

# DOUG FORD'S CLASS WAR



## Stop climate chaos

Reports from the resistance around the world

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## Territorial acknowledgment

*As settlers, we acknowledge our occupation of lands that are the Indigenous territories of Turtle Island. Furthermore, we support all struggles for Indigenous sovereignty in whatever forms they take by the hundreds of First Nations and Inuit communities that have resided here for many thousands of years, and by Métis communities that have developed in the last hundreds of years.*



**D**oug Ford's Bill 47 slashed some of the gains Ontario \$15 and Fairness campaigners had forced the Wynne Liberals to enact.

The Tory "Open for Business" Bill 47 cuts a planned minimum wage raise to \$15/hr, eliminates two paid sick days and reduces the number of unpaid sick days from a possible 8 to 3, it revokes equal pay for part-time, contract and temp workers, and cancels the fairer scheduling provisions that were set to take effect on January 1, 2019.

General Motors has shown they know that Ford's "Open for Business" bullshit means corporations can do whatever they want. It is no accident that the announced shutdown of GM

Oshawa, cutting thousands of jobs, comes on the heels of Bill 47's cuts.

### Ford the slasher

Hardest hit are those in low paying and precarious jobs: Indigenous, migrant and racialized workers, especially women.

But that is the nightmare of Ford's Class Warfare—ignore everything but the interests of your business allies, slash as many public services as possible, as fast and hard as possible.

That means hitting the most vulnerable: people with disabilities. Planned 3% increase to Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) have been cut in half and are likely to be frozen for the next 3 years. Changing the definition of

who is "disabled" will allow local bureaucrats to force more people off ODSP and Ontario Works (OW) support and into the workforce, into the lowest paying jobs with the least protection.

Ford the slasher didn't spare children. He shut Children's Advocate offices across the province, often the last resort for kids caught up in the justice or mental health systems. The offices were lifelines for First Nations and Metis kids. The dollar savings will be minimal, but Ford henchman Vic Fedeli bragged about the "red tape" he was slashing.

The environment? Ford says slash that. The office of the Environmental Watchdog is closed. What used to be an independent investigator—a position created after Mike Harris's Walkerton

water disaster—is now an employee of the government. That means all environmental reports will now be approved by Doug Ford before publication.

Francophone Ontarians suffered big cuts. Slashed is the Office of the French Language Commissioner. Slashed is the plan to build a promised francophone University.

Ford's track record: scrapping the Child Advocate and the expert roundtable to end violence against women, going after gender identity, Sex Ed, labour standards and ODSP.

It's all part of a bigger plan to pay for whopping tax cuts for his friends on the backs of minorities and the most vulnerable people in our province.



# From the “Battle of the Hatpins” to Ford: Stop Tory attacks on Franco-Ontarians

by Chantal Sundaram

As part of a many-pronged attack on equity and minority rights in Ontario this fall, Doug Ford’s government went after the 612,000 Ontarians who identify as Francophones when he cancelled plans to found a French-language university in Ontario and dismantled the Commissariat of French-language services.

It was less than three years ago that ex-Premier Kathleen Wynne acknowledged the bitter history that lies behind suppression of the French language in this province. She issued a formal apology in Queen’s Park to the Franco-Ontarian community for a rule that virtually banned the use of French in elementary schools early last century: “Regulation 17 showed a disregard for Franco-Ontarian identity and equality, and on behalf of the government of Ontario I offer an apology.”

That apology might ring hollow from a Liberal government which itself did not invest enough to properly sustain services and education in French. And of course any apology on behalf of the “government of Ontario” rings especially hollow now with Ford at the helm.

But the reason the apology took place when it did was the 100th anniversary of the “Battle of the Hatpins” against Regulation 17: a chapter of Franco-Ontarian history – and women’s history – that should not be forgotten.

The story provides insight into the Tories’ long tradition of anti-Francophone politics in this province: going

right back to 1912, when a Conservative government passed Regulation 17, in order to assimilate the Franco-phone population of Ontario.

## Regulation 17

Regulation 17 severely restricted the use of French by teachers in both Catholic and public schools across Ontario right up until 1927, despite the fact that it was home to the largest French-speaking population in Canada outside of Quebec at the time. Many of this generation, especially in northern Ontario, were denied the right to learn to write or speak their own language.

Regulation 17 was implemented amidst a rise of British sentiment in the Ontario government in the lead-up to WWI, and was enforced by threats to school funding and to teachers’ certifications if schools or individual teachers continued to allow French to be spoken.

It forced many Francophone teachers to resort to hiding French textbooks and pretending to teach in English when school inspectors would visit the classroom.

But there were some schools that openly defied the government, calling themselves “écoles de la résistance.” And there were large protests against the Regulation, especially in the Ottawa area, leading to the founding of Francophone newspapers and organizations, many of which are still in place today.

## “Écoles de la résistance”

At the heart of resistance was Guigues elementary school in Ottawa, where two teachers made history.

In 1915 two sisters, Diane Deslog-



Fighting the Tories’ French language ban in 1916

es and Béatrice Desloges, both teachers at Guigues elementary school, refused to implement the provisions of Regulation 17. They were both banned from school property. With support from some parents and members of the community, they opened classes in a “free school” located in a church basement and later in a commercial building.

Provincial authorities withheld their salaries and revoked their teaching certificates but they refused to back down. Students left Guigues elementary school en masse and the teachers hired to replace the Desloges sisters were soon alone in an empty building.

It wasn’t long after that parents launched a popular movement of civil disobedience. A group of mothers stormed the Guigues school in what came to be known as the “Battle of the Hatpins.”

## Battle and occupation

On January 4, 1916 the group of mothers, armed with scissors and

hatpins, occupied the Guigues elementary school and began guarding the school’s entrance. The Desloges sisters defied an injunction ordering them to immediately leave the school grounds or face arrest and imprisonment. They were protected by the mothers, who became known as the “guardians of the school.” Together this alliance of teachers and mothers staged a long day-and-night siege of what became the most famous “école de la résistance.”

At the end of January 1916, French students in Ottawa took part in a series of protests and sent a delegation to City Hall to demand that the salaries owed to their teachers be paid. As the protests continued, the “guardians of the school” maintained their vigil in the schools on strike until June. In order to thwart any attempt by the provincial authorities to expel the teaching staff, groups of women – again mostly mothers – remained on guard in front of the school armed with their hatpins.

