

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF CUPW 730 / FEBRUARY 2021

INSIDE OUT

**WELCOME
TO
CUPW**

**WEBINAR
SERIES**

**BULLYING,
DEPRESSION,
AND
FIGHTING BACK**

**YOU ARE
NOT ALONE
IN THIS
STRUGGLE**

**BUILDING POWER TO WIN
ROADMAP TO NEGOTIATIONS 2022**

CUPW VS. THE EPOCH TIMES

RESPONSIBILITY IN THE AGE OF CONSPIRACY AND DISINFORMATION



EMPOWER ORGANIZE RESIST

INSIDEOUT is the monthly publication of the Edmonton Local of CUPW.

This newsletter aspires to educate and inform members and affiliates about our union's activities, opportunities, and challenges, as well as to raise awareness regarding all things labour.

Opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily the official views of the Local.

The Communications Committee (responsible for this publication) is always interested in submissions of original articles, photographs, or illustrations. Prospective material must always concern CUPW or the labour movement, but submissions of general interest to the membership will also be considered.

We will also publish Letters to the Editor should you feel an issue requires further discussion. All submissions are subject to editing for brevity, clarity, etc.

To make a submission, or to get involved, contact the Communications Committee at communications730@gmail.com.

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FEBRUARY 2021 // CONTENTS

- [4 // BRING ON THE NEW YEAR!](#) - CUPW730 Executive
- [5 // BUILDING POWER TO WIN: ROADMAP TO NEGOTIATIONS 2022](#) - Devon Rundvall + Roland Schmidt
- [7 // GRIEVANCES: THE MORE YOU KNOW](#) - Elizabeth Tjosheim
- [8 // CUPW VS. THE EPOCH TIMES: RESPONSIBILITY IN THE AGE OF CONSPIRACY AND DISINFORMATION](#)
- Satchel O'Letterson
- [14 // BULLYING, DEPRESSION, AND FIGHTING BACK](#)
- Anonymous
- [16 // TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES: A HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE](#)
- Rashpal Sehmbly
- [17 // WELCOME TO CUPW WEBINAR SERIES](#)
- [19 // STICK YOUR UNION ON YOUR FRIDGE](#)

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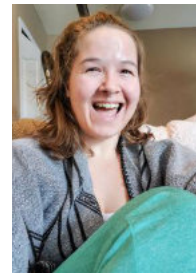
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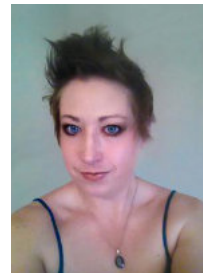
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GOOD RIDDANCE 2020 BRING ON THE NEW YEAR

Comrades & Friends,

Over the past ten months we have faced down a generational crisis together. When our bosses and governments lost direction at the beginning of this pandemic, our members were the ones that took the wheel and charted the course. No matter how big the storm, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers steadied the ship to keep safely providing a lifeline to the public when they needed it most. The mail must go through.

There have been setbacks, incredible stress, and some truly scary moments. As our co-workers got sick, and our facilities shut down for decontamination, volunteers were always there to grind out the perpetual overtime to try to get us caught up. As volumes overwhelmed other processing hubs and shipping companies, our members were the ones to shoulder that load. The mail must go through.

Those that have never done the job cannot understand just how daunting our task has grown during this nightmare. We want to acknowledge and celebrate the incredible labour provided by all of our members and express our deepest appreciation. Thank you for all the long, back-breaking, hours. Thank you for your impossible resilience. Thank you for your ability to always adapt with courage. Without your brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn. Because of you, the mail will get through!

With Warm Solidarity,

The CUPW 730 Local Executive



BUILDING POWER TO WIN

ROADMAP TO NEGOTIATIONS 2022

NATIONAL IS FORMING A STRATEGY TO PREPARE FOR ACTION, BUILD OUR WORKFLOOR POWER, AND NOT LET THE ARBITRATION DISASTERS HAPPEN AGAIN. BUT WE WILL NEED YOUR HELP TO GET THERE

By Devon Rundvall, First Vice President - Organizing and Roland Schmidt, President

It is with great excitement that, for the first time in at least 20 years, a National strategy is being implemented to meaningfully engage, prepare, and organize our membership leading up to negotiations! Over the past two years, our local leadership has been very openly critical of the ongoing lack of a tangible, nationwide organizing plan,

and has pushed, whenever possible, for National leadership to adopt any aspects of the grassroots strategy that has revitalized our local. Regardless how a plan like this was finally adopted by National, we are whole-heartedly in support of it. As refined as our procedural work (i.e. grievances, consults, arbitration work, etc) is, individual, technical skills can never begin to match the power of collective mobilization, but this mobilization must be deliberately organized.

Our Union Needs Us All

Most of us understand that any union is only as strong as their membership are involved. Without workfloor pressure, our organization becomes a toothless, paper-shuffling, husk that CPC doesn't consider a threat. Our biggest challenge is always how to convince a critical mass of our members that their involvement is

worth their time and leads to improving their working lives. Before the pandemic, our local took excellent steps in winning back the trust of our membership through countless workfloor meetings and education opportunities directly encouraging involvement and building workfloor empowerment. This work will be our foundation in the 'Building Power To Win' campaign developed by our National organizing representative, Aaron Spires.

