

SPRING | 2022

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COUNCIL



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VOTE FORD OUT ON JUNE 2ND



Message from the President

Dear Sisters, Brothers, and Comrades,

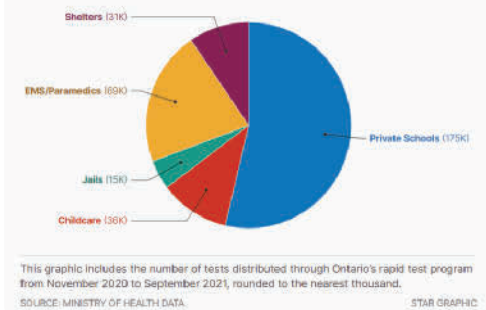
Pandemic records that the Ford government chose not to prioritize the most vulnerable while actively benefiting those with resources, power, and connections. This has been true across the board during their four years in power.

Where is Ontario headed, as we move towards a post-pandemic world where we are fighting for climate justice, good jobs, and quality public services for ourselves, our children, and our communities?

What kind of province do we want to live in? This Labour Council stands for economic, social, racial and climate justice. Working people and our communities want good jobs, a job-rich transition to a carbon-neutral economy, fair taxes, and quality public services for all. What are we being offered?

Investigation showed that just 1/5 of rapid tests distributed by the province's screening program went to hot spots. The Conservative vision can be seen in this image showing that Ontario private schools got more free rapid COVID tests than paramedics, daycares, shelters, and jails combined. That shows their priorities: free federal rapid tests are given to Conservative friends in Ontario.

Private schools got more tests than paramedics, daycares, shelters and jails combined



The Liberal vision is less clear. Del Duca promises some good things, but his party often “campaigns from the left and governs from the right.” The Wynne government pointed to key markers such as Bill 148 and a higher minimum wage, community benefits, and action to tackle climate change and racial discrimination. But it disastrously sold off Hydro One and embraced public-private partnerships in transit and other sectors, resulting in private profit at public expense. Although some individual candidates are progressives (including some trade unionists), the Liberal track record leaves a lot to be desired.

The NDP's vision includes a province that works for people, regardless of their economic situation: universal mental health care; homes people can afford; climate, jobs, and justice; and care for aging Ontarians, whether at home or in long-term care. Our 11 Toronto NDP MPPs have worked hard to build support for this vision as well as anti-racism and Islamophobia provisions, and solid pandemic planning. They haven't had the chance to prove what they could do as the government for more than 25 years, but as the Official Opposition, they have been fierce in defending workers' rights. Many of their candidates are active trade unionists.

Each of our affiliates has its own plans and approach for this provincial election, and we won't know the outcome until the end of election day or later if there's a minority government situation. But we should be able to agree that we must talk with co-workers, family, friends, and neighbours. As the provincial election is coming on June 2, let's commit. Ontarians deserve better than this. We can fight for a better future that benefits all of us. When we vote and fight, we win.

Solidarity,

Andria Bobbitt

President

Moving Ahead Together – Community Solidarity TO A Response to the Rise of the Alt-Right in Canada

It has been two years since Canada declared a pandemic on March 11th, 2020. Twenty-four months of social distancing requirements, restrictions on travel and entertainment. And, twenty-four months of frontline worker exhaustion, fear, illness and loss. COVID-19 fatigue is real, and it is impacting our ability to feel compassion for one another's suffering as we focus on dilemmas closer to home. Many people are weary of not being able to gather with family and friends, and are tired of vaccine mandates and the requirement for face coverings at indoor spaces. Some who have lost jobs over vaccine mandates are outraged by the intrusiveness of 'big' government. Others have felt left out by government because of the deregulation of the trucking industry and the mis-classification of truckers as self-employed gig workers. While the media spotlight has touted the so-called "Freedom Convoy" as one led by truckers, the bigger issue in the trucking industry is the abuse and wage theft from shady labour practices.

Some who are pandemic-weary or left behind by an unjust economy have been co-opted by the far right. A minority of unvaccinated workers are feeling frustrated about their termination by employers, and anxious about rising inflation, housing shortages and growing economic inequality, have become vulnerable to the mis-information and hate speech of the alt-right. This far-right group, which includes white supremacists, has manipulated some workers' anxieties to create a deeply troubling situation in this country.

For three weeks, communities in Ottawa were subjected to huge trucks in their streets spewing out toxic diesel fumes and the blaring of air horns. Ottawa residents were subjected to bullying, intimidation, harassment, racism, anti-Semitism, misogyny and homophobia. The fact that it took three weeks for the authorities in Ottawa to handle and clear out the Convoy occupation is revealing of the double standard in how Indigenous or BIPOC communities are policed. Residents in Ottawa had to stand in the streets in order to block parts of the downtown core from further occupation of the Convoy; in Toronto, residents protested against harassment of healthcare workers and the takeover of streets. Organized labour supported these actions. Premier Ford only intervened at the Ambassador Bridge when the blockade made an impact on business – not ordinary citizens, as in Ottawa.

On February 20th, 2022, Community Solidarity Toronto brought together hundreds of people at Toronto City Hall to denounce these actions and rally in support of healthcare workers, and on the values of social, economic, racial and climate justice. The Labour Council played a key role in convening this group. The creation of Community Solidarity TO was inspired by Community Solidarity Ottawa, that took to the streets February 13, stopping trucks from reinforcing the Ottawa trucker occupation.

