



International Solidarity Report 2007-2008

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Credits & Captions

Cover photo: CUPE delegates marching for pay equity in Vienna, Austria, during the 100th anniversary World Congress of Public Services International. Public sector workers from Argentina joined them in solidarity.

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A NEW ERA OF GLOBAL SOLIDARITY BEGINS

A strong focus on international solidarity began at CUPE's 2007 national convention, when delegates adopted the Strategic Directions policy document. For the first time, global solidarity has been identified as a key part of our intensified fight against privatization over the next two years.

There is no question that the struggle for global justice involves a deepening awareness of privatization and globalization – at home as well as in developing countries. As one example, although this is the United Nations Year of Water and Sanitation, we see increasing attempts to take away peoples' right to clean and safe public water. The privateers are after health care and education in countries where people have managed to hang onto public services. They want to profit through a global takeover of services that public employees deliver effectively and with pride. They literally aim to buy out our human rights.

This report on international solidarity highlights the extent of our work in many corners of the globe. In Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia – where workers are fighting for human rights, safe jobs and a living wage among other essentials that we take for granted in Canada – CUPE is present.

We have begun a new campaign with Oxfam Canada for access to basic public services around the world as the best way to fight poverty. We are educating members and the public about international trade deals, and resisting schemes like the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) that can take those precious services and our rights away from us – just as they have been taken from workers in other countries.



National President Paul Moist and GJ committee member Miriam Palacios (CUPE 2722), with the new GJ display.

Public sector workers are in this fight together. CUPE is well respected for our work on the international scene, and we take inspiration from the action of other unions. Over the past year, we have continued to work with Public Services International on the ongoing campaign to protect and enhance quality public services. We share this focus with 20 million other PSI affiliate members and we are partnering with them wherever we can to promote and protect the public sector.

We are building global solidarity to make this a better world for working people, their families and their communities. We must strive to defeat privatization in all its guises in every part of the world where privateers threaten public services. We are committed to global solidarity for the good of our own members and those of our partner unions in the developing world.

Paul Moist
National President

Claude Généreux
National Secretary-Treasurer

OUR 20-YEAR HISTORY OF GLOBAL ACTION

Some of us remember the visiting South African trade unionists who joined CUPE members as they canvassed for New Democrats in 1988, and got their first taste of a Canadian winter. Five years later, they would get another blast of winter in Montreal when they joined us at a rally against attacks on employment insurance.

Members from the Atlantic coast might remember meeting the two women trade unionists from Mexico in 1994 who told Nova Scotians that free trade was bad for Mexican working people. Quebec members stepped up to the plate in Haiti in 1991 to provide a home for trade unionists under siege.

Some of you have been to Cuba or have heard about the CUPE members from British Columbia who got a taste of the Cuban public sector workplace by going to work with Cuban workers a few years ago in a true worker-to-worker exchange. You might also have joined Ontario CUPE members on a labour tour of Cuba or assisted in the struggle to help that country survive the United States' economic blockade.



SAMWU comrades join hands in South Africa.

Others among you will have cheered the work of Saskatchewan CUPE members in Chile. Still others have been part of an international health care workers' network. And some of you are working for peace in Colombia, where there are more trade unionists murdered each year than anywhere else in the world.

Our union has long been committed to global justice and international labour solidarity.



Global justice activists march in Saskatoon.

This year, we celebrate the 20th anniversary of our first national global justice working committee meeting. We began with a vision to build labour solidarity with partner unions in developing countries far away from our own locals. Slowly we have learned that global solidarity is a two-way street that we walk together with our distant partners.

In 1989, we set out to establish our first global partnership and soon joined hands with the newly formed South African National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU). Our union was there to help NEHAWU and other unions as they united to fight the 300-year-old racist apartheid regime. And we have been there ever since, just as South African public sector unions have been here to help us.

We have had many partnerships since then. In the early years, we also united with public sector unions in Romania, Haiti, Mexico and Cuba. Today, we still have strong ties in some of those countries, and we have expanded our solidarity to include Latin American and Asian countries.

After many visits and many shared struggles over the last 20 years, CUPE can legitimately claim its place as a global union. When we face threats to our livelihoods, our families and communities, we do not face them alone.

Twenty years ago, we committed ourselves to the fight for global solidarity. From that day forward, we have become more effective trade unionists at home. Simply put, engaging in global solidarity work has made us stronger trade unionists.

TAKING ACTION FROM BC TO NL

Each region has its own way of participating in international solidarity. Here is a roundup of some of the CUPE activities that took place from coast to coast.



CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador President Wayne Lucas leads a march on World Water Day in St. John's.

- **Atlantic:** In Newfoundland and Labrador, CUPE members participated in World Water Day, and showed the video *Dead in the Water*. They continued the joint CUPE-Oxfam campaign to fight poverty worldwide. A Division convention resolution called for the creation of a standing committee on global justice. In Nova Scotia, the Division also supported the CUPE-Oxfam campaign and delegates toasted public water. It also inaugurated its new Global Justice (GJ) committee and put forward a resolution committing the Division to global justice work.
- **Maritimes:** In Prince Edward Island, the CUPE-Oxfam campaign was highlighted at the Division convention, as it was in New Brunswick. Both PEI and NB have a new national GJ committee member. CUPE NB discussed the formation of a GJ working group.
- **Quebec:** Quebec Hydro locals focused on activities related to the Security and Prosperity Partnership summit, especially as it relates to the energy sector. In January 2008, Alain Piché (CUPE 2000) and CUPE National staffer Alain Tessier joined a six-person delegation to Haiti to assist in strengthening its labour movement.

Working with the Quebec Federation of Labour, the CUPE delegates, representing health care and energy workers, joined delegates from the communications, transport and postal sectors. This most recent tour continued a connection to Haiti for our Quebec locals that began two decades ago.