Finally, with the beginning of the

school year in the fall of 1916, the schools were reopened and the teachers were paid their salaries in arrears. The crisis came to an end in 1921 and bilingual schools in the province were officially recognized in 1927.

The two central heroines of this story were not forgotten by the Francophone community of Ottawa, who in 1997 named a high school in a French-speaking suburb of Ottawa “Béatrice-Desloges.” But equally worthy of remembrance are the mothers who defended them, the “guardians” of resistance to assimilation.

This is an important example of grassroots resistance that has had smaller echoes in more recent Franco-Ontarian struggles, like the successful fight to save the French-language Monfort Hospital in Ottawa from the healthcare cuts of yet another Tory premier, Mike Harris.

## Resistance today

Resistance to Ford’s renewed attack on Franco-Ontarians has already begun. While there is much to learn from the “Battle of the Hatpins,” today Franco-Ontarians need the support of their Anglophone and Allophone allies to take on Ford.

On December 1 at 1 pm, simultaneous rallies will take place across Ontario at Tory MPP offices and public locations including at the Human Rights Monument in Ottawa and in many small communities in francophone areas in the north.

• You can find the locations and register your participation by following this link: <https://monassemblee.ca>

# Scandals and Cabinet shuffles in Ford’s Ontario

by Faline Bobier

All is not well in the Doug Ford camp. The Ontario Premier announced a cabinet shuffle just days after the surprise resignation of Jim Wilson as Ontario’s minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

What was initially released from Ford’s office was that Jim Wilson had resigned to seek treatment for ‘addiction issues’. It soon became clear that Wilson had been forced to resign because of sexual misconduct allegations against him, made by a male Queen’s Park staffer. The premier’s office became aware of the claim late Friday afternoon, the same day they announced that Wilson was resigning for health reasons.

On the same day that Wilson resigned, Andrew Kimber, Ford’s Executive Director of Issues Management and Legislative Affairs, resigned after being confronted about multiple sexually inappropriate text messages he allegedly sent to a female staffer at Queen’s Park.

Wilson stepped down hours after appearing with Ford at a border crossing near Sarnia, Ont., earlier in the day where they unveiled a sign advertising Ontario as ‘open for business’.

These are two high profile

forced resignations and they put the lie to Doug Ford’s statement when he announced a major cabinet shuffle in the aftermath of these resignations, only four months after his government took office: “After four months of unprecedented action, we are taking this opportunity to calibrate our cabinet assignments to ensure we continue to deliver on our com-



mitments to the people. We have the best team in politics and a plan that is working.”

Wilson, who was first elected in 1990, was one of the most experienced members of Ford’s team, having previously served in several cabinet portfolios for the PCs under the Mike Harris and Ernie Eves

governments.

The so-called ‘best team in politics’ seems to be riven with problems, not least Ford himself, who has been accused of cheating his brother Rob Ford’s widow out of her inheritance.

Many of Ford’s MPPs do have previous experience in the Mike Harris government, which is not really a badge of honour. They have years of experience feeding at the public trough and axing services for ordinary people in Ontario. Under Doug Ford they promise to do more of the same, by refusing to bring in the \$15 an hour minimum wage in January and by taking away the promise of two paid sick days for employees in Ontario.

Michael Tibollo relinquishes his role as Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones. Tibollo will now assume the role of Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Tibollo’s short tenure as the minister responsible for the OPP has been speckled with controversy. Most recently, media reports surfaced that Tibollo was criticized by the Ontario Securities Commission for his actions as a lawyer in the 1990s related to a \$30 million stock fraud.

But Ford was praising Tibollo as

recently as four days before the cabinet shuffle. During question period, the premier called Tibollo “the most credible minister down here.”

“He has integrity, he has transparency and he’s an absolute champion. I’ll stand beside him any day, 365 days a year,” said Ford.

When Ford finally allowed the media to ask some questions about why Jim Wilson had really stepped down, he was very much on the defensive. “We acted decisive. We’re very decisive. I have zero tolerance for this behaviour. It takes courage to come forward and speak truth to power.”

## Bunch of hooley

According to Ford the reason his office initially claimed Wilson was stepping down in order to deal with addiction issues was that he wanted to protect the identity of the person who had come forward with sexual harassment claims.

This is clearly a bunch of hooley, since there would be no reason or need for the Ford government to disclose the identity of the person filing a complaint against Wilson.

Critics have voiced concerns about the suddenness of the cabinet shuffle, saying Ford needs to explain his reasons for making such significant changes so soon into his mandate.

“These actions make it abundantly clear that Ford is trying to paper over the problems in his hand-picked cabinet. To remove and demote a number of ministers after just a few months is troubling,” NDP deputy leader Sara Singh said in a news conference.

Singh also rightfully pointed out the cabinet shuffle is a “missed opportunity” for Ford to tackle diversity issues within his cabinet. As of 2016, about three-in-ten Ontarians identified as being part of a visible minority, but among the reconfigured Ford cabinet, only one minister isn’t white.

The new cabinet also did little to address the gap in gender parity, with seven women and 14 men.

Doug Ford claims his is government ‘for the people’. This might be true if ‘the people’ refers to his entitled, mostly white, mostly male buddies whom he’s appointing to high-paid government positions. It’s no wonder they are falling like stones.

Just like the recent spectacle of Brett Kavanaugh being appointed to the Supreme Court in the US, with all the old white male Republicans gleefully supporting him and heaping scorn on the woman who had the courage to call him out for the sexist scumbag he is, the rot is there for all to see.



# Confronting the Bolsonaro threat

by **Sean Purdy, Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL)**

On October 28, the far right politician Jair Bolsonaro, a former soldier with close ties to the Armed Forces and the powerful evangelical churches, won the Brazilian presidential elections handily with 55% of votes against 45% by the Workers' Party (PT) candidate, Fernando Haddad. Bolsonaro's neoliberal, racist, sexist, homophobic and anti-democratic agenda represents a massive threat to democratic and social rights in Brazil, the world's third largest democracy and the largest economy in Latin America.

Already during the election, at least 3 people were murdered by supporters of Bolsonaro and there were more than a hundred cases of aggression against left-wing activists.

Many deputies from Bolsonaro's Social Liberal Party were also elected to the federal congress and state legislative assemblies with record numbers of votes, riding the wave of popularity of the presidential ticket.

