

January 29, 2016

CUPW Celebrates Black History Month

February is Black History Month, a time to reflect on the stories, experiences and accomplishments of the black community in Canada and Québec. Every year, during Black History Month, CUPW invites all our members to learn about and celebrate the heritage, traditions and culture of African-Canadians.

Africville: Building a Community of Resistance to Racism

Our poster this year features Africville, a small rural community in Halifax, Nova Scotia, originally settled by black people fleeing slavery and persecution in the United States. But, sadly not surprisingly, the residents of Africville had to endure racism in Canada as well.

This racism often came from the city authorities that were supposed to be responsible for providing such basic services as roads, health services, water and sewage, streetlights and electricity. Protests and pleas by residents went unheeded. The city of Halifax made Africville the location for its slaughterhouse, fecal waste dump, prison, garbage dump and infectious disease hospital.

In spite of being beset with health and poverty issues as a result of this mistreatment, Africville became a vital and thriving community with musicians, artists and even a champion hockey team (the Africville Seasides).

Instead of fixing the problems, the city opted to condemn the whole community and relocate its people, many moved by city dump trucks and their homes razed to the ground. Years later, the

City of Halifax finally apologized for this appalling violation of basic human rights and dignity.

Africville's Legacy of Resistance Continues

Africville has become an important symbol of Black Canadian identity and of the challenges of systemic racism. Neglect, stereotyping and the refusal to provide adequate services and opportunities to racialized communities are types of structural racism that continue to plague us today. There is a direct line between the vitality of the growing Black Lives Matter movement and the residents of Africville speaking out against their neglect.

Black Lives Matter: What Can You Do?

Read and share our poster. Participate in Black History Month events.

The struggle against racism and for inclusion is our collective responsibility.

In Solidarity,



Jan Simpson
1st Vice-President

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