

Counterpoint

TIME TO VOTE!

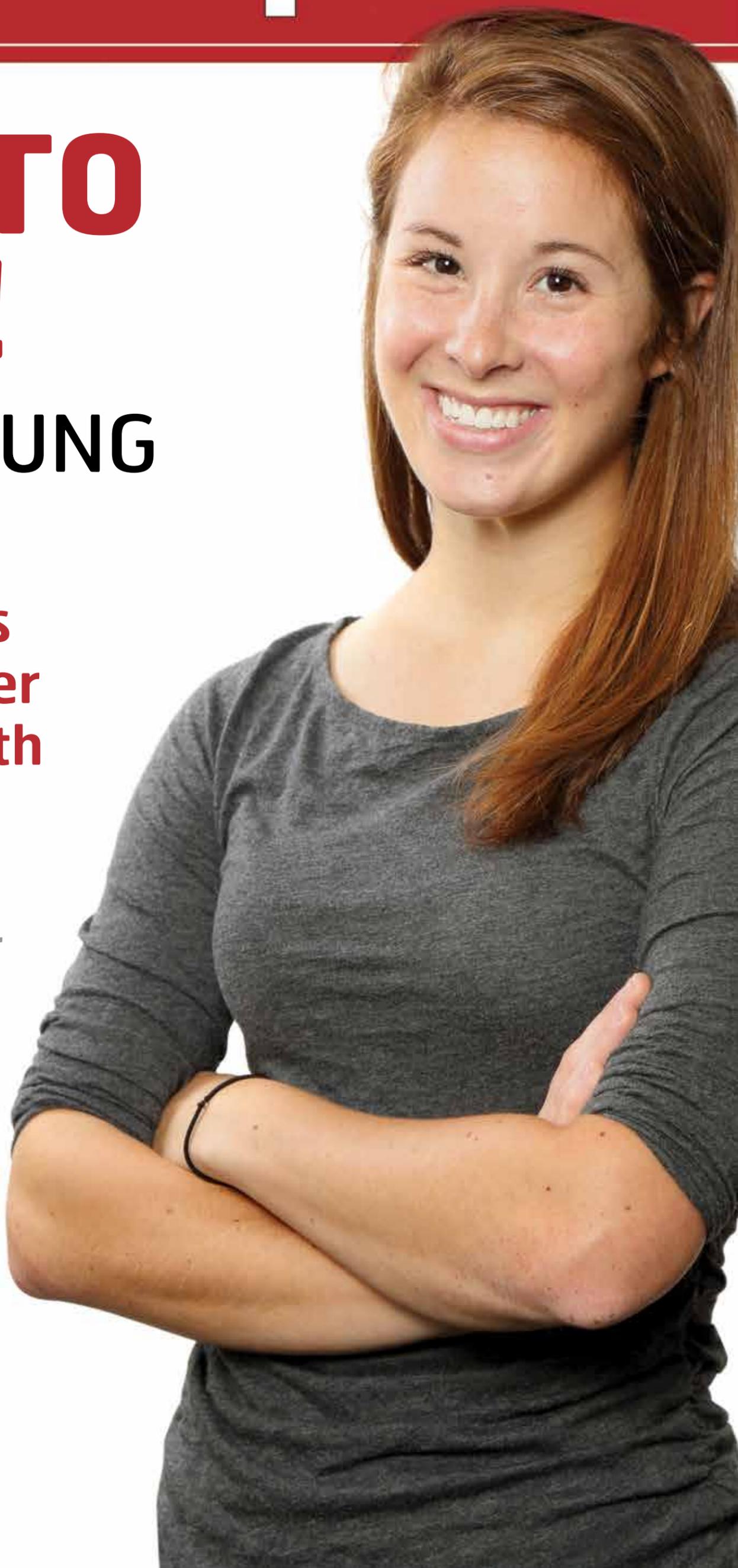
FOCUS: YOUNG WORKERS

**CUPE members
at Halifax Water
in solidarity with
young workers**

Colombia –
ground zero for
privatization

**Campaign to stop the
cuts in colleges and
universities in BC**

KEEPSAKE POSTER
ON THE FEDERAL
ELECTIONS



“Living wage is the issue that ties it all together. There is too much strain on young workers to live a dignified and successful life.”