This campaign is designed specifically to give locals that have no previous experience with organizing workfloors the tools and training to take those first steps in mapping support on workfloors, and how to have those successful conversations that lead to winning over new volunteers. Meeting most locals where they are at is

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BUILDING POWER TO WIN

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necessary if our goal is to develop capacity beyond the locals with the organizing infrastructure already developed. Building Power has a one-year timeline with four distinct phases taking us from initial engagement, to testing our levels of support, to community networking, to flexing our power on workfloors closer to, and during, negotiations. This bulletin will focus on the first phase and what we need from our local to support this nationwide initiative to build the organizing capacity and solidarity necessary to create enough leverage to actually enforce our demands. Future bulletins will clearly detail our campaign progress as we move through it.

Phase One: Building Capacity & Drafting Demands

The campaign calls for every local to recruit one activist for every 100 members, proportionally drawn from each major facility. These volunteers will receive training on how to coordinate and win workforce support for campaign participation which builds our strength leading up to negotiations. Because of all the previous work our local has done with our mass steward and organizer training, Edmonton easily eclipses this total number needed but we do have gaps in some facilities. We will

specifically be targeting these areas currently lacking an activist presence so that our entire local can be a part of this important initiative.

At this stage of Phase One, call-outs

Without workforce pressure, our organization becomes a toothless, paper-shuffling, husk that CPC doesn't consider a threat. Our biggest challenge is always how to convince a critical mass of our members that their involvement is worth their time and leads to improving their working lives.

will be made to our entire activist base, and anyone interested in getting more involved: if you are frustrated by the previous lack of leadership from National, or how we were dragged through our last arbitration, this is the single greatest opportunity to get involved and actually contribute to making a powerful difference!

Our local Organizing Committee is holding an open (video conference)

meeting for Wednesday, January 27, 7pm inviting all those willing to help support or lead on this campaign to learn more and sign-up for training. From there, the training is held through National, and we move towards engaging all of our members on what bargaining demands should be developed leading up to March where our local has scheduled two GMMs to debate and ratify our negotiation proposals.

Back Into Action

After stumbling through a lethargic peak-season, where one grey overtime opportunity bled into the next, blurring the distinction between days, our local is primed to offer a torrent of activity. Between webinars, reading clubs, and coordinating our activist base, there will be countless quality opportunities to get involved. Each set of hands helping us makes the work that much easier, and the likelihood of achieving our goal that much greater. Whether you believe in defying back-to-work legislation, intimidating the government against using legislation, or winning enough public support to bully Canada Post into rolling over at the bargaining table—all roads start here, with deliberately building up and being a part of this vital campaign!

Never forget: no struggle, no victory!



GRIEVANCES:

THE MORE YOU KNOW



A WORKER'S RIGHT TO GRIEVE MISMANAGEMENT IS A NECESSARY PART OF OUR STRUGGLE FOR FAIRNESS. THE PROCESS IS STRAIGHTFORWARD AND WHEN IN DOUBT, IT'S ALWAYS BETTER TO GRIEVE THAN NOT TO GRIEVE.

Elizabeth Tjosheim, Grievance Officer

A grievance, according to our Collective Agreement, is simply “a complaint in writing presented by the union”. 2020 offered members many opportunities to push back against unjust CPC practices, and 2021 shows no promise of slowing down on this front. Grievances offer a paper trail and resistance against the employer's potentially job-threatening disciplinary actions. Stay current by knowing your local's most popular grievances and how to file one of your very own!

GRIEVANCES DU JOUR

Bypasses

A bypass happens when someone with a higher opportunity than you, based on the equal opportunity list, gets offered overtime before you. The rule is that the person with the lower number of opportunities gets offered first (Article 15). Be on the lookout for this issue especially if you are on union leave. Some supervisors will offer you your opportunity for OT if you are on a union bookoff, while others will not. Similarly, sometimes a bypass grievance of this nature is won and sometimes it is not - either way it's always worth grieving.

High Risk Leave and Your Vacation Time

If someone is off on high risk leave (which is common during COVID-19), CPC requires them to use their booked vacation because article 19.05 contains no language for cancelling your vacation when on high risk. CUPW National sent out a bulletin saying workers on high-risk leave will be required to use their booked vacation, but not their personal days.

Quarantine Leave, CPC, and Canada Life

Canada Post pays your full wage for Urban and base wage for RSMCs while on Quarantine Leave, but Canada Life handles the approval process for said leave. Members enduring mandatory COVID quarantine are finding that Canada Life and CPC don't communicate, which inevitably causes members undue financial hardship. CPC has denied some members return to work requests because they haven't been cleared by Canada Life. When that happens, the member often gets put on STDP - or in some cases Leave Without Pay - while they wait for Canada Life to clear their return. STDP pays 70% of your base wage and can take at least a week to kick in.

How do I File a Grievance and What Happens When I do?


There should be grievance forms in your depot, but if you can't find one, there is a version available on our website (CUPW730.ca). Find a Shop Steward and get them to help you fill out the form. There should also be postage paid envelopes at your depot that are already addressed to the Union office. If you use the online form, follow the guidelines and send it as an e-mail attachment.

It is essential for a successful grievance that you supply the necessary supporting documentation. For example, if it's a pay issue, you will need to provide pay stubs. Bypasses will need copies of the appropriate lists. Discipline grievances need the 24-hour notice of investigation, notes from the investigation meeting, and follow-up disciplinary letter. If you are missing anything, you will be contacted by the Local office.

Any grievance on behalf of one person must be filed within 25-working days after the day you first became aware that you had a grievance (Article 9.10). Group (or “Et. Al”) grievances have up to 60-working days from the day the first person was aware there was a grievance (Article 9.11 (c)).

After your grievance is filed and received, the Corporation must reply to your grievance within 20 working days. Your grievance will be addressed for the first time at a First Level Grievance Hearing, where management meets with a union representative and that representative argues on your behalf – this is why it's so important to have all the proper documentation.

