

POWER OF MANY

15TH OFL BIENNIAL CONVENTION

ONTARIO FEDERATION
OF LABOUR

THE POWER OF MANY

ACTION PLAN

FOR MASS MOBILIZATION

////////////////////

AS AMENDED AT CONVENTION

FÉDÉRATION DU
TRAVAIL
DE L'ONTARIO



ONTARIO
FEDERATION OF
LABOUR



// 15TH ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 25 – 29, 2019
SHERATON CENTRE TORONTO HOTEL
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2019

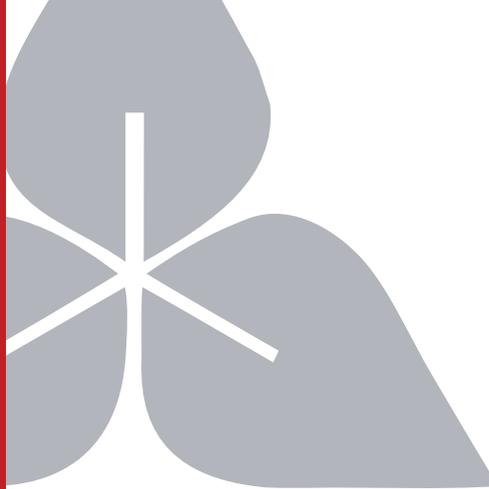
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NOVEMBER 2019

25

MONDAY

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TUESDAY

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ACTION PLAN (PM)

28

THURSDAY

ACTION PLAN (PM)

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29

FRIDAY

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The Ontario Federation of Labour represents 54 unions and one million workers. It is Canada's largest provincial labour federation.

The **POWER OF MANY ACTION PLAN** as amended at Convention was produced for the 15th Biennial OFL Convention, 2019.

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PREAMBLE

2019 marks the centennial of the Winnipeg General Strike – one of the most influential acts of solidarity in Canadian history.

In response to pervasive unemployment and significant inflation; poor wages and working conditions; and rampant xenophobic and anti-immigrant rhetoric, 30,000 unionized and non-unionized workers walked off their jobs in an inspiring demonstration of working class unity – effectively grinding the city to a halt.

100 years later, we are at a similar precipice.

We continue to question the system in fundamental ways.

The reality is that every time we confront the exploitation and oppression that capitalism perpetuates, we find ourselves part of history – on the right side of history.

Solidarity has taken on a renewed importance as emerging movements and organizations have shown us that working people are facing an opportunity for regeneration.

All around us, we are seeing a steadily building explosion of new proposals and new experiments, new ideas and new activism – and most importantly – a new basis for hope.

A whole new generation of young activists across the globe are leading the way as they demonstrate resistance towards regressive public service cuts, attacks on democratic freedoms, and climate change inaction.

A whole new category of workers is raising expectations of decent work as new platforms and industries, such as food delivery and gaming, are being organized and workers are given a voice.

A whole new set of possibilities await us.

It is time to take hold.

This document outlines a blueprint for widespread action in Ontario – one that recognizes that systemic changes, including building working class unity, must be made first before we can culminate our efforts in mass mobilization.

WALK WITH A VISION



**THE OFL'S 2019
VISION DOCUMENT
FOR THE POWER
OF MANY (POM)
CAMPAIGN ARTICULATES
AN UNAPOLOGETIC AND
DECISIVE VISION
TO HELP SPUR
A PEOPLE-LED
MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL,
ECONOMIC, AND
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.**

The labour movement has always been the first line of defence against social, economic, cultural, and political injustice.

Our focus extends beyond the gains that can be made at the bargaining table to include progress that can be made for society at large.

Our work has never been about tinkering around the edges. It has always been about disrupting exploitative and oppressive systems and fundamentally democratizing our workplaces.

That requires helping to construct and strengthen broad, radical, and strong social movements that do the work of building collective power while also challenging and changing the deeply rooted systems of capitalism, white supremacy, settler colonialism¹, and hetero-patriarchy².

The OFL's 2019 Vision Document for the Power of Many (POM) campaign articulates an unapologetic and decisive vision to help spur a people-led movement for social, economic, and environmental justice.

