

REPORT ON

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WORK

FOR THE

2008 NATIONAL TRIENNIAL CONVENTION

OF THE

CANADIAN UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Profound international developments have taken place during the 2005 to 2008 mandate. These changes will have an enormous effect on our union, our jobs, the communities we live in, and our commitment to maintaining public services and advancing the interests of workers here at home.

Neo-liberal globalization has continued to create pressure for privatization and deregulation, including in the postal sector. The UK, Japan and many countries in the European Union have begun or are slated to be privatized or deregulated. The past three years have also seen a major deterioration in the mid-east and neighbouring countries in Asia with devastating effects of conflict in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine. In the South, Colombia continues to be the most dangerous country in the world for trade unionists while the Harper Government negotiates a “free trade” agreement with the regime. At the same time, resistance has been growing in a significant number of countries in the South to the long history of colonialism and the economic disaster associated with neo-liberal globalization.

These are just a few of the global circumstances, which have had, and will continue to have a major impact on CUPW’s international work.

Elements of CUPW International Work

Our international work takes a number of forms:

- Exchanges with postal unions and other labour organizations in developing countries;
- Solidarity relationships with postal unions and labour organizations in industrialized countries such as the U.S. and Western Europe;
- Work around international trade agreements and privatization and deregulation of postal services;
- Work within Union Network International (UNI), and the International Transport Federation (ITF), the global unions to which we are affiliated;
- Activities arising from CUPW’s membership in the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Labour International Development Committee (LIDC);
- Joint international work with other public sector unions;
- Participation in events, like the World Social Forum, that bring together social activists, trade unionists, indigenous organizations, anti-globalization groups and others;
- International peace movement activity and labour opposition to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The International Postal Fund (IPF) was negotiated in the urban operations collective agreement in 2000. Canada Post is required to deposit \$200,000 a year into the fund, which is controlled by the Union.

Highlights of International Projects

FENTECT (Brazil)

Late in 2005, CUPW took advantage of the UNI-Americas Postal Conference in Gatineau, Quebec to organize a tour of activists from the Brazil Postal Workers Union (FENTECT) with whom we had been building a relationship over several years. Following the tour, FENTECT and CUPW drafted a joint solidarity statement, which can be used as a model for effective international solidarity work.

The relationship with FENTECT has continued to grow since the initial tour. We have participated in work with FENTECT around health and safety issues, and Brother Fred Furlong participated in FENTECT’s most recent National Convention.

Frontlines Project and Colombia's STPC

The "Frontlines" project had its origin in a visit by Colombian Postal Workers Union leaders to CUPW locals across the country in 2001. In 2004, CUPW, PSAC and CUPE came to the conclusion that the fight to defend public services was a priority for workers in both countries and building mutual solidarity ties between our unions was essential. The three unions organized a major tour of six Colombian public sector union leaders to locals and workplaces in the Atlantic and the western provinces.

As solidarity ties deepened, a return tour was organized to Colombia in 2006 so that our activists could see first hand the courageous fight Colombian workers are carrying out, in partnership with human rights and community organizations. Four rank and file members and one union representative represented CUPW in this return tour. A video and accompanying booklet were produced about the experience.

SINTRACORREOS (Venezuela)

CUPW took advantage of the 2006 World Social Forum in Caracas, Venezuela, to establish links with our sister union there, SINTRACORREOS. We jointly committed to maintain close contact and work toward ensuring Venezuelan postal workers are able to participate in UNI events and eventually join UNI. To this end, Brothers Evert Hoogers and Ramon Antipan of CUPW were part of a UNI-Americas mission to Venezuela in 2007 to examine the state of the labour movement in Venezuela.

CUPW can learn a great deal from our sister union in Venezuela about how to strengthen a public postal system. The public post office delivers services such as child care and literacy programs to postal workers and residents of the surrounding communities.

U.S. Postal Union Solidarity Work

CUPW has also sought to develop close relationships with our sister postal unions in the U.S. What happens to the United States Postal Service has a tremendous impact on postal workers in Canada.

CUPW has been interested in how postal unions in the U.S. successfully fought against the Bush administration's postal reform initiative, which sought to strip the right of the unions to negotiate wages for members, move in the direction of deregulation and privatization and strip away pension plans. A workshop at the June 2007 NEB/REC Meeting described the strategies and tactics used. The issue of contracting out of letter carriers routes in USPS was also examined. CUPW and U.S. postal unions have also been working together more around health and safety. Four APWU health and safety leaders and activists participated in a tour to Ontario and Quebec. CUPW leaders and activists in Winnipeg, the first target of the Modern Post project, also attended a meeting on how mail sequencing machines affected postal workers' jobs in the U.S.

Regional and Local International Work

The challenges facing postal workers in 2008 show how crucial it is for all levels of the unions to embrace international work as core work of the union. More regions and locals are carrying out projects through the International Postal Fund on their own, or in conjunction with the national union. However, more can be done to involve all levels in the union in international solidarity work.

During this mandate, the two regions in Quebec participated in work in Haiti, the poorest country in the hemisphere. The Quebec regions have also maintained solidarity relations with the Belgian union representing postal workers, the General Confederacy of Public Services (CGPS). Three of the regions (Atlantic, Prairie, and Pacific) have established their own Regional International Solidarity Funds, which have been used to develop and help finance international initiatives.

The NEB has expressed its desire to put far more emphasis on regional and local international solidarity work in the coming mandate.

CLC LIDP Program and CUPW Projects

During the previous mandate, CUPW became a full member of the CLC's Labour International Development Committee (LIDC). The CLC and LIDC unions have worked to prepare a variety of projects with partner unions in a number of developing countries.

In our case, CUPW's International Postal Fund Coordinator worked with the PSAC Social Justice fund Director to develop two joint projects with Postal and Public Sector unions in South Africa and Nicaragua. CUPW will primarily focus on the project with our sister union in South Africa, The Communications Workers Union (CWU-SA).

CUPW has also participated, with other CLC affiliates in support work for the Federation of Trade unions in Burma (FTUB), the trade union central in exile which is deeply involved in attempts to replace the brutal military dictatorship. CUPW has also deepened its connections to organizations resisting the anti-worker repression practiced by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Work in UNI and the ITF

During this mandate, CUPW has maintained and even increased our level of involvement in UNI. Sister Deborah Bourque sits on the UNI-Americas Regional Executive Committee and is 1st alternate to the UNI World Executive Board. Sister Lynn Bue was elected in 2005 during the 2nd UNI-Americas Postal Conference in Gatineau, Quebec to the position of President of the Postal Component of UNI-Americas. This has allowed us to promote our objectives vigorously during this mandate.

The UNI-Americas Postal Conference location allowed CUPW to make important presentations on the WTO, trade agreements and their effect on postal services. The conference adopted an educational campaign for affiliates around the dangers of trade liberalization on postal services.

CUPW during this term also affiliated to the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) because of the global union's central role around organizing the increasingly integrated express/logistics/postal corporations such as UPS, DHL, FEDEX and TNT.

Solidarity with Cuban Workers

During the past three years, CUPW has continued its relationship with the Cuban Communication Workers Union (SNTCIE) and with CTC, the Cuban trade union central. CUPW organized delegations to visit Cuba and participate with the Cuban CTC and SNTCIE in conferences. CUPW activists also participated in International Workers Day (May Day) events. During this mandate, we also continued to send participants to the biennial Conference of Communication and Postal Unions held in Cuba where leaders of communications unions from around the world are brought together.

Also during this term, for the first time in the last 12 years, a delegation from UNI carried out an official visit to Cuba in order to evaluate the possibility of developing stronger relations with the Cuban unions. This visit arose as the result of the consistent and persuasive work of CUPW within UNI-Americas.

CUPW has also joined with other unions and activist organizations in Canada, Quebec and the United States to free the Cuban Five, falsely accused of conspiracy to commit espionage, most recently participating in a solidarity conference, "Breaking the Silence", in Toronto on November 9 and 10.

Bolivia Rising Tour

In 2006, CUPW joined with other unions, the CLC and Common Frontiers to bring a delegation from Bolivian popular movements, including unions, to Canada in order to gain insight into the events surrounding the election of Evo Morales and the rise of social power occurring there. Key to the project was to talk to indigenous unionists and movement activists about the huge changes they are bringing about, how we in the North can learn from them and forge solidarity links with them.

International Solidarity and Social Movement Work

1. World Social Forum (WSF) and Regional Social Forums

CUPW, along with other unions doing international solidarity work, have increasingly participated in the WSF, adding to the diversity of themes by inserting labour's involvement in the debates and reflections. In 2006, CUPW sent a delegation to the WSF in Caracas, one of three "polycentric" for a that year. The CLC organized a three-day educational session involving the UNT labour central.

As far as labour is concerned, a proposal emerged to build a labour network on and in the WSF process. Its purpose would be to give more centrality and visibility to labour issues in the WSF process, strengthen alliances between labour and the social movements and to go beyond defensive and isolated struggles to "find a new transnational capacity for action".

CUPW also participated during this mandate in the first Quebec Social Forum. While the global scope of the WSF is important, it also seemed important to directly encourage the same initiative on a regional basis here, and CUPW participated in, and supported financially and logistically, the Quebec forum in August of 2007.

2. Common Frontiers

CUPW is affiliated to, and has also worked extensively during this mandate, with Common Frontiers (CF), a working group including trade unions, social justice organizations, churches, human rights groups and some NGOs. It carries out research and organizes around alternatives to the economic and social effects of economic integration in the Americas.

CUPW, as well as many other unions, has also worked closely with CF and other coalitions such as the Council of Canadians to mobilize opposition to the North American Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP), a "deep integration" initiative of the U.S., Mexican and Canadian governments, led by the most powerful neo-liberal corporate elite in the three countries. Its purpose is to "harmonize" regulations across the borders to further integration of the three economies. CUPW joined in the ongoing resistance to the SPP, including participating in demonstrations in Montebello, Quebec in 2007 during the SPP summit of Bush, Harper and Calderon.

