

COUNTERPOINT

FALL 2023 SPECIAL 60TH EDITION

CUPE'S NATIONAL PUBLICATION



FOCUS

Fostering equity: Education transforming CUPE one member at a time

Health & Safety

CUPE led the charge to establish Canada's Day of Mourning

Profile

KATHLEEN BRENNAN
CUPE 2157 member

Global Justice

60 years of worker-to-worker solidarity around the globe at the heart of CUPE's work

Economy

Inflation: We've been here before

CUPE TURNS 60

As our country has grown
and diversified, so has our union

CUPE / Canadian Union
of Public Employees

MERGING CONVENTION

CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

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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: comm@cupe.ca

Publications Mail Agreement Number 40005741

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

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Ottawa, ON, K1G 0Z7

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OUR DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH - AND IT'S BEEN KEY TO OUR GROWTH AS A UNION

By **Mark Hancock** – CUPE's National President

It's easy to look at how CUPE has grown over the years, and figure we've simply grown alongside the general population. But the numbers alone don't tell the whole story.

Consider this: in 1963, the year CUPE was formed, the population of Canada was about 19 million, about half of what it is today. But in that same time, our union has grown more than eight-fold, from 85,000 members in 1963 to more than 715,000 today. That's partly because public services have expanded in the last 60 years, and partly because these front-line workers wanted the protection of a strong union.

Sixty years ago, our membership was made up of a lot of older white guys, and our activist base was too. The photo of our founding convention on my office wall definitely reflects that, as do the proceedings from that convention – only about 10% of the delegates were women.

But as our country has grown and diversified, so has our union. Today, we are the largest, strongest, and most diverse union in Canada.

Our most recent membership survey tells us that two of every three CUPE members identify as women. One in ten identifies as Black or racialized, while 5% of CUPE members identify as Indigenous, which is slightly higher than the national workforce average. One in five is a young worker under the age of 34. Nearly one in ten lives and works with a disability, and 7% of CUPE members belong to the 2SLGBTQI+ community.

We have grown because we reflect the diversity of the communities where we work, and because we speak to the issues that matter to members and workers in our communities. We've been showing up at Pride events long before it was popular, and we've been showing up for


Indigenous, Black and racialized communities when they're under attack since day one.

And we have grown because, every day, we fight to expand our tent and extend the benefits of union membership to more workers. We have grown because – whether it's research assistants at the University of British Columbia or sex worker advocates in Toronto – we continue to reach out and organize workers in workplaces and sectors where people have never had a union supporting them.

I've seen first-hand just how much our union has changed since I first became a member of CUPE in Port Coquitlam, B.C. The community was pretty homogenous back then, and there were not nearly as many people working at city hall as there are now. We had to push the city for facilities for the few women who had just been hired in the works yard. As our workplace diversified, we learned how to talk to our members about sexism and racism and human rights, in our workplace or in our union.

And I know that similar stories have unfolded in our workplaces and union halls across the country over the years. CUPE's strength comes from our membership – it always has. And every day, since the day we were founded, the diversity of perspectives and experiences of our members has guided our work and given us the strength we need to take on the fights ahead.

That strength is why we will keep on scoring big wins for workers and families at the bargaining table and in our legislatures. It's why we will continue to combat hate and discrimination. And it's why we are going to take on the likes of Pierre Poilievre, whose far-right agenda is built on dividing and conquering workers and turning us against each other.

“One of the major tasks of our new union was obviously that of organizing the unorganized in our jurisdiction and I am happy to report that in the first year, 39 new locals have been chartered across the country, and new units were added to existing locals,” wrote CUPE’s founding President Stan Little in his first year assessment report.

VOL 1 NO 1

OCTOBER — OCTOBRE 1964

CUPE is One Year Old

THE Canadian Union of Public Employees is one year old. It came into existence on September 24, 1963.

Looking over the first year, one has to note two things: it has been growing

with so many obligations inherited from its parent organizations and imposed on it because of the fact that it was already a full-grown organization from the start.

The second difficulty ex-

Le SCFP a un an

NÉ le 24 septembre 1963, le Syndicat canadien de la Fonction publique vient d'avoir un an.

Si d'une part il a peut-être progressé plus rapidement que

Au moment de la fusion, ses auteurs avaient certes l'impression que les douleurs de croissance ne pouvaient l'emporter sur les douleurs de l'enfantement. Les difficultés que le SCFP a rencontrées au cours



BEING A PROUD TRADE UNIONIST: STILL RELEVANT TODAY

By **Candace Rennick** – CUPE's National Secretary-Treasurer

Recently I came across a wonderful document that summarizes the content of the many news publications CUPE produced over the first 50 years of our union's life. I was struck by how many of the articles were about matters we still deal with today: privatization of public services, cuts to health care and education funding, violence and discrimination in the workplace, gender-based pay inequity, attacks on collective bargaining, and, of course, the ongoing fight to improve the working conditions and standard of living of CUPE members.

This year we mark our union's 60th birthday. It's an opportunity to celebrate how much we've gained over the years, and to honour the members, activists, leaders, and staff who worked so hard and achieved so much. But we must also remember that workers' struggles are never-ending and now it is our turn take up that work, to protect past advances and break new ground.

We must continue and accelerate the fight for wage increases that exceed the rate of inflation. We must continue to grow our union by organizing unorganized workers. And in this, as in all our union work, we must make a much more concerted and better coordinated effort to put an end to gender and racial inequity in every workplace and community.

Often in our union's history, members used their collective bargaining power to reduce and eliminate discriminatory wage gaps. Let's make sure we do the same at every bargaining table going forward. Let's resurrect the fight for benefits and pensions for those who still don't have them. The majority of those at the bottom of the pay scale,

those without job security, those without extended health insurance, and those forced to retire without pensions are women, Indigenous, Black, racialized and 2SLGBTQI+ people, persons with disabilities, or otherwise marginalized workers. Our union was founded to right these wrongs and our work is far from done.

Of course, our fight for real equity must go beyond the bargaining table. To achieve racial equity and advance reconciliation, we need big changes in the justice system, safe schools and safe streets. Our bargaining demands must be made together with demands for expanded public services and fair taxation to ensure equitable redistribution of wealth.

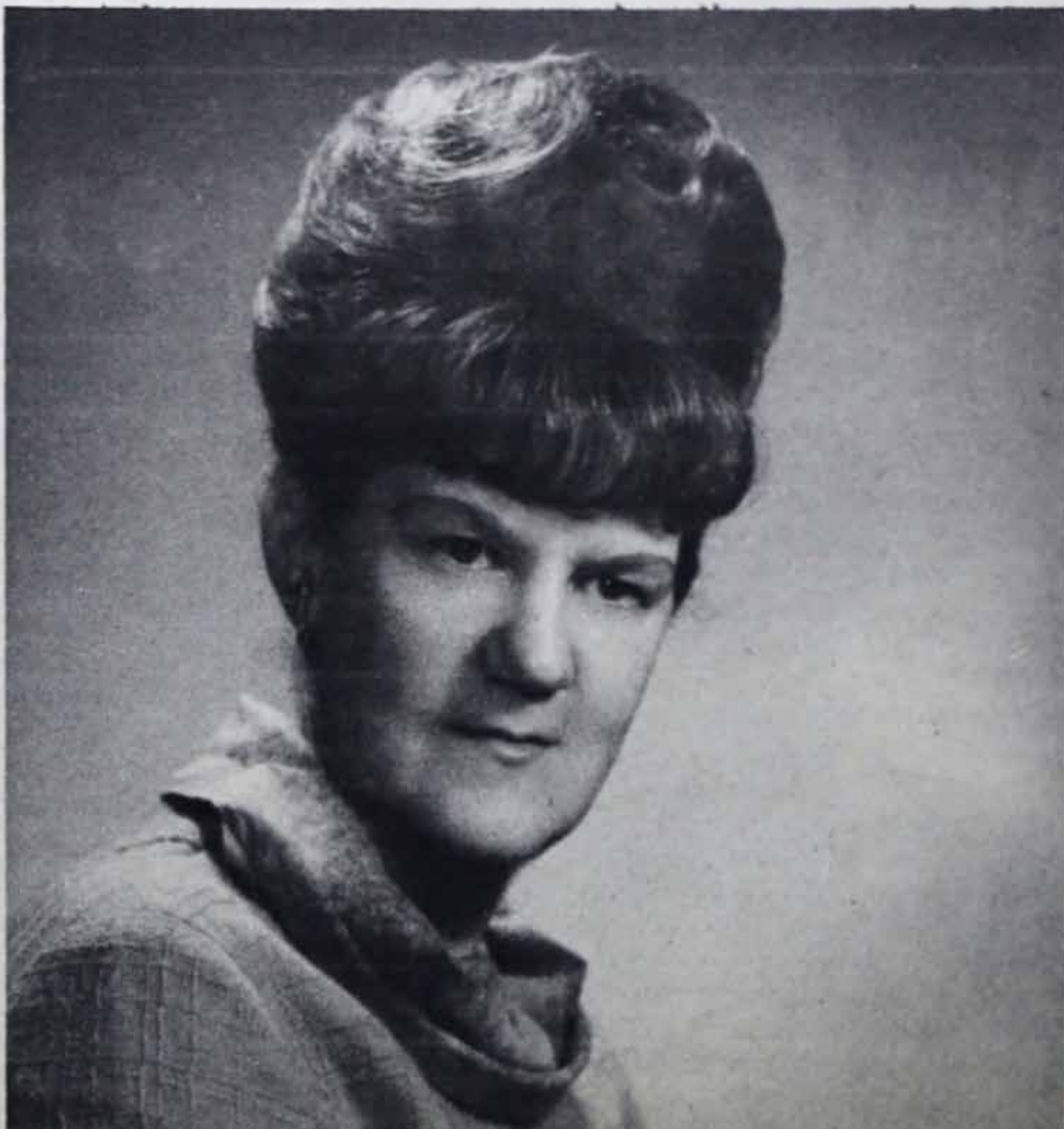
And we need more change, more equity, more safety, within our own union. Our Constitution says that one of our goals is the elimination of harassment and discrimination. Yet, 60 years after our union's birth, both still exist within our structures and practices. It's difficult to admit, but it would be a lie to pretend otherwise. The National Safe Union Spaces Working Group confirmed the problem through extensive surveys and focus groups. We have developed a strategy to address the issues, and we are implementing it.

