

# RISE UP FOR A JUST RECOVERY

JUNE 3, 2021



In the last year, we have often heard how “the COVID pandemic has laid bare the economic and racial inequalities of our society”. We know that to be true – as the conditions of work in long-term care, warehouses, factories, supermarkets and many other places have come to light in a way that was seldom discussed in the mainstream. A blatant example is the strike of Rexplas employees in Etobicoke – immigrant women of colour working for decades, being paid barely above minimum wage by a company which has just rewarded its executives with a massive bonus.

The past few years have been hard on workers, and we have become unsure about the economic future. People don’t know what a post COVID-19 recovery is going to look like, in their workplaces, for their families, and within their communities. The pandemic created a health and safety crisis that decimated working people, as most bosses put worker safety on the backburner in pursuit of profits. Now, we’re hearing about lay-offs and budget cuts for workers who put their lives on the line, even as the stock market soars to new heights.

To ensure workers come out on top after this past year, we need to fight smart, hard and together. The question is whether or not there is real solidarity within the labour movement – will we come together and fight - not just to survive, but to thrive after the pandemic. To make the kind of gains we need, the labour movement has to show workers and their communities that we are ready to fight for them.

We’ll need to get workers engaged in the political process and turn out to the coming elections so that we can hold the politicians who enabled this crisis accountable. We also need – more than ever -- *to have workers engage with the labour movement to organize more workplaces.*

The Labour Council will continue to agitate against repressive and dangerous laws like it has done before in the struggles against racism and unjust policing. We will demand quality education and healthcare for all. This will show workers and communities we are ready to fight for them even outside of the workplace. We will also continue to get good jobs for marginalized communities as we are doing with apprenticeship and trades careers for Black, Indigenous and youth of colour. The best program for marginalized communities is one that delivers good, union jobs, with fair pay.

To make changes that will positively impact all communities, we need to grow our political power and political consciousness across all workers. To mobilize for better working and living conditions, we need to reach workers who are beaten down, and show them that organizing their workplace and voting can change their lives. To positively effect change, we need the trifecta: union power, political power, and community power.

Over our 150 year history those who came before us showed that they could organize, sometime against impossible odds, and win. Let’s draw on those lessons as we rise up to demand a just recovery for all. This Labour Day we may not be marching on the streets, but we should honour the spirit of that day by getting into fighting shape for the crucial struggles ahead.

**It’s time to rise up!**