

THE OTHER SIDE



A Quarterly Newsletter of CUPE Alberta

www.cupealberta.ab.ca

Special G8 Bulletin

June 2002

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As we all know from media reports and our activists networks, Alberta is hosting the upcoming G8 meeting in Kananaskis June 26-27. The G8 represents the eight most powerful nations in the world who meet to plan global economic development.

The G8 activist website reports that the G8 is "...part of the corporate globalization project aimed at eliminating trade barriers to help multinational corporations gain higher profit margins through new markets and bases of operation." Many Canadians do not agree with the objectives of the G8 because these talks threaten labour rights, public services and our environment. Protest at the G8 is based on the threat to working people.

The G6B counter conference, referring to the 6 billion people left out of the talks, is organized to take place at the University of Calgary June 21 to 25. In addition, there will be events throughout the City of Calgary in protest. Log on to www.g8activist.ca to find out more.



On to Calgary

CUPE joins with AFL to encourage all Locals to participate in the protest march against the G8

CUPE Alberta is supporting the peaceful labour protest march in Calgary and urging all CUPE members to get out their walking shoes and join in. The march takes place on Sunday June 23 beginning at the Eau Claire market in Calgary at 1:00 p.m.

CUPE Alberta has hired a couple of busses to take CUPE members to Calgary from both Edmonton and

Lethbridge. The Edmonton bus will leave the Crowne Plaza Hotel at 9.a.m. Sunday June 23 and will return later that evening. For further information contact Dave Loken (780) 448-8981. To catch the bus from Lethbridge contact Alex Radvansky at (403) 328-6544 or (403) 345-5761. Get out those flags and let's show our CUPE presence!

The Fight for the Site

By Josée St-Pierre

Who knew that finding a location for the solidarity village would be like trying to read a book during a blackout? A process that should have been a molehill rapidly became a mountain too steep to conquer.

The purpose of the solidarity village was to ensure a safe, peaceful place for all protesters to come together against the G8, according to Mike Desautels, the Alberta and Northwest Territories representative for the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC).

"The less confrontation the better," says Desautels. "This is the reason a solidarity village is needed. Protest and demonstration does not equal terrorism. We want a place that gives respect for the diversity of groups and

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the diversity of actions they choose. Ultimately, we want to build a movement that will stay well after the G8 is over," he added.

However, one roadblock after another has resulted in no solidarity village.

Efforts to secure a site started back in November 2001 when an organizing committee made up of the Alberta Federation of Labour, the Calgary and District Labour Council, the Canadian Labour Congress, Communications, Energy and Paper Workers Union, the Council of Canadians and individuals against the G8.

In the beginning it seemed natural to approach the First Nations. Not only does their on-going fight for their rights have many parallels to many of our own labour causes, but the location of the Sik Sika reserve, near the G8 meeting was almost too good to be true. However, it takes members from three Bands to hold council. Because of disagreements between each Band it was impossible to get anywhere near a consensus. And by mid May, the search was moved to two or three privately-owned lands in the Kananaskis area, again

to no avail. So, the City of Calgary then became the prime focus. Through a contact at city hall, the Committee quickly applied for a permit to use a public site.

Desautels reports that all the land owners approached in and out of the City were being influenced not to rent their property to the solidarity village organizers by outside pressure coming from local law enforcement, RCMP, Federal government officials and the military.

In late May it looked as though a breakthrough might be at hand when Calgary City Mayor, Dave Bronconnier agreed to help find a suitable venue as a result of a meeting with Desautels. The issue went to Calgary City Council the first week of June. As a result, no permit to solidarity village organizers will be issued.

In announcing its collapse Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) president Les Steel said, "Seven months of hard work by labour and its social partners were enough to have a truly remarkable event planned and ready to roll - but were not enough to overcome covert opposition by those parties intent on stifling protest."

For the calendar of events against the G8 you can visit www.g8activist.ca website.

Banana workers fired for union organizing

Labor Notes/CALM

In Ecuador, 120 banana workers have been fired for participating in a one-day

work stoppage. They were employees of the Noboa Company, Ecuador's largest banana exporter. After the firings, Noboa stationed a police force on the plantation.

The fired workers were demonstrating for basic labour rights, such as overtime pay and health benefits and for recognition of their union, which is currently awaiting official recognition by the labour minister. If their union is recognized, it would be the first independent banana workers' union in Ecuador in more than two decades.

With more than 220,000 banana workers as potential members, the union could become a powerful force in Latin America.

More than 300 banana workers marched to protest the firings and the police intimidation.