ACTION 1:

Ensure that the principles of the OFL's 2019 Vision Document (i.e., decent work for all, public services for all, justice for all, healthy and safe workplaces and communities for all) form the basis of the Power of Many campaign.

¹ Settler colonialism is an ongoing system of power that perpetuates the genocide and repression of Indigenous peoples and cultures.

² Heteropatriarchy is a system in which the male gender and heterosexuality have importance over other genders and over other sexual orientations.

REACH OUT TO LISTEN AND LEARN



**THE POWER OF MANY
CAMPAIGN WILL ENSURE
THAT THE VOICES
AND THE STRUGGLES
OF MEMBERS AND
COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS
ARE REFLECTED IN OUR
VISION AND MOMENTUM
AS WE MOVE FORWARD.**

Movements can change the world.

To do meaningful societal, social, community-level change work, however, movements must respond to the individual and interpersonal effects of oppression in our lives.

We must assert our role as key players in struggles for social change – in both the workplace and broader society. That means expanding the fight to advocate for class solidarity and social justice across all spectrums. The future of unionized workers is tied directly to the interests of the entire working class and the communities in which we live and work.

The Power of Many campaign will ensure that the voices and the struggles of members and community activists are reflected in our vision and momentum as we move forward.

Ongoing personal contact with members will be paramount in ensuring that they are connected and engaged in our campaign. We will also find ways for members to bring their activism into the workplace, encouraging them to use their union as a vehicle for social justice work.

In the process, we will strengthen members' connection to one another, the labour movement, and the progressive movement at large.

This means listening to the issues that are important to them, learning about their lived experiences, reflecting those sentiments in our campaign, and helping to raise expectations about what we should rightfully demand from the society we live in.

It also means providing voice to those stories that have not been heard. Storytelling is an ongoing process through which individuals, communities, and collectives construct their identity, make choices, and inspire action. Each of us has a compelling story to tell that can move others.

Engaging our membership, building our local capacity, and organizing the unorganized will further power our movement.

ACTION 2:

Incorporate the insights and experiences of rank-and-file members and community activists when shaping the OFL's campaign and demands.

ACTION 3:

Conduct ongoing assessments of the shifting terrain locally, provincially, nationally, and globally to identify the fights that will enable the OFL to move towards its vision for an Ontario – and ultimately, a world – for all.

ACTION 4:

Launch an extensive, internal campaign to understand the issues that affect workers in their workplaces and their communities by drafting a survey that will serve as the basis for more than one million one-on-one conversations with rank-and-file members.

ACTION 5:

Facilitate 30 regional forums, along with labour councils, that help develop workers' narratives and educate the public on workers' issues, including a public awareness campaign around occupational disease that highlights the struggles of survivors – particularly in vulnerable populations.

ACTION 6:

Use political education to insulate against the possible attacks of the right-wing by conducting a series of ten regional workshops throughout the campaign about social, economic, and environmental justice – as well as on capitalism and oppression – for members.

ACTION 7:

Develop materials that communicate the value of the work unions as well as unionized workers do and their contribution to society at large.

ACTION 8:

Connect with – and educate – people in their language by ensuring that our organizing material is multilingual based on region.

ACTION 9:

Host an organizing summit with affiliates to review organizing opportunities and issues as well as to raise awareness of different, novel types of local and global strategies, models, and campaigns to organize non-unionized workers.

BUILD STRATEGIC ALLIANCES



All transformative organizing begins with a collective intention — the intention to struggle against a cultural, social, economic, and political dominance that perpetuates and reproduces capitalism, white supremacy, settler colonialism, and hetero-patriarchy.

If we are to successfully build a broad and united social movement that is capable of confronting and ending systems of oppression and exploitation, we must continue to weave together the work of labour, our community and coalition partners, and our political allies.

The OFL is driven by an intention to forge working class unity.

It is, however, important to remember that there is no singular path to this intention.

**THE POWER OF MANY
CAMPAIGN WILL
ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE
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COMMUNITY AND
COALITION PARTNERS,
AND THE NEW
DEMOCRATIC PARTY
CAN ORGANIZE IN
THEIR OWN INTERESTS.
COLLECTIVELY, WE CAN
ALL WORK TOWARDS
BUILDING WORKING
CLASS UNITY.**

Different unions, community groups, and political allies will take different routes to arrive at such an intention.

