

LABOUR ACTION

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COUNCIL

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145 YEARS OF WORKING TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE

One hundred and forty five years ago a small group of workmen came together to give life to an idea – the creation of a collective voice for working people in Toronto. On April 12th, 1871 the Toronto Trades and Labour Assembly was founded by representatives of the emerging economy – barrel-makers, shoemakers, printers, bakers, cigar-makers and metalworkers. They were soon joined by other occupations. It was a time of rising for workers across the world, from the nine-hour day movement to the Paris Commune.



Toronto Foundry, 1872

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nine-hour day movement to the Paris Commune.

Within a year the fledgling labour movement in Toronto would be tested. Printers at the Globe newspaper went on strike and were jailed for criminal sedition. Ten thousand people took to the streets demanding the printers' freedom and labour rights. The call for justice echoed throughout the country and the federal government passed the first Trade Union act.

From the early foundation of skilled trades labour grew with the garment industry, metal and packinghouse workers, brewers and transit workers. In the 1940's mass industrial organizing spread to Toronto's electrical, rubber, appliance, chemical and paper plants as well as hotels and restaurants. In the 1960's public sector workers gained the right to bargain and strike, followed by teachers and other professionals.

Since the first nations gave us the name Toronto – a "gathering place" – this region has been built by waves of immigrants and refugees. Each new group discovered that in order to have a fair share of Canada's prosperity they needed collective representation. In the workplace that was a union. From the very beginning our unions adopted the principle that "What we wish for ourselves, we wish for all". We defined ourselves as a movement of social unionism embracing broad goals of economic justice.

In the early decades the Labour Council built campaigns for employment standards, sanitary conditions, limitation of working hours; and prohibiting child labour. It also called for equal pay for women, one of the first advocates for equality in Canada. There was a sweeping program for

municipal ownership of the street railway system, telephone services, power, gas and the fire brigade. It lobbied for better public health measures, and a quality education system including technical training. Workers Compensation and a Fair Wage policy were early victories.

In the early 1900's there were passionate debates about socialism, war and peace, and a massive upsurge of militancy in the post-WWI period. Labour started to elect candidates to school boards and city council, including Jimmy Simpson who eventually became the first labour Mayor of Toronto. The creation of the Toronto Hydro Electric System was championed by William Hubbard, the first African-Canadian City Councillor. Labour led a plebiscite to create the publicly owned Toronto Transit Commission. These crucial achievements reflected the determination of labour to engage in "political bargaining" to win social gains.

Women were part of the labour movement from the earliest years and in dramatic moments in Toronto labour history such as the 1907 Bell telephone strike and the 1912 Eaton workers strike. The number of women in the workplace changed significantly during World War I and II when women were the majority of the workforce in Toronto munitions' factories.

After the Great Depression the Second World War spurred the economy and created a new upsurge of organizing. Tens of thousands joined unions in Toronto and struggled for collective agreements. At the war's end there was again a massive strike wave to secure union rights as well as better wages and working conditions. The lessons of the fight against fascism were deeply felt, and in 1947 the Toronto Joint Labour Committee for Human Rights was formed. It led a relentless campaign against racist practices by employers, landlords and businesses. This legacy is honoured through the Bromley Armstrong Award.

The long post-war economic boom led to an unprecedented level of prosperity for working families, the spread of the suburbs and expansion of unionization. But it also saw the cold war impact on the labour movement in a fierce struggle over politics. With the creation of the New Democratic Party, labour formally adopted a social democratic orientation. Across the country, it continued "political bargaining" to expand workplace gains like healthcare and pensions into universal social programs. The Labour Council was a founding partner of the United Way, and unions widely supported charitable work.



Labour Day 1952

But the booming economy also had a darker side. Unsafe work conditions plagued the factories and construction sites. New immigrants suffered exploitation and discrimination. In 1960 the Hogg's Hollow tragedy sparked an uprising by the Italian community demanding a new deal in their adopted homeland. New safety and labour laws were won, and mass organizing swept across construction sites and industry. Discrimination was challenged in schools and institutions, including immigration policies. Little by little, a "new deal" was shaped for immigrants, and the demographics of Toronto changed. But racism continued to shape the reality of many Torontonians.

The turbulent 60's and 70's saw the rise of anti-racism struggles, health and safety activism, and a women's movement that was deeply grounded in labour. The Labour Council Development Foundation was formed to create co-

operative housing projects, and the partnership with United Way led to the creation of Labour Community Services. The Labour Education Centre started to offer extensive training on union issues as well as workplace adjustment. Teachers won bargaining rights, public sector workers won the right to strike, and in 1976 the country-wide Day of Protest hit against wage controls.

By the 1980's the labour movement in Toronto was changing as industry shed jobs and public sector unionization increased. Women were moving into leadership of unions, workers of colour were organizing to challenge barriers, and the emerging gay rights movement found growing support. Global solidarity became part of the culture of Toronto labour. But business was transforming as well, and the signing of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement marked a decisive change. A third of all industrial jobs in greater Toronto were lost through plant closures,



Toronto Labour Council Rally - 1984

and employers went on the offensive demanding cuts and concessions.