It is true that change is inevitable, but it is also true that together people have the power to make the change they want. CUPE's 60-year history is full of militant and victorious battles for justice — I am so proud that in the last two years we have contributed to that legacy. Let's keep doing so.



CUPE Secretary-Treasurer

**"Women important in work force,
but not represented in unions"**



Defence Fund Regulations

SCHEDULE OF BENEFITS

Weekly benefits are as follows:

Single	\$12.00
Couple	15.00
Family	20.00

The daily benefits for periods of less than a week shall be:

Single	\$ 2.00
Couple	2.50
Family	3.33

ELIGIBILITY

Benefits shall be available only to those members who make application, who are in good standing according to the CUPE Constitution, and who participate in the strike.

INSURANCE BENEFIT

Only members who are in good standing...

appel to the National Executive Board.
(e) If the monies are invested it must be assumed that such funds are immediately available on request.

OTHER THAN STRIKE BENEFITS

(e) Locals that are compelled under legislation to go to arbitration as the final step of collective bargaining, following investigation, shall be entitled to draw salaries from the National Defence...

Mrs. Grace Harman CUPE Secretary-Treasurer



HIGHLIGHTS FROM CUPE'S FIGHT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OVER THE LAST 60 YEARS

By Tara Paterson

Then National President Judy Darcy wrote these words in a 1993 book titled *Women Challenging Unions*. Back then, Darcy was celebrating the work of CUPE activists and all they had achieved for human rights in the 30 years since the union's founding. She was also warning members not to let up.

Now, 30 years on, we can look at *Breaking Barriers: CUPE's Human Rights History* to see that members heeded Darcy's advice. CUPE has kept pushing for human rights – though, as Darcy recognized even then, struggles remain. As we mark 60 years of our union, we can look back at some of these milestones to remind us to always keep up the fight.

"I certainly don't want to give the impression that sexism and racism don't exist in CUPE and many of our locals. But we do have a very strong mandate to fight even more forcefully than before to tackle all these interrelated equality issues, be they sexism, racism, or discrimination against lesbians and gays or people with disabilities... Our biggest challenge right now is to be vigilant enough so that equality issues aren't pushed to the background."

...to force workers to end strikes, such as occurred last year during a Quebec Hydro dispute.

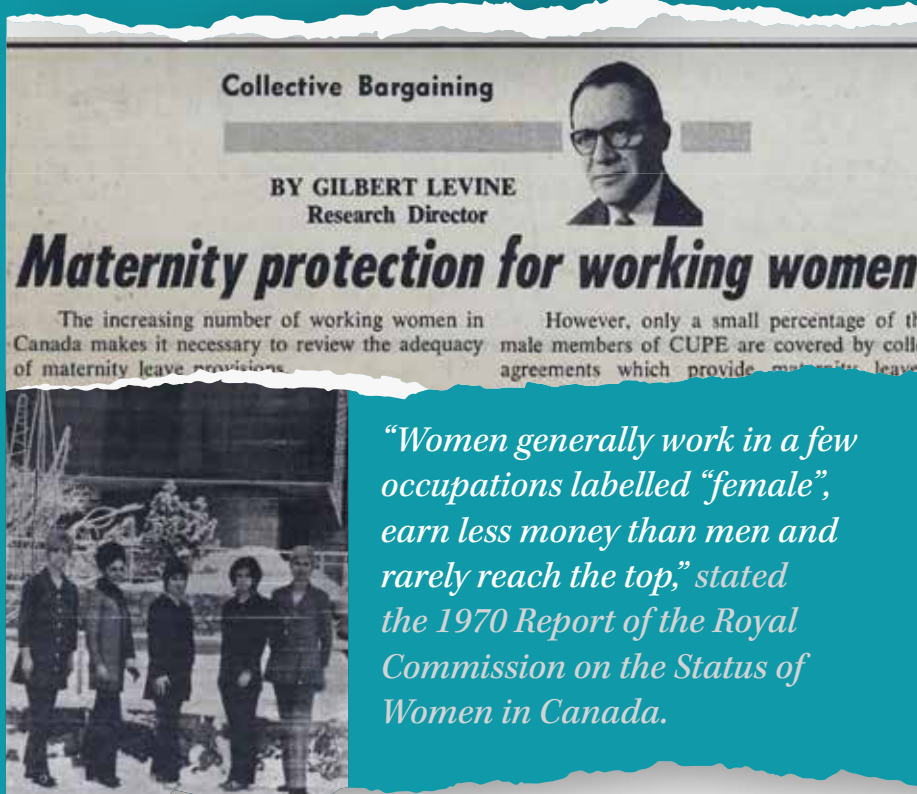
VANCOUVER—Public employees in British Columbia will enjoy free collective bargaining once



Sister solidarity in '67 and '71

In 1967, an article in CUPE's publication *The Leader* slammed the federal government for inadequate maternity leave. That same year, members of CUPE 101 in London, Ontario, won an end to separate collective agreements for men and women.

Four years later, our 1971 National Convention approved a massive program to address gender equality through a national women's committee, special training and a plan to address discrimination, pensions, child care, part-time work, maternity leave, job protection for married women, rug-ranking and women's participation in the union. Of the 140,000 members at that time, 45,000 were women, and some of them won the right to wear pants at work.



THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES:

A REPORT ON LIFE IN CANADA'S NORTHERN 'COLONY'

Fighting for reconciliation in the 70s and 80s

At the same time, Indigenous members were fighting for human rights – especially with the renegotiation of Canada's Constitution on the horizon. In 1975, CUPE published a report by Wally Firth, Canada's first Northern Métis MP, on inadequate conditions for Indigenous peoples. Later on, CUPE hosted Indigenous delegates of *The Constitution Express* in Ottawa, demanding that Indigenous (then referred to as 'native') and women's rights be included in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"Our union is concerned that the already limited rights granted to Canada's aboriginal peoples will be further jeopardized if the constitution is not amended to include them now," said CUPE National President Grace Hartman in 1981.

Taking it international in '85

In 1985, locals sought to ban pension fund investment in apartheid South Africa and organized a boycott of South African goods by hospitals, municipalities, nursing homes, schools and universities. They used that momentum to later challenge the United States' blockade of Cuba and participate in a caravan of goods across the U.S. border bound for Cuba.

No pension funds for apartheid



O'Connor

TORONTO — Pressure from CUPE's Ontario Division has led to a welcome decision by the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement Board (OMERS) not to invest any of its pension money in companies that support the South African government's apartheid policy.

The division has been successful in its campaign for

treasurer Terry O'Connor. "The wording of the resolution passed by the OMERS board is much too vague. It says OMERS won't invest in companies that support apartheid, but that might not cover a firm that operates in South Africa and simply claims it doesn't agree with the government's racist policies. "We'd like to see a much

more specific statement from the OMERS board indicating withdrawal of all investments from South Africa, period."

However, even the weak wording of the recently adopted OMERS policy is a big improvement on the previous attitude of the board, which had ignored apartheid and investment in South Africa completely, he said.



"Labour peace is not simply a matter of unions moderating their demands. Managers must recognize that workers are not spare parts. Treating workers

as units of production is degrading and creates ill-will. Managers must recognize that workers are just as human as their shareholders. Then perhaps we can achieve settlements which reconcile productivity with workers' legitimate economic

Locals push pension board for S. African disinvestment

Saint John, N.B. — Three CUPE locals in this city recently made a determined effort to have the city's pension plan withdraw all investments in South Africa to protest that country's repressive and racist apartheid policy. But

"They didn't succeed this time, he said, "but I know they will keep trying, and I hope other CUPE Locals across the country who have representatives on their pension boards will follow the Saint John Local's example."

battle against apartheid by boycotting all South African products, asking supermarket managers not to stock them, and writing Prime Minister Mulroney (postage free) to ask that Canada impose economic sanctions

Queering workers' rights in the 80s and beyond

In 1987, CUPE took the fight for same-sex benefits all the way to the Ontario Supreme Court. The Court ruled against CUPE, but five years later, in 1992, CUPE and two employees launched a constitutional challenge against the federal government's definition of "spouse" as the opposite sex in the Income Tax Act. The challenge would eventually be upheld, setting a major precedent for equality in pension and other benefits.

"The government's message to homosexuals seems to be that equality is OK on paper but not in practice," said Mary Cook, first vice-president of CUPE 1996 at the Toronto public library, who fought on behalf of local member Karen Andrews.



Gays can be family

TORONTO—CUPE's four-year battle to win equal rights for gay members has been bolstered by a landmark decision of the Canadian Human Rights Commission which says a homosexual couple can constitute a family.

The decision rules that Toronto civil servant Brian Mossop had the right to bereavement leave so he could attend the funeral of his male lover's father.

The long campaign was initiated by Local 1996 member Karen Andrews who wanted to get the children of her

dental plan.

Andrews, a Toronto Library Board employee, said "if lesbians and gay men do not have access to health and pension benefits, employers will, in effect, be instituting two wages—one for straight employees and one for gay employees."

"The Mossop case is good because it makes us visible in our place of work," she said. "It sends the message that we too have responsibilities, relationships and families that matter just as much to us as any other employee's family

Resisting racism in the 90s

Indigenous, Black and racialized members fought hard to forge their way into the union. In 1991, CUPE appointed its first ever anti-racism coordinator, Harminder Singh Magon, and established the employment equity leadership training program for Indigenous, Black and racialized (referred to then as “Native and visible minority”) members.

Four years later, CUPE held the first-ever national anti-racism conference, mainly in response to National Convention defeating a constitutional amendment to add a “visible minority” (now referred to as Black and racialized) seat and an “Aboriginal” (now referred to as Indigenous) seat to the National Executive Board. As many as 275 members attended the anti-racism conference and demanded anti-racism training throughout the union and a comprehensive employment equity plan within CUPE. Delegates eventually supported the amendment for Indigenous and Black and racialized diversity vice-president seats at the 1999 convention.

