

Handout 12a: Labour, Solidarity, and Social Justice

For discussion:

1. What is the difference between 'nationalism' and 'internationalism'?
2. What is meant by 'solidarity'?
3. Can people work with other people in a different country to improve the level of social justice for both?

Unions are part of something called 'civil society'. Civil society can be considered another part of globalization. As governments and corporations have become 'globalized', so have individuals and groups that work to improve the world. In a sense, as politics and economics have become 'globalized', so has solidarity.

Peace activist Mary Wynne Ashford describes the power of civil society in her book *Enough Blood Shed: 101 Solutions to Violence, Terror, and War*:

“Civil society includes organizations as well as individuals who are acting to bring the values and conscience of humanity to the global issues we face. Women, youth, indigenous peoples, trade unions, faith groups, and academics are some of the diverse voices of civil society.” (Wynne Ashford, p2)

“The rise of civil society is a major sign of hope. In almost every country the participation of groups and individuals is shaping the debates on global climate change, free market capitalism, the privatization of resources, human rights, rights of women, and armed conflict.” (Wynne Ashford, p33)

Considering this definition and knowledge of social justice issues, explore the images and news headlines provided. Summarize, with examples, the role of the labour movement in civil society. Locate other relevant images and headlines or have students bring in their own examples.

Examine these news headlines and images. How is the labour movement connected to global social justice?

Teachers join peaceful protest against WTO agenda for public education
 International Unions Reach Out to Japan Quake Survivors

Global Unions Condemn Child Labor

California Working Families Taking the Lead on Immigration Policy



Canadian Labour Congress to John Baird:
 Protect Women's Rights

IUPAT Facebook Campaign Raises Money for
 Children with Cerebral Palsy

Canadian Labour Congress Statement in Support of
 United Nations International Human Rights Day

Day of mourning for Bangladeshi Garment
 Fire Victims



*Canadian Labour Congress:
 Today Solidarity is Pink*



Catholics must take a stand in support of Walmart
 employees

Tunisian unions condemn 'terrorism, violence & murders'

American, Iraqi labor leaders sign statement to dissolve Saddam's
 labor laws

Ontario's public sector unions and anti-poverty activists plan
 day of protest

Anti-poverty charity joins union action: 'We're all in this together,' says
War on Want

