



FOR IMMEDIATE MEDIA RELEASE

October 29th, 2018

THE PITTSBURGH TRAGEDY

TORONTO, ONT – The Toronto & York Region Labour Council joins with all Canadians in condemning the horrific murders of eleven innocent victims at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. We know that because of this act, fear will become heightened across Jewish communities - fear of another incident where their family, friends and community are again targeted; echoes of horrific past persecutions of Jews; the realization that a house of sanctuary has been violated in such a terrible way.

This tragedy is the consequence of a shameful rise in hatred and division across the United States and the world. We condemn the anti-Semitism that has deep roots in all of our societies, and is emerging as a disturbing feature of right-wing populism.

Hatred and hate speech have consequences. It is less than two years since we mourned six men killed at prayer in the Quebec mosque. At that time, Labour Council noted that “Hatred will spread as the most powerful man on earth gives permission to xenophobes, racists and misogynists to act out their worst instincts”. Sadly, that prediction has shown to be true. The world was horrified when Trump’s response to the Charlottesville marchers chanting “Jews will not replace us” was that there were “very fine people on both sides” of the event.

But this is not just an American problem. Here in Canada, alt right groups have the same approach to marginalizing and demonizing people based on race, religion or place of origin. Anti-Semitism has been a constant in Canada’s history – from widespread discrimination at every level, to the Christie Pitts riots, to the KKK and Western Guard, to supporters of Faith Goldy today.

Labour Council calls on all people of good will to join together in challenging anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism and all forms of discrimination. We must constantly affirm our common humanity in the face of hatred and division of any kind.

The Toronto and York Region Labour Council is a central labour body that combines the strength of over 150 local unions representing 205,000 women and men and who work in every sector of the economy.

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