At a time when rallying cries of the left – "Our Streets!" and "Our bodies, our choices!" – are being appropriated by a far-right movement to propel the "Freedom" Convoy and to spew out politics of division



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and hate, Community Solidarity Toronto, a coalition of progressive labour, anti-racist, and social organizations, affirm our deep belief in equity, human rights and social solidarity with all communities and all those who work on the front lines and behind the front lines. This Labour Council respectfully challenges those who are stirring up hate, division and dissent in our society, especially stands opposed to those who are subjecting healthcare workers to abuse, and acknowledges that there is another way to fight for a just economy and a just society that includes all people from all walks of life.

Recognizing that the effects of this pandemic have been tough, and that there is a growing social and economic inequality in our country that needs to be addressed, the solution to ending this crisis is not through more hate or division, but through a lens of community love. Seeing others – even those who hold a different political ideology and ideas on resolving this pandemic – as human, as worthy of love and compassion, is how we will resolve this crisis: together, stronger.

We are all tired of this pandemic. We all want a secure and just future.

The way forward is not to exclude certain groups of workers while raising the floor for others. What we want, we want for all. We understand the anger and frustration of truckers and other workers who have been mis-classified as independent contractors, and about the rampant abuse and wage theft in the trucking industry. We stand with you in improving the rights and benefits of ALL gig workers.

We must reach well beyond those who already agree with our politics and our vision of the world. We need to engage those who don't think like us, to do deep organizing and to stop the spread of Conservative populism.

We will especially challenge those here, and south of our border, who weaponize their wealth to support a dangerous political movement that will likely focus its hate on immigrants, Indigenous peoples, workers, and equity-deserving communities for years to come.



The Labour Council resolves to:

- a) Urge all delegates and their unions support events and activities reflecting the vision of Community Solidarity Toronto.
- b) Continue to demand of Ford's Conservatives what working people and communities really need, including ten paid sick days, fully funded public services, repeal of Bill 124, and other initiatives we have pressed for already.
- c) Call on the federal government to expand eligibility for Employment Insurance, including those who have lost jobs due to the vaccine mandate.
- d) Call on employers to protect workers' health and safety through a full range of protection, including full access to hygiene (including washrooms), ventilation, masking as appropriate, and other mechanisms.
- e) Call on the media and journalists to label the ringleaders (e.g. Pat King) of the so-called Freedom Convoy as white supremacists – it is what they are, and those adjectives need to be added to their name each time they are reported on.
- f) Provide courageous leadership to our union members. Engage our membership and dedicate resources to education and organizing / mobilizing.
- g) Organize our members. Invest in deep organizing. Bridge the divides between our members and find a way to re-build our unions from these internal divisions set by the pandemic.
- h) Work with our community allies in all regions of the GTA to build solidarity not just from within labour, but also throughout this country and region.



We Can't Afford to Shut Up About White Supremacy



On the first weekend of the Ottawa Convoy occupation, many Canadians were shocked to see swastikas, Confederate flags, and other racial hate symbols flying freely in public spaces — unchallenged by either police or fellow protesters. But for those of us who have been doing the work and advocating for real change, there was no surprise in either this public display, or what came next.

The arrival of the convoy disrupted the city of Ottawa and overshadowed the significance of the first National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia and the January 27th International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

It took more than three weeks for authorities to end the aggressive occupation from our nation's capital. In that time, investigative reporting revealed that the organizers of the so-called "freedom convoy" had clear and direct ties to the far-right; furthermore, the list of donors to the movement entered into public record showed a pool of support that was both wide and deep.

In this country, we do an excellent job of making sweeping performative gestures that condemn racism; yet, in the actual practice of anti-racism, we have barely scratched the surface.

March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, was initiated as a response to apartheid in South Africa. In commemorating this day, we must remember that policies of racial oppression have been pioneered here in Canada. It is a grave mistake to believe that Canada has overcome its racist history when this country continues to function on systems structured to value white lives above all others.

The fact is that acts of white supremacy are commonplace. It isn't limited to people waving flags and shouting. It's in our workplaces, in our schools, in our neighbourhoods. Any action should hold not only the extremists responsible, but meaningfully improve systems.

When politicians and other leaders show up for memorial events but won't show up to condemn and dismantle racism in action, that's white supremacy getting a free pass.

From individuals who fail to condemn racists in their midst—and in so doing, excuse them—to the racist systems we collectively fail to overturn, there is evidence in abundance that we are not truly committed to racial justice.

White supremacy is a very real threat to our society and well-being. While performative politicians sleep on real change, the alt-right is organized, well-funded, and successfully growing its ranks. If we do not collectively choose to address white supremacy, head-on and soon, we risk everything.

We are three racialized people who are leaders in our communities. We are doing the work in labour and in society, but our efforts are limited without the support of the government. We need strong political leadership to implement solutions that match the magnitude of the issue.

When our leaders don't take the threat of white supremacy seriously, the lives of racialized people are negatively impacted in real ways. Moreover, it is an uphill battle to affect change: systemic racism impacts who gets heard and who doesn't; who can access decision-makers; whose struggles are recognized, and whose are invisible. Leadership indifference not only reinforces the status quo environment in which white supremacy is able to grow, it is also blind to the ways in which it continues to shape systems in its favour.

If there's no progress, the people have the power to exact change. 2022 is a year in which voters can demand: do better, and do it now.