One week before the election, he promised to "wipe red criminals off the map" and soon after his election explicitly attacked the Landless Rural Workers' Movement and the Homeless Workers' Movement. In the few weeks since the election, he has continued to advance a vicious privatization and cutback agenda as well as attack social, labour and environmental rights.

His choices for Ministers in the new government, which takes office on January 1, 2019, range from a neoliberal University of Chicago-trained economist, a crusading anti-corruption judge, a



Fightback against the far right in Brazil

Photo: Agência Brasil

climate-change denier and a host of poorly-qualified politicians and bureaucrat hacks who recently jumped on his bandwagon.

Despite his supposedly anti-corruption agenda and promise to "do away with everything" in traditional politics, he has gathered around him advisors facing corruption charges and has already begun to cynically negotiate with traditional power brokers in the country, including supporters of the parliamentary coup that impeached President Dilma Rousseff of the PT in 2016 and members of the thoroughly corrupt Temer government that replaced her.

## How did this happen?

The right was able to capitalize on the very real, if frequently exaggerated and distorted, history of corruption by PT governments, the grave economic crisis, a highly orchestrated and illegal campaign of fake news about the economic policies and social positions of the left and the implicit backing of the corporate media and many traditionally corrupt parties. Desperate after 6 years of severe recession and high unemployment and buying into the supposed "anti-politics" and "corruption-free" campaign of Bolsonaro, many believed that he

offered a fresh alternative. The PT erred in launching Haddad as the candidate late in the process and despite tacking to the left during the campaign was unable to turn a tide which had begun months earlier.

From 2016 until the present, the centre and right under the coupster president Michel Temer have consistently shifted the terrain of politics in the country, advancing outright austerity politics, cuts to social programs and attacks on the social rights of LGBT, blacks and women. It was in this climate that Marielle Franco, a black lesbian activist and city councilor in Rio de Janeiro for PSOL, was brutally murdered in March 2018.

Racist and anti-poor law and order politics and a disastrous incarceration policy, which has seen Brazil's prison population rise to the third highest in the world – something which the PT did nothing to change and even fed – proved to be a strong point in Bolsonaro's campaign. He has promised to liberate the personal use of guns, a disastrous policy in a country where 70,000 people were murdered in 2017. Not surprisingly, the number of people murdered by the police, disproportionately poor and black, has risen steeply since 2016.

The only bright light of the elections was the gains by the radical left Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL). It more than doubled its number of federal deputies from 5 to 11, including two black women and a gay activist and elected many more deputies in state legislative assemblies, including several black women and two transgender women.

Yet it is highly likely that the traditional honeymoon for new presi-

dents will be short-lived. Bolsonaro has not even assumed office and has already come under intense fire for breaking some campaign promises and cozying up to the traditional corrupt political class in Brazil.

He has already back-tracked on several proposals – such as the promise to combine the Finance and Environmental Ministries and his support to move Brazil's embassy in Israel to Jerusalem – after intense international criticism from crucial European and Arab trading partners.

The principal question in relation to a Bolsonaro government will be his inability to solve the economic crisis which could provide space for the mobilization of the organized working class. But this will require sustained arguments from union militants against the timid union bureaucracy largely controlled by the PT. A national demonstration against privatization of pensions has been called for November 22 promises to be a good first step in resistance to the Bolsonaro government.

There will be a tension between the neoliberal policies which he has recently adopted and support among many of his voters for decent social programs, job creation and labour rights. His supposed anti-corruption policies will come under scrutiny as he staffs his government with a band of long-standing corrupt criminals and shady army generals.

International solidarity will be essential for Brazilian unions, social movements and the left in the coming months and years. A Bolsonaro regime needs to be denounced by the international workers' movement, the left, all democrats and supporters of human rights. Our struggle is your struggle.

## Explained—why there is a crisis over Brexit

Bankers and bosses are piling pressure on Tory MPs to vote for Theresa May's Brexit deal.

Carolyn Fairbairn, CBI director general, spoke to the annual conference of the bosses' organisation on Monday. "The prime minister's agreement is not perfect," she said. "It is a compromise, but it is hard-won progress."

Big business breathed a sigh of relief when the European Union (EU) Withdrawal Agreement was published last week.

The deal includes a transition period that would bind Britain to EU single market rules until 2021. These rules include regulations on competition and state aid that protect bosses' profits.

But now bosses fear a no-deal Brexit is becoming a real possibility.

Analysts from City Group bank said the political situation amounted to a "full-blown constitutional crisis".

The share prices of the Royal

Bank of Scotland and Lloyds fell by more than 10 percent in a day and a half.

Europe has split the Tories for decades.

There were different positions over joining the Common Market in the 1970s, and over the Maastricht Treaty in the 1990s.

Now Brexit has brought serious fissures between the Tory party and business to the fore.

One banker said, "Politics is always going to be in the driving seat in this process, but now it is swerving all over the road."

Bankers and bosses want to remain in the neoliberal EU's single market and customs union because it protects their profits.

For instance, EU rules wouldn't allow a Labour government to nationalise the whole rail industry and run it as a public service.

Instead it would only be allowed to nationalise individual rail firms—as long as they continued to compete alongside other ones.



EU rules also block policies that are seen to give state-owned companies an advantage over private ones. And the European Court of Justice (ECJ) has the power to levy financial penalties against governments and overturn laws.

These rules would apply during the transition period and the ECJ would still have power to intervene against policies the EU's rulers and bosses didn't like.

Any disputes would be overseen

by a "Joint Committee" of British and EU officials during the transition period. And the EU would still have some power afterwards.

Bosses want assurances that Britain will keep free market rules and access to European markets on its statute books after a transition period.

And large sections of business also fear Brexit will make it more difficult to hire migrant labour.

Yet May has also tried to win over racist, right wing voters by promising to dump freedom of movement for EU migrants. This has split the Tory cabinet and backbenches.

Vile reactionaries such as Jacob Rees-Mogg and Boris Johnson are jockeying for position by screaming betrayal when May has leaned towards the demands of big business.

May has also been hemmed in by EU rulers who are determined to make an example of countries that try to leave their club.

The Tory deal has not resolved the divisions within the Tory party or the wider crisis facing the ruling class that the Leave vote unleashed.

Bosses will now try to force MPs into looking after their interests, but they still see the deal as a compromise.

Some US banks are pushing for Britain to remain in the European Economic Area, which would mean keeping all of the single market's free market rules.

And right wing Tory backbenchers will use the opportunity to argue that May is betraying Brexit.

The solution isn't to line up behind any of these rival sections of the ruling class.

