



February 2018

CBTU-Canada Chapter, c/o Yolanda McClean
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. Statement on the Canadian Government's Recognition of the U.N. Decade for People of African Descent
2. Elementary Teachers of Toronto
3. Environmental Racism Project
4. Mass Incarceration
5. Black Votes Matter
6. Working While Black Workshop
7. African Heritage & Black History Month
8. CBTU 2018 International Convention
9. The CBTU Executive Board Members (effective Jan 2018)
10. Membership Form

"Join one of our Chapter's Committees in 2018 and be a part of the change."

Greetings From Our Board

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Last year, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists worked closely and in partnership with organizations like the Zero Gun Violence Program, Black Lives Matter, Canadian Labour Congress, A Different Booklist, The Freedom Train and the Walk of Excellence to name a few.

We joined with the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces research project as a partner by launching an action research initiative on environmental racism and work on climate change. We launched a social media campaign on Environmental Racism using the hashtag #EnvRacismCBTUACW and hope that you go to our website for more information. We continue to write statements to the Anti-Racism Directorate after attending community meetings across the country.

We've partnered with Heritage Toronto to donate a plaque for The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters union. This plaque is located at the Roundhouse in Toronto. Please go by and take "selfies", send them in to us for our website and #cbtu_on_canada at our new Instagram!

All of this work is great news for us and for our Chapter but over the past 20 years our theme has been "Connecting our Roots - and in our 21st year "Our journey continues". 2018 brings "WE WILL NOT GIVE UP"!

(Greetings From Our Board continued...)

The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Ontario Canada Chapter would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your support in making 2017 such a success and look forward to working with you in 2018! Great things are in store for us!

Your 2018 Annual Membership payment is now due. Please remember if you are planning to attend our International Convention, you must be a member in good standing. The 2018 membership must be paid no later than March 31, 2018 if you want to be able to attend this year's International Convention in Orlando, Florida, from Wednesday May 23, 2018 to Sunday, May 27, 2018.

"We encourage you to get involved by attending our meetings and events."

Please send membership dues directly to the CBTU, Ontario Canada Chapter headquarters at 200 - 1482 Bathurst Street, Toronto ON M5P 3H1 - no later than March 31, 2018 and make sure the forms are complete with current information including an email address and current telephone number. If you have not already submitted an email address and full contact information please do so by sending an email to yolanda.mcclean@cupe4400.org. This way you can keep up to date with the latest information.

The CBTU's mission is to encourage and support the full participation of Black workers and workers of colour in their Unions, as well as to organize and maximize our political influence with the labour movement and other stakeholders. It is critical that the Coalition plays a major role in educating and mobilizing members in order to create the type of workplace and society that we want and need for present and future generations.

There will be many opportunities for you to participate in the Ontario, Canada Chapter's activities throughout the year. This year we are determined to build this organization to be stronger and more influential than ever before!

We look forward to communicating with you and please do not hesitate to pass on ideas, suggestions and comments. Our next General Membership meeting is scheduled for: Tuesday, February 27, 2018, at 47 Densley Avenue, North York - 6:30 pm. Please RSVP to yolanda.mcclean@cupe4400.org or call 416-885-6395 if you plan to attend.

Peace and Solidarity,

The CBTU-Canada Executive Board



CBTU – Canada’s Statement on the Canadian Government’s Recognition of the U.N. Decade for People of African Descent

By The Executive Board On behalf of the CBTU - Canadian Chapter

The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) - Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has announced an official recognition of the U.N. International Decade for People of African Descent. As well he has made more recent statements made at a reception marking Black History Month in Gatineau, Quebec. Canada views this with optimism and concern.

The optimism comes with our view that recognizing the atrocities of slavery and its ripple effects currently being experienced by Black and African Canadians are precursors to both reconciliation and justice. Our optimism continues with the Prime- Minister's acknowledgment of Anti-Black Racism with his most recent comments "It's time we recognize that anti-black racism and unconscious bias does exist".

CBTU - Canada is further encouraged that our Federal Government views the UN proclamation as "a framework for recognition, justice, and development to fight racism, discrimination, and the ongoing inequalities that Canadians of African descent face".