The anger of working people set the stage for the historic election of the Ontario New Democratic Party in 1990. Its five year term was marked by important achievements and heart-breaking disappointments including the Social Contract legislation. It broke ground with new labour law, Employment Equity and environmental policies, although those were repealed by the Harris Conservatives. The Harris “common sense revolution” attacked workers rights and ushered in tax cuts and privatization. The labour

movement mobilized, building alliances and a powerful resistance movement that featured Toronto’s first general strike in October 1996.

By the end of the decade the Conservatives forced a merger of six municipalities into a Toronto mega-city; merged the school boards; and downloaded massive costs. In York Region, the first major privatized transit service was established, setting the stage for future transit schemes across Ontario. In response unions committed themselves to a higher level of political action, defeating the Conservatives in every Toronto seat in 2003 as well as electing David Miller as Mayor.

The 21st century has posed many challenges to the labour movement. Governments have embraced austerity, employers are imposing two-tier wages, and tough

strikes or lock-outs are more frequent. Precarious work seems to be the norm for the next generation.

But unions in Toronto and York Region are responding. There are new approaches to organizing and a focus on bringing a labour message to newcomer communities. Union structures are more reflective of the diversity of the overall population. The urgency of climate change is being incorporated into labour’s analysis, along with an equity lens. And despite the hostility of employers, people seek out and form unions in every sector of the economy.

Labour has been deeply involved in the struggles for community safety, for racial equality, for public services and for an education system that gives every student what they need to succeed. We have laid out a vision for an economy that is both sustainable and offers good jobs for all. And we are

training a new generation of activists who will continue to lead these efforts in the decades to come.

Today the Labour Council represents over 200,000 women and men who work in every sector of the economy. Over the years Labour Council has broken ground on key issues, sometimes developing positions that were clearly ahead of the national labour movement. In the sweep of history working people in Toronto have been on a remarkable journey since 1871. There is a First Nations saying that when making a decision you should consider its impact seven generations away. Those who started 145 years ago – the equivalent of seven generations – laid a solid foundation for justice in Canada’s largest urban centre. We honour their foresight and pledge to continue that legacy.

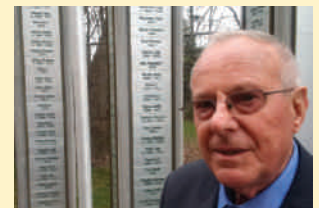
Italian Fallen Workers Memorial

After six long years of painstaking work, the Italian Fallen Workers Memorial was finally unveiled on the National Day of Mourning at the Columbus Centre in Toronto. Eleven prefabricated columns bear the names and dates of over 900 Fallen Workers discovered by the Memorial committee and organized by decade over the last century.

The original projection was somewhere between 300 and 400 workers, but the outpouring of interest by the Italian community resulted in tripling those original estimates. Many unions and businesses supported the project. Donations are still welcome – make cheques payable to:

Villa Charities (Re: Memorial),

Attention Marino Toppan, Villa Charities - Memorial Project, Co-ordinator
C/O Columbus Centre 902 Lawrence Avenue West Toronto, M6A 1C3
www.ItalianFallenWorkersMemorial.com



Marino Toppan



The Mantella brothers and three others died in the Hogg's Hollow tragedy in 1960

A MILLION CLIMATE JOBS



On Earth Day 2016 the Toronto and York Region Labour Council calls on governments and employers to take decisive action on Climate Change and create one million new jobs within the next decade. Earth Day was created in 1970 to bring attention to an environmental crisis caused by pollution that was poisoning the air, water and land. Forty-six years later major advances have been made in banning toxics and reducing pollution. However climate change is now recognized as a fundamental threat to the stability of our world. It impacts billions in both the poorest countries and the richest cities.

The United Nations Summit on Climate Change in Paris (COP21) adopted goals that are crucial for human survival. Those include a

reduction in greenhouse gases to limit the rise of global temperatures to 2 degrees or less. For this to happen, every country has to radically change how energy is created and consumed - in buildings, transportation, workplaces and consumer products. Labour supports the COP21 document but wants to ensure there is "just transition" for workers whose livelihoods will be displaced as cities and nations transform their energy appetites.

The Labour Council calls on every political and corporate decision-maker to commit to policies and programs that will achieve the COP21 goals. Investment is needed in public transit and alternative energy sources. All new buildings should strive to be net zero carbon,

and existing building stock retrofitted. Retailers should take responsibility for the life cycle of their products. Carbon pricing should apply to every product sold in Canada. Finally, a nation-wide network of Workplace Environmental Representatives should be established to support these efforts.

We could create a million climate jobs in Canada if there was the collective will to support clear, decisive action. From skilled trades to finance, manufacturing to design professionals, we can produce equitable access to good jobs to ensure every community benefits. Let us remind our elected leaders and every Canadian of our shared responsibility to create real change.