Sarah Smith, CUPE member and paramedic

A different kind of band-aid solution

This fall, many colleges and universities in British Columbia will be getting some first aid in the form of band-aids placed on “cuts” around campus. Members of CUPE 15 (Langara Community College and Emily Carr University of Art & Design), CUPE 1858 (Vancouver Island University), CUPE 2081 (Camosun College), CUPE 3338 (Simon Fraser University), CUPE 3479 (North Island College), and CUPE 4951 (College of New Caledonia) will be affixing a band-aid to problems on campus caused by devastating funding cuts to post-secondary institutions. Examples of these problems include cancelled programs, peeling paint or leaking pipes.

Communities suffer when colleges and universities are under attack. Funding cuts cause tuition fees and student debt to

rise, limiting accessibility. Public funding is essential for post-secondary institutions to be accessible and to maintain freedom of thought and academic inquiry. Yet public funding for some institutions in BC has fallen by as much as 38 per cent during the past decade.

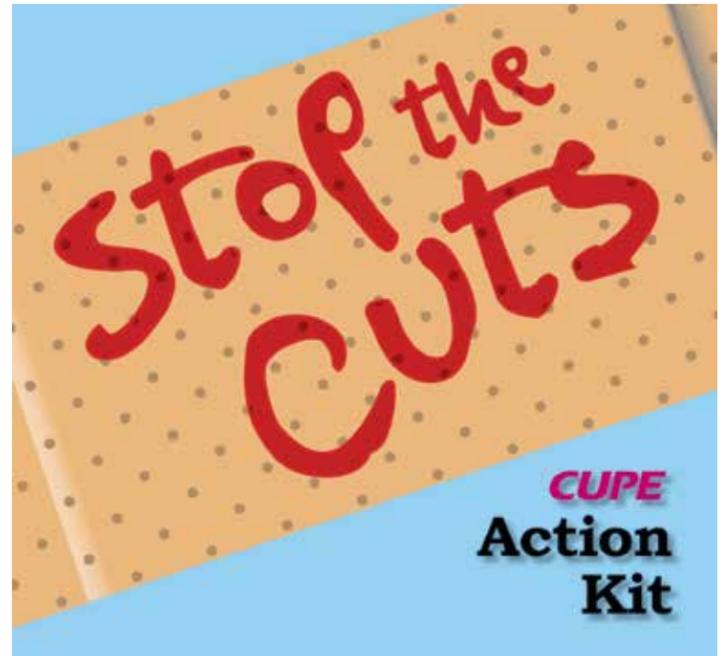
CUPE’s *Stop the Cuts* action kits provide everything members need to highlight the campus problems. The kits contain actual band-aids, peel-off stickers, and larger cardboard band-aids – including one that doubles as a bookmark. There is even a band-aid that is so large it does not fit in the kits. Members can get this one from their local.

With this campaign, CUPE members are raising public awareness about what is happening to post-secondary education in BC and building support to help pressure government for increased funding. The *Stop the Cuts* campaign

is expected to run for two years. Photos of the band-aids with descriptions of the cuts will be sent to

locals and posted on **STOPCUTS.CA.**

■ Janet Szliske



Fighting climate change a the workplace and beyond

The impact of climate change will affect all of us. The planet is in grave danger due to the continual rise in the earth’s average temperature. Currently the biggest impacts have been felt in drastic weather events in some of the world’s poorest countries. Combatting climate change is an issue for all workers and something to which we all need to commit. CUPE National, along with the National Environment Committee has developed a new tool called *Starting to Talk: CUPE Climate Change Conversation* to help members understand climate change and take action on the political front.

Canada needs to reverse the course that it is on. The Conservative record on climate change is dismal. Canada is the only country to pull out of the Kyoto Accord, our environmental assessment process has been gutted and we have not invested in renewable energy under the Conservative government. Electing an NDP government will help to establish Canada as leader in battling climate change and protecting the environment. And we must be vigilant in advocating for what we want. Recently CUPE signed on to the Leap Manifesto. This manifesto is a call for Canada based on caring for the earth and one another. It starts from the premise that Canada is facing the deepest crisis in recent memory. And in the midst of this crisis there is the promise of opportunity to make the political and economic system fairer.

