

## **CUPE BC 2022 CONVENTION RACIALIZED WORKERS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Namaste, Bula, Hola, Ola, Sasri Akhal, Ni Hāo, Ahn nyong ha se yo, Kamusta, Bonjour, Hello. Greetings from your Racialized Workers Committee. We are proud to report to you at the 2022 CUPE BC Convention.

We acknowledge that our work is done on the traditional and unceded territories of the Kwantlen, Katzie, Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen, Stolo and other Coast Salish peoples. We are grateful to live and work on these lands and to be in solidarity with diverse Indigenous leaders and friends. In our work, we as a committee have paid attention to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and have been guided by the following Calls: #7-12, #33-36, #43, #55-57, #62-66, and #92-94.<sup>1</sup>

The newly selected committee are a group of proven leaders in their own locals and are ready and willing to help raise awareness, contribute to positive change, assist in education, and encourage the growth of diversity within all of CUPE BC.

This term we are made up of leaders from all over British Columbia and many levels of their own locals: President, 2nd Vice President, Shop Stewards, Communication Officers, Recording Secretary and members of multiple CUPE BC and local committees. We are of diverse cultures and immigration status, with one member identifying as both Indigenous and Racialized. We are lucky to have many diverse perspectives on our committee because it leads to lively discussions, a lot of ideas, and rich cultural topics.

Many of the members of this new committee are new to CUPE BC committees and we are very excited about that, as well as the inclusiveness of this term's selection process. It is an

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls\\_to\\_action\\_english2.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf)

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ongoing learning process for us to configure how we can best work for the Executive and Locals, and our participation on the committee outside of meetings is at an all-time high! We talk and meet very regularly as a group, as well as with our Staff Advisor outside of committee meetings. We have a long list of action items and are pleased to be able to share some of our work so far with you.

A short-term goal we have is for all committee members to be able to access training and education in the field of Anti-Racism and to bring this training back to Locals and have members participate. We have members attending Spring School as well as the Jane McAlevey Organizing for Power program. This committee is highly driven to bring education into Locals. We are seeing that in the path of correcting appropriate actions and communication, we must first understand what is inappropriate and incorrect in order for us to make those changes.

Inclusion is important to the committee. We are striving to have racialized workers represented on all Local Executives and their Committees. As CUPE BC has participated in different forms of equity audits, we are noticing that the idea of inclusion is becoming more normalized, especially in urban areas, but at smaller Locals and certain locations, inclusion still needs to be encouraged. We have encouraged members of the committee to participate at District Councils and general meetings, to give reports and recommendations on what they would like to see in bringing inclusiveness and what it would look like. We have committee members in growing sectors who would like to see that our sectors represent our communities with diversity and inclusion, using fair and equal opportunities for everyone.

### **Reconciliation**

The Racialized Workers Committee are putting our efforts forward on the path of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. We recognize our privilege as settlers and stand in solidarity with Indigenous people as people who have experienced racial marginalization. We also honour our members' intersectional identities, some of which include people who have Indigenous identity or who are non-Indigenous members of Indigenous families.

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Actions which the Committee are advocating for at this time are strongly related to Education Calls to Action. We have started off our term focusing on sharing of stories and experiences. We are learning how important the decolonization of our union and our communities is, and how limited colonial processes are in their ability to create connections, allow Indigenous and Racialized people alike to share knowledge, and how unsupportive colonial systems are to the hard process of real listening, which is so important to reconciliation. We as a Committee are working on listening, asking for permission and guidance, being inclusive throughout all our processes, and taking into account everything and everyone that would be affected by changes or suggestions for changes.

At the start of our term the Racialized Workers Committee led CUPE BC's participation as a community partner in the Ministry of Multiculturalism's Anti-Racism Data Engagement initiative. We were especially excited to work on this project because it is headed by MLA Rachna Singh, our former CUPE sister, who is now the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives. This project was one piece of the British Columbia government's larger work on creating an Anti-Racism Act. Currently only Ontario has an Anti-Racism Act, so we were very excited to be part of the work that will lead to this in B.C. This was a very long process done in a very short amount of time – over three weeks, we engaged with over 200 Indigenous and Racialized CUPE members and their families to talk about what kind of information the government needs from us to represent Racialized and Indigenous workers better. We were so thankful to those members who shared their knowledge and stories, and we grew a lot as a committee from participating in this project. The initiative is ongoing, and the community consultation was only the first step. We are excited to be able to work with the Ministry of Multiculturalism further on the Anti-Racism Act to share the voices of racialized workers.

### **Poster series**

The previous Committee had started an informative, popular, and important Black History Month poster series that the current Racialized Workers Committee has continued to create and distribute. The annual Black History poster series is a proud project which the Committee has continued, in hopes that this will help highlight important parts of our valuable history and educate, encourage and enlighten those that read through and or interact with the QR

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codes. We are hoping to see Locals hang them in offices and or work sites and send CUPE BC images of them for feedback. We were proud, this Black History Month, to showcase the proud history of Black trailblazers in the medical profession! This year we also added a QR code where additional information can be found on the professionals featured on the poster.

We recognize the importance of celebrations in building a vibrant and diverse community. Now that pandemic restrictions are being lifted, the Racialized Workers Committee is excited about the potential of pursuing in-person community building. However, while pandemic restrictions on public gatherings were in place, our usual Vaisakhi celebrations were put on pause. In lieu of the celebration, we donated to food banks in the cities in which our members live. The list of food banks to which we donated is:

- Prince George Native Friendship Centre
- Vancouver Food Bank
- Surrey Food Bank
- Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness, Victoria, BC

### Recommendations

Finally, the Racialized Workers Committee have the following recommendations for members:

- Locals to schedule Anti-Racism courses and have them available to members to attend.
- To encourage members to participate in free education on Indigenous cultural safety (<https://sanyas.ca/home>).
- To encourage members to participate in free education D.A.R.E (Digital Anti-Racism Education: <https://dare.teachable.com/p/dare-to-be-aware>).
- To encourage non-Indigenous members to read the 94 Calls to Action and consider those that apply to us as workers and to our work as unionists.
- The following courses being offered by CUPE National should be recommended to Locals as training that is important in implementing an equity lens: Challenging Racism, Duty of Fair Representation, Introduction to Allyship.

Thank you all on behalf of the Racialized Workers Committee.

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Respectfully Submitted:

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