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ISSUE OF THE
CUPE ONTARIO DIVISION
INTERNATIONAL
SOLIDARITY
NEWSLETTER

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CUPE Ontario

International Solidarity Newsletter

Issue 1 - February 2004

International Solidarity

Introduction to "International Solidarity" by Edgar Godoy

In the last three decades, CUPE members in Ontario have been involved with International Solidarity work, supporting workers struggles in different parts of the world. For instance, during the sixties CUPE members rallied against disarmament, in the 1970s they got involved in the struggle against the United States' military invasion of Vietnam and the military junta in Chile. In addition to supporting the popular movements in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, our members supported the struggle of the South African people against Apartheid. However, we have to acknowledge that all these International Solidarity initiatives were limited to a few locals and were not a part of a provincial strategy.

In 1987, the first CUPE National International Solidarity Committee was created as a result of a resolution adopted during our National Convention in Quebec City. However, a significant period of time passed between the creation of the National Committee and the CUPE Ontario International Solidarity Committee. After the annual convention, CUPE Ontario leadership made the recommendation to create its Committee for International Solidarity and on December 11th 1999, at Metro Hall, in Toronto the first committee was created. Besides having the political support from CUPE Ontario leadership and being a well attended meeting by CUPE members, there were great expectations, particularly after a successful mobilization against the World Trade Organization-WTO- in Seattle.

Some of the main concerns discussed during our first funding meeting were the lack of awareness within our union about the importance of International Solidarity, the need to initiate a debate at all levels of the union to make it a priority, particularly in light of the negative effects of economic globalization, the North American



(continued from page 1)

Free Trade Agreement-NAFTA- and Free Trade Area of the Americas-FTAA- such as privatization, the attack on our union and collective rights. We also discussed the need for creating a new framework for International Solidarity, moving away from a culture of business unionism and the notion of charity. Consequently, we adopted our first ever Action Plan which consisted of three main components to guide our work: a) union to union solidarity emphasizing mutual solidarity b) Training the trainer, emphasizing education to our members c) Local to local solidarity, emphasizing support for our Solidarity Fund, encouraging locals to subscribe and support our fund.

More recently, CUPE's International Solidarity work has focused on mutual support locally and globally. Locally, we have been supporting the work of the division committees, providing a global perspective on equity issues and have facilitated the third consecutive course "Globalization and the Workplace". Serious efforts have been made to work in coordination with the National International Solidarity Committee to support its campaigns and projects, particularly against privatization of public services.

At the global level, we have been supporting the struggles of our brothers in sisters in the Americas, particularly, the Argentinean, Brazilian, Cuban, Chilean, Colombian, Mexican, Salvadorian and Venezuelan workers.

In Africa, we continue supporting a gender project with municipal workers. We have also been working in coordination with the Canadian Labour Congress on different initiatives, such as supporting the Colombian workers, the North American Labour Exchange initiative and various conferences against FTAA held in Havana, Cuba, opposing the World Trade Organization -WTO- and FTAA.

Today, we continue facing great challenges, specifically those related to the lack of understanding of the connection between our local struggles and the global struggles, lack of financial resources within the committee, lack of initiative in carrying out the work of the committee and CUPE's internal politics. However, CUPE Ontario leadership has continued supporting the Action Plan of the International Solidarity Committee, which is still relevant to our members and CUPE's strategy to confront the corporate agenda. The mobilization against FTAA in Quebec City, the G8 Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta, Iranian Workers tour to Canada, the Minga delegation to Colombia, and more recently, the support for the Cusco Peru Encounter, the Global Justice Forum in Quebec City, the Health Care Workers of the Americas Exchange and the Festival of Resistance are good examples of our commitment to International Solidarity. Finally, union opposition to the war in Iraq is also a good political precedent of our commitment to peace in the world.