Combatting climate change will take nothing less than transforming our economy away from reliance on fossil fuels and toward renewable energy, increased public transit, public water and other public services. A “green economy” will be a more equitable economy. Find the Leap Manifesto at **LEAPMANIFESTO.ORG**.

By acting in our workplaces and at the ballot box CUPE members can do their part to fight climate change.

■ Matthew Stella

CUPE’S QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FALL 2015

Counterpoint

ISSN print 1920-2857
ISSN online 1920-2865

Counterpoint is published by the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Address all letters to the editor to: CUPE Communications, 1375 St. Laurent Blvd. Ottawa, ON, K1G 0Z7 T: 613-237-1590 F: 613-237-5508 Publications Mail Agreement Number 40005741

Union-printed on 50% recycled, 30% post-consumer waste, elemental chlorine-free paper, certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: CUPE Communications, 1375 St. Laurent Blvd. Ottawa, ON, K1G 0Z7

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The busy life of a young worker

Between her job, studies and an internship, Sarah Smith somehow finds the time to give young workers a stronger voice within the union and beyond.



“To be honest,” Smith admits, “I was never involved with young workers issues until I was approached by my local president.” Smith is a primary care paramedic with CUPE 3324 in Charlottetown, PEI, though she currently resides in Halifax while completing

an unpaid internship for Advanced Care Paramedic training. Her past volunteer work with organizations in the LGBTTI community led to her involvement with the Pink Triangle Committee when she became a CUPE member in 2011.

“I was initially unsure about the Young Workers’ Committee,” said Smith, referring to late 2012 when she was first recruited to join, “I didn’t know what I would be able to contribute.” Since then she has come to see the unique challenges that young workers face in the current economic

climate and how the struggles of young workers link to the struggles of the labour movement.

“Threats and attacks on all workers’ pensions are high, and these will directly affect the ability for young workers to continue, or even begin, to contribute to pension plans,” noted Smith who points out that the current generation of young workers has to face exponentially increasing tuition, real estate and living costs while opportunities for good stable employment are dwindling and the burden of saving for retirement has become a personal responsibility for most, rather than a cost shared by workers and employers.

“Living wage is the issue that ties it all together,” Sarah summarized, “There is too much strain on young workers to live a dignified and successful life.” Young workers have a unique perspective on the challenges facing workers today. Facing the prospect of spending their entire working lives in an austerity economy makes it ever more important for young workers to become active in the labour movement. As a member of the National Young Workers’ Committee, Smith has helped develop mentorship programs and promote accessible union education to train the next generation of labour leaders.

■ Matthew Stella



What an NDP government can do and undo.

There’s much to look forward to should the NDP win the upcoming election. We would finally get affordable child care, greater retirement security, a reinvestment in our health care system and a stronger economy. Despite everything the NDP could do in power, what they can **UNDO** also holds a lot of promise.

Conservatives had an ambitious plan to remake our country in their image when they took office in 2006 and they didn’t waste a minute of their time in government rolling out their harmful agenda.

The good news is that many of the Conservatives’ most odious acts can in fact be undone.

Here are six Conservative actions that stand out as perfect candidates for an orange reversal:

LONG-FORM CENSUS

The Conservatives eliminated the mandatory long-form census in 2010. The price we are paying is substantial – namely, public and corporate decision making based on inaccurate and incomplete data. The long-form census is critical for the evidence based, people centred policymaking needed to build a healthier, safer,

more equitable and prosperous Canada.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Through numerous legislative and regulatory changes Harper gutted the environmental assessment process in Canada. For Stephen Harper, important environmental concerns do not stop or delay private industry’s development plans.

OAS

Conservatives raised the OAS (Old Age Security) eligibility age from 65 to 67, forcing seniors to work two years longer to make ends meet.

