

In Brief...

Representatives of community groups in Fredericton will be in court on September 15th to **seek damages from Downtown Fredericton Inc. (DFI) for removing their posters from public poles**. DFI, an association of downtown businesses, has no jurisdiction to enforce bylaws. While Fredericton's bylaw prohibits commercial posters, the community groups' posters promote cultural and political events. After 10 years in court, Montreal's municipal bylaw on posterage was overturned this July by the Quebec Court of Appeals, which ruled the bylaw violates freedom of expression rights guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In the lead up to the **September 27th provincial election**, the NB Pay Equity Coalition continues to demand **pay equity in the private sector**. Pay equity is equal pay for work of equal value. The Graham government implemented pay equity in the public sector in 2009 but failed to do so in the private sector. Sixty-seven percent of women in the labour force are employed in the private sector.

Four workers were killed and 12 injured when a platform collapsed while repairs were being made to a coal silo at the **Cerrejón coal mine in Colombia** on August 5th. About 5,000 third-party-contracted workers at the mine are paid low wages, lack job security, and face poor health and safety conditions. NB Power purchases coal from Cerrejón, a mine that has forcefully displaced communities and contaminated the local environment.

Charges were dropped for nearly 100 people arrested at the **G-20 protest in Toronto** in June due to lack of evidence.

A ship carrying an estimated **500 Tamil refugees**, including women and children, from Sri Lanka arrived off the waters of Vancouver Island on August 13. The Tamil refugees, except for one, survived a dangerous sea journey, as they were fleeing military atrocities and mass displacement. When the ship first neared Esquimalt, territories of the Songhees First Nation, it was immediately boarded by the Armed Forces, Border Services, and RCMP. Families are now being separated, with many children being taken by the Ministry of Child and Family Development. The refugees now face the threat of incarceration and deportation. Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney continues to increase detentions and deportation of refugees and undocumented migrants, while bringing in more temporary exploitable migrant labour.

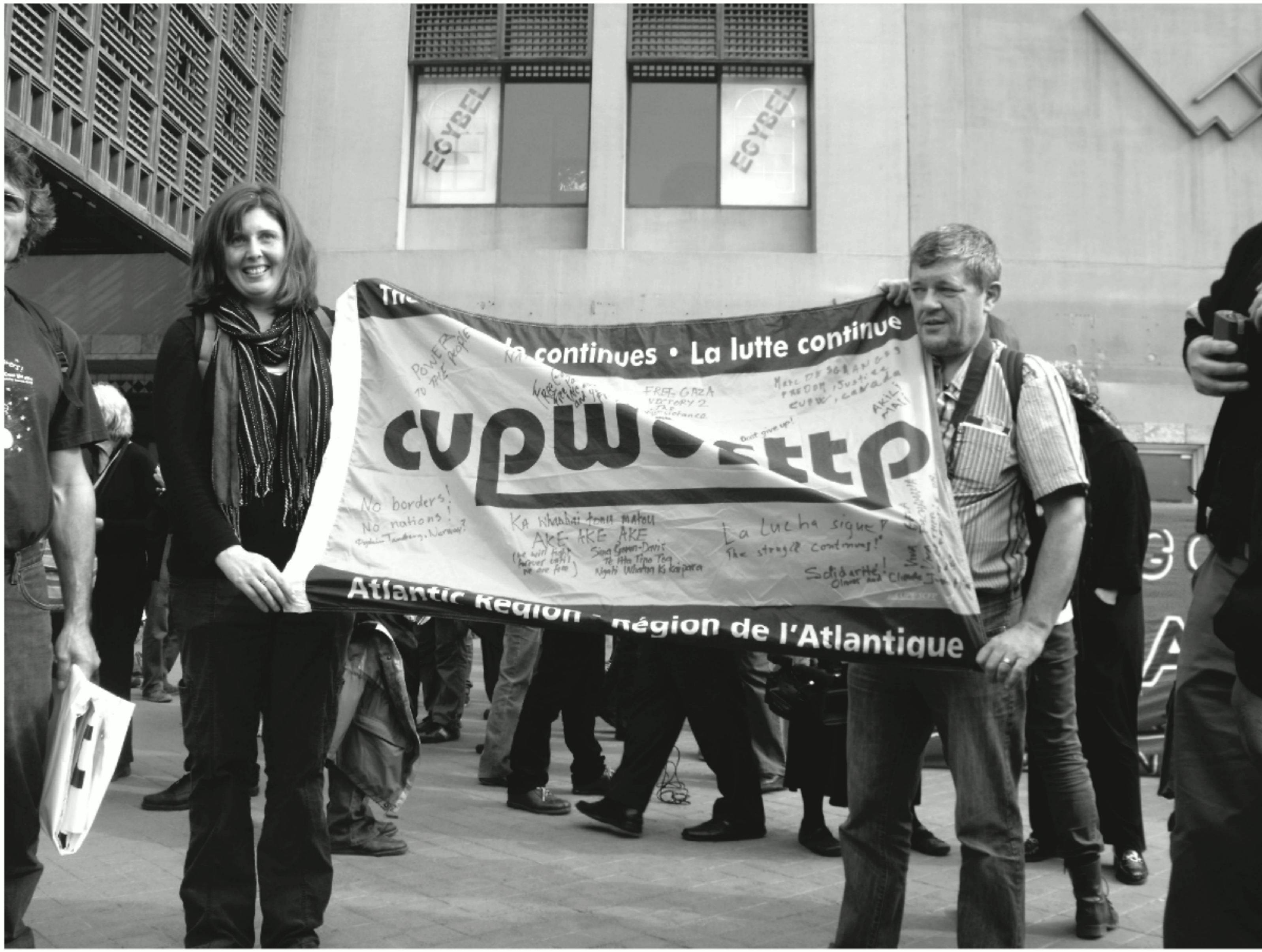
On August 10th, the Vancouver Sun reported on the **conditions of migrant workers** in a remote work camp near Golden, B.C. They laboured 10-12 hours a day and lived in a camp without sufficient food or proper bathing facilities. The workers, mostly recent immigrants from Africa, were also threatened and subjected to racial slurs by employers. Khaira Enterprises Ltd hired the men to carry out a \$280,000 government contract to clear brush.