We will support the individual and the collective ability to learn and put into practice the different ways of relating to the world, to their communities, and to themselves. And in the process, we will create new and exciting approaches that challenge the status quo.

The Power of Many campaign will endeavour to create spaces where unions, community and coalition partners, and the New Democratic Party can organize in their own interests. Collectively, we can all work towards building working class unity.

We will anchor our coalitional efforts, building local and provincial movement infrastructure, through Rapid Response Networks – organizing committees that are made up of labour (including our labour councils), community, and political activists that are empowered to offer prompt solidarity actions in response to regressive government actions and in defence of working people.

ACTION 10:

Foster multiple entry points that build working class unity by amplifying and advancing affiliates', community and coalition partners', and the NDP's campaigns.

ACTION 11:

Incorporate the actions and demonstrations of our allies into the OFL's own organizational calendar and communication platforms so that we can mobilize our communities to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with other working class struggles.

ACTION 12:

Create multiple spaces for organizers and members to integrate the principle of working class unity into the OFL's ongoing work through guest features in the OFL's communication and educational products – like the newsletter and training workshops.

ACTION 13:

Introduce the OFL's organizational intention in multiple ways, providing all affiliates – both new and current – with revamped orientation packages that speak to the OFL's vision, its current work and structures, and the importance of working class unity.

ACTION 14:

Establish 30 Rapid Response Networks, which include labour councils, among identified and prioritized hubs with a plan to expand into all regions of Ontario.

CULTIVATE LEADERS



As a movement that advocates for the full inclusion of all peoples, it is incumbent upon us to lead by example.

Women, Indigenous and racialized peoples, 2SLGBTQI+ persons, young people, and people requiring accommodation bring different lived experiences, perspectives, and approaches to policy and political discourse, which can result in a more inclusive and effective movement when engaged.

We must make a concerted effort to create a culture and a climate of empowerment that delivers a leadership reflective of our membership's diversity. Given the current unbalanced opportunities for advancement and for representation in important decision-making, we must encourage complete equity in our trade union leadership.

The POM campaign will place a strong emphasis on developing the leadership capacity of rank-and-file community members – particularly young people. The reality is that we are reproducing leaders for the movement – not just developing leaders for the POM campaign. We must be cultivating leaders, through a step-by-step process, that are going to be social justice movement leaders for the rest of their lives.

THE POWER OF MANY CAMPAIGN WILL PLACE A STRONG EMPHASIS ON DEVELOPING THE LEADERSHIP CAPACITY OF RANK-AND-FILE COMMUNITY MEMBERS – PARTICULARLY YOUNG PEOPLE. THE REALITY IS THAT WE ARE REPRODUCING LEADERS FOR THE MOVEMENT – NOT JUST DEVELOPING LEADERS FOR THE POWER OF MANY CAMPAIGN.

ACTION 15:

Host a 2020 activist bootcamp focused on cultivating leaders, including young workers and local members in an effort to harness their talents and hone their skills for long term organizing efforts.

ACTION 16:

Develop a leadership framework to facilitate members' – particularly young members' – development from general members to core members to organizational members to movement leaders – with a defined set of responsibilities and characteristics for leadership at each stage.

ACTION 17:

Engage members in discussions to construct individualized leadership development plans and objectives, including providing ongoing political training sessions as well as workshops on current issues.

ACTION 18:

Expose union staff and member leaders to movement spaces – such as provincial networks, national gatherings, community spaces, and political training opportunities – to expand experimentation with unique and non-traditional organizing tactics.

PERSONALIZE THE POLITICAL



**THE POWER OF MANY
CAMPAIGN WILL WORK
TOWARDS ELECTING
THE NEW DEMOCRATIC
PARTY – A POLITICAL
PARTY ROOTED IN
STRENGTHENING
WORKING CLASS UNITY.**

Everything is political. Even the personal.

Our daily decisions are guided by politics.

Our elected representatives are law makers. They are policy makers. They are decision makers. They have the power to govern our individual rights and freedoms, our workplaces, and our communities.

But we have the power to decide who gets elected, to define the issues that will shape their campaign, and to dictate what they do once they are in office – that is our collective power.

