

# CLC CONVENTION 2017

WOMEN'S FORUM  
FACES OF FEMINISM

STREET PARTY FOR A #FAIRFUTURE | FÊTE DE RUE POUR UN #AVENIRJUSTE  
**ALL OUT AT NOON!**  
**TOUS À L'EXTÉRIEUR CE MIDI!**

FORUM DES FEMMES  
LES VISAGES DU FEMINISME

REMEMBER WESTRAY. ENFORCE THE LAW.  
SOUVENONS-NOUS DE WESTRAY. APPLIQUONS LA LOI.



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## **CLC Convention 2017**

**A report by Heather Ross**

When I was first selected to attend the Canadian Labour Congress Convention on behalf of PSAC as a Young Worker I was filled with many emotions. Since this was my first convention (go big or go home), I was excited for the learning opportunity but also very nervous. I attended the PSAC Convention Procedures training session in anticipation for the upcoming week. I found it helpful but I still felt like I was getting into something much larger than the training could prepare me for.

On arriving in Toronto, I joined young workers from across Canada for the *Young Workers' Strategy Session*. Being in a large creative environment of my peers helped brainstorm ideas for future campaigns and shine light on issues being faced by activist youth across the country. During this session I started making bonds with other youth.

By the end of the first day I had made friends with two PSAC Young Workers. One from Hamilton and the other from Surrey. Together we discussed the issues that we felt were most damning to our respective Young Workers Committees. We were surprised to find that many hurdles were echoed from all members of our growing group.

Later that evening we attended the *Human Rights Forum* and the numbers in our group were rising. Two more PSAC Youth joined us from Vancouver and Winnipeg. We were now 5 strong and ready for the rest of the convention. We stayed up late into the night exchanging views on the struggles of Angela Davis and how certain issues from her fight were still being fought by others today. We needed to be a part of that fight and not observers.

The next day brought the first day of convention. It was a little overwhelming to say the least. With the support of my Local's President and my rag-tag group of comrades I made it through the first round of resolutions.



The guest speaker of the day was Mary Walsh, who was speaking on her experience with mental health and addiction in her family. This resonated with me and many other delegates because 1 in 5 Canadians experience mental health or addiction problems in their life.

In a convention that large you have thousands of people in attendance. Some are there to spread the word on a particular issue, some to speak their minds, and others to do their duty as an involved union member and hold down the fort. The last ones I mentioned are of course the ever famous Mic Muffins. By the time Mrs. Walsh had finished her speech the Mic Muffins were settling into their linear formation. It's an amazing sight to see actually. All these people from different walks of life, work backgrounds and education levels debating on matters that for some will have life altering results.

I think all of the conference floor performers and speakers were all moving but to me the most powerful representation was the dance and accompanying video for *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women*. That brought me to tears as I watched and felt the pain of an entire nation. It was one video I shared countless times over the following days, and as time has passed, over weeks. Not enough is being done by our government and it's time to take action.

I attended the three 20 minute *Mobilize to Organize* sessions put on by the CLC. A constant issue for PSAC Young Workers' Committees in attendance levels and online participation. We learned fundamentals on recruiting, winning over union nay-sayers and video/photo tips to enhance our social media pages. These were valuable seminars that educated us in ways that we could transfer to our day to day as Committee Executives.

The *Young Workers Forum* was enlightening because it showcased three strong youth that organized their workplaces and created Unions. It was inspiring to see such actions in what could be viewed as the faces of corporate greed and evil. (I mean, come on, Bell? Goodlife? Evil.) Their determination struck a chord with the youth in attendance.

The *Women's Forum* had powerful speakers; all answering "What does feminism mean to you?". In three thought provoking presentations they shared art, laughter and tears. It's hard to say which artist spoke to me the most but I really enjoyed the poetry from Rania El Magammer.

The final day of resolutions was a heated one. We had many standing votes and it really makes you wonder why the whole voting process isn't electronic.

Needing a break from the tension we were relieved to take to the streets for the *Street Party for a #FAIRFUTURE*. We marched en masse through Toronto's busy financial district, shutting down streets and collecting in a cross section of four major bank buildings. We weren't just raising our noise for a fair future, we were demanding it.



On returning to the convention hall we voted in the incoming Canadian Council (YAY Larry Rousseau!!), paid tribute to Barb Byers and had session adjournments.

Our five-strong group got ready for the CLC's 60th Anniversary Celebration and treated it like a prom. There was fancy dress and cheesy stairwell photos. It was a great closer to a jam packed learning adventure.

All in all it was an amazing experience. The education I received and the inspiration I felt will stay with me as I advance in my activist journey. I made many allies and a few lifelong bonds along the way which is paramount in any revolution.

In solidarity,  
Heather Ross