3. CUPW, the Peace Movement and Resistance to the War on Terror

The union has also worked these past three years in the struggle for peace and against the so-called 'war on terror'. CUPW has taken every possible opportunity to call for an immediate end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As well, the CUPW National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) has incorporated the fight against the security certificate program for refugees and immigrants who have come under suspicion as terrorists, the "deep integration" of U.S. and Canadian immigration policy, the rendition to torture of Maher Arar and Arabs and the three Muslim men earlier incarcerated in Syria and questioned at the behest of Canadian intelligence and police services as an important part of its work.

Moving Forward: Building International Solidarity Work within our Membership

In its Policy Paper on International Solidarity Work, the NEB stated, “No one can seriously contend, in the early days of the 21st century, that unions can truly thrive without integrating their struggles with those of workers around the globe. This is particularly clear for workers in public services such as the Post Office.” The growth of involvement in this work at all levels is evidence that CUPW activists are largely in agreement with this assessment. There remains the necessity of ensuring this work is expanded and deepened, particularly at the Regional and Local levels.

Given the forces driving the neo-liberal global agenda, it is obvious that international solidarity work can only become a more important element of CUPW’s activities over the next mandate.

INTRODUCTION

How the International Landscape Has Shaped CUPW Work 2005 -2008

This report on the international solidarity work undertaken by CUPW during the 2005 to 2008 mandate is being prepared against the backdrop of profound international developments which will have an enormous effect on our union, our jobs, the communities we live in, and our continuing commitment to maintain public services and advance the interests of workers here at home.

Now, more than ever, events have revealed how much our effort to defend the rights of the membership of CUPW and the fight to strengthen public postal service here are contingent on our support for, and the outcome of the struggles of workers in both the developed and the developing world.

The international situation postal workers face in 2008 has by no means remained static since 2005. Certainly, many of the patterns noted in the 2005 convention report continue to present major challenges. Neo-liberal globalization has thrown up new international trade agreements bringing with them the prospect of increased pressure for privatization and deregulation, more latitude to transnational corporate investors and renewed attacks on social programs, public services, human rights and workers’ rights.

Additionally, the so-called “war on terror” has continued to create instability and violence in a host of states, most recently made evident in Pakistan, and here and abroad showing its true colours as a “war on human rights”.

However, there have been specific developments affecting workers internationally which in turn have influenced CUPW’s international work and will have an impact on our focus over the next three years. It isn’t the purpose of this report to analyze every trend in the capitalist world or to chart working class resistance around the globe, but a few key matters should provide a clearer perspective of how our Union views its international solidarity work.

One international reality facing CUPW in this mandate has been the explosion in the “liberalization”, including privatization and deregulation, of public postal administrations in various parts of the globe. In Japan, the process of dismantling and privatizing of the world’s largest public postal network is now well on the way to completion. The European Union is headed for full deregulation by 2011 (the current exclusive privilege allowed for letters weighing up to 50 grams will disappear). Royal Mail in the UK is in upheaval, with liberalization resulting in service cuts, the closure of at least 2500 post offices, and threats of massive job loss.

Competition from privatized postal operations turned multinational corporate giants in countries such as Germany and the Netherlands already are showing an impact in the express and parcel sector in Canada. And while U.S. postal unions were victorious in ensuring that reforms to USPS would not threaten a publically owned postal system with

universal service obligations, recent USPS initiatives to contract out letter carrier delivery and mail processing jobs are casting a shadow over the unions' successes there.

Second, the past three years have seen a devastating deterioration in the mid-east and neighbouring countries in Asia. In July 2006, the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* presented an exhaustive study showing over 600,000 Iraqis had died as a result of the American-led "preemptive" attack and the subsequent occupation, rivaling the death toll of the Rwanda genocide. Since then, tens of thousands more have perished, adding urgency to the struggle to end the occupation and prevent such "interventions" in the future.

The counterpart military invasion and occupation in Afghanistan (in which at least one CUPW member has been killed) has also been devastating, with civilians and working class soldiers paying the price for a war that is deeply connected to a privatization and energy resource agenda (corporate access to and control of oil), as in Iraq. The increasingly militaristic stance of the Federal Government underscores the need for CUPW to work with the labour and peace movement to resist this war and build maximum pressure to withdraw the troops now.

Connected to these wars is the worsening aggression against the people of Palestine by the American and western allies supported Israeli government. Gaza has become the world's largest prison, its inhabitants the victims of an utterly illegal "collective punishment" regime in which food, water, energy and sanitary infrastructure are cruelly denied.

In response to this atrocity, the Apartheid wall and the continued forty year occupation, trade unions, including the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, Palestinian political parties and human rights organizations have called for a global campaign of boycott and divestment against Israel, much like the earlier campaign against Apartheid South Africa. Resolutions on this call will be debated at this convention.

Third, in the Southern part of our hemisphere, around which much of our international solidarity work revolves, events in the last three years have been dramatic. On one hand, Colombia, now a fully-fledged narco-state in which paramilitary forces control much of the government, continues to be the most dangerous country in the world for trade unionists. Human rights and union activists continue to be assassinated, "disappeared" and imprisoned with impunity. The civil war in Colombia has resulted in the internal displacement of up to 5 million people. The entire country is being privatized "at the point of a gun". Currently, the Harper Government is negotiating a "free trade" agreement with the contemptible Colombian regime, stating it is "ridiculous" to demand internationally acceptable Human Rights standards as a condition of such negotiations. CUPW has, and will continue to actively work with the CLC, human rights groups and the labour and popular movements in Colombia to defeat the Canada/Colombia FTA.

On the other hand, the past three years has witnessed a mushrooming of resistance in significant parts of the hemisphere to the long history of colonialism and the economic disaster associated with neo-liberal globalization. People in a significant number of states in the South have followed the example of Venezuela and Bolivia and elected governments emphasizing opposition to American political and economic domination and promising a new kind of political and economic reintegration based on the needs of workers and those most marginalized rather than on profits for transnational corporations.

These governments range from those embracing the concept of "socialism in the 21st century" such as the Correa administration in Ecuador to those whose pace of reform may not yet extend this far but have expressed solidarity with the visions of Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales and have committed to progress to some degree in a similar direction. These include Nicaragua, Argentina and some others. In Venezuela and Bolivia, the main levers of the economy, formerly controlled by foreign monopolies, are being recovered by the state, and free education and health care are being provided to indigenous people and those in poverty for the first time.

The new push for a reintegration of Latin America and the Caribbean has been manifested in the establishment of the Bank of the South designed to shake off the grip of the International Monetary Fund, promoted by Venezuela and endorsed by Brazil, the region's largest economy. It also has featured the creation of ALBA, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas and the Caribbean, which seeks to provide a fair trade alternative to the bilateral, transnational corporation-dominated Free Trade Agreements which have sprouted up as a strategy to replace the spurned Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA).

These are just a few of the global circumstances which have had, and will continue to have a major impact on CUPW's international work. All of these developments have influenced the way CUPW has interacted with postal and other unions in many countries as well as how we work within our Global Union Federations.

As we look at these develops and recount CUPW international solidarity work over the past three years, it will also be important to examine how we can improve our work and build consensus at all levels of the union on its importance, and provide the information and transparency that will convince all our members that they, not simply a few activists, must have a sense of involvement in these activities.

Elements of CUPW International Work

Our international work takes a number of forms:

- exchanges with postal unions and other labour organizations in developing countries. This has involved exchange tours of workers, development projects such as education programs and other specific assistance. The primary focus is in the Americas, but not exclusively so. In addition to bi-lateral union projects, worker to worker exchanges with postal unions in Latin America, we have had projects in other parts of the developing world such as the Pacific Rim, the Francophonie and Southern Africa. For example, CUPW is participating in activities, often with other CLC affiliates, geared to raising awareness about attacks on and assassinations of workers, the poor and human rights activists in the Philippines, and in support of the work of the Federation of Trade Unions in Burma, especially in the wake of the military violence and suppression of basic rights in 2007. We've had an ongoing membership and involvement in Canadian Friends of Burma (CFOB). We have been part of the CFOB union and coalition campaign to pressure Canadian corporations to not do business in Burma until the military dictatorship has ended and the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, Burmese Democracy Leader and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate takes office.
- solidarity relationships with postal unions and labour organizations in industrialized countries such as the U.S. and Western Europe. These relationships typically have focused on workplace issues such as technological change, work processes, work rules, health and safety and organizing strategies. More and more they have involved strategic discussions around globalization, international trade issues and attacks on public services. As the impact of liberalization of postal services have intensified, so have our contacts.
- work around international trade agreements and privatization and deregulation of postal services;
- work within Union Network International (UNI), and more recently, the International Transport Federation (ITF), the Global Unions to which we are affiliated;
- activities arising from CUPW's membership in the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Labour International Development Committee (LIDC);

- This mandate has also seen the expansion of joint international work with other public sector unions, high-lighted by the *Defending Public Services: Canadian and Colombian Workers on the Front Lines* project between CUPW, PSAC and CUPE along with our sister unions in Colombia., and two projects with PSAC in Nicaragua and South Africa within the umbrella of the CLC Labour International Development Program.
- participation in events, like the World Social Forum, that bring together social activists, trade unionists, indigenous organizations, anti-globalization groups and others under the general theme of “Another World is Possible”;coalition work in resistance to the so-called war on terror and its attacks on human rights, including around the fight against Security Certificates, other attacks on refugees and immigrants and our work within the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Committee (ICLMG);
- international peace movement activity and labour opposition to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The International Postal Fund (IPF) was negotiated in the urban operations collective agreement in 2000. Canada Post is required to deposit \$200,000 a year into the fund, which is controlled by the Union. The IPF’s revenues are modest compared to some other unions’ funds, yet it has allowed CUPW to pursue important core work which could not have been achieved otherwise. CUPW also makes use of the General Fund for work with an international component when decided by the NEB.

The “Policy Paper on International Solidarity Work and the International Postal Fund” adopted in 2002 (and currently being updated) has provided guidance to the NEB in trying to meet our key objectives during this mandate:

- to strengthen other postal unions or labour organizations;
- to strengthen CUPW through our international work;
- to build international solidarity work in the regions and locals.

