

### CONVENTION DELEGATE REPORT – CUPE BC 55<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION

May 15, 2018

Greetings,

First off, I would like to thank CUPE 2081 for electing me as a first-time delegate to the CUPE BC 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention. I enjoyed myself and learned a lot about both how the BC division of CUPE operates and workers' concerns from across the province. If you haven't been, I would recommend going! While the vast majority of votes were one-sided, hearing people speak on a resolution shows the depth and complexity of the issue it addresses.

I enjoyed being surrounded by people who are politically and socially active, and who share many of the same concerns I do, from mental health to housing affordability to protecting the environment to racial/indigenous/gender/LGBTQQI equity in the workplace. I thought it was nice that instead of gifts for speakers, the conference made donations to Vancouver's Overdose Prevention Society.

I also enjoyed learning about workers' struggles that I didn't know about, such as K-12 educational assistants being regularly exposed to violence from clients, flight attendants being stuck on-board with drunk passengers, and people having more success with job applications if they don't use a racially coded name or don't mention their disability. Berenice Celeita spoke at the conference about receiving death threats and the murder of her friends while they fought the global extraction of resources from Colombia and the associated human rights violations related to petroleum drilling and mining for gold, uranium, and nickel.

There were three lively debates through the conference. The first was whether CUPE BC should establish a Childcare Committee to investigate both the needs of workers who provide childcare and the workers who need childcare. The other two were about the structure of the conference itself--whether to establish a task force to adjudicate the conference's effectiveness in serving its members and whether to move the conference to running every second year instead of annually. All three were ultimately voted down but sparked interesting, heated and respectful debate around where CUPE BC should be spending its money and to what extent the organization should be monitoring and modernizing its methodology and enacting its goals. I liked that there was one debate a day since the drama kept things interesting.

The recurring themes of the conference were election of John Horgan's minority NDP government, the upcoming October municipal elections, British Columbia's upcoming Proportional Representation referendum, and the election of CUPE-endorsed candidates to the Board of Governors of the Pacific Blue Cross after the Blue Cross locked out members of local 1816 for 60+ days last year.

Jeff McQuiggan