- **Ontario:** A high priority for the Ontario Division continued to be support for Palestinian workers. CUPE members also engaged in anti-war work with the Coalition to Stop the War, participated in the March 6 Colombia Day of Action rally in Toronto, and supported the international campaign in support of trade union rights in Iran. The Division committee provided a speaker for a labour solidarity panel on Iran organized by the International Alliance in Support of Workers in Iran-Canada and the Committee in Support of Workers in Iran. The committee has also increased education involving rank and file members. CUPE 1281, Hamilton Ontario Public Interest Research Group, obtained a second year of funding support for *Radio Libertad* in Guatemala.
- **Manitoba:** The Division committee collaborated with CUPE 2348 to hold an event on International HIV/AIDS Day, helped launch a second Stephen Lewis event to raise funds for HIV/AIDS action in Uganda, continued support for Fair Trade Manitoba, and marched for peace in Colombia. The committee donated to the national GJ Fund and to Co-Development Canada to continue work in Colombia. It also submitted a convention resolution advocating support for the national fund. Some committee members met with a potential partner union in Peru.



The mosaic logo of Guatemalan Radio Libertad.

- **Saskatchewan:** The committee staffed a GJ booth at the Division convention. The Division pledged \$500 to support the Cuban musical group *Eleye*. The committee is now searching for a Global Justice Fund project to take on, with support from CUPE National. Oxfam executive director Robert Fox, a former CUPE communications director, addressed the Saskatoon meeting.



- **Alberta:** The committee's focus was on Canada's Temporary Foreign Workers' Program and its human rights implications. The Division highlighted the CUPE-Oxfam campaign at its convention, and Robert Fox addressed the Calgary meeting.

- **British Columbia:** CUPE BC continued its national GJ Fund-supported projects in Cuba, Colombia and Nicaragua. It also continued to strengthen its Colleen Jordan Humanitarian Fund, created to assist projects related to local issues, natural disasters, and social and global justice. CUPE BC, with financial assistance from CUPE National, continued to promote greater understanding of the issues in the Palestine-Israel conflict through distribution of its booklet *The Wall Must Fall*. CUPE's Hospital Employees' Union continued its national GJ Fund-supported projects in Central America and Honduras concerning *maquila* workers' rights. The Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) committee joined BC Labour Against War and encouraged members to participate in peace rallies. It also met with Haiti Solidarity BC to learn more about engaging in solidarity work in Haiti. The committee adopted a "Statement of Unity" and developed a new logo. Both Divisions responded regularly to calls for support and solidarity from trade unions in developing countries and both supported the CUPE-Oxfam anti-poverty campaign.



CUPE BC President Barry O'Neill visits partner, the Cuban National Union of Public Sector Workers (SNTAP).

THINKING AND ACTING LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

Throughout the year, CUPE took action to support struggling workers in many parts of the world in an ongoing effort to build solidarity.



Global Justice Committee co-chair Barb Moore (CUPE 3912) wearing a Colombia solidarity tee-shirt at the CUPE national convention.

- **Supporting our partners in South Africa:** CUPE National supported sister unions in South Africa as they engaged in a public sector general strike. CUPE National President Paul Moist visited Johannesburg for the triennial meeting of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) in June 2007. His daily reports appeared on the CUPE National website. At press time, the South Africa Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) was planning a national strike to support its Johannesburg members.
- **Helping "Suchitoto 13" in El Salvador:** Members were urged to support community leaders arrested while protesting against water privatization in Suchitoto. Human rights experts concluded that the Suchitoto protest was lawful and denounced the government's charges. The charges of terrorism laid by the government of President Elías Antonio Saca were eventually dropped, in part due to grassroots pressure, including protests from CUPE members.
- **Supporting Burma protesters:** CUPE members heard the call when Buddhist monks hit the streets last year. Our members joined the thousands who donated over \$325,000 to support the Burmese people's efforts to protest peacefully against their military rulers and press the junta to respect human rights and the right of the Burmese people to a democracy. Responding to a call from the Canadian Labour Congress, CUPE National agreed to spend the remaining money from a joint labour project in Burma on protection for trade unionists. We also supported emergency resolutions at the CUPE National convention and the Public Services International world congress in Vienna, condemning the regime in Burma. CUPE leaders also wrote to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, calling for action. Meanwhile, CUPE's Hospital Employees' Union called on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to pressure Canadian companies to cease doing business in Burma and provided a list of those companies that are "enriching the military regime."
- **Helping stop arrests, release unionists in Iran:** CUPE National and others wrote repeatedly to Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad,
- **Protesting for peace in Colombia:** CUPE Manitoba Global Justice Committee member Denyse Lambert, also a member of the national Global Justice committee, joined a Winnipeg march for peace which coincided with mass rallies in Colombia on March 6, 2008. Thousands of Colombians have been forced into exile during a civil war that has been raging since the 1960s. Several hundred of them now live in Winnipeg.
- **Demanding an end to Canada-Colombia free trade deal:** CUPE National regularly wrote to Prime Minister Stephen Harper demanding that he cease free trade negotiations. We also wrote to Colombian President Álvaro Uribe Velez to protest human rights violations and the murder of trade unionists. We kept members posted about how dangerous it is to stand up for workers' rights and fight privatization in Colombia.

urging an end to the arrest and detention of trade union leaders such as Mahmoud Salehi, Mansour Osanloo and others. CUPE participated in a rally outside the Iranian Embassy in Ottawa last August to bring public attention to the mistreatment of the leaders held in Iran's Evin prison.



Farid Chaharlangi, CUPE 4722, and CUPE Equality Branch Director Anne McGrath participate in a rally outside the Iranian embassy in Ottawa.

- **Condemning Pakistan government:**

The government of former president General Pervez Musharaff imposed emergency rule on November 3, 2007, and imprisoned trade union and opposition leaders. A CUPE Ontario resolution to end emergency rule in Pakistan and restore democracy was adopted at the Ontario Federation of Labour convention. The resolution also called on the Canadian government to “unequivocally condemn the military government and institute tough sanctions.”

- **Seeking pardon for rape victim:** A story on the CUPE website helped stop a young woman from being flogged in Saudi Arabia. She had been sentenced to 200 lashes after having been kidnapped and gang-raped. Succumbing to international pressure, including CUPE emails and letters, King Abdullah pardoned the woman.

- **Supporting strike action in South Africa:** During a visit to South Africa in April 2008 to attend joint staff meetings regarding international projects, CUPE National senior researcher Ron Verzuh brought a solidarity message to striking members of SAMWU, and attended a May Day rally with members of SAMWU and NEHAWU. Verzuh was also able to meet the international officer of Zimbabwe's Movement for Democratic Change, the victor in the recent elections, and members of the South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union, the union that refused to unload a ship full of arms destined for Zimbabwe.