[Our concern or disappointment stems in part from the reality that Black and African Canadians have yet to receive a formal apology from the Federal Government for the atrocities committed through Canada's role in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.](#) We believe that the restorative justice on this issue must include recognition, an apology and the restoration that flows as a result.

We have waited in vain for many years for results. Various governments have delayed action through endless research projects, and we are concerned when we hear familiar commentary such as "This means learning more about the issues that affect Black Canadians, including improving research and data collection, so we can better understand the particular challenges they face." as was stated in the Prime Minister's address.

Few communities have been studied more than Black and African Canadians. Whether it's the [2017 Report of the U.N. Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent in Canada](#), the [1992 Stephen Lewis Report on Race Relations in Ontario](#) or the numerous other reports written on the 'Black experience', it remains our view that the information needed to move forward on this issue remains readily available.

As such, CBTU-Canada calls on our Federal Government to issue a formal apology to African Canadians for Canada's role in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. This formal apology should be alongside the implementation of an effective pathway to restorative justice.

CBTU remains committed to working with our coalition partners on moving this issue to the next step and achieving a more inclusive Canada.

"We believe that the restorative justice on this issue must include recognition, an apology and the restoration that flows as a result."

Elementary Teachers of Toronto

By ACW (AdaptingCanadianWork.ca)

Elementary Teachers of Toronto (ETT) invited Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) to speak to their Environment Committee on the issue of Environmental Racism and Work.

LeRoi Newbold of #BLMTO and Jawara Gairey facilitated the workshop.

The workshop focused on how climate change exposes structural racial inequality and the opportunity that this exposure provides racialized communities to strategize towards a just transition. Jawara presented a PowerPoint to a group of around 40 ETT activists.

The feedback received from ETT activists included how to implement strategies within their respective schools and communities to engage students and adults on the topic.



ETT activists also submitted a variety of ideas on developing strategies and building skills required for racialized students to be prepared for the Green Economy from the K-8 grades.

Black Votes Matter

By Christopher Wilson

In the spirit of the social movements of South Africa and the United States, people of African descendants in Canada are advocating and fighting for the political rights and power of African-Canadians. Important issues that affect our community are decided at the ballot box (criminal justice, minimum wage, economic inequality, etc.). Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) has created a political report card that states each party's position on crucial issues facing our community. The Black Votes Matter workshop is intended to supplement that by creating a dialogue and action to move our community forward.

You may hear that our votes do not matter but do not believe it. There are 7 riding in Ontario with 10%+ of voters who are Black Canadians. Many elections are decided by less than 2000 votes. Your votes are important.



The goal of this workshop is:

- Strategies and tips for creating election campaigns that help you reach and connect with African Canadian and Black communities.
- Understand how to identify the issues of importance in African Canadian and Black communities and draw on shared values and common interests; and
- Gain greater insight into effectively including a diversity of African Canadian and Black communities in their campaigns.

Environmental Racism Project

By ACW (AdaptingCanadianWork.ca)

The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Canada (CBTU) has joined the Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces (ACW) research project as a partner organization by launching an action research initiative on Environmental Racism.

The destructiveness and speed of climate change is a call to action. CBTU will explore the impact of climate change on racialized communities within Canada.

CBTU is a community based organization that gives voice to Black Trade Unionists on issues that impact upon people of African-Canadian descent. ACW is a partnership grant of Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Working with 47 individual researchers and 24 partner organizations in 4 countries, ACW seeks to slow global warming by developing tools to green the workplace and work itself. ACW is Canadian-focused and national in scope.

The CBTU Environmental Racism research project brings a vision of community engagement and mobilization around climate change by drawing Black Trade Unionists, and other racialized communities, into the fight to slow global warming while developing pathways to green jobs.

To start the project, CBTU is launching a social media campaign to engage racialized and indigenous communities in the process of discovering what has been written so far about environmental racism in the fight against climate change. Our focus is Canada, but we are including experience from the U.S. or the world if it is relevant to our situation.

Using the hashtag [#EnvRacismCBTUACW], the project seeks to engage climate justice activists through Facebook and Twitter to identify the varying contexts of environmental racism.