Congratulations to employment equity grads



CONVENTION '95 Moving forward to fight racism

CUPE will hold a first-ever national conference on anti-racism this year as a concrete step towards fighting racism in each and every workplace and empowering each and every CUPE member.

National president Judy Darcy made the commitment from the National Executive Board three days after the convention defeated a constitutional amendment resolution to add seats for one visible minority and one aboriginal member to the NEB.

“We have heard some passionate and powerful voices regarding the anger, hurt and pain that many delegates felt after that debate,” she said, urging all delegates to take a moment to walk in the shoes of the aboriginal and racial minority members



waited a long time, but I don't think setting up special seats is the answer.”

lessons, knowing we will commit our support to each other. It's a historic day. I feel we have been welcomed back home.”

At the Rainbow Forum, CLC rep David Onyalo told members the right-wing attack on human rights, employment equity, social,

human and family rights means equality-seeking groups face the toughest challenge of their lives. He said we must draw on the collective strength of diverse members and community alliances to provide a powerful voice in the workplace and in the community.

The emotional impact of the issue was also illustrated by Joanna Mason of Local 500 (Winnipeg civic employees): “What I'd love to see is 1,700 union leaders going back home with a dedication to fight the barriers in the system, and barriers in themselves, to listen to each other, to share, learn and grow with each other.”



Putting trans rights on the table in '01

In 2001, CUPE 4400 and trans activist Martine Stonehouse were instrumental in getting the Toronto District School Board to become the first public school board in Canada to add gender identity protection for students and staff to its human rights policy. That same year, CUPE 3903 at York University negotiated up to eight paid weeks off for transition leave for trans members.



the Webb, Yolanda McLean, and (back row, L-R) Heather Vidito and Anne McGrath.

Taking sexism to task in '05-'07

In 2005, there were only three women on CUPE's 23-person National Executive Board. In response, National Convention established a National Women's Task Force to consult women members and seek advice from activists and staff on women's equality needs. The Task Force made recommendations to organize a National Women's Bargaining Conference, develop a feminist legislative agenda, create a code of conduct, hire full-time equality representatives in every region, strengthen equality training, establish a mentoring program for women leaders, and develop dependent care policies for the union.

"Knowing that many feel the same concerns gives us the strength and power to break the barriers before us. United, we can tackle the most difficult problems," said National Women's Task Force Co-Chair Barb Moore after the presentation of the report in 2007.



Campaigning for accessibility in '12

In 2012, CUPE launched a massive disability rights campaign, *A Solidarity of Abilities*, with the Persons with Disabilities National Working Group. Members across the country received fact sheets, posters, and a pamphlet titled *Ready and Able*. At the same time, CUPE's Union Education Department launched a week-long duty to accommodate workshop, equipping representatives and stewards across the country with better tools to challenge workplace ableism.

CUPE has a proud history of championing equality - within our union, our workplaces and our communities. Check out our interactive digital timeline with events since our founding convention in 1963.

Showing our mettle

These CUPE members fought
for their rights at work.
Now they're fighting for yours.

You have the legal right to have
your disability accommodated
in the workplace.

[CUPE.ca/disability-rights](https://cupe.ca/disability-rights)



FOSTERING EQUITY: EDUCATION TRANSFORMING CUPE ONE MEMBER AT A TIME

— By Corina Crawley and William Chalupiak

Education is a powerful tool, and it's not neutral. Underlying every educational program are the values and vision of the society it serves.

Our Union Education Branch has been fostering inclusion and an equity perspective for a long time. We do everything we can to ensure that every member from our diverse CUPE community, from coast to coast to coast, has a voice and sees themselves reflected in our union.

We believe that promoting equity is not just a responsibility – it is the key to our strength and unity.

Educating our members is crucial to creating a safe space for reflection, introspection, and change, and for addressing specific issues like white supremacy, colonialism, racism and all forms of discrimination.

Founded in 1964 to educate CUPE activists on everything from being a good steward to parliamentary

procedures, the Union Education Department has served a critical role in empowering CUPE members. From these humble beginnings, it has grown with the ever-evolving needs of our membership.

In 1965, 75 participants took part in the second annual Ontario Summer School. The courses focused on all the basics for local activists.



By 1967, the Union Education Department had grown to four full-time representatives, and had set their sights on ensuring women were benefiting from the program. Along with workshops for union members, the Education 67 seminar included recreation for families and a special session for “wives”.

New Look in EDUCATION dans le vent

A capacity crowd filled the ballroom of the Park Motor Hotel, Niagara Falls, during opening sessions for the CUPE Ontario Division sponsored EDUCATION 67 program. The seminar was attended by 270 union members, including 60 wives and their children, as a result of a “new look” in union weekend education endeavours: The program included recreational activities for the unionists’ families. At a special session with the wives, it was also announced that a special “union wives” course would form part of the division’s next seminar. Courses offered were: Negotiations, led by CUPE Representative R. J. Anderson; Grievance, with CUPE Representative E. B. Parker; Hospital Workers, with Research Director Gil Levine and Representative Doug McEntee; and Legislation, with Division Vice-President Percy Huggett.

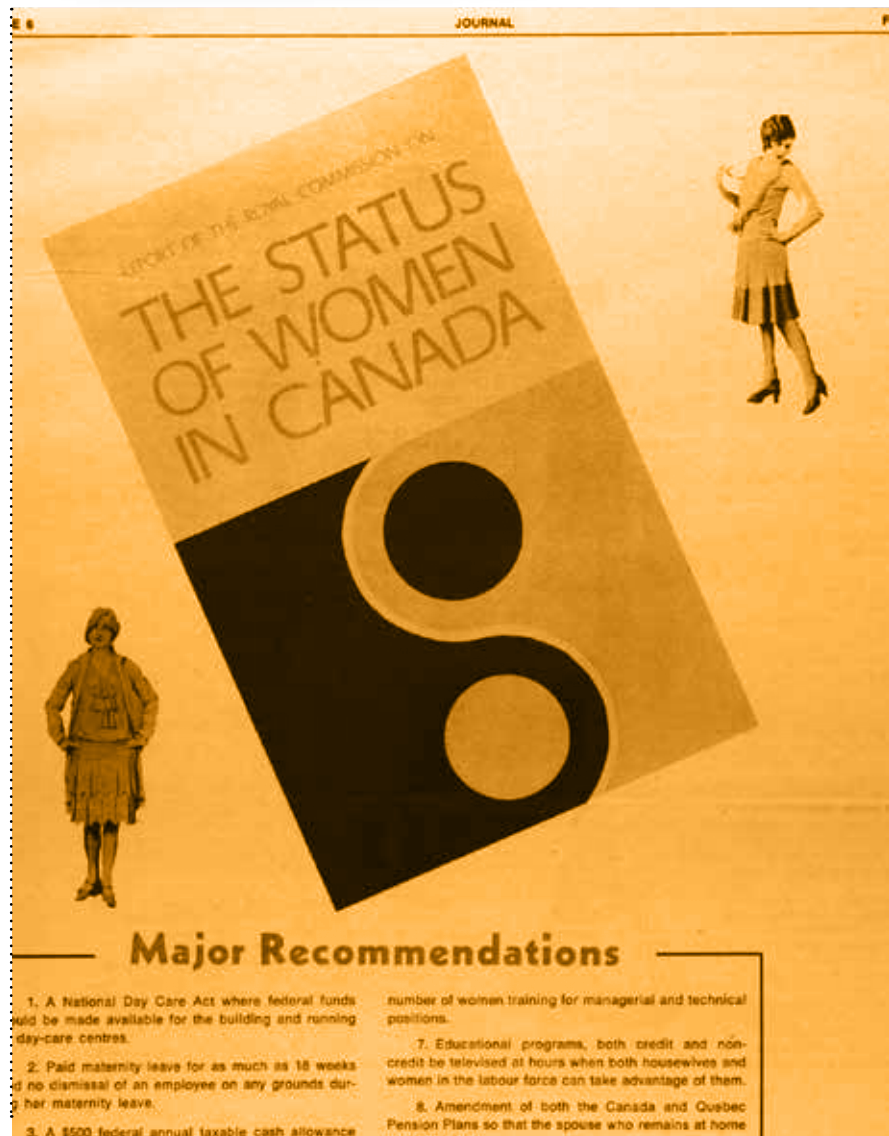
Les organisateurs du dernier séminaire de fin de semaine du Conseil d’Ontario du SCFP sont dans le vent. En prévoyant un programme de distractions pour les femmes et enfants des syndicalistes, en plus des cours réguliers, ils ont encouragé les “élèves” à amener leurs familles avec eux. Le résultat a dépassé leurs espérances: Il y eut 270 adhérents, ainsi que 60 de leurs femmes et un grand nombre

45,000 WOMEN MEMBERS

CUPE seeks ways to gain implementation of Status of Women Report recommendations

Through the 70s, the focus shifted from simply including women in union activities, to challenging the structural issues impacting women at work. Equal pay for equal work initiatives and job evaluation joint committees were launched, and the CLC sponsored mixed trade unionist courses encouraging women to attend.

“The number of female trade unionists will soon reach 50% of the total organized labour force, but in spite of that, few women are ever elected to fill administrative offices in the labour movement,” said Jean-Jacques Jauniaux, Quebec education director at the CLC who created the school for Quebec’s women trade unionists in 1971.



Put union education on the bargaining table



Throughout the 80s, the focus on building a more equal union broadened. CUPE had grown by leaps and bounds, and with it, the desire to reflect the true diversity in the membership became more and more important. So, there was a stronger push to provide union members with the union education they need.

Along with education for bargaining, finances, grievance handling and managing daily union affairs, union education began prioritizing workshops promoting building an inclusive CUPE with diverse leadership.

In 1986, the Union Education team launched *Strategies for Equality*, a new course which focused on ending workplace discrimination in all its forms.