- **Participating in PSI meetings:** Senior health care researcher Irene Jansen attended a Public Services International (PSI) Health Services Task Force meeting in May 2008, while National Services Managing Director Stan Marshall participated in a PSI Public Sector Steering Group meeting in April 2008. Both meetings were in held in Geneva, Switzerland. PSI headquarters are located in Ferney-Voltaire, France, a few kilometres from Geneva.



Saskatchewan GJ committee members and Oxfam intern (left) raise fists

GLOBAL GUESTS INSPIRE DELEGATES IN TORONTO

When we rallied against poverty during our national convention in Toronto in October 2007, Petrus Mashishi, president of the South African Municipal Workers' Union, spoke of the fight against poverty in his homeland. "Amandla," he shouted out. Power. And from the heart of the CUPE crowd came the response: "Awethu." To the people.

Mashishi and 14 other international guests enriched the experience of the more than 2,000 delegates through their active participation in convention events. Peter Waldorff, the new general secretary of Public Services International, addressed the floor to outline his plans to reach out to affiliates like CUPE around the world. Norma Stephenson, president of UNISON, the public sector union in the United Kingdom, spoke to the women's caucus and inspired the group with her strong message of encouragement and solidarity.

A guest from each country spoke at our international dinner, bringing to the room a vivid sense of the importance of international solidarity and global justice. At the global justice forum, one guest from each delegation addressed the issues of privatization, human rights and international solidarity from their union's perspective.

Our guests met with many delegates to discuss mutual concerns. Some guests also attended an



Cuban and Argentinian guests join the international march against poverty in Toronto.

evening theatrical event called "Get a Job," sponsored by the local labour council. In one case, a meeting between guests and a university local sowed the seeds of an organizing drive. Our South African guests told the university workers that CUPE was the union to join if they were serious about international solidarity.

In addition to those named above, the guest list included Sandra Van Niekerk, a SAMWU researcher; Junéia Batista, a PSI director and Brazilian municipal union leader; Carlos Gonzalez, a Colombian university sector union leader; Angela Lynes, a UNISON executive member; Pablo Micheli, a health care union leader in Argentina; Rúben Garrido, a staff member with the State Employees Union of Argentina (ATE); Barbara Kindelán Panucia, a Cuban municipal sector union leader; Silvia Matute Carrión, a staff member with that union; Gladys Dikiledi Mahlangu, a NEHAWU provincial president; Guy Slingsby, a NEHAWU researcher; Eddie Markey, a health and safety specialist with the UK's Public and Commercial Services Union; and Michel Clerc, a leader of Droit à l'énergie SOS Futur in France.

As well as endorsing a new Strategic Directions policy document that included international work, convention adopted several international resolutions. These resolutions covered the Americanization of Canada, fair trade, HIV/AIDS, immigration, international solidarity, peace, trade agreements and water.



Petrus Mashishi addresses an anti-poverty rally in Toronto during the 2007 national convention.

CUPE PRESENCE FELT AT PSI WORLD CONGRESS

A five-member CUPE delegation attended the 100th anniversary World Congress of Public Services International held in Vienna, Austria, September 23-26, 2007. CUPE is a long-time affiliate to the 20-million-member global union federation, and was a key player in hosting the previous world congress in 2002.

Led by CUPE National Secretary-Treasurer Claude Généreux, the delegation included former general vice-president Rick MacMillan (New Brunswick, CUPE 1117), Regional Vice-President Candace Rennick (Ontario, CUPE 2280), national Global Justice Committee member Denyse Lambert (Manitoba, CUPE 500), and Ron Verzuh, the senior researcher assigned to CUPE's international program.

Brother Généreux made effective interventions on privatization at a main plenary session and at several workshops, including one with HRH Prince Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands who leads the United Nations' water and sanitation initiative in this International Year of Sanitation.

CUPE delegates attended a pre-congress meeting of the Canadian delegation, made up of nine unions including four from the Quebec public sector. They also went to pre-congress workshops for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered workers and youth.



Claude Généreux and Rick MacMillan raise anti-poverty cards at the world congress.



PSI General Secretary Peter Waldorff at the Toronto convention.

They participated in workshops on health, utilities, municipal services, worker migration, public administration and international solidarity. At informal workshops, our delegates discussed privatization, labour rights, trade agreements, women and young unionists, Iraq and Palestine, water, sustainable development, worker fatigue and the future of unions in the public sector. CUPE's resolution calling for the recognition of a Venezuelan union body, one of 22 presented to congress, was referred to the new PSI board.

CUPE delegates marched for pay equity alongside delegates from Argentina, several African countries and other Canadian affiliates, and participated in a "Stand up against poverty" action.

Brother Généreux hosted a lunch for delegates from CUPE's South African partner unions. This facilitated discussions about renewed relations with the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) and strengthening CUPE's current relations with the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU).



A YEAR OF INTERNATIONAL DAYS

Each year, we celebrate, commemorate and protest on several special days.

