

ITF Young Workers' Summer School

24 – 28 June 2013

Forty participants from twenty-four different countries were hosted by International Transit Federation (ITF) affiliate International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) at the William W. Winpisinger Education and Technology Center, Maryland.

The program was intensive and focused on a wide range of issues relevant to building and strengthening unions. Each day offered participants the chance to learn more about and discuss vital labor issues including: the causes of the international financial crisis, power relationships in the global economy, and building alliances beyond the workplace.

Political, Economic and Environmental Crisis

June 24-25, 2013

Jim Stanford was the presenter for the first day; which was packed full of useful information on the economy and the environment. The name of his first presentation was “Finding the Right Balance” (copy of PowerPoint attached). He spoke on global surface temperatures and green jobs. There was emphasis on the problems caused by globalization and climate change. Safety concerns for union members as well as actions that need to be taken were explored and discussed. As an added bonus each of us received a copy of Jim’s book titled, *“Economics for Everyone.”*

Jim’s second presentation was focused on finances and was titled, “Taking Back Finance” (copy of PowerPoint attached). We explored the negative effects made by “the paper economy” and the global financial crisis. The presentation included a lesson in economics, with particular attention paid to euro debt, austerity and attacks on unions. The 2008-2009 economic crises were explored in depth by each country (group of participants) and global economy effects were reported on.

The third presentation given by Jim was titled, “Global Austerity and the Myth of Scarcity” (copy of PowerPoint attached). We discussed the government’s functions, scarce jobs and neoliberalism. Participants completed an activity on deficits, debt and taxes using their country as an example (copy attached).

Precarious Work

June 26, 2013

The main focus of the day was precarious work, facilitated by Dave Spooner. Group activities included discussions on key changes in work in the transport industry, how young precarious workers organize and how the ITF can support the unions to do this.

As a result of our requests, the ITF offered free swag and/or support to any union youth group upon request and also internships for interested youths at the ITF office in London (unpaid). Any questions or requests can be sent to Donna Connor [Connor_Donna@itf.org.uk]

During the day the group sent a message of support to Deringezi (right photo), to call for an end to the repression taking place in Turkey. They took time to celebrate the day of the Seafarer and also sent support to Egyptian workers who are fighting their own revolution (left photo). (Another example of support from the ITF)



A video was made each day to sum up the conference. The following link is an example of what the participants had to say about the day and their thoughts on the issue of precarious work: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2bLXrLZnRc&feature=youtu.be>

The last half of the day was spent with delegate presentation. Gaz Jackson, Chair of the Young Worker Committee at the RMT, and I gave a joint presentation. We showed video of the RMT Young Workers Convention and the TWU Young Workers May Day Action Video. We explained the TWU/RMT alliance and common issues faced by our unions.

Organizing Strategy

June 27, 2013

Teresa Conrow gave a presentation on the overview of organizing steps to strengthen strategic campaigns. The group debated the obstacles faced when trying to organize workers, along with the different ways in which to overcome these obstacles. (PowerPoint attached)

There was an overview of the [ITF Organising Manual](http://www.itfglobal.org/education/organising-manual.cfm) which is a tool to help increase worker participation to achieve the ultimate goal of enhancing union power in the workplace and across the transport industry. ((<http://www.itfglobal.org/education/organising-manual.cfm>))

The group watched videos which showed how some of the ITF live campaigns have organized their workers and discussed ways of mapping. They looked at the [ITF Strategic Campaigns Manual](#). The manual is a step by step guide on how to plan and implement an

effective campaign. Modules include identifying targets that could bring pressure to bear on the main target, developing strategies and tactics, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and case studies of actual campaigns. (<http://www.itfglobal.org/education/strategicmanualhome.cfm>)



In the afternoon the group had some leisure time and visited Washington, DC. Sights included the Whitehouse, The Abraham Lincoln Memorial and the Martin Luther King Memorial. I was able to bring some of the participants, Gaz Jackson (RMT), Nick Pedler (MUA) and Mary Breadner (CAW), on a tour of the TWU International office.



[Click here](#) to see what some of the participants had to say about their experiences in Washington.

Panel Discussion/Graduation

June 28, 2013

The last day started off with a panel of activists; one from the Sierra Club, another from Oslo Transportarbeiderforening in Norway, and TWU's Jeff Rae! Speakers visited each group

and held discussions. Jeff focused on the Occupy Movement, which participants from other countries were very interested in.



The closing ceremony and graduation took place Friday afternoon. Delegates agreed that overcoming fear is a global challenge when it comes to organizing and recruiting young workers. All the delegates made a commitment to increase youth participation within their unions with the support of the ITF. Ingo Marowsky, ITF youth officer, said: “We will strengthen our young workers’ program and network to build the space for young trade unionists to continue to share issues and build an active international response to the problems of austerity, youth employment, precarious work and the growing environmental crisis.” Delegates said that the summer school gave them an invaluable opportunity to learn from colleagues in other countries, and that building a direct relationship with other young activists was a strong basis for future international solidarity and action. Alana Dave, ITF education officer, made a commitment that ITF education will work closely with young workers to build capacity and strengthen activism on all issues important to young workers. She added that the critical awareness and confidence of these young activists will feed new life into their unions and the ITF’s industrial work.

On July 3rd the ITF/TWU networking committee, myself and Drew Nowak (also Chair of the TWU Young Workers Committee) met and discussed the progress and connections made at the summer school. There are hopes to include ITF affiliates in our TWU youth actions and meetings. Drew intends to utilize the resources provided by the ITF in the upcoming TWU YWC meeting in September and provide all attendees with the materials provided during this summer school. I hope that future TWU youths will have the opportunity to attend these summer schools in the future. It was a useful and an enjoyable experience.

This week there is a similar school which is we will be watching via live streaming:

<http://global-labour.net/2013/07/pre-school-briefing-a-starter-kit-for-international-trade-unionists/>