By 1993, CUPE had taken big steps toward becoming a leader in the fight against racism. Union education continued to play a major role in the broader work CUPE members were doing to combat racism in their workplaces, introducing anti-racism workshops into their regular course offerings.

At National Convention, National Rainbow Committee members presented CUPE's major policy paper on employment equity called *On the front burner*, proposing to institute equity and fight to eliminate discrimination against women, gender diverse, Black and racialized people, and persons with disabilities. Delegates adopted the strategy by a vast majority.

“Look around your communities, the faces are changing,” Rainbow Committee Chair David Onyalo urged 1993 National Convention delegates.



STRATEGIES FOR EQUALITY

How to deal with workplace discrimination



**“WHY DO PEOPLE SAY:
I NEVER THINK OF YOU
AS BLACK?
AS IF THAT WAS
SOME KIND
OF COMPLIMENT.”**

The fact is that in Canada 94 per cent of job agencies are asked by clients to reject workers because of their colour, according to a 1988 Canadian Recruiters Guild survey.

Historically, there are instances when governments used racism to manipulate people, while employers used racism to divide and exploit employees.

But in only eight years women, aboriginal people, visible minorities and disabled people will form 80 per cent of the workforce.

**RACISM:
EVERYBODY'S PROBLEM.**

Anti-RACISM
COUNCIL ON RACIAL JUSTICE

CUPE's Anti-racism booklet is available from the Anti-Racism Coordinator's Office at 21 Florence St., Ottawa, Ont., K2P 0B6. Anti-Racism FACT SHEETS, to assist visible minorities in becoming active in their union, are also available.

OUT OF THE CLOSET AND INTO THE CLASSROOM

CUPE leads the way, with a new education workshop on homophobia. It's a new tool to sensitize union members to the often "invisible" discrimination against gays and lesbians in the workplace.

When Pam Wagner of Hamilton, Ontario, did a pilot project for a workshop on homophobia in St. John's, Nfld., it was "an amazing and emotional experience."

"As the former chair of CUPE's Pink Triangle Committee I tried to be organized and educational – explore discrimination, and then systemic discrimination – a very structured approach," recalls Wagner. "But the reality of the group took us away from that. The students were curious and confused. They expressed

and bereavement leave, free tuition) are not articulated as heterosexual, but are assumed to be. It's natural for a labour union to take on these issues, says Kirwan. "We're used to fighting discrimination and harassment, but in these cases they're often invisible.

The personal touch works best in raising the awareness of union members and staff to discrimination against gays and lesbians, says Joey Sayer, a committee member who works at the Calgary Public Library. Gay bashing jokes are still the only way some unionists can deal with the issue, he realizes, but things are changing. Sayer remembers it was about two years ago when he first spoke publicly at a union function about being gay.

"It was an equality conference and I used good quotes, some

Thanks to the tireless work of trailblazers like David Onyalo and Pam Wagner, CUPE continued to broaden the horizons in our pursuit of justice in the workplace. By 1997, a new workshop on homophobia and "invisible discrimination" called Out of the closet and into the classroom was being offered to CUPE members.

"I was a union activist first and a gay rights activist second, so I could see how lesbian rights fit into the union framework," explained former CUPE Pink Triangle Committee Chair Pam Wagner after hosting a pilot project for the workshop in 1997.



The new millennium brought a renewed commitment from our union to dismantling injustice at work. Indigenous CUPE members in B.C. organized the first “Aboriginal Council” in 2004.

“We wanted to celebrate our diversity as First Nations cultures. But we also wanted to figure out how we could have a stronger voice in CUPE and make some positive changes in the union,” said Richard Gauthier, a Métis student advocate from CUPE 3523 in Kelowna. He participated in organizing and facilitating the 2004 event described as “the largest CUPE Aboriginal gathering ever held in Canada”.

This was followed by the creation of the “National Aboriginal Council” in 2006.



At the same time, CUPE was also taking on ableism at work. Our union was eager to make sure that all members' rights were respected. Thanks to activists like Richard Sherring and other members of CUPE's Persons with Disabilities National Working Group, CUPE expanded its educational materials to help highlight the voices of workers with disabilities.

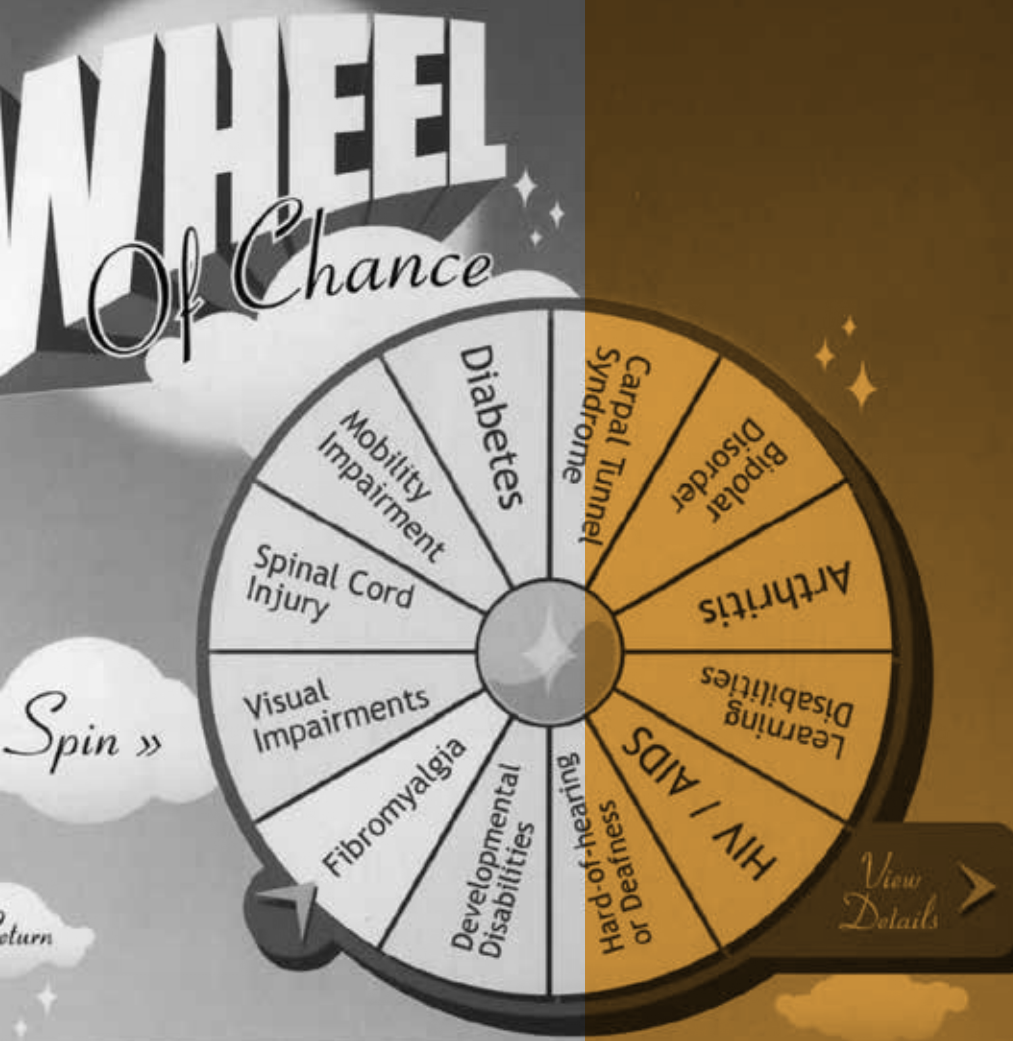
Our dedication to equity, as exemplified by the training we have provided to CUPE members in the past 60 years, is a part of what sets us apart and fuels our growth as a union. Worker-centred literacy is an important aspect of inclusion, and we've been taking the lead on literacy in the labour movement. Literacy and essential skills are necessary tools for building activism and leadership beyond the status quo in our union, as well as in our workplaces and communities.

The new century has led to new course offerings from our Union Education Branch, such as *Bystander training*, *Safer spaces for gender-diverse members*, *Disability and ableism*, and *Indigenous issues*.

The COVID-19 pandemic also forced us to accelerate the shift to online learning. This led to increased participation from members who may not have had access to our workshops and resources in the past. As the cost to participate in union education activities decreased, and with the ability to participate remotely, the number of new participants in workshops increased exponentially. Members could now access online education on their own time, rather than needing to book time off work and juggle with family responsibilities or multiple jobs.

The Union Education Branch continues to play an important role in driving forward CUPE's strategic initiatives, empowering members, and building solidarity.

Want to know what it would be like to have a disability in the workplace? Spin the Wheel of Chance and find out.





CUPE LED THE CHARGE TO ESTABLISH CANADA'S DAY OF MOURNING

By **Pierre Ducasse** and **Troy Winters**

We know April 28 as Worker's Day of Mourning, observed across Canada in honor of those killed or injured on the job. What is less known is just how instrumental CUPE was in establishing this day.

In 1983, the health and safety director of CUPE, Colin Lambert, came up with the idea of a day to recognize workers killed or injured on the job. Lambert was a former steelworker and miner from Sudbury. He made the suggestion to CUPE's Health and Safety Committee, and members were quick to endorse the idea.

At our National Convention in 1985, delegates adopted a resolution calling for "a day of recognition each year for those who have suffered death or disability as a result of their work". A year later, it was the Canadian Labour Congress's turn to endorse the idea.

Workers then mobilized and intensified pressure on governments to recognize the day of mourning. In 1991, the House of Commons at long last passed a private member's bill, sponsored by the NDP, naming April 28 as the "Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace".

Today, that day of action and remembrance is widely recognized across Canada's labour movement, and around the world, with the yellow canary as its signature symbol.



same role the canary played in the mines of yesterday.

Although conditions in today's mines are not always much of an improvement over the old days, there are more sophisticated ways of detecting gas leaks.

Still, the little yellow canary remains a universal symbol of safety.

We in CUPE believe it is also a symbol of recognition for all workers who have suffered and died in the workplace.

April 28 is the Canadian Labour Congress's National Day of Mourning. It is a special day set aside in memory of all those who have been hurt or killed on the job — most of them needlessly.