- **International Repetitive Strain Injuries Awareness Day (February 28):** CUPE used the day to promote injury prevention, and raise awareness about the prevalence of RSIs (one in 10 Canadian adults, and climbing).
- **International Women’s Day (March 8):** CUPE participated in the Canadian Labour Congress’ new campaign on women’s economic equality, under the slogan “Equality! Once and for all!”
- **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21):** In its annual statement CUPE said, “We like to think of Canada as a place to which people from all over the world can move to find the same opportunities as those who were born here. Unfortunately, the numbers tell a different story.”
- **World Water Day (March 22):** Working with the Council of Canadians, Oxfam and other non-governmental organizations, CUPE focused on women, water and sanitation. CUPE promoted a 2007 World Development Movement report that said public water providers must be at the heart of efforts to tackle the global water crisis.
- **Earth Day (April 22):** For the sixth year, CUPE invited school children across the country to send their artwork to the union’s poster contest. Children drew some of the actions we could take to protect our environment. (See all the 2007–08 winners at www.cupe.ca.)
- **Day of Mourning (April 28):** CUPE led the way in the mid-1980s by calling on the Canadian Labour Congress to initiate a day of mourning for workplace injuries and deaths and fighting for better health and safety standards. The CUPE canary has become an international symbol of health and safety.
- **International Day Against Homophobia (May 17):** CUPE locals were encouraged to recognize the day, to fight against homophobia/transphobia, and to integrate protection of rights into collective agreements, bylaws, policies and procedures.
- **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (October 19):** CUPE delegates to the 2007 national convention joined 38 million people in 110 countries to “Stand Up Against Poverty,” sponsored by Oxfam and Make Poverty History. This action broke a Guinness World Record.
- **World AIDS Day (December 1):** In 2006, CUPE welcomed the first such day with a reminder that many CUPE members have met the disease face to face. CUPE marks the day annually and continues to fight HIV/AIDS in our international work.
- **International Human Rights Day (December 10):** CUPE joined with organizations around the world to commemorate the day by encouraging people to act on behalf of those whose human rights have been violated.
- **United Nation’s Year of Sanitation (2008):** While supporting a needed global focus on access to sanitation, CUPE National wrote to the UN General Secretary to disagree with the call for the use of public private partnerships to address lack of sanitation.



Two of the winning posters for Earth Day.

WORLD MAP OF CUPE SOLIDARITY

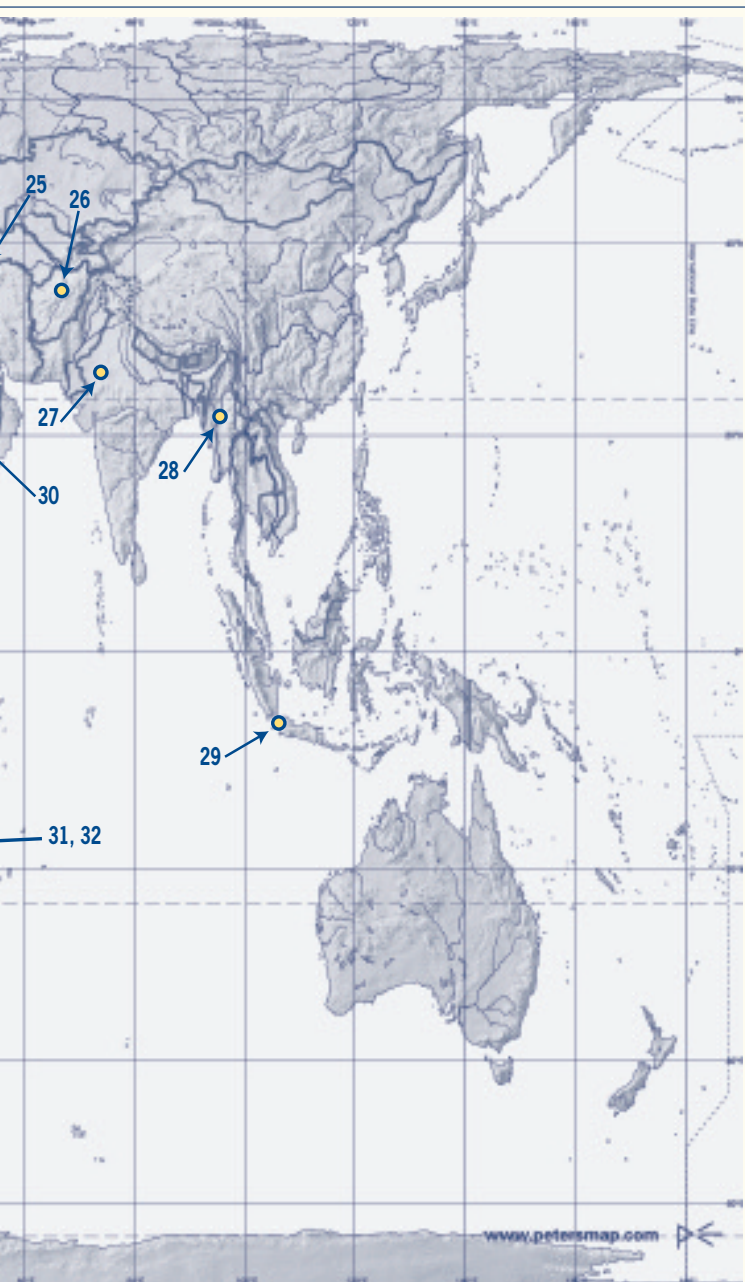


Measured by its ties to unions across the world, CUPE is a global union with union friends and partners on almost every continent. Each of our activities in 2007-08 is indicated on the map pictured here.

SOUTH & CENTRAL AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

1. Brazil: convention guest
2. Argentina: health care networking, convention guests
3. Chile: HEU member visit, letter supporting salmon fishers
4. Peru: member visit, new solidarity ties

5. Colombia: opposing free trade, fighting for human rights
6. Nicaragua: women workers' rights
7. Honduras: legal aid for women workers
8. El Salvador: support for "Suchitoto 13," indigenous conference
9. Guatemala: Radio Libertad, HEU and CUPE members' volunteer work
10. Haiti: capacity building, protecting trade unionists
11. Cuba: capacity building, call for release of "Cuban Five"



© 2005, Akademische Verlaganstalt

NORTH AMERICA

- 12. New Orleans: opposing SPP at summit
- 13. Nationwide: CUPE-Oxfam anti-poverty campaign & CUPE-Council of Canadians water campaign in Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon, Brandon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Fredericton, Saint John's, Charlottetown, Halifax
- 14. Ottawa: CLC/LIDC, coalition work with civil society groups and unions
- 15. Washington: planning opposition to SPP

EUROPE

- 16. Manchester: convention guest from health and safety field
- 17. Harrogate, U.K.: UNISON women's conference
- 18. London: UNISON guests at convention, follow-up by international branch
- 19. Paris: national convention guest from energy sector
- 20. Denmark: PSI general secretary addresses CUPE national convention
- 21. Geneva, Switzerland: PSI Health Services Task Force and PSI Public Sector Steering Group meetings
- 22. Vienna: Austria, PSI 100th anniversary World Congress