The answer is to use their crisis to fight for a Brexit in the interests of workers and migrants—and to force the Tories out.

• This article was originally published on [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk)



# CLIMATE CRISIS NEEDS RADICAL SOLUTIONS

*The climate crisis is accelerating, and radical action is required. On these pages, we look at struggles that are tackling the growing crisis, and why the working class, not consumers or the market, is the key to challenging capitalism’s drive to profit and environmental destruction.*

by **Eric Lescarbeau**

Direct warnings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in October have reignited debates in the climate justice movement over who is to blame for the crisis and what kind of action is required to stop it in time.

In the IPCC report, the world’s leading climate scientists warn we have just 12 years to limit global warming to 1.5C or face significantly worse impacts from droughts, floods, extreme heat and poverty affecting hundreds of millions more people with each half degree increase above that.

The report is also seen by many of the scientists who helped draft it

as extremely conservative in its projections, leaving out discussion of climate refugees or any mention of tipping points which could dramatically accelerate the crisis.

The gap between these warnings and the current state of climate politics internationally could not be starker. The world’s governments have set us on track for a 3C world whose consequences would threaten the existence of civilization as we know it. Donald Trump has vowed to walk away from the Paris accords altogether and newly elected president Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil is promising to open the Amazon for unfettered development. According to a newly released study, Canada is one of the worst climate criminals, whose policies would put the world

on track for 5C warming if other countries followed its example.

In this context, two related “solutions” have come into focus, carbon pricing and personal lifestyle changes. Both are problematic.

Critically, the working class must be central to any strategy for fighting climate change because rising emissions stem directly from the capitalist drive to profit from the exploitation of workers, their communities and the natural world they are a part of.

Real action on climate change therefore means working people acting collectively to take the power to decide away from corporations and the market and put it in the hands of the people most impacted. We can’t leave it to policies put for-

ward by well-meaning technocrats and reforms brought in from above that ultimately depend on the very “free” market system that is causing the problem and leave that system untouched.

Neither can we look to individual strategies that reinforce our atomization as individual consumers and thus undermine efforts at collective action. We need systemic change that can only come directly from the mass mobilization and unity in action of workers and their communities and in solidarity with indigenous sovereignty struggles which are driving the movement against pipelines and other Tar Sands projects.

For the full article please see: [www.socialist.ca](http://www.socialist.ca)



Mass direct action in London, UK last month shut down bridges across the Thames

Photo: Thomas Katan - DeSmog Blog

## BC NDP: Green light for new devastating fossil fuel project

by **Patrick Schreck**

It is time to take the energy sector out of the hands of corporations and politicians.

In the same week that the IPCC announced that immediate, “unprecedented” world-wide action can still reverse greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to keep temperatures from soaring above 1.5 ° C, the BC NDP government has given the green light and economic incentives for joint-venture LNG Canada to build a massive liquified natural gas (LNG) export facility in Kitimat, BC. This will also include the expansion of the pipelines and natural gas fracking required to feed the LNG Canada facility.

### Aggressive CO2 cuts

The latest IPCC report makes it clear that the agreed goals of the 2016 Paris Climate Accord are currently unlikely to be met, and moreover, are themselves inadequate to avoid temperatures that could trigger runaway climate change.

However, the scientific consensus of the IPCC is that it is still possible and feasible to keep the global temperature increase below 1.5 degrees Celsius instead of 2° or more. Staying below 1.5°, compared to hitting 2.0°, would mean significantly reducing the risk and severity of a litany of climate change consequences: water scarcity, drought, crop failure, food shortages, more extreme weather events, unprecedented forest fires, heat-related illness, re-establishment of once-eradicated diseases, biodiversity loss, species extinction, loss of tropical coral reefs, collapse of fish stocks, melting of polar ice sheets, and rising sea levels leading to the

displacement of 10s of millions of people. There’s a lot at stake for human civilization.

The IPCC report concludes that a massive reduction of GHGs (mainly CO2 and methane) emissions needs to take place in the next 12 years. The goal must be to leave fossil fuels in the ground. The hopeful message in the IPCC report is that staying below 1.5 degrees is both possible and feasible, but only with a massive shift away from fossil fuels and toward renewables along with significant changes in economic, industrial, and land use systems.

So, it is breathtaking that within days of the IPCC report, the BC NDP government, side-by-side with the federal Liberal government, celebrated at the LNG Canada deal-signing event.

The project is a climate and environmental disaster from beginning to end.

On the ‘upstream’ end, the project will unleash a 40-year frenzy of natural gas fracking in the Montney Formation in northeast BC. More fracking will mean further dam construction and diversion of fresh water, injection of fracking chemicals into the earth and water table, and methane (a GHG worse than CO2) release as hundreds of new gas wells are fracked each year to feed the LNG Canada export facility.

To transport the fuel, TransCanada Corp will construct the 670-kilometer Coastal GasLink pipeline across northern BC which will pump 2.1 billion cubic feet of fracked gas per day to the LNG Canada export facility in Kitimat. Once there, the energy-intensive liquefaction process will burn up to a third of the gas supply itself for electricity. LNG carrier ocean ships will sail up and down the Douglas Channel loaded with LNG to be delivered overseas, to be burned in factories and electricity generation plants.

**LNG Canada is going to emit massive amounts of CO<sup>2</sup> in order to sell a fossil fuel that will emit even more massive amounts of CO<sup>2</sup>.**

double BC’s current emissions from the oil and gas sector.

Heaped on top of LNG Canada’s own CO2-emitting activities, is the CO2 that will be unleashed from the fracked-and-liquified-in-BC gas shipped to and burned in overseas factories and power stations. When government decisions are made to extract fossil fuels and are reported in the media, the final CO2 emitted when the BC gas is burned outside of BC rarely gets mentioned, let alone figured into the BC carbon budget. LNG Canada is going to emit massive amounts of CO2 in order to sell a fossil fuel that will emit even more massive amounts of CO2.

**Natural gas: a barrier, not a “bridge”**

Oil and gas corporations aggressively push the message that natural gas is “cleaner” than coal and oil. As vast reserves of natural gas trapped in shale formations become available to new extraction methods like fracking and horizontal drilling, the oil and gas industry is rushing in to bring natural gas to market and reap huge profits for their shareholders.

