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RAISE WAGES NOT THE SEA

GOOD GREEN JOBS FOR ALL

Anti-racism

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Facts & figures

15
As of July, the number of consecutive months where the global average temperature was the hottest ever for that month since recording started in 1880.

350
parts per million of CO2 in in the atmosphere which must be maintained to prevent climate chaos

404
parts per million of CO2 in the atmosphere in July

650
Number of troops Trudeau is sending to Africa to protect mining profits

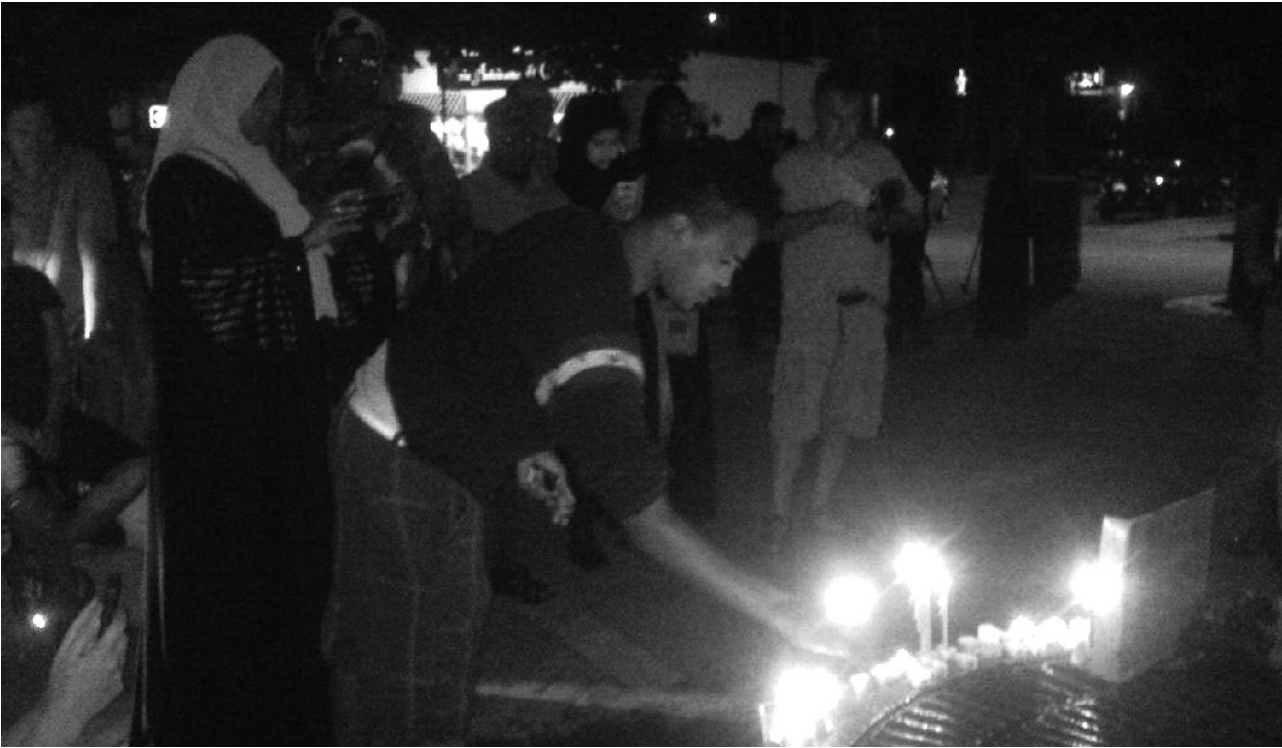
In their own words

“The second officer arrived and immediately started beating the suspect with his fists in the face and head”

-eyewitnesses describing Ottawa police beating Abdirahman Abdi to death

“I stand in support of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nations and all Canadians who find themselves with no voice in our present version of democracy, who are trying to come up with the entry fee that gets them a seat at the table where their pollution future is being discussed.”

-Gord Downie of the Tragically Hip



Black Lives Matter: Abdirahman Abdi mattered

by CHANTAL SUNDARAM

Those were the words written on a restaurant chalkboard in the Ottawa neighbourhood of Hintonburg on the evening of Tuesday July 26, when hundreds gathered at a vigil for Abdirahman Abdi—a 37-year-old Somali-Canadian man with mental health issues who police murdered in that neighbourhood on Sunday July 24.

Abdi lived in the Hintonburg neighbourhood, and was unarmed when a call from a coffee shop brought police in. According to witness Ross McGhie and his partner, as reported on CBC news: “It really kind of looked like an officer just approaching somebody who had posed a minor disturbance, so it was really surprising to see what happened happen. I think the both of us were really surprised when the second officer arrived and immediately started beating the suspect with his fists in the face and head. From a total layperson perspective, it appeared that it escalated way too quickly for the type of resistance being put up by Mr. Abdi. It went from zero to 100 very, very, very fast.”

Vigil

The vigil two days later was large and

very diverse, bringing out both people from the neighbourhood and the Somali community from around the greater Ottawa area. Somerset Square Park, next to the residence where Abdi lived and was killed, was overflowing and surrounding streets remained full long after.

During the vigil, a local alderman spoke, and a speaker from the family said they were very grateful for the community support. The overall message was that the entire community, black and white, was standing together.

Jocelyn Iahtail, First Nations activist who now lives close to the Ottawa neighbourhood where the killing occurred, also gave greetings of solidarity. Iahtail herself has a son with special needs, and her grandmother and mother received an official apology in the House of Commons in 2008 over residential schools. She came to the vigil to represent the link in Canada between the treatment of Indigenous people and people of African origin in Canada’s racist justice system. As a next step in demonstrating this in practice, she announced the commemoration of Prisoners’ Justice Day at the Ottawa Human Rights Monument on August 10.

The end of the Ottawa vigil was marked by Muslim sunset prayers by

members of the Somali community in the streets of Hintonburg, Ottawa, with the support of their allies, many of whom stayed long after speeches were done to light candles and bear witness together to a grave injustice that affects us all.

State violence

Canada has a shameful history of oppressing and torturing Somalian civilians abroad, so terrible that it led to the disbanding of the elite Canadian Airborne Regiment for the 1992 beating death of Somali teenager Shidane Arone, who merely came into the compound looking for food. Canada also has a long and ongoing history of anti-Black racism at home, from carding to killing.

In Ottawa, the commemoration of Prisoners’ Justice Day at the Ottawa Human Rights Monument on August 10 was announced at the vigil for Abdirahman Abdi as a way to commemorate all victims of state-sponsored police violence. It will be a way to locally demonstrate that Black lives matter, that Muslim lives matters, that Indigenous lives matter, that the lives of all people of colour matter, and that their allies know it.

Trudeau fails to defend civil liberties

by CHANTAL SUNDARAM

In May, a Federal Court Justice ruled the National Security Certificate against Mahmoud Jaballah to be unreasonable, almost 20 years to the day that he and his family arrived in Canada seeking asylum as refugees from Egypt’s Mubarak dictatorship.

But in August, it was announced that the Trudeau government – touted as a supposed friend to refugees because it admitted 25,000 Syrians into Canada – is appealing the Jaballah decision.

Secret trials

Security Certificates allow for secret trials where information is not disclosed to the detainee or to their lawyer, unlike a criminal trial in which there must be full disclosure and due process. Instead, it sets up a process that uses the lowest standard of proof of any court in Canada. Security Certificates allow imprisonment and deportation of refugees and permanent residents to unjust imprison-

ment, torture or even death. They have only been used against Muslims, none of whom were ever charged with any crime.

One of them is Mahmoud Jaballah, who the government alleges is a member of al-Jihad, a group which advocates violence against the Egyptian government. Jaballah denies this accusation; he sought refugee status on the basis that he was wanted by Egyptian authorities on charges of inciting violence, and that he would be killed if sent back.

In May, Federal Court Justice Dolores Hansen ruled that the government had not in fact established reasonable grounds to believe that Jaballah is a danger to Canadian security. She also rejected the assertion he was ever a member of al-Jihad or provided support to the group, and ruled to strike down the Security Certificate against Jaballah.

But the federal government is claiming that Justice Hansen made mistakes in concluding there was no credible evidence he posed a threat to Canada. In a notice filed with the Federal Court

of Appeal, the government asks that the ruling be overturned and the Security Certificate be upheld, failing which the case should be sent back to the Federal Court for another look.

In an approach that signals no departure from the Harper government’s approach to Canadian “security” and civil liberties, federal lawyers claim that Justice Hansen relied on a higher standard of proof than necessary in weighing the evidence. Again, Security Certificates have been widely condemned precisely for relying on the lowest standard of proof in Canada.

The Liberal appeal was filed during the immediate aftermath of Aaron Driver, an Ontario man with Islamist sympathies who was killed in August during a confrontation with police. There can be no doubt that the Liberals are trying to demonstrate that they are not “soft” on terror.

The appeal also comes in tandem with the federal government’s new “anti-radicalization” initiative. While the program has received endorsement from some in

the Muslim community, this only continues a process whereby Canadian Muslims are constantly expected to visibly demonstrate their opposition to terrorism and “radicalization” in order to have credibility in raising concerns over civil liberties and Islamophobia.

But no “anti-radicalization” campaign can take the place of halting what fundamentally fuels political disaffection and the use of terrorism as a strategy: the Western drive to imperialist war in the Middle East.

The first promise made, and the first broken, by Trudeau after his election was to stop Canadian involvement in the bombing of Syria and Iraq. It is this aggression, in the name of combating ISIS and other Islamist groups, that feeds their growth and growth in the ranks of their sympathizers.

It is not Mahmoud Jaballah, or any of the other victims of Security Certificates, who pose a danger to national security. It is Canada’s involvement in the war on Iraq and Syria that makes ordinary people in Canada unsafe.

Justice for Abdirahman Abdi

by CHANTAL SUNDARAM

On July 24, Abdirahman Abdi, a Black Muslim Somali man living with autism and mental illness, was beaten to death by Ottawa police. Two days later, neighbours of Abdi, and supporters from across Ottawa, gathered for a vigil in the Hintonburg neighbourhood where he lived and was murdered.

While the vigil was an opportunity to mourn and stand by the family, the one-month anniversary of Abdi’s death on August 24 was an opportunity to demand justice. In solidarity with Black Lives Matter – Toronto, which called for nation-wide demonstrations on that day, rallies took place in Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, London, Kitchener/Waterloo, Hamilton, Sudbury, and in Ottawa.

The Ottawa rally was held at Ottawa Police Services, and was more broadly political than the vigil that followed Abdi’s death. Unlike the vigil, it brought out fewer members of Ottawa’s Somali community and residents of the immediate neighbourhood where he was killed. But still it represented an important continuity from that first response of support and outrage.

Speakers emphasized that Abdi’s murder was not an exception: the crowd was asked to repeat names from a long list of victims of systemic police racism and violence. But the main message was still that Abdirahman will not be forgotten: his life will be celebrated and valued, and what ended it must be challenged.