Edgar S. Godoy, Chair, CUPE Ontario
International Solidarity Committee

Hamilton Meeting: US Military Families Against the Iraq Occupation

**Sunday, February 8, 7:00 pm
McMaster University Medical Centre , Room 1A6**

- **Nancy Lessin & Charley Richardson,**
Military Families Speak Out/United Steelworkers
(Boston)
- **Henry Evans-Tenbrinke,**
CUPE & International Solidarity Movement observer
in Palestine
- **Peter Leibovitch,** Steelworker delegate to Cairo
conference

- Sponsored by the November 16 Coalition -

Say No to the Free Trade Area of the Americas

Report from Miami, November 17 to 21, 2003
United with the citizens of this Hemisphere,
we said "NO FTAA - A BETTER WORLD IS
POSSIBLE!"

The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) is a proposed regional free trade agreement that aims to expand the failed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to all of the countries in the Western Hemisphere (except Cuba). "NAFTA for the Americas" is being negotiated behind closed doors by trade ministers from 34 nations. The talks, launched in 1994, are set to be completed by January 1, 2005. The U.S. Congress would vote under the "Fast Track" procedure, meaning only a yes or no vote is allowed with no amendments or modifications.

During the week of November 17 to 21, when trade officials from throughout the hemisphere met in Miami to further negotiations for the FTAA, workers, students, farmers, immigrants, artists, environmentalists, consumer advocates and activists were joined by people from all over the Americas in demonstrations and rallies against the FTAA.

Here are some of the highlights:

On Saturday, November 15, people from South-Florida based grassroots organizations together with grassroots organizations from across the Americas, gathered 34 miles north of Miami for a three day march to down town Miami highlighting the impacts of "free" trade policies on poor communities.

Forums (amongst others) held throughout the week were: Latino Communities and Free Trade Forum, Global Workers' Forum, Globalization and the African World Forum, United Steel Workers of America Forum on Corporate Responsibility.

There was also a AFL-CIO sponsored Workers Forum "Giving Voice To Workers of the Americas." U.S. Workers from the SEIU, UNITE, Steel Workers and Machinist Unions spoke of losing their jobs due to NAFTA. A worker from Mexico's maquiladoras, a health care worker from Nicaragua, a Steelworker from Brazil and a teacher from Colombia gave testimony to the working conditions, violence, and loss of pensions and jobs.

A series of workshops, panels and teach-ins were held under the themes of "Sustainability and Democracy, Health and Social Development and Face of the Global Economy". Jack Layton and Ed Broadbent addressed the participants of the Canadian Steelworker Union.

There was a People's Gala for Global Justice with international performers and presentations from a broad range of cultural, labour, environmental, religious and agricultural leaders from throughout the hemisphere.

The main march took place on November 20 with a rally at the Bayfront Park Amphitheater then a march through down town Miami, past the official meetings and back to the Amphitheater.

Throughout the week activists were surrounded by masses of police and security guards. President Bush took 8.5 billion dollars from the 87 billion appropriations Bill for Iraq to pay for security and police operation. All of downtown Miami was closed off. Buses of demonstrators were refused entry into downtown Miami and were unable to join the rally.

The peaceful march ended when police moved in attacking the activist who did not disperse after the rally ended. Many were shot at with rubber bullets, beaten and arrested. Amongst the arrested was a union brother from Colombia. At the time of his arrest he was under amnesty protection and living in the U.S.

Was he targeted? What will happen to him? Thinking of him I fear for his life.

--Heide Trampus, International Solidarity
Committee - CUPE, Ontario

Editor's note:

As we go to press, Heide Trampus is participating in the **Third Hemispheric Congress Against the FTAA** in Havana, Cuba. Look for her report in the next issue of the CUPE Ontario International Solidarity Newsletter. CUPE members can contact her by e-mail: w2wcclsn@hotmail.com.



Celebrate May Day Celebrate Working People

By Stephen Seaborn, VP - Political
Action, CUPE Toronto District Council

On May 1st Toronto and York Region Labour Council is hosting a landmark 12-hour celebration of Toronto's working people at the city's "distillery district", the home of our city's first grand industrial workers.

The days' activities will be a co-production of the Labour Council with production assistance from the Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association, the Mayworks festival and CityScape which operates the Distillery District, North America's largest free-standing Victorian industrial worksite encompassing 19 acres of heritage buildings and laneways.