MIDDLE EAST & ASIA

- 23. Egypt: attending peace conference, protesting jailing of union leader
- 24. Palestine: opposing Israeli attacks, supporting Palestinian trade unionists
- 25. Iran: rally and letters to support imprisoned trade unionists
- 26. Afghanistan: CLC resolution opposing war
- 27. India: information exchange with public sector union group
- 28. Burma: protecting trade unionists, support for democracy
- 29. Indonesia: resolution on climate change for Bali conference, reports on former CUPE member's volunteer work with Peace Brigades International

AFRICA

- 30. Ethiopia: website reports on former CUPE members' volunteer work
- 31. Zimbabwe: protecting teachers, support letter for free elections rallies
- 32. Swaziland and Zimbabwe: letter read at rallies calling for free and fair elections
- 33. Johannesburg, South Africa: SAWMU workshop on organizing and servicing women workers, visits from NEHAWU leader and staff, convention guests
- 34. Durban, South Africa: call for end to Canadian boycott of anti-racism conference
- 35. Cape Town, South Africa: visits from SAMWU leaders and staff, strike support, convention guests

NOTE: This is a Peters Projection map, wherein countries are drawn in accurate relative sizes. It is an alternative approach to standard Euro- and North American-centric maps.

OXFAM AND CUPE BOOST PUBLIC SERVICES

Oxfam and CUPE are working together in Canada and around the world to ensure that everyone has access to basic public services – such as clean water, working toilets, classrooms with teachers, and clinics with nurses – to empower lives, especially those of women and girls.

When the two organizations teamed up to strengthen the fight for strong, accessible public services for everyone, Nova Scotia members were the first to launch the campaign. And they did it with style, using Canada’s oldest university as a backdrop for the “Public Services – for all – Fight Poverty” campaign in Halifax.



The start of the CUPE-Oxfam campaign, in Nova Scotia.

Oxfam supporters and students at the University of King’s College carried 10-litre buckets of water around a parking lot to symbolize the daily struggle faced by women and girls who must walk up to six kilometres to find clean water for their families and communities.

“This is not a drama,” Joyce Mwangi from Kenya told participants. “This is a very real struggle for women of my country.” Mwangi works with women in rural communities.

Manitoba members were next, with a provincial launch. “They shared the honest and open experiences of our Sudanese sister Ang’er Deng Ruay, and Canadian artist Ray Dirks hit a reality chord for many in the room,” Global Justice



Edmonton city workers (CUPE 30) sign campaign cards at a booth during the CUPE Alberta convention in Calgary.

Committee member Denyse Lambert said. “It expressed, in a very raw manner, the correlation between lack of public services and poverty.”

Good public sanitation – clean water and efficient waste disposal – are critical factors in ensuring human survival and future development. That is why the United Nations declared 2008 International Year of Sanitation. Oxfam volunteers and CUPE members and staff worked together to bring that message – along with reusable water bottles and postcards – to Division conventions.

“Taps, toilets, clinics and education play a fundamental role in fighting poverty and securing equality rights for women,” Oxfam Canada executive director Robert Fox told CUPE Division convention delegates in Calgary and Saskatoon.

The campaign continues throughout 2008.



(clockwise from left) Ang’er Deng Ruay, Southern Sudanese “Lost Girl”; Ray Dirks, artist; Michelle Beveridge, Oxfam Canada Prairie Region coordinator; Alexandra Hrabowych, Oxfam volunteer; and Denyse Lambert, national GJ committee member & CUPE 500.

AWARDS AND KUDOS

Each year, CUPE assists organizations doing valuable international work, appoints members to international bodies and recognizes individual global justice efforts.

- **Member wins international development award:** Former CUPE National Executive Board member Leo Cheverie won the 2007 Alumni Award presented by World University Service of Canada (WUSC). A library technician at the University of Prince Edward Island, Cheverie is President of CUPE 1870. The award recognizes his exceptional contribution to international development through his support of WUSC's programming.
- **International condolences:** The international labour community felt the loss of Donalda MacDonald, a National Executive Board member, CUPE PEI President and CUPE's representative on the women's committee of Public Services International. PSI General Secretary Peter Waldorff expressed sadness on behalf of the global union federation's 20 million members. Joining him with her condolences was PSI Director Juneia Batista of Brazil.
- **CUPE appoints new PSI women's committee rep:** National Executive Board member Candace Rennick (Ontario) has replaced the late Donalda MacDonald as CUPE's representative on the PSI women's committee. In March 2008, Rennick attended the PSI InterAmericas Regional and women's committee meetings in Panama City.
- **Health Care Workers' Exchange:** A CUPE delegation of Sid Ryan (President, CUPE Ontario), Edgar Godoy (President, CUPE 2191),



Candace Rennick (CUPE 2280) and African youth delegate Aimee Lukwasa-Kafutshi attended a PSI youth workshop at the world congress in Vienna, Austria.

Serge Lalonde (CUPE 3350), Nancy Ingalls (CUPE 805), Pearl Blommaert (CUPE 4980), Boni Barcia (HEU), Louis Rodrigues (Ontario Council of Hospital Unions) and CUPE staffers Antoni Shelton and Gwen Hewitt attended the May 2007 meeting of health care unions from North, Central and South America in Havana, Cuba. Another CUPE delegation of Edgar Godoy (CUPE 2191) and Joanne Foote (HEU) travelled to Cuba April 29 to May 3, 2008 to plan the next Exchange meeting, set for Havana in July.

- **International Symposium on Union Education:** Judi Armstrong, British Columbia Union Development representative, attended the United Nations International Labour Organization (ILO) conference in Geneva, Switzerland, in October 2007. The symposium participants stressed the need to make union education more inclusive.
- **Renewed memberships:** CUPE renewed its membership in the International Lesbian and Gay Association, the Canadian Council for International Cooperation and the Canadian Peace Alliance.
- **Greetings and solidarity:** A CUPE delegation carried greetings to the Communist Party of Cuba, and a solidarity support letter accompanied Ed Thomas (CUPE 5167), a member lobbying for recognition of the Day of Mourning at the United Nations in New York.



Leo Cheverie



Donalda MacDonald

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS TAKE THE LEAD

Sometimes, it was individual CUPE members who engaged in international solidarity work. Their efforts often guide where CUPE might get involved on a union-to-union basis.