Filipino Workers Assembly

Over a hundred Filipino-Canadian union and community activists came together on April 9th in the first Filipino Workers Network Conference. They heard keynote speaker Maria Castaneda of the SEIU1199 in New York describe her journey from new immigrant to one of the top leaders in the U.S. labour movement. After a full day's work this is their reflection:

"Thousands of Filipinos leave the Philippines daily to go to countries like Canada because of worsening economic and political situation in the Philippines. As Filipino Workers Network, we join in making a better Canada, a Canada that cares about its people. A Canada that protect the rights of workers and upholds the rights and freedoms of its people."

"...we are committed in the **fight to improve workers' rights**. We **strongly support the changes to Employment Laws** that will stave off poverty, benefits workers and lay the foundation for the next generation of workers."

"...We join and **support the campaign to keep our public utilities public.**"

"...we are **committed to protecting our environment and ensure that workers are protected** when their jobs are being eliminated or changed due to transitioning to green jobs."

"**We condemn racism.**" We are continually discriminated upon as a people yet our voices are not heard. We are the invisibles or the visible minorities.

"We strongly support the **demand to permanent resident status for all temporary workers currently working in Canada.**"





Thank You Judy Persad

After ten years of working with the Labour Council, Judy Persad is moving on. Judy started in 2006 on an eight month contract as an organizer for the Hotel Worker Rising campaign, in which we had a formal partnership with UNITEHERE International for community outreach. Prior to that, Judy had been with Women Working with Immigrant Women for a number of years, and had extensive experience in community organizing. Judy and Salome Lukas of WWIW researched and wrote the book “Through the Eyes of Workers of Colour” in 2004 as a foundational document for our Equity Agenda.

In 2008 when we convened the Good Jobs for All coalition, Judy became the co-ordinator for the coalition and its highly successful Summit that convened a thousand people to support the Good Jobs for All Declaration and a plan of

action. The next year she helped organize the Good Green Jobs for All conference that broke ground on connecting issues of equity and environment.

Since then Judy has worked on many campaigns of the Council, and continued to co-ordinate the GJFA Coalition. Most recently, she has reached out to women activists from many unions in the GTA to create a strong network connected to our Women’s Committee. Her most recognized public profile has been with the Toronto International Women’s Day Committee, which each year puts on the largest IWD march in North America. Judy’s passionate speech in the last IWD Rally at OISE was truly remarkable.

We wish Judy all the best in her future endeavours. It has been a decade of great work and important leadership.

College part-timers still signing union cards

IT ONLY TAKES A FEW AT THE TOP

College	Salary
CANADORE	\$213,309.84
CANADORE	\$409,900.00
CANADORE	\$274,941.56
HUMBER	\$425,282.23
Seneca	\$408,288.41
SECLAIR	\$300,210.02
St. Lawrence College	\$268,547.45

TO KEEP THOUSANDS AT THE BOTTOM

Many part-time community college workers struggle to get by on unfairly low wages and precarious work schedules. These rich community college presidents are doing everything they can to make sure that never changes.

Part-time college staff rarely get equal pay for doing the exact same job as a full-time worker. They've never been given the right to health benefits, paid sick days or vacation. And these colleges are using every trick in the book to stop thousands of part-timers from forming a union to protect themselves.

**Ontario's community colleges promise students a good job and a bright future.
It's time they delivered those opportunities to their own workers.**

collegeworkers.org |

The largest union drive in Ontario history is charging ahead at the province's community colleges.

The Ontario Public Service Employees Union started the drive in September 2015. Since that time, thousands of part-time support staff have signed union application cards. The drive covers workers at more than 100 campuses at all 24 public colleges.

“The situation of college workers working precariously is appalling. It’s a system that takes blatant advantage of part-time workers,” says Marilou Martin, chair of the Support Staff Division of OPSEU.

OPSEU represents close to 20,000 full-time academic and support staff. This is the union’s second attempt at signing up part-timers. The first came in 2009, shortly after the Liberal government of

then-Premier Dalton McGuinty made it legal for college part-timers to unionize.

The drive has not gone unnoticed by college employers. In some cases, college presidents have ordered union organizers off college property and even entered on-campus union offices to hunt down organizers. The pushback by colleges prompted OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas to lead groups of members in handing out the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on campus.

“College part-timers will have their union rights recognized, and they will be OPSEU members,” Thomas said. “We are in this for the long haul.”

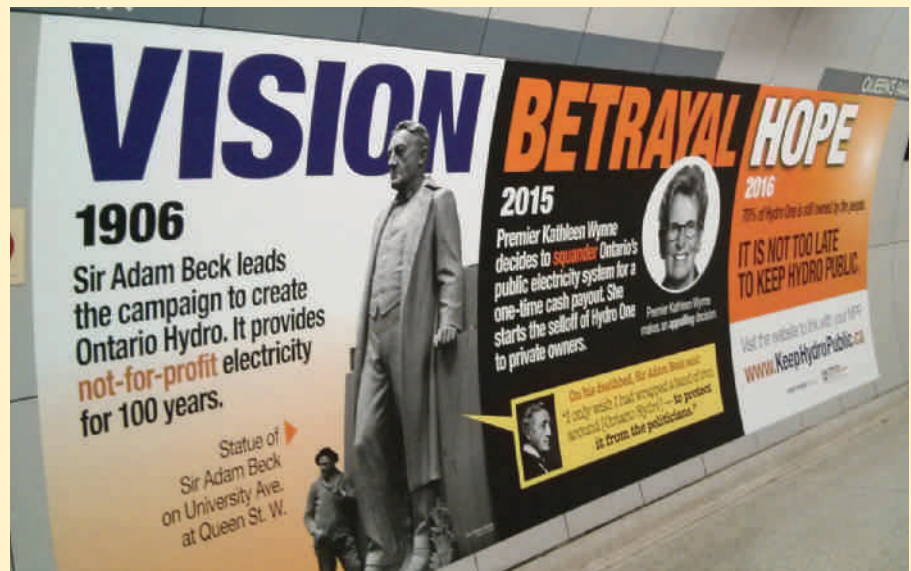
Part-time college support workers can apply online for membership to OPSEU directly via www.collegeworkers.org

