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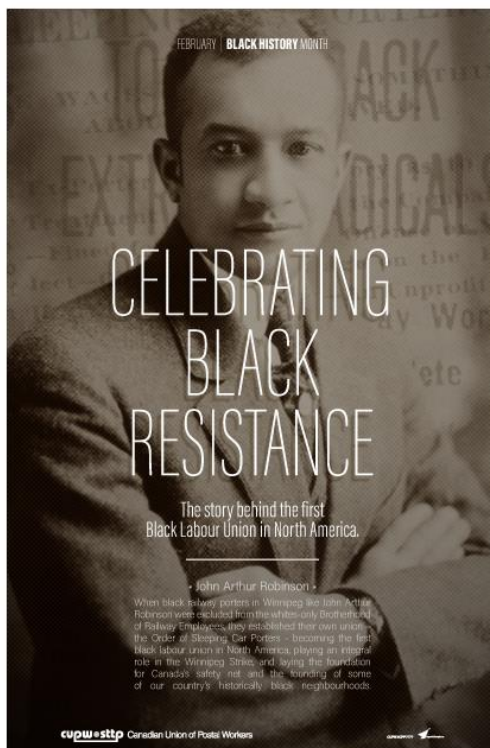
February - Black History Month

A Legacy of Worker Solidarity

As we observe **Black History Month**, we take this opportunity to reflect on the invaluable contributions of Black individuals to the labour movement and our society at large. Black history is deeply intertwined with the story of worker solidarity, equity, and justice — values that are important to us as union members.

This month, we honour not only the struggles, but also the triumphs of Black workers who have shaped our collective history. Among them stands the remarkable legacy of Canada's first Black union, a testament to resilience and determination.

The Order of Sleeping Car Porters, established in 1917, was a groundbreaking labour organization that united Black railway porters across the country. Founded by men like Ben Isaacs and John A. Robinson, this union became a beacon of hope and solidarity for Black workers who faced systemic discrimination and exploitative working conditions. These courageous individuals demanded fair treatment, better wages, and dignity in the workplace. Their organizing efforts not only led to improved conditions for porters, they also laid the foundation for labour rights in Canada, paving the way for future unions and inspiring countless movements for justice and equality. Their involvement in the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike was a significant moment in Canadian labour history. Black railway workers played a crucial role in the strike, standing in solidarity with their fellow workers in the fight for better wages, working conditions, and union recognition. Their participation in the strike was an essential contribution to the broader labour movement, highlighting their commitment to collective action and the pursuit of justice for all workers. The unity demonstrated by the Order of Sleeping Car Porters during this historic event reinforced their legacy as



powerful agents of change in the struggle for workers' rights and racial equality.

This **Black History Month** let's also reflect on the ongoing work required to achieve true equity and inclusivity within our workplaces and communities. We see this in efforts such as the Black Class Action lawsuit, which highlights the systemic barriers Black workers continue to face within public service, from unequal opportunities for advancement to racial discrimination. This lawsuit not only seeks justice for those affected, but also calls for institutional reforms to create more inclusive and equitable work environments. Let this

month inspire us to learn more, support each other, and recommit to the fight for justice in all its forms.

<https://www.blackclassaction.ca/>

The journey toward equality and justice is ongoing. The struggles and triumphs of Black workers continue to inspire and guide us in our shared mission for a better, more equitable future. By honouring the past and understanding its lessons, we strengthen our commitment to solidarity, fairness, and the fight for workers' rights. Together, as union members, we stand united in the pursuit of a world where all workers are valued, respected, and empowered. Let this month be a reminder that our collective efforts have the power to shape a brighter, more inclusive tomorrow.

In solidarity,

Jan Simpson

National President

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