Demands include: charge the two officers responsible for Abdi’s killing; release the Special Investigations Unit report on Abdi’s killing to the public; release general police statistics by race; enact recommendations on police protocol regarding interactions with people living with mental disabilities and mental distress; hold Ottawa Hospital accountable for mishandling of the Abdi situation and withholding information from his family; hold media accountable for misrepresentation of the killing.

It was announced at the rally that on the following day, August 25, a Town Hall for members of the Black community, led by Somali mothers, would take place in the neighbourhood where Abdi was killed.

#JusticeForAbdirahman

Socialist Worker

e-mail: **reports@socialist.ca**
web: **www.socialist.ca**
lphone: **416.972.6391**

All correspondence to:
Socialist Worker
P.O. Box 339, Station E
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Trudeau: widespread selfies and hidden imperialism

While the Prime Minister was spending his time photo-bombing families on beaches in western Canada, the defence minister Harjit Sajjan was announcing yet another deployment of Canadian troops overseas. This time the plan is to send 650 troops to conduct operations in Africa.

We have not heard where the troops will be deployed but the 3 countries that have been named as possible candidates are Mali, Congo and the Central African Republic (CAR).

Canada, of course already has significant interests in each of those countries where Canadian companies mine gold, uranium and diamonds.

Almost all the companies have been accused of fueling or directly supporting human rights violations. A UN panel released a report in 2002 called “Report on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Congo.” The report stated that they had clear evidence of violations committed by 8 Canadian mining companies in the Congo alone.

Canadian troops have already been to Mali to protect mining interests under the guise of anti-terror initiatives. In the CAR Axmin corporation is desperate to recover the massive Ndassima mine which was taken over in 2012.

And Canada’s new UN ambassador Marc-Andre Blanchard—who also spoke at the same press conference—would know. Before becoming a full time diplomat this long time Liberal fundraiser was CEO of McCarthy Tétrault, a major Canadian corporate law firm which represented Canadian mining firms

internationally and specialized in facilitating trans Atlantic pillage.

This new adventure is the third announced military deployment by the new Prime Minister in the first 10 months of his tenure after Iraq and the Baltic deployments. All have been described as open-ended missions and have deliberately vague objectives.

Meanwhile Canada became the second largest supplier of weapons to the Middle East and the sixth largest military exporter overall.

Turkey: were there two coups?

By Şenol Karakaş

Turkey is an interesting country. In a place that, together with the 15 July coup attempt, has experienced five serious coups, the concept of a coup is being applied to whatever anyone wants. The variety of uses of the concept of a coup rivals only the variety of uses for the concept of fascism.

Just as these days terms like “civil fascism”, “military fascism”, “colonial-type fascism”, “Islamofascism” and “open fascism” are often being used, so to about coups we hear “civil coup”, “Islamic coup” and “palace coup”. This is not the reality.

A coup is a military process. It can not be watered down. Putschists cannot be compared to the politicians who are targeted by coups, even if those politicians are implementing the most ruthless right wing policies. A military coup cannot be compared to an authoritarian parliamentary regime. The point here is that a struggle between a parliament and a coup, is not a

struggle between equal powers. No matter how right wing, no matter how corrupt the parties in government are, a parliament represents democracy and that cannot be compared to a military coup.

Democracy and parliament as a platform for democracy is the expression and achievement of the struggle of the oppressed and of an ongoing struggle from below for rights. While the struggle from below pushes for a reduction of the limitations to democracy, the right wing and ruling bourgeois class, the racist or centre-right parties and even social democratic parties push to narrow the range of democracy. The extent of struggle from below and its ability to make its achievements permanent, can decrease ruling class pressure. But a military coup is something totally different. Had the coup succeeded, struggling against it would have been like struggling with hands and feet chained, with eyes and mouths taped.

There is a radical difference between a political space in the hands of armed forces and a

political space controlled by the power won in elections. While in the latter it is possible to win back the rank and file, to defeat politically, to outmaneuver with social dynamics, to pull off demands, to win, with a military in power they are able to abolish mass resistance by suppressing ideas, protests, the freedom of expression and organisation in all spaces. They would implement a temporary ban on all the organisations that continue to fight for rights.

What does this mean? This means that on 15 July the struggle did not pivot between two coups. On 15 July, the putschists attacked people elected by popular vote, and even though they have authoritarian tendencies, are forcing through a presidential system and are wearing away democratic practices, Parliament and the democratic mechanisms needed to be protected. They killed people who resisted the coup to enforce their choice.

What we are facing is not two different coups.

Only one coup was carried out on 15 July. It is very important that

this coup was defeated. It is very important to try to influence the movement that defeated the coup. It is crucial to oppose the coup, to connect with the masses who came out against the coup, to advance and organise the movements that will affect them in order to totally defeat coups and to resist authoritarian tendencies, to resist extension of the limitations of democracy, to ensure a return to the peace process, and to reduce the size of support for authoritarian tendencies.

In order to prevent coups, to take radical steps that will change all the structures of the education system, the political space and the state that produces putschists, we have to struggle shoulder to shoulder against every single coup. In such a fight we can push back the authoritarian tendencies and the state of emergency.

This is shared from the Revolutionary Socialist Workers’ Party (Turkey)

Freedom for Egyptian revolutionaries but many more face state repression

by ANNE ALEXANDER

Egyptian revolutionary socialist activists Mahienour el-Massry and Yousef Shaaban have been freed from jail after serving 15-month sentences on trumped-up charges.

Mahienour and Yousef are well-known in their home town of Alexandria for the key role they played in the 2011 revolution.

They helped to organise the first protests against police brutality which later grew into a nation-wide campaign.

They have endured inhuman conditions in Egypt’s overcrowded prisons, along with tens of thousands of others seized during the clampdown since the coup of 2013.

They suffered from lack of water, soaring temperatures in the filthy cells and inadequate access to medical treatment.

Mahienour and Yousef were greeted on their release by Taher Mokhtar, an activist in the Doctors’ Union and a campaigner for prisoners’ rights.

Taher was also freed on bail last week after lawyers successfully appealed against the continuation of his pre-trial detention.

He and his flatmates were seized in a dawn raid on their home in Cairo in January this year.

Stormed

The security forces stormed into their apartment and claimed they were planning protests against the military regime on the anniversary of the 2011 revolution.

They also seized copies of reports which Taher was working on documenting medical neglect in Egyptian prisons.

Meanwhile thousands of other political prisoners remain in detention, many without formal charges.

They include hundreds arrested during the crackdown on protests against the sale of the Tiran and Sanafir islands to Saudi Arabia earlier this year.

Labour lawyer and revolutionary socialist activist Haitham Mohamedain was arrested on 22 April and is in detention awaiting trial.

In a recent letter to supporters he argued that the protests over the sale of the islands couldn’t be separated from the struggle against privatisation.

The generals who sold off Tiran and Sanafir are also selling off Egypt’s public services, industries and agriculture to investors from the Gulf and elsewhere.

Worker activists are also targets of the crackdown.

Workers from Alexandria Shipyard who were arrested in May and charged with “incitement to strike” were set to find out their sentence from a military court this Tuesday.

Go to egyptsolidarityinitiative.org for information about campaigns to support political prisoners in Egypt. This is shared from Socialist Worker (UK)

Support posties

As *Socialist Worker* goes to press it’s not clear what the outcome will be of negotiations between Canada Post and CUPW, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, representing over 51,000 workers across the country. Postal workers were in a legal strike situation as of Monday, August 29, but have a reached a tentative deal that has to be ratified by the membership.

What is clear is that Canada Post management is on the warpath to break the union and also that what happens to CUPW matters a great deal—not just to their own members, but to the rest of the labour movement and for the delivery of public services in general.

That’s why there was a lot of public support for the Save home delivery campaign launched by the union. Under Stephen Harper’s Tory government and Canada Post management—most notably CEO Deepak Chopra—we saw the introduction in 2013 of a wildly unpopular plan to eliminate door-to-door delivery of mail and to convert to “community mail boxes,” a misnomer if there ever was one!

Seniors, people with disabilities or mobility issues and people who just didn’t see the need for ending a public service that is provided in most other industrialized countries, hoped that with the election of the Trudeau government they might see the reversal of this policy, especially since it was one of the promises Trudeau made in his bid to be elected.

So far, the 860,000 Canadians who had already been converted to community mailboxes have been left wondering when the Liberals will uphold their campaign promise. The Liberals are conducting a “review” of Canada Post and they say that nothing is “off the table,” which means, of course, that they may choose to go ahead with the same kind of cost-cutting measures and elimination of jobs and services that we saw under the Harper government.

Militant history

The role of militancy within the postal workers’ union is historic. CUPW was born in 1965 out of the old Canadian Postal Employees Association. They went out on what was an illegal wildcat strike in 1965, before workers in the public sector had the right to strike or even to form unions and won the right to collective bargaining for public sector workers.

Up until this time wages in the public sector were notoriously low. Throughout the 1970s CUPW went out on strike to fight for a living wage for low-paid workers, many of whom were women. A 1978 strike resulted in CUPW president Jean-Claude Parrot being jailed when the union defied back-to-work legislation passed by the Canadian parliament.

In 1981, after another strike, CUPW became the first federal civil service union in Canada to win the right to maternity leave for its members. Many of the gains made by CUPW were translated into gains across the board for other unionized workers. But they were not won without a fight.

That’s why it’s no surprise that this time around CUPW is supporting the rights of new hires and women workers. Two of the main bargaining issues in this round of negotiations are equal pay for women letter carriers who work in rural areas and saying no to the creation of a two-tiered pension system—where new employees would have no choice but to accept the defined contribution pension scheme, much more uncertain and with much less onus on the employer to ensure a decent pension for retirees.

The stakes in this fight are high. On the one side we have Canada Post management, functioning like any private corporation. They have been recording record profits but apparently not high enough for the CEO. How to ensure even greater profits: cut services and worsen wages and working conditions for workers.

The ‘Save door-to-door delivery’ campaign and its popularity across the country show the possibilities of uniting CUPW members and the public they serve in a joint fight for decent wages and decent public services.

Initiatives from the union, like the recent proposal around the possibilities of creating a postal banking system—which would benefit low-income people (who may have difficulties opening a regular bank account) or people living in rural areas where banks are closing because it’s not profitable for them to serve small communities—are dismissed out of hand by Canada Post management.

Strike solidarity

CUPW leadership has said their job action may not be an all out strike but could include things like a ban on overtime or possibly rotating strikes, in an effort not to “inconvenience” the public. However, the real strength of the union is exactly in understanding that the only way to get Canada Post to budge is to use their withdrawal of labour to affect the profits that should be used to create a better postal service and decent salaries and working conditions for those who provide the service.

The recent example of library workers in Mississauga, who successfully struck for 15 days to raise the wages of pages and part-time workers—among the lowest paid workers in the library system—is instructive. The public didn’t turn against the library workers because they were “inconvenienced” by the strike. Library workers successfully reached out to community members who love and use their public library system, to explain why the strike was necessary.

