

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers Nova Local appreciate being given the opportunity to take part in the U.N. Special Rapporteur. This is a great opportunity to talk about the issues that affect this area.

CUPW is affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress. There are approximately 48,000 members in this union, and over 1000 members in the Nova Local (Halifax/Dartmouth area).

The CUPW has been active in the struggle of racism. The CUPW has been educating its members about inequalities in employment, and the history of this struggle. CUPW has sent members to anti-racism forums in Nova Scotia, Toronto, Montreal, South Africa, Barbados, United States, and other locations to continue this struggle. The CUPW has called upon the employer to "implement an affirmative action program enabling racially visible persons, Aboriginal peoples, the differently-abled, and women access to full employment."

The CUPW takes part in the Canadian Labour Congress and has many members participating actively in their Anti-Racism and Human Rights Departments.

Many people of colour have faced difficulty in gaining employment. This has happened for generations. People of African descent began to arrive in Nova Scotia in the 1600's. A large influx of people arrived in 1783 - 1784 they were called the Black Loyalists ( included both free Black people and slaves). The Jamaican Maroons arrived between 1796 - 1800. Black Refugees arrived between 1813 and 1816. In 1900 people of West Indian Descent arrived in Nova Scotia.

"Chinese and South East Asians arrived in Canada in the late 1800's when Chinese workers came to build the national railway network" (CLC statement to UN Rapporteur).

Systemic racism has existed in Canada for many years and has had harmful effects on people of colour with regards to education, housing, employment, health, etc. "The CLC conducted a study in 2002 which reviewed recent evidence on the quality of jobs, income, and on

poverty for racialized workers. The results of the study are in "Is Work Working for Workers of Colour?" a report by Andrew Jackson, CLC Senior Economist.

The conclusion of the report is that racial discrimination plays a major role in creating and sustaining large differences in the quality of jobs and in economic security. Mr. Jackson also concludes that European immigrants used to catch up quickly in respect to economic security but racialized people who came to Canada in the 1980's have still not caught up." (CLC Report 2002)

Many workers that I talked to about their employment said there was an under representation of workers of colour at Canada Post Corporation in the Halifax- Dartmouth area compared to the general population. A large percentage of workers (20-25 years employees) were transfers from Toronto, not hired in this area. There were only two workers with 30 years seniority. There were a small number of 8 -12 year employees, a large percentage of this time was spent as temporary/casual help. A small number of workers of colour have been hired recently within the past several years, but this number does not reflect the population. Some unsuccessful applicants have said they have never heard back when they filled out applications. Some people said they did not know the hiring process, what to expect, and hadn't seen advertisement for job openings (regular and Christmas help).

Some solutions suggested for hiring more people of colour include:

- Negotiated policies with employers - employment equity
- Involving people of colour in the process, asking them for suggestions when hiring takes

place

- Training staff (personnel) so they are informed about workers of colour and actively

seek these workers

- Employers could encourage applications through community organizations, recreation centres, spiritual centres, mosques, community newspapers, etc.

- Employers could ask for workers of colour to speak at these community centres to explain the work place environment to future applicants

- Employers could hold a workshop to create interest and encourage applications

Unions are a very important part of the struggle of people of colour. They have contributed in making society a better place. Having said that we recognize that much more needs to be done in the future both within society and the labour movement. I thank you for your time and wish you well in your deliberations. I hope that this meets with your approval.