Whether your grievance is settled or denied at this first level, you will receive a Grievance Reply in the mail. Many grievances are denied by the Corporation at the first level, but this doesn't mean the grievance is closed. These denied grievances are then sent to our Regional office, where they will decide if it will be referred for arbitration.

For assistance with your grievance, contact the Local Union office at 780-423-9000 and leave a message if you don't get through immediately. Digital grievance forms can be found on the Resource page of our website, CUPW730.ca. 

WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES DO WE HAVE AS POSTAL WORKERS? WHAT ABOUT WHEN DOING OUR JOB REQUIRES US TO KNOWINGLY DISTRIBUTE DISINFORMATION AND CONSPIRACY THEORIES MASQUERADING AS A NEWSPAPER? OUTCRY FROM THE PUBLIC AND OUR CO-WORKERS REGARDING THE EPOCH TIMES SHOWS THAT WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTION -- BUT WILL WE SEIZE IT?

By Satchel O'Letterson

When a sample issue of the Epoch Times began arriving as a flyer in early 2020, postal workers immediately began discussing refusing to deliver it. Members of the public who received it as a flyer were also upset. The problematic headline that got under people's skin suggested that the Chinese Communist Party (the CCP) endangered the world with COVID-19. The fear was that this headline might encourage people to direct their anger at Chinese-Canadians or the Asian community more broadly.

Scarborough Local Vice-President Derek Richmond reached out to Public Services Minister Anita Anand to bring up these concerns. The response from the federal government was that the Epoch Times did not meet the criteria under the Criminal Code of Canada to be considered wilful promotion of hatred. Carl Giourard, CUPW's National Grievance Officer, responded by saying that CUPW considers this material inflammatory, objects to members having to deliver it, and that they would continue to monitor the situation.

CUPW

VS.

THE EPOCH TIMES:

RESPONSIBILITY IN THE AGE OF CONSPIRACY AND DISINFORMATION

In the Fall, the Epoch Times returned again. In Winnipeg, carriers refused to deliver it. A member reached out to a local anti-racism project to bring in materials for its national campaign to get essential workers to speak out against racism. Masks containing the messages 'Speak Out' and 'Act2endracism.ca' were given to workers and posters were provided for the bulletin board. Unfortunately, newer temporary employees were still tasked with delivering the flyer.

Not everyone is on the same page, of course. An opinion piece in the Toronto Sun claimed the CBC's initial report that people were upset with receiving the Epoch Times was a result of the CBC targeting Chinese dissidents for not being pro-CCP. Some of our co-workers make similar arguments, saying that carriers who don't want to deliver the Epoch Times are trying to censor the mail over a mere difference of opinion, that it's just another flyer like an ad for pizza or real estate. It's a slippery slope – what's next? (The answer to that is whatever you can organize around.)

In the following, I argue that the Epoch Times is not just another flyer and that it is irresponsible for us to continue delivering it as such. I argue this across three sections. First by covering the origins of Falun Gong and its conflict with the CCP. Second, the origins of the Epoch Times, its growth, and its embrace of Donald Trump and conspiracy theories. Finally, I discuss the evidence that hate crimes have increased since Trump became President in 2016 and since COVID-19 became a pandemic in 2020.

Falun Gong and the Conflict with the CCP

To understand the Epoch Times and the origins of its antagonistic relationship with the CCP, we must

start with Falun Gong. Falun Gong emerged under the leadership of Li Hongzhi in China in 1992. This was part of a nationwide trend that started in the 1980s that saw people returning to the ancient Chinese practices of qigong, which focus on deep breathing, exercise, and meditations. It is believed that these practices help promote physical, mental, and spiritual well-being by enhancing the flow of vital energy to the practitioner's body. Falun Gong also draws on ideas from Buddhism and Daoism.

Falun Gong has a deliberate policy of

The CCP had a general policy of tolerating Falun Gong, but [they] became more hostile and cracked down on [them, and] any other activities perceived as a threat to the CCP.

peaceful protest against the CCP. In 1999, thousands of Li's followers gathered in front of President Jiang Zemin's compound to protest against the arrest of several Falun Gong members. Up until this point, the CCP had a general policy of tolerating Falun Gong, but after this the CCP became more hostile and cracked down on Falun Gong, as well as any other activities perceived as a threat to the CCP.

According to the CCP, this crackdown happened because Falun Gong is a cult. The CCP provides a number of reasons for this classification. This includes 'cultic doctrines,' such as a hierarchical structure and the belief

that Li can walk through walls, levitate, and that he is the saviour of mankind; and also the belief that illnesses can be cured with 'magical power.' For the CCP, this represents a disruption of public order, stability, and social ethics. Falun Gong's anti-scientific beliefs, says the CCP, will hinder China's economic development.

The CCP, however, has been found to have committed crimes against Falun Gong. Since Falun Gong was first banned in 1999, tens of thousands of practitioners have been detained and thousands have been sentenced to labour in re-education camps. In 2019, the China Tribunal, which was setup by the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse, reported that there was clear evidence that the CCP was harvesting organs from imprisoned members of Falun Gong. The CCP has objected to these findings and claimed that it stopped using organs from executed prisoners in 2015 and that now organs must be freely given.

The Epoch Times, Social Media, and Donald Trump

i. Origins of the Epoch Times

This section will cover the origin of the Epoch Times, its connection to Falun Gong, how it grew its reach through social media and by embracing the campaign and presidency of Trump, and the criticisms the Epoch Times has received for promoting conspiracy theories. The paper itself was started in 2000 by John Tang, a graduate student and a Falun Gong practitioner living in the United States. Initially given out for free on street corners, the aim of the Epoch Times was to "provide information to Chinese communities to help immigrants assimilate into American Society."