Please take a moment to honour them with us and to help strengthen our resolve to improve occupational health and safety everywhere.

Remember. We are all canaries in today's workplace!

Day of Mourning, April 28





HERE ARE SOME OTHER OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR HISTORY:

1988

The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) was created in 1988, thanks to efforts by CUPE and other unions. Employers had a deadline to ensure that all controlled products were labelled and had a material safety data sheet.

“This system is meant to protect workers across Canada by providing them with information on the hazardous materials they use at work. WHMIS is a major step forward for workers,” said CUPE Health and Safety Director Colin Lambert in 1988.

WHMIS a winner!

OTTAWA – Workers will soon have a legal right to know about potentially hazardous products they use, thanks to efforts by CUPE and other unions to create the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System.

As of Oct. 31, employers “must ensure that all controlled products are labelled and have a material safety data sheet,” said CUPE health and safety director Colin Lambert in a letter to locals.

“This system is meant to protect workers across Canada by providing them with infor-

mation on the hazardous materials they use at work,” said Lambert.

Employers will also be required to set up worker education programs on WHMIS in consultation with health and safety representatives.

“WHMIS is a major step forward for workers,” he added, “but to make it work, you must become familiar with the system.”

To help workers use the new system, a background paper on WHMIS was attached to the letter.

1993

Due to pressure from CUPE Saskatchewan, which developed a postcard campaign and made historic gains at the bargaining table for CUPE health care workers, Saskatchewan became the first province in Canada to specifically include protections against violence in the workplace.

CUPE 4980's Pearl Blommaert was instrumental in this fight for better health and safety standards for workers in Saskatchewan. She was the first woman to win the National Health and Safety Award for her work, in 2015. She also influenced provisions in provincial legislation and regulations, and policies for musculoskeletal injury prevention, working alone, shift work and psychological harassment — another first in Canadian occupational health and safety law.





There is an on-going "see no evil, hear no evil" culture surrounding the disaster, said CUPE's submission to the Westray Mine Public Inquiry.

"You must speak of the evil that allowed yet another disaster to occur," the brief argues. "It was evil to intimidate workers and staff so that they were afraid to speak out against practices that led to the explosion."

"It was evil for the regulators to join the

2004

On May 9, 1992, deep inside the Westray coal mine in Plymouth, Nova Scotia, methane gas and subsequent coal dust explosions killed 26 miners underground. The mine had been open for less than eight months. CUPE submitted a brief to the Westray Mine Public Inquiry, denouncing a workplace culture that intimidated workers from speaking out and promoted profits over safety. More than 10 years later, and despite the families' efforts, no individual or organization had been held liable for the miners' deaths.

There is an ongoing "see no evil, hear no evil" culture surrounding the disaster, said CUPE's 1996 submission to the Westray Mine Public Inquiry. "You must speak of the evil that allowed yet another disaster to occur."

The disaster had a strong impact on occupational health and safety in Nova Scotia, and on March 31, 2004, the Canadian government passed Bill C-45, amending Section 217.1 of the Canadian Criminal Code. Known commonly as the "Westray bill", it established new legal duties for workplace health and safety and allowed criminal prosecution and liability of organizations where workers have faced occupational health and safety violations that have resulted in injury or death.

2015

The first ever Canadian survey on domestic violence in the workplace, put together by the Canadian Labour Congress and Western University, with help from CUPE and other unions, revealed that more than one third of workers had experienced domestic violence in their lifetime. Over 80% of those workers said domestic violence had a negative effect on their work performance including, for some, losing their job. More than half said the violence occurred at or near their workplace, and over a third reported that coworkers were affected as well. Most of the people who filled out this survey were in stable, unionized jobs, and workers in non-union and precarious employment faced even more negative job-related impacts.

In November, recognized annually as Domestic Violence Prevention Month, Manitoba became the first province to introduce proposed new legislation that provides paid leave for domestic violence victims. The leave became law in 2016 and included 10 days, five of which are paid, in every 52-week period.

Check out CUPE's bargaining guide *Domestic violence and the workplace* to learn how every local can negotiate protections regarding domestic violence.

33.6%
OF RESPONDENTS
EXPERIENCED DV

81.9%
OF THOSE AFFECTED
BY DV
EXPERIENCED
NEGATIVE
EFFECTS
ON WORK
PERFORMANCE.





2018

After decades of lobbying and work lead by CUPE and other unions, on October 17, 2018, the federal government banned the production and input of almost all asbestos and asbestos-containing products.

For years, CUPE sounded the alarm about the danger of asbestos in public buildings and the risks to the lives of the workers who build, maintain and work in them, even as government and industry were working hard to keep the asbestos mines in business.

“The ban announced by the federal government is a step in the right direction,” said CUPE’s National President Mark Hancock celebrating this major victory for the labour movement. “Now it’s time for the federal government to work together with the provinces to harmonize regulations and to collaborate on health strategies for asbestos-related diseases.”



BUILDING A SAFER AND MORE INCLUSIVE CUPE

By Colleen Butler

In March 2021, CUPE's National Executive Board (NEB) formed the Safe Union Spaces Working Group (SUSWG). The group, made up of the women members of the NEB, conducted member surveys, held focus groups and organized listening sessions. They discovered that many CUPE members, especially women and those from equity-deserving groups, weren't fully participating in the union due to safety concerns.

After gathering information from members, the SUSWG collaborated with experts to determine next steps. They outlined their recommendations in an interim report and action plan, published in April 2022.

Since then, CUPE has been putting these recommendations into practice. Here are some highlights!



The Safe Union Spaces Working Group on stage at CUPE's *National Women's Conference* in March 2023 with Judy Darcy, former national president of CUPE.

Supporting new and women leaders

CUPE organized a women's conference in Vancouver last March. This event was CUPE's first National Women's Conference in 14 years and attracted over 500 participants. During the conference, members explored how to promote fairness and strengthen women's leadership through bargaining, politics and member engagement.

The SUSWG is also bolstering leadership programs across the country. This has included improving CUPE's leadership training and backing the *Women in Leadership Development Program (WILD)* in Ontario.



CUPE Ontario launched the *Women in Leadership Development Program (WILD)* for Indigenous, Black and racialized women in 2022. The first group, seen here, graduated in spring 2023.

Restorative approaches

The SUSWG re-examined our conflict resolution processes. As part of this, CUPE organized training on restorative practices at several events, including the *All Committees Meeting* in Vancouver and CUPE Manitoba's convention. Participants learned about the potential restorative practices hold for unions and developed key skills, like active listening.



The restorative practices session at the 2022 *All Committees Meeting*.

Bystander training

The working group's interim report revealed a serious issue: many CUPE members and staff don't step in when they see violence, harassment or discrimination. This can make it seem like such behaviour is accepted or even supported.

To tackle this issue, CUPE's Union Education Branch created a 3-hour bystander intervention course open to all CUPE members. CUPE has also provided shorter bystander intervention training at several national events like the 2022 Sector Council Conference in Ottawa and the National Women's Conference.



Bystander intervention training at the 2023 *National Women's Conference*.

Cultural change

The SUSWG introduced a Safe Walk program at recent events to help members who are travelling alone. In addition, the working group has developed resources for locals, including a checklist for safer, more inclusive union spaces. At a structural level, CUPE is setting up an independent office to handle complaints about sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination in our union.

The effort to make CUPE safer and more inclusive continues. Other safe union spaces initiatives, including pilot projects, are coming soon.

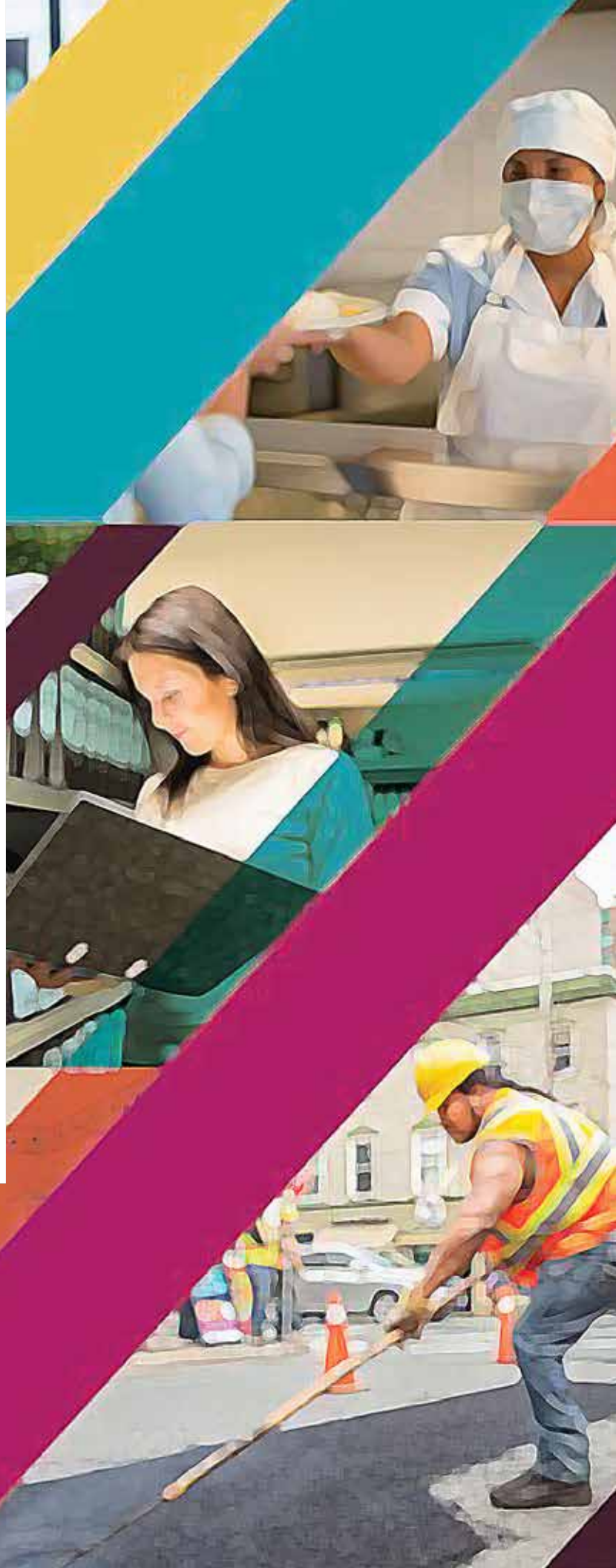
CELEBRATING OUR HISTORIC STRUGGLES AGAINST CONTRACTING OUT AND PRIVATIZATION

By **Alia Karim**

CUPE members have defended high-quality public services since our union's inception in 1963. Privatization is an ever-present threat – one we faced then, and still face every day.