Will candidates take anti-racism seriously? Incumbents must be held to account by both their voting records and their platforms.

Will the media take anti-racism seriously, by naming white supremacy and racism and by asking better questions from political leaders?

Will voters recognize that we, too, are accountable for building the society we want?

The late Bishop Desmond Tutu, a South African theologian and human rights activist, said, "I wish I could shut up, but I can't, and I won't." His words are a reminder that we have a moral imperative to vocally denounce racism and work to dismantle it.

For many of us who face racial discrimination directly or indirectly, there is no choice. It is a matter of survival. Like Desmond Tutu, we must not shut up.

By: Andria Babbington, Faduma Mohamed, and Neethan Shan

Neethan Shan is executive director of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations, Faduma Mohamed is executive director of Labour Community Services, and Andria Babbington is president of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council.

The Real Cost of Doug Ford – Can we Afford Four More Years?

Workers are understandably preoccupied with individual challenges, hopes, and goals. Yet, the June 2nd provincial election is a big opportunity to make a collective change for good.

With that date coming quickly, it's time to think about what will happen if Ford gets re-elected. Many can point to evidence demonstrating that Ford's government has failed working people over the last four years and expect his re-election would make things worse.

But some will figure they should give Ford a break. We hear, "Ford got us through COVID." Or they remember that the minimum wage will go up this October and believe he cares about workers. Or they point to Ford's license sticker rebates and a drop in the gas tax as steps to help resolve their pocketbook challenges. Yet when we put the whole package together it is clear Ford's choices have benefitted those with resources, power, and connections.

To see why the Conservatives deserve to be decisively voted out of office on June 2nd, take a look at what Labour Council Delegates have said about this government during its four years in power. Each statement accurately predicted the results of Ford's decisions – the real costs.

July 2018 – Our statement, *Moving to a state of Readiness*, reminds us that the Conservatives immediately cut the scheduled minimum wage increase of \$15 an hour, even though their campaign slogan had been "For the People". (They also withdrew from climate action commitments, instituted hiring freezes, eliminated key equity ministries, etc., etc.).

- The statement said, "We should expect [Conservatives'] actions to enrich the wealthy at the expense of most of the people, while undermining social justice."
- The result? In just one example, companies like Loblaw's made record profits while retracting the temporary premium pay for at-risk frontline workers during the pandemic. **Check ✓**

August 2018 – Our statement, *The Abuse of Power Begins*, covered Bill 5, an attack on democracy which hijacked Toronto's elections and slashed Toronto City Council from 47 seats to 25 mid-election. Ford even threatened to use the notwithstanding clause to get his way when the courts ruled his action unconstitutional.

- The statement said, "This move is driven not by a pursuit of savings. It is about restoring backroom deals by wealthy powerbrokers - reducing accountability so they can profit from the resources of our cities."
- The result? A significantly less diverse, representative, and progressive Toronto City Council. Since then, City Council has been timid and tepid, normalizing austerity budgets, allowing homelessness to shift to permanent crisis, while wealthy investors make a killing off real estate. **Check ✓**

January 2022 – Our statement, *The Ford Government Just Doesn't Work for Workers*, pointed out that the government was pretending to be a friend to workers while actually reducing workers' rights or offering too little, too late.

- The statement said, "Ford wants to look like he's helping workers and COVID-struck employers, in a desperate bid for re-election in June. But he's actually helping workers as little as possible while rewarding [H1] bosses who injure their workers or deny their status as employees."
- The result? Bill 27 passed, giving billions in WSIB premiums back to employers instead of paying injured workers who can't work. Gig workers' second class status was enshrined in legislation. The minimum wage increased to \$15 an hour three years late, leaving workers out of pocket by \$3,000, putting it instead into corporate profits. Bill 124 stayed in place. **Check ✓**

April 2022 – Our statement, *Mr. Ford Gets it Wrong Again: Workers Vote for Good Jobs and Public Services, Not Free License Stickers*, called out the Ford government's backpedaling on hiring targets for Black and other racialized workers previously negotiated through Community Benefits Agreements.

- The statement said "After four years of a Ford government, no one is surprised at the backpedaling on transit policy while sacrificing the very real day-to-day needs of marginalized communities for equitable access to transit and to the jobs that build public transit in the first place."
- The result? Instead of ensuring sufficient funding for public transit and good jobs for equity-seeking communities, the Conservatives are reducing provincial coffers by over one billion dollars, shamelessly trying to buy votes for the June 2nd election by refunding license plate sticker payments. **Check ✓**

Statement after statement lays out what Ford's government was doing during its time in office: its attacks on workers, health and long-term care, public education, the environment, communities, low-income and vulnerable members of our society, LGBTQ, racialized and Indigenous people.

Statements also clearly identified who would benefit – the wealthy, the 1%, Doug Ford's buddies – while workers and communities pay the price.

We see how badly this government treats key public services like education, health care and long-term care. Especially during the pandemic, Doug Ford abandoned his responsibilities and neglected the people who give and receive the services. Instead of the promised "iron ring" around long-term care in the first COVID wave, there was a horrific "ring of death", particularly at for-profit homes, while Ford criticized LTC inspectors while letting profits mount. Now he promises more for-profit LTC institutions will be built and supported by our tax dollars.