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CUPW VS. THE EPOCH TIMES

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To this day in its About section, the Epoch Times claims it “stay[s] outside of political interests and the pursuit of profit” and that the “starting point and goal is to serve the public benefit and be truly responsible to society.” The About section also makes it clear that the publication is explicitly anti-communist: “We stand against the destruction wrought by communism, including the harm done to cultures around the world.”

The Epoch Times makes no mention of Falun Gong. Li has also objected to any suggestion that there is a connection between Falun Gong and the Epoch Times. However, the Epoch Times is a part of a larger media network that includes the New Tang Dynasty (NTD) television station. Li has been documented as referring to this network as “our media.”

ii. Social Media and Donald Trump

In 2016, the Epoch Times embraced both Facebook and Donald Trump, gaining one of the largest social media followings of any news outlet. In Vietnam, the Epoch Times used bots to generate likes and shares for its pages, though it denies it did the same in North America. Renee Diresta, a disinformation researcher with the Stanford Internet Observatory, says that the Epoch Times' dozens of affiliated pages gained thousands of likes and shares over night. However, Diresta says, there were no comments, which is a typical sign of a “click farm,” where people are paid to click links over and over again.

After Trump lost the 2020 Presidential Election, a pro-Trump YouTube network that is connected to the Epoch Times

appeared and began spreading more conspiracy theories and disinformation aimed at keeping Trump in office. Across these channels, reporters found misinformation about election fraud, voting technology companies, votes being flipped from Trump to Biden, disappearing USB drives, suspicious servers, and the Christmas Day bombing in Nashville. These YouTube channel hosts are current or former contributors to the Epoch Times, but this is not information they disclose – with the exception of Roman Balmakov, who appears in ads for the Epoch Times.

On January 6th, 2021, when the US

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been sent from
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Congress was working on certifying the results of the 2020 Presidential Election, there was a march and rally at The Whitehouse that some have been calling an insurrection and attempted coup d'etat. Eye Opener with Michael Lewis, one of the YouTube channels connected to the Epoch Times, blamed this on communists, despite the evidence that these people were spurred on by Trump and his claims of election fraud since the election.

Joan Donovan, research director of the Sherenstein Center on Media, Politics, and Public Policy at Harvard, says that this sort of thing is not surprising

because YouTube has failed to keep operations like the Epoch Times in check. Donovan says that what we have here is dark propaganda that obscures its origins: “If people believe they are viewing news when they paid to click links over and over again.

According to journalist Kevin Roose, pages filled with feel-good videos and click-bait popped up and were used to direct users toward the Epoch Times' news coverage and sell subscriptions, doubling its revenue. The Epoch Times also embraced Trump in its fight against communism, viewing him as a key ally and, in some cases, as having been sent from heaven.

This new source of revenue also allowed the Epoch Times to become the second largest advocate of the Trump campaign – second only to the Trump campaign itself – spending \$1.5-million on pro-Trump ads in 2019. Editors of the Epoch Times also began removing any criticism of Trump from articles. Trump and his family also began to share links to Epoch Times content on their personal social media pages, providing the Epoch Times with an even larger platform.

iii. Criticism and Conspiracy

Alongside embracing social media, it seems the Epoch Times also began to embrace conspiracy theories. Some of the conspiracy theories of note include 'Spygate,' which believes that Barack Obama was illegally spying on the Trump campaign in 2016; Q Anon, which posits Trump as the hero trying to bring to justice a vast network of blood-drinking, pedophile elites; and that COVID-19 was either a synthetic bioweapon created or at least harnessed by the CCP, or that the CCP was lying to cover up how devastating COVID-19 is. These pages have also shared misinformation about Black Lives Matter and about Joe Biden's

2020 presidential victory being a result of voter fraud.

Ben Hurley, a former practitioner of Falun Gong who helped create Australia's English version of the Epoch Times, says that Falun Gong practitioners began seeing communists everywhere: Hillary Clinton, Jackie Chan, and former Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan were all seen as having sold out to the CCP. Epoch



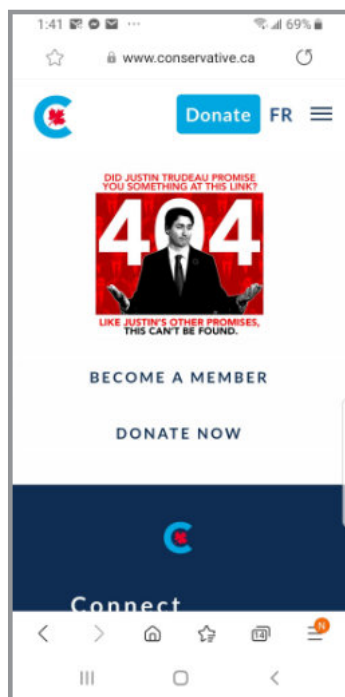
actually asserted that these experts think lockdowns shouldn't be the primary method to stop the pandemic. "Calgary Mayor, Other Officials Target of Chinese Regime Influence: Leaked Document," discussed how some names, such as Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi's, appeared in a document that makes no mention of what its plans were or how it would carry them out. Finally, and perhaps most indicative of a broader trend, was the headline "Communist China's

they are viewing news when they are really seeing dark propaganda, what responsibility does YouTube have to limit or label this content?"