Toronto's May Day celebration will be opened by Mayor David Miller. It will:

- Showcase Ontario's international array of cutting-edge performers on the outdoor mainstage and later at the original fermenting house cabaret stage;
- Honour the coopers, the millwrights, the hackmen, the bricklayers and the day labourers of Gooderham's 1832 mill and distillery;
- Incorporate 25 community arts organizations and studios;
- Highlight healthy working communities and the safety of our workplaces in a series of interactive displays;
- Introduce Toronto's most innovative functional & visual artisans; and
- re-enact the Chicago Haymarket work stoppage for a shorter, safer workweek.

Many Toronto's unions including CUPE locals from across the city will be subsidizing lunches for members & their families, sponsoring performers and reserving tables for the evening cabaret.

**For more information contact Kim Hume,
Labour Arts Subcommittee,
<khume@actratoronto.com> or
Stephen Seaborn, <sseaborn@cupe.ca>**

The case of Omid Oladi's death in Iran Khodro's factory

By Khalil Vermezyari

Iran is one of the countries where the number of victims of work-related accidents and diseases is enormously high. Although Iranian workers are deprived of independent worker organizations, they pursue the struggle to improve working conditions and to reduce the number of victims of incidence at work in various forms.

A recent case is the death of a 22 years old worker in Iran Khodro Company (the largest vehicle manufacturer company in Iran), which is currently being pursued by a major campaign and widespread struggle in this factory.

On the 25th of December 2003, Omid Oladi who was working on the night shift had a stroke while at his post and died subsequently in hospital a few days later. Omid Oladi worked under the cover of a contract company 'Iran Ehiya Gostar'. Another young worker from this company, Peyman Razilou had also died following a stroke, about three months ago.

Following the 'restructuring' of the organization of the Iran Khodro Industrial Group, the main company that claims to be the largest vehicle manufacturer in the Middle East, they began imposing an ever-increasing harsh working conditions on their employees, including three working shifts, forced overtime, increase in rate of production and reduction of break time. They have also transferred parts of company's operations to sub-contractors, which impose temporary contracts on workers, depriving them of their most basic rights.

Workers in Iran Khodro's "Ehiya Gostar" have started a strike and protest actions since January 12th for their rights. These workers want an abolition of temporary contracts and demand that all workers should be covered by the Iran Khodro with overtime pay for work during holidays and night shifts. A main demand is a call for an investigation of the circumstances that led to the death of Omid Oladi and identification of those responsible for his death.

These workers need your help, support and solidarity. Our request is that, especially with a view to respect 28th April, the International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers, you do all you can, for example by writing protest letters to the International Labour Organisation and to the authorities of the Islamic Republic government in Iran, in support of the demands of Iran Khodro workers.

**For more information, please contact
alliance@workers-iran.org**

A GLOBAL PEACE MOVEMENT REVIVAL

Tom Hayden, AlterNet
January 19, 2004

MUMBAI, INDIA — Natalia Ablova faces a tough challenge in her campaign against the U.S. occupation of Iraq. Ablova, who looks like any friendly middle-American in her plain dress, shoulder-length hair and reading glasses, is opposing the Iraq occupation on the streets of Kyrgistan, the only Central Asian country where such protest is permitted.

“There is no chance for participatory democracy in our region,” she laments. But last year, she led 30 human rights groups to the U.S. Embassy to denounce the invasion.

Far from being alone, Natalia Ablova is complicating the Bush administration’s war planning and its status as the sole superpower. On this March 20, the first anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, when the White House expected throngs of cheering Iraqis in the streets, there will be masses of jeering protestors like Natalia Ablova around the world instead. Last year, four to five million people protested in over 600 cities globally. This year the numbers are unpredictable, but opposition to the war has increased among the general public, affecting the American presidential campaign and keeping the United Nations at a distance.

This week Natalia Ablova is attending a “General Assembly of the Global Anti-War Movement,” one of the many planning sessions provided space for the tens of thousands attending the World Social Forum.

Instead of weakening or fragmenting the global justice movement, the war in Iraq has prompted a peace movement heavily influenced by the anti-globalization analysis of the forum.

