



April 29, 2010

Editor
Toronto Star
One Yonge Street
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To the Editor:

It was extremely disturbing to open today's Star and find no story of the labour movement's Day of Mourning commemoration of the thousands of workers killed and injured at work. Nathan Phillips Square was filled with more than 600 people, many of whom have either lost loved ones or have been injured themselves. Mayor David Miller opened the ceremony with a proclamation on behalf of the City of Toronto and paid tribute to Dilshod Marupov, the lone survivor of the Christmas Eve scaffolding collapse that killed four migrant workers. This is the labour movement's most solemn day, made necessary because of the mounting tragedies; yet the lack of coverage suggests that this is just a normal price to be paid for the privilege of work and that the statistics are just par for the course.

We cannot and should not grow easy with the status quo. In the first two months of this year alone there have been 86 deaths and 38,184 claims for work-related injuries and diseases reported to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board; in 2009, there were 479 fatality claims and 253,761 injuries and disease claims.

Also on view at yesterday's City Hall event were hundreds of signs with "Kill a worker, go to jail," which exhorts the provincial government to make use of its most important weapon, the Criminal Code of Canada provision that enables prosecution of corporate executives, directors and managers who act wrongfully or negligently.

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In the six years since Bill C-45 was passed it was unused in Ontario, yet more than 400 workers have been killed on the job and nearly two million injured. Its first use finally took place in Sault Ste Marie last month and already employers are beginning to sit up and take notice. We need more of this kind of serious action from the government.

In 1991, the Parliament of Canada declared April 28 the National Day of Mourning. The flag at Toronto's City Hall stood a half-mast, a gesture of respect and concern. We would have expected the Star to make note of this and hope that in the future when a worker dies on the job it is given the serious attention it merits.

Yours truly,

Patrick (Sid) Ryan
President

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