protest demonstration against privatisation of the Metropolitan Waterworks Authority (MWA) on 22 February. Chaiwat Voorapeboonpong, PSI project coordinator in Thailand, was among those attacked. The protestors were at a public hearing on privatisation of the MWA and demonstrated their disagreement to the proposed privatisation. They wanted to indicate that Thai policy makers are probably unaware that even the World Bank acknowledges the failure of water privatisation policies, which the Thai government wants to impose.

A massive national union campaign is forcing the Thai government to slow its plans to privatise the Energy Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT). The EGAT union accused the government of rushing the sale of EGAT without conducting a full national debate. More than 30,000 EGAT workers have been demonstrating at EGAT headquarters since 23 February. The workers have installed kitchens and sleeping quarters at the demonstration site, and they plan to keep the demonstration going until the government agrees to a national debate on its privatisation policies.

PSI has written a protest letter to the government, and affiliates are invited to send a similar letter. PSI has also sent out a media release on the situation. Both are available on the PSI website www.world-psi.org or contact david.boys@world-psi.org.

CONGRESS - SO FAR AWAY YET ALREADY CLOSE!

The Austrian affiliates met in early March with staff from the PSI secretariat for the next stage of planning the 2007 PSI Centennial Congress. The Congress dates are 24-28 September 2007. It will be hosted by the Austrian affiliates in Vienna. Affiliates might want to write the dates in their calendars and to note that they should start making flight bookings, selecting delegates and arranging visas in late 2006. More urgent is that we have had very little response to an earlier request that affiliates that know they have historical material (on public services, public service unionism, important struggles, etc.) should notify Mike.Waghorne@world-psi.org of the nature of this material and the name of the relevant contact person. This is for the history project which we hope to complete in time for the Centennial.

MARCH 8TH INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

PSI affiliates are focusing on the right to health to mark this year's International Women's Day on March 8th. Achieving the right to health is integrally linked to rights at work and the current situation in many countries of low pay and appalling working conditions is fuelling the migration of health workers. PSI is calling on governments, health sector employers and trade unions to engage in social dialogues so as to:

- improve wages and working conditions for nurses and other health care workers
- implement ethical recruitment guidelines to regulate recruitment agencies
- provide compensation to government health services in sending countries
- increase the participation of workers and trade unions in health sector reform and planning.

For the full text of the PSI media release and a background article on working conditions of women health workers, visit the PSI website or contact equality@world-psi.org. Please write in and let us know how your union marked 8th March 2004.

UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The substantive trade union delegation to this year's UN Commission on the Status of Women from 1-12 March in New York, USA, will include 4 PSI representatives: Marie Mbayabu, from the Solidarity Union of Nurses of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gloria Mills, from UNISON UK, Vera Morgenstern, Verdi, Germany and Nora Wintour, Equality and Rights Officer at the PSI Secretariat. The two main themes of the Commission are 1) the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality and 2) women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in-post -conflict peace building. PSI will moderate a panel discussion at the UN Building on 4th March on "securing a peaceful future -trade union women in peace-building initiatives", co-sponsored by ICFTU and Women's International Coalition for Economic Justice.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK TRAINING

A regional training workshop for Global Unions' regional staff in Latin America was held in Guatemala from 23-27 February. Among the 16 participants were Subregional Secretaries Oscar Rodríguez and Jocélio Drummond. PSI Education Officer Christine Roos also attended on behalf of the GUF headquarters staff. The training focused on the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), which has now become the required method to develop project proposals to sponsors in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands. This method provides for a detailed problem analysis and needs assessment to guarantee a more focused approach to project objectives and expected outcomes. This also facilitates monitoring and evaluation of project activities. The workshop is part of a series of training events in developing and transitional countries that will provide training to all regional staff of the Global Unions.

GLOBAL UNIONS' DELEGATION MEETS WITH COLOMBIAN REPRESENTATIVE

As a follow up to the 10th December activities in support of Colombian trade unionists, a Global Unions' delegation, comprising Nora Wintour, PSI Equality and Rights Officer, and representatives from EI, ICFTU, IFBWW, IUF and UNI, met on 27 February with the Colombian Ambassador to the UN in Geneva. Anita Normark, IFBWW General Secretary, handed over to the Colombian Ambassador a letter signed by Guy Ryder, ICFTU General Secretary, and Phil Jennings, Global Unions' President. The letter requested that measures be taken to investigate assassinations of trade unionists (a list of 14 specific cases was attached, which included cases of PSI affiliates ANTHOC, SINTRAEMDES and SINTRAEMCALI). The Ambassador assured that the letter would be passed to the competent authorities. Nora Wintour raised the fact that the PSI cases had already been presented to the Government with no avail on the occasion of International Human Rights Day in December 2002 and 2003. However, the delegation was able to convey the importance for the Colombian Government to cooperate actively with the ILO and the Ambassador expressed her willingness to keep channels of communication open.

PUBLIC SERVICES WORK!

The French and Spanish language versions of PSI's publication Public Services Work! have been printed and will be sent to French and Spanish-speaking affiliates shortly. The publication, commissioned by PSI and written by David Hall at the PSIRU, presents a wealth of information about the role of quality public services in building strong societies. It identifies the principles that underpin quality public services: the commitment to community and solidarity and the need for accountability and democracy. It offers concrete, documented examples of what works and why. The document is available on the website in English. The French and Spanish versions will follow soon. For further information, contact the Quality Public Services campaign director, wendy.caird@world-psi.org.

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