Solidarity is still the strongest weapon the working class has in its arsenal. In the battle between Canada Post management and CUPW members, which side are you on?



Eyewitness to the DNC: spectacle and revolt

by KEVIN TAGHABON

Held in the Wells Fargo Centre in downtown Philadelphia, the Democratic National Convention peaked with the foreseen coronation of their preferred presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton. After months of campaigning against her and successfully building a massive grassroots network, Senator Bernie Sanders finally threw his full weight behind Clinton.

Like all presidential conventions, the DNC brought together disparate groups of activists from across the country to the streets of Philadelphia. Unlike most other conventions however, Sanders delegates, staffers, and volunteers were a large part of the dissident voices at the marches in the streets. The happy ball shown on all major cable news networks did not reflect the reality of what was happening inside the Wells Fargo Centre.

Sanders people mistreated

On the Wednesday of the DNC (July 27) I caught up with a mother and her two daughters on the subway to City Hall from Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park. They all held pro-Sanders or anti-Clinton signs, one reading “Feminist for Bernie.” She told me that her oldest daughter (not present) was a Sanders delegate. On Monday night, when they walked out as a group in protest, they were not allowed back in. They had no way to get on the shuttle buses inside, and were stranded 45 minutes from their hotel rooms. I asked her who made this decision, but she did not know.

The next night at the gates of the Wells Fargo Centre, protesters informed the crowd using the People’s Mic technique that Sanders delegates were now not being allowed out. The DNC also intermittently shut the lights out on Sanders delegates when they chanted protests or held anti-Clinton signs. Sanders supporters mostly had hand-made signs confiscated at the door. Clinton supporters did not.

The contradictory behaviour seems like petty vengeance against the Sanders people, but perhaps it was also lack of organization. I spoke to one of the bus coordinators working inside the DNC on our way home Thursday. He told me that the buses “were completely disorganized. Septa (local buses) were mixed in with delegate buses and no one knew which was which.” This despite the Department of Homeland Security

giving Philadelphia \$50 million for this National Security Special Event. It should be noted that this lavish party (as well as the often-closed Democratic Primaries) is funded with public money.

Grassroots has no love for Clinton, moving to Jill Stein

In three days on the streets, parks, and public spaces, I encountered fewer than a dozen people with pro-Clinton signs or apparel. On the other hand, I saw tens of thousands of Sanders supporters floating around Philadelphia. Perhaps Clintonites feared the atmosphere outside the DNC gates. Of about 20 pro-Sanders people who I actually interviewed at some length, not a single one said they would be voting for Clinton (or Trump). Most immediately said they would be moving their efforts to the Green Party’s Jill Stein.

Stein spoke at Socialist Convergence at Friend’s Centre in Philadelphia on Wednesday. Her co-panelists included author Chris Hedges and Bhaskar Sunkara (editor of Jacobin Magazine), among others. On her entry, the 500 in the auditorium crowd stood and roared at fever pitch for a full minute. One of the most interesting things she mentioned in her brief talk was that in many districts, the Green Party is using its ballot line to put non-Green leftist candidates from other third parties on the ticket. This includes candidates from Socialist Alternative and the Party for Socialism and Liberation. This exemplifies far more respect and unity than what the DNC was able to feign. Stein has already garnered high-profile endorsements—including from Socialist Alternative Councilwoman Kshama Sawant, Code Pink co-founder Medea Benjamin, Marxist economics professor Richard Wolff, and professor Cornel West.

Philadelphia: everything is not okay

The circus inside the Democratic National Convention and the polish of the downtown core is completely misrepresentative of Philadelphia. In the Philadelphia City centre, most municipal buildings were draped with dozens of massive red white and blue banners and cloth. The blue Democratic National Convention flags lined light posts all across the city, and subway stops’ windows were decaled entirely in DNC promo. This likely

cost tens of thousands of dollars alone, if not more. It would be comical if it wasn’t sad.

Looking 100 yards in the other direction one could often spot homeless people sleeping in church doors’ archways or underneath the buildings’ shade in JFK Plaza. I was told by a subway-goer this was after a concerted effort to remove homeless from the city for the convention. The above-ground trip to my Northeast Philadelphia hotel was even more telling. There are closely cramped dilapidated houses for miles, with used car lots packed tight dotting the landscape every few blocks. There were also many abandoned lots and some large buildings wholly missing windows, either former factories or office parks. These looked like they had not been used for decades. On a few streets I saw mattresses on sale for \$29 and \$39. They were leaned up against the side of businesses facing the street. None of them looked like they had ever been stored indoors, and were covered in soot.

Beyond Sanders and the Democrats

Beyond the material conditions of the city, there are the implications of what the DNC specifically in this year, this week, represented. This is namely Sanders’ capitulation to the Democratic Party and the Clinton campaign. Instead of keeping the moral high ground, maintaining his base of support behind him and throwing the energy behind him into a worthy movement, Sanders chose to back Clinton.

This was why many of the Sanders delegates say they walked out. I saw the defeat and sense of wandering in the wilderness first hand in the eyes of Sanders supporters. One middle-aged man with buttons covering both his bags was silently crying on the way home Wednesday night. I saw him leading chants at the DNC gates the next night. At a Black Men for Bernie rally, speakers disagreed on whether to “Demexit” to leave the Democratic Party en masse in protest, or to stay in and try to take it over. The tide was turning strongly towards a mass exit.

The type of simultaneous momentum, defeat, and renewed rage flowing through Philadelphia could do well to benefit mass movements. With any luck, the political revolution will not have died with Sanders’ campaign.

Guyana: support the sugar workers

Kevin Brice-Lal discusses the sugar workers’s fight against austerity, and the need for solidarity

After 25 years of neoliberal rule from the PPP (People’s Progressive Party), the 2015 election of the APNU-AFC (A Partnership for National Unity and Appliance for Change) under president David Granger brought elation to many in the country who were filled with hope for a better Guyana. But in his “The Good Life Beckons” budget he announced that by October 2015 the Wales Sugar estate would close down and its 1700 workers would lose their job.

The plan to close the Wales Estate alarmed sugar workers all over Guyana who rightly saw the attack on the Wales workers as paving the way for an attack on all sugar workers. In response to these attacks the sugar workers at all estates engaged in protests, job actions, and strikes to oppose the closure.

Race and Class

A casual observer of the dynamics of racial politics in Guyana, may see the attack on the sugar workers (who are primarily Indo-Guyanese), by the APNU-AFC government (primarily supported by Afro-Guyanese), as another salvo in the country’s ongoing competition between both racial groups. The fact that members and leaders of the Guyana Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU), are also supporters of the PPP adds to the appearance that the attack on the sugar workers by the government is an attack on Indo-Guyanese.

The PPP has traditionally drawn its support from the country’s Indo-Guyanese citizens, especially those in rural areas and has long counted the sugar workers and their unions as their chief supporters in the labor movement.

But the government has been indiscriminate in its threats and indifference towards the Guyanese masses. The aforementioned “Good Life” budget was nowhere to be found when the predominantly Afro-Guyanese workforce of chronically underpaid teachers at Brickdam Secondary School staged a teach-out to protest the deplorable conditions of their school.

Two other sectors of society that are predominantly Afro-Guyanese and usually support the APNU-AFC have also come in for rough treatment from the government: public sector workers and the vendors around Stabroek market.

Austerity Attacks

What underlies the government’s attacks on sugar workers, teachers, public sector workers and vendors is not race, but class. The majority of Guyanese people have to struggle to make a living and the “Good Life” budget and other policies aim to take even more away from the struggling Guyanese masses. The current government, like all the other post colonial regimes in Guyana, does not see itself as accountable to the masses but to their backers in Washington D.C. and London. In the 1970s Walter Rodney explained the dynamics behind this process:

“Applying Rodney’s framework to the present, we see President Granger and his administration seeking to squeeze the masses by attacking government employees such as the sugar workers and teachers. In attempts to raise revenue, the government is also seeking to regulate, tax and charge vendors for selling outdoors.”

“the neo-colonialism arrangement is one in which the petty-bourgeoisie has decided they want a few more fruits for themselves....to get these they have decided to squeeze the mass of the people, because they are not getting it from imperialism. Anything that goes to the petty-bourgeoisie by way of so-called material benefits must come out of the accumulation that is being made by the masses. It is part of the surplus value that is being squeezed.”

Applying Rodney’s framework to the present, we see President Granger and his administration seeking to squeeze the masses by attacking government employees such as the sugar workers and teachers. In attempts to raise revenue, the government is also seeking to regulate, tax and charge vendors for selling outdoors.

What is left unsaid, but understood by those in the private sector and by Guyana’s international creditors, is that the privatization of state-controlled industries will lead to massive lay-offs. For Granger and the government this means saving on wages and pensions. For the Guyanese masses privatization means mass unemployment and a further deepening of the economic crisis which leads so many people to flee to other countries or worse.

Austerity and Sugar Workers

The APNU-AFC government and President Granger are not currently bold enough to try to privatize the government industries all at once so they have decided to chip away at them little by little. The chisel has fallen hardest on the sugar workers because the government feels that since the sugar workers and their unions are traditionally supporters of the PPP, they are not risking the loss of political support. The government, for example, would tread a lot more carefully in the state-owned bauxite industry where the workers are predominantly Afro-Guyanese.

Minister Harding claims that

“The practice of diverting scarce funds from the good estates to keep the poor performers in operation can no longer be tolerated as the survivability of these estates could not now be guaranteed.”

If it is true that it is no longer possible to operate the Wales Estate without subsidizing it, we need to ask an important question. Who created this situation? Who ran the Wales Estate into the ground? It surely was not the workers or their unions who do not have input in the direction of the sugar industry. Yet, because of GuySuco’s mismanagement, the government aims to balance their budget by laying off over a thousand workers who are already earning poverty level wages.

If the Guyana government put as much effort into the maintenance of the sugar industry, as it did into attracting foreign investments, the Wales Estate would not be in the deplorable conditions that it is in today.

The Human Cost

Lives are at stake here and if the APNU-AFC is successful in closing the Wales Estate, the misery of the workforce, their families, and the communities built up around this single industry would be profound and devastating.

According to GuySuCo, as of 2014, “The sugar industry remains the largest employer for the country with 16,000 workers, 300 suppliers and about 100,000 persons indirectly dependent on its factories.” For a country with a population of under 800,000 and an even smaller work force the threat of the loss of 2,500 jobs will reverberate throughout the nation.

If the sugar industry plays such a large role in the economy of the nation what will the closure of the Wales Estate mean for the surrounding communities? What will become of the village of Wales without a sugar industry?

This is especially appalling because as it stands Guyana has the highest youth unemployment rate of 40% (almost double the national average of 21%) in the

Caribbean, and the highest suicide rate in the world.

Guyana’s shameful record of having as many citizens living abroad as in the country is a direct result of policies like the proposed closure of the Wales Estate. There is a clear relationship between the country’s high level of unemployment, high rates of emigration and world record rates of suicide.