Bremer and Kissinger

The growing demand is not simply to end the military intervention in Iraq but the U.S. takeover of the Iraq economy and its natural resources as well. The protest is not only against the contracting favoritism shown to Halliburton and Bechtel, but the very idea that the Iraqi economy should be contracted out to private foreign corporations in the first place. Seen this way, the Iraq occupation is a perfect real-time example of the Bush administration’s doctrine of right-wing market fundamentalism that is being offered as an alternative to religious fundamentalism in the region.

In this context, Paul Bremer is understood not only as point man for the U.S. government, but as managing

director of Kissinger & Associates, which represents a secret list of U.S. multinational corporations with long-term stakes in the region. Bremer already has imposed a maximum flat tax of only 15 percent on corporate profits, privatized hundreds of Iraqi businesses and natural resources, and carried free market fundamentalism so far that he faces legal challenges to the U.S. authority based on the traditional international rules governing occupations. In addition, a Bremer order dictates that all non-governmental organizations in the “new Iraq” must be registered and provide detailed membership lists to the American authorities in Baghdad.

Except for Dennis Kucinich, Democratic presidential candidates have been hesitant to criticize the sweeping right-wing agenda in Iraq except for “excesses” like Halliburton’s overcharging on petroleum.

But all that will change if the global peace movement succeeds in reframing the debate.

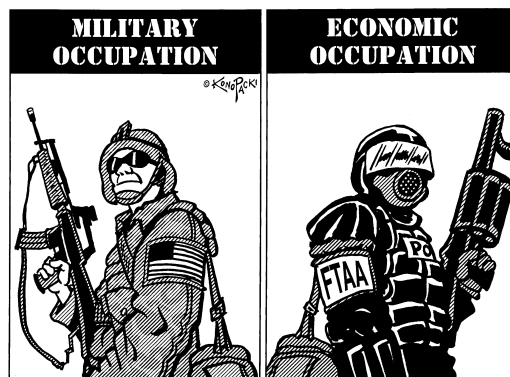
A New Movement

The reframing has already begun among countless activists on the ground. After returning from Iraq last year, Medea Benjamin of Global Exchange raised concerns about the U.S. economic designs on Iraqi wealth. Anti-globalization writer Naomi Klein has published research in *The Nation* on the attempted sale of Iraq to corporate bidders. This week here, the novelist-turned-activist Arundhati Roy has urged

crowds to go home and shut down the corporate offices of firms profiting from the Iraq occupation. Such ideas, which were implemented by effective direct action in San Francisco last year, are circulating rapidly in the thousands of nooks and crannies where movements germinate in a kind of “pre-history” before being recognized in the media.

At a lengthy meeting on the forum grounds today, peace activists known only to each other through phone calls and emails met for the first time, shared their reflections on last year’s February demonstrations and their plans for March 20. The discussion revealed a high level of unity and concern for proper messaging, despite the exceptional diversity of cultures, languages, and nationalities in the mix.

Iraqi women, for example, urged the international activists to support the struggles of Baghdad-based NGOs to protect Iraqi businesses and emerging women’s groups hard hit by Bremer’s recent agreement to waive existing civil laws for religious codes concerning marriage and divorce.



(A Global Peace Movement Revival, continued)

An Indian woman spoke of being "very nervous" about March 20 because over 80 percent of the 100,000 who protested last February were Muslim. "What are we working for, just numbers in the street?" she asked. Or are we trying to build a "broader, non-religious, secular movement emphasizing the questions of Iraq's natural resources and development?"

The World Social Forum, she said, provides an opportunity to build a larger anti-Iraq movement across the deep religious divides of India.

Many speakers impressed the audience with their resistance in remote and difficult circumstances. A Turkish woman recounted how 100,000 people marched last year at just the moment the Parliament was weighing whether to send troops to Iraq. An individual from Montreal described how 200,000 people gathered in 20-below weather for an all-day vigil. A British woman living in the U.S. client state of Qatar spoke of how nervous she was taking her first anti-war stand while the country was "overrun with American soldiers."

An Egyptian peace activist explained the relative absence of mass demonstrations last year. "All of us in the Arab countries are under some sort of military rule. Our governments fear that even a small, permitted peace demonstration will grow into a larger one against our miserable life." He is working nonetheless on a social forum linking peace and democracy.

