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The CUPE newsletter is published by CUPE Local 3911. We welcome your submissions, letters and comments. Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of CUPE Local 3911

Editor: Virginia Gillese

“A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself.”

- **Joseph Campbell**

CUPE National Convention – Virginia Gillese

PRO: The convention was fun! There is a real feeling of community and inspiration to be found when over 2000 people sing “Solidarity Forever.” People were helpful and friendly, and there was a feeling of camaraderie amongst all as proposals to better society were debated and voted on. The wonderful location of Quebec City was an added bonus. The convention gave me hope. With that many delegates, not to mention all the members who couldn’t attend, working to better the world, I think we can remain confident that as we stay the course we will accomplish much.

CON: There was some politicking, especially amongst the Alberta group. Politics is everywhere, and CUPE is no exception. But it is disappointing.

The loss of the definite article: I noticed that the term “convention” (as in, “We will discuss it at convention”) instead of “the convention” was used. This may seem like a minor matter, but it reminded me of my Catholic upbringing. People dropped the definite article to denote reverence. So, they would say, “We will sit at table” to show a sort of piety. Instead of “on the altar” you would hear, “at alter.” The fact that CUPE people used this form of reference bothered me as it connoted a religious type of reverence regarding CUPE itself and its convention. I did feel that for some of those present, CUPE is a sort of religion and, if that is true, then it easily follows that it will be treated as being above reproof. Let’s make sure we hold CUPE to high standards and not fall into the trap of treating CUPE like something above reproach.



Want some free

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Sign up for your pension!

The pension sign up information is found at:

<http://www1.athabascau.ca/hr/benefitpage/CUPERRSP>

The Outsider – The VOICE of the TUTOR

Furlough – Rob Wiznura

Don't forget that Athabasca University has imposed a furlough on us. While you have a flexible five days that you can determine, the other five are determined by the university. The days are as follows: December 23 & 24, 2013 and January 2 & 3, 2014. **DO NOT WORK** on those days. By that, I mean do **NOT** respond to your e-mails. These days do **NOT** count as work days for the turnaround time on assignments. I suggest that you set the following automatic reply/block on your e-mail.

Athabasca University is closed for the following days over Christmas: dates. As well, AU has imposed a furlough on all tutors of the institution for the following days: December 23 & 24, 2013 and January 2 & 3, 2014. What this means is that we (your tutors) are not being paid and have been instructed by the university not to work on these days. E-mails will not be responded to until January 6th and assignments will not be marked or returned during the aforementioned dates. Please note that there will likely be some backlog when we are allowed to return to work, so please be patient.

Call Centre and the Labour picture in Alberta – RobWiznura

As the cold weather sets in, a cold heartedness has nestled in the administration at Athabasca University and at the legislature. Regarding AU, as many of you know, they have shifted a number of science courses to the call centre model. We have lodged a grievance and are taking whatever steps we can to fight this. However, do not be afraid to mention to your students when you communicate with them how these things will affect them. The other night, I was talking to a student who was telling me how amazing it was that she had direct access to me. I informed her that the institution is planning to remove that direct access from her. She was quite taken aback and quite willing to mention in the evaluation of the course how important access is for success. We need to realize that WE are the real “student success centre.”

At the legislature, the bills attacking AUPE as they approach the next round of bargaining are certainly going to affect us in the future. We already have no access to strike action and, if they can get away with eliminating arbitration with AUPE, there is little to stop them from denying the same to us. Remember that the post-secondary learning act is being revisited by this government, so don't be surprised if some dark changes loom ahead. If ever there were a time to raise your voice, that would be now. No matter how progressive or backward your MLA is, do express your concerns. We encourage you to voice your opposition to Bills 45 and 46, no matter how quickly the government rams them through the legislature

“Legal” Attacks on Workers are Still Attacks – Dougal MacDonald

The Canadian government has a history of using "legal means" to attack working people, under a variety of excuses. One well-known example is Trudeau's implementation of the *War Measures Act* on October 16, 1970 after declaring a so-called state of "apprehended insurrection." 12,500 troops were deployed in Quebec and 10,000 homes were searched, without warrants. Almost 500 people were arrested of which only 25 were ever formally charged. The *War Measures Act*, created in 1914 after the outbreak of the First World War, gives sweeping emergency powers to the federal Cabinet, allowing it to govern by decree if it perceives the existence of "war, invasion or insurrection, real or apprehended."

