



## Global Picketline

### Proposal for international coordination

Submitted to AAWL Committee of Management

31 May 2017

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### Part 1. Background

AAWL learned the concepts of building *International Industrial Action and Solidarity* through communication, exchange visits and joint projects with our **solidarity partners** over many years.

More recently we have used the name Global Picketline to identify and promote coordinated campaigns of *International Industrial Action and Solidarity*.

We developed and published outlines and presentations to promote Global Picketline.

Every few months, AAWL receives requests from our solidarity partners to begin new Global Picketline campaigns. These requests always concern urgent and important labour movement issues and disputes.

So the AAWL Committee of Management has been the structure that considers Global Picketline requests.

But at AAWL, after much discussion, we have decided that this method of considering possible new Global Picketline campaigns is not viable. AAWL does not have the authority to decide, or the capacity to run, multiple Global Picketline campaigns across the world.

As the concept of Global Picketline is receiving increasing support, we have decided to contact our solidarity partners, and ask if they wish to participate in a joint process of discussion and decision-making, to propose, launch and coordinate Global Picketline campaigns.

The structure we propose is a **Global Picketline International Committee (GPIC)**.

## **Part 2. Global Picketline International Committee outline**

This proposal aims to launch a Global Picketline International Committee (GPIC) that will have the task to initiate, coordinate and conclude Global Picketline campaigns.

The Global Picketline International Committee will also appoint and assist Global Picketline coordinators, and endorse, modify and conclude their activities as required.

### **1. Global Picketline International Committee**

AAWL will invite long term solidarity partners who have experience in developing campaigns of *International Industrial Action and Solidarity* to join the Global Picketline International Committee to develop and manage Global Picketline campaigns.

### **2. Invites**

AAWL will initially invite individuals representing solidarity partners to participate in the Global Picketline International Committee

AAWL also nominates a representative to the Global Picketline International Committee

### **3. Membership**

Global Picketline International Committee members are required to be representatives of genuine labour movement organisations. Organisations may replace their representative to GPIC at any time.

### **4. Privacy & security**

Because of the communication requirements involved in participating in the Global Picketline International Committee, it is understood that involvement may be observed. Members of the Global Picketline International Committee are therefore expected to be publicly known as labour movement activists.

### **5. Committee coordination**

AAWL proposes a three person coordination committee to be established, to be responsible for coordinating invites, maintaining a membership contact list, website updates and conducting online meetings. The coordination committee should have no other responsibilities. It is not an executive and may not speak on behalf of the Global Picketline International Committee.

### **6. Finances**

There will be no membership or affiliation fees. The Global Picketline International Committee will not maintain bank accounts or have any role in collecting, managing or distributing finances. All costs and expenses will be voluntarily covered by member organisations. Any solidarity financial assistance by a member organisation to any group of workers will be managed directly by the comrades involved.

## **7. Meetings**

The Global Picketline International Committee will hold monthly online meetings. Quorum will be three members. Meetings will be chaired by a member chosen by those participating in the online meeting. Online meetings will run for a maximum of two hours.

## **8. Standard agenda**

A Global Picketline International Committee meeting will have a standard agenda:

**Item 1** will be consideration of motions to launch a Global Picketline campaign.

**Item 2** will be the appointment two Global Picketline coordinators, from different GPIC member organisations, for each Global Picketline campaigns that has been launched. The Global Picketline coordinators will be expected to be supported by their own organisations. A team of three GPIC members will also be appointed as additional support for the coordinators of each Global Picketline campaign.

**Item 3** will be reports from the coordinators of each Global Picketline campaign that is already running, and motions to continue or conclude a campaign, motions to endorse the reports of the Global Picketline coordinators or to suspend their activities, and any motions to recall or replace Global Picketline coordinators.

**Item 4** will be any motions to make changes to Global Picketline International Committee rules.

**Item 5** will be the next meeting.

## **9. Voting**

All votes at Global Picketline International Committee meetings will be by simple majority. The GPIC may decide to circulate decisions or minutes to members. The GPIC may request that an online vote of all members be taken following the meeting.

