

# OUR SHARED HUMANITY



Canadians mourn the tragic loss of life of six of our neighbours gunned down because of their religion in a mosque Sainte-Foy Quebec. The murder by a white supremacist fuelled by the Islamophobia of Marine Le Pen and Donald Trump stands as a shocking notice of what is at stake in 2017 and beyond.

The inauguration of Donald Trump was met with the largest outpouring of anger in living memory. Across the world, millions marched to protest his politics, his attitude and his agenda of bigotry, sexism and division. In Toronto over 50,000 women and allies from all walks of life jammed Queen's Park in the largest protest in decades. Many in the crowd had never been to a demonstration, while others were veteran activists dismayed at the prospect of past gains undone by a vile demagogue in the White House.

In the first week he proved the worst fears to be justified. His cabinet of billionaires representing oil and

finance capital are determined to gut labour standards, public education and equality rights. Executive Orders to build a wall against Mexico, bar Muslims are conscious steps to build a climate of fear and division against people of colour and immigrants. On World Holocaust Day, despite the tragic record of Anne Frank and her Jewish family being refused entry to the United States, he signed the order to ban refugees from seven majority Muslim countries.

In Canada, the Trudeau government is positioning itself to accommodate the new reality of Trump's America First doctrine. The cabinet was shuffled, the corrupt former PM Brian Mulroney was recruited, and the Keystone pipeline decision applauded. Business leaders are trying to position themselves for future trade relations, while oil, gas and mining interests prepare to claw back measures for carbon pricing or climate justice.

There will be much to protest in the



next four years. Hatred will spread as the most powerful man on earth gives permission to xenophobes, racists and misogynists to act out their worst instincts. Workers' rights, equality rights and civil liberties will be under attack by Republican majorities and the Supreme Court. Federal Right-to-Work legislation is being tabled. Canadian demagogues like Kevin O'Leary and Kellie Leitch will try to ride to power on the Trump momentum. It will become a much nastier world, and people may feel overwhelmed unless they see inspiring and effective response.

The spark of resistance was evident on January 21st, as millions repudiated the Trump agenda. The turnout of hundreds of lawyers at U.S. airports to assist those caught in the net of repression was a hopeful sign, along with rulings by a number of judges that challenged the legality of Executive Orders. Mayors and State Governors have vowed to obstruct the repression against undocumented

residents, and a sanctuary movement is blossoming. Sadly, some labour leaders stood by Trump as he made his pipeline announcement, just hours before his wholesale attack on human rights and the most vulnerable in society.

How should Canadians respond? Across this country, there needs to be a deep movement to reject division and hate. No Canadian politician or businessman can be allowed to "normalize" the rule of Trump and the Republican wrecking crew. Nor should they be allowed to mimic weaker rules on climate action, workers rights or corporate tax cuts. Toughening our fight for economic justice so that people have decent work and dignity is vital to countering the despair that is a fertile ground for right-wing populism. We need to be resolute in standing for the true values of Canada, and be guided by the courageous last words of Jack Layton as he urged us to affirm our shared humanity:



My friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world.

**Labour Council will work with affiliates, the CLC, national unions and community allies to develop a comprehensive response to the dangers facing humankind over the next four years:**

**Undertake constant mobilization** to maintain a broad public rejection of the agenda of the Trump Republicans and their corporate backers. Build on key events such as IWD, International Day for the Elimination of Racism, World Refugee Day and Canada's 150th Anniversary to highlight our commitment to justice.

**Build powerful movements** to challenge Islamophobia and all forms of discrimination, and deepen the equity agenda in schools, workplaces and the labour movement. Strengthen the refugee, migrant rights and sanctuary movements and support those in the U.S. who are working to uphold civil liberties. Rescind the "Safe Third Country" agreement and repeal Bill C-51.

**Strengthen the fight for good jobs for all.** If NAFTA is being re-negotiated, delete Chapter 11 and enshrine labour and environmental rights. Secure Just Transition policies for those affected by transformation to a greener economy. Defend public services and fight for fair corporate tax policies. Fight for new laws that strengthen workers' rights and economic security.

**Support Indigenous peoples** in their struggle to defend land and water, for justice for missing and murdered indigenous women, and implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Report.

**Defend the principles of professional journalism** and financial sustainability of Canadian media as a key component of democracy.