His government legislated larger class sizes and mandatory virtual course credits before COVID (he was forced to step back by labour and community organizing), and then refused to take steps to keep schools safe during the pandemic. Along with adequate ventilation, one key step would have been smaller class sizes to allow social distancing in classrooms. But Ford and Lecce absolutely refused. It's not just a question of cost or availability of teachers for this temporary measure; it's that if parents saw

the positive effects of smaller classes on student success, they would demand permanently smaller classes. This would have wrecked Conservative plans to favor private schools, undermine public education, and commodify education services. Instead students, education workers, and families had to get sick, stressed, or just stay home, reducing student success and burning out workers.

We saw the effect of COVID waves on hospitals. Here in Ontario, reaching maximum ICU capacity became the measure of how well the government was doing at balancing rules and "re-opening". Many remember Ford's Solicitor General Sylvia Jones saying, "We wanted to make sure that the modeling was actually showing up in our hospitals." Ontarians' disgust with this negligence was amplified by the effects of Bill 124, which – like a slap in the face – sent nurses reeling from hospital jobs en masse.

We see how badly this government acts in a crisis, whether COVID or convoys. This winter, having ramped up the demand for an end to "lockdowns", Ford did nothing in the face of weeks of convoy protests until business complained about regaining bridge access to US markets. But he still left Ottawa to its own defenses, since it was only residents complaining. The lingering outcome is that the convoy's far-right leadership was allowed to fester in Ottawa, planting stronger seeds of hatred and planning ways to delegitimize governments. This at a time when we have seen the importance of having governments that can lead during a crisis, as we saw when COVID hit.

And now, Ford's government has pulled a billion or more dollars from Ontario revenues to pay drivers back for license stickers. Something is going to be cut from the budget eventually in order to balance off that billion. What will it be?

Ford's government will do much worse.

What becomes clearer every day is that solidarity among working people and our community allies is absolutely necessary. We have been a resistance movement for four years, but now we want to become an activist movement. We'll work with the next generation of leaders to step firmly forward, and the current generation of leaders to share the lessons of past struggles. We'll work with allies, rooted in diverse communities and workplaces, to build that future!

First, we need to vote this government out! Then we can turn our attention to building the Ontario we want to live in, rather than putting our energy into fighting against what we don't want.

City Vote 2022: A Blueprint for Building Pro-Worker Power

2022 is a municipal election year. This October, voters will go to the polls once again to elect members of council, mayors, and school board trustees.

Municipal elections often fly under the radar. With many local races, various offices, and no overarching political party messaging, it takes some effort to learn about who is running and what they stand for. And yet, local government is the most closely linked to our daily lives. We have a lot to gain, and a lot to lose, in municipal and school board elections.

From public health to recreation programs, road works to public transit, libraries to affordable housing —decisions at our municipal governments impact how we live, work, and play. During and between elections, Labour Council advocates for policies and budgets that support strong public services, high quality and unionized employment, keeping public infrastructure in public hands, socially just governance, and a just transition to a low-carbon future.

Every four years, we run a municipal program that seeks to:

- **Establish and solidify pro-labour political power** in city councils and school boards in both Toronto and York Region;
- **Assert the progressive values of working people** in ways that shape the conversation at a high level and at the ballot box;
- **Develop leadership and power-building capacity** in our labour movement by connecting workers to training and mentorship

Labour Council works to support the election of progressive candidates for city councils and school boards across Toronto and York Region in a number of ways. Later this year, we will publish a **report card** on the voting records of sitting Toronto city councillors. We'll also release official **endorsements** of council and trustee candidates. And, we'll be building organizing power through our unions at our upcoming **political action conference**.

The municipal action plan is a major collaborative effort, conducted through two Election Planning Committees for Toronto and for York Region. The EPCs, composed of affiliated locals with the greatest stake in municipal election outcomes, direct the work and make strategic decisions around endorsements and resource allocation. Both EPCs are underway.

Toronto City Council races traditionally have the highest profile because of the scale of the city. Since the Ford government reduced council to just 25 seats in 2018, each ward represents between 95,000 and 142,000 residents – that's a bigger population than many Ontario cities!

What to watch for in Toronto:

So far, there are two open races, both in the downtown core and previously held by labour-friendly councillors: Spadina-Fort York (Ward 10), formerly represented by Joe Cressy; and Toronto Centre, formerly represented by Kristyn Wong-Tam. Mayor John Tory has declared his intent to run for a third term, and no progressive mayoral candidate has come forward. Therefore we anticipate most of the focus will be on individual council races where seats may be flipped or held, and in particular on the two seats mentioned above.

Interested in getting involved?

Please join us! No matter your experience or skill level, we want to make campaign activities accessible to you. Municipal campaigns are run on people power – especially at the municipal level, which have lower spending caps. They need you! Here's three ways you can participate:

1. Attend the Political Action Conference on June 12!

This is a full-day, in-person conference where we'll talk about what progressive governance can be, hear from people who have been doing the work, and gain practical campaign skills that can be used in elections and in union-building, too. Please visit www.labourcouncil.ca/election_conference.

2. Talk to friends, family, and coworkers about what's at stake.

Use the report card and the endorsements (forthcoming) to support your conversations about what makes a candidate worker-friendly.

3. Get involved in a progressive campaign.

Hook up with a local campaign either as an individual, through your union, or you can even organize a labour canvass! Not sure where to go? Reach out to Labour Council's municipal campaigns organizer, Skylar Maharaj at smaharaj@labourcouncil.ca.