BILL C-51 THE ANTI-TERRORISM ACT

Also known as the Conservative ‘spy’ bill, this legislation undermines the civil liberties and democratic freedoms of all people living in Canada.

STATUS OF WOMEN CANADA

Conservatives modified Status of Women Canada (SWC) mandate, preventing it from funding research and advocacy work: the terms ‘advocacy’, ‘equity’ and ‘access to justice’ were removed from SWC’s official mandate. This has prevented women’s groups who receive funding from

SWC from doing critical advocacy and research work, and in some cases eliminated entire organizations who no longer qualified for any funding.

BILL C-377

The Act to amend the Income Tax Act (Labour Organizations) is a partisan attack on unions. It requires unions to disclose more financial information than MPs, Senators, political parties or corporations. It is a breach of privacy and will cost \$20 million simply to set up a tracking system for it. Union finances have always been available to members of the union.

■ Riccardo Filippone

NATIONAL PRESIDENT PAUL MOIST

We have never been closer

We are only a few weeks away from realizing what the labour movement envisioned when we helped form the New Democratic Party of Canada. We have never been closer to electing a federal government that will truly work in the interests of working people.

Thomas Mulcair and his NDP team are on the cusp of a historic election victory. Our country is eager for change, and Canadians want a government that will work to build better lives for their families and better communities for everyday people.

I’m extremely proud of the work CUPE members and activists have already done in this long campaign, and I’m thankful to the thousands who have made good on their pledge to help the NDP by canvassing, making phone calls, putting up signs, and talking

to their families and neighbours about the issues important to us as working people.

But there is still much to do.

Our economy has undergone another recession under the Conservatives. Stephen Harper’s credibility as a good steward of our national economy is all but gone. More than ever Canada’s working people need a government that is focused on building a sustainable economy that will foster good paying jobs.

Thomas Mulcair and his NDP team know that a strong economy needs strong public services. They know that affordable and accessible child care and a strong public health care system are not just good for workers, they are good for the economy.

An NDP government is also committed to ensuring all Canadian workers can retire in dignity and out of poverty. With our help, we can get a federal government with the courage and leadership needed to expand the Canada Pension Plan.

Now is the time to do our part. We need to renew our efforts and get the message out in our communities on these vital issues important to us all.

Please take that last step and vote. Make sure your families, friends, coworkers and neighbours vote.

Together with the NDP, we are about to change the world.

PAUL MOIST ONLINE twitter.com/CUPENatPres



FOCUS:

YOUNG WORKERS



Newfoundland and Labrador replaces student loans with grants

Newfoundland and Labrador broke new ground this summer as it became the first province to eliminate student loans in favour of a non-repayable grant plan.

The grants, offered only to residents of Newfoundland and Labrador who are studying in-province, will cut student debt by as much as 44.5 per cent, according to a government statement.

Over 7,000 students will benefit from the program, which provides \$140 per week to full-time students.

Part-time students will receive up to \$500 per semester of part-time study to a maximum of \$1,000 per year.

Under the new program, a four-year undergraduate student at Memorial University in St. John's would have less than \$14,787 in debt this year, down from \$26,000 in the 2003-04 academic year.

Student representatives praised the announcement.

"It means students are graduating with less debt," said Travis Perry, the provincial chair of the Canadian Federation of Students. "They're able to get out of their program of study, start a family, purchase a home and meaningfully contribute."

■ Dave Loan

Is this the future for young people?

FEWER GOOD JOBS

20% of young people aged 15-24 have never had a job

25% of university graduates work in low-skilled jobs

27% of employed youth aged 15-24 want more work but can't get it

INCREASING COSTS

In the past **15 years** student debt has increased by 460% from \$8,000 to \$37,000 per student

In the past **10 years** rent has gone up by more than **20%**

In the past **14 years** transportation costs have gone up by **28%**

TIME FOR A NEW DEAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

CALM.CA/YOUNGPEOPLE

LABOUR MEDIA

Mentoring the next generation of union leadership

Engaging young workers is an important part of having a strong local; but it can be hard for locals to know where to start.

