

## When "Contract" No Longer Means Agreement

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Sunday, July 17, 2005

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I thought I had it bad as a public school teacher in BC when the provincial government unilaterally imposed a "contract" on us a few years ago. I always thought a "contract" was something that was agreed to by both parties in a transaction.

But the Orwellian ghoulishness of Gordon Campbell's neoLiberal junta kept beating us about the temple with the word "contract" until it just became a new kind of thing...a thing that meant something like what it always used to, but didn't need the hassle of actual agreement. I don't recall the BCTF bargaining unit ever actually signing the legislated "contract".

So in the brave new world of global competition, \$6 minimum wages, and a healthy, robust race to the bottom, worker rights can still exist, at least in name only, when "contracts" are unilaterally imposed: "what's the problem? at least you've got a contract," except when there is no actual agreement on **both** sides.

But now, the private sector is getting into the Orwellian game. [Telus has decided](#) to unilaterally impose on its employees a "contract" which will define their work. They have been without a contract for 4 years. It's thus time to squash them for good by completely dropping the pretense of good-faith labour negotiation by just ending it all by imposing their offer. And they think this will bring labour peace. Sadly, in Campbell's New Era BC, they might be right. But I [doubt](#) the Telecommunications Workers Union will go so quietly. I hope they don't.