The Socialist Alternative

What underlies the APNU-AFC government’s proposal to close the Wales Sugar Estate and their other attacks on the Guyanese working masses is their commitment to the system of capitalism. By prioritizing profits over people, capitalism ensures that only a tiny segment of the population is able to benefit from the hard work of the masses.

A socialist society would prioritize the interests of the working masses over profits. Whatever surplus is made is the sugar industry would be directed back to the workers and their surrounding communities to improve their overall standards of living. A socialist society would seek to introduce labor saving technology to the sugar industry to alleviate the on the job injuries of the current labor-intensive methods of harvesting sugar cane. In addition to reinvesting the profits in the communities, workers would be able to have shorter shifts which would free up time for leisure, political and personal development, a truly good life!

The sugar workers, are showing all Guyanese the way forward out of capitalist misery by standing up and fighting against the attacks on their livelihoods. The Socialist Workers Alliance of Guyana expresses solidarity with the struggle of the sugar workers and implore all Guyanese working people to join them in their fights against the lay offs.

**Sign the petition: www.change.org/p/president-david-granger-guyana-save-wales-sugar-estate
for more visit swaguy.com



SOCIALISM AND ANTI-OPPRESSION

Anton Cu Unjieng explains capitalism’s dependence on oppression and how socialist theory and practive support movements for self-emancipation



A ruling class is the class that has the most power to shape society according to its own strategic interests. But ‘shaping society’ means exercising power over and against the rest of us. We represent a real challenge to the ruling class—oppression is their answer to that challenge. We should think of the power of the ruling class to rule as the context of racial, sexual, religious, and every other kind of systematic oppression that we see around us.

As Marx pointed out, oppression is necessary for every division between rulers and ruled: “An oppressed class is the vital condition for every society founded on the antagonism of classes.”

Just as the dictatorship of the proletariat and the transition towards a fully liberated society constitutes the strategic vision of the revolutionary working class, modern day oppression is the very essence of the capitalist class’ strategy for hegemony. And we need to grasp it as such.

Of course, even members of the ruling class can suffer from oppression. Hillary Clinton, for example, is not lying when she claims to have experienced sexism; in spite of this, as a member of the ruling class, she has also been responsible for a great deal of sexual oppression as well. You can’t expect to create an expansive system of oppression that grasps all of society without suffering some blow back.

The difference is that oppression defines the working class as a class. But we don’t all experience oppression the same way. In part, this is because the ruling class makes different uses of different strata of the working class. I think this fact is especially important for understanding racism in North America. For example, as I’ve argued in an earlier article, anti-immigrant racism is not about keeping immigrants out, it is a tool by which the ruling class manages the labour force that is available to it—and imperialism means that the West has access to the impoverished, dispossessed, and refugee population of the rest of the world as a potential source of surplus labour.

Now it should be clear that if oppression is constitutive of class society, then we cannot possibly hope to be fully rid of oppression until we get rid of capitalism. But we clearly cannot wait until after the revolution to challenge oppression today. How can the working class hope to overthrow capitalism if it is divided against itself by racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.? How can it hope to be strong enough to defeat the most powerful ruling class in history if it allows trans-workers, disabled workers, undocumented workers to be weakened and vulnerable? The strength of the whole class is sapped by these special oppressions, and we cannot hope to win the revolutionary struggle without also improving the position of the vulnerable sections of the class. So the question is, how can the working class overcome the divisions and weaknesses which capitalism has foisted on it?

Change yourself by changing the world

The ABC of Marxism is that ideas change in the struggle itself. In other words, every effort, even very small ones, to challenge capitalism also shakes up dominant ideologies. The class struggle has a kind of accumulation of its own—the more workers struggle, the more likely they are to discover their strength, the more other workers are likely to join them, the more they are forced to reckon with who can really be an ally and who the real enemy is. And the more struggles deepen, the more they come up against chauvinism and bigotry that we have absorbed, the more fundamentally are we required to rethink our understanding of the world and each other. As Marx puts it, only through a mass popular revolution can the working class “succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew.”

Without an understanding of the transformative nature of the class struggle, the entire socialist project falls down. This is the cornerstone of Marx’s politics—and this is why the very fact that workers must struggle, often simply to survive, gives us confidence that oppression really can be overcome.

But much turns on how we interpret this idea. Marxists more optimistic than myself like to point out that the stratification of the working class has a contradictory dynamic -- that the constant restructuring of the labour force also means that many work places are quite diverse. A single factory can employ men and women, whites and people of colour, straights and queer people, cis- and trans- people, etc.

On this basis, an article in the UK’s Socialist Worker titled “How do our ideas change?” points out that: “When people go on strike, for example, they find themselves in a collective battle against the bosses. When this happens, ruling class ideas can begin to break down. Racist and sexist ideas make less sense when black and white people, men and women, stand together against a common enemy. When this happens, the conflict between workers on one hand and bosses on the other is laid bare.”

Of course, I don’t exactly disagree with any of that, but I think it would be facile to stop there. For one, I think it underestimates the degree that segregation continues to exist in the

workplace. But more importantly, I think it underestimates just what a powerful fortress oppression is for the ruling class. We need to avoid “economism” in our image of what constitutes the class struggle. On its own, the article can suggest a certain passivity regarding racism or sexism as the though the logic of the strike can be trusted to sweep them away. It is only a slight improvement to say that a strike provides anti-sexists and anti-racists with an excellent opportunity to make their arguments.

But specific articulations of oppression such as racism are such powerful weapons for the capitalist class’ rule, that unless they are challenged directly and considerably weakened the working class struggles in vain.

English workers and the Irish Question

One of the most frequently cited texts by Marx on racism concerns the anti-Irish chauvinism of the English working class in his day. What is less often noted is that this is one of the most important documents of Marx’s theory of revolution as it relates to the problem of oppression, and I want to take a close look at it.

Marx says that the antagonism between English and Irish workers is the “secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organisation. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power.” The English working class was one of the best organised in the world. In spite of this organization, it was still unable to overcome anti-Irish chauvinism and the hostility against the English workers that this inspired among the Irish. This was the root of what Marx goes so far as to call their “impotence” and the secret to the English ruling class’ power.

As Marx studied the Irish Question, he became convinced that the colonial oppression of the Irish was the most important stronghold for English capitalism. He gave a number of reasons for this, but believed that the antagonism generated within the working class itself was the “most important of all” these factors. In an earlier letter on the same topic, Marx had written that the English workers “will never do anything decisive here in England before they separate their attitude towards Ireland quite definitely from that of the ruling classes ... Every movement in England is itself crippled by the dissension with the Irish...”

Marx’s conclusion is radical even in terms of socialist theory: he says, “the decisive blow against the English ruling classes (and it will be decisive for the workers’ movement all over the world) cannot be delivered in England but only in Ireland.”

What I find interesting for our purposes is what this implies for the English working class. There are 3 key implications:

Firstly, The English working class could not hope to emancipate themselves until the colonial oppression of Ireland had been ended.

Secondly, The development of the English working class as a revolutionary class capable of overthrowing capitalism depended utterly on the independent, self-activity of the oppressed Irish people. This point needs to be emphasised. The English working class could not overcome their anti-Irish chauvinism on their own. To a considerable extent, their development hinged on the actions of the Irish—that is to say, on the resistance of an oppressed minority.

Thirdly, it has implications for how revolutionaries should approach the problem of working class unity. In a sense, this has something to do with what we would today call the “vanguard” of the working class. Marx is so convinced of the need to support Ireland that he threw himself into solidarity work with the Fenian struggle even though this put him into opposition with the mainstream of the English working class. His advice to his German immigrant comrades in the US was similar. “The greatest achievement you can bring about now,” Marx suggested, would be a “coalition of the German workers with the Irish workers” adding only in a parenthetical “(and of course also with the English and American workers who are prepared to accede to it).”

This is not because Marx thought revolutionaries in the US could afford to ignore American workers, but because revolutionary activity with those workers could not be done on the basis of opportunism regarding their bigotry. Marx trusted that, with patient work, the struggle of this coalition could provide the basis for a challenge to mainstream chauvinism and therefore lay the foundation for principled shared activity.

Marx thought this had implications for the responsibility of socialists in England in relation to the Irish struggle. According to Marx, it was the task of English socialists to “make the English workers realise that for them the national emancipation of Ireland is not a question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment but the first condition of their own social emancipation.”

The point was not that English socialists and workers had nothing to do with the Irish struggle. It was absolutely necessary to very actively take the side of the Irish in it; my point, rather, is that the most important factor which made it possible in the first place to take their side at all was the simple fact that they themselves were resisting.



Early American Trotskyists and Black liberation

It is remarkable how much this approach parallels the approach of Trotsky, CLR James, and the American Socialist Workers Party towards what they called “Negro Question” in the 30s and 40s.

In presenting the material for the SWP’s discussion of this issue, CLR James begins by showing that the American ruling class had often and very consciously deployed anti-Black racism against the working class. Attacks on blacks were very often the cutting edge of a wedge that eventually hurt all workers.

Trotsky uses the theory of the “aristocracy of labour” to frame his approach. This is not the place to debate the validity of that framework, but I think that his strategic conclusions are fundamentally sound. Commenting on the racist policy of labour unions in the US, Trotsky argued that the work of revolutionaries in North America “is further complicated by the abominable obtuseness and caste presumption of the privileged upper strata of the working class itself, who refuse to recognize fellow-workers and fighting comrades in the Negroes. (This policy) ... is at the present time the most effective guarantee for the successful subjugation of white and colored workers alike. The fight against this policy must be taken up from various sides, and on various lines. One of the most important branches of this conflict consists in enlightening the proletarian consciousness by awakening the feeling of human dignity, and of revolutionary protest, amongst the black slaves of American capital. ... this work can only be carried out by self-sacrificing and politically educated revolutionary Negroes.”

The SWP went so far as to predict that the political backwardness of white workers and the particularly intense oppression faced by Black workers meant that it was possible (even likely) “that the Negroes will become the most advanced section” of the class, “they will then furnish the vanguard” of the American proletariat. In a similar vein, CLR James argued, “the place of the Negroes is in the front of the class” struggle.

More than anyone else in the American SWP, James tried to theorise the dialectical relationship between the independent self-activity of Blacks in the US (which he saw as “of fundamental importance for the political development of the proletariat”) and the class struggle more generally. He argued that the “independent Negro movement is able to intervene with terrific force upon the general social and political life

of the nation...” even if it is not waged under the banner of socialism but limited to “democratic rights” and even if it is “not led necessarily either by the organized labor movement or the Marxist party.”

The struggle for Black liberation strikes at the very root of capitalism in the US, even today. For the early Trotskyists, the hope was that as it developed, the class differentiation within the black community itself would come to the fore. Its middle class sections would tend to steer it towards cooptation as their own interests within capital start to be impinged. In this context, organic intellectuals from within the Black working class could emerge to struggle for leadership. This was not thought of as automatic, it depended on the political development of the black working class.