The notion of natural gas being a ‘bridge’ or ‘transition’ fuel is largely an oil-industry ruse that keeps it in business while undermining the urgent move to the fossil-free economy we need. Right now, natural gas is as cheap or cheaper than renewables like solar, wind, geothermal and tidal. And natural gas is forecast to get cheaper as the global oil industry expands into natural gas as new technologies, weak regulations, and government subsidies make it more and more profitable. Reuters reports that LNG Canada is “just the tip of the megaproject iceberg” of many new huge LNG projects currently being pursued by the major oil companies. Shell inked a similar deal in Qatar just weeks before.

The old oil companies now getting behind so-called “transition” fuels are interested, not in the IPCC recommendations or stopping climate change, but in maximizing the profits from their capital investments for as long as possible. For them, the longer so-called “bridge” fuels crowd out renewables, and major conservation efforts such as public transportation expansion, the better for them and their profits.

**De-privatize and democratize**

The BC NDP government has just made this

LNG exporting, pipeline building, and fracking frenzy possible with an array of economic incentives, including tax reprieves, tax subsidies, discounted electricity rates, and even a break on BC’s own carbon tax.

Clearly, the strategy of relying on politicians to steer us away from climate catastrophe has failed. As have market-based strategies. It has been, rather, the market-based pursuit of profit that lies behind the climate crisis we now face.

We urgently need a socialist solution.

Studies show it is possible to completely eliminate fossil-fuel use in a few decades with wide-scale conservation efforts and the intensive adoption of renewables. The logic of capitalism will not get us there. It is recklessly focused on the expanding profit making potential of corporate shareholders.

Unlike socialism, capitalism is not focused on the needs of ordinary working people or the communities and the environments they live in.

A socialist solution includes organizing together and pushing aggressively for the de-privatization and democratization of an energy sector that is in the hands of workers and communities and an energy policy that is set democratically and focussed on human needs and the environment, not profit.

That starts with resisting LNG Canada and all new fossil-fuel projects as well as all continuing fossil-fuel extraction enterprises.

We must reclaim democratic control and social ownership of the energy industry. Then we can restructure it through a planned and orderly transition to renewable energy under local worker and community control — including the livelihoods of current oil industry and related workers.



Join the barricades

Photo: warrior publications

## Solidarity with Unist’ot’en camp

On November 19th, the Unist’ot’en received notice from TransCanada that “field reconnaissance and pre-construction activities are scheduled to begin the week of November 19th and conclude before the end of 2018.”

This is in attempt to build the Coastal GasLink pipeline project, which will extend from Dawson Creek to Kitimat in BC.

In response, the Unist’ot’en are calling for supporters to stand in solidarity and push back against the corporation.

The Unist’ot’en also state that TransCanada’s timing for this project was deliberate, as Freda Huson, spokesperson for the Unis’tot’en, is helping her partner’s mother in a critical palliative care home.

The company is also choosing to do pre-construction plans during the winter as the poor weather can often damper

it harder for supporters to mobilize.

The Unist’ot’en Camp asks “If you can launch a campaign, organize education forums, host kitchen parties, fundraise with our consent, organize a caravan, plan a trip to support us ASAP, donate, spread the word... please start. We just ask that you let us know in advance so that we can establish a contact and endorse any actions before they start.”

Campaigns and solidarity efforts to shut down Enbridge’s Northern Gateway and Chevron’s Pacific Trails projects were successful, so let’s join the fight against TransCanada and shut this third pipeline down.

• Visit [www.unistotencamp.com](http://www.unistotencamp.com). To donate: <http://unistoten.camp/support-us/donate/>

## Quebec’s Pact: from words to action

by **Chantal Sundaram**

In November 2018, 500 major cultural, artistic and scientific personalities in Quebec signed a *Pact for the Transition* to “save the planet.”

This marks an important step in the broad mobilization against climate change that builds on many local and Quebec-wide victories against fracking, incursion on conservation areas, and the defeat of the Energy East pipeline.

Before and after the recent Quebec election, there have been huge mobilizations in the streets to demand a government response to the crisis, under the slogan “the planet invites itself to parliament.”

The strength of the pact is its broad reach at a solution: “The science also tells us that it is absolutely possible—technologically, humanly and economically—to limit global warming. Political will is a necessary element of the solution.”

The pledge points to all the right impacts – fossil fuel use, food production, carbon footprint – but not to all the right targets for those impacts. The focus of the pledge is individual consumption.

But the ultimate target is social



50,000 march for the climate in Montreal

Photo: Gustavo Monteiro

consumption, whose major culprit is corporate consumption in industry and manufacturing. The pledge seeks to set an example by individuals to those who hold more power. It states: “I commit, starting now and over the next two years, to the extent of my realities and abilities, to reduce my greenhouse gas emissions through the following concrete actions:

- Reducing my oil consumption in whichever way possible
- Reducing my consumption, waste production and wastage

- Reducing my plastic consumption
- Reducing my consumption of farmed meat and opting for locally produced and organic foods, understanding both regional realities and loss of food security in Indigenous communities associated with biodiversity loss
- Using my power as a citizen”.

In return, the Pact demands that the government take serious action through legislation and redirection of resources to a just transition. The broad support for this pledge must

be fought for in the streets and in workplaces to force a change at the level of government and industry that matches the will of ordinary people to reduce their carbon impact on the planet.

Quebec climate activists will mobilize again for this at a rally on December 8 in Montreal, coinciding with the Conference of Parties (COP) 24 meetings in Katowice, Poland.

- To sign the Pact: <https://www.lepacte.ca/english.html>



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 transgender 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.

Tragedy of Two-Tier Tony

LEFT JAB

by John Bell

After 20 years in “public service” Tony Clement’s career is in tatters: he has been caught sexting genitalia pix to someone who used them for extortion purposes. It seems Clement had access to sensitive security information. That caused Tory leader Andrew Scheer to demote the veteran from his shadow cabinet. Clement swore it was a one-time deal. Then came a flood of information from women about a long history of creepy behaviour. Then it was learned that this wasn’t the first time he had been threatened with extortion from sharing explicit photos. That caused Tory Leader Andrew Scheer to kick Clement out of his caucus.

A Harris MPP

Clement is asking for understanding for his weaknesses, and that we allow him to seek help. While we would love to be charitable, here are some facts from Clement’s career that might inform that charity. What might have led young Tony to a lifetime of being a dick? Maybe it was his time as a student “free speech” advocate busy in the pro-Apartheid struggle. He fought to bring the South African ambassador to U of T to explain why whites should rule. You get the idea. Clement was a leading figure in Mike Harris’s government beginning in 1995, took a break when those Tories were thrown out in disgust after two terms, then hitched his wagon to Stephen Harper. For the past 12 years he pushed the same policies he championed as an Ontario MPP: slashing public services, deregulation, whipping up hysteria to promote policing and militarization, and blaming victims.

