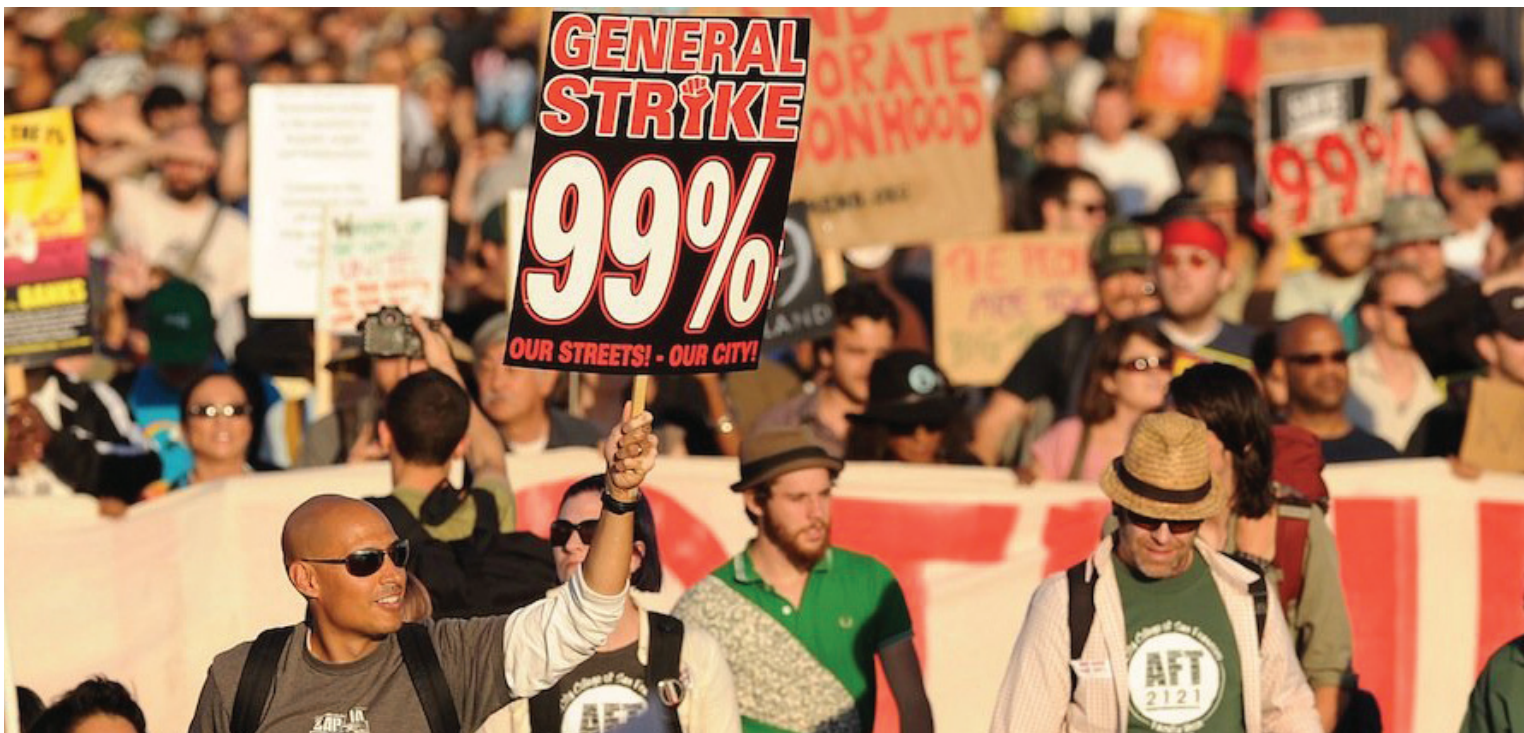


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It's them...



...against us

FOLLOWING HIS anti-teacher Bill 115 with a wholesale prorogation of the legislature, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty has demonstrated how the austerity agenda attacks basic democratic rights—from collective bargaining to social democracy. This challenges us to build democratic alternatives to the bargaining table and the ballot box, and there are growing examples around the world of rank-and-file resistance.

Even before teachers had a chance to bargain, McGuinty instituted Bill 115—imposing concessions on them, taking away their right to strike, and handing decision-making power over any issue to the Minister of Education. As one legal expert said, “You do not have to be a constitutional lawyer to conclude that this legislation is an unprecedented attack on the civil liberties and constitutional rights and freedoms of educational workers.”

Now that McGuinty is facing opposition—from high school students walking out to oppose Bill 115, to scandals over healthcare and energy, to losing a recent by-election to the NDP—he has shut down the most limited form of democracy, that of the legislature, and

handed power to his cabinet to rule unaccountably. This is not a sign of strength but a sign of weakness, exposing how much the 1% needs to undermine the most basic forms of democracy in order to impose its unpopular austerity agenda. This is happening coast to coast and around the world, raising the need for alternatives.

