

April-May 2008 N° 212

World Movement of
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Editorial

Let's All Climb Aboard Together

When the ship hits rough weather and the waves toss the vessel from side to side, there is always a danger that the crew can lose control and the ship runs aground. Yet when the members of the crew rise to the challenge to work together and act in solidarity they can overcome even the stormiest of seas.

The crew aboard the sailing ship WMCW made up of all the national member movements of the WMCW has managed to weather the storm and has set sail on its course to its destination of building a new society, a society based on solidarity, a new society where all working men and women can find a dignified job which enables them to provide a decent life for their families and their communities; where families are no longer torn apart by war and ethnic conflict, where workers are not forced to make long dangerous journeys across continents to find work to feed their families.

In this edition we report on the WMCW seminars held in Egypt and the Cameroon, which demonstrate that our movement is still alive and well and that the crew members have rolled up their sleeves to defeat the storm. We include our message for the celebration of international workers day. In this message we remember the thousands of workers who quit their homelands to seek a better life elsewhere. Migrants are, according to our Christian faith, our sisters and our brothers. To welcome the migrant, it is to welcome God among us.

You will read the nautical theme that we are adopting as way of showing that we are on course, but as with all journeys we need provisions and fuel to reach our destination. Our next port of call on our journey will be the international seminar and general assembly to be held in the autumn of 2009. At the international seminar we propose to take as our theme of Migrant Workers and Globalisation. To reach this destination we need your concrete help and financial support.

We urge you climb aboard our ship and join our crew by responding generously to our solidarity campaign and to renew your subscription to INFOR details of which can be found in the column to the left.

Let's not miss the boat it promises to be the journey of a lifetime!!!

Paul Edwards
General Secretary WMCW

The WMCW in the Arab world

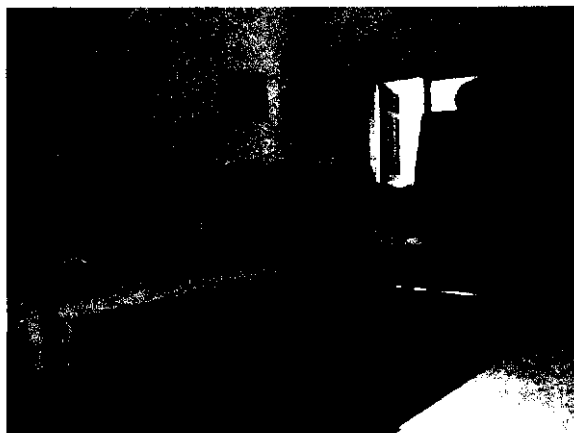
From the 23rd to the 27th of August 2007, the Arab countries met in the suburbs of Cairo (Egypt) for their seminar. The theme of the meeting was, "How can we increase our effectiveness and capacity for change in order to improve our lives and our societies?" Around twenty participants from Egypt and the Lebanon discussed their experiences and their convictions.

The seminar had been delayed for a year due to the Israeli-Lebanese conflict in 2006. The Lebanon, a small country with a population of 4 million (500,000 of whom are Palestinian refugees) is torn by rivalries between different religions (Shiites, Sunnites, Maronites, Druze and other small Christian communities) and strong, conflicting foreign interests (Syria, USA, Europe...). In these difficult circumstances the members of MTC Lebanon try to help the victims of the conflicts and stem the prevailing current of tribalism to rebuild a tolerant State. Egypt is a large country with a population of 73 million (40 million of whom live in urban areas). In political terms it is a multi-party democracy but corruption is rife, roughly 30% of the population is illiterate and unemployment is high (despite the fact that the official unemployment rate is only 9.3%). Bad living and working conditions make life hard for many workers. The labour movement is experiencing a revival (230 strikes in 2006-2007).

The participants examined three real situations. The first related to unfair treatment at school, the second to the unavailability of clean drinking water and the third to corruption in the workplace.

They reaffirmed that everyone has the right to a good education, equal education opportunities, access to clean drinking water and fair and equal treatment for all workers.

There were also lengthy discussions on women's and children's rights, and more particularly women's rights within marriage and in the family, women's right to education and to choose the profession in which they wish to be trained, women's rights at work, children's rights to protection, education and love and the role of schools.



Participants of the seminar of the Arab countries in Cairo in Egypt

One of the most obvious features of today's world is its « culture of despair, » sustained by the power elite. The only objective people are encouraged to pursue is consumerism, and the only model they are offered is one based on pragmatism and materialism. Young people in «disadvantaged » countries want to migrate to America or other « developed» countries.