The strategic perspective was that as the struggle develops and capital itself faces a challenge that becomes more and more systemic, other sections of the working class are themselves forced to take sides, but in a new context—in the context of the real and present resistance that is taking place before them. This struggle can therefore be the signal that calls on the working class as a class to take on its revolutionary responsibilities. In James’ words, “the independent Negro mass movement ... by their agitation, resistance and the political developments that they can initiate, can be the means whereby the proletariat is brought on to the scene.”

It is for this reason that the American SWP challenged “any attempt to subordinate or to push to the rear the social and political significance of the independent political Negro struggle.”

Of course, the SWP as an organisation wanted to be a part of the development of the Black liberation movement. It hoped that its members could even exercise a leadership role in that movement—but not from the outside. Rather it wanted to be a part of that layer of “politically educated revolutionary” blacks that it believed the mass movement must develop.

The responsibility of white socialists was “critical but unconditional support.” White socialist workers had to fight for demands that the movement itself raised. In other words, the terms in which solidarity could be had were to be set by the Black liberation movement itself.

So the revolutionary approach of the SWP towards Black liberation was to trust (and also participate in, if it could) the agency and self-activity of the oppressed Black population—even though it understood all too well that this involved a great deal of class heterogeneity. But this was not in any sense

a form of identity politics whereby all Blacks are assumed to have all interests in common, and that only Black people can fight for Black liberation.

Rather, they insisted on the self-activity of the oppressed because this was the only basis for the kind of solidarity that could reveal the duplicity of the middle class Blacks and the necessary unity of the entire working class. It is only by this activity that Blacks could “draw the revolutionary elements and more powerful elements in the proletariat to their side.”

The struggle is a school for politics

These points should underscore the significance of the resurgence in Indigenous nationalism or the appearance of Black Lives Matter. The crisis of neo-liberalism is breaking the ideological stranglehold of the right, and almost everywhere, the most powerful blows have been struck by the struggles of the oppressed.

Without these fights the working class would be dead in the water. This is a lesson that Black workers in the US clearly learned: the Fight for 15 did not make independent anti-racist struggles redundant, they furnished the Black Lives Matter movement with some of its best activists.

Genuine Marxism cannot treat these battles as secondary to the class struggle. The lessons that the working class must learn for self-emancipation cannot be learned exclusively in the fights for “bread and butter issues.” The struggle must be a school for politics as well as for economics. We should also remember that precisely because these struggles involve class mixing, there is an internal class struggle within them that is every bit as necessary as the struggle of rank-and-file workers against conservative union bureaucrats. The struggle itself will provide the opportunity for arguments against identity politics to win the day. To seize that opportunity, revolutionaries need to put the struggle for liberation at the heart of our politics.

There is a methodological principle that informs the best theorists in our tradition. This is simply that the ideas of Marx, Trotsky, or CLR James did not come from clever brains being clever. It came from clever activists who respected and took seriously the agency, intelligence, and power of the oppressed.

Where liberals see in the oppressed only victims who must be helped or raised up, a particular current of revolutionary Marxism saw the force on which rested the very possibility of revolution and the fate of the entire working class. This vision is as necessary today as it has ever been.

The Burkini

What we wear: it’s a woman’s right to choose

Almost exactly a year ago, *Socialist Worker* wrote the following in response to a protest by Ontario women asserting their right to go topless without harassment by police:

“Despite several decades since the women’s liberation movement first raised the notion that women should have control over their bodies and what they choose to wear on them, we live in a society just as obsessed with regulating what women wear. Women are blamed for the sexualisation of their body if they choose to reveal too much. Or they are blamed for blindly accepting “barbaric” beliefs if they choose to wear the hijab or burka. You’re either covering too much or not enough: either way, women are robbed of the fact that their bodies are their own.”

The Burkini debate in France is yet another example of both sexism and Islamophobia.

Sexism and Islamophobia

In August images of a Muslim mother being ordered to remove her clothing by French police officers carrying pepper spray and batons made international headlines. In fact, what that woman was wearing was a hijab, not an actual Burkini, but it was an indication that the explicitly racist French Riviera ban on full-body swimsuits with head coverings would be enforced by authorities with intimidation and fines.

The incident was at a beach near the location of the Bastille Day attack, but Nice was only one of 30 French municipalities that banned the Burkini and began serving fines to Muslim women on France’s beaches. A Nice tribunal had ruled that the ban, which began in nearby Villeneuve-Loubet was “necessary, appropriate and proportionate” to prevent public disorder. The tickets women began receiving claimed they were not respecting “morality/good morals” and “secularism.”

A Corsican mayor banned the Burkini amid violent clashes between villagers and Muslim families which resulted in riot police being brought in to stop a crowd of 200 Corsicans marching into a housing estate with a high population of people of North African origin, shouting “this is our home.”

But there was also an important legal victory: France’s Human Rights League (LDH) appealed the Nice tribunal ruling at France’s top court, and on August 26 the Villeneuve-Loubet ban was struck down, setting a legal precedent for all the 30 other Riviera municipalities with similar bans.

Unfortunately this ruling did not come as a result of mass protests and opposition by the French left and non-Muslims in France. Once again it is a test the French left and French feminists have failed. French Socialist mayors supported the ban, and Socialist Prime Minister Manuel Valls said that the burkini is “the expression of a political project, a counter-society, based notably on the enslavement of women.” But in fact, throughout the controversy it has been clear that the goal is not to protect women but to target clothing identified as a symbol of “Islamist extremism.”

The original designer of the Burkini, Australian Aheda Zanetti, was inspired to design swimwear that is both modest and comfortable and flexible for sports: “I created the Burkini to give women freedom, not to take it away.” On Australian beaches, Zanetti’s Burkini design is worn as a uniform by Muslim women lifeguards.

Quebec

But that didn’t stop politicians elsewhere to use false concern for women’s rights to comment on the Burkini. The right-wing Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) simultaneously took issue with both the Burkini and the RCMP’s decision to allow Muslim women officers to wear the hijab. CAQ MNA Nathalie Roy Roy said that hijabs, like Burkinis, are accessories of radical Islam and shouldn’t be part of a police department’s uniform, and that she is in favour of banning the Burkini since to accept it is “to admit that a woman’s body is the object of temptation.” She later had to admit, however, that such a ban would countervene Quebec’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Québec solidaire MNA Manon Massé challenged the CAQ for trying to generate political capital with the issue: “Let’s be serious, Islamist terrorism cannot be combatted with a discriminatory dress code...To combat violence against women, community resources exist. It is time to stop cutting and reinvest massively in those services. What Quebec needs are feminist politics, inclusive and progressive. We will protect neither women nor Quebec culture with dress codes.”

True secularism, and true feminisim, respects a woman’s right to choose, and does not regard women of colour as being any less capable than white women of exercising that choice competently and freely.

ANALYSIS



Condo development on sacred Algonquin land

By Tom Leonard

On May 10, 2016 Liberal Minister of Indigenous Affairs Carolyn Bennett announced that Canada would adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Article 32 of UNDRIP specifically commits the Canadian state to “consult and cooperate in good faith” with Indigenous peoples “in order to obtain their free and informed consent” before the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories. Testing this commitment to consultation, however, is a real estate development on islands in the Ottawa River—right in the heart of the national capital.

Chaudière Falls

The Chaudière Falls are an area of rapids and waterfalls approximately 1.5 km west of the Parliament Buildings, with three small islets—known as the Victoria, Albert and Chaudière Islands. The entire area is known as Akikodjiwan by the Algonquin, and like the rest of Ottawa and Gatineau, the territory is unceded Algonquin land. In addition, the area is considered sacred by many Algonquin.

Despite this, Akikodjiwan has been the site of substantial industrial activity since the 1800s. Since the early 20th century, the falls have been enclosed by the Ottawa River Ring Dam which captures energy for pulp, paper and power generation projects housed on Chaudière Island and in Gatineau. The last industrial activity on Chaudière Island ceased in 2007, when paper company Domtar shuttered its operation there. In December 2013, property developer Windmill Development Group announced plans to acquire 37 acres of so-called “brownfield” (i.e. contaminated) land from Domtar on Chaudière and Albert Islands and to create a “green” real estate development on the acquired land, comprising 1,200 condominiums, office, retail and public space. The development is called Zibi, from the Algonquin word for river.

First Nations vision

Algonquin elder William Commanda’s vision for the islands is known as Asinabka (www.asinabka.com). It was developed over a period of 30 years in conjunction with internationally renowned First Nations architect Douglas Cardinal, designer of the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau.

Asinabka calls for the development of a National Indigenous Centre comprised of “a fully inclusive city

park, historical interpretive centre, conference centre and Aboriginal centre at the sacred site of Asinabka / Chaudière Falls, Chaudière and Victoria Islands,” with the lands being held in trust by Algonquin elders.

In April 2008, Commanda presented a detailed report on the Asinabka vision to the National Capital Commission, and Cardinal developed extensive concept drawings for the proposed buildings. In a recent interview with the *Ottawa Citizen*, Cardinal noted that “Everybody has an embassy here in Ottawa but there’s no place for First Nations and there should be.”

Developer misrepresents

The developer’s website (www.zibidialogue.com) misrepresents Commanda’s vision as involving only Victoria Island and Chaudière Falls, not Albert and Chaudière Islands. Having framed Commanda’s vision in self-serving terms, the Zibi website then passes the buck, implying that because the development does not involve Victoria Island, which is owned by the National Capital Commission, nor the Falls, “or any of the land on either side of the falls, which are managed by subsidiaries of Hydro Ottawa and Hydro Québec,” that its opponents should go elsewhere for redress—as “Zibi has no ability to undam the falls, or to remove the hydro facilities on either side of the river.”

On October 8, 2014, Ottawa city council approved the rezoning of Chaudière and Albert Islands, allowing the development to proceed, despite what the *Ottawa Citizen* described as “dozens of public delegations at a planning committee meeting asking the city to preserve the lands as open space.”

First Nations opposition

In August 2015 Chiefs and Councils from four Algonquin First Nations (Wolf Lake, Timiskaming, Eagle Village and Barriere Lake) announced their opposition to the Zibi development, confirmed that they were not consulted and stated that the entirety of Akikodjiwan was a site sacred to the Algonquin.

On November 19, 2015 the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador adopted a resolution opposing the rezoning of the site and, among other demands, calling for the Zibi development to be halted unless and until the “free, prior and informed consent” of the Algonquin Nation was secured. The resolution also called on federal, provincial and municipal governments to immediately consult with the Algonquin Nation in relation to the development, and purchase

any privately held lands within Akikodjiwan and return them to the Algonquin Nation.

The developers claim to be consulting with First Nations because they are working with the Algonquins of Ontario (AOO). But according to the AFN resolution of December 8, 2015, the AOO “is not a band, First Nation, Nation or entity possessed of Aboriginal title or rights, under Algonquin law, Canadian law or international law. It is a formulation of the Ontario and federal governments and as such, it does not represent the Algonquin Nation.” The AFN resolution is quite clear that only federally-recognized Bands are mandated to speak for the Algonquin Nation, and nine of these ten Bands have not been consulted and have not given their consent.

