

**RISING
TOGETHER**

DAILY REPORT

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2013

“

We call it ‘austericide’ and it is killing our jobs and our economy through austerity.

Tània Pérez Díaz
Federation of Workers Commissions, Spain

”



Photo: Peter Boyle

Tània Díaz from UGT Spain explained how austerity measures caused her country's economic and social crisis, forced the retirement age up and drove youth out of the country in search of jobs.

CONVENTION TWEET DECK

@JBotari: Is your #Union on #Strike? Call #ScabWatch 705-674-1223 sponsored by the Sudbury & District Labour Council

@DeenaLadd: Great action today org by the @OFLabour for #14now! Big thank you! @SidRyan_OFL @WorkersAC

@LisaTaylor1982: Kalpana Akter Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity shares of “death factories” in the garment industry. #banWalmart #ETFO



**12TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 25-29, 2013
TORONTO, ONTARIO**



Photo: Joel Duff

MINIMUM WAGE RALLY FLOODS TORONTO'S RETAIL DISTRICT

The hundreds of trade union activists flooded out of the convention hall to demand an increase in Ontario's minimum wage. On the street, they were joined by vulnerable worker groups and community allies for a mass march that took their demands directly into the centre of Toronto's retail district.

The rally gave voice to a popular demand to thaw Ontario's minimum wage freeze and implement an immediate increase to \$14 an hour.

“Working hard at a job should lift you out of poverty, not drive you further into it,” OFL President Sid Ryan thundered to the crowd. “We are calling on Premier Kathleen Wynne to put an immediate stop to employers who are paying poverty wages.”

The OFL has been working in coalition with the Workers' Action Centre to support the Campaign to Raise the Minimum Wage and a series of monthly rallies that have drawn attention to the need for fair wages for all. This year, the Wynne government responded to public pressure by striking an advisory panel to review the province's minimum wage and conducting consultations across the province. However, labour and community groups say that low-wage workers cannot wait any longer to earn a fair wage.

“We don't need any more studies, we need solutions!” said Lorraine Fern of the Workers' Action Centre. “There are over a million

workers earning close to the minimum wage in Ontario and they cannot participate in the economy. Increasing their wages would inject five billion dollars a year into the economy and it would give their families a boost.”

The rally was joined by Legal Aid Lawyers who have been denied the right to form a union. Comprised mostly of women and racialized workers, these lawyers are the only members of the legal profession who do not have the right to collectively bargain.

“We are the most diverse group of lawyers who are serving the most vulnerable communities,” said Mike Story. “It is shameful that privileged crown lawyers and judges have their interests protected while the rest of us lack any representation at all.”

The rally was also addressed by CUPW Representative Doug Hacking whose union is presenting concrete solutions for underserved communities through a call for postal banking.

After the rally, protesters stormed the Eaton Centre to disrupt business at the Richtree Restaurant where 50 workers were fired by the union-busting company.



Photo: Peter Boyle

GLOBAL PANEL TACKLES AUSTERITY

A morning panel moderated by the CCPA Ontario's Trish Hennessy focused on the international devastation caused by austerity and examined the role played by labour movements around the world in the fight against the neoliberal agenda.

Kalpona Akter from the Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity brought delegates to their feet with her call for action to force companies to sign safety accords and provide a living wage for Bangladeshi workers: "I am here to call on you, as consumers and as trade union members, to stand in solidarity with Bangladeshi workers."

Ruben Garrido from Argentina talked about the need to build alliances with un-unionized and unemployed workers and Spain's Tània Pérez Díaz talked about the role that disaffected youth played in driving social resistance, but it was South African trade union activist Joe Mpisi who drew a strong historical parallel to emphasize the need for a common front in the face of austerity: "We must work together with civil society, church movements, student movements and social movements, just as we did to defeat apartheid. You cannot fight this fight as an individual; you must fight it as a collective. Amandla!"

RESOLUTIONS CORNER

The following resolutions were adopted by Convention:

37 (Protecting Workers Rights); 159 (Defeating the Attack on Workers' Rights, covering 42); 46 (Action Plan and Policy Paper, covering 38, 47, 48, 49, 96, 97, 98, 124).

The following constitutional amendments were adopted:

62 (Inclusion of Transgender, covering 60 and 61); 63: (Young Workers' Caucus); 52-55 (Task Force Recommendations 1-4)

LABOUR FORUM DELIVERS FAIRLY TOUGH TRUTHS

Toronto and York Region Labour Council campaigner Rob Fairley led an afternoon forum that did not mince words in presenting the clear and present threat to union security in Ontario.

"If the unthinkable happens and the Tories win a spring election, it will send shockwaves throughout our movement," said Brother Fairley. "Imagine how your union would adapt if your dues were cut in half or if you had to appeal to each member to pay them. Any worker who takes their union rights for

granted had better be prepared to lose them."

Fairley counselled delegates to develop a state-of-readiness campaign that focuses on membership awareness:

"This is an internal campaign for the hearts and minds of workers. It won't involve placards or megaphones or banners, and it may not even have buttons. This is about winning our members over and challenging Hudak's propaganda that it is possible to stop paying union dues while still reaping the benefits."



Photo: Peter Boyle

HORWATH RAILS AGAINST RACE TO BOTTOM

Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath called on delegates to work together with the NDP to protect the rights of organized the unorganized workers in order to improve the livelihoods of every Ontarian and make the province a much fairer place.

She said that the desperate need for economic relief and a growing frustration with scandal and the

politics of division had created the perfect climate for change a change in government.

"I've made it pretty clear that I'm seeking the job of Premier of Ontario," she said. "Working together, trade unions and the NDP have sent three more New Democrats to Queen's Park. Now we need to make a progressive party the choice for all Ontarians."

ONTARIO STRIKE APPEALS

A call for support was issued for several locals walking the picket lines: CUPE Locals 1281 (CESAR) and 4616 (Municipality of Bonfield); UFCW Local 175 & 633 (Wing's Torlake) and (Ramada Inn Trenton); and USW Locals 1-1000 (Commonwealth Plywood), 1005 (Max Aicher) and 9176 (Crown Cork and Seal).