Less Sloganeering, More Outreach

Several speakers emphasized the need to reach a wider audience, and to conduct the protests in ways supportive of the peace movement in the United States. A Costa Rican delegate stressed that "we must

coordinate with the American movements, not let ourselves be seen as anti-American, and not be seen as violent." Another from the Middle East called for "less sloganeering, and more reaching out."

The few Americans present, mostly from branches of United for Peace and Justice and ANSWER, welcomed the international dialogue and support.

An American student reminded the audience that young people had never before been involved on the scale of the February 2003 protests. "Don't say it's not going to be as big this time. The thing is, more people in the U.S. are doubting Bush today than during the protests before the war. The peace sentiment is growing. March 20 should not be measured just as a mobilization but by the base-building and education we do on the corporate takeover of Iraq."

Last year's large-scale protests were the first in memory before a war began, revealing a crucial lack of public consensus as Bush commenced the conflict. With the occupation bogged down, casualty levels rising, and the administration's false claims revealed almost daily, anti-war sentiment has spread to middle America and influenced the tone of presidential debate. Organizing a larger protest is made more difficult in some ways by the peace movement's success, but the need to reframe the message and keep the heat on the presidential candidates will be a major challenge in 2004.

But if Natalia Ablova is marching to the U.S. Embassy once again, anything is possible in this unpredictable movement against war.

Tom Hayden is a progressive activist and former California elected official. He is in Mumbai, India, covering the World Social Forum for AlterNet.

Peace and Anti-War Resources on the Web

Canadian Peace Alliance:
www.acp-cpa.ca
Toronto Coalition to Stop the War:
www.nowar.ca

US Labour Against the War:
www.uslaboragainstawar.org
Bring Them Home Now:
www.bringthemhomenow.org

Military Families Speak Out:
www.mfso.org
International ANSWER:
www.internationalanswer.org

United for Peace and Justice:
www.unitedforpeace.org
Cairo Campaign:
www.cairocampaign.com

DEMONSTRATE AGAINST THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ

**Saturday, March 20 at 1 PM
Nathan Phillip's Square
(100 Queen St. W. - Toronto)**

Join the Labour Contingent for a "Labour Breakfast" starting at 11:00 am at the Steelworkers Hall - 25 Cecil Street (South and East of College and Spadina)

Update from Palestine

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am receiving daily reports from Palestine. The situation for the Palestinian people and for Peace Activists, both International and Israeli seems to be worsening.

In a town called Mas-Ha, where a peace demonstration against the "Apartheid Wall" was being held, Israeli soldiers fired live rounds at a crowd of about 200 peaceful, non-violent, demonstrators yesterday as they attempted to open one of the gates in the barrier and pass through. One demonstrator, an Israeli named Gil

Na'amati was seriously injured and an American demonstrator was slightly wounded.

Despite the shooting, the activists and demonstrators remained peaceful and continued to open the gate. This incident represents an escalation of force by the Israeli military in this area. It was further stressed that at no time during the demonstration were any Israeli soldiers threatened nor in any danger from the demonstrators.

It is my understanding that there were also children ranging in ages from 13 to 18 in this

crowd who could also have very easily been shot and that the Israeli soldiers were aware of this.

To me this incident further illustrates the importance of the work that is being done by organizations such as the International Solidarity Movement and CUPE.

Yours in Peace and Solidarity

Henry Evans-Tenbrinke

Henry Evans-Tenbrinke is a member of the CUPE Ontario International Solidarity Committee. He has recently returned from Palestine.

Appeal from South Korea

The South Korean government is taking extreme action to crush the power of the nationwide trade union for migrant workers, known as the Equality Trade Union - Migrants Branch, by treating workers as illegals, forcing mass deportations and denying even basic human rights.

The government has deployed immigration officers and armed police as part of its campaign, and with the assistance of Korean Airlines it is making efforts to deport tens of thousands of migrant workers.

The vicious crackdowns involving tear-gas and gun-wielding immigration officers and on going police brutality on the workers are designed to intimidate workers into submission and docility to smash the ETU - MB workers organization.