The Mackenzie King federal government put the *War Measures Act* into force on August 25, 1939 declaring a state of apprehended war. The Defence of Canada Regulations (DOCR), drafted only a month previous, were instituted under the *War Measures Act*. The DOCR legalized repressive measures such as waiving of *habeas corpus* and the right to trial, internment of "subversives," bans on political groups, restrictions of free speech, banning of certain publications, and confiscation of property. Section 21 of the DOCR allowed the federal Minister of Justice to detain without charge anyone who might act "in any manner prejudicial to the public safety or the safety of the state." The *War Measures Act* remained in force in Canada until the end of 1945.

The King government's official line was that the wartime DOCR were intended to suppress anyone obstructing the mobilization of Canadians in support of the war effort against Germany. However, the government often used the DOCR to attack those who were anti-fascists and who in no way sympathized with Nazi aggression. The people mainly targeted by the state were

trade unionists, communists, and anti-fascist Ukrainians because King and others in the ruling circles saw communism and socialism as far greater threats to Canada than fascism. In fact, King had publicly expressed his admiration for Hitler on more than one occasion.

The DOCR were immediately used to attack trade union leaders. Wartime inflation from 1939-41 eroded workers' wages which, along with labour shortages, set off an upsurge in union militancy and organizing. The King government used the DOCR as a weapon to block organizing and to undermine strikes and picketing. For example, in December 1939, Canadian Congress of Industrial Organizations secretary C.H. Millard was arrested for telling Timmins, Ontario steelworkers "[we] should have democracy here in Canada before we go to Europe to defend it."

Communist trade unionists were singled out by the King government as the main "agitators" in the labour movement because they were not only active union members, but leaders and organizers of unions such as the Canadian Seamen's Union (CSU), the United Electrical Workers (UEW), the International Woodworkers of America (IWA), the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC), and the United Automobile Workers (UAW). For example, on June 20, 1941, the RCMP arrested UEW president, C.S. Jackson, on direct orders from the King government because UEW was on strike at the Toronto General Electric Plant and organizing workers at Westinghouse in Hamilton.

On June 6, 1940, the King government officially banned the Communist Party of Canada, the anti-fascist Ukrainian Labor Farmer Temple Association, and thirteen other progressive organizations. RCMP officers, empowered

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to issue their own search warrants, were ordered to arrest members of the banned organizations, and anyone who distributed literature or spoke publicly. Anyone who advocated for or defended principles or policies of banned organizations was presumed guilty unless proven innocent. Suspected “subversives” were sent to internment camps, one of which was in Kananaskis, Alberta.

The DOCR were also used to smash the very influential Ukrainian Labor Farmer Temple Association (ULFTA) which at the time had about 20,000 members across Canada. On June 5, 1940, the King government banned the anti-fascist ULFTA, closing its halls and interning thirty-six of its leaders on trumped up charges. Labour temples, built and financed by the Ukrainian workers and farmers, were raided across Canada, printing presses were stolen and many libraries were burned or shredded, similar to Nazi book burnings. The government turned over some of the

ULFTA's principal halls and properties to the pro-fascist Ukrainian National Federation for next to nothing.

Today, Harper is following in Mackenzie King's footsteps by also using "legal means" to attack those who dare to stand up for their rights. Recent examples include the back-to-work bills passed against the striking postal workers on June 15, 2011, the striking Air Canada workers on March 12, 2012, and the striking rail workers on May 30, 2012. Another example is Harper's promotion of Bill C-377 which will force all trade unions and their locals to provide detailed reports on their finances and activities which no other organizations must provide. The real aim is to stop unions from speaking out on important issues such as human rights. In addition, there is the very real danger of U.S.-style “right to work” laws, which would exempt union members from paying dues but would still require unions to act on behalf of their non-paying members.

ETexts

At the November 16th GMM, Mark Dimirsky provided an update on the eText initiative going on. Please follow the link to read Mark's full report.

http://3911.cupe.ca/updir/3911/eText_Advisory_Committee_Report_Nov_2013_GMM.pdf



Next CUPE General Membership Meeting:

Saturday, December 7th, 2013 9:30 a.m.