## **10. Meeting dates**

AAWL proposes that the first online meeting of the Global Picketline International Committee should take place on Thursday 6 July 2017, with subsequent meetings on the first Thursday of the month.

## **11. Global Picketline coordinators**

The role of the Global Picketline coordinators will be to liaise with workers and genuine labour movement organisations involved in disputes, and if appropriate begin organising solidarity actions in line with the motion authorising the Global Picketline campaign. Global Picketline coordinators will report to each meeting of the Global Picketline International Committee.

## **12. Global Picketline Campaigns**

AAWL will propose launching a Car Industry Global Picketline - with the objective of achieving the release of the jailed Maruti Suzuki workers - at the Global Picketline International Committee meeting in July. AAWL will consult with comrades, and if appropriate nominate Global Picketline coordinators.

AAWL will propose launching a Mining Industry Global Picketline - with the objective of achieving the reinstatement of the sacked Freeport-McMoran workers, and the recognition of the demands of the Indigenous people affected by the Freeport mine - at the Global Picketline International Committee meeting in August. AAWL will consult with comrades, and if appropriate nominate Global Picketline coordinators.

### **13. Software**

Global Picketline International Committee online meetings will be conducted using Google Hangouts. This software limits participation to 10 active participants.

The Global Picketline International Committee may decide to record or broadcast particular meetings, and may decide to make recordings of meetings available to GPIC members or to the public.

In an online vote of all members, SurveyMonkey will be used.

### **14. Documentation**

The text of this Global Picketline International Committee outline, the invitations sent to solidarity partners, and the initial information on the Global Picketline website will be essentially the same, and will form the basis of the discussion with our solidarity partners to develop the project.



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## Elements of Global Picketline

We have consolidated our documents relating to Global Picketline on one website: [picketline.aawl.org.au](http://picketline.aawl.org.au)

### 1. Strategy

Global Picketline is a strategy for organising campaigns to support workers involved in major disputes by developing joint or coordinated solidarity activities, across workplaces, industries and countries.

Global Picketline campaigns are developed by building working class solidarity connections and solidarity actions within class struggles.

### 2. Common demands

The process of developing a Global Picketline begins with the concept that workers have common demands across the world. This concept facilitates a discussion of some disputes and campaigns as international, and for the development of an international strategy.

The Global Labour Movement Charter is a document that has been developed over many years through meetings and discussions with many labour movement organisations across the world.

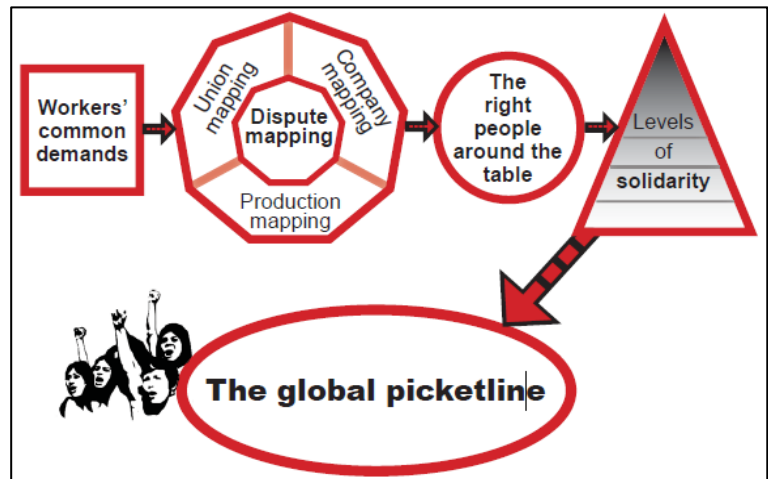
We consider the Global Labour Movement Charter a useful document to assist in discussions between genuine labour movement organisations who intend to work together to build *International Industrial Action and Solidarity* campaigns.



### 3. Dispute analysis

While it is possible to start discussing international labour movement communication and coordination before a dispute, in practice disputes are what has given impetus to our discussions and activities building *International Industrial Action and Solidarity*.

So when a major dispute happens we look at a series of conditions. We ask: *Is this dispute suited to a Global Picketline strategy?*



To be suited for a Global Picketline strategy, a dispute has to involve a large, possibly anti-union international company, with multiple production and distribution sites - where there is the active presence of genuine unions on multiple sites.