This type of crowd-sourced syllabi models similar participatory research campaigns such as #BlackLivesCDNSyllabus and #PrisonAbolitionSyllabus.

You can help to enrich the dialogue on environmental racism in Canada. [Please click here to learn what we know of so far](#), then share your thoughts with us on Twitter or Facebook using the hashtag #EnvRacismCBTUACW.

We will incorporate suggestions into a final bibliography which will be used to design a participatory training workshop to engage the community in the struggle to slow climate change and identify pathways to green jobs.



Art by Favianna Rodriguez

Mass Incarceration

By Our Times Magazine

The World Social Forum ("WSF") brought together tens of thousands of social justice activists from over 100 countries with the shared objective of building a sustainable and inclusive world where every person and every people can make our voices heard.

Under the theme "Another World is Necessary, Together It is Possible" spaces were created through convergence assemblies, conferences, self-organized workshops and demonstrations to challenge capitalist exploitation, racism, environmental destruction and all forms systemic oppression.

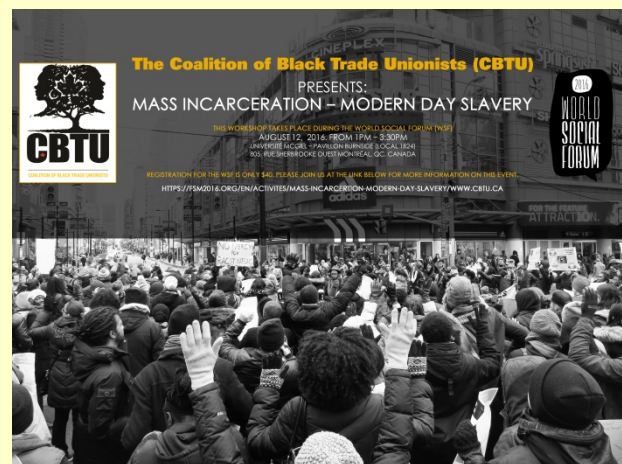
The workshop self-organized by CBTU was modelled upon a similar module developed by the AFL-CIO titled "Mass Incarceration: A Module of Common Sense Economics". The module was re-designed by co-facilitators Mojdeh Cox (Canadian Labour Congress) and Christopher Wilson (Coalition of Black Trade Unionists), and by Isabelle Miller (Coalition of Black Trade Unionists), to integrate a Canadian perspective.

The objectives of the WSF workshop were: (1) to identify the impact of mass incarceration upon racialized communities (2) make links between mass incarceration and anti-black racism (3) develop strategies to confront racism within the criminal justice system and (4) respond to the impact of mass incarceration within our communities.

The workshop started with a discussion on the definition of mass incarceration. Participants shared their experiences and knowledge based upon the principles of popular education and developed the following definition "Mass incarceration occurs when there is an over representation of particular groups particularly racialized and indigenous peoples within prisons and other centers of detention.

Discriminatory police interactions arising from carding of racialized communities is one of the causes of the disproportionate rates of imprisonment. Mass incarceration is further perpetuated on a systemic basis by laws and policies designed to criminalize and warehouse so-called unwanted populations including peoples with struggling with mental health, the poor, migrant workers, racialized and indigenous peoples. Mass incarceration is rooted in a racist and colonial history dating back to slavery both in the United States and Canada.

Mass incarceration and capitalist exploitation are linked when prisons are privatized such as in the United States and the encroachment of private companies in Canada through lobbying and contracting-out practices.



Artwork by Liam Joseph

"I'm really interested in figuring out how to expand the labour movement to include these big problems that heavily impact upon our community, but tend to be lower on the list of priorities of organized labour."

Tanya Ferguson,
Workshop Participant



Mojdeh Cox and Christopher Wilson

(Mass Incarceration continued...)

The urgency of the crisis is revealed through statistics which were handed out to all participants: the United States has 25% of the world's prison population with only 5% of the population. In numerical terms these percentages translate into 2.3 million people in prison with an additional 7 million on probation or parole. Close to sixty percent (60%) of incarcerated people are racialized. Thirty-two (32%) of Black men 20 to 29 years in the United States are in prison, on parole or on probation on any given day.

