

## Handout: Social Justice and Labour Terms



**American Federation of Labour:** Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)—A federation of craft and industrial unions, as well as unions of a mixed structure in the United States, the U.S. counterpart of the Canadian Labour Congress.

**Barter:** system of direct exchange of goods or services for goods or services

**Blacklist:** to deny someone work or a list of people created in order to deny them work

**Blue-Collar Workers:** Production and maintenance workers, as contrasted to office and professional personnel.

**Canadian Labour Congress (CLC):** Canada’s national labour body representing over 60% of organized labour in the country.

**Closed Shop:** A provision in a collective agreement whereby all employees in a bargaining unit must be union members.

**Collective Agreement:** A contract between union(s) acting as bargaining agents, and employer(s) covering wages, hours, working conditions, fringe benefits, rights of workers and union, and procedures to be followed in settling disputes and grievances.

**Collective Bargaining:** Method of determining wages, hours, and other conditions of employment through direct negotiations between the union (representing the membership “collective”) and the employer. Normally, the result of collective bargaining is a written contract that covers all employees in the bargaining unit.

**Contracting Out:** An employer’s having work performed by an outside contractor and not by a regular employee of the unit. Not to be confused with a subcontracting which is the practice of a contractor delegating part of the work to a subcontractor.

**Contract stripping:** when an employer removes items from a negotiated collective agreement.

**Craft Union:** Also called *horizontal union*. Evolved from guilds, a trade union that organizes on the principle of limiting membership to some specific craft or skill (electricians, plumbers, etc.). In practice, many traditional craft unions now also enroll members outside the craft field, thereby resembling *industrial unions*.

**Dues:** Payments by union members for the financial support of their union.

**Empowerment:** addressing or eliminating legal and institutional injustices that have excluded individuals or groups from full participation in society.<sup>1</sup>

**Essential services:** work that the Labour Relations Board of BC considers “necessary or essential to prevent the immediate and serious danger to the health, safety or welfare of the residents of British Columbia.”

**Ethics:** a set of concepts or principles that guide people in determining what behaviour helps or harms others; perceptions of right or wrong; the rightness or wrongness of actions, the virtue or vice of the motives that promote the goodness or badness of the consequences of those actions.<sup>2</sup>

**Equality:** a social justice value, achieved when all groups and individuals receive the same treatment, have the same opportunities, and are able to attain the same achievements, and where any differences are not based on prejudice or forms of oppression. In this case, 'equality of outcome' refers to ensuring that all groups are able to attain the status and benefits possible in society.<sup>3</sup>

**Equity:** equality while accommodating individual and group differences. Also describes those practices and policies that seek to remove and prevent traditional discriminatory barriers to services and resources.<sup>4</sup>

**Fairness:** Just, equitable. The quality of treating people equally or in a way that is right or reasonable<sup>5</sup>

**Gender Gap:** The difference between men and women’s pay. In Canada, the gender gap has remained at about 70% overall. In union workplaces, the gender gap is about 93%.

**Globalization:** The increasing connectedness among countries and regions, including the integration and interdependence within the economic, social, technological cultural, political, and environmental spheres. Globalization is the outcome of many factors such as advanced technology, communication, and economic structures.<sup>6</sup>

**Grievance:** Complaint against management by one or more employees, or a union, concerning alleged breach of the collective agreement or injustice. The last step of the procedure is usually arbitration. By law, every collective agreement must have a grievance procedure, to be used without disruption of work.

### **Ideology of competition**

Belief that people should compete with other members of society to “elevate oneself to the 'winners circle’”. Assumption that beating someone is “natural, inevitable, and even good for us”.<sup>7</sup>

### **Ideology of cooperation**

Belief that competition is not natural or healthy and that “co-operation and pro-social behaviours

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<sup>1</sup> BC Ministry of Education, “Glossary”, BC Social Justice 12 IRP, 2008, p. 49-54. Accessed August 2, 2013. [http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/pdfs/social\\_studies/2008socialjustice12.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/pdfs/social_studies/2008socialjustice12.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Cambridge University Press, “Fairness”, Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2013. Accessed August 2, 2013. [http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/fairness\\_1](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/fairness_1)

<sup>6</sup> BC Social Justice 12 IRP, 2008

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.sociology.org/courses/sociology-288-social-movements/unit-4-competition>.

seem more natural than competition...competition in humans is not natural at all, but rather seems to be learned as a part of our socialization process".<sup>8</sup>

**Industrial Union:** Also called *vertical union*. A trade union that organizes on the principle of including all workers from one industry or workplace, regardless of their craft or whether they are skilled or unskilled.

**Injunction:** A court order restraining an employer or union from committing or engaging in certain acts (e.g., picketing a particular location).