More information is available on Facebook at facebook.com/SignUpOPSEU

Keep Hydro Public Campaign Continues

Although the recent sale of another slice of Hydro One was a setback, the campaign against privatization continues. As well as community leaflettings in Toronto ridings and Liberal ridings across Ontario, the campaign unveiled a subway advertising “takeover” at Queen’s Park subway station. In addition to dozens of elevator and platform posters, there are three massive murals on the rear walls of the subway platforms. Visit Queen’s Park station, stroll down the platform and experience these remarkable murals first hand.

www.KeepHydroPublic.ca



Canada will not benefit from the TPP



Today, 97 percent of commercial goods that Canada trades in the TPP zone are already duty-free. In exchange for a fractional increase in potential market access, Canadians are being asked to give up tens of thousands of jobs in the automotive and dairy industries, to name just two sectors that would be impacted.

Labour laws that guarantee fair wages and employment practices for Canadians would also be restricted as companies would be free to import foreign workers rather than hire people locally.

Our food safety and labelling laws could be deemed unfair trade barriers and challenged, as could policies aimed at fighting climate change and providing affordable prescription drugs.

Worse, the TPP includes the same unaccountable,

anti-democratic framework as the North American Free Trade Agreement's (NAFTA) notorious Chapter 11. That framework allows corporations to sue governments for the loss of economic gain on their investments.

The problems with this model of dispute settlement, known as Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), are well established and Canada has already felt the impacts. Canada is already the most sued country under Chapter 11.

ISDS gives corporations an almost equal status to states in the context of international affairs through their ability to challenge laws and regulations put in place by democratically elected governments.

Other G-20 countries, including Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia, and potentially India, are rejecting ISDS as a failed experiment and are refusing to move forward with any trade agreements that include it. All the more reason for Canada to refuse to ratify the TPP.

Black Lives Matter Toronto

“Allah, give me strength not to ... plz, plz, plz”



PRIDE
CANADA'S WEEKLY AFRICAN CANADIAN AND CARIBBEAN NEWS MAGAZINE

It was supposed to have been the tweet that could almost have stopped the earth from rotating.

The tweet that could be spun, twisted and manipulated by mainstream media into the distraction that would make the city forget that, on July 5, 2015, Andrew Loku, a 45-year-old father of five with a history of mental illness, was shot dead by Toronto police, only minutes after they arrived on the scene.

We were supposed to have forgotten that on September 24, 2014, Jermaine Anthony Carby was shot and killed by a Peel Regional Police officer in Brampton, and neither of the officers involved will be charged with a crime.

We were supposed to have overlooked names like Sophia Cook, Wade Lawson, Lester Donaldson and others, who received what many in Canada's Black community would describe as an unjust and unnecessary level of violence via the barrel of a police officer's gun.

Finally, we should have not even been aware that Jean-Pierre Bony and Fredy Villanueva both unarmed Black or Brown men were recently killed by the hands of police in Quebec.

We were supposed to have turned our attention to the leaders of Black Lives Matter-Toronto (BLMTO) and question their ability to lead, as we fall in line with the belief we were presented with.

A belief that says that the leaders of BLMTO, while under the immense pressure that comes with constructing societal change, are somehow not permitted to pray for restraint as they press forward.

“Why are you doing this story?” asked Sandy Hudson, co-founder of BLMTO, in an interview with veteran CP24 news reporter, Jee-Yun Lee.

Hudson was being interviewed about the tweet — at the beginning of this column — written by co-founder, Yusra Khogali, in February of this year.

Hudson went on to say that, for two weeks, people have been sleeping outside of the Toronto Police Headquarters, under difficult circumstances, protesting deaths in our community and, just the day prior, a Black man was killed by the hand of police in Montreal with not a single story from CP24.

In addition Hudson stated that Ontario Premier, Kathleen Wynne, has committed to reviewing the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and mainstream media is focusing on a story put forth from a man who has made homophobic tweets, islamophobic tweets and misogynistic tweets in the past.

The BLMTO co-founder added that the same man has effectively managed to manipulate media outlets to switch the story.

She was referring to Jerry Agar, the Newstalk 1010 reporter, who discovered the tweet on Yusra Khogali's twitter account and broke the story.