That is why the CUPE Saskatchewan Young Workers' Committee has developed a four-part mentorship program designed to give locals a step-by-step guide to reach out to young members. The goal of mentorship is to increase young worker involvement at all levels of our union, to support that involvement, and to create an easy-to-use resource from which locals benefit.

"There are barriers to involvement from our generation. There is real

value in supporting leadership development for our locals, for CUPE, and for the labour movement," said Lisa Worobec, the co-chair of CUPE's National Young Workers' Committee. "Mentorship is one way to create a respectful and deliberate way to share information, support each other, develop leadership and confidence, and then be able to go reach a point where you can step away as a mentor."

The program features four pamphlets. Each tip and tool sheet was created to be shared across CUPE locals in Saskatchewan and across Canada.

"Sometimes it can feel

daunting for local executives to start this type of project," said Kent Peterson, alternate young workers' representative to the CUPE Saskatchewan executive. "Mentoring is a key aspect of a local's strategy to involve young workers and also plan for succession to ensure valuable knowledge is not lost when members retire or move on."

The first phase of the project was to develop the resources. The project is moving into an implementation phase where locals will be encouraged to move forward with mentorship and succession planning. CUPE.SK.CA

■ Tria Donaldson

Têtes-à-têtes!



“Mentoring is a key aspect of a local’s strategy to involve young workers and also plan for successorship to ensure valuable knowledge is not lost when members retire or move on.”

Kent Peterson, alternate young workers’ representative to the CUPE Saskatchewan executive.

CUPE members at Halifax Water in solidarity with young workers

In the 58 day lock-out at Halifax Water (which ended on July 15) the primary employer demand was for major cuts to the pension plan. However, for the 335 members of CUPE 227 (outside workers) and CUPE 1431 (inside workers) the lock-out was about much more than pensions.

The employer was demanding a cut to pension benefits by one-third on a go-forward basis. Under this scheme, workers would keep their already accrued pension earnings while earning benefits at a reduced

rate moving forward. This amounts to a two-tier pension system where long-time employees see a slight reduction to the value of their pension while new and future



hires will earn the reduced rate for close to their entire career. This arrangement would disproportionately hurt young workers.

From the employers perspective the strategy is about more than simply cost reduction. It is about driving a wedge between workers, breaking solidarity and weakening the bargaining unit for future negotiations. By placing a greater burden of the pension cuts on new employees and future hires, the employer was betting that the older members,

who comprise the majority, would not act in the interest of defending the pensions of younger workers.

Standing up to employers in these types of negotiations requires more than assessing immediate concerns, it requires a long term view of the effects of the agreement. Kevin Skerrett, a pension researcher for CUPE, participated in the negotiations. “The bargaining team understood the weight of the struggle,” said Skerrett. “The proposal was detrimental to everyone in both locals and especially so

for the younger workers. Giving in to the employer’s demands would have set a terrible precedent and weakened the bargaining unit and the union moving forward.”

Members remained united in the end, and successfully defended their pensions in the lock-out public sector pensions have been under attack for the past decade. Claiming that existing pensions schemes are unsustainable, employers seek to slash pensions first and foremost for young workers. What the locals in Halifax have shown is that when it comes to protecting the pensions of all members CUPE is prepared to fight and win.

■ Matthew Stella

Colombia: ground zero for privatization

For Lisa Worobec, member of CUPE 2669 (Saskatoon Public Library) and co-chair of CUPE’s National Young Workers’ Committee, travelling to Colombia was a learning experience about the devastating effects of neoliberal policies abroad.

“It was a huge eye opener for me,” said Worobec, who went to Colombia in July as part of a Frontlines delegation along with representatives from CUPE, PSAC, CUPW and NUPGE.

The delegation was in Colombia to follow up on the impacts of the Canada – Colombia Free Trade Agreement, and to discuss the privatization of public services with the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA). “I’ve generally known about free trade agreements being a means for exploitation, and about the bad reputation that multinationals – particularly Canadian mining companies – have in South America, but it was

astonishing to learn about TISA,” said Worobec.

The Trade in Services Agreement or TISA, is an agreement currently being worked on in secret by over 80 countries to further privatize and deregulate public services. So secretive are the negotiations that its existence is only known about through leaked documents.

