

January 2010

TO ALL CUPE CHARTERED ORGANIZATIONS

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

MARCH 21 – INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

On March 21, 1960, armed white South African police fired more than seven hundred shots at peaceful black demonstrators, who were protesting the Country's **pass laws** (*discriminatory laws that imposed restrictions on blacks to freely move around in the country, controlled by passports, forbidden to organize unions and all black mine workers were forced to live in the countryside*) in Sharpsville Township. Tragically, sixty-nine blacks were killed and 180 wounded, almost all of them shot in the back.

March 21 is a reminder of the struggles and challenges that Aboriginal Peoples and racialized workers have endured. It is also a time to recognize and applaud the fact that members of these two communities have made anti-racism struggles a significant part of labour's agenda. Their active participation has indeed strengthened our movement by bringing new ideas, perspective and energy into the struggles of working people.

Things you can do to fight Racism:

- Challenge our own racist assumptions and beliefs.
- Learn more about racially visible people and their communities.
- Stand with racially visible communities and speak out against hatred and racism.
- Challenge government's racist and discriminatory policies and laws.
- Organize a panel discussion on racism.
- Set up an information booth or a lunch-time video that promotes better cross-cultural understanding.
- Act against racist acts – Jokes/Slurs/Graffiti/Name Calling/ etc.
- Organize a speaker on human rights at your next union meeting.
- Identify barriers to equality at work and find ways to remove them.
- Include equality issues on your bargaining agendas.

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- Organize education on anti-racism in your local.
- Include in your union newsletter, ethnic culture success stories. Send such stories to your local newspaper.
- Contact public institutions and officials to encourage their support for human rights and anti-racism, when an issue arises.
- Make a plan for ending racism in our workplaces, our institutions and our communities.
- Join or support organizations that are working to build inclusive communities.
- GET INVOLVED AND HAVE COURAGE! Stand up against racism and hate!

In recognizing the ongoing work needed to address racism, CUPE has been providing members and staff with tools to raise awareness and stop racism in our workplaces and communities. For information and assistance on these materials, please contact the Equality Branch at the National Office in Ottawa.

March 21 is the ideal time to renew our commitment to the goal of ending racism. By joining hand in hand with our Aboriginal Peoples and racialized workers, working together, we can make a difference in eliminating racial discrimination.

In solidarity,



PAUL MOIST
National President



CLAUDE GÉNÉREUX
National Secretary-Treasurer