Private sector employers are interested in taking over public services to boost their profits. They stand to make more money by cutting staff and busting unions, thus eliminating pressure for better wages and benefits. Contracting out can drive down wages and worsen working conditions across an entire sector, hurting all workers. But this also means the public loses access to high-quality public services that are more responsive to their needs and priorities.

There is a growing global movement to stop contracting out and bring jobs and services into (or back into) the public sector. The benefits of using qualified in-house workers are not only aimed at delivering better public



services, but also at improving working conditions for all workers and building thriving communities. CUPE's *Stop Contracting Out Guide* outlines how public services help people get out of poverty, facilitate more equal economic opportunities, and focus on improving public health and well-being.

That is why fighting privatization has always been a priority at CUPE: we shouldn't have to live in a society where our quality of life is sold to the lowest bidder.

Here we celebrate some the significant campaigns where CUPE members fought, and most often won, against contracting out and privatization.

CUPE and labour movement allies win Canada's first public pension plan in 1966

In the 60s, the private insurance industry saw the proposed public pension plan as a threat to their profits and launched a huge campaign to reject the Canada Pension Plan and advocate for privately-run workplace pension plans. Before the CPP was established in 1966, seniors were falling into poverty and the public pension system consisted only of a meagre Old Age Security payment available from age 70.

In 1966, the labour movement scored a significant victory in the creation of Canada's first public pension plan. Ever since, CUPE members have built labour-community coalitions to defend other public services, like Medicare or child care, against ongoing attempts by conservative governments to privatize them.

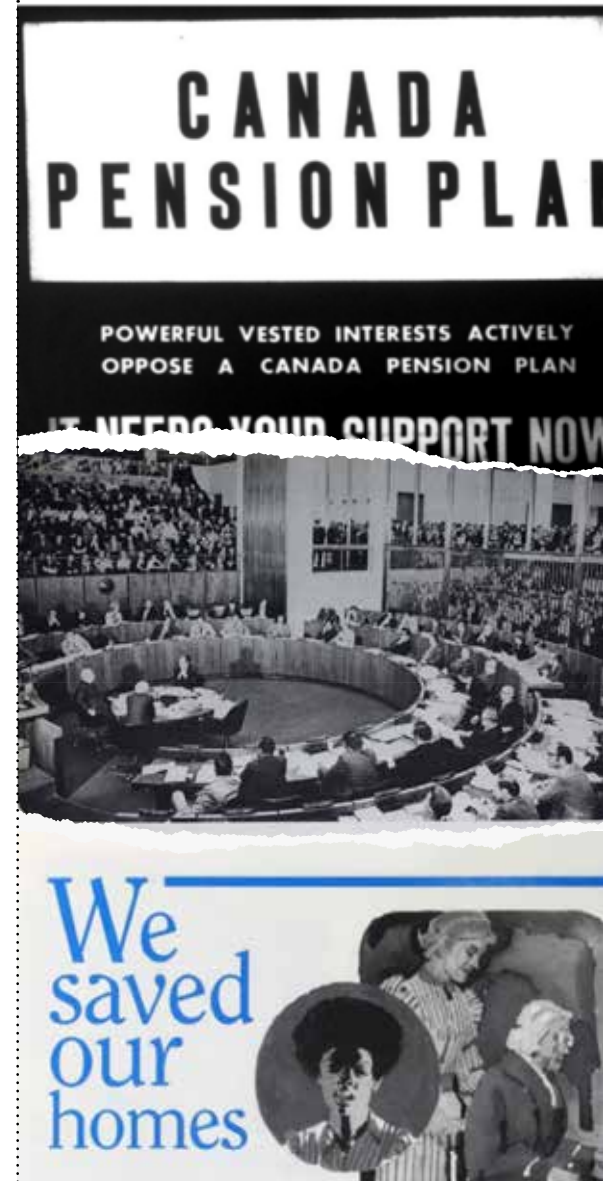
CUPE locals push back against waste collection privatization

Early in CUPE's history, members working in municipalities across the country fought against corporations bidding to take over waste collection. In 1973, CUPE 500 gathered 20,000 signatures to stop contracting out of their work. More than 2,000 CUPE members and allies gathered at a Winnipeg City Council meeting to oppose the contracting out of waste collection. The city responded by referring the matter for further study by the works and operations committee.

CUPE 500 has engaged in anti-privatization campaigns ever since. And ever since, CUPE has argued that the public sector is the right choice to deliver public services, not only because it is financially competitive, but also because it provides better and safer jobs. CUPE municipal locals have won major victories against contracting out and have brought services back in house in numerous municipalities — Beauport (QC), Kingston (ON), Conception Bay South (NL), and Port Moody (B.C.) to name a few.

CUPE 79 and the sustained fight against contracting out in Toronto

In 1996, CUPE 79 in Toronto won a resounding victory against the contracting out of the 10 Metro Toronto Homes for the Aged where they represented nearly 3,000 dietary, housekeeping, nursing and clerical staff. CUPE 79 fought against private sector long-term care operators who had been lobbying politicians to privatize the homes. When the city struck a task force to consider



contracting out, members created a newsletter and asked their stewards to make deputations to the task force. The pressure from workers and community members prevailed as Toronto's Metro Council decided to keep the long-term care homes public.

Fifteen years later, when Toronto Mayor Rob Ford announced his intention to privatize cleaning staff in municipal buildings, CUPE 79 worked with the Toronto and York Region Labour Council on a campaign called *Justice and Dignity for Cleaners* to advocate for these important jobs. In 2012, members won over Toronto city councillors with direct appeals, making deputations at committees, holding press conferences, and most importantly telling their personal stories about why keeping services in-house matters for workers, and for the community.

CUPE Saskatchewan protects health care from 90s trade agreement

In 1998, CUPE Saskatchewan worked with the Council of Canadians and community coalitions against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) which would have allowed U.S.-based health management organizations to privatize health services. CUPE Saskatchewan wrote to the 30 District Health Boards in the province, and to all provincial and federal health ministers, urging them to abandon the MAI negotiations.

Members' efforts paid off as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities passed a resolution expressing their concern with the MAI and international negotiations were discontinued.



Winning the race against contracting out of education work

"Big corporations offer to build schools, rent them back to boards and then sell them to the board after 35 years. They're called Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), but Picking the Public's Pockets is a more accurate term. "Schools get run down toward the end of the period and we inherit a mess," said CUPE 1280 member Michael Hennessy." In fact, the September 1998 issue of CUPE's magazine Organize featured a great number of members' stories fighting to save schools across the country from threats of privatization.

In the late 90s and early 2000s, several CUPE locals resisted attempts by corporations to profit off the education sector.

CUPE members prevailed when, in June 2000, the Nova Scotia government cancelled its P3 schools project. The 38 new schools cost Nova Scotia taxpayers \$32 million more than initially anticipated. CUPE had warned the government that P3 schools are more expensive than doing conventional builds financed through the public sector because private developers want to make profits.

In Calgary, CUPE 520 had a 9-week strike against a catholic school board over contracting out. And in Edmonton, CUPE 474 successfully pushed back against a plan to contract out cleaners in one-third of their schools as private companies proved costly. Finally in Winnipeg, CUPE 1112 forced their school division to cancel a decision to contract out school buses.



A IS FOR AMALGAMATIONS – B IS FOR BUDGET CUTS – C IS FOR CONTRACTING OUT

THE ATTACK ON OUR SCHOOLS

STAFF AND STUDENTS FIGHT BACK

Mike Reichardt, Bus Driver, Local 748, Nelson B.C.

the system – so much for “classroom” spending, so much for other spending. If classroom spending isn’t cut, the theory goes, then kids aren’t hurt.

- In Burnaby, B.C., 27 crossing guards with Local 379 lose their jobs this fall, meaning children have to cross the main routes into Vancouver alone. Six lanes of traffic, no guard.
- In contracted out schools in Calgary, children are hit with falling panels from the ceiling because maintenance has been so dramatically cut.
- In London, Ont., members of Local 1156 only clean the desks on which primary students eat once every three days, despite the viruses that flourish in schools. Only in cases where deadly allergies are proven does the board fund daily cleaning.
- In Edmonton, 94 of 103 privately run school buses failed safety tests, pulled off the road by the police for brake failure and lack of service records.
- And in Kawartha, Ont., a volunteer head secretary of a school had access to confidential records. Unlike members of Local 5555, volunteers do not have to pass a criminal record test to work in schools.

“It’s just not right. It’s immoral.”

Terry Allen, Local 379, Burnaby, B.C.

So children are fine. Just so long as they don’t walk or bus to school, eat at school, need to worry about abuse or want

Grade A disaster

The one-room schoolhouse is a part of Canada’s history. But if you listen to the privateers and most governments, you would think the best schoolhouse is a no-room schoolhouse. Think about it –

fighting back – fighting the agenda that wants to use public education for private gain.

Defeating proposed water public-private partnerships since the 90s

For decades, CUPE locals have defended municipal water systems against corporations who try to commercialize them. Since the 90s, CUPE has partnered with community

groups to fight off plans for public-private partnerships (P3s) which have been proven to be more expensive, more secretive, and less accountable to the public. CUPE and community allies set up dozens of Water Watch campaigns to successfully reject P3 water and sewage treatment projects across Canada, notably on Vancouver

Island and in White Rock (B.C.), Winnipeg, Regina, and Taber (AB).