Flooding in Pakistan in the months of July and August killed more than 1,600 people. The flooding is affecting over 13 million people; many are homeless and in danger of dying due to lack of medical supplies, food and water. The Pakistan Trade Union Defence Committee says, "Many put the blame for the floods on global warming, which is also the by-product of capitalist greed for profit at the expense of the environment. That may be true. But what is most certainly true is that the two main factors for this unmitigated disaster were the inadequate and fragile infrastructure and drastic deforestation. Both these are equally the result of the greed of the capitalists and landlords for profit and the unbridled play of market forces."



Vancouver residents took part in a national day of action in support of Tamil refugees. Photo: No One Is Illegal - Vancouver.

Postal workers' solidarity with Palestine



CUPW member Toni MacAfee and CUPW National Director Quebec Region, Christian Martel, attended the Gaza Freedom March in Egypt last year. Photo: Toni MacAfee.

By MARIE-CHRISTINE ALLARD AND TRACY GLYNN

In the occupied territories, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Palestinians live under Israel's brutal siege, which is marked by air raids, military checkpoints and blockades of food and medical supplies. The Canadian government provides extensive political and economic support to the Israeli apartheid regime.

In August, Israel announced that they were blocking mail to Gaza. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) is calling for mail delivery to be restored to Gaza. The Union is calling on Canadians to back efforts to break the siege by sending their Gaza-bound mail via the Canadian Boat to Gaza. Article 25 of the fourth Geneva Convention guarantees the right to personal correspondence with family members under occupation. "As postal workers, we know very well that cutting off mail creates suffering and hardship for people, who are isolated from their loved ones," said Denis Lemelin, National President of CUPW. "How many more abuses will the people of Gaza have to endure?"

NB Media Co-op's Marie-Christine Allard interviewed Fredericton activist and CUPW member Ruth Breen to find out more about CUPW's solidarity work with Palestine.

MCA: Could you explain 'Boycott, Divestment, Sanction', and why CUPW decided to support it?

RB: Boycott involves boycotting Israeli products that are made with the benefit of the oppression – the exploitation of the Palestinians. Divestment is to divest funds in Israeli companies, and sanctions are to pressure the government to bring on international sanctions against the Israeli government. Historically, the trade union movement has been very involved in international solidarity on many

fronts. The first boycott, divestment and sanction [campaign] that jumps to mind was in the case of South African Apartheid, so it is modelled after that. About five years ago, there was a call from Palestinians to have a boycott [of Israeli products] and demand sanctions [against Israel]. It's very important that the call is coming from the Palestinian people – they are asking for our help. For CUPW it is the right thing to do, in keeping with our National constitution.

CUPW is endorsing and working with the organizers of the BDS conference in Montreal on October 22-24. This will be an important opportunity for activists from many backgrounds to discuss what BDS means in their life, community, and country.

MCA: What would you tell someone who questioned a trade union's role in taking a stance on the issue of Israel/Palestine?

RB: A worker is a worker, wherever you are. We are all in the struggle for equality, human rights and dignity. It would be very elitist for us as workers to negotiate a great collective agreement for postal workers in Canada and then presume our work is done. We aren't just active in this international solidarity front; we're active in many other areas where there's conflict and oppression. It is really about workers supporting each other.

