

## **22.04.01: CUPW National Human Rights Committee**

From Friday April 1st, 2022 to Sunday April 3rd, 2022 I had the pleasure of chairing the National Human Rights committee for our union. The only in person meeting we had was in December of 2019 before the world pandemic hit us all in March of 2020. There was a decision made to continue on the important work and the only way would could safely meet was by a virtual platform through Zoom. As this was my first time chairing such a meeting with over fifty members of the committee along with translators/sign interpreters and technical help in the background. I have a real appreciation for those that have had to chair meetings both in person and over a virtual platform such as Zoom.

As with any meeting we began with Ron Rousseau and a land acknowledgment. Next our Harassment Policy was read by Doug Warren and Ennika Beaujour.

Jan Simpson and others spoke about the equity audit which will be rolled out soon and how things are progressing with this initiative. The framework of this is to recognize the make-up of the variety of equity groups which are involved at the Local, Regional and National levels of our union.

Moving along in the agenda we then watched a Ted Talk video featuring Loretta J. Ross titled: Don't call people out Call them in. Equity Calling In / Out video and discussion: Now we are going to watch a short video that features Loretta J. Ross. Loretta is an African American academic, feminist, and activist. She has written about love with accountability and about speaking up without tearing down. This video is a TED TALK entitled "Don't call people out, call them in". It lasts a little over 14 minutes. Let's listen to the clip, and we'll talk about it after. The video has French subtitles. [video link](#)

After this video there was some very good discussion on how certain situations can be handled better when these types of things take place.

The following video was also watched: Here is the trailer of: [The Wisdom of Trauma](#) This brought us into a better understanding of how early traumatic events have caused harm in our society and the everlasting effects.

### **Convoys and the Alt-Right:**

We listened to two presentations on this event, then we'll have a discussion and you'll be able to ask our speakers some questions. We have two speakers in to discuss this: The first is Farnaz Farhang.

Farnaz resides in Ottawa on unceded Algonquin Anishinabe Territory). She is an MA student at the University of Ottawa and is currently finishing up her thesis on Right-wing Extremist groups and White Nationalism in Canada. She also works as a Research Coordinator on a community-based project looking at the experiences of racialized youth, Cannabis use and mental health. Alongside her research projects, Farnaz is involved in grassroots community organizing that primarily focuses on highlighting the harms of surveillance and policing, while advocating for alternative means of community safety through mutual-aid and non-carceral community-based care.

Our second speaker is Sam Hersh. Sam lives in Hintonburg and is an activist and political organizer. Originally from Montreal, he has lived in Ottawa since September of 2016 when he moved to the city to pursue his Master's degree at Carleton University. Since then, he has been involved in several electoral and issue-based campaigns, having worked to elect two City Councilors to City Hall. Outside of electoral politics, Sam has also been involved in different movements that support social, environmental and economic justice that fight for systemic change at different levels of government. He's involved in Horizon Ottawa because he thinks that the only way to change Council is to bridge the gap between electoral and movement-based politics.

**Day 2:**

Regional Reports of what local human rights committees have been up to were presented.

After this the Equity Groups went off into their respective groups to work on recommendations to the National Executive Board. see attached Recommendations.

**Day 3:**

Today we had a big day ahead of us. First, we had a guest that will speak to us about a model of anti-oppression and liberation. Leticia Nieto made a presentation.

Leticia is a psychologist and family therapist. She has been an active poet, dramatist, and performer since 1978. She has been a psychotherapist and trainer in anti-oppression and expressive techniques including psychodrama, playback theatre, and theatre of the oppressed since 1980. She is the author of Beyond Inclusion, Beyond Empowerment: A Developmental Strategy to Liberate Everyone. For her work in the Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology Program at Saint Martin's University, Nieto was named Outstanding Faculty of the Year in 2005. She is also a member of the faculty of the European School of Classical Psychodrama in Mexico and loves to sing.

The last part of the day was spent on moving the recommendations from the committee. See attached recommendations. The meeting ended and for the next a person from each equity group presented the resolutions/recommendations. At the December 2022 meeting we will see what had been accepted.

**Final Thoughts:**

I thoroughly enjoyed chairing the meeting and understanding the complexities of what must take place in regards to the things that need to be organized behind the scenes for this to work well.

Often the heartfelt struggles of what individuals or groups have had to endure of the years can bring emotional turmoil to those that have suffered injustices over the years. Our home and indigenous lands and peoples is no stranger to the atrocities that their ancestors have suffered over the years. Some of the survivors of Residential Schools today continue to suffer from the emotional and physical scars that can never be erased. Link to Residential Schools: [video](#). Time line of Residential Schools: [timeline video](#). The emotion and passion as members of the Indigenous Equity members spoke about these historic times had us holding back tears listening to how some had family members who were forced into the Residential Schools.

In Solidarity,

Rashpal Sehmy