In 2005, CUPE commissioned public opinion research on the issue, with good results. In B.C., for instance, nearly 9 out of 10 people agreed that “water is a basic public service and should always remain in public hands”.

“We did a big show in Montreal, and that show was so well mediatized and had so much impact on the public opinion, that the government had to think about it. And then, the minister said “I think we shouldn’t privatize”. So it’s really local opposition that makes a difference,” said Gabrielle Pelletier, director of the Quebec Environmental Network in CUPE’s video H2O: The Price of Privatization which helped kick off the Water Watch movement.



Fast forward a quarter century and the vast majority of municipal water systems in Canada are still publicly owned and run, many operated by CUPE members. Our union is proud to have stemmed the tide of water privatization. CUPE continues to advocate against P3 water projects and water injustice which has a tremendous impact on Indigenous peoples. To learn more, take the pledge that’s part of our Water is life campaign: cupe.ca/water-is-life

Nova Scotia highway workers advocate for public highways

CUPE 1867 highway workers forced Nova Scotia’s conservative government to back down in the summer of 2000 on a plan to privatize highway maintenance work. Their campaign Roads are not a private matter mobilized members across the province to knock on doors, approach politicians and solicit community leaders for support.





Nova Scotia highway workers face down contracting out scheme and win



Last spring, CUPE's fight to stop contracting out erupted on another front. Soon after Nova Scotia's government declared war on public sector workers by releasing a budget that drained millions from education and health care, the Conservatives unleashed a plan that would see all of the province's highways contracted out over the next five years.

CUPE sprang into action. Members recognized that we were all in this fight together and that if we didn't take control and effectively mobilize against the government's agenda we would lose."

The highway workers launched their Roads Are Not a Private Matter campaign at Province House – home of the provincial legislative assembly. But the

Despite this resounding victory, CUPE 1867 remains in an ongoing fight to defend Nova Scotia's highways from P3 projects and other forms of privatization.

Unions join forces in 80s Our Air Canada – Preserve The Trust campaign

In 1987, a standing committee recommended the federal government explore options for privatizing Air Canada "so that it could better manage its affairs". Airlines worldwide were having financial difficulties at that time, facing a recession, the high cost of fuel and equipment, and high taxation rates. CUPE's Airline Division, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, and the Canadian Auto Workers, representing 14,000 workers at Air Canada, jointly launched an information campaign exposing the myths of privatization.



"The twin wrongs of deregulation and privatization don't make a right. The deregulation of our airline industry means there is an even greater need for the government to continue to operate Air Canada as a Crown corporation and preserve service and jobs throughout all of Canada," reacted CUPE Airline Division President Richard Nolan to the government's plan to begin selling off Air Canada shares in 1988.

Unfortunately, the airline was privatized a year later, and kept operating at a loss during the 90s.



City of Rimouski decides to publicly manage operations in new sports complex

CUPE Quebec has organized countless anti-privatization campaigns to oppose public-private partnerships (P3s) and the contracting out of municipal services, including recreation services, snow removal, and public transportation.

In 2018, for example, CUPE successfully campaigned to keep services in-house at the City of Rimouski sports complex.



CUPE 5275 worked closely with the Public Works Department and Human Resources, convincing the municipality that this is a decision that makes the best use of taxpayers' dollars. City workers were proud to take on the day-to-day operations at the new venue.

CUPE is the largest union in the municipal sector in Quebec and has spent several decades tracking the risks that arise from privatization and P3s.

HEU wins reversal of privatization of cleaning and dietary work in B.C. hospitals

In 2018, the B.C. NDP government introduced Bill 47, the *Health Sector Statutes Repeal Act*, which reversed the privatization of thousands of jobs in hospitals and long-term care homes. This victory is a response to HEU members' determination to bring those jobs back in-house to the local health authorities for almost 20 years. They celebrated this massive win that also restored workers' pensions, benefits and wages which had been cut in the early 2000s.







PROFILE KATHLEEN BRENNAN

By Amanda Vyce and Aline Patcheva

BEYOND THE SHELVES: CELEBRATING CANADIAN LIBRARY MONTH

Canadian Library Month is a time to celebrate our libraries and the indispensable services provided by library workers in our communities, schools, universities, and colleges. Libraries are so much more than book repositories, and library work is a much wider spectrum of responsibilities than people might think.

To highlight the crucial contribution of CUPE library workers, we spoke with Kathleen Brennan, a library access technician at Keyano College in Fort McMurray, Alberta. A member of CUPE 2157, Brennan currently sits on the local's bargaining team, and previously served as the local's vice-president and executive secretary. She is also CUPE Alberta's young worker vice-president and the liaison to the Alberta Library Employees Committee.

Brennan brings a wealth of experience from each subsector, having worked in a post-secondary library, as well as a public library and two school libraries. Her insights shed light on the diverse world of library work and its often surprising facets.

Question 1

What sparked your interest in library work, and what aspect of your work are you most passionate about?

I grew up in a family of avid readers. I remember when I was young, my dad and my grandmother took me to the public library regularly. Later on, in high school, I faced some mental health challenges that prevented me from attending regular classes, but I couldn't stay at home either. So, I spent a semester going to the school library every day and that's when I truly fell in love with books and reading.

Libraries offer a safe space where people can be themselves and aren't judged based on their background or financial status. When people are struggling, like I was as a teenager, they look for commonality among people around them, or in the stories they come across. We can find those stories at the library. The library is the great equalizer in the world.

As a library worker, I am passionate about introducing people to the vast resources available beyond just books, and meeting them where they are at in their reading and learning journey. Libraries are wonderful public spaces, even for people who will never pick up a book.

Question 2

How long have you been working in libraries and what is something surprising about your current role?

My first library job was in a public library in Ontario during college, where I worked for five years. I was then employed as a school library worker for three years, before moving to Alberta to start my current role at Keyano College in February 2018.



The first school library I worked in was an Ontario K-12 school with 1,500 students. I had no budget to purchase resources, as is often the case in Ontario schools. Then, I worked in an Ontario high school with 700 students. There were 26 schools in the board and my high school was the only one with a library worker on staff, but I was provided with a small budget of \$1,200.

In my current role at Keyano College, in Fort McMurray, I meet students who have never seen a library in a school before. So, my favourite part is to have the tools and a modest budget that allow me to get new resources and be creative.

Our library is staffed by three library technicians, three librarians, and a handful of student assistants. I am responsible for acquisitions of everything from books to technology, videos, office supplies, and more. I handle fines and financial holds, and I create programs, virtual and physical displays, and newsletters to promote our resources. I also manage our participation in NEOS, a library consortium that collaborates to create and maintain an online catalogue of collections shared across institutions.

People might not know that I play a significant role in promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion – also a priority for the college. For example, I create *LibGuides* focusing on these themes, to organize and showcase various library resources and services available for research and study. *LibGuides* feature library assets in multiple formats including books, databases, journals, and freely accessible online content like podcasts, articles, and community events.

Question 3

What role does the library play in the lives of the Keyano College community?

We are constantly looking for ways to support students and fill the gaps in their lives. For example, during the pandemic, it became obvious that many students lacked access to technology. Access to the internet and technology can be unaffordable for some people in Fort McMurray. When the college switched from in-person to online classes, we helped start a laptop loaning program with as little as 10 laptops. Each year, I found money and grants that enabled me to purchase more laptops, and we now have 70, ensuring equal access to technology. We aim to remove roadblocks students encounter on their educational journey.

Additionally, I run a staff summer reading challenge called Keyano Reads. Reading is an important tool to promote mental health and stress relief for staff too. I've also been involved in book clubs for students, and in supporting students who are discovering their identities, creating safe spaces within the library for them when they are transitioning.

Question 4

How would the absence of library staff at Keyano College impact students?

It would be terrible. Students would lose essential and much needed support, such as one-on-one help with research and citations which professors can't provide due to large class sizes.

Keyano College also serves a large, non-traditional student base, including individuals training for new careers and parents attending evening and weekend courses. They all need to be able to access the library, and the support of library staff is crucial. Without us or with reduced hours, their access to library resources and services would be severely limited, which would be detrimental to their success.

Question 5

What challenges are you and other library workers facing in your library, and how could they be addressed?

We are constantly expected to do more with less. Staffing is always at the top of the list. This year we had a couple of vacant positions and student employees were filling in the gaps, even though they are not suited to perform qualified work. The employer has a hard time finding staff with relevant skills and training, but they are offering shorter contracts, fewer hours, and lower pay. People are understandably unwilling to accept these positions long term.

Adequate funding is the key to addressing this issue and providing better working conditions. It would enable the employer to hire qualified staff and to extend library hours to enhance accessibility, especially for our non-traditional and international students.

Question 6

What message is vital to share about libraries and library work during Canadian Library Month?

Most people don't know what goes on in a library. Library work is essential, specialized, and should be well-compensated. Libraries offer a unique and irreplaceable resource that can genuinely improve someone's life.

A great example is the *Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)* program, funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada through the *Settlement Program*. It provides free English language training to adult newcomers on a part-time or full-time basis in post-secondary education libraries across Canada. Therefore, our library has curated a collection of resources to support learning English as a second language or an additional language (ESL/EAL).

It is incredibly fulfilling to connect with these learners, fostering a sense of belonging and support in their journey to language proficiency.

If you ever had to choose between schools, the one with the library would be the obvious choice – libraries play a pivotal role in enriching lives and supporting education.

CUPE members were the first library workers to go on strike

The London library workers, members of CUPE 217, went on strike in 1970 demanding equal increases for all library board workers. The settlement called for across-the-board 13% wage hikes, a maternity leave provision and dropping of management demands to eliminate library heads from the union.

In this photo, London library worker Jackie Jeffery from CUPE 217 confronts books which were returned during their two-week strike. It was the first strike ever by library workers in Canada and brought them equal increases for all workers.



Anger against INFLATION: WE'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE

By **Angella MacEwen** and **Pierre Ducasse**

Whether it was 1975 or 2022, the federal government has always tried to push the cost of inflation onto workers, and CUPE was there to fight back. CUPE still argues that workers don't cause inflation, so they shouldn't be forced to bear the brunt of the cost.