Under Harris he was in turn Minister of Transportation, the Environment, Municipal Affairs and Housing, and—most memorably—Health and Long Term Care. The privatization of toll-highway 407 was a massive cash giveaway, resulting in billing abuses, safety short-cuts, and police investigations. As for the Environment, the deaths from drinking water in Walk-

erton resulted from deregulation and weakened standards. Clement’s fingerprints are all over those debacles. But it was as Health Minister that Clement won his nickname, Two-Tier Tony. Amalgamation and closure of hospitals meant layoffs of nurses and loss of beds—the origin of the “hallway healthcare” that Doug Ford is pretending to solve with even more cuts. Clement initiated the building of a new “public private partnership” hospital in his own Brampton riding. From the outset the privately built and run hospital met opposition from the community, workers and health-care advocates. Cost over-runs, poor planning and mismanagement led to a shortage of beds at the hospital, which—coupled with the closure of other public facilities—became the only ER to serve Brampton, one of the fastest growing towns in the province. The results were disastrous for health, but profitable for business.

Taking it national: Harper Cabinet star

After a brief hiatus Clement was back serving the interests of the rich and wrecking ordinary lives. Having ruined his reputation in Brampton, he sought bluer pastures, moving to the safe Tory seat in Muskoka. As federal Health Minister, Clement led the charge to prosecute casual marijuana users, declaring “The party’s over!”. Under his leadership arrests in some cities increased by one third. He also set the template for Tory Health Ministers ignoring a mountain of evidence proving safe injection sites save lives and reduce addiction. Ignoring harm-reduction facts and evidence, there was always right-wing ideology to fall back on: “The supervised injection site undercuts the ethic of medical practice and sets a debilitating example for all physicians and nurses, both present and future in Canada,” Clement pontificated. “This is a profound moral issue.” Clement’s next position, Industry Minister, oversaw the shutdown of the federal census; undercut the CRTC when it threatened to weaken the telecommunications stranglehold of the big corporations; and divvied up \$50 million earmarked for security at the G8 Summit among small town



mayors from his riding, to pretty up their store-fronts. Part of the dough went toward the Muskoka gazebo that will forever be part of his legacy. As President of the Treasury Board his career-long hatred of organized labour came in handy. In charge of negotiating with federal workers, Clement promised to claw back their pensions, wages and benefits. “So that means taking a position that will alter the dynamics of collective bargaining as it has been done in this country over the last few decades.”

In opposition: still a dick

When Trudeau’s red wave swept away most of Harper’s worst, Tony announced his candidacy for Tory leader, but dropped out because no one came forward to support him financially or with endorsements—perhaps a clue to the observant that even his own Party was on to his now-known history of creepy behavior. Two-Tier Tony was recently spotted enjoying a night on the town, standing in line outside Roy Thomson Hall to see Steve Bannon (lying hater) debate David Frum (hateful liar). And then came news that finally spelled his downfall—insert your own dick joke here. He is sorry and begs our understanding. After all these years, looking over the thread of his career, I think I understand him pretty well. The true tragedy of Two-Tier Tony Clement is that it took a tawdry little scandal like this to scuttle him. His politics of greed, callous inhumanity, and betrayal of the public interest should have been more than enough to do him in.



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# Stop Mohamed Harkat's deportation to torture

The federal government is pushing to deport Mohamed Harkat to torture. The matter is urgent and imminent.

Harkat, a United Nations Convention refugee who has lived in Canada for 22 years, faces deportation to Algeria under a highly controversial security certificate.

Declared unconstitutional in 2007, then reinstated with a minor alteration, Security Certificates allow for secret hearings where the accused and their lawyers are not allowed to see key allegations and evidence used against them. Security-cleared lawyers are allowed to see some of the secret case, but neither the accused nor their lawyer is allowed to be present.

Harkat was arrested on International Human Rights Day, December 10, 2002, and subsequently detained without charge for 3.5 years, often in solitary confinement. He has struggled under a brutal series of house arrest bail conditions and is fighting this latest threat of deportation.

As his spouse Sophie Harkat stated, "I have been married 18 years to this gentle, funny, hard-working man, someone who has never been accused – much less convicted of – committing a crime or act of violence. But in the Canadian racial and religious profiling sweeps that happened after 9/11, Moe was wrongfully targeted... Moe was never charged with anything. Yet he spent over a year in solitary confinement, and after three more years in jail without charge, was transferred to the strictest house arrest in Canadian history."

Though Harkat was arrested under the security regime of the former Harper government, appeals to the Liberal government to let him stay in Canada have so far gone unheeded – despite their inability to show that he presents any kind of threat.

If sent back to Algeria, Mohamed Harkat faces detention, torture and even death.

This threat of deportation flies in the face of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's declaration last year that "Nobody, ever, deserves to be tortured." Nobody, ever, deserves to be deported to torture either.

Amnesty International, the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, and thousands of people and organizations across this country are demanding that the federal government put an end to this nightmare for the Harkat family by lifting the threat of deportation.

Organizers are urging supporters to write



to Trudeau and the Ministers of Public Safety, Justice and Immigration to urge them to stop the deportation to torture of Mohamed Harkat and to not make themselves, and Canada, complicit in torture once more.

• To sign the petition <https://bit.ly/2QfelLI>.  
To send letters to federal officials <http://iclmg.ca/stop-harkat-deportation/>

## REVIEWS

# Extreme Cities: Climate change and resistance

by Valerie Lannon

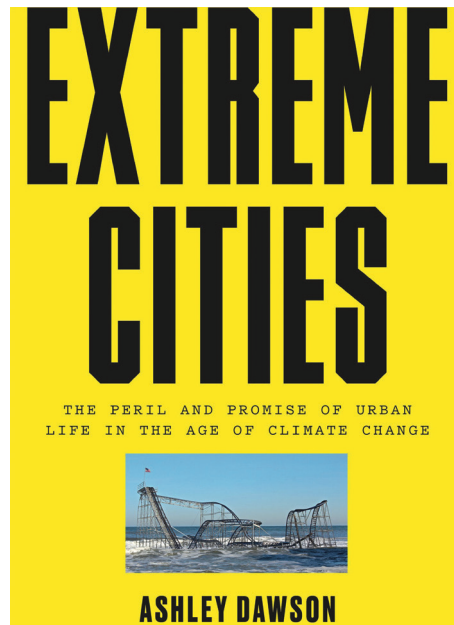
Ashley Dawson's use of the term "extreme" in the title of his book refers to "... an urban space of stark economic inequality, the defining urban characteristic of our time, and one of the greatest threats to the sustainability of urban existence."