MCA: CUPW has been actively supporting the Canadian boat to Gaza. Can you explain what this is?

RB: CUPW is endorsing the Canadian Boat to Gaza and several postal workers are on the working committee. It's a committee that was struck from civil society within Canada by activists who were on the Gaza Freedom March last year and others that have been active in the struggle. After the attack of the Turkish ship there was more awareness. The Free Gaza Movement is organizing an international flotilla of humanitarian aid to challenge Israel's blockade this fall, so we thought it would be important to have a Canadian boat in that international flotilla, especially given that the Canadian government is complicit on many levels in the Israeli apartheid. It is an important thing for Canadians to take on.

We want to hear about what's going on in your community! Send us articles, letters, story ideas and pictures at editors@nbmediacoop.org.

The NB Media Co-op is a member-funded organization. Be part of the movement for democratic media and become a member today! Contact us at info@nbmediacoop.org.

Community Calendar

For details and updated event listings, visit nbmediacoop.org. To list your event or to receive the community calendar by email once per week, email: community@nbmediacoop.org

Labour Day Picnic - Hosted by Fredericton District Labour Council on Mon., Sept. 6, 12-3pm. Wilmot Park, Fredericton. Contact: debbie@nbu.ca

Falls Brook Fall Fair/Forest Festival - Sept. 10-12. Falls Brook Centre in Knowlesville. A celebration of rural living. Music, tasty food, children's activities, info booths, solar power, walking trails, crafts and more! Contact: 506 375-4310, ja@fallsbrookcentre.ca

NB Media Co-op's 1st Annual General Meeting - Sat., Sept. 11, 4:30pm at Conserver House, 180 Saint John St., Fredericton. Attend in person, by phone or Skype. Billeting and rides available. Everyone is welcome but you must be a member to vote! Not a member yet? Be part of the democratic media movement and sign up today! Contact: info@nbmediacoop.org

AIDS Walk for Life - On Sept. 11, AIDS NB will host AIDS Walk for Life in Fredericton and Bathurst. In Fredericton, meet at Officer's Square at 1pm. Walk starts at 2pm. In Bathurst, meet at Coronation Park at 12pm. Music, speakers, raffle draw and BBQ. Contact: 506 459-7518, info@aidsnb.com

Stop Aerial Spraying Concert - Sat., Sept. 11, 1-5 pm at Fundy Writers Retreat in Alma - 8 Spruce Lane, Route 114. Music by Leaky Basement Band. Contact: 506 887-2008, guevara24001@yahoo.ca

Empowering African Women and Youth - With Farida Simba from Tanzania. Mon., Sept. 13, 7pm at Conserver House, 180 St.John St., Fredericton. Hosted: CUSO-VSO. Contact: atlanticconnect@cuso-vso.org, 1-800-676-8411.

Ecofestival in Bouctouche - Celebrating nature, culture and sustainable living on Sept. 18-20 in Bouctouche.

Schedule of events: www.bouctouche.ca Contact: 506 743-7318.

Take Back the Night March - A woman-and-children-only march through the streets at night symbolizing the darkness, isolation, silence and invisibility of violence against women and children. In Fredericton: Fri., Sept. 24 at 8 pm at Fredericton City Hall. All are invited to the opening/closing ceremonies. Hosted by: Fredericton Sexual Assault Crisis Centre. Contact: Jennifer Gorham, 506 454-0460, fsaccadmin@nb.aibn.com. Web: www.fsacc.ca/

Local Festival - A celebration of local food with gourmet flair in Fredericton! Fri, Sept. 25, 6-8pm at Christ Church Cathedral Hall, 168 Church St. Enjoy a three course local meal, music by Cesar Morales, celebrity servers and a silent auction. Reserve tickets (\$22 each) by contacting 506 458-8747, homegrown@conservationcouncil.ca.

Work Bees at the Falls Brook Centre - In Knowlesville, Sept 26: Organic Orchard Care. Oct. 2: Autumn Harvest, Preserving and Garden Clean-up. Contact: education@fallsbrookcentre.ca

Critical Mass Bike Ride - Take the streets on bikes the last Friday of every month. Upcoming rides: Sept. 24, Oct. 29, 5:30pm, Officer's Square, Fredericton.

SWARM, NB Environmental Network Gathering - Join NB's environmental movement at the Université de Moncton on Oct. 1-3. To register/more info: www.NBEN.ca

Cinema Politica is a network of community and campus locals screening documentaries on issues that matter. In Fredericton, CP returns every Friday night starting Sept. 10 at 7:00pm at Conserver House, 180 St. John St. Cinema Politica locals also exist in Fundy, Sackville, Saint John, Moncton and Taymouth. Check out film schedules at cinemapolitica.org