During this mandate, the NEB has worked to implement these objectives through an International Subcommittee of the Board that has met much more frequently and provided much more direction to international work than in previous years.

Highlights of International Projects

FENTECT (Brazil)

Late in 2005, CUPW was able to take advantage of the UNI-Americas Postal Conference, which took place in Gatineau, Quebec to organize a tour of activists from the Brazil Postal Workers Union (FENTECT) with whom we had been building a growing relationship over several years. This included a successful campaign to bring FENTECT, the largest postal union in Latin America, into UNI. With a long history of militancy, FENTECT brings to UNI a similar perspective on a range of issues including the necessity for strong international support in the similar challenges facing postal workers in the Americas and elsewhere. Describing the tour in a bulletin to our membership at the time, CUPW noted:

“FENTECT and CUPW may represent postal workers in jurisdictions on different continents, but the recent tour of a delegation from the Brazilian Postal Workers Union has revealed how similar the issues confronting workers in each union really are.

For example, United Parcel Service (UPS) and other multi-national courier companies have launched a big campaign in Brazil to virtually end the exclusive privilege of Brazil’s public postal service to deliver regular mail. And here, UPS has sued the federal government, claiming that CPC violates the rules around unfair competition against private courier companies contained in NAFTA.

In both cases, the actions of UPS amount to a major threat to universal public postal service. CUPW and FENTECT have committed to support each other's campaigns and mobilizations around the growing power of global courier companies.

CUPW, at FENTECT's request, has already intervened in the UPS court challenge to the postal monopoly in Brazil. Brazil's Federal Supreme Court recently ruled against the UPS challenge, but further challenges are expected.

The FENTECT delegation, consisting of two sisters and two brothers from the union's national executive, visited postal installations and met with CUPW members, local activists and regional and national officers in Ottawa, Montreal, Kitchener and Saskatoon, between November 5 and 17, 2005.

Both unions have declared the visit an unqualified success and an example of how to build union solidarity across borders.

Despite the different levels of economic development in our respective countries, the tour showed that, in many other areas, the situation facing our members is more similar than we ever imagined.

The tour resulted in both unions recognizing, and deepening our understanding of, the struggle of each other's membership in the workplace, particularly in the area of health and safety.

The two unions made concrete links between the fight against privatization and for universal postal services, and the roles our two unions have assumed in the larger battle against the neo-liberal model of capitalism in our countries and around the world. We came to important agreements on how we will work together within UNI, the Global Union Federation we both affiliate to, in order to build its capacity to unite unions internationally to fight against neo-liberalism and exploitation.

CUPW and FENTECT also discovered a profound level of unity on strategies to provide solidarity assistance in the ongoing project of breaking down barriers to participation of all our members within our unions, whether by reason of gender, race, disability or sexual orientation.

Following the tour, FENTECT and CUPW drafted a joint solidarity statement included as an appendix to this report. This "solidarity pact" stands out as a model for effective international solidarity work. It places emphasis on mutual support for national and local struggles and sharing of experiences in these struggles, and recognizes the commonality of the fight against privatization of public services as part of the resistance against neo-liberal capitalism, with its project of extending global markets into every aspect of social life.

The relationship with FENTECT has continued to grow since the initial tour. We have participated in work with FENTECT around Health and Safety issues, and Brother Fred Furlong participated in FENTECT's most recent National Convention.

Frontlines Project and Colombia's STPC

The "Frontlines" project (full name: *Defending Public Services: Canadian and Colombian Workers on the Front Lines*) had its origin in a visit by Colombian Postal Workers Union leaders to CUPW Locals across the country in 2001. This was the first visit by Colombian public sector trade unionists to a sister union in this country.

During this trip we learned of the growing attack on public services, especially postal services in Colombia and the way in which the Colombian Government used threats, violence and assassination by military and paramilitary forces to carry out its privatization agenda.

The crisis of violence and murder of workers, small farmers, human rights activists and students, as well as the brutal attacks on trade union rights in Colombia was also becoming more of a focus of the CLC and a number of its affiliates. Other public sector unions were developing bilateral ties with their counterparts.

In 2004, after looking closely at circumstances facing our brothers and sisters in Colombia, CUPW, PSAC and CUPE came to the conclusion that the fight to defend public services was a priority for workers in both countries and building mutual solidarity

ties between our unions was essential. The three unions organized a major tour of six Colombian public sector union leaders to locals and workplaces in the Atlantic and the western provinces.

Union leaders and the many members of all three unions who the Colombian union activists met, learned about how the struggle against privatization and deregulation had important common features in both countries, as well as about the danger and violence involved in this fight in Colombia, where restructuring of the state through privatization was being imposed at the point of a gun. It also has resulted in massive unemployment and internal displacement.

As solidarity ties deepened between CUPW, PSAC, CUPE and our counterparts in Colombia, a return tour was organized to Colombia in 2006 so that our activists could see first hand the courageous fight Colombian workers are carrying out, in partnership with human rights and community organizations. This return tour was in two parts, and CUPW was represented by four rank and file members and one Union Representative.

A video arose from the visit, containing a sense of what the delegation learned about the experiences Colombian workers in the postal, health, municipal and other services are facing. The video was recently screened at CUPW Regional Conferences and has been distributed to all Locals.

An accompanying booklet distributed entitled “Defending Public Services—Summary Report” provides further important information on the observations and recommendations of the Frontlines delegation. It has been posted on the CUPW website.

CUPW, PSAC and CUPE view the “Frontlines” project as ongoing and as an important model for joint solidarity work for the future.

Both as a partner union in the “Frontlines” project, and as a bilateral partner with CUPW, the Colombian Union of Postal Workers (STPC) has been a major focus of CUPW solidarity work during this mandate. Delegates to the CUPW Convention in 2005 will remember the discussion and emergency resolution around the decision of the Colombian Government to liquidate Adpostal, its public postal service. The spirited resistance of STPC, supported by a large international campaign, was able to delay the dismantling and consequent job loss for several months, but in the end, Adpostal was dismantled, and postal workers (a majority of them women) lost their jobs.

These dire circumstances, however, did not result in the death of the union. Quite to the contrary, STPC has launched a remarkable campaign in Colombia. On the one hand, it fought to preserve pension benefits for Adpostal’s older workers, pursue legal avenues to return some members to their positions and seek new sources of livelihood for the many members left without work. On the other hand, with the support of CUPW and UNI, the Union embarked on an ambitious project to organize postal related workers in the nonunionized private sector, while advancing the political struggle with its allies to gain back a public postal service in Colombia.

But in Colombia, violence is never far away from activists fighting for labour rights and social justice. Paramilitary forces, which had infiltrated the “cooperatives” replacing the public postal services, did not take kindly to the STPC initiatives and targeted the National President, Brother Porfirio Rivas. Death threats against him and his family grew ever more serious, and it became clear they could not stay in Colombia. Through the good work of the QFL, and former CUPW National Secretary-Treasurer Gilles Chapadeau, Brother Rivas and his family were able to come to Quebec, where he has been building support for STPC and participating in Labour events. Brother Rivas is a key-note speaker at the 2008 CUPW National Convention.

SINTRACORREOS (Venezuela)

In line with CUPW's support for and participation in the World Social Forum activity, CUPW was able to take advantage of the 2006 WSF in Caracas, Venezuela, to establish links with our sister union there, SINTRACORREOS. There was a large delegation from unions in Canada and Quebec, allowing the CLC to arrange for a three day educational forum with unions in the new labour federation in Venezuela, known as UNT, which earlier had split from the CTV, whose leadership had supported the *coup* against Hugo Chavez in 2002 and the subsequent "bosses strike" against Chavez's economic policies.

The UNT now far outstrips the CTV in membership, and although it is anything but homogenous, generally favours the Chavez government's "made in Venezuela" direction and supports the state expropriation of industries central to the economy, as well as factories and companies which abandon their enterprises or fail to negotiate with their workers.

SINTRACORREOS left the CTV and affiliated with the UNT upon its formation. Since it is a relatively new labour central, its affiliates are not at this time a part of UNI. Our discussions with SINTRACORREOS featured a joint commitment to maintain close contact and work toward ensuring that Venezuelan postal workers are able to participate in UNI events and eventually join UNI. To this end, Brothers Evert Hoogers and Ramon Antipan of CUPW were part of a UNI-Americas mission to Venezuela in 2007 to examine the state of the labour movement in Venezuela, in which SINTRACORREOS participated. The mission report recommends that "Venezuelan unions in various UNI sectors [should be invited] to take part in regional and sectoral activities and [UNI should] find ways to aid them in their struggle to win protection for their members with the aim of inviting in or returning these unions to the UNI family as full affiliates".

CUPW can learn a great deal from our sister union in Venezuela about how to strengthen a public postal system. Instead of threatening measures to privatize and deregulate IPOSTEL (the public postal service), the government, backed by the union, has incorporated within its mandate the delivery of services included in its highly respected "social missions", available to postal workers and as well as to residents of the surrounding communities. At the Main Post Office in Caracas, for example, there is a fully functional kindergarten, a gynecology clinic, training facilities for postal workers and those applying for postal jobs, literacy training facilities and a full-fledged medical clinic. Postal workers also process groceries for delivery to "mercats", grocery outlets in poor neighbourhoods where workers and poorer residents are provided with nutritious grocery products at huge discounts.

U.S. Postal Union Solidarity Work

It will be no surprise that CUPW has sought to develop close relationships with our sister postal unions in the U.S. The United States Postal Service (USPS), after all, is right next door, and what happens to the USPS and how postal unions there deal with issues has tremendous impact on postal service and postal workers in Canada. Over the years CUPW has been involved in exchanges around technology, organizing, health and safety, organization of work and a range of other issues affecting our membership and the memberships of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), the National Rural Letter Carriers Association (NRLCA) and the National Postal Letter Carriers Union.