Unfortunately the South Korean government's actions are just one of the many examples of the harsh

realities that migrant labourers face worldwide; often being denied basic rights, health care services, and being robbed of the minimum labour standards. The ETU-MB has been under constant attack since it formed in 2001 for no other reason than because of the fact that the union threatens the ability of the government and corporations to systemically exploit and abuse workers as cheap migrant labour - a pure defiance against globalization.

Activists from the ETU-MB are in the front line of the worker's struggle and they continue to fight to win!

These migrants pay brokers exorbitant fees just to come to South Korea to work (between \$8000-10,000 US) and their families rely heavily on their remittances to survive. Despite state terrorization and being nabbed for their public defiance, the workers continue to be militant and organized; engaged in a sit-in (now entering its third month)

at the Myongdong Cathedral in the center of Seoul.

Eight migrant workers have died as a result of the crackdowns and six more workers are dead by suicide. To make an already desperate situation worse, the Korean government recently announced on January 15, 2004, that they will step up the campaign to purge all remaining undocumented workers.

The ETU has sent out an urgent international call to show solidarity with migrant workers and we need to act!

Demand a legalisation of migrant worker rights and an end to all deportations of ETU-MB workers in South Korea.

Please show your support and send a message to the South Korean president by visiting: www.laborstart.org and click on South Korea.

Mobilizing International Solidarity in Cairo

By Ali Mallah, Equity Vice-President, CUPE Toronto District Council, and CUPE Delegate to the 2nd Cairo Conference Against US Aggression

The Second Cairo Conference, organized by the International Campaign against Zionist and US Occupation in early December, had all the ingredients of a successful anti-war event.

Almost a thousand Egyptian, Arab and international activists representing the anti-war movement ended a two-day conference on Sunday as news of ousted Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's capture was announced.

Over two days, dozens of passionate Arab and international speakers took to the Egyptian Press Syndicate podium to express solidarity with the Iraqi and Palestinian people, and denounce US imperialism, globalization and aggressive capitalism.

The impressive array of speakers included veteran British politician Tony Benn, former US attorney-general Ramsey Clark, former Humanitarian Coordinator with the United Nations in Iraq Dennis Halliday and British MP George Galloway. Hundreds of activists representing the UK-based Stop the War Coalition, International A.N.S.W.E.R and the anti-war movements in France, Canada, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Turkey, Japan, Jordan, Bahrain, Lebanon, Morocco and the occupied Palestinian territories, also took part.

Egyptian participants represented Nasserist, Islamist, secular, communist and socialist currents, thereby completing the veritable global unity of activists.

The lineups of speakers at the various workshops on Imperialism, Popular Movements, and Support of the Iraqi and Palestinian Resistance were very long which indicate participants' commitment and enthusiasm for these lively debates.

For two days, fiery speeches were the order of the day. An Italian activist, Shubeilat, attacked his country's media for describing the Iraqi and Palestinian resistance as terrorism. Iraq and Palestine have become the "symbols of the anti-globalization movement. Arab popular movements must engage with this global movement to make it truly universal," he said. The Japanese participant informed the conference that his government has violated the Japanese constitution by agreeing to send troops to Iraq.

The chemistry between the conferences' left wing and Islamic currents was a revelation to many. Making a rare appearance in such a socialist-oriented gathering, Ma'moun El-Hodeibi, the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood's supreme guide, spoke at the opening session. Slamming the "authoritative imperialist and aggressive capitalist systems", Hodeibi hailed the "new [anti-globalization] global movement".

The UK Stop the War activist Yakoub described the anti-war movement as a "bridge between East and West. From Cairo to Birmingham, Muslim and Jew, we have more in common than we have differences, and its unity that gives us the potential to be the other superpower."

Sabah Al-Mukhtar, an Iraqi lawyer from the UK-based Arab Lawyers Network, urged the conference "not to recognize the occupation forces [in Iraq] or the Governing Council. The Iraqi people must know that the world stands behind them".