The 2022 general election in Ontario will be a defining milestone in our POM campaign. We need a progressive government in Ontario – one that champions and advances the working class through their words and actions.

The Power of Many campaign will work towards electing the New Democratic Party – a political party rooted in strengthening working class unity.

ACTION 19:

Host an annual lobby day to educate politicians on workers' issues and provide an opportunity for rank-and-file members to share their stories.

ACTION 20:

Convene a one-day conference to unveil the OFL's 2022 provincial election strategy.

ACTION 21:

Continue to reach out, speak to, and connect with Ontario workers, who feel disengaged or overlooked in the political process, on issues that matter to them and that align with our class solidarity narrative.

ACTION 22:

Mobilize unionized and non-unionized workers to engage in the electoral process, to educate their community on campaign issues, to exercise their right to vote, and to promote the Ontario NDP as the only choice to realize an Ontario for all.

ACTION 23:

Develop a strategy with community groups to support unionized and equity-seeking workers running in the provincial election as well as foster spaces to promote and encourage equity groups to get involved in politics – be it in front of or behind the scenes.

COMMIT TO ESCALATING MOVEMENT



We cannot allow business as usual to proceed.

Organized resistance remains our best chance at confronting state power and fighting for a progressive future.

The government needs to be challenged – on the streets and in our workplaces.

The reality is that we will only win with struggle. And that means building on our momentum and maintaining pressure.

The Power of Many campaign will include a series of escalating actions that accumulate into a critical crisis point.

Over the next three years, we will identify 30 priority hubs across Ontario to focus our organizing efforts. Each year, we will concentrate on ten different hubs – partaking in deep community outreach that culminates in a day of militant and inclusive job action.

By 2022, the POM campaign will have reached over one million people and recruited over 20,000 new volunteers.

By 2022, the POM campaign will have demonstrated that a unified and strong labour movement – in partnership with our allies – can help deliver grounds for change that are deep and far reaching.

ACTION 24:

Encourage affiliates in mobilizing their locals to affiliate with their local labour councils to ensure the Action Plan is successfully implemented in communities across the province.

**THE POWER OF MANY
CAMPAIGN WILL
INCLUDE A SERIES
OF ESCALATING
ACTIONS THAT
ACCUMULATE INTO A
CRITICAL CRISIS POINT.**

ACTION 25:

Achieve the following through the POM campaign:

- // Communicate the current crisis, its context, and its regional impact to workers and the public at large through campaign materials and social media**
- // Organize regional phone banks to connect unions with their members and the issues that matter to them**
- // Mobilize 1000-person all stewards meetings, with the help of our affiliates, that educate and agitate workers**
- // Empower stewards to mass leaflet their workplaces and educate workers on the issues**
- // Request one to two book offs per union for one month in the lead up to a day of action/disruption**
- // Build a visible community presence with a campaign space to create access for volunteers and participants**
- // Plug in unions, community and coalition partners, and political allies to highlight various working class struggles in different lead-in events**
- // Galvanize 1000 to 5000 people to participate in a day of action/disruption in each hub**
- // Create a performance metric to evaluate the success of the POM campaign's local organizing efforts**
- // Ensure that regional hubs remain engaged with the POM campaign in both the short- and long-term through Rapid Response Networks**

ACTION 26:

Organize a mass general action across Ontario to demonstrate the power of working class unity.

CONCLUSION

Organizing will continue to be a central approach that we employ to address various working class struggles from rising income inequality to diminishing democracy to increasing hate.

OUR RESISTANCE MUST MOVE US TOWARDS ACHIEVING OUR LARGER OBJECTIVES, WHICH AT ITS CORE IS AN INTENTION TO BUILD AND STRENGTHEN WORKING CLASS UNITY.

Our resistance must move us towards achieving our larger objectives, which at its core is an intention to build and strengthen working class unity.

Our task is to champion issues that have the greatest potential to improve the lives of the working class and to unleash new opportunities to engage and win future fights that move us towards our long-term vision of decent work, strong public services, equity and justice, and healthy and safe workplaces and communities.

Let us harness the energy of this convention and use it to set fires of resistance everywhere.

The Power of Many is an awesome force and together, we will win.



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