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Working Green 2050

Workshop for Workers

This workshop, consisting of 4 sessions, trains workers to be effective climate warriors, working in their unions and communities to fight climate change. Contact us at the information below to register now!

ABOUT WORKING GREEN 2050

Climate change is the major threat to the planet. Unions and their members must have the tools and knowledge to respond to climate change and help reduce the threat in our workplaces and communities.

One Workshop, Four Sessions

01



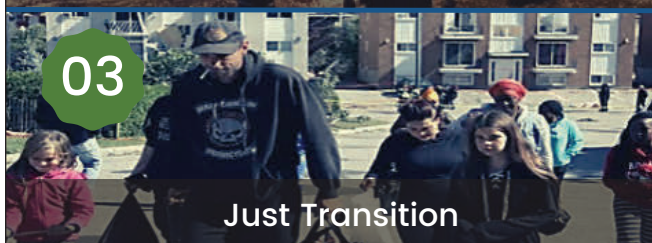
The Affect & Effect of Climate Change

02



Mitigation and/or Adaptation

03



Just Transition

04



Climate Justice is Union Business

The basic workshop is 3.5 hours long. Content can be customized to your region or sector or to fit into time blocks at your union's convention. Shorter and longer workshops are also available.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US

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TOGETHER WE DID | TOGETHER WE CAN | TOGETHER WE WILL

Celebrating 150 Years of Toronto & York Region Labour Council

For the last year, we at the Toronto & York Region Labour Council have had the privilege of celebrating our 150th anniversary. For a century-and-a-half, working people have organized collectively in this place with a vision of economic and social justice. Through text, audio, videos, graphics, and events big and small, we've endeavoured to tell their stories – the stories of their victories and setbacks, of their perseverance and vindication. The learnings from this journey are more than just history. They provide a guide for those working for a more just society today and tomorrow.

We are in the “Dish With One Spoon Territory,” a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee. It is here, on the land of Indigenous communities, that our history begins, forged over time by immigrants and refugees from around the world who have come to build Canada's largest urban centre.

In 1871, a small group of workers banded together, called by the creation of a collective voice for working people in Toronto. On April 12 of that year, representatives of the emerging economy – bakers, barrel-makers, cigar-makers, and metalworkers, among others – founded the Toronto Trades Assembly. Workers were rising across the world, from the nine-hour day to the Paris Commune, and soon workers from other industries joined their ranks. Their size, scope, and influence would continue to increase.

Over the last 150 years, labour has been deeply involved in the struggles for community safety, racial equality, for stronger public services and for an education system that gives every student what they need to succeed. Today, the Toronto & York Region Labour Council represents 220,000 working people embedded in every sector of the economy.

This journey has been a remarkable one. At every step, the labour movement has been guided by unique individuals compelled to build the power of working people. That's why the centrepiece of the Labour Council's 150th anniversary celebration is our Profiles of Courage, a showcase of people and their stories who have fought over the last century-and-a-half to build the power of the people to win justice for a better world.

Over the last year, the Profiles of Courage have highlighted dozens of individuals and their important contributions to the labour movement in Canada. Along with figures from the movement's early days, the Profiles of Courage also feature modern day changemakers, fighting not only for the broader cause but for justice for their own communities as well. These stories can be found in full on our celebratory website, Labour150.ca.

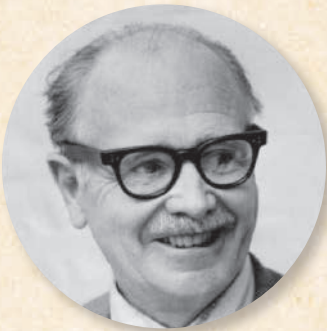
The goal of our 150th anniversary was always to push beyond the page and bring labour's achievements out into the world. Over the past year, our stories of celebration have appeared on the web and in print, they've sprung up across communities in advertisements and on the sides of public transportation, and appeared in newspapers, magazines, podcasts, games, and contests. And soon, the Labour Council will mark the occasion with our annual gala later this season.

As we've come together to mark this critical movement of our movement, the last year has been an incredible time of celebration. However, we know our work is far from complete. The last few years in particular have been challenging as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to upend the lives of working people in Toronto, York Region, and elsewhere. Throughout this change though, we have seen hope, with workers standing up and seizing this movement to bring real and significant change for the better. The Labour Council's history is one of determination and perseverance. Let this celebration be the inspiration for the next generation of the labour movement's victories.

Labour's Profiles of Courage

Trace the long arc of history and you'll see how the journey of working people has moved ever-closer towards justice. When we zoom in on Canada's largest urban centre, we see their stories of victory play out across seven generations. The rights and freedoms they have secured in hard-fought campaigns waged since 1871 have not only made individual lives better, but allowed for all those who have come after to build their futures with greater freedom and security. Their stories inspire not just change, but hope – hope for better jobs, better conditions, and a better world. Each one drives new generations of activists who will continue to lead these efforts in the decades to come.

In the Winter 2022 issue of Labour Action, we celebrated Black History Month with a spotlight on the historical contributions of six Black unionists whose contributions were not just integral to the Labour Council, but historic in their own right. This month, we continue to shine a light on six more Profiles of Courage, people who have made a difference for workers in Toronto and York Region over the last 150 years.