- **Hydro worker visits remote school in Guatemala:** When Manitoba Hydro technical assistant Arlene Macklem, first vice-president of CUPE 998, visited Guatemala in early 2007, she took a box full of CUPE shirts and other supplies with her. “We donated some of the supplies, including CUPE gifts, to the poorest children attending school in a village called Santa Cruz Bylamja,” Macklem said. The rest of the supplies (crayons, markers, etc.) went to a school in a remote area in the highlands.
- **CUPE local helps Colombian families:** For CUPE 2204’s Shellie Bird, it seems “a lifetime ago” that her child care local joined with other members of the Ottawa-Colombia Sisters in Solidarity (OCSS) group to assist two Colombian families to settle in Canada. It was part of the Canadian Labour Congress’ sponsorship program. CUPE 2204 and the others raised more than \$30,000 to support the families to make a new home here. As part of the project, two members of OCSS went to Colombia.



HEU retiree Jose Monzon makes an annual pilgrimage to his native Guatemala.



Shirley Lord, with VSO Ethiopia Acting Director Semira Alhadi.

- **Former steward protects activists in Indonesia:** Winnipegger Kevin Freedman is a former CUPE activist with a passion for human rights. Last year, that passion took him to Indonesia to work as a Peace Brigades International volunteer, providing non-violent protection to local human rights activists. “My earliest experience with human rights concerns was through my CUPE jobs,” Freedman said. “In fact, I found that human rights was tied directly to labour rights.”
- **Former CUPE activists volunteer in Ethiopia:** Long-time CUPE global justice activists Shirley Lord and George Harris are in Ethiopia, working with the Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA), the largest advocacy network in the country. Lord was a municipal hospital unit president with CUPE 500 in Winnipeg. Harris was treasurer of CUPE 2348 at the city’s Nine Circles Community Health Centre, and served on international solidarity committees at both the Division and National levels. “The opportunities offered me as an activist in CUPE – both in education and experience – provided me with the skills that I am now using in my Voluntary Services Overseas placement in Ethiopia,” Lord said.

OUR GLOBAL JUSTICE FUND AT WORK

Our Global Justice Fund continues to support projects in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

- **Alternative radio in Guatemala:** Founded on March 14, 2004, *Radio Libertad* is the small CUPE-assisted radio station in Guatemala that serves as a “Voice of the People.” Now broadcasting about six hours daily, it is as much an alternative place of learning as it is an outlet for popular broadcasting.
- **Defending human rights with Colombian trade unionists** is a joint project with CUPE BC and Co-Development Canada (CoDev) to educate CUPE members on the continuing crisis in Colombia and build a long-term relationship with Colombian civil society groups, including unions, focused on human rights and the fight against privatization of public services.
- **Strengthening solidarity between Cuban public sector unions and CUPE** is a joint project with CUPE BC and CoDev to raise awareness among CUPE members regarding the Cuban public sector; deepen union solidarity and improve the capacity of Cuban unions to promote the values of union activism.
- **Empowering women *maquila* workers in Nicaragua and other free trade zones** is a joint project with CUPE B.C. and CoDev, in partnership with the Maria Elena Cuadra movement of employed and unemployed women. The project assists the MEC with capacity building, training, and awareness building about free trade zones.
- **Strengthening the solidarity of Central American *maquila* workers** is a joint project with the Hospital Employees’ Union and CoDev, in partnership with the Central American Maquila Network, to ensure that the rights of women and *maquila* workers are included in the Central American Labour Code and to increase the capacity to defend their human rights.
- **Health and safety for women *maquila* workers** is a joint project with HEU and CoDev, in partnership with the Honduran Women’s Collective (CODEMUH), to provide training and institutional support to *maquila* workers to enable them to seek reforms of the occupational health and safety section of the Honduran Labour Code.
- **Organizing and servicing women workers** is a continuation of our project with the South African Municipal Workers’ Union. CUPE and SAMWU co-sponsor a national workshop to improve SAMWU’s ability to recruit women workers in the public and private sector.
- **Possible future projects:** CUPE National’s Research Branch has been exploring other projects that could be undertaken with our international friends, such as: human rights in Colombia; water development in rural Guatemala; an educational exchange between CUPE aboriginal members and indigenous public sector workers in Latin America and Australia; organizing work with a Brazilian public sector union; labour missions to Colombia, the Philippines, Nigeria and Cuba; support for Guatemalan school children; new solidarity relations with public sector unions in India and Peru; and renewed relations with the National Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union of South Africa.



Public sector workers removing garbage in Colombia.

A YEAR OF DEMANDS FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE

CUPE responded to calls for letters of support from troubled developing countries in South and Central America, Asia and the Middle East and Africa.

- **Colombia:** The kidnapping and murder of Colombian trade unionists continued to top the list of atrocities in 2007. In the first three months of 2008, 12 trade unionists had been assassinated by paramilitary death squads. CUPE responded with strongly worded condemnation in letters to Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Colombian President Álvaro Uribe Velez as well as sending condolences to the unions and families of the victims.
- **Palestine:** CUPE called on the Canadian government to urge the Israeli government to lift temporarily its economic sanctions imposed on the Gaza Strip. “While we acknowledge the political volatility of the situation in the region, we urge the Canadian government to take this action on humanitarian grounds.”
- **Iran:** CUPE wrote to Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to demand the release of students and labour activists detained as political prisoners. “Here in Canada we have experienced the terrible consequences of brutality in Evin prison through reports of the torture and death of Canadian photo-journalist Zahra Kazemi.”



CUPE National President Paul Moist standing in solidarity with members of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union in South Africa.