As a library worker, Worobec sees the effects that TISA could have in exacerbating the trend of corporatizing and privatizing information. And while there is a similarity in mindset to some of the challenges Colombians are facing – privatization agendas, cuts to public services, etc. – Worobec is quick to note that Colombia is not Canada.

Like many countries in Latin America, “Colombia is really ground zero for privatization with free trade agreements signed, little to no government regulation



Raul Burbano pours Lisa Worobec a glass of water from La Sirena community aqueduct.

and a high degree of exploitation,” said Worobec. Many Colombians refer to this system, coupled with the death threats and repression that human rights activists and labour leaders face, as neocolonialism.

Despite the immense challenges faced by people in communities with virtually no public services, Worobec

said she saw inspiring examples of organizing such as community built water treatment facilities, progressive farming communities resisting laws against saving seeds and the work of Public Services International in mobilizing the people to resist the neoliberal agenda. Though different in scope and

severity, privatization in Canada and Colombia requires resistance efforts that work across borders. For Worobec, this was the purpose of their delegation. “We were coming in solidarity,” she said. “Not as charity, but as partners, to learn, to share, and to build relationships.”

■ Matthew Stella

NDP governments' fiscal and economic record best of all parties

The Harper government frequently emphasizes its economic record, claiming sound economic management, but the reality is very different: our economy is faltering. Austerity, cuts to public spending, tax cuts, suppression of workers' wages and a narrow focus on the resource sector, the regressive policies they instituted since forming a majority simply don't work.

And it's getting worse. Downward revisions to Canada's gross domestic product by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for this year are worse than any other advanced country. Figures released in September show we've entered another recession, with growth far below what the recent budget projected.

Despite the low dollar, which should help stimulate exports and reduce imports, Canada's international trade deficit has worsened to record levels. Although interest rates are close to historic lows, private capital investment is expected to fall by seven per cent in 2015.

Job growth in Canada has slowed to a crawl, also the worst since 2009. Around 1.3 million Canadians remain unemployed, with another 1.3 million underemployed and a growing number of long-term unemployed.

Not everyone has done badly. Corporate profits have increased by 83 per cent since 2009 and CEO compensation is up by 40 per cent, four times the increase in average wages. While sales of luxury cars

have hit new records, little has trickled down to everyday Canadians.

Unfortunately, Conservative and Liberal governments have applied these failed trickle-down economic policies for decades that have not only increased

inequality, but have also led to meagre and declining economic growth. They've also too frequently used the public purse to enrich their wealthy friends instead of being responsible guardians of public finances.

What Canada needs now is a federal government led by Tom Mulcair that will put a priority on workers: creating more and better quality jobs, with decent wages and benefits; developing a more diversified, innovative and sustainable economy in collaboration with all sectors of the economy; strengthening our public services and social protections, and putting in place a fairer

tax system.

This isn't just theory or wishful thinking. NDP governments across Canada have done it before. Over the past 35 years NDP governments have not only had a better fiscal record, but they've also had a better economic record with stronger wage growth and lower unemployment rates than either Liberal or Conservative governments at provincial and federal levels.

The bottom line is clear: NDP delivers better economic results—and that's what should matter to Canadians.

■ Toby Sanger



in brief

CUPE 101: Stronger together

After a long and often difficult strike, City of London inside workers returned to work doing what they do best – serving the residents of London. The 750 members of CUPE 101 emerged from the strike stronger after fighting an employer that was determined to break the members' spirit, even going so far as to hire scabs during the 62 day long strike.

"A strike is never easy and this strike was no different, but our members showed strength and solidarity during this struggle and we've emerged stronger together because of the support shown not only by our members and Londoners, but from CUPE members across the country," said Shelley Navaroli, president of CUPE 101.

Vancouver transit referendum



In July, voters overwhelmingly rejected a 0.5 per cent increase to the provincial sales tax that would apply regionally to Metro Vancouver and fund the Mayor's Council Transit Plan.

The defeat leaves Metro Vancouver with no long term public transit plan at a time when the population is expected to grow by one million in the next 30 years.