Just before ending the conference, a representative for the Arab Lawyers Union announced that it will work tirelessly to defend the prisoners of Iraq and Palestine and urged all human rights and social justices groups to join in the campaign. The organizing committee undertook the commitment to follow-up on this issue.

Over all, it was a very interesting conference, Some delegates were very clear with their appeal to launch the "global movement for justice and peace" by establishing chapters around the globe.

There is a huge need for more diversity and representations from various parts of the world. The conference however, missed a great opportunity to organize a meeting between international activists protesting the injustices imposed on Arabs, and Arab activists who are systematically subject to oppression for their political views.

The full text of the 2nd Cairo Declaration, adopted by the participants on December 14 is now available at www.cairocampaign.com.

Ali Mallah is a member of CUPE 79 and the President of the Toronto Chapter of the Canadian Arab Federation

Excerpts from the Second Cairo Declaration:

**"With the Palestinian and Iraqi Resistance...
Against capitalist Globalization and US Hegemony"**

--Cairo Declaration, December 14, 2003

What follows are excerpts from the Second Cairo Declaration. For the full text, please see www.cairocampaign.com.

The second Cairo Conference met between the 13th and 14th of December 2003, upon the invitation of the Popular Campaign against the aggression on Palestine and Iraq, and with wide participation from all over the world, including prominent international figures and political and trade union activists, intellectuals and writers, journalists and artists, defenders of human rights, from Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and the United States, and from the Arab World, joined by their common struggle against capitalist globalization, US hegemony, Zionism and Racism and their joint efforts to find more humane and just alternatives to the policies of capitalist globalization in the framework of "A Better World is Possible".

Participants in the 2nd Cairo Conference observe that the conclusions and convictions they had reached in the 1st Cairo conference, held in December 2002, were the basis for a globally active and effective movement, which spread throughout the world with the participation of a wide spectrum of democratic, peace-loving, anti-war and anti-aggression groups, through the organization of international anti-globalization conferences which reject the aggression on Iraq and express their solidarity with Palestine, and the declarations that developed therefrom such as that of the Tokyo and Jakarta conferences; and the specification of days of solidarity with the Iraqi people. Those days have witnessed popular demonstrations of millions from all nations of the world, the largest of which were the demos of the 18th of January and the 15th of February 2003. Several popular conferences have been organized in different countries of the world condemning the American aggression against Iraq and supporting the struggle of the Palestinian people against Zionist aggression and Israeli occupation.

Although those wide popular actions and activities did not prevent the United States from its occupation of Iraq, they succeeded in the condemnation of that occupation from its very beginning, creating a unanimous international rejection of it and has had its impact in the refusal of many states from participating therein. They have also

deprived the US of a wide international alliance. This international popular campaign has also contributed to deepening the contradictions between major capitalist states regarding their position on the aggression on Iraq. The activities of the international mass movements have been successful in the continuous mobilization of popular groups and forces within the framework of their common strategic objective represented in the struggle against the policies of globalization and its militarization and the dangers it carries for the interests of the peoples and the future of humanity. Porto Alegre was a clear and successful example of what can be achieved by joint popular struggle condemning anti-people aggressive policies and their challenge everywhere.

Based on those achievements and seeking more effectiveness in the struggle against capitalist globalization and US hegemony, the 2nd Cairo conference discussed the main issues related to that struggle to draw the lessons learned from last year's activities and to prepare for a more effective confrontation in the coming year. Themes for discussion included the resistance of US hegemony and capitalist globalization, means and ways to support the resistance in Palestine and Iraq, strengthening the role of Arab and International popular movements in supporting the resistance and the meeting the challenges that face those popular efforts in the Arab World.

Discussions have developed into the following basic conclusions:

First: as regards Capitalist Globalization and US Hegemony

Participants in the 2nd Cairo Conference observed that the US continues its efforts to strengthen its control over the world, using its increasing control over the world economy and its major military powers, seeking to prevent the recreation of a multipolar world, which might undermine its increasing influence and powers. It is therefore important for the international movement against capitalist globalization and US hegemony to challenge that tendency.