In 2016 Canada's crime rate hit a 45-year low and has been down by half since peaking in 1991. However, at the same time, the number of people incarcerated has hit an all-time high. Black inmates have been the fastest growing groups in federal corrections with an increase of 75% over 10 years. While the black population of Canada is 2.5%, people of African descent represent over 9% of the federal inmate population. Black boys are four times over-represented versus white boys in youth jail population when compared to Ontario's population. Indigenous women's incarceration has increased 112% in the last decade. In federal prisons, indigenous inmates account for 22.8% of the total incarceration population.

Statistics, however, do not give voice to the lived experiences of racialized and indigenous peoples. Workshop participants then engaged in a discussion on the human side of mass incarceration by reviewing a case study of a formerly incarcerated African American man (Jeff was the fictitious name) who had been convicted, of marijuana possession with intent to distribute, following a plea bargain. Jeff sought to find employment and reintegrate in society but faced barriers as a result of "the box" that employers used to question applicants on their criminal background. One participant brought attention to the politics of mass incarceration by talking about how certain U.S. States manipulate voting districts to ensure Republicans win and maintain harsh sentences for minor drug offences as part of the "war on drugs" Another participant reminded the group that Bill Clinton introduced the "3 Strikes You're Out Policy" so both parties are complicit in the perpetuation of mass incarceration. Another participant talked about how some employers in Canada also do criminal background checks and discriminate against candidates with criminal records regardless of the nature of the job. The scale of the crisis is highlighted through analogies to "The New Jim Crow" (Michelle Alexandre) and "Canada's Prisons Are the 'New Residential Schools'".

The workshop concluded with a discussion on the question: What can the labour movement do to help change this unfair criminal justice system and mass incarceration? The workshop was open to all WSF participants and included prison abolitionists, community organizers, trade unionists and other social justice advocates; consequently, facilitators anticipated that differences of opinion would arise based upon varied ideologies, interests and experiences. Although positions varied consensus was reached that: racism has no place in our movement. One participant succinctly stated in response to Toronto Mayor John Tory, the Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson and other apologists for state sanctioned violence "we don't want 'em" A handout stating the position of the Canadian Labour Congress was also distributed to all participants where Hassan Yussuff states: "None of these tragedies are happening in isolation, so it isn't enough to treat them that way. We very clearly have to have to address systemic issues across the country".

CBTU recognizes that change will not occur as a result of a single workshop. Ongoing conversations, regardless how difficult, are needed among rank and file members to truly engage the movement in the black liberation struggle. As a community organization rooted in the movement, CBTU is open to working with any affiliated union that is interested in delivering this workshop to confront anti-black racism within the criminal justice system. As BLM activists chant: "We shall not be moved. We believe we can win."



Working While Black Workshop

By Isabelle Miller

The CBTU was asked to co-facilitate a Working While Black workshop at the USW Justice 2017 conference in Vancouver, BC. The interactive workshop focused on learning about how various forms of anti-black racism (including police surveillance) affect Black workers on the job and in the community. Co-facilitated by CBTU-Canada Communications Secretary Isabelle Miller of USW Local 1944 and by Natasha Tony of USW Local 2009, the workshop also provided participants with a framework in order to discuss personal experiences and develop strategies that participants had for coping and/or for solutions.

In 2012, the African Canadian Legal Clinic (ACLC) presented a comprehensive report to the Canadian government regarding its compliance with the Intl Convention on the "Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination". Participants briefly reviewed the portions of the report relating to the use of the term "visible minority", and its origins from the Employment Equity Act:



Natasha Tony & Isabelle Miller

"Persons other than Aboriginal People, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour"

The ACLC surmised that Canada's categorization of racialized persons as "visible minorities" was recognized as possibly being contrary to Article 1 in the International Convention. Article 1 provides that racial discrimination occurs when equitable treatment is upset by "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national ethnic origin."