Liberal Non-Response

While the legal struggle continues, opponents of Zibi organized a Sacred Walk from Victoria Island to Parliament Hill on Saturday June 17 during the annual Pow Wow in Ottawa—an event which saw more than 500 people march to oppose the development.

A group of non-Indigenous allies has formed under the name Stop Windmill (www.stopwindmill.ca), which includes student organizations and labour unions. On June 27 Stop Windmill supporters marched on Minister of Environment and Climate Change MP Catherine McKenna’s office to deliver a letter demanding that the federal government respond positively to the AFN resolution and intervene to stop the transfer of Crown land to Windmill..

So on one side we have a private developer building on unceded, sacred Algonquin territory who argues that the Crown has no role in their private sector project. On another, we have the Algonquin Nation, whose representatives argue that as the land is unceded and sacred this is an issue to be addressed through negotiations with the Crown, not simply a private sector transaction. And we have the Crown, which argues, in essence, that the consultations required of the developer under existing law are proceeding so what’s the problem?

Where in all of this is the commitment to “consult and cooperate in good faith” with Indigenous peoples “in order to obtain their free and informed consent” prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands? Where is the commitment to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples? Where is Justin Trudeau’s stated commitment to build a nation-to-nation relationship?



ABCs of Socialism is a good start

BOOK

The ABCs of Socialism
 Edited by Bhaskar Sunkara
 Reviewed by Tom Leonard

The ABCs of Socialism is a short book published as a collaboration between Verso Books and Jacobin magazine, which “is released online and quarterly in print to over 15,000 subscribers” according to the book’s preamble.

The introduction notes that the Bernie Sanders campaign has put the word ‘socialism’ back into popular consciousness in the United States, and states that “our inbox is flooded with emails asking basic definitional questions about socialism.” The intro goes on to say that “we don’t have all the answers, but this book was made to tackle some of them.”

The ABCs is arranged in short chapters, each of which is intended to address a key question, with titles such as “Is Socialism a Western Concept?”, “Socialism Sounds Good in Theory, But Doesn’t Human Nature Make It Impossible to Realize?” and “Aren’t Socialism and Feminism Sometimes in Conflict?”. Each chapter is written by a separate author, which allows the book to showcase a range of opinions over what socialism is or could be, and

taken together the chapters engage with many of the key debates one is likely to encounter in a discussion of socialism. The book has a “notes” section of blank pages at the back, enabling the reader to track their own thoughts on the topic, as well as URLs linking to articles from the Jacobin online archive for further reading on each chapter. This last feature is an excellent addition, given how necessarily short the chapters have to be in a small primer like this.

Anti-racism

The book has some strong sections, particularly Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor’s chapter on the role of socialists in combatting racism (“What About Racism? Don’t Socialists Only Care About Class?”). Taylor points out that “Capitalism is an economic system based on the exploitation of the many by the few” and that “because of the gross inequality it produces, capitalism relies on various political, social, and ideological tools to rationalize that inequality while simultaneously dividing the majority, who have every interest in uniting to resist it.” Taylor argues that racism is “only one among many oppressions intended to serve this purpose” of divide and rule, and references Marx arguing that “in the United States of

America, every independent movement of the workers was paralyzed as long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded.”

Erik Olin Wright’s chapter entitled “But At Least Capitalism Is Free and Democratic, Right?” and Danny Katch’s chapter “Would Socialism Be Boring?” are also recommended.

Workers and the state

These strengths aside, the book also has some serious omissions.

There is no reference to the labour theory of value that explains where profits come from (the exploitation of workers), and no discussion of the role of the state in capitalist society, and any explicit discussion of the nature of the former USSR.

The ABCs of Socialism offers a broad range of opinion with regards to socialism and many of the key questions that might be asked of someone identifying as a socialist. This very breadth of opinion, however, renders the book theoretically inconsistent and thus confusing. Those looking for concrete analysis and strategy, however, will find the book lacking.

over a century by the Department of Indian Affairs. It starts with the visit of the infamous Canadian poet and deputy minister of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott, to James Bay in 1905 for the signing of Treaty 9.

Charlie Angus has been an NDP M.P. for Timmins-James Bay since 2004. This book is also a first-person account of his frustrating dealings with Ottawa on behalf of his constituents. The two troubled First Nations of Attawapiskat and Kashechewan have been frequently in the news over the past 12 years, due to a succession of environmental and human crises, most recently a suicide epidemic among youth. In 2011 the hunger strike of Chief Theresa Spence over lack of housing provided a spark that helped ignite the national Idle No More movement among First Nations.

This northern riding is one of 121 in Ontario, yet accounts for almost 1/3 of the province’s land mass. Its economy is based on the resource extraction industries of mining and forestry, and includes the yet to be developed Ring of Fire chromium deposits. Until now these resources have been developed without the free, prior informed consent of the region’s First Nations. Over the years billions of dollars have flowed out to absentee investors, while the aboriginal inhabitants are forced

to live in poverty.

The Victor diamond mine, operated by the multinational diamond firm De Beers, is located 90 km. west of the Attawapiskat First Nation. It began production in 2008, and represents a \$1.1 bn. investment providing 400 permanent jobs. It has yet to pay royalties to the Government of Ontario, as it is still “recouping its initial investment.”

The denial of basic services to the James Bay Cree under nearly 10 years of Conservative government was insensitive and lacking in compassion, qualities which characterized the Tories in other areas. But it is disturbing to learn that the same neglect of First Nations has been going on ever since Confederation, with Liberals forming government during most of that time.

The new Liberal government of Justin Trudeau has been saying a lot of the right things, professing to turn over a new leaf in Canada’s relations with its First Nations. But if at the same time they promise not to raise taxes on those who can afford to pay, they will always be able to fall back on the old excuse that funds are not available to pay for education, housing, clean water and health care for First Nations and other Canadians.

LEFT JAB

John Bell

Canada’s killer elite

While the docile media swooned over our shirtless Prime Minister, his government was quietly endorsing changes to the export rules that prohibited arms trade with dictatorships and human rights abusers.

Well, the Trudeau Liberals promised “real change” and so we got it. Where the Harper Tories were happy just to ignore the rules and sell tanks and guns to human rights abusing regimes like Saudi Arabia and Thailand, Trudeau’s gang decided to change the rules to suit the arms trade. From here on in it will be a lot easier for the Canadian killer elite to ignore the fate of oppressed and vulnerable people, and sell weapons to any putrid theocracy or military dictatorship.

The fact that some of these questionable regimes are Canada’s “allies” only makes more glaring the fact that our government prizes profits over human rights.

I concentrated on the most glaring, the sale of tanks to Saudi Arabia, in a previous column. There are other eager buyers. Ontario-based Streit Group has been denounced by the UN for shipping tanks to Libya in violation of an arms sale embargo to that war torn regime (a disaster in part brought about by Canada’s role in the invasion of that country in 2011).

Streit has skirted the laws by selling the tanks to a variety of corporate middlemen based in the US and United Arab Emirates, who in turn “donate” the tanks to Libyan militias.

Nothing says corporate generosity like the gift of a Typhoon armoured personnel carrier.

Streit is using the same shell game to supply tanks to militias fighting in South Sudan.

Human rights organizations are raising the alarm. Alex Neve of Amnesty International Canada told the *Globe and Mail*: “It is stunning and deeply disappointing to see that a Canadian company—whatever the nature of their offshore operations were—was selling military equipment to South Sudan, in the middle of that country’s brutal civil war, and also to Libya in the midst of the chaos and lawlessness that has prevailed there over the last five years.”

The list of countries receiving arms from Canadian companies, or subsidiaries of multi-national corporations based in Canada, include Nigeria, the Philippines, Mexico, Thailand, Colombia, Peru and Turkey. All are home to documented human rights abuses.

The devil in the details

To make it easier to sell weapons, the Liberals are watering down export regulations. “Wide ranging consultations” including on human rights and freedoms have been required before now. Now they “may be” done.

Of course some governments simply ignored those regulations. Stephen Harper was personally involved in negotiating the sale of tanks to Saudi Arabia. He even promised his friend King

Abdullah that the terms of the deal would never be made public. In January of 2015 Aliya Mawani, a Canadian diplomat based in Riyadh, told Foreign Affairs colleagues that “we [the government] would be breaking the terms of the contract” with Saudi Arabia if details were made public.

“The contract is under a Canadian government guarantee in terms of fulfilment... This was confirmed in writing by our Prime Minister in his letters to the King.”

Fortunately Harper was unable to keep his promise, in part because of Saudi Arabia’s enthusiasm for using the new tanks against civilian populations in Yemen and Bahrain. This in itself was not only a violation of international law, but also broke Canada’s old trade regulations. Those stated that the purposes for which the arms were sold could not be altered or “diverted.” The tank deal was to arm the Saudi National Guard, charged with protecting the Saud regime from internal threats. Using them to interfere in civil conflict in neighbouring countries was an illegal “diversion.”

The previous wording of our regulations stated that Canadian arms exports would not be “diverted to ends that could threaten the security of Canada, its allies, or other countries or people.”

The new, Trudeau-approved wording drops the crucial reference to other countries, and says “the security of Canada, its allies or civilians.”

Thus a new loophole is born, one in the shape of a noose for victims of human rights abuse and violence.

A new rule has been added to protect the privacy of Canadian corporations selling weapons abroad. Lord forbid we should be allowed to know what the killer elite is up to, and with whom.

The bottom line is, well, the bottom line: profit. The purpose of the rewritten regulations is to “balance the economic and commercial interests of Canadian business” with this country’s “national interest.”

With friends like these

Ah yes, we’re now no worse than our allies. Next time you hear Trudeau talk about how Canada is a leader in the fight for human rights—and you won’t have to wait long for him to say it—remember this.

Canada is no worse than its allies. No worse than the US which sells arms to virtually any regime that supports its imperial ends, including military dictatorships like Egypt. Look for Uncle Sam to double his arms trade with African regimes next year.

No worse than Britain, which we know used a campaign of deliberate lies to manufacture support for the invasion of Iraq.

No worse than Mexico, Colombia, and a host of nations that Canada has bilateral trade deals with, despite their civil wars and human rights horrors.

No worse than Israel and Saudi Arabia, the twin pillars of Middle East slaughter and oppression. We’re no worse than the killer elite – there’s a true motto for Trudeau’s Canada.

WHERE WE STAND

The dead-end of capitalism

The capitalist system is based on violence, oppression and brutal exploitation. It creates hunger beside plenty, it threatens our sustenance through unsafe and unsustainable farming, and kills the earth itself with pollution and unsustainable extraction of oil, minerals, animals, trees, and water. Capitalism leads to imperialism and war. Saving ourselves and the planet depends on finding an alternative.

A system that is killing the planet

Capitalist profits depend on extracting the world's blood and bone. The devastating impact of capital's assault on the planet affect the world's most vulnerable populations and threaten the long-term meaningful existence of humanity. Capitalism cannot regulate the catastrophic effects of climate change. We stand for climate justice, including the concept of "just transition" for affected workers.