Despite repeated attempts by veteran news reporter Lee, to get Hudson to switch the narrative from the police killings of Andrew Loku and Jermaine Anthony Carby and, even with obvious frustration on her face, she was not able to move Hudson from the original narrative of the disproportionate levels of police violence against the Black community.

Was Sandy Hudson supposed to break down under the pressure of the veteran reporter? Was she supposed to run away crying, taking with her the credibility of Black Lives Matter-Toronto?

Bromley L. Armstrong 2016 Award

2016 Award Recipients

The Toronto & York Region Labour Council has established this prestigious award in 2004 to commemorate the courage, dedication and outstanding service of Bromley L. Armstrong to the labour and human rights movement in Canada.

Bromley was a Jamaican-Canadian member of the Autoworkers Union who helped lead the Toronto Joint Committee on Human Rights in the 1950's. This award is presented to a labour activist who has demonstrated excellence in equity and human rights.

Winnie Ng is the Unifor Gindin Chair in Social Justice at Ryerson University. Starting as an organizer with HERE Local 75, she rose to become the former Ontario Director of the Canadian Labour Congress. Winnie has led equity work in many roles, from the Labour Education Centre to co-chair of Good Jobs for All Coalition.



David Onyalo is a lifelong trade unionist and anti-racism activist. He was active in CUPE Local One rising to position of Vice-President, where he played a central role in the ground-breaking equity work. David chaired the CUPE National Committee on anti-racism, anti-discrimination and employment equity. Since 1994 David has worked at the CLC, first on the Anti-Racism Task Force and now as National Director of the Anti-Racism and Human Rights Department.



I don't have an answer to those questions but, what I am confident of, is that, notwithstanding the young men on the executive of BLMTO on this day, mainstream media clearly underestimated the strength of the Black women who lead the Black Lives Matter–Toronto coalition.

A diamond in its earliest stages is under pressure as it is being formed in the earth. That pressure subsequently produces one of the strongest and most beautiful gems that the earth can provide.

It has been said that in a similar manner, the pressure and adversity experienced in the lives of Black women, produces some of the strongest and most beautiful gems that the Black community has to offer. That

gem was what was displayed via Sandy Hudson during the CP24 interview.

As a community, we can never forget that when BLMTO recently set up camp outside of the Metro Toronto Police Headquarters on College Street — protesting the SIU decision not to prosecute the officers involved in Andrew Loku's shooting or release their names — these “sisters” and “brothers” were beaten up by the police and dragged away from the barrels that safely housed the fires that kept them warm.

Both the barrels and their tents were taken by the police and they were left to protest exposed to the cold.

In response, BLMTO acquired a sound system and

a flatbed truck, and organised a demonstration that brought hundreds, if not thousands, of people to the doorsteps of the police headquarters and draped a banner stating “Black Lives Matter–Toronto” over the entrance to the iconic flagship Metro Toronto Police Headquarters.

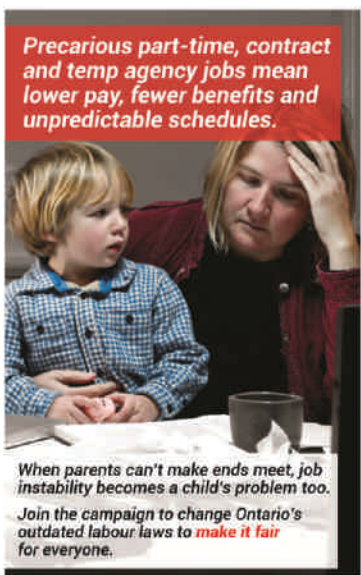
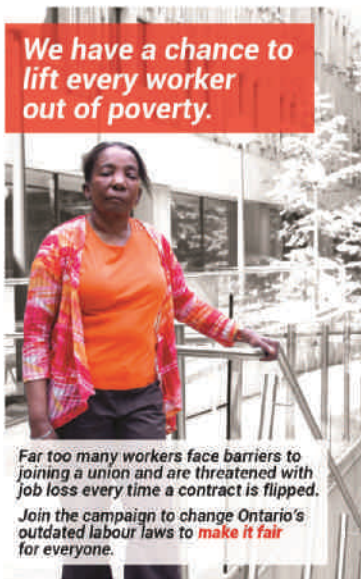
In many ways the resilience and strength being displayed by BLMTO is comparable to the resilience of those who experienced firsthand segregation and discrimination in the southern United States.

The greater the opposition to the end goal, the stronger the resilience of BLMTO becomes.

Whether they are blocking Toronto's Allen Expressway, crashing Toronto Mayor John

Tory's Black History Month event for youth, camping out at the Toronto Police Headquarters, or engaging in some other creative form of protest in order to get the message heard, history will not soon forget the “sisters” and “brothers” of BLMTO, who compelled a society to look at its own privilege and acknowledge that, in addition to the other lives, all the Black lives matter as well.

Mark Brown is the Chair of the Labour Council's Equity Committee, a member of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and the Toronto Local of the Canadian Union of the Postal Workers.



MAKE IT FAIR



The Ontario government is currently reviewing the province's employment laws. That means we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to bring in sweeping changes and create the Ontario We Want!