During this mandate, this solidarity work has deepened for very good reasons. As postal "liberalization" exploded in many countries and pressure toward privatization and deregulation made itself felt here, unions in the U.S. were facing a struggle against the Bush administration's Postal Reform initiative which had enormous implications for the 800,000 employees in USPS. It sought to strip the right of the unions to negotiate wages for its members (replaced by a regulator who would set and impose wage rates), move in the direction of deregulation and privatization and strip away pension plans within the Federal sector, among the 35 worker-related proposals of the Bush government. It had

used the flattening of traditional mail volumes, increased infrastructure costs and the issue of “terror” and “security” (the reduction in mail volumes resulting from the anthrax scare) as its rationale for the restructuring proposals.

Using a combination of creative strategies and tactics, including reaching out to the public and also to businesses dependent on USPS the unions were able to beat back the vast majority of negative measures so that the Commission’s final report ended up defending exclusive privilege, opposing privatization, and allowing U.S. postal workers to retain most of what they had.

This struggle, and the ability of the unions to successfully rebut the claims and proposals of the Bush government at the Congressional hearings was of huge interest to CUPW, as it felt the heat of similar initiatives. Our interest in the union fight-back gave rise to the organization of a special workshop at June 2007 NEB/REC Meeting at which Brother Jim Sauber from NALC described the strategies and tactics used and the results. A great deal of information was exchanged which will prove useful in future campaigns.

The issue of contracting out of Letter Carriers routes in USPS was also examined. Arising out of the defeat of the Bush reform Bill, the contracting out program seeks to replace union carriers in suburban, and even in urban areas and represents an area CUPW must rigorously monitor.

The growing interest in joint health and safety initiatives between CUPW and U.S. postal unions was reflected in this mandate by a tour to Ontario and Quebec by four APWU health and safety leaders and activists. The objectives were to explore ways we can cooperate better around evaluating technologies, work process and design issues, to develop “working relationships” between health and safety activists in the two unions, and to exchange information on the approach of the unions around promoting the health and safety of postal workers. Based around on-site visits to the Ottawa and Montreal plants, the two unions exchanged comprehensive information on collective agreement issues, work on ergonomic risk reduction projects, maintenance training issues and other health and safety matters.

The unions agreed that our similar technology and work process make a closer relationship on health and safety issues a matter of great mutual benefit. Regular conference calls, and a return visit of a CUPW delegation to U.S. postal plants were discussed as important next steps.

The relationship with American postal unions has become even more important with the recently announced “Modern Post” initiative by CPC. This project will have huge implications for postal workers in Canada and Quebec over the next decade or more. The U.S. Unions will be an important source of assistance and solidarity as we cope with the changes it will bring. Much of the new technology and reorganization of work processes involved have already been experienced by our brothers and sisters south of the border, so working with these unions is absolutely critical.

As this report is written, a meeting is being held in Winnipeg, the first target of the Modern Post project, where CUPW leaders and activists will attend sessions on how mail sequencing machines affected postal workers jobs in the U.S. CUPW has brought in Sister Pam Donato, President of the NALC Minneapolis Local who has been deeply involved with the introduction of this equipment and can explain to CUPW what must be watched out for and how to respond to the changes it brings with it, including the pressing matter of so much more time on the street for letter carriers. This will include a close look at the MOAs between USPS and NALC on the issues of Flat Sorting System (FSS) and Delivery Point Sequencing (DPS).

These developments ensure that our relationship with U.S. postal unions will continue to play an increasingly important role in CUPW international solidarity work.

During this mandate CUPW continued its support for and involvement in Labor Notes, a research and organizing center in Detroit Michigan which seeks to breathe life into the faltering U.S. trade union movement (one of its slogans is "...putting the movement back in the labor movement") and to support union struggles in the U.S., Canada and around the world. Emphasizing rank and file based initiatives, it organizes biennial Labor Notes Conferences which have been attended for many years by CUPW activists at all levels. This mandate was no exception. CUPW attendees at every Conference attend a workshop with our U.S. postal union counterparts to explore our common concerns such as privatization, plant closures and organizing. Sister Bourque sits on the Labor Notes Board, and at the 2006 Conference was a key-note speaker, addressing the Quebec City closure and CUPW's fight-back campaign.

Other solidarity events with U.S. postal unions include the Pacific Region's annual summer workshop/picnic with Washington State APWU activists, ongoing now for many years.

Regional and Local International Work

One of the stated objectives in the CUPW "NEB Policy Paper on International Solidarity Work and the International Postal Fund" is "to build international solidarity work in the regions and locals".

The challenges facing postal workers in 2008 provide more than enough evidence to show how crucial it is for all levels of the unions to embrace international work as core work of the union. And while steady progress has been made in this direction, with more regions and locals carrying out projects on their own, or in conjunction with the National Union while accessing the International Postal Fund (Appendix "R" of the urban ops collective agreement), this objective has not been realized everywhere. In the final section of this paper our future work and responses to concerns that some CUPW activists have expressed about our international work will be reviewed..

Regional and local work in the two regions in Quebec is of specific importance. Although the NEB Policy provides for the same procedures for all regions and locals in accessing Appendix "R" funding, it also states that "CUPW fully respects the special relationship which exists between the CLC and the Quebec Federation of Labour, including the activities of the QFL in international solidarity work". This means that these two regions, while participating in many national projects, also have had a specific role to play in solidarity projects with francophone countries, and are consulted when the NEB considers solidarity delegations to other countries.

During this mandate, the two regions in Quebec participated in work in Haiti, the poorest country in the hemisphere, and one which has endured the ravages of repeated imperialist and colonial inference, including by our Federal Government. As Haiti seeks to recover from the chaos of recent years, and as its fragile union movement embarks on tentative steps to become a force representing the interest of Haitian workers, the Quebec and Metro-Montreal Region has been able to play an important role. Last year, CUPW participated in a QFL delegation to Haiti, and facilitated a union seminar with the Haitian Postal Workers Union. These links will continue and grow.

The Quebec regions have also maintained solidarity relations with the Belgian union representing postal workers, the General Confederacy of Public Services (CGPS). CPC and the Belgian Post both use Georoute software for their route management system. During 2007, an exchange was organized to analyze the Georoute system, as well as the challenge posed by privatization and deregulation of postal services. A delegation of two Belgian postal workers came to Quebec in September and met with members of CUPW during the pre-convention Area Councils and visited the work floor in different postal installations. Following this, in mid-October, a delegation of four CUPW members (two from each region) travelled to Belgium. This revealed clearly how much in common we have in the struggle to preserve public postal service, and how necessary these meetings are to develop common strategies.

It isn't possible to note in this report all the international work that has been done in the regions and locals, but a brief mention of some activities in this mandate will give a sense of what kinds of projects have been organized. Three of the regions (Atlantic, Prairie, and Pacific) have established over time their own Regional International Solidarity Funds, which have been used to develop and help finance local and area international initiatives.

The Atlantic Region has for many years conducted worker-to-worker initiatives and other projects with our sister union and the labour movement in Cuba. This has continued in this mandate, particularly around International Workers' Day (Mayday) events and the conferences on global issues and worker education in conjunction with May Day. These events in 2007 and 2008 involved participation of CUPW members from Truro, Exploits Valley, St John's and others.

The Atlantic Region and the Nova Local also have been active in the Canadian Haiti Action Network. In addition to attending activities relating to Haiti, whose people are suffering a massive crisis in employment, health care, education and other services and whose fragile unions are struggling to regroup after a period of repression and human rights abuses, the issues facing Haitian workers and the Canadian Governments complicity in undermining Haiti was a focus at a Regional Conference and in education seminars. The region has also promoted among its Locals education and fundraising for the "Bracelet of Hope" Campaign designed to bring attention to and provide assistance to the victims of the brutal ravages of HIV/AIDS in Lesotho, where an entire generation is in danger of being wiped out, with all the consequences for future generations this entails.

In the Central Region, the Ottawa Local, and especially its Women's Committee have for some years joined with CUPE and PSAC Locals in Ottawa in a project called "Sisters of Solidarity". The project involved doing education and carrying out fundraising in order to make links with trade union women in Colombia whose lives are at risk as a result of state sponsored terror. As a result of the hard work of these sisters and the support of their unions, Sisters in Solidarity were able to sponsor two families of Colombians to the Ottawa area whose lives were at risk in their communities. The Ottawa Local, with assistance from the Appendix "R" International Postal Fund sent a member of the Local Women's Committee active in Sisters in Solidarity to a Colombian Women's Peace Conference and meet and make preparations for one of the trade union women and her family prior to their arrival here.

The Prairie Region and its Locals continued the work it had begun earlier around building solidarity with workers and dispossessed people in the Maquiladoras (transnational corporation factory and assembly plant enclaves with few or non-existent labour laws or regulations) along the Mexican side of the Mexico/U.S. border. As a result of the earlier work done by the Regional Office and a number of Local activists in conjunction with the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, significant interest in becoming involved in this work was expressed by solidarity activists in other regions and at National Office.

Consequently, the National Executive Board authorized a delegation of National, Regional and Local leaders, lead by the Prairie Region National Director to directly witness the devastation that "Free Trade" and NAFTA have brought to the lives of Mexican workers in the Maquiladoras, and to build links with struggles occurring there. The delegation met with workers from the Maquila plants and learned about the inhuman conditions they work in—using equipment with safety features removed, working near open barrels of toxic chemicals, sustaining many injuries due to no health and safety standards, working for long hours without breaks and without washroom facilities. On top of this, these workers are paid wages on which it is virtually impossible to survive

The delegation also met with postal workers on the visit and discovered the massive gap in wages and working conditions between Mexican postal workers and postal workers here at home. They visited "colonias" (shanty town communities) often built on toxic dumpsites, and witnessed the environmental disaster these Maquiladoras corporations (and therefore NAFTA) have created.

Workers are now subject to Plan Puebla Panama (PPP), the new regional development plan which will see the maquiladoras competing with Chinese factories where workers earn about 25 cents per day. The participants in the delegation have put together a comprehensive report *2005: Two Delegations; a Million Memories of the Maquiladoras*, available through the Prairie Regional Office. Delegates on the tour have continued their solidarity work by supporting a fundraiser for communities in the Maquiladoras called "Light and Love" to pay for solar lights in a squatter's settlement without electricity, a fundraiser to be continued at National Convention.