**International Labour Organization (ILO):** Tripartite world body representative of labour, management, and government; an agency of the United Nations. It disseminates labour information and sets minimum international labour standards, called *conventions*, offered to member nations for adoption. Its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland.

**International Union:** A union that has members in more than one country. Typically refers to a United States based union with members in Canada.

**Job Security:** A provision in a collective agreement protecting a worker's job as in the introduction of new methods or machines.

**Labour Council:** An organization composed of locals of CLC-affiliated unions in a given community or district.

**Labour Relations Board:** A board established under labour relations legislation to administer labour law: certification of trade unions as bargaining agents, investigation of unfair labour practices, and other functions prescribed under the legislation.

**Layoff:** Temporary, prolonged, or final separation from employment as a result of lack of work.

**Local (Union):** The basic unit of union organization. Trade unions are usually divided into a number of locals for the purposes of local administration. The locals elect their own officers. They are usually responsible for the day-to-day administration of the collective agreements covering their members.

**Lockout:** A labour dispute in which management refuses work to employees or closes its establishment in order to force a settlement on its terms.

**Open Shop:** A shop in which union membership is not required as a condition of securing or retaining employment.

**Patriarchy:** social system whereby males are afforded power and privilege and most institutions in society are governed by men and the assumption of the subordination of women.

**Pay equity:** the principle of 'equal pay for work of equal value'. The idea (and sometimes law) that employers must assess the value of a particular job based on its worth to the organization and ensure that wages are comparable and not discriminatory based on gender, race, or other criteria.

**Power:** the real or perceived ability or potential to make choices and to bring about significant change in

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<sup>8</sup>

<http://www.sociology.org/courses/sociology-288-social-movements/unit-4-competition>.

a society or in people's lives. Can be based on a dominance of sex, age, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, socioeconomic class, geography, etc. An inequity of power is one the most common causes of social injustice.<sup>9</sup>

**Picketing:** Patrolling near employer's place of business by union members— pickets—to publicize the existence of a labour dispute, persuade workers to join or support a strike or join the union, discourage customers from buying or using employer goods or service, etc.

**Rand Formula:** Also called *agency shop*. A union security clause in a collective agreement stating that the employer agrees to deduct an amount equal to the union dues from all members of the bargaining unit, whether or not they are members of the union, for the duration of the collective agreement.

**Seniority:** An employee's status relative to other employees for determining order of lay off, promotion, recall, transfer, vacations, etc. Seniority is based on length of service.

**Social justice:** the full participation and inclusion of all people in society, together with the promotion and protection of their legal, civil, and human rights. The aim of social justice-to achieve a just and equitable society where all share in the prosperity of that society-is pursued by individuals and groups through collaborative social action.<sup>10</sup>

**Strike:** A refusal to work by employees in combination or in accordance with a common understanding for the purpose of compelling an employer to agree to terms or conditions of employment. Usually the last stage of collective bargaining when all other means have failed. Except in special cases, strikes are legal when a collective agreement has passed its end date, a majority of voting employees support the action and the union has served 72 hour strike notice.

- A rotating strike or hit-and-run strike is a strike organized in such a way that only part of the employees stop work at any given time, each group taking its turn.
- A sympathy strike is a strike by workers not directly involved in a labour dispute—an attempt to show labour solidarity and bring pressure on an employer in a labour dispute.
- A wildcat strike is a strike not authorized by the union—often in violation of a no-strike clause.

**Strikebreaker/Scab:** A person who continues to work or who accepts employment to replace workers who are on strike. By filling jobs, scabs may weaken or break a strike. Strikebreakers can include militia, police, or private security hired to force workers back on the job.

**Trade Union:** Workers organized into a voluntary association or union to further their mutual interests with respect to wages, hours, working conditions, and other matters of interest to the workers.

**Union Label; Bug:** A tag, an imprint, or a design affixed to a product to show it was made by union labour.

**White-Collar Workers:** Workers in offices and other non-production phases of industry.

**Workers Compensation:** insurance that gives wage and medical benefits to workers hurt on the job. Under this system, workers give up the right to sue their bosses for those injuries.

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<sup>9</sup> BC Social Justice IRP, 2008

<sup>10</sup> BC Social Justice 12 IRP, 2008

**Working Conditions:** Conditions pertaining to the worker's job environment, such as hours of work, safety, paid holidays and vacations, rest period, free clothing or uniforms, possibilities and advancement. Many are included in the collective agreement and subject to collective bargaining.