Increase in Hate Crimes

i. Trump's Presidency

This final section covers the anti-worker outcomes from Trump's presidency and the documented increase in hate crimes. I didn't want to talk about Trump in any detail. Trump is a divisive politician and I believe that the nature of the harm his presidency did will be debated for many years. I also don't think we can blame Trump solely. He is a symptom, not the cause. But he also knew his audience and his class interests, and we have data and policies that illustrate what that means.



Before and After: Conservatives delete webpage accusing Trudeau of rigging the election.

Trump's presidential campaign and his presidency were based on targeting minorities and immigrants. His campaign promise was to get Mexico to pay for a wall along the US-Mexico border to keep out 'illegal immigrants'. Trump's presidency started with a ban on travel from seven predominantly Muslim countries and the refusal to accept refugees from Syria. During this time, the Epoch Times writers focussed their articles on illegal immigration and Islamic terrorism. When it came to COVID-19, Trump consistently used language that targeted Asians and blamed China.

Times editor John Nania was involved with the creation of America Daily, which has published articles about Bill Gates directing the pandemic as well as suggesting that there is a "Jewish mob" controlling the world. The Epoch Times, however, denies it has any relationship with America Daily.

Silent War Against the West," which claimed the CCP has infiltrated every aspect of our lives, right down to the app TikTok.

The November sample issue of The Epoch Times we delivered contained a number of misleading headlines. "Opposition to Virus Lockdowns Mounts Among Health Experts,"

Joan Donovan, research director of the Sherenstein Center on Media, Politics, and Public Policy at Harvard, says that this sort of thing is not surprising because YouTube has failed to keep operations like the Epoch Times in check. Donovan says that what we have here is dark propaganda that obscures its origins: "If people believe

During a 2020 presidential debate, Trump was asked to denounce a white nationalist hate group - instead he told them to "stand back and stand by." Trump and his team later claimed he misspoke and had no idea who the group was, though the group in question was already selling merchandise with references to this quotation. During protests in support

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CUPW VS. THE EPOCH TIMES

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of Trump following his 2020 election loss, members of this group destroyed and burned Black Lives Matter signs at historic Black churches in Washington, DC. These actions are currently being investigated as hate crimes.

One of the criticisms the Epoch Times levied against the CCP was that it lied about and mishandled COVID-19. However, Trump intentionally downplayed the seriousness of the pandemic, stating in a recording that he knew it was worse than the flu but he didn't want to create a panic. At the same time, Trump publically pushed the false cure of hydroxychloroquine and even platformed a doctor who believes that having sex with demons causes illness. Videos of this doctor's speech were quickly banned from various social media platforms for misinformation. As of this writing, the US has had over 330,000 deaths due to COVID-19.

When it comes to our class interests as workers, there is a long list of policies that show Trump is not our friend. Trump rolled back overtime protection and erased a rule that extended OT pay to millions, making workers lose thousands of dollars. Trump also made it easier to award federal contracts to companies that repeatedly violated wage laws, sexual harassment laws, racial discrimination laws, and laws protecting unionization rights. Trump's administration also urged the Supreme Court to rule that the federal anti-discrimination laws do not apply to gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual workers. Trump's policies also weakened federal employee unions, relaxed requirements for reporting workplace injuries, and reversed a ban on a toxic pesticide that hurts farm

workers and causes neurological damage to children.

ii. Hate Crimes

According to the FBI, personal attacks motivated by bias or prejudice – hate crimes – reached a 16-year high in 2018. This saw a marked increase in violence against Latinx people. As of 2020, the FBI reports that there has been close to a 20% surge in hate crimes during the Trump presidency. Hate-motivated murders, generally

This is all happening in an environment that has a history of anti-Asian racism and an increase in present-day hate crimes. It would be misleading to say that the Epoch Times and Trump are responsible for this, but they know their audience, they know what sells, and they are not doing anything to stop it.

committed by white supremacists, have seen their highest numbers in 28-years.

The COVID-19 pandemic also saw an increase in hate. Data compiled by the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter, Project 1907, Vancouver Asian Film Festival, and the Chinese Canadian Council for Social Justice shows that since the pandemic began, there have been more than 600 incidents of hate targeting Asians. One-third of these have been assaults,

and these reports have been consistent with reports from police.

Justin Hong, Executive Director for the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter, says that these attacks stem not only from historical anti-Asian racism in Canada but also how COVID-19 was racialized. Hong also states that the same thing happened with the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in the early 2000s, so they saw it coming and decided to start collecting data.

Conclusion

If we wish to refuse to deliver the Epoch Times, we must avoid the trap that suggests criticism of the Epoch Times is censorship or pro-CCP. We need to focus our argument. Calling it racist against Chinese people or the Asian community will be a tough sell because the publication was started by Chinese immigrants who have a very real conflict with the CCP.

What we see here is that the Epoch Times has embraced conspiracy theories and dishonesty in order to push its message. It also hitched its wagon to the Trump administration, which has shown itself to be all too willing to use conspiracy theories to bolster its platform and try to stay in office all while attacking workers and people of colour.


Cindy Gu, Epoch Times editor, does stress that the Epoch Times makes it clear they are targeting the CCP, but we're not operating with a blank slate here. This is all happening in an environment that has a history of anti-Asian racism and an increase in present-day hate crimes. It would be misleading to say that the Epoch Times and Trump are responsible for this, but they know their audience, they know what sells, and they are not doing anything to stop it.

Those of us in Canada are not immune to propaganda. On a fundraiser page, the Conservative Party argued that Trudeau was currently working to rig the next election. After the riot in DC and subsequent criticism, the page was removed – but it lives on through the Internet Archive. We also have the aforementioned Epoch Times report about Calgary Mayor Nenshi being targeted by the CCP.