Urbanization has been continually growing for decades, so that now "...the majority of the world's megacities are in coastal zones threatened by sea level rise. Today, more than 50 per cent of the world's population lives within 120 miles of the sea." Cities are where carbon emissions from industries and transportation are highest.

By focusing on extreme cities that are located at sea level, he carefully documents how climate change will negatively affect huge populations of people, many of whom are poor and least able to cope with the impact. Recall the deaths and forced relocations of low-income black people in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and you get the beginnings of the picture.

The book pays particular attention to Miami, New York (to remind American readers, as if they needed reminding, that rising seas won't just be affecting remote Pacific islands), Jakarta, Delhi, Port-au-Prince and Sao Paulo. In Canada we can add places like Montreal (which saw record heat wave-related deaths this past summer, as well as a huge upsurge in climate justice activism on the streets), Richmond, BC, Halifax and other coastal cities to the mix; say good-bye to the scenic Vancouver airport.

Drawing from earlier work by Mike Davis, particularly Davis' Planet of the Slums, Dawson reminds us of how capitalism has thrown millions of peasants world-wide out of their traditional farming and into a poverty-laden urban proletariat or unemployment. While on Turtle Island/North America, much of our



climate justice opposition has been led by indigenous communities threatened by pipeline or marine spills, it is also the case that "extreme cities" will see huge numbers of people threatened.

### Just transition

In addition to highlighting the physical, social and economic disasters awaiting the residents of extreme cities, Dawson lists what needs to be done to ensure a just transition. There needs to be a planned relocation of populations, so that the poor are not left behind. Otherwise what we are likely to see under capitalism is the wealthy able to make their getaway, leaving everyone else stranded.

Using an anti-capitalist analysis, Dawson also points the ways forward for achieving a just and democratic way out of the impending climate disaster, especially in extreme cities. His chapter entitled "Disaster Communism"

describes the grass-roots community response to Super Hurricane Sandy in New York in 2012. He notes that grass-roots efforts by health and social service workers, and other community organizers, were quicker and more efficient than state and federal government departments. "Rather than provoking selfish, antisocial, and even belligerent circumstances, most people tend to regain their self-control and become concerned about the conditions of those around them relatively quickly."

Dawson argues that continuing climate disaster will likely make "disaster communism" more common and, like Andreas Malm, points to the origins of some of the Arab Spring uprisings in climate-induced droughts, leading to higher food prices and resulting grain riots.

But he has no illusions in "horizontal" organizing as the ultimate solution. He states "Disaster communism – on a purely local scale- does not actually constitute an inherent threat to the capitalist social order." He backs this up by describing how quickly state bureaucracies and elite interests intervened post-Hurricane Sandy to resume control of rescue and reconstruction operations.

Unfortunately, Dawson has no suggestions for how the required changes he recommends can come about aside from a general call for social movements to act in unity.

He is deafeningly silent on the role of the working class, which is odd given his quotes throughout the text of figures like Trotsky and modern day Marxists like David Harvey and Mike Davis.

In spite of this significant shortcoming, the book is still recommended. We should be inspired by his conclusion that "The good city cannot be a version of today's city newly embellished with green trimmings like bike lanes and ribbon parks in front of high-end condos. The good city will only heal the wounds of calamitous environmental degradation if it is rebuilt to overcome today's yawning economic and social inequalities."

# Poppy: Am I a Girl

by D'Arcy Briggs

Poppy's latest album, *Am I a Girl?*, is a celebration of all that is capitalist alienation, commodity fetishization, and environmental destruction. If *1984* was a musical, this album would surely act as the score. It's an album which is incredibly self-aware, and showcases the ideas of celebrity in the digital age. It easily serves as a tongue-in-cheek warning to those who question what it means to be an individual and a member of a community under capitalism.

*Am I a Girl?* is a concept album that takes place in a near-apocalyptic future in which a feminized pop-star android, Poppy, is reprogrammed and subsequently struggles with their own identity, their place in the world, and reaches a musical and thematic climax during the final few tracks.

The album generally follows a pretty standard synthpop formula, but with a decidedly strong vaporwave influence. The final tracks go for broke and blend together their aggressive heavy metal with saccharine sweet pop. The majority of the album wears its contemporary dance music influences on its sleeve (The album is being released on Mad Decent records and even contains a song featuring Diplo), but ends sounding like some hellish mix of Carly Rae Jepsen and Slipknot. While musically it's not a tired album at all, it's the album's efficacy in thematic and lyrical content that really delivers.

As stated earlier, *Am I a Girl?* could be seen as

both a self-aware and self-indulgent play on pop music culture. The album's opening tracks see our pop star lyrically addressing the audience of their songs in an almost They Live fashion. The track "It's Fashion After all" opens with "I'm working every angle / My lipstick is a staple



/ My hair and makeup make you envious and want to die... / My wrists are terrorists / My lips gave you a kiss / My consciousness thinks this is making me feel fabulous." The tracks "Iconic," and "Chic Chick" follow the same path, while lyrically emphasizing the importance of consumption in the creation of the individual.

After Poppy's reprogramming she seems to be somewhat self-aware of humanity's destructive nature when she awakens alone in a facility. The chorus to the track "Time is up" sings "I don't need air to breathe when you kill the bees / And every / river bed is dry as a bone / Oh, I will still survive when the plants have died / And the atmosphere is just a big hole." While the character is now 'awake' to the nature of the system, she still feels outside of the problem. Poppy then starts to acknowledge how she was previously treated and thrown out and questions her identity in "Girls in Bikinis," as well as the title track, in which the chorus asks "Am I a girl? / Am I a boy? / What does that even mean? / I'm somewhere in between."

The album ultimately ends with Poppy decided to destroy the system herself, starting with the track "Play Destroy." In the song, she pledges "This is how we play destroy... / Burn down the local Wal-Mart / Monsanto, Raytheon."

