

2009-2011 REPORT OF THE AFL HUMAN RIGHTS & INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

The Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee had an active 2009-2010 term. During this period the Committee continued with the tremendous task and challenge of fulfilling our mandate.

This is continuous work as the state of human rights does not seem to improve substantially. Peace, economic, social, political, and culture rights continue to be threatened and violated around the world. Internationally we still see people dying because of war, and human rights activists and trade unionists continue to be put in jail, tortured, and murdered.

In Canada, Aboriginal people continue to have the highest level of unemployment, resulting in malnutrition, addictions, and marginalization. The killing and disappearance of Aboriginal women has not been resolved. Neither the federal nor the provincial governments have taken any action as more than 500 aboriginal women have been killed in the last decade as reported by the Stolen Sisters campaign.

In fact, the Federal government has discontinued funding to support this campaign. In simple terms these are the situations and conditions we are facing today as workers and as result pose a constant challenge to the labour movement.

In June of 2009 the committee began discussions on how we could support the Lubicon Cree First Nation in their struggle for lands rights and violations to their basic human rights.

In the Spring of 2010 the Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee, AFL Secretary Treasurer Nancy Furlong, and Amnesty International took a trip to the Lubicon Cree First Nation at Little Buffalo to determine where we could be the most help.

The Government last negotiated with the Lubicon in 1992.

During the visit we held a lunch meeting with the kids. They were asked specific questions such as, "why do kids drop out of school?" We heard many responses, but the overall theme was, "there is nothing for us to do in Little Buffalo." The principal will open up the gym in the evenings for a "gym night," but other than that, they are at home, riding on quads, or as one student put it, "getting into trouble." We asked the kids what they needed to create a positive atmosphere. The kids came up with idea of an outdoor hockey rink.

"Operation Hockey" began, and within a month the kids were successful in securing land behind the school for the rink. On May 25, 2010 CEP 707 met with members from Little Buffalo and began planning the leveling and clearing of topsoil and laying the gravel.

The Committee began fundraising, which included a letter to affiliates explaining the purpose and cost of "Operation Hockey", selling hand-crafted jewelry made by a member of the Blood Reserve, and raffles at various union events.

In the fall of 2010 the concrete and rebar were installed. Band members became involved, doing much of the work themselves, including building of the boards.

On February 6, 2011 the official ribbon cutting ceremony happened. The AFL chartered a bus; we left on February 6, 2011 at 6 am, and returned February 7, 2011 at 5 am. The day began with quick introductions, and then the official face-off.

As Chair of the Committee I was privileged to drop the first puck and be the official referee until I played with the under-12 group. The first game included everyone who was on the ice. Shortly after, we split the ice in half, and on one side the under-12 group played, and other side was the 12 and older group, along with members from UFCW 401, (Rick Schneider and Kevin Braun), NDP/IBEW 424 (Joel French and Philippe Johnson), CEP 707, AFL, and representatives from the oil companies.

There were approximately 80 kids participating throughout the day.

After a few quick games, and skills competition for the 12 and under, we presented a plaque to the community which acknowledged all those who contributed to this project. As well, each child was presented with a commemorative medal.

Certificates were prepared for the unions and oil companies that contributed, however, most contributors were not available and the certificates were mailed out afterwards.

The day was filled with excitement, in other words it was like a day of organized chaos.

A Media Advisory was issued on February 3, 2011, and a guest column article on the event was picked up by the Edmonton Journal on February 7, 2011. The grand

opening ceremonies were recorded and posted on YouTube.

To date we have raised over \$111,000 for the rink. The final step is to install permanent lighting which will occur this Spring. The committee will need to raise another \$17,000 to accomplish this.

Thank you to following members and organization for their contributions, both financial, and donations in-kind:

Alberta Federation of Labour
CEP 707 – Humanities Fund
CEP 707 – Fort McMurray
(Roland Lefort, Brian Hatfield, Bernie Gillies)
COPE 458
CUPE Local 3911
CUPW Edmonton
CUPW Calgary
Health Sciences of Alberta
United Nurses of Alberta
United Nurses of Alberta, Local 407
UFCW Local 401
UFCW Local 1118

Nancy Furlong, AFL Secretary Treasurer
Terry Indigo-Jones, AFL Staff
Dave Courneyer, UNA
Adrienne Nowicki
Gail Bunch
Fort McMurray Oil Barons –
donation of equipment

The following oil companies donated to the project, they support the Lubicon Band and work in cooperation with them:

Arsenal Energy Inc.
Canadian Forest Oil
CCS Corporation
C-Six Water Hauling
Devon Energy
Harvest Operations Corp.
Hi-Tech Reclamation
Norab Contracting
Outsource Seismic
Roy Northern Land
Triple K Trucking.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

**AFL HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE
2009 – 2011**

Christina Doktor, Chair	UNA
Ricardo deMenzes, Secretary	UFCW
Linda Robinson, Council Liaison	COPE
Asma Burney	CUPW
Mary Dahr	HSAA
Ann Healy	JUWA
Jesse Sand	IBEW
Dale Warner	TWU
Terri Barr, Alternate	UNA
Rashpal Sehmy, Alternate	CUPW
Terry Inigo-Jones	AFL Resource
Nancy Furlong (information)	AFL
Gil McGowan (information)	AFL

Committee members who served a partial term:

Brenda Skayman, Council Liaison	PSAC
Dave Winter (information)	CLC
Tom Fuller	AFL Resource

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