

## Open Letter to Ken Georgetti and the Canadian Labour Congress:

We are labour activists, many of whom were involved in organizing against the G20 Summit in Toronto and solidarity actions across the country. After the “Peoples First” march, many of us remained on the streets throughout the weekend contesting the unprecedented militarization of our city and the G20 neoliberal agenda.

We are disturbed and concerned to read the statement by Ken Georgetti, President of the Canadian Labour Congress, issued during the G20 summit. The CLC issued a statement condemning ‘vandalism’ and declaring their commitment to working with the police throughout the summit; however, the CLC’s statement is shockingly silent about the violence perpetrated by the state and police, aimed at rendering the right of people to assemble, organize and resist obsolete, brutalizing our sisters, brothers and children.

Union members and our allies in the community were victims of the organized confusion that led to the massive violations of our basic civil liberties including house raids without warrants, indiscriminate searches, and the warehousing of activists, innocent bystanders and others for hours without charges in a dehumanizing detention centre.

Thousands of union members and others gathered on the streets and in the state and police-sanctioned “free speech zone”, otherwise known as Queen’s Park. As the mainstream media was glued to unattended burning police cars, protesters were being charged and trampled by police horses, subject to indiscriminate arrests, rubber bullets, tear gas and various forms of police brutality.

The focus on vandalism and attacks on private property espoused by the CLC statement and some mainstream media outlets, expels from the debate the legitimate concerns and lived injustices of many within the labour movement who turned out to protest the G8/G20. By commission or omission this limited focus legitimizes the suspension of rights and liberties in this city, including the right to assembly and the right to political protest.

Thousands mobilized in front of police headquarters on June 28<sup>th</sup> in solidarity with the hundreds of activists still being detained and our unions and union flags were absent. We believe union solidarity should have been present. While we are encouraged to see the CLC's recent decision to join the call for a public inquiry, we feel that the CLC and Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) must support our allies, call for the release of all prisoners in the detention centres and jails, and resist the attack on our human rights in all its forms.

We as a labour movement must commit to organize social movements along with our allies in social justice, environmental justice, grass-roots, anti-poverty, anti-racist, feminist, non-status, Indigenous, Queer and international movements to challenge and resist neoliberal capitalist governments’ ruthless assaults on the working people in Canada and globally. We will not and cannot win the struggle we face against the violent onslaught of neoliberalism by abandoning our allies and our communities in the wake of a massive crackdown on dissent.

## Signatories:

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