David B. Archer (1912-1989)

Ontario Labour Relations Board, Ontario Federation of Labour

Born in Scotland, David Archer came to Canada at age seven. He had trouble getting a job during the 1930s and worked for a while as an unpaid organizer for the CCF. During World War II, David began working in a textile plant, but was fired for trying to organize a union. He then became an organizer for the Canadian Congress of Labour and was later assigned to the Textile Workers' Organizing Committee. He worked for the United Packinghouse Workers and the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union before being appointed to the Ontario Labour Relations Board in 1948. He was secretary of the Toronto Labour Council (CCL) from 1947 to 1953, serving as its president from 1953 to 1956. He later became secretary of the Ontario Federation of Labour and ultimately, its president from 1958 until 1976.



Eileen Tallman Sufrin (1913-1999)

United Steelworkers

Born in Montreal, raised in Toronto, Eileen Tallman Sufrin began work as a teacher before transitioning to office work. She became active in the youth wing of the CCF, and, when the party established a union committee in 1937, she became secretary. By 1941, Sufrin had become a full-time organizer for the Office and Professional Workers Organizing Committee. She organized seven locals of bank workers in Toronto and led a strike of such workers in Montreal that year. By 1943, she had become an organizer for the United Steelworkers, helping to organize the huge John Inglis plant. After spending a few years in Vancouver, Sufrin returned to Toronto in 1947 to spearhead the four-year organizing drive at Toronto's T. Eaton store into the Department Store Employees Union. The campaign was ultimately unsuccessful. In 1952, Sufrin returned to the Steelworkers where she organized white-collar workers. She later worked for the Saskatchewan and federal governments.



David Lin

Canadian Union of Public Employees, Chinese Workers Network

After studying and working in the United States, David Lin immigrated to Canada with his wife and two children, settling in Toronto. David first began working in a restaurant before earning a news translator position at Ming Pao Daily, a Chinese-language newspaper that was relatively new at the time. In 1998, he started working at the Toronto District School Board as part of its International Languages program. It was here he took notice of the collective agreement won by CUPE 4400, which would set his interest in unions as a way to fight for fairness and justice. Over his career, David has continued to extol the virtues of unionization for working people, particularly in the Chinese-Canadian community. Now semi-retired, he also is a member of the Chinese Workers Network, part of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council.



June Veacock

Director of Human Rights and Race Relations, Ontario Federation of Labour

An anti-racism activist and Human Rights advocate, June Veacock was the first Black woman to work for a central labour organization when she became Director of Human Rights for the Ontario Federation of Labour in 1986. She championed the case of a group of Black and visible minority nurses which brought the first successful case of systemic discrimination on the grounds of race to the Ontario Human Rights Commission in 1994. Among her many other accomplishments, June was a founding member of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists – Ontario Chapter.



Patricia Chong

AMAPCEO, Asian Canadian Labour Alliance, Chinese Workers Network

When she was 20 years old, Patricia Chong was working part-time as a cashier at the University of Toronto bookstore. While some employees were members of CUPE 3261, other departments did not have a union. In 1999, she became part of the negotiation team and in 2000, helped to obtain a collective agreement after a 13-week strike. Patricia would go on to make a short film about the experience on its 16th anniversary, called STRIKE 16. The film was screened as part of the Canadian Labour International Film Festival in 2016.

Over the years, Patricia has worked as a trade union organizer for public and private sector trade unions in Ontario, the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, and Nunavut. A strong advocate for unionization continues to encourage workers to get involved in the labour movement, and in particular organizations geared towards encouraging, mentoring, and providing outreach towards racialized union activists.



Fred Dowling (1902-1982)

United Packinghouse Workers

Born in Toronto, Fred Dowling worked briefly for the CNR before heading to Chicago, where he got a job in a meatpacking plant. Upon his return to his home city, he grew heavily involved in the CCF Youth, becoming labour editor on the party's newspaper. After helping to organize auto and rubber workers, he was hired by the young CIO in Canada in 1939. Two years later, Fred was assigned to the Packinghouse Organizing Committee. In 1943, he was elected to the first executive of the United Packinghouse Workers and became Canadian director. Fred would hold those positions for thirty years.

Over his time, Fred also got heavily involved in international labour organizations. His long-term commitment to social democracy led him to be active in the founding of the New Democratic Party in 1961, becoming the party's first labour vice-president. After the merger of his union with the meat cutters and butcher workmen in 1968, Fred remained director of the Canadian section, known as the Canadian Food and Allied Workers.



The May Day mobilizations across Ontario were amazing.
WE MADE IT!



**APRIL
28**
Day of Mourning



We remember those who died, or were injured or made ill, from their work

We commit to protecting workers and preventing further workplace tragedies



Indigenous & Workers of Colour Conference 2022

The Racialized Majority

Know our worth
Normalize our power and
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INVITED

JUNE 8, 2022

6:30 - 8:30 PM

VIRTUAL EVENT

Labour Community Services and the Equity Committee of Toronto & York Region Labour Council are happy to invite you to the 17th annual Bromley Lloyd Armstrong Awards Gala on June 8, 2022. Join us for an inspiring night, recognizing the hard work and dedication of activists and unions fighting for human rights and social justice. Together, we will hear from our guest speakers, enjoy special performances, give away raffle prizes and present this year's Bromley Lloyd Armstrong Awards to an individual and union.

The Bromley Lloyd Armstrong Award was established in 2005 to commemorate the courage, dedication, and outstanding service of Bromley Lloyd Armstrong to the Labour and Human Rights Movements in Canada, and will be presented to an individual and union for excellence in labour equity, human rights, and inclusion. Nominations will be accepted until May 16, 2022.

