

Local and Global Trade Unionism

Peter Fairbrother, Centre for Governance, Work
and Technologies, RMIT University

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Questions

- How can global unions support and shape local action?
- How can local action support and shape the global ?
- What do the GUFs do?
- What resources do they have?
- What impact do they have?

What we know about Unions in a Global World

1. Local unions beginning to experience the outcomes of economic globalisation
2. Local unions reaching out to community bodies, in particular cases and sectors
3. Institutional change taking place
4. Beginning of cross border alliances
5. Global unions – long history

Global Union Federations

1. BWI – Building and Woodworkers International
2. EI – Education International
3. ICEM – International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions
4. IFJ – International Federation of Journalists
5. IMF – International Metalworkers' Federation
6. ITF – International Transport Workers' Federation
7. ITGLWF – International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation
8. IAEA – International Arts and Entertainment Alliance
9. IUF – International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations
10. PSI – Public Services International
11. UNI – Union Network International

What Do GUFs Do?

Many activities (incremental)

- Lobby
- Policy formulation
- Campaigns
- Conferences- 'Quality Public Services – Action Now!' 12-14 October 2010 (Geneva, Switzerland) Council of Global Unions
- Protests
- Research
- Education

Plus

- Agreements: International Transport Union/Framework

Key Exemplar: Framework Agreements

- Many GUFs:

e.g.

BWI (14); ICEM (13); IMF (19); ITGLWF (1);
IUF (5); PSI (1); UNI (31)

- Core Labour Standards
- An organisational tool?

Case 1: Local Unions Looking to Global Union Federations



1. The Actors

Three unions (in a far off land not so long ago)

- **Maritime Union of Australia (MUA)**
- **Transport Workers Union of Australia (TWU)**
- **Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU)**

Looking to the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)

2. Biography and History



3. Space and Place



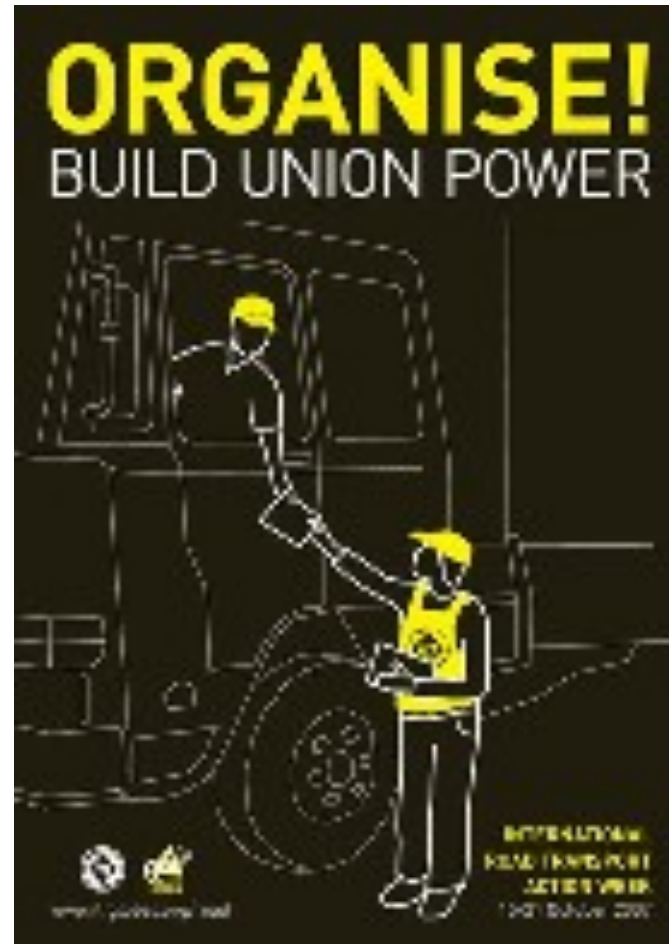
Building Unity via the ITF: Motion (2004)

‘That this meeting congratulates the MUA, RTBU (Rail Division) and TWU initiative of forming the ITF Victorian Transport Union Working Group.

The Integration of Logistics Transport through the establishment of multi modal transport companies is happening and the VTUWG is a logical step for our three unions to take. Noting that this is not an amalgamation in any way shape or form, but a way for our unions to cooperate for the benefit of our members.

We fully support the principal of this working group. “...to establish a cooperative working relationship for the benefit of maritime, rail, and road and air transport union members. Further it seeks to uphold the charter of the ITF and identify and support the ideals, principles and campaigns of the ITF” (Maritime Union of Australia, 2004)

4. Creating Collective Representation and Activities



Case 2: Acting in an International Context

The International Transport Workers' Federation

1. The ITF: , the international trade union federation of transport workers' unions.
2. Based in London, it has an affiliation of 751 unions representing over 4,600,000 transport workers in 154 countries.
3. Recognition that unions have to rethink their purpose and enhance their capacities.

Observations About Local Unions

A view from the top:

- Yes most unions have no real strategies developed in terms of how they tackle the logistics industry the way that it is organised today (ITF Staff, 2007).

In a global world for transport, the ITF is about supply chains, the movement of goods, as well as the transportation of people. In relation to the ITF the task became:

- So the ITF's position really is to try and make sure that there is a union structure that is capable of moving forward. And I ... to my mind it will mean that we will have to pick winners and losers in the end in terms of support, resource allocation. (ITF Staff, 2007)

From Local to Global and Back Again

General

- Maritime Union: 1993
- Small and active
- International history

Local

- Melbourne Port
- Stevedores
- Union

Assessment

- **First, for trade unions to effectively challenge key aspects of these emergent relations, they must take steps to rebuild the way they organize and operate at local levels.**
- **Second, unions must begin to look to their capacities, developing links and relationships that cross borders and place unions in the position to face the international world in which they operate.**
- **Third, in the process of undertaking change, unions will also address their purpose, shaping and reformulating their aims and objectives.**

Case 3: The Importance of Education and Research

Public Services Today

1. Privatisation/corporatisation: new space union organisation
2. Re-evaluation of union relationships with government
3. Organising Approaches
4. Enhanced training, education and research capabilities
5. Decentralisation of power within unions
6. Revitalised / renewed the union?

Campaigning and Looking Outwards

1. Issues:

- Quality
- Work and employment conditions
- Ownership

2. Activity

- Publicity
- Lobbying
- Rallies/demonstrations

3. Education and Research

- Commissioned research/evidence
- Awareness
- Alternatives

Union Capacities/Renewal

- Internal organisation/forms of representation
- Power resources (local, national, global)
- Recomposing global forms for trade unionism

Assessment

Global Unionism: The same aspects in a new context

- Leadership
- Capacities
- Renewal and revitalisation

Unions in a Global World: The End of the Beginning

Tools and Procedures

- Information: research and learning
- Agreements: bases for representation
- Occasions: rallies,
- Material: leaflets, briefing

Activism

- Meetings
- Experiments
- Events

Institutional change

- Cross border alliances
- Reaching out to others