Second: As regards the heroic Palestinian Intifada against the Occupation

Participants in the second Cairo conference acknowledge that the cause of the Palestinian

people started with the issuance of the Belfor declaration in 1917 and the seizure of Arab Palestinian land in 1984 by means of a racist settlement and replacement colonialism led by the Zionist movement. This was completed in 1967 by an occupation of the remaining Palestinian land and parts of other Arab countries, as an extension of the continuous Zionist aggression on the Arab nation. While we differentiate between Judaism as a religion, respected like all other religions, and Zionism as an expanding, Zionist and political movements, participants in the conference condemn the aggressive Israeli policies against the unarmed Palestinian people.

Third: Concerning the Iraqi Resistance of Occupation

Participants in the 2nd Cairo conference stress that the occupation of Iraq constitutes part of a US strategic plan to tighten its control over the world with a view to spread more US power over the world. It is also part of the Zionist plan, which targets the establishment of the greater State of Israel from Nile to Euphrates, and Israel's direct role in the occupation of Iraq and the use of Israeli weapons by American troops in Iraq.

Fourth: The pursuance of the struggle to support the unified international front against imperialism and capitalist globalization

Participants in the 2nd Cairo conference agreed that the conclusion and facts they have reached regarding the themes of discussion have strengthened their will to continue the struggle towards building a unified international popular front against imperialism, capitalist globalization and US hegemony, and to extend the activities of that front to the whole world and to ensure the continuity of those activities throughout the year through various actions that are inclusive of wider popular circles. In view of its increasing awareness regarding the contradiction between its basic interests and those of the policies of capitalist globalization.



Ali Mallah was the CUPE delegate to the 2nd International Conference Against US Aggression.

March 20 - Global Day of Action to Oppose the Occupation of Iraq

More people have been killed in Iraq since George Bush declared the "official" end to major combat operations on May 1st than had died in the "official" war. He told us the war is over yet the American and British forces are encountering increasing resistance to their occupation.

How did things get so out of control in Iraq? Here are some basic facts about the situation.

LEGITIMACY

The US has not found the much-feared weapons of mass destruction in Iraq nor have they provided a shred of credible proof of links between Saddam Hussein and Al-Qaeda. The war was illegal and the occupation remains illegal and the Iraqi people are more aware of this than ever.

THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

We are told that troops are in Iraq to provide security but it isn't working. The reason is the heavy-handed approach of the occupying forces.

On October 12th 2003, for example, US forces in Dhuluaya, a small town 50 miles north of Baghdad, demolished date and orange

trees in search of a suspected suicide bomber. They wiped out the livelihood of hundreds of Iraqis, deepening the anger against the US/UK presence in Iraq.

Amnesty International reports that young Iraqi girls are being tied up and frisked in their own houses during late-night,

random raids in Baghdad.

Since the release of a CIA report that said more and more Iraqis are siding with the resistance forces, the US intensified its attacks on Iraqis. Called Operation Iron

Hammer, the attacks included using 2,000 pound bombs, some of the largest weapons in the US inventory.

Attacking civilian neighborhoods, ruining livelihoods for hundreds, and terrorizing thousands in random and violent raids are not going to increase security but will further a cycle of violence in Iraq.

RECONSTRUCTION EQUALS PRIVATIZATION

The true nature of the reconstruction in Iraq is laughable. The most basic

necessities of the Iraqi people are not being met, while billions of dollars are being given to US corporations like Halliburton (Dick Cheney's company) and Bechtel.

The ultimate plans for the privatized reconstruction have been outlined by Paul Bremmer, the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, who decreed in September 2003 that an Iraqi constitution would embody American values, "allowing foreign direct investment to the rate of 100% in all sectors, except for natural resources [oil], in addition to allowing foreign banks to own local banks at 100%.

Throughout Ontario and around the world, trade unionists are beginning to mobilize in their communities. For information about what's being organized in your community, check out the Canadian Peace Alliance at: www.acp-pa.ca.

This Newsletter has been compiled by CUPE members supporting the CUPE Ontario Division International Solidarity Committee. To become part of our CUPE International Solidarity network or to receive future issues of this Newsletter, please email Pam Frache at president@cupe1281.org or drop us a line at 76 Pauline Avenue, Toronto, ON M6H 3M8