If all the conditions for a possible Global Picketline are present, we then prepare a dispute analysis, which includes an assessment the importance of the dispute for the workers involved and for the working class, the perceived strengths and weaknesses between workers and the company, and a detailed history of the dispute.

In our experience an *International Industrial Action and Solidarity* campaign takes significant time and resources to organise, so it is most suited to major disputes that are seen as important for the working class, in that they may result in a major victory or major defeat for workers, with considerable flow-on effects.

### 4. Strategic plan

If a decision is made that a dispute is suited to a Global Picketline strategy, a strategic plan can be developed. This involves dispute mapping, including company mapping, union mapping (the unions involved plus potential allies) and production mapping (identifying strategic production or distribution choke points).

Once a strategic plan is outlined and approved, a Global Picketline campaign can be launched. A dispute slogan should be developed, aimed at workers located throughout the dispute map.

Campaign coordinators are appointed. Their task is to contact the workers and unions involved, liaise with workers and unions to develop the Global Picketline campaign, help prepare and share documents and proposals, assist in organising communication and meetings, assist in developing joint activities, and report on progress.

## **5. *The right people around the table***

Global Picketline is an international campaign, so many of the workers, union officials and activists developing the campaign can't actually meet together. But we still imagine the campaign being developed by all of us together, sitting at the same table.

As we develop a Global Picketline, it becomes clear that particular workers, union officials and activists are much better placed to assist in developing solidarity activities. Obviously the workers directly involved in the dispute are the people who are best placed to propose and request solidarity actions. But some other workers, union officials and activists are also well placed to help to build a Global Picketline campaign. They are strategically placed to assist in the dispute. Possibly they are working in a related company; or possibly they are already active in an area that is strategically connected to the dispute. (Like a transport group used by the company in the dispute; or a housing area where all most of the workers involved in the dispute live).

We have called the workers and activists best placed to assist in a dispute *the right people around the table*. If *the right people around the table* can effectively work together, they can develop an international solidarity strategy to help workers win.

Through experience in many international campaigns, we now know some of the qualities that *the right people around the table* need to have.

They need to be people who want to help the workers win the dispute.

They need to be genuine unionists or genuine labour movement activists. That is, they can't be corrupt; they can't be acting on behalf of management, or for the police, or for the state bureaucracy.

*The right people around the table* can include prominent labour movement leaders; left activists; union officials; union delegates; union activists. They may be active in a union, a community group, in a left organisation or in an international labour movement structure. They need to be well situated to assist in the dispute. This means that *the right people around the table* will take turns at being in meetings and discussions, depending on the stage of a dispute, and also depending on the solidarity strategy and tactics that are chosen.

*The right people around the table* need to be supportive of international solidarity, and they need to be supportive of a strategy that brings together workers, union officials and activists from many unions, workplaces, industries and countries, meeting as comrades in constructive discussions to help fellow workers.

## **6. Levels of solidarity**

Increasingly effective solidarity actions are central to a Global Picketline.

We have learned that the first expression of solidarity tends to be a solidarity message, from one group of workers to another group of workers involved in a dispute.

This initial connection can be a first step to increase communication and discussion, with the aim of connecting the struggles of different groups of workers.

We know that increasing the level of solidarity actions is not easy, and may not be a linear process. Campaigns can be built, but can also retreat. Regular discussions between the workers involved in the dispute and workers developing solidarity activities are a necessary part of Global Picketline, and are necessary to maximise the impact of our activities.

## 7. Joint actions

Our objective is to strengthen connections and discussions to promote joint actions.

We aim to increase the reach and effectiveness of *International Industrial Action and Solidarity*. We know from experience that different groups of workers, in different workplaces, companies, industries, and countries, taking coordinated and mutually supportive action are able to multiply the effect of their actions and win disputes.



Joint actions may not always achieve it, but our aim is to support workers consciously joining together in a global struggle, encompassing many local demands that are connected across companies and industries, to achieve significant gains for the whole working class.

**\*\*\* End**