Visit our website for more details on getting your tickets, becoming an event sponsor, and submitting your award nominations. We look forward to seeing you all for the celebration!

FOR ANY QUESTIONS, CONTACT:
INFO@LABOURCOMMUNITYSERVICES.CA

TICKETS: WWW.LABOURCOMMUNITYSERVICES.CA/2022BROMLEYGALA

Community College Faculty Strike Averted by Tenacious Bargaining

OPSEU college faculty win an agreement after months of hard bargaining

OPSEU/SEFPO's 16,000 faculty members (professors, instructors, counsellors and librarians) have returned to full duties after bargaining a new agreement with community colleges in the GTA and across Ontario. College faculty and the College Employer Council (CEC) reached an agreement to enter binding interest arbitration and the strike that was scheduled to commence in mid-March, was called off.

The College Employer Council (CEC) broke off negotiations last November and imposed working conditions on faculty in December, following up with a forced offer vote instead of returning to the bargaining table. By law, an employer may ask the government to conduct a one-time vote on their last offer.

After a 62% vote rejected the forced offer, College Faculty Bargaining Team Chair (now OPSEU President) JP Hornick said, "Faculty sent a clear message that this offer failed to address faculty concerns around time for students, fairness for all faculty, and education quality. We stand with hundreds of thousands of college students when we say 'enough already.'"

Part of the pressure to return to negotiations came via an open letter to college presidents in which the faculty bargaining team urged them to agree to send all outstanding issues at the table to binding interest arbitration, which would allow a neutral third party to impose a compromise solution.

LifeLabs Workers Win First Collective Agreement

Striking couriers and mailroom workers at profitable LifeLabs force employer to bend

OPSEU Local 5119 represents 160 members who work as couriers and mailroom workers in three GTA LifeLabs locations. They recently organized a union at LifeLabs and went on a two-week strike to seek a living wage, after their hard work and sacrifices during the pandemic went unrecognized by their employer. LifeLabs is one of the most profitable companies in Canada.

Many of the members of Local 5119 have to work two or three jobs to make ends meet in the costly Greater Toronto Area and Local President Mahmood Alawneh says this contract is good news. "We aren't asking for much," said Alawneh. "The GTA is an expensive place to live and work and all we want is enough money to make a decent living, at least we've made some good progress."

OPSEU points out that the average courier and mailroom worker in Toronto is paid around \$35,000 a year while living in the most expensive city in Canada and said that those workers should see a larger share of the company's profits.



U.S. Amazon Workers Vote to Unionize in Historic Labour Win

The successful organizing effort and motivation extend beyond the borders of the United States

On April 1, warehouse workers at Amazon's largest Staten Island New York facility voted to unionize and created the Amazon Labor Union (ALU). This historic outcome marked this worker-led effort as the first successful U.S. organizing attempt in the retail giant's history, giving more than 8,000 workers power to negotiate with the company. The victory was a difficult battle for the workers and organizers who lacked official backing from an established union.

It's important to understand and amplify the magnitude of this victory. Amazon warehouse in Alberta, Canada also sees the comeback of union drive after the landmark labour victory in U.S. Teamsters Canada, a trade union of more than a million members in the United States and Canada, has brought back a union drive for workers in an Amazon fulfillment center in south Edmonton. Working conditions at the company's warehouses in Canada have also been under scrutiny, particularly during the pandemic. The labour movement's goal is to keep empowering workers through union representation, lift worker pay, improve working conditions and reduce inequality.

Labour Education Centre to train residents for redevelopment of the Golden Mile

The Labour Education Centre (a project of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council) will be starting a new trades training program at the end of May.

The Golden Mile Trades Training (GMTT) program will train equity-seeking residents (women, youth at risk, people of colour, Indigenous Peoples, newcomers and LGBTQ12s+) from 5 postal codes around the Golden Mile to train for well-paid construction trade jobs.

The Golden Mile area (Eglinton Avenue East from Victoria Park Ave to Birchmount Road) is currently the subject of 13 development applications to the City of Toronto to build 32,803 new housing units. This is the largest proposed re-development in the GTA and will require the demolition of all current buildings along this stretch of the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit line.

Negotiations are ongoing as to how many will be affordable housing units and for the relocation of the Victoria Park Hub community space.

The Greater Golden Mile is home to diverse communities, with significant immigrant and racialized populations. Income and employment rates in the neighbourhood are below average compared to the rest of the city – a key indication that opportunities to date have not reached residents.

In 2018, United Way Greater Toronto CEO Daniele Zanotti and BMO Financial Group CEO Darryl White launched the Inclusive Local Economic Opportunity Initiative (ILEO) to ensure residents of neighbourhoods undergoing revitalization could benefit from the development rather than being displaced.

To support targeted recruitment for these jobs, The Centre for Inclusive Economic Opportunity (CIEO) Golden Mile was incorporated in 2020 as a non-profit corporation. CIEO is composed of 10 community organizations, which include the Labour Education Centre and the Toronto Community Benefits Network.

In 2021, CIEO entered a partnership with Canada's third-largest construction company, Aecon Group to form Aecon-Golden Mile (A-GM) a construction joint venture with the community represented by CIEO having 51% ownership and Aecon Group 49%. AGM is a construction and maintenance company that will provide construction services to the Aecon Group and other construction firms.