- **South Africa:** CUPE wrote to Prime Minister Stephen Harper in response to a Canadian government decision to boycott the United Nations world conference on racism set for Durban, South Africa, in 2009. “At CUPE, we see the everyday fight against racism in our workplaces, our communities and in society as an imperative battle for social and global justice.”
- **Swaziland and Zimbabwe:** A message of support was read aloud at embassies during a mass march in South Africa on March 7, 2008, where unions demanded free elections and democracy in Zimbabwe and Swaziland. Our leaders supported the call for “a stop to the looming disaster and suffering of our sister peoples.”
- **Zimbabwe:** Our leaders also wrote to police officials in Harare, Zimbabwe, to protest the detainment and torture of members of the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe. “We abhor these vicious acts ... [and] urge you to bring these criminals to justice and provide future protection for trade unionists.”
- **G8:** CUPE and Oxfam called on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to increase Canada’s support for strong public services in the developing world while attending the G8 meeting in June 2007.
- **Egypt:** We wrote to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to protest the arrest and sentencing of labour leader Kamal Abbas and the closure of union offices. “We are concerned that the sentencing marks a drastic escalation of repression against the democratic movement in Egypt.”
- **Cuba:** In a letter to Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier, CUPE expressed concern about the sale of Canadian credit card service provider CUETS Financial Ltd. to the Bank of America. “Many of Canada’s 5 million Credit Union members – some of them CUPE members – won’t have access to credit card services while in Cuba.”

TRADE BATTLES PROTECT SERVICES, RIGHTS

Since Brian Mulroney signed away jobs and income security with the Free Trade Agreement in the 1980s, then through more of the same with the North American Free Trade Agreement of the 1990s, CUPE has been fighting for fair global trade.

Today we battle a new trade enemy, the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP), but we do not fight alone. CUPE participates in a coalition, including the Council of Canadians, Common Frontiers, the Quebec Network on Continental Integration (RQIC), the Alliance for Responsible Trade, Red Mexicana, and others.

Working with our Quebec Hydro locals last summer, CUPE National co-sponsored a timely meeting of energy sector unions in Montreal and a “teach in” on Parliament Hill. Later, as the “three amigos” met at Montebello, QC, CUPE was there to witness and record on film police attempts to cause a riot at the SPP meeting. Along with the Council of Canadians and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union, CUPE exposed this anti-democratic act.

The SPP amigos met again on April 21-22, 2008 in New Orleans to discuss the so-called “next generation” trade deal that is poised to undermine the security and rights of working



While protesting the SPP, the CUPE delegation toured hard-hit areas of New Orleans to show their solidarity with activists working to revitalize their community.



Food workers in Colombia.

people. A CUPE delegation of Brian Koski (CUPE 38), Catherine Bert (CUPE 4250), Pauline Niles (CUPE 1), National Secretary-Treasurer Claude Généreux and CUPE National staff Carol Proulx and Blair Redlin was there to confront them with the many flaws in the SPP agreement.

Earlier, fact sheets had been issued to CUPE members to help them cut through the public relations spin surrounding SPP, as it was secretly concocted by the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States.

CUPE also keeps members informed about SPP through our national website and with the circulation of a popular Canadian Labour Congress comic book on SPP. We also report on the Trade and Investment Review Panel, a group of progressive economists and trade unionists that watches trade issues closely.

Our leaders monitor and are critical of Canada's ongoing push to sign free trade deals with Latin American countries. Peruvian workers will now fall under free trade. But the battle is not yet lost in Colombia where we have persistently protested that Canada cannot engage in trade with a country that allows the murder of trade unionists by paramilitary death squads.

CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS HIT WORLD'S HOT SPOTS

A founding member of the union movement's Labour International Development Committee (LIDC), CUPE works with union partners and civil society groups in Canada and overseas, collaborating on various initiatives involving human rights, privatization and international development. The LIDC program



CLC President Ken Georgetti, with United States Congressman Mike Michaud, after sharing views on how to oppose free trade with Colombia.

includes CUPE in its five-year funding cycle from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Currently, we are devoting CUPE's portion of the CIDA funding to an ongoing project to assist with organizing and servicing of women workers in South Africa.

CUPE works closely with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) international department in responding to crises and calling on the Canadian government to improve efforts to assist developing countries. CUPE was active at the CLC policy convention held May 26-30, 2008, in Toronto, sponsoring a booth where it shared space with Oxfam to promote the ongoing joint anti-poverty campaign.

CUPE National submitted six international resolutions to be considered for debate and adoption at the CLC convention. Peace in Afghanistan led the list, with CUPE calling on

Canada to bring home the troops and for the labour movement to "build solidarity with Afghani workers." We also called on the CLC to urge Canada to: stop negotiating a free trade deal with Colombia, insist on an end to human rights abuses in the Philippines, and call on the United States Congress to free the Cuban Five (the men serving harsh sentences for supposedly spying in the United States). In addition, we urged the CLC to demand that Canada lift its boycott of the second United Nations conference on racism to be held in Durban, South Africa, in 2009. Other CUPE resolutions dealt with issues related to international solidarity, including the Security and Prosperity Partnership, privatization and internal trade deals.

In December 2007, CUPE's National Executive Board adopted a resolution pushing the Canadian government to show international leadership at the United Nations climate change conference in Bali, Indonesia.

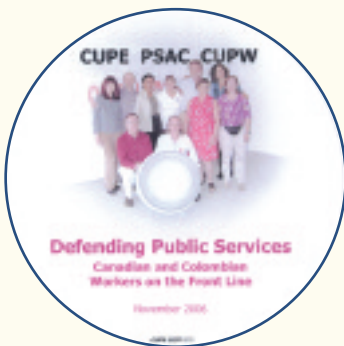


South African guest shows solidarity fist at an October 17, 2007 anti-poverty rally.

WORDS AND IMAGES THAT SPUR MEMBERS TO ACT

New communications tools offer plenty of information on CUPE's international activities.

- Website's global justice section reorganized:** The global justice section of the national website got a tune-up this year. Users will find a better organized section, with more highlighted items on the section front page and additional information in a separate subsection devoted to the fund. An average of 20 postings a month, many illustrated, focus on human rights, trade and international solidarity issues as well as member actions. Some Division websites now include a direct link to the global justice section of the national site.
- Global Justice newsletter gets facelift:** Four editions of the Global Justice newsletter appeared this year: Spring, on trade talks, democracy and public services under threat at the World Trade Organization; Summer, on pensions and global justice, the shifting forces in Latin America and the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP); Autumn, on international guests at national convention, the human rights crisis in Colombia and a South African project update; and Winter 2008, on our project in Guatemala, United Nations Year of Sanitation, human rights battles and an international award winner.
- What Colombian public sector workers face:** CUPE National recently distributed copies of *Defending Public Services: Canadian and*



A new DVD of the CUPE-assisted Colombia labour tour was released.