Changes the participants wished to see:
- The ideal of a world of hope and peace;

- Respect for public and common property (rather than its destruction);
- Acceptance of the principle of diversity (rather than the elimination of differences);
- The promotion of a spirit of liberty that contributes to the formation and development of people and communities;
- The advent of true democracy respecting both majorities and minorities;
- Equality and justice, solidarity in the interests of the common good (rather than every man for himself);
- Simpler human relationships;
- A society where every citizen contributes to making their country a better place (rather than fleeing abroad);
- Emigrants returning home so their countries can benefit from their talents and abilities.

« How can we increase our effectiveness and capacity for change in order to improve our lives and our societies? »

What is needed is a collective effort to raise the awareness of every individual so we can:

- Deepen our knowledge of the situa-

tions and problems that need to be addressed ;

- Acquire new skills to use in our relationships and endeavours with the organisations and associations in which we are active;
- Improve our ability to analyse problems in order to effectively address their root causes.

The Review of Life should be an opportunity for all of us to examine three aspects of our lives: the technical / legal / structural side, the human/living together/community side and aspects relating to our faith.

All the participants felt the seminar had been a success because of the quality of the subjects discussed, the input, the human relations and the organisation. The movements that attended the seminar identified the difficulty of expanding the movements in the Arab world as a real challenge.

***Gilles Roustan,
on the basis of a report by
the organisers of the seminar***

On matters of solidarity, making all the difference

Dear Readers

Friends, members, ex-members, Movements and support groups

INFOP 210 is the second edition in 2009

We wish to ask you to renew your subscription to INFOP

You will find the costs on the next page

Thank you in advance for your interest and gesture of support

May Day Message 2008

Theme: Let's march in solidarity with migrant workers

Migration to seek work and a better life in the 21 century is a fundamental challenge to our society today. The poor of the world flee famine, oppression, and the threat of death, expulsion, the destruction of the environment. Migrant workers end up in undignified working conditions, denied basic rights at work. They are victims of human trafficking and often forced into prostitution and returned home without any legal protection.

Whilst we salute them on this auspicious day (international workers day), the fact remains that repression is a reality for many workers. Inequality in the case of wages, working conditions and security has changed little for migrant workers in more than a hundred years.

In many countries migrant workers are forced to work at least 16 hours per day when local workers work only 8 hours per day. Migrant workers suffer hunger and persecution on a daily basis. Local agents and politicians due to the lack of suitable labour laws for protecting their rights frequently exploit them.

Economic globalisation, based on neo-liberal policies has negative consequences, which lead to impoverishment and in turn migration. The unjust trade policy of the World Bank, WTO and the IMF destroys in many places economic structures and prevents sustainable development. The governments of the G8 countries only produce symbolic policies, but do not create real solutions. They divide workers into documented and undocumented workers, who are frequently labelled 'illegal'.

Migrants are, according to our Christian faith, our sisters and our brothers. To welcome the migrant, it is to welcome God among us. In the Church there is no stranger. The Gospel of love of neighbour at home and abroad (MT 22,34-40) requires clear actions of solidarity with the stranger. God requires the dignity of human being.

We have an indispensable calling to join in the struggle and lives of workers everywhere; through our actions with and for workers we see rays of hope in our movements in all continents.

The World Movement of Christian Workers is convinced that the issue of migrant workers has become a global challenge. On the eve of international workers day

The WMCW salutes the global workforce and urges solidarity with all workers of all nations with or without official documents.

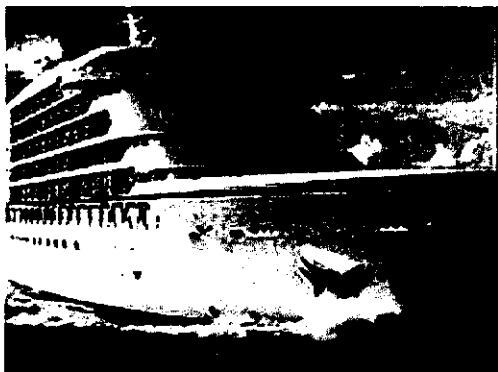
We want to march towards a global society, which is based on human dignity as it is laid down in the Declaration of the human Rights of the United Nations. It is a requirement for us, here and today, to work for a future.