Socialism and workers' power

Any alternative to capitalism must involve replacing the system from the bottom up through radical collective action. Central to that struggle is the workplace, where capitalism reaps its profits off our backs.

Capitalist monopolies control the earth's resources, but workers everywhere actually create the wealth. A new socialist society can only be constructed when workers collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution to satisfy human needs, not corporate profits—to respect the environment, not pollute and destroy it.

Oppression

Within capitalist society different groups suffer from specific forms of oppression. Attacks on oppressed groups are used to divide workers and weaken solidarity. We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support the right of people of colour and other oppressed groups to organize in their own defence. We are for real, social, economic and political equality for women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination and homophobia against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered people.

We oppose environmental racism. We oppose discrimination on the basis of religion, ability and age.

Canada, Quebec, Indigenous Peoples

Canada is not a "colony" of the United States, but an imperialist country in its own right that participates in the exploitation of much of the world. The Canadian state was founded through the repression of Indigenous peoples and the people of Quebec.

We support the struggles for self-determination of Quebec and Indigenous peoples up to and including the right to independence. In particular, we recognize Indigenous peoples' original and primary right to decide their fate and that of their lands, heritage, and traditions. Socialists in Quebec, and in all oppressed nations, work to give the struggle against national oppression an internationalist and working class content.

Internationalism

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We oppose everything that turns workers from one country against those from other countries. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The 1917 revolution in Russia was an inspiration for the oppressed everywhere. But it was defeated when workers' revolutions elsewhere were defeated. A Stalinist counter-revolution, which killed millions, created a new form of capitalist exploitation based on state ownership and control. In Eastern Europe, China and other countries, a similar system was later established by Stalinist, not socialist, parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

Elections and democracy

Elections can be an opportunity to give voice to the struggle for social change. But under capitalism, they can't change the system. The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary protect the ruling class against the workers. These structures cannot be simply taken over and used by the working class. The working class needs real democracy, and that requires an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates.

Reform and revolution

Every day, there are battles between exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed, to reform the system—to improve living conditions. These struggles are crucial in the fight for a new world. To further these struggles, we work within the trade unions and orient to building a rank and file movement that strengthens workers' unity and solidarity.

But the fight for reforms will not, in itself, bring about fundamental social change. The present system cannot be fixed or reformed as the NDP and many trade union leaders say. Nor can the system regulate itself to prevent environmental destruction and climate injustice. It has to be overthrown. That will require the mass action of workers themselves.

The Revolutionary Party

To achieve socialism the leading activists in the working class have to be organized into a revolutionary socialist party. The party must be a party of action, and it must be democratic. We are an organization of activists committed to helping in the construction of such a party through ongoing activity in the mass organizations of the working class and in the daily struggles of workers and the oppressed.

If these ideas make sense to you, help us in this project and join the International Socialists.



Activist calendar
movement events



Toronto Disability Pride March
Saturday September 24
Queen's Park, 1pm

torontodisabilitypride.wordpress.com



International Socialist events

REVOLUTIONARY
ACTIVISM

socialist conference

Sunday September 25
Toronto

www.socialist.ca

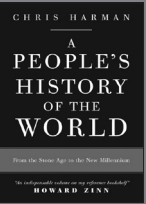
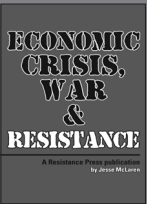
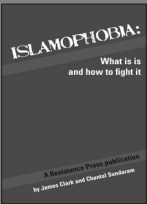
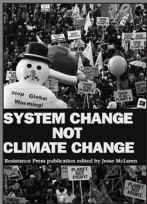
One solution:
REVOLUTION

socialist conference

Saturday October 1
10:30-5:30
Langara College, Vancouver
21stCenturyMarxism.ca

OPEN SATURDAYS, 12-3pm

427 Bloor Street West, suite 202, Toronto ; 416-972-6391; www.facebook.com/resistancepress



WHAT THE STRIKE MEANT TO US, IN OUR OWN WORDS

By Laura Kaminker

After CUPE 1989 ratified our new contract, I said I would write about the intangible gains we made through our strike, the kind that aren't written in the collective agreement. I've heard labour activists say that strikes are a "transformative experience" -- a life-changing event -- and now I know why.

At work, we are full-time and part-time, we are pages, librarians, library assistants, couriers, cataloguers. But on the line, we were one: we were 1989. I could go on and on about this—I often do!—but I'd rather let our members speak in their own words.

Reflections after we returned to work

"The journey we all were on for three weeks was enlightening, because now we all know that striking is not easy, but we made friends along the way. We had a unity, a togetherness, instead of the divisions between part-timers and full-timers that some of us thought might happen."

"It wasn't all about the money but also the principle of the matter—fairness, equality, respect, being valued."

"It was a lot of sweating, walking, with moments of happiness and despair, but for a good cause and I would do it again."

"I will never pass by another strike and think that a quick honk is enough support. I will always stop to ask if there is anything I can do to help. Water, snacks, words of encouragement. Make calls. Walk the line with them. Whatever I can do to make a difference no matter how small."

"I will probably retire next year, but I feel so good about what we all just did, leaving our union in such better condition, proud of ourselves, no longer afraid to strike. I am so glad I had a small part in this. I am so glad that I got to experience a 'kinder gentler strike' and to witness solidarity in action."

"I still can't believe the unity the strike created. I admit feeling a little let down once the picketing ended, knowing that I wouldn't be seeing so many of my colleagues daily. It was way better than any staff appreciation or team-building exercise our employer could come up with. The caring about people, checking up on one another, lifting morale when one of us was having a tough day, making sure colleagues were staying hydrated and being safe on hot, hot days."

"My first day on the strike, I was a little uncertain as many probably were. Within 15 minutes, up went the flag, someone handed me a sheet of chants. "Be a rebel," she said. And so I was. My favourite part was blocking the executive garage, and chanting at the corner of Burnhamthorpe. Apparently the city received many complaints about the noise."



"Returning to work we realized the public was totally with us. So happy to see us back. I find it funny they were more appreciative of our return from the strike than when we were closed for 18 months [for renovations]. Many of our customers read between the lines of City's press."

During the strike...

"Today was a really interesting time. Standing up for worker's rights at the library was a unifying experience. It was really encouraging to hear so many commuters honk their horn in support!"

"It's ridiculous how our Employer has turned so many of its best and brightest against itself. There are incredibly dynamic library workers, and often it's these very folks who are channeling their boundless energies and exceptional levels of commitment into keeping our Union strong while standing up to the very organization they give their proverbial blood, sweat and tears to every day."

"I love how united we are. We have 20+ year veterans picketing with fresh-faced newcomers. Librarians and senior librarians with couriers and technical services processors. Full-timers, part-time part-timers and pages. Everybody sounds passionate, committed, and fed up with always being treated as an afterthought."

"I have never felt such a deep sense of belonging. I am so proud!!!!"

"I'm falling in love with my Union!! I am seeing so much of the best that people can be these last few days (ha ha...with some exceptions, of course, but I tend to ignore those parts)."

During some tough times...

I've been a library employee (and union member) for almost 30 years. In that time, we've come close to striking on two occasions (one of them within a hair's breadth) but we've always backed off. Why? First, fear; second, a naïve belief that if we were 'reasonable' our employer would recognize this and reward us 'the next time.' This 'next time' never came, so we drew a line in the sand—and our employer hasn't just crossed it, they've obliterated it with their mean-spirited and insulting offer.

I'm sure they did this because they assumed, as in past years, that we would back off. Well, the chickens have come home to roost—only we're not chickens. We're taking a long-overdue stand against the erosion of our standard of living."

"This letter [from the library director] is an insidious attempt to divide us; its aim is to plant doubt in the minds of the Union members, weaken our trust and ultimately sap the vigour, commitment and passion that Union members feel right now (and which [the director] and the other senior managers can witness so vividly from their library offices when they observe us out on Celebration Square)."

"Tsk tsk tsk, don't the employers know their attempts to divide us backfires? It's amazing how loud librarians can get. Today I'll test my hearing. But so far so good. I think it survived yesterday."

When we reached a settlement...

"I can't believe it! This is so wonderful! I am so proud to work with such amazing, strong, dedicated and compassionate people. Congratulations to everyone for a fight well fought!"

"This strike has taught me many things (some not so good, but let's focus on the positive); there are so many amazing people that work in our library system, the support, the SOLIDARITY. The support of the public and other unions in this fight was unbelievable."

"I hope that our fight will help others fight for what's fair and help end precarious work. I say all this still not knowing what the deal will be, but I trust that our bargaining team would not settle for anything less than we deserve. I don't know about you, but I'm celebrating this weekend!"

Let's carry this hope, loyalty and friendship forward into our workplace and stay respectful and kind to all of our friends who fought this battle and carried the flags and talked the talk... let this be our future mission!

"I feel like we won the lottery! Only we didn't win it, we FOUGHT for it!

This is shared from wmtc.ca

STICKING WITH THE UNION

Carolyn Egan

World Social Forum

The World Social Forum (WSF) brought thousands of activists to Montreal in early August.

The event started in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2001 and attracted veterans from across the globe who were fighting, each in their own way, against the neoliberal agenda. They exchanged ideas and developed strategies hoping to make the world a better place for the vast majority who are struggling for a decent life, and in many instances their very right to existence.

After discussion the Steelworker Toronto Area Council made the decision to have fifty members participate. A bus left on a Monday morning. On the way a video was run outlining the mercury poisoning that took place at Grassy Narrows showing the terrible consequences to the lives of the Indigenous people who lived there. Governments at every level have done nothing to deal with the issue. The paper industry was responsible and has ignored it for decades. An Indigenous member of the union made a presentation on the issue and got his fellow workers geared up for discussions on a whole range of issues that were to take place at the WSF and the need for solidarity with others who are also struggling.

Workers have a tremendous power if they use the collective strength that is theirs. In recent times the attacks have been heavy and there have been many loses. In many instances workers have not had the confidence to fight back. Connecting with struggles internationally can help us gain a broader perspective and realize that if we can help to strengthen an individual fight back it can potentially win. A win in one area can provide the inspiration to fight in another. The World Social Forum had over a thousand workshops where individual activists spoke about

their campaigns. Their courage and resolve was inspiring.

Solidarité

On the first day a march of thousands took place. There was chanting and drumming and cries of "So, So, So, Solidarité". Local Montrealers joined with others from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean showing the broad diversity of the international movement for change. There were banners for the Fight for \$15, from unions, from Indigenous communities, cab drivers fighting against Uber, climate justice and so many more. It was a very powerful beginning.

As the workshops took place, there were translation French, English, Spanish, and Portugese though due to the number not in every one. Discussion and debates were lively. There were many young people, particularly from Quebec, but the number of veterans was also noticeable.

The lessons of solidarity were not lost. The Steelworkers were asked to support a blockade of the street in front of a federal building in a march against the Energy East pipeline. We waited around a corner and when the marchers, mainly Francophone, came by we joined them with our flags and banners and tried the best we could to chant in French. It was a very warm welcome and the climate justice demonstrators were elated that a diverse group of anglophone Toronto Steelworkers suddenly had their backs. The street was shut down by a simulated pipeline and the action was a great success.

