

The Future Role of Organized Labour (Script) Riley Belloc

In Canada, 4 million workers are supported by unions which fight for fair wages, safe workplaces, and decent working hours. In 2020, unions faced an unexpected challenge as COVID-19 made its way across the globe, impacting over 207,000 jobs as of last April, and the health and safety of all workers across Canada.

Now more than ever, it is up to unions to reshape the world, shifting the role of organized labour, in order to ensure justice amongst the workplace as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In our return back to a new idea of normal, unions such as the CEIU must take on the role of protecting their workers by ensuring that they have the proper supplies and conditions to maintain a safe workplace.

Through the transition back to an in person workplace, unions like the CEIU should fight to negotiate provisions governing remote work into their collective agreement. It is important to transition workers at their own pace, and keep online working options available, as many workers may not feel safe with the sudden transition from home to office. Beyond this transition, unions should push for the availability of further post pandemic health resources to deal with the stress of returning back to work.

As workers reunite with their peers, unions should actively address systemic racism and discrimination in the workplace. Due to the pandemic, discrimination has arose towards those with asian backgrounds, and workers need to be reminded that this is not tolerated.

As this pandemic has caused a lot of financial distress, it is up to unions like the CEIU, to further secure jobs and protect workers from unjust conditions. As of April 2021, Canada's economy has lost over 207,000 jobs. The CEIU must fight to secure jobs, and continue to ensure that workers are not being overworked, and are receiving fair wages, as well as all employee benefits, such as paid leave.

By prioritizing health, negotiating remote work, addressing racism, securing jobs, and protecting workers from unjust conditions, unions can better the lives of workers, and bring us one step closer to our future version of normal.