Another solidarity initiative in the region has been supported by the Edmonton Local and its Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee. This is an ongoing project to build a school in a small and impoverished community in Africa (the hometown of one of our members in the Local, who worked to initiate the project). To date, enough funds have been raised to pay for the construction of the school, and the Local, in conjunction with some other Locals and individuals, continues the fundraising for equipment for the school.

The Pacific Region and its Locals have continued to build solidarity links with The American Postal Workers Union in Seattle and the U.S. Pacific Northwest. This includes an annual summer Seminar around common postal union issues and a picnic for activists and their families, rotating annually between B.C. and Washington State.

The Pacific Region and a number of its Locals have been working for some time to develop links with unions in the Pacific Rim countries. International Solidarity activists in the Region are currently working on organizing a union tour (postal workers participating will use their annual leave) to the Philippines, which in recent years has emerged as the second most dangerous country for trade unionists next to Colombia, and to China, where the economic boom has seen huge investments by transnational corporations such as Wal-Mart and resultant big challenges for workers. A number of unions here, such as the CAW have been encouraging unions to make contacts with Chinese Unions, who are beginning to develop strategies to deal with the realities of neo-liberalism.

This by no means covers all the international projects initiated by Regions and locals, but it does provide a sense of some and of the possibilities which exist. The NEB has expressed its desire to put far more emphasis on regional and local international solidarity work in the coming mandate. There remains much to do around developing consensus that this is core work of the union, that it is not the preserve of a few activists, that most solidarity work is carried out in our communities rather than just through international delegations and that the transparency and information needed to make solidarity work successful is required for all our activists to feel ownership of this work.

CLC LIDP Program and CUPW Projects

During the previous mandate, CUPW became a full member of the CLC's Labour International Development Committee (LIDC). The LIDC brings together CLC affiliates which have Humanities, Social Justice and International Solidarity Funds or which situate international work as central to the union's core activities. This work is coordinated in Quebec by the QFL, which also sits on the LIDC.

Recently, a number of additional Unions have joined the LIDC as unions increasingly negotiate such funds. The Committee allows the CLC and affiliates to discuss the international solidarity work and projects each is involved in with other unions around the globe, to examine the work of various Global Union Federations to which unions are affiliated and , increasingly, to develop and support joint Solidarity projects (such as the *Frontlines* project with Colombian Public Sector unions).

Over the past three years, the CLC and LIDC unions worked to prepare a variety of Labour International Development Projects (LIDP) with partner unions in a number of developing countries. In our case, CUPW's International Postal Fund Coordinator

worked with the PSAC Social Justice fund Director to develop two joint projects with Postal and Public Sector unions in South Africa and Nicaragua. In conjunction with other unions proposing projects, the CLC was successful in securing a grant from the Canada International Development Agency (CIDA) for the next five years.

CUPW will primarily focus on the project with our sister union in South Africa, The Communications Workers Union (CWU-SA), and PSAC will focus on the project with its counterpart in Nicaragua, in conjunction with the Nicaraguan Communication and Postal Workers Union.

The project with the CWU concentrates on the impact of deregulation and privatization on postal workers in South Africa, with a special emphasis on gender. The program objective will be to increase the capacity of CWU to influence social and economic changes and contribute to public policy decisions in this area that effect workers, and especially women workers, on the job and in the labour market. CWU will be working with CUPW and PSAC to share information on the common challenges of deregulation and privatization (including the resulting casualization of labour), to increase women's participation in union activities and decision making, and increasing the union's ability to engage effectively around issues related to deregulation and privatization.

CUPW has had a long and growing relationship with CWU-SA, and we look forward with considerable excitement to working on this joint program over the next 5 years. Brother Gallant Roberts, General Secretary of CWU-SA will be attending the CUPW Convention as one of our international guest and this gives us the opportunity to discuss and formally launch the project.

CUPW has also participated, with other CLC affiliates in the LIDC in CLC support work for the Federation of Trade unions in Burma (FTUB) the trade union central in exile which is deeply involved in attempts to replace the brutal military dictatorship is reaching out for global trade union support to assist in the struggles of Burmese workers. The recent demonstrations in Burma and the arrests, killings and imprisonment of monks, students and other activists underscore the urgency of providing solidarity. The CLC will be increasing its work around Burma over the next period of time.

Although not exclusively in conjunction with the CLC-LIDC, CUPW has deepened its connections to organizations resisting the anti-worker repression practiced by the Islamic Republic of Iran and assisting in any way possible, the courageous struggles of workers in Iran to attain the right to form unions and to freely negotiate with employers. In addition to the CLC, we have worked closely with the International Alliance in Support of the Workers of Iran (IASWI), organized by Iranian Trade Unionists outside the country that have links with trade unionists trying to build a labour movement inside the country. More recently, we have embraced the global campaign initiated by the ITF to free the imprisoned leaders of the Tehran Bus Drivers Union, Mansour Osanloo and Mahmoud Salehi.

Events in the past three years have required the development of a carefully analyzed approach to this support work. On the one hand, the Iranian government, as it imposes neo-liberal economic policies, has increased its persecution of labour activists, and has steadfastly refused to move toward providing rights demanded by the ILO for freedom of association and the right to free negotiations. On the other hand the bellicose Bush administration has given every indication of its desire to initiate a war, including threats to use nuclear weapons in order to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons (the hypocrisy of this stance is obvious). And while recent U.S. intelligence reports have debunked the Iranian nuclear weapons program story, the threat of a U.S. attack remains. It has been important for the labour movement to insist its demands that the Iranian government abide by international labour law in no way can ever be used as a justification for waging war on Iran. In any such scenario it would be the workers and people of Iran who would pay the horrendous price.

Work in UNI and the ITF

During this mandate, CUPW has maintained and even increased our level of involvement in UNI. Postal and communications unions from around the world, along with approximately 950 other unions from over 150 countries in the finance, commercial graphical, electrical and 17 other sectors are UNI members. CUPW has consistently played a significant role in UNI and its predecessors, promoting resistance to privatization, deregulation and particularly postal “liberalization” emphasizing gender and equity issues and seeking to build the effectiveness of UNI-Americas in uniting the unions in the developed North and the developing South.

Sister Deborah Bourque sits on the UNI-Americas Regional Executive Committee and is 1st alternate to the UNI World Executive Board. Sister Lynn Bue was elected in 2005 during the 2nd UNI-Americas Postal Conference in Gatineau, Quebec to the position of President of the Postal Component of UNI-Americas. This has allowed us to promote the above objectives vigorously during this mandate.

The UNI-Americas Postal Conference location allowed CUPW to make important presentations on the WTO, trade agreements and their effect on postal services, resulting in the adoption by the Conference of an educational campaign for affiliates around the dangers of trade liberalization on postal services, mobilization of campaigns of resistance to liberalization and reclassification of postal and Courier service at the WTO, including at the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Conference (where a CUPW delegation participated in the labour and popular movements resistance activities) and support for CUPW and FENTECT (Brazil) in their respective struggles against private courier companies’ (led by UPS in both instances) legal challenges geared to undermining the ability to provide universal public postal service.

This Conference and other UNI activities over the past three years have demonstrated a progressive evolution in UNI’s approach to important global issues.

A marked openness to developing strategies opposing the liberalization of postal services is now evident. This follows a period of reluctance to engage in the fight against deregulation and privatization of postal services, particularly in the important European section. Now, with the evidence of disastrous results in a number of countries, including the U.K., there is a new willingness to mobilize its member unions to resist.

A second development is evident in UNI-Americas affiliates growing insistence on fighting at all levels against neo-liberal globalization. This development was especially clear at the UNI-Americas 2nd Regional Conference In Mar del Plata Argentina in 2007. Delegates from the South (and from some unions in the North such as CUPW and CEP) vividly recounted the catastrophe left behind after two decades of the reign of so-called “free market” capitalist policies. These include grinding poverty, economic and social exclusion, collapsed national economies while transnational corporations swallow the economic structure and reap obscene profits, horrendous attacks on workers, loss of unions’ rights to organize and human rights disasters. These delegations expressed great anger at the transnational corporations and the American empire which has imposed this pillage, and this was reflected in the statements and resolutions arising from the Conference. The Conference acknowledged the “large impoverished sector of the population who have opted for political change in their countries [and who] believe that the huge social deficits that have been accumulating for decades should be paid off”.

The Conference adopted a resolution that the “the trade union movement must maintain a position of ...absolute rejection of the neoliberal model”. It adopted a mission statement emphasizing the struggle for global union rights, a campaign for “Decent Work” in the hemisphere, with a special focus on the impact on women and children and a commitment to global organizing with “a clear policy supporting: migrant workers, informal workers and unprotected minorities”. Within the context of the need for inclusion, the Conference condemned any outside interference in Cuba, because “[it] is the Cuban people and the Cuban workers, and not foreigners who must decide the future

of their country” and called for the facilitation of the participation of the CTC and Cuban workers in UNI activities.

UNI is also active in other parts of the globe around postal liberalization issues and organizing. UNI-Apro (Asia –Pacific Region) has been reaching out to unions (including CUPW, particularly in the Pacific Region) to engage in these struggles. At the invitation of UNI Apro, two members of the NEB presented a paper on developments in CPC and the implications of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) on postal, express and courier services at a privatization Conference in New Delhi, India. While there, CUPW made links with the unions representing 800,000 postal workers, whose members deliver 100 Million pieces of mail a day by hand.

UNI Apro also was very involved in resistance to the antediluvian labour laws developed by the neo-con Howard Government in Australia (Howard is mercifully gone, but the labour laws remain, at least in large part for now). UNI has also embarked on a global campaign, along with the ITF, to coordinate the organizing of transnational courier and express corporations such as Federal Express (FEDEX), and UNI is becoming increasingly involved in the campaign to organize Wal-Mart.

