



TRANSPORT WORKERS FIGHTING BACK

ORGANISING GLOBALLY

Railway Workers' Campaign

Transport workers all over the world, including railway workers, are experiencing the negative consequences of privatisation, deregulation and liberalisation. New employment forms are emerging which are resulting in increased casualisation and outsourcing of jobs in the transport sector. Global operators employ workers in the same workplace on different wages and conditions, and promote expansion only on profitable routes.

Workers and unions are the first to observe the negative consequences of private companies, including a reduction in safety levels due to decreasing maintenance standards and deskilling of jobs. These dangers were raised by unions during the ITF 'Safety First' campaign for railway workers and their unions which started in 2000. Safety is an important link between unions and passengers.

In 2014, the Section issued an ITF Statement on Railway Safety. You can use this policy paper to address railway safety via the inclusion of special clauses in collective agreements, the establishment of safety committees and through community support. If you would like to receive a copy of the Statement, please contact the Secretariat (inlandtransport@itf.org.uk).

In November 2012, the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section Conference and the ITF Railway Workers' Section Conference endorsed the decision to merge the ITF railway workers' Action Day, traditionally held in March/April, with the annual ITF road transport Action Week campaign in October.

Examples of activities organised by rail unions for the 2015 Action Week:

The European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) has organised action days during the ITF Action Week in 2013, 2014 and 2015 as part of its campaign against the 4th Railway package, which aims to enforce the fragmentation and privatisation of domestic rail services across the European Union, including the compulsory competitive tendering of rail public passenger services and separation of infrastructure and operations.

For more information about the ETF campaign, please contact the ITF Secretariat (inlandtransport@itf.org.uk).

The Free Trade Union of Locomotive Engineers of Ukraine (VPMU) organized a picket outside the Government and handed in demands to the Cabinet of Ministers urging stable financing of the railways, preservation of jobs during the railway reforms and the inclusion of rail union representatives in decision-making processes. It was agreed that the union demands would be examined and proper actions taken.

In Japan, the JRU produced 1,000 leaflets highlighting the importance of railway safety and sustainable public transport. JRU officers distributed the leaflets to members of the public outside the JR Gotanda Station in Tokyo. Members of KOKURO handed out 20,000 fliers on the Action Week and railway safety at major railway stations across the country.

The Nigeria Union of Railway Workers mobilized members for a peaceful demonstration to urge the management of Nigerian Railway Corporation to improve workers' working conditions including better working environment, payment for overtime and issuance of timely staff promotions.

Strong union power on a global level, involvement in decision-making at a national level and cross-border solidarity in the present globalised world are of crucial importance.

What can railway unions do during the Action Week?

- draw attention of the public and state authorities to problems in the industry and highlight alternatives,
- campaign for improved safety standards for workers and passengers,
- promote the ITF Statement on Railway Safety,
- build alliances with other NGOs, community and passenger groups,
- organise cross-border actions and solidarity campaigns,
- hold seminars and other educational activities involving young workers and women.

“[The] Capital of the world is uniting for exploitation of the workers but we will unite to fight against the capital.” (AIRF, India, 2012 Action Week Report)

Please keep in touch! ... Inform us about your activities and let us know the achievements and results of your Action Week campaign so that we can share them with other affiliates and inspire future victories!