Unfortunately, the Government's decision to abolish the long form census including all data relevant to ethnic diversity has had a tremendous impact on our ability as workers and activists to identify discriminatory practices of employers. A failure to distinguish among different "visible minorities" means that policies that are developed on the basis of this data are often misguided and ineffective. Essentially, there are more limits to our ability to "quantify" the level of discrimination faced by black Canadians.

Participants also discussed the OHRC settlement from 2005 for Toronto District School Board, and what forms of census building are used in various USW locals/workplaces. Personal stories were shared regarding interaction between the Black Community and Law Enforcement. It was telling to see that such a small group could provide so many examples.

After a brief review of incarceration statistics from Canada and the US pointed to the disproportionate number of arrested or jailed members of the Black community. The group discussed the impacts that constant police surveillance and other forms of anti-black racism can have on a worker, even on their commute to or from work.

After viewing a short video from the CBTU regarding employment opportunities in a union environment post-incarceration, the group discussed the impact of having a record on one's ability to even find and retain gainful employment.

(Working While Black Workshop continued...)

It is significant to see that (we have allowed) Trump's supporters and commentary to shape the conversation about racism, even north of the border, both in and out of the workplace. Do you sense racism at work more, less, or equally since Trump took office?

At the end of the workshop, the group discussed following these proposed strategies:

- Creating space and time for exploration of anti-Black racism at: conferences, think tanks, webinars and Labour Schools.
- Education on equity and inclusion for all levels in the workplace and unions.
- Organizing
- Active engagement in addressing systemic oppression
- Addressing tokenism -equity seats -one is not enough
- Equity audits: what does your local have? Does the leadership reflect the membership? If not, there needs to be the willingness to address it.
- Proactive examination of policies, constitutions, and bylaws with a true equity lens

The workshop ended with a final discussion about maintaining momentum to ensure that these conversations are happening on all levels within the workplace and our unions.

African Heritage & Black History Month Event

African Heritage & Black History Month

CELEBRATING OUR PAST, TAKING ACTION FOR OUR FUTURE.

TIME: Wed Feb 21, 2018
6:00 - 8:30 p.m.
PLACE: 25 Cecil Street, Toronto, ON
REGISTER: <https://bhm2018.eventbrite.ca>,
or email: phaset@oll.ca
phone: 416-441-2731

Free tickets and dinner provided by sponsors. Register today.

Celebrate the rich history of our struggle for freedom and join a discussion on the current struggles facing our community with the objective of developing strategies to make our voices heard through political action.

Then add your voice in a community based discussion to help shape the political action work of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Ontario Federation of Labour and Canadian Labour Congress. By working in solidarity with Black and racialized workers across Canada we will continue the legacy of our ancestors to challenge anti-Black racism in our times.

CBTU
CANADIAN BLACK TRADE UNIONISTS

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

Canadian Labour Congress
Congrès du travail du Canada

CBTU 2018 International Convention



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AFSCME

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WILLIE L. BAKER JR.
Exec. Vice President (Emeritus)
UFCW

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Washington, DC 20035-6268
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Fax: (202) 419-1486
Web site: www.cbtu.org

CBTU Founders:

Nelson "Jack" Edwards (UAW)
Charles A. Hayes (UFCW)
Cleveland Robinson (District 65 UAW)
William "Bill" Lucy (AFSCME)
William Simons (AFT)

January 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am pleased to issue the official convention call to the 47th International Convention of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). The convention will be held in Orlando, Florida at the Hilton Orlando Buena Vista Palace, 1900 E. Buena Vista Drive, Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830 from **May 23-28, 2018**. The theme is **"47 Years Strong, From Surviving to Thriving"**. All general convention sessions will be held at the Hilton Orlando Buena Vista Palace.

We must continue to build and advance this movement in the face of some of the toughest opposition and most racist antics seen in decades. This convention will focus on the things that have made CBTU successful for so many years, civic engagement and mobilization. Our agenda is busy as I have outlined below.