AGM will employ Golden Mile residents in the construction trades as well as in office-related jobs, trained and mentored by Aecon employees.

The Golden Mile Trades Training program is a 6-week program. Successful graduates will be offered a paid 8-week program (\$24/hr) to train on Aecon's Hydra-Vac trucks. The primary trade, Construction Craft Worker is to train workers on 2-person Hydro-vac trucks and will become members of LiUNA 183, and if they have the correct drivers' license, they could become the driver on the truck, and become members of Local 793 Operating Engineers.

A-GM is working with other ILEO member companies to provide hydra-vac crew and other trades apprentices.

Hydra Vac trucks are used as a non-intrusive way to excavate around high-risk utilities (natural gas, hydro, steam, etc) as opposed to excavating with a machine such as a backhoe or an excavator.

The 2-year program is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Labour and Skills Development.

72 grads over 2 years Recruitment will begin in April, the first cohort is to start training on May 30.

To register for Golden Mile Trades Training please contact Marci Sarvi at msarvi@laboureducation.org or phone 647-836-7420.





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YES, IT MATTERS!

SELF-CARE TOOLKIT AGAINST RACISM



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FREE RESOURCES

The **Self-Care Toolkit Against Racism** was designed to help people of colour find ways to cope with and address racism and discrimination in the workplace. Learn more about addressing systemic racism and the *Yes, It Matters!* campaign by visiting the Labour Community Services' website: www.labourcommunityservices.ca/yesitmatters.

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LABOUR COMMUNITY ADVOCATE TRAINING PROGRAM – LEVEL 1

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BECOME A LABOUR COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

SEPTEMBER 14 - NOVEMBER 23, 2022

The 10-week program is designed to train union members to become referral agents in their workplaces. Participants receive training on social issues faced by working people and are provided resources available within their community. Register for the Level 1 session by visiting:

www.labourcommunityservices.ca/lcat. For any questions, email: n.soufian@labourcommunityservices.ca



Asian Heritage Month: Member Spotlight—Winnie Ng



Winnie Ng is a union organizer, anti-racism activist and feminist. She came to Canada in 1968, and her experiences of sexism and racism while a student, a worker, a mother and a daughter have shaped her journey into becoming the person she is today. In order to put herself through university, Winnie worked part-time in the summers. Her first summer job as a chambermaid at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal, where she cleaned 17 rooms per day at \$1.25 an hour. Her experiences of receiving sexual propositions and sexual and racial harassment, and her silence around it as a young woman worker, prompted her to speak out and mobilize later in life.

In Winnie's words: "I didn't do anything and just walked away. After four months, I was able to return to the comfort of learning. It's my sense of guilt about having had the option to leave and leaving all the other immigrant women workers and women of colour behind, and the rage over my silence, that has prompted me to keep speaking out and mobilizing."

Winnie later became an organizer for the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union. She witnessed her mother being told by her boss that she was too old and slow (at the age of 60) and that she was wasting a sewing machine. Another experience which shaped her involved her daughter, who was born in Toronto, being told to go back where she came from. These experiences of sexual harassment and racism, and worker injustice has propelled her to organize workers to fight for dignity in their workplace, fight to elect progressives in the political arena, and against racism and sexism in all sectors of society.

Winnie Ng later became the Ontario Director of the Canadian Labour Congress where her leadership impacted many immigrant workers and racialized peoples in Ontario workplaces. She has also inspired a new generation of Asian Canadian activists in the labour movement – such as Nrinder Nann, Anna Liu, Chris Ramsaroop and Patricia Chong.

In 2000, after months of negotiations for the first contract at Sing Tao Daily newspaper, the workers went out on strike since the company was not moving. Winnie brought activists from different unions to join the picket line every day to cheer up morale. Despite many other workers there to support the picket line, Winnie was arrested by the police for blocking high-level vehicles onto Sing Tao property. In spite of her arrest, she wrote a handwritten letter to the picketers to encourage them to continue their courage and solidarity. This letter was published on a leaflet that promoted the strike action and openly discussed racial discrimination within the police. The workers at Sing Tao are grateful to Winnie for her show of solidarity and support. This paved the way for the successful organizing of the World Journal and Ming Pao

Daily newspapers a decade later. The courage of the Ming Pao inside organizers who conducted the union drive as an open committee was truly inspirational. The courage and solidarity of these workers resulted from the organizing efforts that came before them.

For over three decades, Winnie Ng has championed the rights of workers through her involvement with various labour organizations and networks. Prior to her appointment in 2011 as the Canadian Auto Workers-Sam Gindin Chair in Social Justice and Democracy (UNIFOR National Chair in Social Justice and Democracy) at Toronto Metropolitan University, Ng was the acting executive director of the Labour Education Centre. She was the labour co-chair of Good Jobs for All Coalition, an executive member of the Asian Canadian Labour Alliance and a board member of Labour Community Services. Winnie received numerous distinctions, including the Urban Alliance on Race Relations' Leadership Award, the United Farm Workers' Cesar Chavez Black Eagle Award and the YWCA Women of Distinction Award.

Even in retirement, Winnie continues to organize and mobilize others to act whether in their workplace or politics. She wants everyone to reclaim, re-imagine and remake solidarity that can truly be forever and for all.



POLITICAL ACTION CONFERENCE

June 12, 2022

Build worker power through skills-based training and community connection for the 2022 municipal election.

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