The ballot box and the bargaining table

The BC Liberals have been attacking teachers while sinking in the polls, and recently cancelled the fall session of the legislature. In Quebec, Liberals imposed Bill 78 to attack students and basic civil liberties, and used an election in an attempt to divide the movement and distract from corruption scandals. Federally, Harper's austerity agenda has included two prorogations to avert scandals, and omnibus bills that ram through austerity.

Electing a different driver won't alter the path of the austerity train because the tracks are designed for the 1%. This awareness exploded at Occupy Wall Street, including signs saying “the system's not broken, it's built this way.” In the midst of the US election, Democratic mayor Rahm Emanuel attacked teachers. Social democratic governments in Britain, Spain, Greece and South

Africa have imposed vicious austerity, and the Nova Scotia NDP has raised tuition and is contracting out jobs. Despite student occupations and labour demonstrations, Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath supported McGuinty's austerity budget claiming that “we serve the public better by getting to work here in this legislature.”

Meanwhile the trade union bureaucracy repeats the same calls of waiting for elections and bargaining as usual—when the austerity agenda is undermining what remains of the ballot box and the bargaining table. The CAW leadership settled for concessions without a fight, and despite mass strike votes from Ontario teachers and solidarity from students the union leadership seems intent on bargaining with a prorogued government.

Our democracy

The most effective opposition to austerity has been from below: in the streets, in workplaces and on campuses. Egyptians occupied and went on strike to topple their dictator, and workers are continuing to strike against the new regime. In South Africa a victorious miners' strike has exposed the ANC government and trade union bureaucracy, and inspired other workers to strike. There have been mass strikes in

Britain, Greece, and Spain—pushing the trade union bureaucracy to act through rank-and-file pressure.

Wisconsin students and workers occupied their capitol building and built a movement that defeated an anti-strike law. Chicago teachers built alliances with students and parents and won their strike against the Democrat mayor. Even precarious Wal-Mart workers are gaining the confidence to strike.

Quebec students built a broad strike movement that toppled the government, its tuition hike and its draconian law. This boosted the new left party, Québec solidaire. Air Canada workers went on wildcat strike at the same time as locked out workers in Alma built a rank-and-file resistance that pushed back mining giant Rio Tinto. On the west coast, teachers have won public support fighting the Liberals, government employees have struck and built solidarity networks, and there was a mass sit-in against the tar sands.

While the austerity agenda is undermining the traditional forms of democracy—through the ballot box and the bargaining table—people are rediscovering rank-and-file resistance in workplaces and campuses, building their own democracy from below—which can beat austerity.

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Victory for Musqueam

by JESS CHAN

AFTER MONTHS of negotiation, vigils and protests against ancestral remains being dug up, members of the Musqueam Band have halted the destruction and exploitation of sacred land with help from other BC First Nations, community and labour allies, and the City of Vancouver.

On September 28, the BC government decided to cancel the development of a five-story condo in the Marpole-Midden area of Vancouver after the building site was considered sacred grounds for the Musqueam Band. Even with the province showing its support for the developers, Century Group, the Musqueam were able to reclaim what was theirs to begin with.

The 4,000 year-old site where the development was proposed was declared a National Historic Site in 1933. A Coast Salish winter village, artifacts, and remains of the deceased have been buried there.

“We would love to be able to negotiate a way for the Musqueam to get the land back in their possession, and also the whole area, which was the site of a village where people lived for thousands of years,” said Musqueam spokesperson Wade Grant.

The BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations even stated that development of the site “is no longer appropriate” after the discovery of the burial grounds.

BC Premier loves highways, not public transit

by ANNA ROIK

BARELY A week after TransLink announced it would be scaling back transit projects, BC premier Christy Clark announced plans for a major Lower Mainland highway expansion project.

At the September 28 meeting of the Union of BC Municipalities, Clark told mayors that it is time to replace the tunnel that links Vancouver to Delta and Surrey, as well as the ferry terminal to Vancouver Island.

Clark says the replacement is needed to accommodate the projected increase in population and traffic.

This announcement came in the same week as a citizens’ transit advocacy group launched its campaign, Get OnBoard BC. The campaign’s mission is for sustainable funding and transit options for the growing population of the Lower Mainland so that people are no longer dependent on cars for their daily commute. Mayors have indicated they want to negotiate sustainable funding for transit but that the BC government has been rejecting many suggestions.

Clark stated these two projects are part of the government’s BC Jobs Plan. But the government is creating jobs related to the unsustainable fossil fuel industry. Instead it should be creating green jobs and increasing funding for public transit.