**Worth:** the level at which someone or something deserves to be valued or rated; value or merit <sup>11</sup>

Unless otherwise noted, definitions come from the Labour History Project or B.C. Teachers Federation and BC Federation of Labour, "Glossary of Labour Terms". *Youth, Unions, and You: A Secondary Teacher's Guide to Labour Studies for B.C. Schools*. May 2001. Accessed August 2, 2013. <http://www.bctf.ca/TeachingResources.aspx?id=18848>

<sup>i</sup> "Minimum vs Living Wage", Hennessy's Index: A number is never just a number.

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/commentary/hennessys-index-number-never-just-number-3#sthash.cWOKPbwj.dpuf> In April 2010 the City of New Westminster took steps to guarantee that all city employees and all hired by city contractors were paid at least \$18.17 an hour, the living wage figure promoted by unions and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

<sup>ii</sup> "BC now has lowest child labour standards in North America", Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, March 4, 2004, <http://internationalization/newsroom/news-releases/bc-now-has-lowest-child-labour-standards-north-america#sthash.1y762Klt.dpuf>

<sup>iii</sup> "The long list of Canadian firms that have sought temporary foreign workers", Grant Robertson et al, The Globe and Mail, Friday April 26, 2013. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/jobs/the-long-list-of-canadian-firms-that-have-sought-temporary-foreign-workers/article11113782/?page=all>

<sup>iv</sup> "Hope fades for trapped workers", by Pinaki Roy, The Globe and Mail Friday April 26, 2013, News A6-7.

<sup>v</sup> "Poverty Facts and Stats", by Anup Shah, Global Issues: Social, Political, Economic and Environmental Issues that Affect Us All. [www.globalissues.org](http://www.globalissues.org), retrieved July 22, 2013

<sup>vi</sup> "What does that \$14 shirt really cost? Bangladesh disaster raises tough questions about cheap clothes", by Rosemary Westwood on Wednesday, May 1, 2013, Macleans, <http://www2.macleans.ca/2013/05/01/what-does-that-14-shirt-really-cost/>

<sup>vii</sup> "Poverty Facts and Stats", by Anup Shah, Global Issues: Social, Political, Economic and Environmental Issues that Affect Us All. [www.globalissues.org](http://www.globalissues.org), retrieved July 22, 2013

<sup>viii</sup> "Poverty Facts and Stats", by Anup Shah, Global Issues: Social, Political, Economic and Environmental Issues that Affect Us All. [www.globalissues.org](http://www.globalissues.org), retrieved July 22, 2013

<sup>ix</sup> Canadian women benefit from the union advantage, CUPE 50, Mar 8, 2012 12:29 PM <http://cupe.ca/women/canadian-women-benefit-union-advantage>

<sup>x</sup> "Women in the workforce: still a long way from equality", Canadian Labour Congress, [onceandforall.ca](http://onceandforall.ca)

<sup>xi</sup> "Poverty Facts and Stats", by Anup Shah, Global Issues: Social, Political, Economic and Environmental Issues that Affect Us All. [www.globalissues.org](http://www.globalissues.org), retrieved July 22, 2013. And that's before Iraq and Afghanistan!

<sup>xii</sup> "Poverty Facts and Stats", by Anup Shah, Global Issues: Social, Political, Economic and Environmental Issues that Affect Us All. [www.globalissues.org](http://www.globalissues.org), retrieved July 22, 2013

<sup>xiii</sup> "The facts about globalization, including the winners and losers of GATT and details about which corporations make more money than which countries", New Internationalist, [www.newint.org/features/1997/11/05/facts/](http://www.newint.org/features/1997/11/05/facts/) This data is from 1997, so already quite outdated.

<sup>xiv</sup> "The facts about globalization, including the winners and losers of GATT and details about which corporations make more money than which countries", New Internationalist, [www.newint.org/features/1997/11/05/facts/](http://www.newint.org/features/1997/11/05/facts/) This data is from 1997, so already quite outdated.

<sup>xv</sup> "The facts about globalization, including the winners and losers of GATT and details about which corporations make more money than which countries", New Internationalist, [www.newint.org/features/1997/11/05/facts/](http://www.newint.org/features/1997/11/05/facts/) This

<sup>11</sup> <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/worth>

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xvi. "The facts about globalization, including the winners and losers of GATT and details about which corporations make more money than which countries", New Internationalist, [www.newint.org/features/1997/11/05/facts/](http://www.newint.org/features/1997/11/05/facts/) This data is from 1997, so already quite outdated.

xvii. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Hennessy's Index, Canada by the Numbers  
<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/index>

xviii. The Facts About Women and Poverty, Canadian Women's Foundation,  
<http://www.canadianwomen.org/facts-aboutpoverty#15>

xix. "Facts on Child Labour 2010", International Labour Organization,  
[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_126685.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_126685.pdf)

xx. Which is the world's biggest employer? By Ruth Alexander BBC News, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17429786>