Alberta Global Justice committee members show off the new global justice materials.

Colombian Workers on the Front Line, a video offering a glimpse into the lives of Colombian workers. The 16-minute DVD, produced by CUPE, the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, illustrates what was learned during a tour by a joint Canadian union delegation to Colombia in 2006.

- Wall Must Fall booklet reissued:** CUPE National revised, reprinted and distributed *The Wall Must Fall*, a CUPE BC publication on the Palestine-Israel conflict.
- Wake Up Canada distributed:** We have also purchased and distributed copies of the Canadian Labour Congress comic book about the SPP trade agreement.
- Global Justice Fund kit:** A new promotional kit now is available online at www.cupe.ca/globaljusticefund and from CUPE's National office. If your local is interested in participating in our global justice activities, contact the CUPE research branch and ask for the international solidarity office.



The CLC-sponsored comic on the Security and Prosperity Partnership was circulated.

SOLIDARITY GOES BEYOND OUR BACKYARD

One thing we have learned over the past 20 years is that an international fund is essential if we are to make a real difference in our goal of global justice for all.

At the beginning of this new century, the Union Aid Fund unofficially changed its name to the Global Justice Fund; we are proud of its accomplishments. Now, we must ask ourselves how we can take a giant step in our commitment to achieving global justice through international labour solidarity.

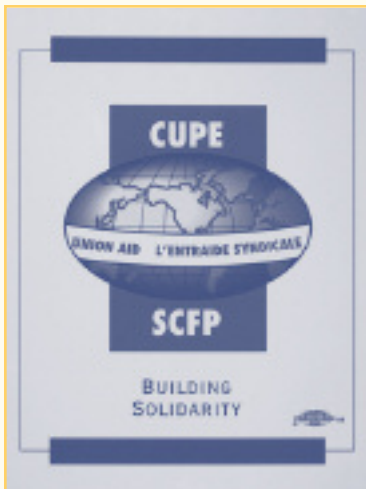
We know that international solidarity isn't just about how we can help others. That's part of it, but it is also about how we can help each other. Let's ask how our international ties can bring us closer to achieving a labour solidarity that will counteract the forces, political and economic, that work against us in the world. Privatization, globalization, free trade – the tools of those forces – are punching holes in public sector unions everywhere. They lead to worsening

conditions for all public sector workers no matter where we live.

What happens in a South American, Asian or African country has an immediate impact on own communities and workplaces. It's as obvious as the fluctuating numbers we see at the gas pumps when we drive home tonight. It could also be the numbers on a water meter or a developing country's interest-owing bill.

By using our international solidarity to create lasting networks of partnership, we bring CUPE to the front line of global justice. We also bring CUPE to the front line in the eyes of our employers, who will see us as a force to be reckoned with at every level – from the Canadian community to the global one.

CUPE members everywhere know the importance of international solidarity. We share a deep understanding with our sisters and brothers – our comrades – the world over. We need to continue building that solidarity. Our Global Justice Fund, and your Local's use of it to build new international union friendships, can help us do just that.



Global Justice Fund posters through the years.

MEMBERS MAKE AN INTERNATIONAL DIFFERENCE

Members support the Global Justice Fund

CUPE members donated almost \$80,000 to the fund in 2007, showing their dedication to international solidarity and its importance to our work as trade unionists. These are the donors in 2007:

CUPE 974, Saskatoon Community Clinic, SK

CUPE 1174, police and fire staff, Summerside and Kensington, PEI

CUPE 1281, OPIRG, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON

CUPE 1281, OPIRG, Guelph University, Guelph, ON

CUPE 1287, Regional Municipality of Niagara staff, ON

CUPE 1860, University of Prince Edward Island staff, Charlottetown, PEI

CUPE 1876, Northside Community Guest Home, North Sydney, NS

CUPE 2220, St. Catharines Public Library staff, ON

CUPE 2330, group home workers, New Glasgow, NS

CUPE 2424, Carleton University support staff, ON

CUPE 2440, CUSO, Ottawa, ON

CUPE 2722, Oxfam, Ottawa, ON

CUPE 3008, Resi-Care Cape Breton Association, Glace Bay, NS

CUPE 3067, New Dawn Guest Home, Sydney, NS

CUPE 3371, Canadian Council for International Cooperation, Ottawa, ON

CUPE 3479, North Island College, Courtenay, BC

CUPE 3912, Dalhousie, St. Mary's and Mount St. Vincent universities, Halifax, NS

CUPE 3963, Prince Albert Cooperative Health Centre, SK

CUPE 4326, Cumberland Country Transition House, Amherst, NS

CUPE 4557, KAIROS (Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives), Toronto, ON

CUPE 4600, Carleton University teaching assistants, ON

CUPE 5111, Prairie North Regional Health Authority staff, SK

CUPE 5167, City of Hamilton workers, ON

CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador, St. John's, NL

CUPE Manitoba Global Justice Committee, Winnipeg, MN

CUPE National

Many CUPE staff members and individual members also gave generously. Thank you to all those who have contributed to our fund.



Sisters across borders in South America.

National Global Justice Committee 2005–2007

Jeanne Clarke, Newfoundland and Labrador (CUPE 1860); Barbara Moore, Co-chair, Nova Scotia (CUPE 3912); Tracey Fall, Prince Edward Island (CUPE 3324); Doug Kingston, New Brunswick (CUPE 833); Claude Arseneault, Quebec (CUPE 2000); Edgar Godoy, Ontario (CUPE 2191), Katherine Nastovski, Ontario (CUPE 3903); Don Cockburn, CUSO (CUPE 2440); Miriam Palacios, Oxfam (CUPE 2722); Denyse Lambert, Manitoba (CUPE 500); Vickie Angell-Scheler, Saskatchewan (CUPE 5111); Margaret Templeton, Alberta (CUPE 1606); Ken Davidson, Co-chair, British Columbia (CUPE 1004); John Evans, Hospital Employees' Union; Fred Muzin, HEU and National Executive Board liaison; Ron Verzuh and Corina Crawley, staff advisers.



***Building
international
solidarity***

www.cupe.ca/globaljustice