Pre-convention sessions begin **Tuesday, May 22nd**. We will be offering **Leadership Training**. This is for CBTU Leadership looking to advance their skills, chapters and their regions. We will also be offering **Common Sense Economics - Train the Trainer**. This training will empower members on how to explain and breakdown the economy. **Special Registration is required for both.**

Wednesday, May 23rd Bill Fletcher Jr., has agreed once again to host a dynamic session entitled: **"Right-Wing Populism in the USA: How to Understand It; How to Fight It."** **Special Registration is required.**

The general convention begins **Thursday, May 24th** where we will outline the visions and projects CBTU will be undertaking. **May 25-27th** will be our sessions that focus on specific issues impacting our community and different methods of resistance utilized to make positive change.

CBTU has grown from a small collection of leaders to a powerful voice for Black workers. The movement needs to hear us more now than ever and I ask you to join us as we lay out our strategic plan moving forward.

Registration for the 2018 convention can be done online or you may download forms at www.cbtu.org.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please call the CBTU International office at 202-778-3318 or email us at cbtu@cbtu.org. See you in Orlando.

In solidarity,

Rev. Terrence L. Melvin, President

The CBTU Executive Board Members (effective January 1, 2018)



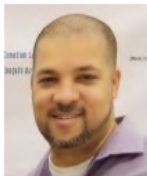
Yolanda McClean of
CUPE – President
(CBTU-International Board
Member)



Isabelle Miller of USW–
Communications Secretary
(CBTU-International Board
Member)



Megan Whitfield of
CUPW– Trustee



Chris Wilson of PSAC–
1st Vice President
(CBTU-International Board
Member)



Mark Brown of CUPW–
Social Media Officer



Laurie Antonin of CLC–
Youth Member at Large



Holmann Richard of
PSAC – 2nd Vice President



Andrea McCormack of
OPSSU– Recording
Secretary / Region 1
Recording Secretary



Dennis Williams of USW–
Member at Large



Jonathan Lobo of
UFCW– Treasurer /
Financial Secretary



Felicia Samuel of ETFO –
Trustee



Colin Husbands –
Retiree Member at
Large



Janice Gairey–
President Emeritus

The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) would like to thank the following organizations for their continued donations, support and for including CBTU in their recent conventions, conferences and events:

ACTRA Toronto
Canadian Labour Congress
Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
Carpenters Union
Dewart and Gleeson
Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
Elementary Teachers of Toronto (ETT)
Goldblatt Partners LLP
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW)
International Brother of Electrical Workers (IBEW)
International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT)
Labours International Union of North America (LIUNA)
Ontario Federation of Labour

Ontario Public Service Union (OPSEU)
Ontario Public Staff Union (OPSSU)
Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF)
Power Workers Union
Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)
Ryder Wright Blair & Doyle Barrister and Solicitors
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Society of Energy Professionals
The Canadian Office and Professional Employees (COPE)
Toronto and York Region Labour Council
Unifor
Union Marketing
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)
United Steel Workers (USW)
WE Travel

If you would like the CBTU to participate or speak at one of your events, or host a workshop for your organization, please contact us:
yolanda.mcclean@cupe4400.org



CBTU

COALITION OF BLACK TRADE UNIONISTS

CBTU ONTARIO CANADA CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP FORM

Applicant Information

Full Name:

First

M.I.

Last

Address:

Street Address

Apartment/Unit #

City

Province

Postal Code

Primary Phone:

()

Year of Birth:

Union Affiliation:

E-mail Address to

Receive CBTU Info:

(This e-mail address will not be shared outside of CBTU)

Union Membership Status

If you wish to become a member, please check one box that corresponds to your union membership status, and make your cheque or money order payable to: **Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.**

☐ International Officer: \$155.00

☐ Rank and File: \$35.00

☐ *Information Only: \$25.00

(*This level of membership entitles you to participate in meetings, but not to any voting or delegate privileges)

☐ Staff: \$80.00

☐ Retiree: \$20.00

Processing Information

Please Check One:

- ☐ I would like to join CBTU
- ☐ I am renewing my membership
- ☐ Please note my change of address

Please Mail To:

Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
Ontario Canada Chapter
c/o Yolanda McClean
1482 Bathurst Street, Suite 200
Toronto, ON M5P3H1

A MEMBERSHIP CYCLE IS FROM JANUARY 1 – DECEMBER 31 OF EACH YEAR