

Vancouver & District Labour Council



Media Advisory

April 29, 2019
Vancouver, BC

VDLC Joins with Labour and Community Organizations to Mark May Day

The Vancouver and District Labour Council is among several labour and community groups which have joined together to organize a march and rally for May Day, International Workers Day, on May 1st.

The event will begin at 5:30PM at Richards St. and W. Georgia St. with a territorial acknowledgement followed by opening remarks from VDLC President Stephen von Sychowski. At 6:00PM, a march will commence which will conclude at Victory Square at 7:00PM. The route will include stops for speeches and protest activities. The theme of this year's event is "Unite to Strike".

"In part, the idea behind the theme is to raise our voices together to say that it is not acceptable for the right to strike to be legislated away from workers, as was done to postal workers last Fall by the Liberal government," said von Sychowski.

But the event will also explore the broader concept of the right to strike. "At the same time, what we have in Canada is an exceptionally limited set of rights when it comes to your ability to strike, to withhold your labour," von Sychowski contests. "While what happened to the postal workers was a case of workers' clear legal rights being abused, we also want to raise the broader discussion of the rights of all workers. That means the right to strike for non-union workers. The right to strike for political issues, climate action, or other causes."

May Day is celebrated in countries around the world and is a public holiday in several. It was established at the International Labour Conference in Paris in 1889, in memory of those who struck for the eight-hour work day in Chicago's Haymarket Square in 1886, and those who were subsequently martyred for their alleged involvement in the events which transpired there. This year also marks the 100th anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike, a watershed moment in Canadian history which makes the theme "Unite to Strike" additionally relevant.

The Vancouver and District Labour Council represents nearly 100 local unions and 60,000 affiliated members in Vancouver, North Vancouver, Richmond, and West Vancouver.

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For further information: Stephen von Sychowski at president@vdlc.ca or 604-454-7816

Suite 170—111 Victoria Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 4C4

Phone: 604.254.0703 Email: office@vdlc.ca Website: www.vdlc.ca