

SUMMER 2007

PENSIONS AND GLOBAL JUSTICE

GLOBAL justice issues are being integrated into CUPE's pension education program. In a new introduction to pensions, participants work on a case study about the impact of Canadian mining



companies overseas and in Aboriginal communities in Canada. Many workplace pension plans and the Canadian Pension Plan invest in these companies.

So far, participants in pension workshops in British Columbia and Ontario have looked at situations in Ecuador and Guatemala and have been shocked by what they've learned. Our deferred wages are often invested in business mining that causes environmental contamination, displacement of communities and even death. Both in Canada's North and in the global South, mining ruins lives.

Members are making the links between our pension plans and poor working and living conditions of communities around the globe. Our deferred wages must be invested to support human rights and sustainable development.

In the workshop, participants strategize about what we can do to promote corporate social responsibility – through our pension plans' investment policies as well as through political action.

To find out more about the perils of the mining industry, Canadian pension plan investments in mining, and what you can do, visit <http://www.cupe.ca/globaljustice>.

For information about the new workshop, visit <http://www.cupe.ca/union-development>.

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Shifting forces in Latin America: Hope for a progressive world

Voters in many Latin American countries are choosing governments who support policies that put people, the environment and communities first. Canada has an opportunity to join other countries in the Americas to forge new trade and social links that will foster decent employment opportunities and promote a different model of development.

Popular leaders have been elected in Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina and elsewhere, on the basis of promises to nationalize energy, fight structural causes of poverty, and oppose American-style free trade that benefits only the rich.

With our brothers and sisters continuing to demonstrate that another world is indeed possible, our partnerships in these countries have never been more important.

The Security and Prosperity Partnership: much at risk for North America

OFFICIALS from Canada, the United States and Mexico are discussing major water exports under the “North American Future 2025 Project.” It is part of a massive policy, security and economic integration initiative called the “Security and Prosperity Partnership” for North America or SPP.

Water – SPP discussions have been held in secret, among corporate and government executives. The Canadian Council managed to obtain documents showing that the United States is desperately

seeking access to Canada’s water.

Racial profiling – Security and “smart border” initiatives are also part of the SPP. Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the United States created a “no-fly list” of thousands of people

banned from flying on commercial airlines. Arab and Muslim people are the primary victims of “anti-terrorist measures.” Now, Canada will have its own “no fly list” called the Passenger Protection Program.



Other issues on the SPP agenda include concerns about Canada’s energy security, reliance on more flexible labour and low-paid migrant workers, and public standards and controls being seen as barriers to trade.

Corina Crawley (CUPE Staff), on behalf of Common Frontiers, joined others who presented their concerns to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on International Trade. A tough fight led by New Democrat MP Peter Julian has helped bring this secretive process out into the open.

Visit www.commonfrontiers.ca and www.canadians.org for more information about the SPP and Deep Integration.

FundNEWS

Colombia on CUPE’s radar – Solidarity with Colombian trade unionists and human rights activists is growing in CUPE following two Frontline Solidarity tours to Colombia.

CUPE activists joined members from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the Public Service Alliance of Canada to visit a number of agencies and organizations, some of which are supported by CUPE. They will use what they learned to educate their brothers and sisters about the dangers of privatization.

Together, we can help end the human rights abuses that are ongoing in the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist.



Frontline Tour participants with counterparts in Columbia, November 2006.

New committee for Nova Scotia

A resolution went to Nova Scotia’s division convention this year to create a standing Global Justice committee for the region. It passed unanimously and will take effect at the 2008 division convention.

Want to know more about CUPE’s international activities? See CUPE’s International Report for 2006-07 at <http://www.cupe.ca/globaljustice>.

ILO criticizes Canada for NON-compliance

A NEW International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) report issued in March highlighted the fact that Canada has only ratified five of the eight International Labour Organization's (ILO) core labour standards. Although some federal laws give workers the right to join and form trade unions, significant limitations on trade union and other workers' rights also exist under Canada's provincial laws.

Canada has failed to ratify ILO Convention 98, the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining; ILO Convention 138, the Minimum Age Convention; and ILO Convention 29, the Forced Labour Convention. As an ILO member, Canada must ratify these three major conventions.

The report also exposes the reality of discrimination in Canada. Women continue to be paid significantly lower incomes



than men, while discrimination against workers of colour, Aboriginal people and workers with disabilities continues.

To read the full report: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Canada_TPR_final.pdf.