The Epoch Times has arrived in the depots again. Postal workers in Winnipeg and Regina have refused to deliver it. People who have received it as a flyer in Nova Scotia have expressed concern that this publication is appearing in their mailboxes unsolicited. We often hesitate to act, claiming that we don't have public support, especially when it comes to going on strike. The public is making it clear what their position is. What will we do with that?

Maybe you think it's not our responsibility. That's fine, you can think that. I think the history of our union shows us otherwise, but I can handle a difference of opinion.

For those of us who feel we have a responsibility to our co-workers and our communities more broadly, what are we to do? If we wish to stop the spread of conspiracy and misinformation, we can't wait for Canada Post or the government to make that call. It is clear that a strongly worded letter and asking nicely have not been enough, but as the Epoch Times keeps coming and customers keep disagreeing with receiving it, we haven't lost our opportunity.

If we wish to stop delivering misinformation masquerading as a newspaper, we must act together. Solidarity and collective action are our only way out. 

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

What are they? Why do they flourish?

BE WARNED: THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS SEEN A RISE IN HARMFUL AND MISLEADING CONSPIRACY THEORIES. IT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO RECOGNIZE THEM OR KNOW HOW BEST TO DEAL WITH THEM.

1. What are they?

→ The belief that events are secretly manipulated behind the scenes by powerful forces with negative intent.

2. Conspiracy theories have these 6 things in common

- 1 An alleged, secret plot
- 2 A group of conspirators
- 3 'Evidence' that seems to support the conspiracy theory
- 4 They falsely suggest that nothing happens by accident and that there are no coincidences; nothing is as it appears and everything is connected.
- 5 They divide the world into good or bad.
- 6 They scapegoat people and groups.

3. Why do they flourish?

→ They offer an explanation of events or situations which are difficult to understand and bring a false sense of control and agency. This need is heightened in times of uncertainty like the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. How do they take root?

→ Conspiracy theories often start as a suspicion. They ask who is benefiting from the event or situation and thus identify the conspirators. Any 'evidence' is then forced to fit the theory.

Once they have taken root, conspiracy theories can grow quickly. They are hard to refute because any person who tries is seen as being part of the conspiracy.

5. Why do people spread them?

→ There are different reasons: Most believe they are true. Others deliberately want to provoke, manipulate or target people for political or financial reasons. Beware: They can come from many sources e.g. internet, friends, relatives.

With thanks to Michael Butter, co-author of the COMPACT Guide to Conspiracy Theories, and John Cook and Stephan Lewandowsky, authors of The Debunking Handbook and The Conspiracy Theory Handbook.



THE FIRST STEP TO PREVENT CONSPIRACY THEORIES IS TO KNOW THAT THEY EXIST. BE AWARE. STOP THE SPREAD.



European Commission

BULLYING, DEPRESSION, AND FIGHTING BACK

Anonymous

Feeling the weight of harassment and intimidation from management, a worker is pushed to the brink of self-destruction. This is all too common at Canada Post and not everyone manages to make it through. In this case, the worker found the strength to fight back and is working on having their dog designated as an emotional support service animal. Navigating the system to do this turns out to be a whole new struggle. (Pet names are changed for privacy. -Ed.)

Content Warning: Suicide mention

If you are having suicidal thoughts or contemplating suicide, please contact the Canada Suicide Prevention Line: 833-456-4566 or Alberta Access 24/7: 780-424-2424.

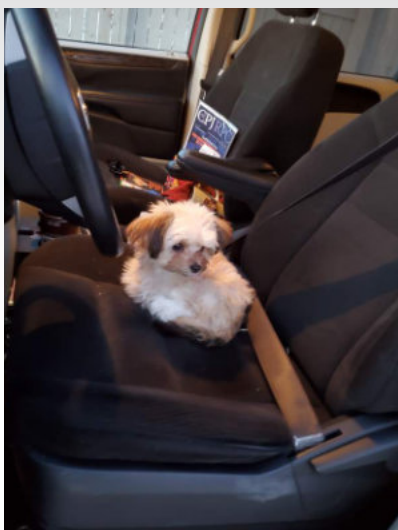
Management's Insidious Ways

In May 2020, I was being harassed by a supervisor over numerous issues. The incident that set off the following story was the supervisor telling me I couldn't have my dog, "Maxie", in my vehicle. At the time, I had just left my husband of 20-years and I was living on my own. I couldn't leave my dog in the apartment by herself.

Initially, the supervisor wanted to inspect my vehicle to ensure it met size requirements because on this day there was a parcel that wouldn't fit unless I left a window down. It is a security issue if a window can't be safely sealed. When the supervisor went to my vehicle, he saw my red, 5-

year-old miniature pinscher in the passenger seat. Just as my car was loaded and I was ready to leave, the supervisor phoned me and told me not to leave the premises until I spoke with him.

Then another supervisor came out to the parking lot and said that I couldn't



leave. Either the mail went or the dog went, but I couldn't have a person in the car while it contained Canada Post property. I pointed out that it was a dog. The supervisor reiterated that it was against CPC policy to have another person in the vehicle when it contained CPC property. Again, I pointed out that it was a dog, not a person, but I made the decision to unload the mail and keep my dog.

Next, with the assistance of a Shop Steward, I spoke with the superintendent and explained my situation and why I needed the dog in the car. The superintendent said she understood but that it was still against the rules to have both a dog and CPC property in the vehicle.

I said, "I'm not being cheeky or smart, but can I ask why? Can you show me where that rule is written?" Nobody, neither the superintendent or the other two supervisors, could show me the proof of their claim. The superintendent said it was a liability because the dog could bite somebody. "Through the window?" I asked. This ended the conversation.