As well, at the 2nd UNI Postal Global Union Conference in Athens in 2007, an important agenda item focused on the damage postal “liberalization” has done to universal public service and jobs, and the need to mount extensive campaigns against the new competition rules the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS—a crucial instrument of the WTO). Noting that it is transnational corporations which “reap the rewards of pressure on national postal systems to adapt [to competition]”, UNI-Postal declared that without “monopoly protection” as a result of GATS rules, European and U.S. global private players will be greatly strengthened, and “GATS will prevent re-regulation such as the reintroduction of monopoly rights”. CUPW is attempting to position itself to encourage this developing analysis in UNI and work toward building its capacity to become a global force to be reckoned with in the fight for the retention and expansion of public postal service.

CUPW participated in other UNI initiatives in this mandate, including in the organizing it is doing around youth workers. CUPW recognizes that there is much work to be done to ensure that the new possibilities emerging in UNI are realized in practice. It has been our position for a long time that UNI’s work as a Global Union Federation is critical for our future and the promotion our objectives within the organization must continue and grow.

As a result of the growing emphasis in CUPW around organizing, and because the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) has joined with UNI to develop strategies to research, share information, develop campaigns and organize the increasingly integrated express/logistics/postal corporations, CUPW during this term has affiliated to the ITF. UNI and ITF have developed an Integrators Network in response to the changes in global companies such as UPS, DHL, FEDEX and TNT (the transnational corporation arising from the privatized postal service in The Netherlands). Typically, these corporations have created integrated freight transport systems that merge road, air, rail, shipping and supply chain management.

The consolidation of these integrated companies is occurring in the context of looking for competitive advantage through cost reduction and enhanced services and is very much a part of the “liberalization” and globalization of postal services. The impact on jobs and conditions of employment, the new emphasis on express delivery of letters and small packages and resultant pressure to develop competitive technologies, and the lack of information typically given to workers and their unions have made joint global union cooperation a necessity.

The ITF Integrators Network was a major focus at the ITF Congress in Durban in 2006. By March of 2007, it had 188 network members in 50 countries, CUPW among them.

The global resources and solidarity the network can provide will prove invaluable as the Union embarks on the upcoming FEDEX organizing campaign.

Solidarity with Cuban Workers

During the past three years, CUPW has continued its relationship with the Cuban Communication Workers Union (SNTCIE) and with CTC, the Cuban trade union central.

In line with resolutions at past National Conventions and Policy D-22, CUPW sees its relationship with Cuban workers as one which opposes the attempts of U.S. and global corporate and financial institutions such as the WTO to isolate Cuban workers as part of a strategy to re-impose the capitalist economic system and colonial subjugation so decisively rejected by the Cuban revolution.

Our union policy states that “Cubans should be the ones to direct their own futures”, and worker-to-worker projects have allowed for important exchanges of ideas, experiences and solidarity work at the base between postal workers in Cuba and in Canada and Quebec.

CUPW has organized delegations to visit Cuba and participate with the Cuban CTC (Cuba’s equivalent to the CLC) and SNTCIE in conferences of communications unions, free trade and neo-liberal globalization and related issues. CUPW activists have also participated in International Workers Day (May Day) events for which Cuba has become justly famous.

During this mandate, we also continued to send participants to the biennial Conference of Communication and Postal Unions held in Cuba. At each of these meetings, leaders of communications unions from around the world are brought together, and CUPW serves on the organizing committee and is able to make a presentation on the key challenges we are currently facing. In addition to the important debates we are part of at these conferences, this allows us to reinforce our links with SNTCIE, the union representing postal workers in Cuba.

Also during this term, for the first time in the last 12 years, a delegation from UNI carried out an official visit to Cuba in order to evaluate the possibility of developing stronger relations with the Cuban unions. This visit arose as the result of the consistent and persuasive work of CUPW within UNI-Americas. During the visit, meetings were organized with the CTC, Cuba’s Labour Central and with individual unions in several sectors. We are assured that this will result in fruitful exchanges in the future.

Events during this mandate underscore the importance of working to ensure Cuba and Cuban workers do not become isolated. The decision of Fidel Castro not to stand for re-election as President has already been seized on by the Bush administration and its allies as an opportunity to launch renewed tirades against the Cuban Government and its people. Those who wish to re-impose colonialism and capitalism on Cuba hope that the economic blockade (economic isolation) will combine with political unrest inside Cuba and an increase in subversive activities, creating an excuse for outside intervention.

This threat is reflected in the continued incarceration in the U.S. of the “Cuban Five”, falsely accused of conspiracy to commit espionage and sentenced to four life sentences and one sentence of 75 years. CUPW has joined with other unions and activist organizations in Canada, Quebec and the United States to free the five, most recently participating in a solidarity conference, “Breaking the Silence”, in Toronto on November 9 and 10.

In fact, the five Cubans had been working to stop the attacks of anti-Cuban terrorist attacks based in Miami, funded by the CIA. Over the past 40 years, 3,400 Cubans have died as the result of these attacks. The 5 infiltrated these terrorist organizations, successfully uncovering several terrorist plots, and ensuring all the information they gathered was presented to the CIA. Rather than arresting the real terrorists, U.S.

authorities arrested the five Cubans. Appeals of their convictions continue, and the Breaking the Silence Conference resolved to build an international solidarity campaign geared to securing their freedom.

The Conference included in its call “to demand the extradition to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela of the terrorist Luis Posada Carriles whose acts included the bombing of a Cubana civilian airliner that caused the death of all 73 people aboard in 1976”. He also tortured and assassinated suspected leftist when he worked for the Venezuelan secret police in the early 1970s. That this sordid terrorist freely walks the streets of Miami living the good life illustrates the utter hypocrisy of the U.S. administration’s so-called “war on terror”.

“Any person or government that supports, protects or harbours terrorists,” Vice-President Dick Cheney famously stated, “is complicit in the murder of the innocent.” Luis Posada Carriles’ continued freedom is another reason to keep the sunlight of scrutiny on the continued attempts by the U.S. to isolate and attack the people and workers of Cuba.

It is encouraging to note that while a few years ago CUPW was one of the few unions here to emphasize the need for connections with Cuban workers, a significant number of unions have now embarked on their own projects. This is reflected, for example, in the delegations to Cuban trade union conferences such as those on the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in the past few years, as well as in the increasing interest from a variety of unions when Cuban union representatives visit this country.

Bolivia Rising Tour

In 2006, CUPW joined with other unions, the CLC and Common Frontiers to bring a delegation from Bolivian popular movements, including unions, to Canada in order to gain insight into the events surrounding the election of Evo Morales and the rise of social power occurring there. Key to the project was to talk to indigenous unionists and movement activists about the huge changes they are bringing about, how we in the North can learn from them and forge solidarity links with them

Morales, Bolivia’s first indigenous Head of State, particularly came to our attention when he nationalized Bolivia’s gas reserves and established a Constituent Assembly to develop a Constitution reflecting the interests of Bolivian indigenous people, workers and campesinos instead of the interest of global corporations which had ravaged the country. He stated in his Presidential acceptance speech, “The hour has arrived for change, for hope, for a better future for our children and for our grandchildren.

Originally organized to include 6 trade unionists and popular movement activists, Canadian authorities refused visas to four of the delegation on spurious grounds (they claimed there was danger the four would try to defect upon their arrival in Canada). The two who were able to enter the country, however, initiated a rich dialogue and provide us with information that will allow trade unionists and other activists to build and maintain solidarity ties in the days ahead.

One of the delegates, Sister Lydia Robles, is the Women’s Secretary for the Cochabamba Federation of Factory Workers, a union organizer and educator. The other delegate, Brother Alberto Camacho is a letter carrier and postal union organizer in Cochabamba. He has a 35 year background in trade union mobilization. He was the National President of the Miners’ Union for ten years also served as the leader of COB, the trade union central body in Bolivia.

In a welcoming reception for the delegation in Ottawa, Sister Deborah Bourque noted that both were involved in the “Cochabamba...mobilization of campesinos and workers [that] defeated Bechtel’s and the then-government’s plan to privatize water. This was a struggle that gained headlines around the world and inspired activists both in the South and the North.”

The delegation discussed this, the struggles of the coca leaf growers and their union (of which Morales was President), and other struggles to protect public services, including postal services, all of which are part of the back-drop to the political changes sweeping Bolivia in the wake of Morale's election.

Those who met these two activists were able to share the feelings of hope they expressed arising from the victories and social changes in Bolivia and other Latin American countries. This helps explain why CUPW, in conjunction with other unions and allies in the social movement are committed to organizing such solidarity tours.

International Solidarity and Social Movement Work

1. World Social Forum and Regional Social Forums

Another important category of CUPW international work is what we do in conjunction with various social movements here and abroad, such as participation in the World Social Forum (and more recently, in regional variations thereof, such as the Quebec Social Forum).

The World Social Forum began eight years ago, following the 1999 Seattle anti-globalization protest and before the 9/11 attack. The idea originally was to establish a sort of world-wide participatory peoples' assembly as a response to the yearly exclusive gathering of the world's economic elite in Davos, Switzerland, where the global challenges to ordinary people such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the impact of neo-liberal globalization strategies in the South and the industrialized North and how social movements are developing can be discussed among every conceivable element of civil society.

The WSF since its inception has been organized as an open space for discussion and exchange between the various actors in civil society, where trade unionists and peace activists, indigenous groups and cultural workers, environmentalists and youth activists, human rights activists and international solidarity workers are all able to intermingle and develop an understanding and appreciation for the dynamism and work of social movements around the world, all under the theme "Another World Is Possible".

CUPW, along with other unions doing international solidarity work, have increasingly participated in the WSF, adding to the diversity of themes by inserting labour's involvement in the debates and reflections. In 2006, CUPW sent a delegation to the WSF in Caracas, one of three "polycentric" fora that year. As noted earlier, the CLC organized a three day educational session involving the UNT labour central to explore and discuss developments in Venezuela—and we took the opportunity to meet with activists from our sister union, SINTRACORREOS.