Inflation went above 10% in 1974 and 1975. This prompted Prime Minister Trudeau (Pierre Elliott, that time) and his government to adopt the federal *Anti-Inflation Act* in 1975, aimed at controlling the increase of prices and wages. The Liberal government passed the Act despite having campaigned explicitly against such a proposal in the 1974 election just a few months before. The Act established an Anti-Inflation Board (AIB) to enforce a three-year cap on wage increases for companies with more than 500 employees and all federal employees. Most provinces signed an agreement with the federal government to apply the wage cap to public sector workers in their jurisdictions.

By the beginning of 1976, workers saw that while their wages were being held back, prices were continuing to increase – especially for necessities, like food and energy. Sounds familiar?

Big private sector employers were bragging about how the savings from wage controls were padding their profits. At the same time, executives were able to avoid wage controls by re-writing job descriptions, engineering promotions, and deferring profit sharing. The wage and



price controls hit the workers who could least afford it the hardest.

In response, CUPE organized 100 anti-wage control meetings to hear from members. CUPE argued that the AIB didn't understand the complexity of collective bargaining or the equity concerns that might justify larger wage increases for some workers.

In October 1976, one million workers, including 100,000 CUPE members, participated in a one-day general strike against wage and price controls. Within six months, provinces started withdrawing from their agreements with the AIB, and the federal government ended the program eight months before originally scheduled.

In 2023, we have Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem discouraging employers from giving their workers pay increases and giving arbitrators ammunition to decide against wage increases on the grounds that it might cause a wage-price spiral. CUPE disagrees with the Bank of Canada's narrative that workers are to blame. This is a real class war. We advocate against austerity and we will keep supporting our locals to obtain real wage increases at the bargaining table.

We've seen inflation before. Workers should not have to pay the price for bad policy.



60 YEARS OF WORKER-TO-WORKER SOLIDARITY AROUND THE GLOBE AT THE HEART OF CUPE'S WORK

By **Kelti Cameron** and **Karin Jordan**

Since CUPE's founding in 1963, our union has been a member of the global union federation Public Services International (PSI). Over the last 60 years, we have supported countless international struggles, notably against apartheid in South Africa, and in solidarity with the people of Vietnam, Cuba, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Grenada, Nicaragua, Haiti, Burma, Iran, Palestine and the Philippines.

To this day, CUPE members have organized for peace and justice, and have backed workers and social movements fighting for their rights and defending vital public services. We have always recognized that our unity as workers provides us with strength and ability to challenge the global economic system that oppresses us. Our unity allows us to exert our collective right to live in a just world.

We also recognize the need for strong organizations and allies who advocate for self-determination and liberation against all forms of oppression, including class, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion and ethnic origin. Our work to strengthen our movement in Canada has always been an important contribution to this global struggle, and for a strong public sector around the world.

Convention delegates take a stand on Vietnam in '67

CUPE joined the anti-war movement in the 60s by urging the Canadian government to stop sending weapons to the Vietnam war.



Actively supporting United Farm Workers grape boycott in the 60s

During the 1965 strike against table grape growers in Delano, California, CUPE supported the workers' call for a boycott. The strike was a historic example of the power of consumer boycotts and solidarity. Initiated by the Filipino members of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) to fight against the exploitation of farm workers, it soon became an alliance with the Mexican National Farmworkers Association (NFWA) that resulted, five years

later, in a victory for over 10,000 farm workers reaching a collective agreement with major table grape growers.

“The convention decided CUPE should urge all its members to boycott California grapes until the United Farm Workers’ Union has won its strike against the California grape industry,” CUPE reported in the special convention edition of The Journal in 1969.



Offering solidarity and calling for peace in the 70s and 80s

The anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and the revolutionary movements in Latin America in the 70s and 80s mark some of CUPE's most significant international solidarity work. CUPE members were meeting with front-line leaders of the Nicaraguan revolution and of the South African anti-apartheid struggle. Our solidarity further extended to the people of Chile, Cuba, El Salvador and Guatemala as they fought for peace and liberation from American imperialism.

“For the basic union activities we engage in here, you could be kidnapped, imprisoned, tortured or shot,” recounted four CUPE members who met with trade unionists during their visit to Central America in 1986.



Anti-free trade in the 80s

In 1987, our National Convention voted in favour of formally supporting our union's international solidarity work with the intention of engaging in solidarity instead of charity and focusing on social change instead of humanitarian relief.

The 80s also marked the start of significant mobilizations against Canada-U.S. free trade agreements. CUPE joined this movement and fought for sovereignty, equality, and mutual respect against the threat and incursion of American corporations in our national industries and in our public sector.

"If implemented, free trade will erode our manufacturing industries, our social programs, our culture, our political independence – all those elements that make us different... that make us Canadians," wrote journalist Ed Finn in The Leader in 1986.



1991: birth of the National Committee on International Solidarity

Nearly 30 years of international solidarity work at CUPE, largely inspired by leaders in South Africa, led to the formation of the National Committee on International Solidarity in 1991. CUPE resources were directed toward education and worker-to-worker solidarity exchanges.

The following year, CUPE's "Union Aid" Fund was formally established. It was the first international solidarity fund by a public sector union created to establish long-term and reciprocal relationships with allies in other countries around the world.

New international committee starts fund



International committee will build fund. From left to right, Gerry Barr, Steeworkers, Aina Kagi, Saskatoon, Steve Seaborn, Toronto, Cathy Young, St. John's, committee chair Paul Mabry, Ottawa, Gary Cwitco, communications workers, CUPE international solidarity officer Ron Verzuh, Miguel Uttamchandani, Winnipeg, Kevin Flaherty, Edmonton, Randy Sykes, national president's office, and Terry O'Connor, Toronto.

TORONTO — The new national committee on international

The committee members are Casey Swann, B.C., Kevin Flaherty, Alberta, Aina Kagi,

new committee. Mabry has been appointed committee chair and Local 1



CUPE delegates protest NAFTA in Vancouver

Global justice, a strategic priority

The globalization of social movements firmly embedded CUPE in the world by the early 2000s. At the height of the international anti-globalization mobilizations, our 2001 National Convention endorsed a policy statement titled *On the front line locally and globally* as a renewal strategy for our international work.



In 2003, National Convention endorsed a name change for our international solidarity efforts from “Union Aid” to “Global Justice”, to better reflect CUPE’s political orientation and objectives. That same year, CUPE’s Strategic Directions integrated international campaigns and strategic alliances as core elements of our union’s work.



And in 2005, National Convention adopted a policy that focused on sectorial organizing. This led to a health care workers exchange established by CUPE to create and strengthen the network of workers from that sector from countries across the Americas.

“Meeting our Colombian counterparts was just fantastic. We learned so much from them about how privatization is destroying their country, and how they can keep up their spirits in the face of such terrible conditions,” said Tracy Fall, a Charlottetown paramedic from CUPE 3324 who was part of the first Canadian unions’ delegation touring Colombia in 2007.



Actively building a fairer future

In 2007, CUPE outlined a substantial international solidarity action plan in the union’s strategic directions. The program included support for CUPE’s Global Justice Fund, for issues like member education, country and issue-specific calls regarding the HIV/AIDS epidemic, global social movements for water protection, and for countries like Colombia, Palestine, and South Africa.

CUPE’s International Policy Statement was adopted in 2014 by CUPE’s National Executive Board following an assessment of our international solidarity work, in an effort to adapt it to our ever-changing world.

“International solidarity is not charity, it is a strategic tool in the world struggle against labour’s enemies,” said Sisa Njikelana, NEHAWU General Secretary speaking at National Convention in 1989.

CUPE’s international solidarity has taken many forms and has grown significantly over the years. We have learned that there is a great deal of action and creativity taking place in the global labour and social movements. Workers in Canada and around the world are fighting for a just, economically and socially sustainable world within the limits of its resources. We will continue to be inspired by their work and will continue to support it in the future.



The CUPE logo through time

By **Pierre Ducasse**

A well-designed logo serves more than one purpose. It is not only a recognizable emblem to identify an organization, but it should also, ideally, convey that organization's values. A logo plays a pivotal role in shaping and reinforcing an organization's brand identity, fostering a sense of belonging and unity.

**Here are the different logos
CUPE has used over the
last 60 years.**



CUPE's first logo

This logo was used for seven years, following our founding convention in 1963. It shows two hands clasping and the maple leaf.



Our longest-lasting logo

This logo, known for its arrow, was used for 30 years, from 1969 until 1999. It was introduced to members in the October 1969 edition of the CUPE Journal:

“CUPE has adopted a new insignia. The new crest is a square within a circle. The arrow and circle symbolize the progress and motion of CUPE. The square within the circle is symbolic of the fact that CUPE is an entirely Canadian union and all its members fall within the Canadian border. The initials are perfectly balanced to symbolize the equal status with which both languages are regarded by CUPE.”



The forgotten logo

While probably not an official CUPE logo, this one was frequently used in CUPE publications, and on pins and posters, between 1977 and 1982. It aimed to give more prominence to the union's name. Note the presence of a minimalist arrow on the right.

A new logo for a new millennium

In 2000, an entirely new brand identity was developed. A young and vibrant colour, a strong and dynamic design, but the same sense of forward motion and momentum with a solid line of “racing stripes” – the front line – replacing the arrow. This logo was first used at the 1999 National Convention, and it came with the English slogan “On the front line”, and “Au coeur de l'action” in French. This logo was also easily customized for locals.

“A new distinctive logo will help raise our profile, helping the public – and prospective members – see the key role we’re playing in the social, political and economic life of the country – and their community,” explained CUPE’s magazine Organize in June 2000.



Simply CUPE

Around 2010, CUPE started to use the logo we have today, without an official slogan, making name recognition a priority. Simple, clear, and effective.



COURAGE. COMPASSION. COMMITMENT. CUPE.

CUPE'S 715,000
MEMBERS
ARE ON THE
FRONT LINES
KEEPING YOUR
COMMUNITY
STRONG.



CUPE.CA