Maxie and I went home for the day. I filed a grievance against the supervisor over the harassment and bullying I was subject to. Just over a month later, Maxie passed away in her sleep unexpectedly. The next day, my boyfriend brought me "Minnie," an 8-week-old fluffy terrier – who now weighs 5 lbs, fully grown.

On July 30th, I unexpectedly received an emergency suspension for safe-dropping a parcel. At no point was a 24-hour notice of investigation issued. Instead, as I was about to leave to deliver, my supervisor asked me to come inside and speak with the superintendent. At her office I was served with an emergency suspension that was effective immediately and without a return to work date.

I immediately phoned Elizabeth in the Grievance Office to begin the grievance process over harassment and unfair treatment by management. She told me that an emergency suspension should only be issued if a person is an immediate threat to the depot or another co-worker.

On August 4th, Elizabeth and I had a meeting with the supervisors. They offered me a letter of condition which Elizabeth and I both agreed I should

not sign. Ultimately, I received a five-day suspension and won back three of those days through our Union.

Descent into Darkness

On August 5th, my doctor put me on stress leave. I hand delivered the paperwork to the depot and 4-hours later I got a call from staffing asking me if I could help them out by delivering a route. I was blown away and at this point the endless stress I was feeling from work aggravated my pre-existing depression and anxiety.

Starting this leave gave me time to do a lot of thinking, and that thinking turned into a really dark depression – to the point of suicidal thoughts. I was anxious about finances, my boyfriend had to buy my groceries, at one point I lost power to my apartment... And bad things just kept happening one after another. Out of the blue I received a call from a bailiff, telling me he was downstairs at my van – which I use for work – and to come clear it out because the payments were in arrears and he was seizing it. That was a dark day.

Over the next little while, I was so afraid I would lose everything that my substance abuse took over. The van was gone. I wasn't able to eat. I was behind on rent. I was tired of fighting – something I had been doing my whole life. I was tired of being strong.

Being harassed and targeted by my supervisors at work had taken my fight. On my darkest day, I was planning to follow through on my suicidal thoughts but when I saw Minnie sitting alone on the bed, I thought about how much she relies on me. I realized that nobody I knew had keys to my apartment and that nobody would question not hearing from me for a couple of days. What would Minnie do? I could not do that to her.

Minnie truly saved my life and she means everything to me because of it.

A Reason to Fight

This is the reason I am now fighting to have Minnie in my work vehicle as a support animal, and I will take this fight all the way up the chain. Meanwhile, as I pursue this struggle, the insurance company contacts me regularly with silly, irrelevant questions. They require regular updates from the doctors who – overburdened even outside our current pandemic – have to regularly fill out document after document.

...when I saw Minnie sitting alone on the bed, I thought about how much she relies on me....What would Minnie do? I could not do that to her. Minnie truly saved my life and she means everything to me because of it.

Two weeks ago the insurance company told me they can't help me with my work to get approval for a support dog and that their understanding is that Canada Post has a 'no dogs' policy. They said I would have to go to CUPW in order to make that policy change, which made no sense to me. I had already asked about the no dog policy and no one could provide an answer.

As it turns out, our benefits company, Morneau Shepell, classified my vehicle as a workplace and CPC has a no dogs in the workplace policy. They said I couldn't have a dog in the workplace

and that there was nothing else that they could do – thank you, have a nice day. When I requested that the insurance company put their decision in writing, they said that no firm decision had been made and that CPC was reassessing their position.

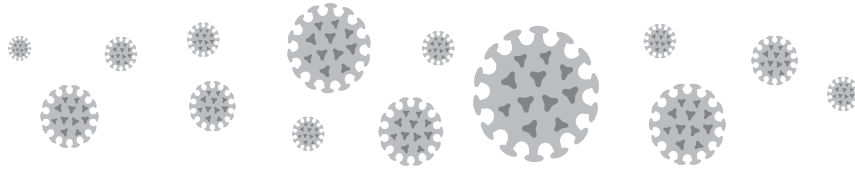
This brings us to today. I've requested updates and any available information. Essentially, Morneau Shepell is insisting I register the dog in the very expensive and drawn out support animal government program. I'm not asking to bring the dog into the depot, apartments, or outside at CMBs. She is small and I just want her to be in my vehicle with me.

CPC plays games with us workers. In bed with the insurance companies, they drag things on forever and forgo human decency while countless among us suffer quietly with our private struggles. If you are experiencing harassment and bullying, reach out to a Shop Steward or call the Union office directly. If you are experiencing personal issues, CUPW has a network of trained Social Stewards who are there to listen and offer resources while maintaining full confidentiality.

The struggle continues, but we don't have to go it alone. 🛬



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES: A HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE



Rashpal Sehmbly, Health and Safety Officer

As we leave behind 2020 and enter into the year 2021, things have been extremely busy at the Health & Safety office of our local. When COVID-19 hit the world stage there was no clear understanding of how workers across the world could properly mitigate the risks associated with this new dilemma.

As CUPW members, we immediately noted a lack of hand sanitizers, masks, and other PPE required to keep ourselves safe on our workfloors. With this added panic arose the need for workers deemed high-risk to immediately receive approval for High Risk Leave (HRL) from CPC. The phone calls to our office from concerned members wondering if they needed to apply for HRL were seemingly endless. Then, in the midst of this, CPC confusingly released a new HRL form. Getting a hold of this new form proved almost impossible. This level of uncertainty kept our members confused and caused unneeded anxiety and stress along the way.