Ontario's outdated labour laws fail to protect workers...

It's time to Make it Fair!

Together we can make it:

- Easier to join & keep a union;
- Easier to get a first contract;
- Faster to resolve disputes;
- Illegal to intimidate or harass any worker; and
- The right of all workers to keep their jobs even when a contract is flipped.

We can help every worker by:

- Lifting all wages above poverty;
- Providing paid sick days;
- Stopping misclassification;
- Securing decent hours and paid vacation; and
- Protecting every worker, with no exceptions!

What can you do?

Ask your union how to get involved.

Check out www.MakeItFair.ca for information and updates. Spread the word on social media.

Speak to your MPP to let them know they should support improvements to labour laws and Employment Standards.

If someone you love gets a job with "flexible" hours ... look out.



Contact Andria at ababbington@labourcouncil.ca or 416 441-3663 x 223 for assistance or email ababbington@labourcouncil.ca.

Text the word "fair" to 647-496-5602 to sign up for campaign updates.

The Cost of (NOT) Organizing

Are Canada's unions willing to change the reality of work for a million young workers in the next decade? It's a good, tough question. There will need to be a dramatically new investment in organizing for the labour movement to achieve for the next generation what it did for those who are now retiring. And the hard truth is that means time, people and dues money.

Decent wages, benefits, working conditions and pensions are all part of the difference a union can make. Often those standards lift up others working in the same sector, but sometimes not. It depends on the union strength in any given sector. The portion of workers covered by collective agreements is called the unionization rate or union density. In Canada, union density reached 38% in 1981. Since then it has fallen to below 30%, and in greater Toronto only one out of every four workers has a union.

“Many good-paying occupations—from industrial workers to construction trades and even teachers - were once poverty jobs.”

Why does that make a difference? If the majority of people in a sector have union wages and benefits, they will set the standards for that sector. On the other hand, if only a small portion have a union contract, they will always be under pressure to reduce their wages or conditions to match lower non-union costs. We have seen corporations force massive concessions and two-tier wages by threatening job loss or lengthy lock-outs, and politicians target public sector workers for earning more than the private sector.

The only way to resist these “market pressures” is to make sure the majority of workers in the sector have a union

that fights to improve standards. How to achieve that? There is only one answer - putting time and money into organizing. Many good-paying occupations – from industrial workers to construction trades and even teachers – were once poverty jobs. That only changed after mass organizing drives provided the bargaining clout to improve standards. For a quarter century after WW2 unionization spread to workplaces across the economy and brought most workers into middle-income employment.

But in 1995 Ontario's Conservatives made massive changes to labour laws to make it harder for workers to unionize. They allowed employers to create a climate of fear and intimidation in the workplace before a mandatory vote. Union drives were defeated, companies were allowed to bust unions, and union density dropped. Public services were outsourced and ruthless competition drove down wages in healthcare, food services and even transit.

As a result, real wages across Ontario have stagnated for two decades. More people are stuck in precarious work, and some of the largest corporations have a business plan based on poverty wages. Many people only get a raise when the Minimum Wage is increased, and a whole generation risks being undervalued and underpaid for their entire working life.

It's time to turn things around. Every union needs to devote more resources to organizing unrepresented workers in their sector. Bargaining goals need



to include supporting union rights for workers along the supply chain or in related companies. And most importantly, every union activist needs to focus on fixing the laws so workers can join a union without fear.

“It's time to turn things around.”

There is a famous quote that tells us that “You can't remain an island of prosperity in a sea of despair”. It is meant to be a moral caution about ignoring the plight of others, but it is also a hard truth about the future of our movement. Those of us with a union today have to thank someone from the past who did the hard work of building it from scratch. We should repay that debt and put our energy into giving millions of others a voice at work. Let's make this country a better place to live for everyone in the future.

Young workers getting organized with the Fight for \$15 and Fairness



For almost six months, the Toronto Young Workers' Network (TYWN) has been building a network of union and non-union workers across the city. The idea materialized during the 2015 federal election, when many were turning to youth and students to mobilize against Harper and to get out the vote. While electoral politics is one avenue for activating young people, after the election the network asked: what's next?



Hundreds turned out on April 15th at Ministry of Labour to rally for \$15 + Fairness

Every month, the TYWN invites young workers from all Toronto and York Region Labour Council affiliates, as well as non-union workers, to discuss the next actions of the network. In the winter months, the TYWN held their first public event: a social brought more than 60 people from across the city together. As the winter pressed on, many members were also involved with the Fight for \$15 and Fairness which was gearing up for a pan-Canadian Day of Action on April 15, a natural fit for the network to plug into.

The network organized two major spaces to participate in the Day of Action. One week beforehand, an

outreach blitz engaged the public about the campaign and invited people to join on April 15. Then, as part of the Day of Action, the network hosted a march for which two giant banners had been handcrafted by members. The preparation and mobilization done ahead of time resulted in a great turn-out for the march. Young workers and students took over University Avenue chanting "What's outrageous? Poverty wages!" and demanding a \$15 minimum wage. When they arrived at the Ministry of Labour to join the larger Toronto rally, their fighting spirit lifted the energy of the entire crowd which reached over 1000.