In addition to the first-hand look at the changing political landscape in Venezuela, the 2006 WSF also provided new meaning to the debate about whether the WSF should remain simply a space for discussion and protest, or whether it should move on to proposals for concrete action. Hugo Chavez, in his keynote speech at the WSF, diplomatically suggested that it would be a shame if the WSF were limited to simply being a vehicle for "revolutionary tourism". He said he was convinced that, instead, the WSF would become an instrument of struggle against imperialism and neo-liberalism. Some others, such as Egyptian economist Samir Amin, called upon the Forum to adopt a program of concrete actions and a more clear-cut political stance. However, some leading activists cautioned that the Forum should continue to allow "diverse movements to organize without submitting to a single way of thinking".

Of major significance to CUPW and the other unions in attendance was the Americas Trade Union Forum, organized by ORIT (the regional branch of the ICFTU—now the ITUC) and assisted by CLAT (the regional branch of the World Confederation of Labour—now part of the ITUC). ORIT and CLAT organized a two-day forum which focused on four objectives:

- promoting the debate on “decent work” as a fundamental element of sustainable development
- establishing the trade union movement agenda on the front lines of the struggle against free trade and neo-liberal globalization
- promoting gender, work and unionism as top priorities of labour in the Americas
- debating the role and strategies of the trade unions in the growing move in Latin America and the Caribbean to economic and political integration as an alternative to U.S.-dominated free trade agenda
- moving forward the unification process of the trade union movement in the Americas

For union delegations having experience with ORIT conferences in past years, this Labour Forum represented a remarkable departure. Gone were the cold war hostilities to Cuba, the dominance of the AFL-CIO international positions and the related adherence to U.S. foreign policy. Replacing this familiar old agenda was panel discussions including representatives from the Cuban CTC (Leonel Gonzalez, a long-time friend of CUPW was enthusiastically received for his presentation on the role and strategies of the Trade Union Movement in the alternative integration process in Latin America), inclusion of the Venezuelan UNT (not an affiliate of ORIT) and a deep commitment to struggle against neo-liberalism. Close to 1,000 trade unionists participated in the two-day event.

The WSF in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2007 because of its location was attended by fewer trade unionists from Canada and Quebec, including from CUPW. It was the first WSF held in Africa, and although smaller than some of the previous WSFs, was able to present important discussions on a large number of social and economic challenges with which neo-liberalism has particularly burdened Africa, ranging from poverty, the water crisis and the HIV/AIDS pandemic to issues facing women, as well as LGBT people in Africa.

As far as labour is concerned, a proposal emerged to build a labour network on and in the WSF process. Its purpose would be to give more centrality and visibility to labour issues in the WSF process, strengthen alliances between labour and the social movements and to go beyond defensive and isolated struggles to “find a new transnational capacity for action”.

CUPW also participated during this mandate in the first Quebec Social Forum. While the global scope of the WSF is important, it also seemed important to directly encourage the same initiative on a regional basis here, and CUPW participated in, and supported financially and logistically, the Quebec forum in August of 2007. More than 40 members of CUPW in Quebec attended this event. CUPW facilitated two highly successful workshops, one on postal service and one on the environment. We expect a growth of Regional Social Foras in the next period.

2. Common Frontiers

CUPW is affiliated to, and has also worked extensively during this mandate, with Common Frontiers, a working group including trade unions, social justice organizations, churches, human rights groups and some NGOs. It carries out research and organizes around alternatives to the economic and social effects of economic integration in the Americas. The CLC, PSAC, CAW, CEP, CUPE and Steelworkers are all active members.

Common Frontiers arose out of the struggle over the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement preceding NAFTA, where it became clear that the opposition to the Free Trade agenda required cooperation, not only between sectors on a national basis, but also with sectors in the U.S. and elsewhere. It played an important strategic role in the opposition to NAFTA and more recently, in solidarity with many Latin American and Caribbean organizations it was very involved in the international struggle against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

Common Frontiers (CF), along with the Réseau Québécois sur l'intégration Continentale (RQIC) represent Canada and Quebec on the Coordinating Group for the Hemispheric

Social Alliance (HSA). The Coordinating Group also includes the ITUC Americas regional organization ORIT, the Mexican National Network on Free Trade (RMALC) and organizations from other Latin American countries. Formed in 1999, the HSA sees its mission as “a forum where progressive organizations and movements from around the Americas can gather, strategize, share information and plan joint actions” and to “fight for an alternative and democratic development model for our societies”.

Among the important activities HSA and its constituent groups have carried out during the past three years was organizing the Third Peoples Summit of the Americas in Argentina in November 2005 (the Second Peoples Summit was in Quebec in 2001).

In both Quebec and Argentina, the Peoples Summit was organized to parallel and counter the Summit of the Heads of State of the Americas. CUPW had been very involved in the actions and discussions in Quebec, and while unable to participate in massive numbers in Argentina, the union, along with the CLC and several affiliated unions, was able to send a small delegation and just as importantly, work with Common Frontiers here during the planning stages.

Occurring during massive manifestations of opposition to George Bush’s presence in Argentina, the social movements throughout the Americas mobilized against the “free trade” agenda Bush was pressuring other countries in the Americas to accept. There were huge demonstrations at the Mar del Plata location for the Heads of State Summit and marches in many other cities in Argentina, and the Argentina Workers Central called a one day work stoppage on November 4, 2005.

The Peoples Summit was a huge success, and proved to be a fundamental obstacle to the Bush FTTA project. The Peoples Summit insisted, reported Common Frontiers, that for the future of our hemisphere the “social agenda should take priority over a commercial one” and trade “would serve to strengthen national economies...specifically targeted at eliminating poverty, and on the creation of decent jobs.”

The CUPW and other labour delegations were not pleased with the role of the Federal Government at the Summit. Although we now have a different government, the neo-liberal approach to trade issues has not changed. The real work around the international trade issue—an issue of critical importance to the future of postal workers-- has been, and will continue to be, done right here at home, in conjunction with organizations such as Common Frontiers. In CF’s report on the Summit, our agenda has been described as follows:

“Given all that went on at [the]... two Summits in Mar del Plata, Canada needs to rethink its position towards the other peoples and nations in the Americas. Canadians need to let Ottawa know that we wish to be participants in the building of an Americas free from economic exploitation and military domination. We can begin to reclaim our hemispheric right of all being known as “Americans”, and to promote a life affirming agenda for people from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, able to live in sovereign, interconnected societies that are just, respectful of diversity, and committed to taking common action in the face of the many challenges at hand.”

CUPW, as well as many other CLC affiliates and the CLC, has also worked closely with CF and other coalitions such as the Council of Canadians to mobilize opposition to the North American Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP), a “deep integration” initiative of the U.S., Mexican and Canadian governments, led by the most powerful neo-liberal corporate elite in the three countries. Its purpose is to “harmonize” regulations across the borders to further integration of the three economies. It has achieved momentum through the hysteria generated about “terrorism” in the post-9/11 political environment. The SPP isn’t a trade agreement, but a series of “consultations” between high level government figures, the heads of transnational corporations and military officials without any public debate whatsoever.

Due to the dominance of the U.S. in the SPP process, every nook and cranny of Canadian and Mexican relations with the U.S. is being examined from the perspective of the U.S. “national security” agenda, which consists of nothing less than the economic interests of the largest corporations in North America. Its regulatory reforms will involve major new attacks on public services and will impose corporate-defined standards on the provision of public services. The security initiatives of the SPP are proving to consist of invasive monitoring and attacks on human rights, civil liberties, the rights of immigrants and refugees, and workers.

CUPW has joined in the ongoing resistance to SPP, including participating in demonstrations in Montebello, Quebec in 2007 during the SPP summit of Bush, Harper and Calderon.

3. CUPW, the Peace Movement and Resistance to the War on Terror

The account of our union’s relationship to international work would not be complete without mention of the work CUPW has embarked on during the past three years in the struggle for peace and in resistance to the direction taken in the so-called ‘war on terror’, which has become nothing less than a war on human rights.

The introduction to this paper outlined the global landscape which we live in as we meet at the 2008 National Convention—the continuing and worsening conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the deteriorating conditions faced by Palestinians, the growing instability and violence in countries in the Arab and Muslim world generated by the war on terror, and the mounting attacks on human rights and civil liberties generated by the war on terror..

At the 2005 convention resolutions were adopted committing CUPW to “continue to work with the labour movement, students, churches, peace groups and organizations and our political allies in opposition to war” as well to participate with labour and human rights groups “fighting to end this war an human rights masquerading as a war on terror”.

CUPW at all levels have taken these resolutions seriously in the past three years and at every possible opportunity has called for an immediate end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As well, the CUPW National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) has incorporated the union’s involvement in the fight against security certificate program for refugees and immigrants who have come under suspicion as terrorists, the “deep integration” of U.S. and Canadian immigration policy, the rendition to torture of Maher Arar and Arabs and the three Muslim men earlier incarcerated in Syria and questioned at the behest of Canadian intelligence and police services (currently the subject of the Iacobucci Inquiry) as an important part of its work. It invited Roch Tasse, Coordinator of the International Civil Liberties Association (ICLMG—to which CUPW and many other unions are affiliated), to give a presentation on the ongoing work of this coalition in mobilizing opposition to the many incursions on human rights and civil liberties created by the “national security” climate and anti-terrorism initiatives prevailing at this time.

During this mandate the NHRC at each meeting discussed a report on these and related issues and made recommendations based on these discussions for future work. All of this has developed into an important component of CUPW’s international work and clearly needs to be continued in the coming term. The union has recognized the direct implications these assaults on human rights, many supported by the Harper governments legislative and political agenda, have for postal workers—if due process and social justice is denied to specific groups such as refugees today, it may well be denied to trade unionists tomorrow.

Moving Forward: Building International Solidarity Work within our Membership

In its Policy Paper on International Solidarity Work, the NEB stated, “No one can seriously contend, in the early days of the 21st century, that unions can truly thrive

without integrating their struggles with those of workers around the globe. This is particularly clear for workers in public services such as the Post Office.” The growth of involvement in this work at all levels is evidence that CUPW activists are largely in agreement with this assessment.