Ontario Retirement Pension Plan



In August, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne announced the creation of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. The plan is intended to supplement CPP for workers without workplace pensions. It has been criticized by the Ontario NDP for allowing exemptions to employers that offer defined contribution pension plans saying that workers in high-cost private pensions will be left out of lower-cost public plan.

Cheques in the mail

In July, the Conservative federal government tried to bribe Canadian families with children under 18 with Universal Child Care Benefit cheques. The cheques provide just enough money to roughly pay for only three days of child care a month.

The income from the UCCB cheques is also taxable and replaces a previously existing federal tax credit, meaning that at tax time any gain in income from the UCCB will be erased. The UCCB has been dismissed by many child care advocates, as it does nothing to create more affordable and accessible child care spaces.

Talk to your care-facilitators

CUPE Quebec's provincial council on social affairs, Conseil provincial des affaires sociales (CPAS), is launching a new phase of its advertising campaign to highlight the work of care-facilitators. This fall a second series of short videos will invite people to talk to care-facilitators about the "nitty-gritty" of their daily work in the Quebec public health and social services system.

CPAS represents 20,000 members in Quebec, with more than 50 job classifications. Beyond their current union activities, the members of the council have made it their mission to celebrate the under-recognized jobs within the health and social services network. And so the term "care-facilitator" ("périsoignant" in French) was created in 2012. Care-facilitators are the various health care institution employees, other than medical personnel, who assume a multitude of essential tasks related to care and services.

"We want to publicize the workers who are not doctors and nurses. In a hospital, there are also orderlies, office staff, maintenance workers, kitchen staff, etc. We need to recognize these occupations, which are often forgotten, but without which the



CPAS's new advertising campaign called [Talk to Your Care-Facilitators]. For further details, see www.carefacilitators.com.



system simply wouldn't function," explains Pierre Soucy, president of CPAS.

At the same time, CPAS is also raising its voice against governmental reforms, privatization and outsourcing of public services, which are seriously affecting the work of care-facilitators.

"Throughout the public network, our care-facilitators perform essential tasks for Quebecers, not for private interests," notes emergency physician Dr. Paul Lévesque in the videos.

The videos promote a reliable public system that is accessible to all, and urges the public to

recognize and support their dedicated workers. The videos denounce the reduction of resources despite an increase in needs, as well as the privatization of services at greater expense to the taxpayers.

■ **Aline Patcheva**

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER CHARLES FLEURY

Young workers can help put Canada back on the right track

Since winning their majority in 2011, the Conservatives have embarrassed us on the world stage by making Canada the only country to pull out of the Kyoto Accord. They've worked with the Liberals to attack our individual rights and freedoms by passing Bill C-51. They've completely disregarded pressing issues like student debt and youth unemployment, creating a generation of unequal opportunity.

But what if the two thirds of young voters who stayed home in 2011 had voted?

Maybe Stephen Harper would not have gotten the 6,201 votes he needed in 14 key ridings to win a majority.

This time, if more of the 5.5 million young Canadians

that are eligible to vote cast their ballot on October 19, we can replace Stephen Harper. But even more importantly, we can finally elect a government that stands with all workers if we vote for Tom Mulcair and the NDP.

By voting NDP, we are supporting a team that is ready to implement the change that matters to workers and their families, like \$15 per day quality child care, stronger public health care, good jobs and sustainable development, as well as better pension protections so that all generations are equal when it comes to retirement security.

Not only does the current NDP caucus have the most diversity in Canadian history, both in terms of the number of women and youth MPs, but it also shares young Canadians' passion for justice, democracy and equality. Don't just take my word for it, look at their concrete proposals on proportional representation, aboriginal sovereignty and workers' rights.

To make sure Stephen Harper doesn't have another four years to inflict more damage onto Canada's future generations, all workers need to vote. And if you want to elect a government that will create a stronger, fairer Canada today, and in the future, vote for Tom Mulcair and the NDP.

CHARLES FLEURY ONLINE  twitter.com/CUPENatSec



GO
VOTE

GET THE
CHANGE YOU
WANT ON
THE ISSUES
THAT MATTER



VOTING
MATTERS

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