

February 9, 2017

Islamophobia Not Welcome Here

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter... I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear” Martin Luther King

Our Union mourns the tragic loss of the fathers, husbands and sons massacred while they prayed at the Islamic cultural centre in Quebec City. These acts of hate harm everyone. Now is a time for reflection, compassion and meaningful solidarity. Muslim Canadians are represented in every field of work. They are our families and our co-workers.

Many unfair myths about Muslims are projected in our culture. The truth is that the first Muslims arrived in Canada in the mid-1800s. Like many newcomers, they struggled, raised families, and built the infrastructure of this nation. Today, those adhering to this faith number almost 1.2 million Canadians. They are not a “fringe group,” they are us and we are them. They are our sisters and brothers in struggle for a better quality of life. If there is any threat to our communities, it’s not coming from Muslim Canadians, it’s coming from those full of fear and hatred who think their own misplaced insecurities give them the right to murder.

This senseless violence did not occur by chance. It is the outcome of decades of attempts to vilify followers of Islam as threatening. It is the outcome of Islamophobia; the rantings of right-wing talk radio hosts looking for ratings, and more hidden forms of discrimination. Our popular culture, from Disney to action films, presents Arabs and Muslims as either exotic or villains.

Our public safety is threatened by the homegrown production of hate, ignorance and privilege. Authorities and leaders were quick to suggest the murders in Quebec were an act of “terrorism,” again linking Muslims with terror when it was clearly a terrible crime of domestic *hatred*.

Many Muslim Canadians are postal workers also. Stand with them. Support them. Don’t be a bystander. Intervene and show working-class solidarity when you hear Islamophobic comments.

This is about more than being a decent person. It is about understanding that solidarity is not merely a word. We cannot be silent in a society that marginalizes some of us and manufactures hatred. “An injury to one is an injury to all.”

The six murdered men, fathers, sons and brothers were:

**Khaled Belkacemi
Azzedine Soufiane
Aboubaker Thabti
Mamadou Tanou Barry
Abdelkrim Hassane
Ibrahima Barry**

We honour the lives and families of these men and wish a speedy recovery for the injured. Let us never forget.

In solidarity,



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2nd National Vice-President

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