10011 – 109 Street Edmonton

**** Teleconference Available ****

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CUPE National report – Ernie Jacobson

The 2013 CUPE National Convention was held in Quebec City from October 21 to October 25, 2013. Ernie Jacobson, Ronnie Leah and Virginia Gillese were delegates from CUPE3911. Sector meetings were held on Sunday, October 20.

Post-Secondary Education Sector Meeting, Sunday October 20, 2013.

The post- secondary education sector meeting prior to the opening of the convention discussed key issues in post-secondary education including more casual and part-time work, more staff without pensions and benefits, a greater corporate presence on campus, and even more initiatives to further privatize and casualize the post-secondary academic sector.

The following is the Post-Secondary Education sector report published by CUPE National:

Post-secondary education sector workers from coast to coast gathered Sunday afternoon to find ways to change the two-tiered status of precarious workers in that sector.

Participants discussed the need to mobilize and reach out to other unions on campus to fight the austerity agenda being pushed in universities and colleges across the country. Working conditions and bargaining structures might be different but post-secondary education workers all face the consequences of core funding cuts.

*Panelist Nora Loreto, who had just released a new book *From Demonized to Organized: Building the New Union Movement*, talked about the importance of finding new ways to mobilize youth. Unions need to be more creative in how they engage students and they need to reach out to students on an on-going basis, not only during bargaining.*

Participants identified ways they could work together to support each other and identified the need to engage and work with other unions on campus, build coalitions, share information and strategize more effectively.

Convention Report

There were approximately 2300 delegates as well as staff and guests, for a total attendance of close to 2600.

Guest speaker on Monday was NDP leader Thomas Mulcair, who discussed the federal government attack on unions and collective bargaining. To watch part of his speech, please click on this link:

<http://cupe50.ca/no-one-left-behind/>

On Tuesday a three person panel made up of author Thomson Highway, Trish Hennessy of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and student activist Martine Desjardines discussed how fairness can be promoted in society. They made that point that a higher level of union density in a society will lower the overall level of inequality in a society, even for non-union members. Please follow this link to view the panel discussion:

<http://cupe50.ca/panel-discussion-labour-matters-reinventing-our-movement/>

Also on Tuesday, during the lunch break, a march and demonstration from the Centre de Congress(Convention Centre) to the Quebec National Assembly was held to support the municipal workers(the “blue collars”) of Quebec City.

On Wednesday the convention was addressed by Rosa Pavanelli, General Secretary of Public Service International who discussed the attack on public service workers across the globe.

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To view her speech, please follow this link:

<http://cupe50.ca/the-fight-for-union-rights-is-in-front-of-us-pavanelli/>

Paul Moist ran as incumbent for the position of National President, and a young worker was nominated from the floor, so there was an election for this position. The result was the re-election of Paul Moist for Charles Fleury was re-elected as National Secretary-Treasurer by acclamation. Charles Fleury was first elected as the National Secretary Treasurer in 2011. A number of key themes emerged through the discussions, speaker presentations and from the Strategic Directions, 2013-2015 document:

- Legislative threats to unions
- Unite for Fairness/Stand Up for Fairness
- Achieve real gains for members and for all working people
- Defending public services
- Building solidarity, including international solidarity
- Building political action and activism

Wednesday evening was the Global Justice

Forum, which included speakers from South Africa, the Philippines and Colombia to discuss the particular issues of each country. Each speaker dealt with issues of inequality and their efforts to improve the social and economic conditions within their country.

The convention succeeded in passing many resolutions pushing for:

- Resisting the attack on defined benefit workplace pensions,
- Promotion of an accessible post-secondary education system in Canada
- Resisting airline attempts to compromise airline safety by reducing the ratio of flight attendants to passengers on Canada's airlines.
- Protesting federal government moves to reduce employment insurance benefits
- Advocacy for protecting national medicare and the Canada Health Act

The 2013 CUPE convention delegates participated in the "parliament" of CUPE representing the 627,000 CUPE members across Canada. There was a sense of satisfaction in the level of discussion, the democracy demonstrated by the vigorous debates, and a sense of urgency in resisting the attempts of the current government to reduce union strength and tear apart the social fabric of our country.

"I dream of giving birth to a child who will ask, "Mother, what was war?"

- **Eve Merriam**