Meanwhile, many other confused members were calling because CPC told them that if they contracted Covid-19 they would have to utilize the Short-Term Disability Plan instead of using Quarantine/Special Leave. The membership's confusion and frustration during the beginning of the pandemic was palpable.

Since then, the local has worked hard

It is vital that we all continue to adhere to the safety protocols to help minimize any risk to ourselves or others.

to make sure protocols are in place to mitigate risk within our various facilities and that members are supported as they navigate various confusing leave processes laid out by CPC and the insurance companies. Even though Covid-19 has not left us, things are starting to improve. It is vital that we all continue to adhere to the safety protocols to help minimize any risk to ourselves or others.

If you experience sudden or age-related changes to your health that

shift you into a high-risk COVID-19 category, let the Health and Safety office know immediately as we can help you navigate the corporation's complicated HRL forms and processes.

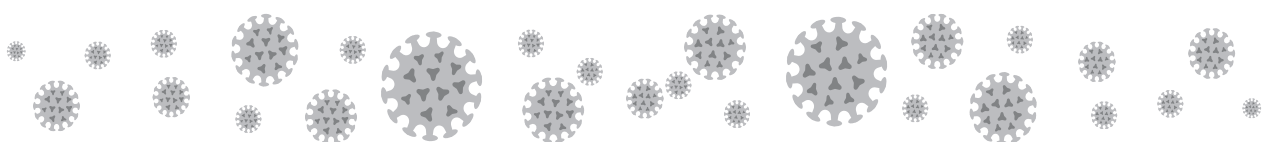
Just a reminder: if you are injured at work, please report your injuries to the employer as soon as possible. Quite often we hear of injuries not being reported immediately which inevitably causes delays in receiving proper treatments and coverage by the Worker's Compensation Board. If in doubt regarding proper paperwork protocol, please give us a call.

Finally, with increased uncertainty that accompanies leave due to health issues, we see an increased need in members to utilize mental health and addiction supports. If you are suffering, please reach out:

**24 Hour Line for Addictions:
1-866-332-2322**

**24 Hour Mental Health Line:
1-877-303-2642**

**Addictions and Mental Health
Access 24/7: 780-424-2424**



WELCOME TO CUPW WEBINAR SERIES



As a new (or new to caring) CUPW member, it is vital that you learn the many ways to contribute to worker power within your union's structure and have a basic understanding of what it means to be a part of our Union. It is also necessary that you prepare yourself to effectively push back against CPC's inevitable negligence and power abuses.

Recently, our National union office announced a bold plan to train workers across the country in direct action tools to prepare us for our upcoming contract negotiations. We need you with us and ready!

This three part webinar introducing you to CUPW will be hosted by two Local 730 officers and happen over the course of three consecutive Sundays in February as follows:

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH, 10AM - 12PM
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH, 10AM - 12PM
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST, 10AM - 12PM

The webinar is open to all CUPW members and affiliates across Canada.

The registration deadline is **midnight on Wednesday, February 3rd, 2021.**

Please pre-register via the link in the president's weekly update, our website (CUPW730.ca), [Facebook](#), or [Twitter](#).

We're on Social Media!

Get up-to-date info and analysis at our website: cupw730.ca

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YouTube: [CUPW Local 730 - Edmonton & Affiliates](#)

Submissions, article suggestions and inquiries
communications730@gmail.com



CUPW VS. THE EPOCH TIMES: RESPONSIBILITY IN THE AGE OF CONSPIRACY AND DISINFORMATION

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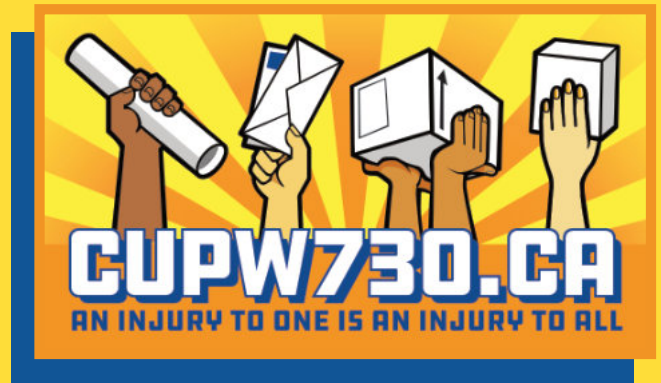
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STICK YOUR UNION ON YOUR FRIDGE



The Local 730 Communications Committee has designed a magnet that will be freely distributed to our members to help promote staying informed and connected.

Since COVID-19 restrictions prevent regular workflow visits, we are putting considerable effort toward building our website (CUPW730.CA) into an information hub, and valuable resource, for our members. There, you can find regular updates from the local office, contact info for all your Executive representatives, full digital copies of our newsletter, bylaws, national constitution and Collective Agreements, as well as links to our social media pages, and more. Upcoming updates will include membership polls, an events page, and a merch section.

Until we can gather in person, let's continue to protect each other, stay safe, and stay connected.

The struggle continues! (But holding up your shopping list...that battle is won!)

SOLIDARITY STYLE OFFICIAL CUPW 730 SHIRTS



To order: email union@cupwedm.net with your shipping address and size. Please note that the XS-L shirts are a more tight fit. The XL-XXL sizes fit as normal. All extra proceeds from a 'comrade' sale goes to our local Goods & Welfare Committee to help members facing sudden hardship.

REGULAR - \$30
COMRADE - \$40
SHIPPING - \$5

CUPW 730 EDMONTON & AFFILIATES GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2021
11:00 AM > 1:00 PM

REGISTER @ [CUPW730.CA](https://cupw730.ca) > CALENDAR
DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 5, NOON

