

COMMUNIQUÉ



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March 17, 2004

LABOUR COUNCIL SPONSORS CITY HALL DISPLAY IN HONOUR OF INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The Toronto & York Region Labour Council is proud to sponsor the presentation in City Hall of "And still I rise...", a history of African Canadian workers in Ontario. Created by the Ontario Workers Arts and Heritage Centre, the display is in the City Hall rotunda from March 15th -21st as a reminder of the contribution of African Canadians to our society and every sector of our economy.

On March 21st, 1960 police in South Africa attacked a peaceful demonstration of students, killing 69 and wounding many more. The Sharpeville Massacre came to symbolize the brutality of apartheid, the legal system of racial discrimination that was upheld by force in South Africa.

March 21st was declared by the United Nations as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, as part of the global effort to end apartheid and all other aspect of racism that afflict humankind. The labour movement in South Africa and across the world was a steadfast opponent of apartheid, and many union activists were jailed for their involvement in the anti-apartheid movement.

Labour has also been deeply involved in the many efforts to challenge discrimination here as well. In the 1940's and 50's, the Toronto Labour Committee on Human Rights undertook to expose racial discrimination in hiring and accommodation, and was central to the passing of the first Human Rights Code in Ontario.

"This history teaches us to celebrate the contribution of all who came before us" said Labour Council President John Cartwright. "We must be engaged in the never-ending task of building a society where people from many different backgrounds can come together and live in harmony".

Toronto & York Region Labour Council represents 190,000 union members in the Toronto region, with an Executive that has the most diverse leadership of any central labour body in the country.

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