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WE CAN FOLLOW THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION RECOMMENDATIONS, EVEN IF THIS GOVERNMENT WON'T.

The ugly truth is now clear. Canada was founded on the destruction of Indigenous societies and cultural genocide. European colonists and Canadian governments tried to assimilate Indigenous people through the forced elimination of their culture, language and traditional governance, including severe child abuse (rape, torture, experimenting, starvation, and female sterilization). In short, this country was founded on cultural genocide and the unresolved theft of land that continues into the present. These children were essentially abducted, stolen from their families in the name of “progress”. Our lifestyle is based upon the illegal theft of First Nations, Inuit and Metis resources.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has made a series of 94 recommendations on the legacy of the Canadian residential school system and the horrific child abuse that occurred there.

The Commission made 94 recommendations to redress this disgraceful period in Canadian history. Will we listen to these recommendations or continue on the same path? At the closing ceremony, Stephen Harper remained silent and the Aboriginal Affairs Minister stayed seated as others stood to applaud the recommendations. The corporate-controlled mainstream media immediately discredited some of the recommendations.

The historical crimes of the residential schools are not over. The pain and isolation they created remain with us. It's clear not much has changed when hundreds of Indigenous women are abducted and murdered without significant investigation.

At the very least, the government of Canada must apply the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Modern Canada is based on an apartheid system based on theft of land, resources, and cultural genocide. Settlers have never treated Indigenous people with respect or reciprocal generosity. It is time to change that.

Our Union can play a part in the truth and reconciliation process by adopting these recommendations within our negotiated contract agreements. In the recommendations, education plays a major part in ensuring Indigenous stories are told.

Thanks to First Nations, Inuit and Metis members of our National Human Rights Committee, and the Prairie region, CUPW has started the process of understanding and reconciliation. Turtle Island, a course offered by CUPW and written by and about the people affected, reveals a long buried rich and diverse history that all of us need to become aware of.

This is one step in a long journey to honour those that passed and those that have not been born yet. It is time. We don't have to wait for governments to start; reconciliation can and should start with all of us.

For the findings and reports of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, visit trc.ca.

In Solidarity,



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