While Poppy's *Am I a Girl?* could push some away for the artist's strange persona and targeted synthpop and metal sound, there is an interesting sci-fi story under the surface for those willing to take the time to listen to the album as a whole experience rather than just the singles. It ultimately serves as an incredibly powerful, if not catchy, soundtrack to a world in which the ideas of social justice and human rights are seen as debatable. This is just as much the soundtrack to the horrors of capitalism as it is a pastiche of celebrity in 2018.



## COPE fights for affordable housing in Vancouver

by Lisa Descary and Bradley Hughes

In Vancouver, COPE is figuring out what it means to be the only working class voice on city council. COPE is organizing with allies outside of council to bring the support Jean Swanson will need to win a city that prioritizes the 1% over the 99%.

When Swanson was elected to Vancouver city council on October 20, some activists in the City We Need campaign for renters' rights said they felt as if "we (in the movement) had all won." This rings true because Jean and the members of the COPE/City We Need campaign realize that it is only as part of an ongoing movement that a city councillor can make real change.

So it's not a surprise that on November 9, less than three weeks after the election, Jean was one of the speakers at the "Rally to Ban Renovictions" organized by the Vancouver Tenants Union (VTU). There tenants of Berkeley Tower told their stories of how they were being evicted by their landlord so that renovations could be done, providing a pretext for vastly inflating rents. Swanson was clear in condemning "predatory landlords...who are destroying communities to build luxury commodities."

Swanson has two upcoming motions to city council, one to ban renovictions and the other to fulfill the city's earlier promise to build 100% welfare/pension rate community controlled social housing at 58 West Hastings, a city-owned



Jean Swanson speaks at the Vancouver Tenants' Union rally

Photo: Nat Lowe

site in the Downtown East Side.

In BC, yearly rent increases are restricted to a rate set by the province. This is typically above the inflation rate - a gift to landlords. In Vancouver the vacancy rate is close to zero, so landlords are eager to get around these meagre rent controls and they can do it by evicting ten-

ants to make renovations, at which point they can increase the rents by as much as they like. If it passes, Swanson's motion will allow tenants to move back into their homes after renovations are finished without any increase in rent.

The first few weeks after the October election have already shown the true colours of many of

the "progressive" councilors and mayor. Once Swanson's motion to ban renovictions was on the agenda, COPE and the Vancouver Tenants Union organized their members to register to speak to Swanson's motion. Feeling the heat, the pro-business NPA party, put forward a motion to eliminate the public's right to speak to this motion. Former NDP MP and new mayor Kennedy Stewart, along with two of the three Green councilors, voted with the NPA to prevent the public from speaking. Even one of the five NPA councilors was unwilling to go as far as the Greens and the mayor and voted against the motion.

Fortunately COPE's efforts to publicize this betrayal led these "progressives" to back down and a subsequent motion reinstated the public's right to speak on Swanson's motion.

The motion has since been rescheduled a few times, but is expected to go before council on Tuesday November 27 as Socialist Worker goes to print. The Vancouver Tenants union is holding a rally at city hall before council meets.

To find out about future VTU events, message them on Facebook at @tenantsunionvr and to stay in touch with the City We Need campaign, message Jean Swanson at @swanson4council on Facebook. And look for both groups of activists to keep pressuring Vancouver city council to support Swanson's motions that help working people get closer to the city we need.

## Posties fight for decent jobs

by Carolyn Egan

A national postal strike has been taking place in cities and towns across Canada and Quebec. The issues are clear and one of the most important is the question of health and safety.

Over 14,000 workers have been injured in the last four years. This is due to a number of reasons including the decrease in letter mail, and a dramatic increase in parcel delivery which has significantly increased the load that individual letter carriers are forced to deliver. The routes are also longer, there are fewer pick-up points along the way and members are forced to sort mail as they do their deliveries.

The intensification of work is happening in many industries and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) was determined to take it on in collective bargaining.

Other key issues are the demand that rural workers be paid for all hours worked, and the creation of more full time jobs which would cut back the Crown corporation's dependency on precarious workers. The need for permanent employment for younger workers in particular is something that all unions should be taking up.

CUPW is fighting not only for the working conditions of its own membership, but for all workers across the country who are facing these same challenges.

The conditions that Canada Post has been imposing on its workers are making life harder both in the sorting plants and those doing the delivery. The corporation is not facing a deficit. It actually made a profit of \$144 million in 2017. It is a public service providing delivery of both mail and parcels to residences and businesses

and there is absolutely no need for it to be driven by an endless drive for profit with its workers being forced to pay the price.

There has been strong support among the rank and file membership for the fight with their employer. There is a confidence that they can make gains and we have seen a strong response to the rotating strikes that are taking place.

The work stoppages started on October 22nd and there has been real enthusiasm on the lines. Though there are many new employees who have not had the strike experience of older

workers there has been a strong communication network through the elected stewards and activists keeping everyone informed of the ups and downs of the struggle. This has knitted together a solid, fighting union which is prepared to fight for its workplace rights.

As this article is being written, back to work legislation has been passed by the House of Commons and will be voted on by the Senate. The union will of course challenge this in court. When Stephen Harper was Prime Minister in 2016, Parliament ordered postal workers back

to work - but this was overturned in court. The judge ruled that the legislation indicated that Canada Post was bargaining in bad faith by not trying to negotiate a settlement and waiting for legislation to be put in place. The judgment stated that the corporation was assuming that the workers would be forced to end their rotating strikes.

"We are still here and ready to negotiate, but what about Canada Post?" Says Mike Palecek, CUPW National President. "No matter what, we have to be prepared to fight for your constitutional right for free collective bargaining. We went to court and won this fight after the 2011 legislation. We will fight once again, should that right be taken away."

The government should take the position that the parties should negotiate and not legislate. Actions of this nature undermine the collective bargaining process and allow the corporation to run roughshod over workers' rights. If the right to strike is taken away, the major weapon that workers have to defend their interests is no longer there.

Eight Liberal MP's offices have been occupied across the country, and rallies are taking place to defend collective bargaining. These should be supported by the community and other unions to make it clear that the Liberal government is not on the side of working people in this country.

We live in a capitalist society that grants great powers to the employers and puts workers at a huge disadvantage. The right to strike has been hard won in this country and all workers should do everything they can to defend it. In a time of low levels of workplace struggle, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers is showing the way forward.



Picketing the South Central sorting plant in Toronto

Photo: Michelle Robidoux