The Fight for \$15 and Fairness campaign calls for an increased minimum wage, but also has other demands such as paid sick days, fair scheduling, and fairer rules to join unions. The time to make these demands heard is now because the Ontario Government is reviewing employment and labour

law. Young workers have taken up this call to action and plan to make their voices heard. The appetite for taking action and being connected to other young workers speaks to the interest that exists among young people for social justice activism and being part of a working class movement.

The task ahead is to channel this energy towards growing a network of young workers who can be activists and leaders in their own unions, or are interested in bringing their non-union workplace into the labour movement. By working on campaigns such as the Fight for \$15 and Fairness, the TYWN can offer a space to hang out, support each other, build skills and grow the movement across the city. Stay tuned for upcoming actions!

The Toronto Young Workers' Network meets every month before Toronto and York Region Labour Council delegates meetings, at 5:30pm at the OFL Building.

Close the Gap – It's 2016!

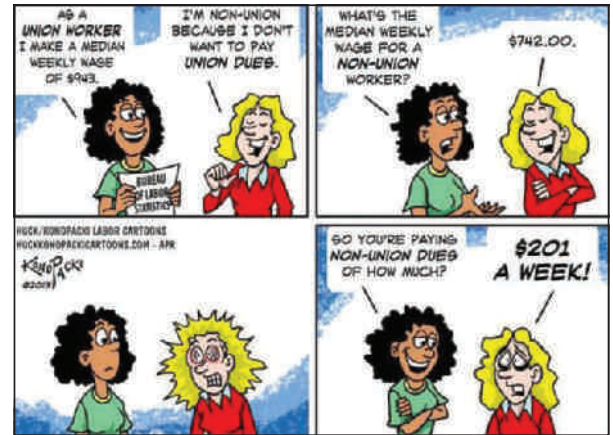
Last year the Ontario government launched consultations to “develop a wage gap strategy that will close the gap between men and women in the context of the 21st century.” Organizations and individuals were given the opportunity to make submissions to suggest actions of business, government, labour and all Ontarians to achieve that goal.

Labour and community organizations such as the Equal Pay Coalition have been organizing actions such as Equal Pay Day. It is designed to educate Ontarians as to how far into the year a woman has to work to match what a man makes. Equal Pay Day varies year to year in order to mark how much or how little progress has been made in closing the gender wage gap. In 2016 Equal Pay Day took place on April 19.

Labour Council has endorsed the Equal Pay Coalition's “Twelve Steps to End the Gender Pay Gap by 2025” and sees these recommendations as integral to the campaign on making work fair.

- Treat Closing the Gap as a Human Rights Priority

- Raise Awareness through annual Equal Pay Days & Education
- Develop the “Close the Gender Pay Gap by 2025 Plan”
- Enforce & Expand Pay Equity Laws
- Implement Employment Equity Law & Policies
- Promote Access to Collective Bargaining
- Increase the Minimum Wage
- Provide Affordable & Accessible Child Care
- Mainstream Equity Compliance into Government Laws & Policies



- Mainstream Equity Compliance into Workplaces & Businesses
- End Violence & Harassment of Women
- Secure Decent Work for Women Across the Economic Spectrum

April 28th is the National Day of Mourning for workers killed or injured through work. The labour movement been observing that day since 1984, and during that time the number of deaths due to industrial disease has surpassed those from direct workplace trauma. Asbestos is a leading cause of death.

Canadian unions are calling on the federal government to implement a comprehensive ban on all use and imports of asbestos, and for a registry of both contaminated buildings and people with diseases caused by asbestos. Here are five reasons why:

1. **Asbestos is killing Canadians:** It's estimated that more than 2,000 people die every year from diseases caused by asbestos exposure, like mesothelioma and lung cancer. Death from mesothelioma increased 60 percent between 2000 and 2012. Internationally, the WHO reports an average of 100,000 asbestos-related deaths per year.
2. **Asbestos-related diseases are on the rise:** In 1992 there were 276 recorded cases of mesothelioma. Twenty

years later the number of new cases of mesothelioma has more than doubled, with 560 recorded in 2012.

3. **Asbestos imports into Canada are increasing:** Imports of asbestos-related items rose to almost \$6 million in 2015 from \$4.9 million, the year before.
4. **In addition to their health, Canadians' jobs are being put at risk:** Canada is importing replacement brake pads and linings containing asbestos, despite the fact that Canada manufactures non-asbestos replacement alternatives.
5. **Many countries have already banned asbestos.** Those countries include: Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, Singapore, New Zealand, Japan, Australia and South Africa, among many others.

Uber takes us back to the days of bandit taxis

Once upon a time, bandit taxis roamed Toronto streets in unsafe, unregulated vehicles. The modern taxi bandit is back. Officially. With city imprimatur. Disguised as a respectable, benign, mayor-backed, citizen-loved, warm and fuzzy transportation service.



Increasingly, Uber drivers have been offering competing taxi service — unencumbered by the very regulations that ended the old bandits; cheaper, too; and very attractive to the app-addled populace hinged to cashless smartphone transactions.