We believe in building alliances and networks with other worker organisations on a global level that are fighting for justice for migrant workers. It is necessary to lobby governments to introduce labour laws that protect the rights of migrant.



Executive Council of the WMCW

A tale for today



Once upon a time...*

there was a ship flying the **WORLD** flag and plying the seas of four continents for some 40 years. It had called in at many ports in over 70 countries to supply them with goods and take on board their products. It had been buffeted by strong winds and had struggled against fierce undertows. However, in recent times, a storm never before experienced broke out, severely rocking the boat: some sailors were tossed around, others fell overboard or were carried away by the

waves; others managed to cling to the sides of the deck or jettisoned ballast to keep the ship afloat. The storm over, the crew much reduced but determined, took over control and the ship is still there, rather the worse for wear, its provisions diminished but with its treasure still intact stowed away in the hull.

On some faraway shores, ten experienced sailors heard about these troubles and sprang to the rescue to help with the repairs, to re-establish communications, to provide the necessary provisions, etc., because they had faith in the Ship and in its ability to ride other storms. They were reminded of the great Helmsman who in a similar circumstance cried out: 'Of what are you frightened oh men of little faith!'

And there are tale ends... Oh I nearly forgot the message on the ship's journal: Keep going straight for the workers of all the continents are waiting for you!

Bernadette Dubuc, one of the 10 sailors

Readers' comments

I am very pleased to see that INFOR is being published again and to receive information about the crisis the movement is going through. This transparency is a good thing from which all the movements will benefit. Thank you for everything that is being done to inject new dynamism into our movement for the good of the working class. Jacques Archibald, Quebec,

Thank you for publishing news about the weakest members of our society and defending their dignity. We members of ACO France regularly remember to « raise a glass to Solidarity » to help support you. Thank you to the whole team and good sailing! Go on spreading your news to denounce the unacceptable and build more fraternity. Geneviève Andrenutz, Diebling, France

I have had a subscription to INFOR for many years. Being able to read and reread the articles and share them with Christians throughout the world who are struggling against all odds to build a world of love is a huge comfort to me. You must go on. It helps me experience the universality of Humankind and the universality of God. Georges Tardif, Lyon, France

I am very happy to have received INFOR. It is a good piece of work, but only one person has signed an article. This does not project the right image of teamwork. Benoît Dionne, St-Georges, Quebec

African Continental Seminar in Douala, Cameroun, from 2 to 6 August 2006

Strengthening of social solidarity in the economic sectors

This was the theme of the Continental Seminar of the WMCW movements of Africa held in Douala. Eight countries attended who regretted the absence of their brother movements; an absence, they suspect, due more to financial problems (transport costs, leave of work, loans from friends, savings) than a real lack of interest!

Each movement presented a document on the reality of social and economic solidarity in its country. Some states timidly recognize the contribution of this sector but there is scant legal promotion. It's still very much on its own. Certain bodies give micro financing. All the delegates stressed that social solidarity in the economic sector was very weak and that it was necessary to work in different areas simultaneously: first, reforming the labour laws, improving working conditions, helping women to exercise responsibilities; second, to continue the fight against privatisations, to defend the rights of workers when companies shut down or privatise, in particular with regard to pension rights. As the cost of living increases everywhere, pay has to be adjusted to meet essential needs and unjustified taxes stopped.

This presentation was illustrated with the following actions:

KENYA: Defence of women's rights who are the majority in the informal sector and political pressure in favour of this sector. Denouncing sexual harassment. Promoting with other groups greater transparency in the economic sector.

TOGO: Organising a savings fund with colleagues for small income-generating activities. Temporary suspension of retailers' coop advantages. Stocking and resale of red oil. Increasing the standing of apprentices with another association.

POPULAR REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: Grouping together of fish sellers, brick mak-

ers. Field cultivation. Involvement in staging a strike. Celebration with YCW of 1 May. Campaign of information on AIDS.

BENIN: Each local team is engaged in an action that responds to a need. For example: literacy courses (2), women market sellers, craftsmen, workers, children not in school, child domestics employed by a family. Small-scale animal rearing, agriculture, gardening, commerce, job integration through micro financing. Schooling (2) and inclusion of the disabled, the destitute, abandoned children. Grouping together of worker craftsmen for better work opportunities. Creation of a school for children of school-going age. Defence of workers' rights in the informal sector, domestic workers working for expatriates.

NIGER: Formation of groups of hairdressers, the destitute, the out-of-work, workers, dress-makers, bar attendants, domestics. Actions of support and defence of their rights – the poor helping the poor. Computer training offered to degree holders.