This report illustrates the many categories of CUPW work that contain an international dimension. Moreover, it is clear that the vast majority of the international solidarity work locally, regionally and nationally is done right here at home, at our workplaces, in our union offices, amongst our members and in our communities.

Despite this reality, some of our members have raised criticisms of the union’s international solidarity activities. These criticisms range from belief that such work can be a diversion from the union’s key role of representing the membership in the struggle with employers and defending collective agreements to a concern that international solidarity work consists to a large degree of free trips to foreign countries with only a select few activists getting what seem to be “perks”.

It is important that our responses to these criticisms are done from the perspective of how we can convince our membership that international work is demonstratively crucial to our future as workers and as defenders of public postal service. Further, we ought not to shy away from pointing out weaknesses in our administration of some activities, including transparency and reporting on activities to our membership.

This report has attempted to show that “international solidarity work” is not some abstraction or a sort of “add-on” to the real work of the union. Throughout this mandate it has been, without doubt, much more integrated into the fundamental work of the union. However, there is always room for improvement and some areas where this can occur are readily apparent.

As far back as 1999, the NEB reported to the National Convention that as the conditions leading to an increased international focus grew, and “as we deepen our commitment to join in the common struggles of workers around the globe, the NEB has recognized that our approach to international solidarity requires planning, prioritizing and follow-through”. Giant strides have been taken toward realizing this, manifested particularly in the role assumed this mandate by the NEB International Subcommittee.

However, more focus is required on informing our members of international projects in advance, and placing them in the context of our other work in the union and in the labour movement. Related to this is the need to improve the way we report on our international projects, so that members can make informed judgments on the importance and effectiveness of this work.

The incoming NEB will consider how best to do this, including the more regular production of fact sheets, and the development of a dedicated page on our website to international issues. This will include a dialogue with the membership, including but not limited to, the various circumstances that need to be taken into account when decisions are made about delegations to other countries. The DVD and Summary Report on the *Frontlines* project with Colombian public sector workers, sent to every Local, is an example of how this dialogue can be conducted.

The NEB International Subcommittee has also identified building international solidarity work in the regions and locals, one of the three primary objectives, as an area where renewed energy and innovative strategies are required. This report reflects significant advances in this area over the past three years, but involvement, particularly at the local level, remains spotty.

While a procedure for local access to Appendix “R” funding is included in the current NEB Policy Paper, the issue deserves a separate document (perhaps in “fact sheet” form) for wide distribution. It would outline the way in which local projects are debated and adopted, then discussed with the National Director and taken to the NEB for approval. It

would also explain how project funding can be arranged, with considerations similar to funding under section 7.60 of the National Constitution. Currently this can be found on page 13 to 16 of the “NEB Policy Paper on International Solidarity Work and the International Postal Fund”.

Given the forces driving the neo-liberal global agenda, it is obvious that international solidarity work can only become a more important element of CUPW’s activities over the next mandate. If the union at all levels wisely uses the resources available both within the International Postal Fund and available through NEB decisions concerning the General Fund, our long-time commitment to international solidarity with working class struggles, to social justice and to the interest of postal workers in Canada and Quebec can yield rich fruit.

Evert Hoogers
National Union Representative
For the CUPW International Subcommittee

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SOLIDARITY STATEMENT OF THE CANADIAN UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS (CUPW) AND THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF BRAZILIAN POSTAL WORKERS (FENTECT)

This solidarity statement arose from the visit of the FENTECT delegation to Canada and Quebec on November 5 to 17, 2005, hosted by CUPW. The tour took place following the Union Network International (UNI) Conference of Postal Unions in the Americas on November 2 to 4, 2005, held in Aylmer, Quebec. The Brazil Postal Union delegation, composed of two sisters and two brothers on the National Executive of FENTECT, visited postal installations, participated in a variety of events and met with CUPW members, local activists and regional and national representatives in Ottawa, Montreal, Kitchener and Saskatoon.

Both FENTECT and CUPW view this solidarity tour as an unqualified success. As the tour progressed, we realized that, despite different levels of economic development in our respective countries, the situation facing workers and our members is more similar than any of us imagined.

Both unions discussed and developed major insight into the workplace struggles of each other's membership. We made concrete links between the escalating fight against privatization and for universal public postal service, and the roles our two unions have assumed in the larger battle against the neo-liberal model of capitalism in our countries and around the world. We discovered a profound level of unity on strategies to represent our members and agreed on a common commitment to ensure the mobilization of our respective memberships to resist these threats and to participate in the struggle for equality and against discrimination, both in our unions and in our larger communities. We also determined the necessity of ongoing acts of solidarity between CUPW and FENTECT as we build on the relationship we have created.

Consequently, FENTECT and CUPW declare our **joint solidarity and unity around the struggles of our members in the workplace**. We share the conviction that it is our responsibility as trade unionists to represent the class interests of our members in response to the competing interests of employers and governments. We recognize that our most important work occurs at the point of production in the workplace. This underscores all of the related struggles in which we engage.

As a result, and taking into account differences in the circumstances and the legal environment the two unions work within, we declare our full support for each other's struggles to bring about improvements in working conditions and benefits for our members. We will provide to each other all the assistance and collaboration possible, whether it be through sharing our experiences, bilateral exchanges, providing education materials or assisting in capacity-building projects. One priority in this area arises from our exploration of the health and safety issues facing members in FENTECT and CUPW. Our two unions share a commitment to the right of all workers to a safe and healthy workplace as an integral part of our undertaking to defend workers against exploitation. Our unions will exchange information, educational materials and strategies geared to achieving the highest standards in our collective agreements, in legislation and in our work environments.

Further, we will look for opportunities to provide solidarity assistance in other aspects of our mutual struggles to improve working and living conditions for workers in both unions.

CUPW and FENTECT stand united in our **determination to defend universal public postal service in our respective countries** and to ensure that this is guaranteed in law.

To this end, we will support and assist each other's campaigns and struggles to ensure a strong public postal monopoly, which lies at the heart of maintaining a universal service obligation. Both unions are committed to resisting the neo-liberal drive to deregulation and privatization of public services and recognize that trade unions constitute the principle obstacle to privatization drives both in Brazil and in Canada and Quebec.

In addition to the struggle against deregulation and privatization, **both unions join in opposing the international economic and political institutions and agencies driving these neo-liberal projects in our respective countries.** The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are principle examples of the economic power and control exercised by multinational corporations at the expense of the working class in countries around the globe, and massively inequitable trade agreements, such as the proposed Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), seek to enshrine the power of multinational corporations and their political representatives over the sovereign right of people to determine their own destiny in their own nations.

It is agencies and trade deals such as these which have concretely given rise to the attacks on public postal services by the multinational courier industry. United Parcel Services (UPS) and the courier industry in Brazil are attacking the very existence of the postal monopoly there. UPS has launched a legal challenge against the Federal Government of Canada claiming that Canada Post Corporation violates the rules contained in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) around unfair competition against private courier companies – a challenge threatening the provision of universal public postal service. FENTECT and CUPW declare their total solidarity with the campaigns and mobilizations of each union in response to the growing power of these corporations and resolve to explore and act upon further joint activities in the future.

To this end, FENTECT and CUPW **will work together in the international trade union organizations to which we may be affiliated, particularly in Union Network International (UNI-Americas), in order to build policies and an action program capable of uniting all affiliated unions in defending workers, in resisting discrimination and all barriers to inclusiveness and in struggling against the challenges of neo-liberalism and exploitation.** This includes a continued commitment to oppose any remaining cold war policies within UNI. We will strive to ensure that workers in our sister Cuban unions will not be isolated, through their increasing participation in UNI-Americas activities, meetings and conferences. We also will work together and within UNI-Americas to develop solidarity relationships within the new progressive labour organizations in Venezuela.

CUPW and FENTECT recognize the potential existing in UNI for building international solidarity with unions struggling against exploitation. Much progress has been made in UNI and its predecessors in the past number of years, but much remains to be accomplished if UNI is to realize this potential. Both unions will actively work together to build on UNI-Americas' capacity to bring unions together and thereby better represent our own members in the workplace.

To this end, CUPW and FENTECT want to ensure that UNI conducts its solidarity work based on the foundation of workers in struggle to advance their interests counter to the competing interests of employers and their allies in governments. Both unions therefore recognize that UNI's recent membership in and involvement with the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the world-wide network of postal services, should be limited and cultivated only to the extent that takes advantage of its role as a tool for the global campaigns of UNI.

In order to make it possible for FENTECT to pursue this collective work within UNI, both unions will emphasize the necessity for all documents generated by UNI-Americas to be available in Portuguese.

As well as joining together to resist discrimination at the international level and within UNI, FENTECT and CUPW **agree to provide solidarity assistance in the ongoing**

project of breaking down barriers to participation of our members within our unions, and by extension, within our respective societies. Both unions recognize the need to deepen and expand the struggle for gender equality, and we pledge to look for new ways to help each other in our work to build unions free of gender discrimination.

We recognize that our unions are immeasurably strengthened when women workers, workers of colour, indigenous workers, workers of different sexual orientations and disabled workers feel that they occupy places of equal importance in their trade unions, and that they have equal access to participation in, and leadership of, the many struggles our unions must take on. CUPW and FENTECT will exchange information and educational material and will provide support to each other's efforts to promote real equality within our organizations.

All of the members of CUPW who were able to participate in the tour, and the delegation from FENTECT, realize that our two unions have begun a very special process with this visit. We have come to appreciate profoundly how the struggles of postal workers in both our unions closely intersect and how we can support each other. We are determined to build on the relationship we have begun and, in solidarity, to deepen our participation in the struggles of the international working class.

Solidarity,

FENTECT

Ivan Carlos Pinheiro
Ana Zelia Almeida dos Santos
Rogerio Ferreira Ubine
Sandra Martins de Jesus

CUPW

Deborah Bourque
Lynn Bue
Denis Lemelin
Evert Hoogers

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