TAKING CANADA TO TASK: Bill C-293 for more and better aid

CURRENTLY, money labeled "foreign aid" is spent on a wide variety of items, including the war in Afghanistan.



Canadian global justice activists celebrated as Bill C-293, Canada's Better Aid Bill, passed in the House of Commons on March 29, 2007. The NDP, Bloc Québécois and Liberals voted in favour of the legislation to ensure that aid resources go to those living in poverty and respect human rights obligations.

Meanwhile, Canada's spending on aid has been dropping in recent years. According to the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Canada is not carrying its weight in assistance around the world. We are near the bottom, tied with Australia for 15th position among 22 donors.

CUPE and Oxfam Canada are calling not only for more aid but for BETTER aid. Let's ensure that our aid money is invest-

ed in strong public services that help build communities - not privatization or war.

Visit www.cupe.ca/globaljustice for more information and to take action.

New solidarity fund in Saskatchewan

Joining CUPE national, HEU (Hospital Employees' Union) and CUPE British Columbia, delegates at CUPE Saskatchewan's 2007 division convention voted to establish a solidarity fund. A per capita levy increase will be established to support the "Glen Makahonuk Humanity Fund."

Resisting privatization: WATER IN ECUADOR AND BRAZIL

IN A MAJOR victory for the Coalition for the Defense of Public Water, plans to privatize the water system in Quito, Ecuador have been cancelled.

A Price Waterhouse study had argued that lack of public funds made private investment necessary. But the Coalition proved that the municipality would end up paying almost three times what private companies would. Further, a private company could expect to earn profits of up to \$226-million U.S. and would have exclusive rights to the water sources in the Quito region.

There are so many success stories of public control over community water systems in Brazil that the Transnational Institute has published a book about it.

What explains the success of Brazil's system is not only an understanding that public money for profit means less for

the people, it is also a commitment to real democratic participation in community decision-making. The book, *Successful Experiences in Municipal Public Water and Sanitation Services from Brazil*, was first published in Portuguese in June 2006 by a network of more than 1700 public water and sanitation companies in Brazil called ASSEMAE.



CUPE's national global justice committee: who we are and what we do

The NGJC meets twice a year and provides advice and recommendations on projects to the union, and implements national policy on International solidarity. The NGJC works with other national committees and through their provincial divisions to coordinate policy, programs and campaigns.

Committee members currently include:

- Jeanne Clarke (jeanne102003@yahoo.ca)
- Barbara Moore (Co-chair) (barb.m@ns.sympatico.ca)
- Doreen Wall, Doug Kingston (nbchu1252@nb.albn.com)
- Claude Arseneault (carseneault@scfp2000.qc.ca)
- Edgar Godoy (president@cupe2191.org)
- Katherine Nastovski (knastov@yahoo.com)
- Miriam C. Palacios (miriamp@oxfam.ca)
- Don Cockburn (don.Cockburn@cuso.ca)
- Denyse Lambert (monde@mts.net)
- Vickie Angell-Scheler (vangell@sasktel.net)
- Margaret Templeton (welkers@telusplanet.net)
- Ken Davidson (Co-chair) (ken1004@telus.net)
- John Evans (jevans.heu@shaw.ca)
- Fred Muzin (fmuzin@heu.org)
- Corina Crawley (Staff Person) (ccrawley@cupe.ca)

Upcoming EVENTS

- ➔ Canada, United States, Québec and Mexican networks will meet in Mexico City to advance joint initiatives for alternatives to the SPP, July 12-18, 2007.
- ➔ The «3 amigos,» Harper, Bush and Calderon (Mexican President), will meet in Montebello, Québec, August 21-22, 2007.
- ➔ United States Social Forum, Atlanta, Georgia, June 27-July 1, 2007. For more information visit <http://www.ussf2007.org/>.
- ➔ Québec Social Forum, Montréal, Québec, August 23-26, 2007 <http://forumsocialquebec.org/>.

Some helpful global justice links:

Global Policy Network – The Global Policy Network (GPN) unites international researchers and civil society organizations to provide reliable research that brings the workers' perspective into policy discussions. GNP empowers civil society organizations by building their research capacity. It advocates for socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable policies. Since its inception in 2000, the GPN has become a vital tool for unionists. See www.gpn.org.

CUPE's national global justice newsletter is published approximately four times a year. Send your feedback, suggestions, draft articles, announcements and reports on activities to CUPE Research research@cupe.ca or call (613) 237-1590.

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