This very much embodied the spirit of the World Social Forum and the Steelworkers joined like minded activist from around the globe in the fight for a better world for all. We have all returned home stronger and more committed than ever to continue the struggle.

Private college instructors battle corporate greed

By Bradley Hughes

Instructors at two Vancouver area colleges are battling corporate greed in a fight for fair wages, and control over their work. Members of locals 9 and 11 of the Education and Training Employees Association (ETEA) are the instructors at Hanson International Academy in New Westminster and Vancouver English Centre in Vancouver. The employer forced them into strike action on August 2.

These instructors have dropped many bargaining demands in an attempt to reach a settlement. They are fighting for a living wage, pay for preparation time and copy right over their own teaching materials.

Hanson International Academy is able to provide college level courses due to their affiliation to Cambrian

College. At Cambrian College the faculty are paid many times more than the instructors at Hanson, even though they teach the same courses. A similar wage differential exists between these instructors and those in the BC public college system, again even though the courses count equally towards an undergraduate degree.

Shahrzad Hamed works at the Vancouver English Centre, where she teaches English as a second language to children. She explained to Socialist Worker how her and her colleagues are "standing up for what is right and what is fair." Other schools pay their instructors more for less work. Vancouver English Centre is also treating it's students unfairly. There is no refund for time without instructors, and "there are no teachers so whatever they are doing in there is not what the students paid for." Shahrzad pointed out that, "without teachers there are no

other jobs, no doctors, nothing."

The president of local 11 of ETEA is Anthony Fawcett. His local certified just over a year ago with a 90% certification vote and they had a 100% strike vote. "Our business instructors have calculated that Hanson International Academy has revenues of around \$9 million a year. They spend three per cent of that on salaries. Our wage demand would increase that by two to three per cent." In other words, their employer is refusing to pay their workers a living wage even though it would still allow them to keep over 97 per cent of their revenue.

Join the picket lines in Vancouver with local 9 at 250 Smithe Street and in New Westminster with local 11 at the River Market (by the entrance at the bridge over the rail way).



Socialist Worker

STOP ANTI-BLACK RACISM

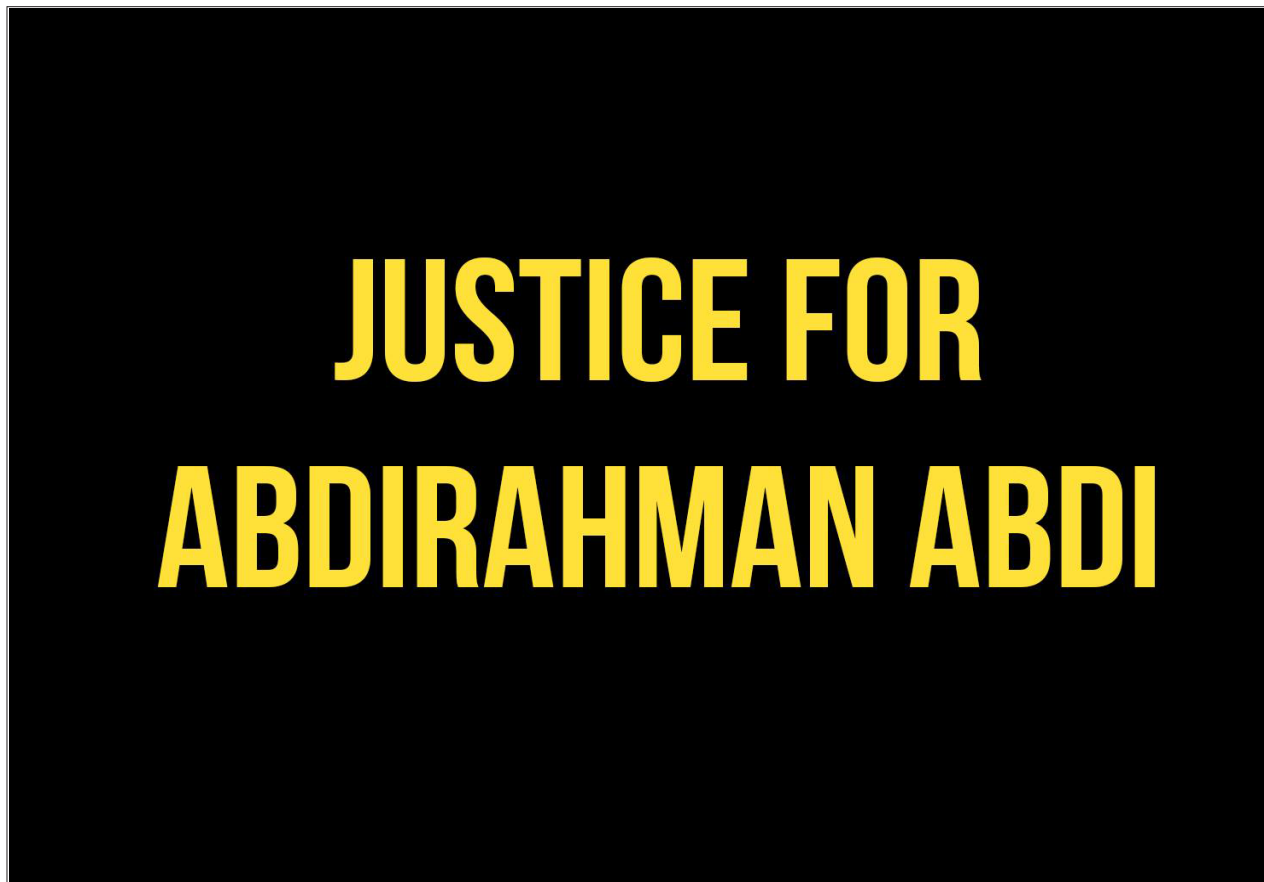
On August 24 there were rallies across the country, and Black Lives Matter-Toronto occupied the front of the “Special Investigations Unit,” to demand justice for Abdirahman Abdi, who Ottawa police executed one month prior.

As witness Ross McGhie told CBC news: “It really kind of looked like an officer just approaching somebody who had posed a minor disturbance, so it was really surprising to see what happened. I think the both of us were really surprised when the second officer arrived and immediately started beating the suspect with his fists in the face and head. From a total layperson perspective, it appeared that it escalated way too quickly for the type of resistance being put up by Mr. Abdi. It went from zero to 100 very, very, very fast.”

Ontario’s Special Investigations Unit, or SIU, will most certainly investigate the circumstances around Abdi’s death and eventually clear the officers of any wrongdoing.

Abdi’s murder at the hands of Ottawa police follows two years of almost daily video releases of police executions of Black people throughout North America. The Ferguson uprising, following the slaying of Michael Brown, familiarized us with the names of Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Freddy Gray, Alton Stirling, and Philando Castile.

Racist police murders are also a fixture of the Canadian reality. On July 27, 2013, Constable James Forcillo executed 18-year-old Sammy Yatim on a streetcar. Following Yatim’s death, then-police chief Bill Blair commissioned a report which advocated training that emphasizes de-escalation techniques and communication. The report is now collecting dust.



Carding kills

It turns out that the Peel Regional Police officers who killed Jermaine Carby on September 24, 2014, initially asked him for his identification minutes before killing him.

“Carding” is the unconstitutional and racist practice of detaining persons to verify identification and input confidential information into a police database. Constable Jason Senechal, who was on the scene, has since admitted he had no investigative reason to ask Carby for his personal information. Carby’s cousin, La Tanya Grant, said outside court, “If he wasn’t carded, Jermaine would still be here today.”

The Coroner’s inquest into the police killing of Jermaine Carby found that the killing was an act of racially-motivated homicide.

The five-member Coroner’s jury released 14 recommendations and made it clear that Carby’s death was a homicide influenced by “unconscious racial bias.”

The SIU nonetheless cleared the implicated police officers as they claimed Carby had a knife. Another officer who tampered with evidence, however, cast doubt on the very existence of a knife in the first place.

On July 5, 2015, police killed Andrew Loku within seconds after they showed up at his apartment building. Loku was allegedly wielding a hammer during an argument over noise. Protests broke out when it was announced there would be no indictment for the cops who shot him. This is what activists called Toronto’s “Mike Brown moment.”

The SIU was established in 1990 to provide some

measure of accountability for violent police conduct. Since many investigators are former cops however, it is largely seen as agency designed to provide cover rather than accountability.

But yhe SIU has a 98 per cent clearance rate for accused officers. The Toronto Star in an investigative series “Above the Law” looked into two decades of cases probed by the SIU. It found that police officers across the province are treated differently than civilians when accused of shooting, beating and running over and killing people.

The Star’s own analysis shows that, “of the 51 fatal shootings involving the Toronto police, at least 18 involved black men, representing 35 per cent of fatal police shootings. Toronto’s black population is roughly 9 per cent.”

To serve & protect?

Interestingly, the facts show that very little of what police do are related to the public commitment to “protect and serve.” Writing for Gawker, David Graeber of the London School of Economics says: “The police spend very little of their time dealing with violent criminals—indeed, police sociologists report that only about 10 per cent of the average police officer’s time is devoted to criminal matters of any kind. Most of the remaining 90 per cent is spent dealing with infractions of various administrative codes and regulations: all those rules about how and where one can eat, drink, smoke, sell, sit, walk, and drive. If two people punch each other, or even draw a knife on each other, police are unlikely to

get involved. Drive down the street in a car without license plates, on the other hand, and the authorities will show up instantly, threatening all sorts of dire consequences if you don’t do exactly what they tell you.

The police, then, are essentially just bureaucrats with weapons. Their main role in society is to bring the threat of physical force—even, death—into situations where it would never have been otherwise invoked, such as the enforcement of civic ordinances about the sale of untaxed cigarettes.”

Disarm, then abolish the Police

Journalist Desmond Cole recently argued that it is time to disarm the police. He is right. Police across the country have shown they cannot be trusted with option of lethal force. He writes: “If we keep enabling deadly police confrontations, we will be forced to keep justifying deadly outcomes.”

But disarming the police is only one aspect of the campaign. We should be calling for the abolition of the police altogether. Since the police came onto the scene some two hundred years ago, their primary purpose has been to break strikes, terrorise minority populations and selectively enforce the criminal code against the working populations.

For socialists, racism and capitalism are inseparable. Capitalism has historically used racism to divide and rule in order to better exploit the entire working population. Ultimately the need for police will dissipate when the racist class system they prop up is effectively challenged and replaced with something that works for us all.

One Solution REVOLUTION

10:30-5:30 • Sat Oct 1 • Langara College • Vancouver

Capitalism creates endless wars, millions of refugees, a climate crisis that threatens us all, and the sexism, racism and other oppression that plague our lives. Join us for a conference on the nature of oppression and the possibility of liberation; the failures of capitalism; the need for socialism; the history of the Russian Revolution; and a look at how we can build a better world.

Presented by the International Socialists

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