The new rules are an effective sellout of the taxi industry — not that the majority of the populace care when the public's reflex motivation is cheaper fares. Taxi drivers must still pay \$290 to get a licence and pay a \$290 annual licensing fee. Taxi drivers would continue to be screened by the city and monitored for criminal background and driver record. Uber would be allowed to monitor its own drivers and disclose their record only if audited.

Taxis must go through two city-run mechanical inspections a year. Uber cars are to meet safety standards, but the Uber safety certificate can come from any licensed mechanic. We know how that works. Taxi drivers must go through mandatory training so when they hit the streets they are good ambassadors and know the city. (If they fall short now, blame the taxi school.) Such training sounds like a good thing. But, oops, we don't want to impose that on Uber drivers, so let's scrap it altogether. How is that good for citizens?

There is more. Surge pricing is among Uber's most odious practices, because it gouges citizens with higher fares at precisely the time they are most vulnerable. Taxis are not allowed to impose higher fares when demand is higher. So, does the city propose the same rules on Uber?

That would suggest a leveling of the playing field, so no. Uber can continue to charge what it wants when it wants. Taxis? They can charge less than the going meter rate for trips booked online or on the phone. They can't impose surge

pricing. And they must charge the meter rate when hailed on the street.

The reforms leave us with cars that are less safe, drivers with poorer training, the gutting of the plan to make all cars accessible, an extra 1,000 cabs that will further damage the value of cabbies' investment and destroy the viability of the business model, a flood of new Uber cars for hire that will only lead to a plethora of part-time drivers and not enough money in the industry to sustain it.

In other words, they just killed the cab industry. A new entity will evolve, no doubt. Wanna bet that the millionaires who now run the industry will be replaced by a billionaire or two? And the money will fly away, offshore.

Then we will see if fares remain low.

Excerpted from article by
Royson James
Toronto Star Apr 07 2016

Changemakers never mind their own business



Soon after being elected shop steward in her union local in 2010, Jody Kerr found that she felt unprepared for the full gamut of responsibilities that came along with it. “I represent 700 members at ATU from very diverse backgrounds, so I knew that my toolbox was a little on the light side.”

In the years that followed, Jody completed all three levels of the Labour Community Advocate Training Programme. She credits it for helping her provide informed support for the members that approach her for help.

“If you want to make a difference in the lives of others, take this course”

“I’m not professionally trained in these fields,” Jody explains, “and I don’t pretend to be. But I don’t need to have all the answers, as long as I can direct them to someone who does.”

Jody emphasizes that her most memorable class continues to be the session on 211 Toronto. “I’ve lived in this city for almost 40 years, but no one ever told me about this great resource. It’s not known to the public.” After learning about the wide variety of

assistance and counselling that 211 provides, Jody has pointed dozens of friends and coworkers to its services — for reasons as varied as marriage counselling, teen pregnancy, financial trouble, and a whole host of others.

Most importantly, Jody believes that the programme has helped her to improve her people skills. She recalls how she’d react when people seemed under the weather five years ago: “I’d better mind my own business.” Nowadays, she realizes the value of reaching out her community members and asking about their problems. “Maybe having someone ask about their day is exactly what they wanted. If they’re just having a bad day, they can turn me away, but at least now I’ve given them an opportunity to share.”

“Sometimes, all they need is to know that someone’s listening. After all,” she laughs, “not everybody’s so outspoken. There are times when I have to pull it out of them.”

Although she finished the third and final level of the programme a few years ago, Jody is still connected to what she lovingly calls her “Labour Advocate family.”

“I’ve found a whole new network,” she exclaims. “The other graduates frequently call me to come out to rallies or support their projects.” And of course she’s always happy to oblige.

Next month, Jody will be starting a new course with Toastmasters: “I want to work on my public speaking skills. The LCAT programme, according to Jody, was just the first step in her continuous path of self-improvement.

A spring session of Levels I and II are currently underway, coordinated by staff member Najib Soufian. They will be repeated for a new group of participants later this year, as will one session of Level III.

For Labour Community Advocate Program info call Najib 416 445 5819x26 or email nsoufian@labourcommunityservices.ca

ABORIGINAL & WORKERS of COLOUR CONFERENCE

MAY 14th, 2016

Registration 8:30am Conference 9 am to 4:30pm
Toronto Don Valley Hotel, 175 Wynford Dr, Toronto
\$60 (includes lunch & parking)

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KEYNOTE by Terrence (Terry) L. Melvin

President of CBTU (Coalition of Black Trade Unionists)
Secretary-Treasurer of New York State AFL-CIO

KEYNOTE by Chief Leslee White-Eye

Chippewas of the Thames First Nation



WORKSHOPS & PANELS

Make It Fair: Fixing Labour Law &
Employment Standards Act

Indigenous People -
Reality & Struggles

The Young Workers Café
Fighting Racism & Islamophobia
Effective Campaigning &
Engaging Workers

Go to www.labourcouncil.ca to download the registration form or email kkulendiren@labourcouncil.ca



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