The unemployed find some energy during a training session

IVORY COAST*: Training offered to young girls who've dropped out of school. Dress-making centre with various options. Vaccination and screening campaign. Important to mention the effect of the war on the movement's activities.

CAMEROON*: Implementation of micro projects: shop offering essential products, juice production. Grouping of craftsmen. Political

action to return power to the Ministry of the Family. Individual projects to create jobs.

GHANA: Helping YCW members to train for a job. Support for the Market Hawkers Association in the defence of their rights; education about cancer and AIDS. Fight against prostitution and rape. Organisation of courses on literacy, hygiene, protection of the environment.



A savings bank created by Porters in Ghana

On the basis of this sharing, contributions from the experts, and collective reflection, the participants defined their action plan for each movement and the concrete means for its implementation.

A few examples:

To train workers to defend their political, social, cultural and economic rights.

To improve living conditions of the marginalized, the destitute.

To forge a professional consciousness in view of an improved productivity, spirituality and awakening to solidarity.

To popularize national legislations: labour laws, collective bargaining, diverse ratifications published by the International Labour Organization.

To collaborate with local NGOs, trade unions, social movements.

To alert political leaders and workers to the importance of economic and social solidarity.

To demand from our governments the promotion of decent work for all.

To give back what one received

Most of the participants left concerned to share what they had learned with their movement (local team, regional and national teams). This is what they said:

« This Seminar answered my wish to share the experiences, training and everything I learned.»

« There should be more like this one; we have a responsibility with regard to the social economy.»

« We should join our forces to other groups in order to change living and working conditions and to undertake more effective actions . »

« We must carry out activities and actions even if our means are small. »

« Let's develop a pragmatic outlook. »

« We must give priority to realistic actions in our movement. »

« We must reflect more with all the MTC movements, improve relations and find ways to galvanize our grassroots teams.

Celebration of the 40th anniversary of WMCW

The seminar celebrated the 40th anniversary of the creation of WMCW with a solemn mass in the chapel with people mainly working in the informal sector. Some 600 working men and women attended.

A cultural evening event was the crowning moment of this feast day with a variety of entertainment from sketches and African dances to the enjoyment of food and poems.

The principal sketch traced the story of two « crazy » workers dreaming of a better world where each person had a decent job and could lead a life of dignity with their families. For them, there would be no need to emigrate clandestinely to some mythical country where a person was not only unwelcome but absolutely inexistent, in the hope of finding a hypothetical job while leaving behind one's loved ones and beautiful country which was then drained of its workforce and its competent and educated intelligentsia.

It was also mentioned that seven African movements had been part of the WMCW creation in 1966. And since then there have been four international leaders from Africa.

Bernadette Dubuc

(Based on participants' notes and seminar report)

International Solidarity Campaign for the International Seminar and the General Assembly*

The WMCW will soon be heading towards the wide open seas and needs all its valiant sailors to realize its International Seminar and final port of call which is the General Assembly.

The launch is set for 2009.

It's now the time to start our preparation so that all the movements barring none can take their place on board. This will become a reality thanks to the solidarity of all the men and women who still believe with all their hearts that we can navigate the stormy waters of globalization in the years ahead.

A world that refuses to accept modern-day slavery, degrading working conditions, unemployment, exclusion, child trafficking.

A world that affirms the dignity of all workers and daughters of God are worth more than all the gold in the world. A world that says the application of human and social rights, to decent working conditions is irreplaceable for working people.

Where can we find the resources to pay travel and stay costs?

Each movement can meet this challenge starting now by saving a certain amount received from members' donations, fund-raising activities, reliable friends.

Examples of what the members can

- The price of a glass of beer
- The price of a glass of beer
- The amount of one working hour

Examples of fund-raising activities: bring-and-buy sales, a meal for solidarity, cooked dishes (breakfast, pies, cakes...), lotto, dance party, plays or sketches, sale of flowers or seeds, games and betting on a winner.

A calculation based on figures at the start of 2008

35 FCFA = 0.50 eu = 0.75 CND = 0.77 USD

Total membership of WMCW member movements: 345 000.

So if each member contributes 0.50 eu we'll have 172 500 eu.

Utopia or a dream?

« When several people dream together, then the dream can become reality » Mgr Camara

WE'LL BE ALL THERE FROM FROM EVERY COUNTRY!

SO DON'T MISS THE BOAT!