The first 50 days of the PQ government

by JESSICA SQUIRES

OCTOBER 25 marked the fiftieth day of the PQ government of Quebec. Out of the gate, Pauline Marois’ minority PQ government seemed set on tacking left, under pressure from the student movement and for their own political reasons. But the PQ are already starting to show their true colours.

The PQ began their term by announcing the reversal of the tuition fee increases that sparked months of student strikes and demonstrations and which brought down the Liberal government of Jean Charest; and they repealed the reactionary bludgeon law, Law 12 (Bill 78). These two acts were huge victories for the student movement, followed by another: the maintenance of the student assistance measures first offered by Charest as an alternative to eliminating the fee hike. These victories were quickly followed by government announcements of the closure of the only nuclear power facility in Quebec, an end to a Liberal asbestos plan, and a moratorium on shale gas exploration (fracking).

Progressives could be forgiven for thinking that a new day had dawned in Quebec with the election of Quebec’s first woman premier—especially when the PQ announced it would roll back tax cuts for the rich in order to eliminate the health care premium. They could also be forgiven for being confused.

The PQ Finance Minister has long been on the record as supporting tax cuts for corporations. And Pauline Marois tried to unfreeze tuition fees years ago when she was Education Minister (the student strike of 1996 stopped her). The PQ is a neoliberal party. The only substantial difference between them and the Liberals is their stand on the national question. So how can we explain the seeming anomaly? In addition to responding to and trying to appease the mass pressure in the streets, the PQ has its own cynical reasons to tack left.

Despite nine years of Liberal corruption and an unprecedented, no-hold-barred campaign for strategic voting, the PQ could only get four more seats than the Liberals in the last election. Their days are numbered if

they can’t turn this around.

First, the PQ is watching demographics. They know their base is aging, and they suffered a series of devastating internal crises last year. Their best hope of remaining viable in the long term is to appeal to younger voters, many of whom were involved in the strike and who have progressive ideas on a range of other issues including the environment.

Second, they have been shoring up their own base by announcing measures designed to appease their progressive members. Third, they hope to recoup losses to their left, both in terms of actual votes and in terms of political space, to Québec solidaire (QS) and Option nationale. By tacking left and testing the limits of a minority, they can point to it later and appeal for those voters to help them win a majority.

The veneer didn’t take long to fall away from the cynicism. A scant 35 days into their mandate, the PQ backed down before a backlash from the right-wing CAQ and the Liberal opposition to the tax reforms.

At budget time, it’s a safe bet we can expect them to reveal their true colours,

appealing to the base of the Liberals and CAQ: corporations and the rich.

In the meantime, the PQ’s principal policy challenge—independence—remains unresolved, and likely will remain so for as long as Marois can keep it that way. The last thing the PQ needs right now is an open debate about independence that could expose the divisions inside her party between hard-line, often ethnic, separatists on one hand, and advocates of moderate compromise with empire on the other.

The PQ needs to find a way to be all things to all people—an impossible task—if they are to win a majority government in the next election.

And that election will come sooner than later; most expect it in 18 to 24 months. We should already be preparing for the next struggles against the Quebec government, with its new political stripes—and also for the next election. The student strike shows how we can beat austerity by building mass rank-and-file campaigns, and the recent gains of QS show how this can be combined with a left electoral challenge to the joint austerity program of the PQ, Liberals and CAQ.

Hurricane Sandy

by JESSICA SQUIRES

FRANKENSTEIN WAS the name of the doctor who created a monster. Frankenstorm, the tongue-in-cheek name for the storm labeled Sandy, was created by human action under capitalism.

It makes sense to call it that—not the idiotic way the mainstream media uses the term because of the coincidence with Halloween, but because Sandy was made by capitalist climate change.

Scientists have linked warmer sea surface temperatures to more frequent and stronger Atlantic hurricanes. Record high temperatures in the Atlantic sea water fed Sandy the energy it needed. Rising sea levels as a result of record polar ice melts earlier this year also broke storm surge records up and down the Atlantic coast of North America.

Sandy’s odd trajectory from east to west was caused by a weather “blocking event,” which have occurred with more frequency of late and are linked to extreme weather events such as heat waves. Those heat waves are, some scientists believe, linked to polar ice melting at a faster rate, and that melt is unquestionably increasing due to man-made climate change.

Warmer water, polar ice melt, and heat waves: capitalist climate change made Sandy what it was.

Meanwhile, as climate justice activists have long observed, the impact of severe climate change is much more often felt in impoverished regions and by marginalized populations. Sandy was no exception. While the damage in New York City was devastating and spectacular (and let’s hope it opens some eyes in the process), between 150,000 and 200,000 homes were destroyed in Cuba, and untold millions of dollars worth of damage suffered in Haiti, Jamaica and the Bahamas, not to mention dozens of fatalities.

Yet the mainstream media has, with very few exceptions, focussed on the damage in New York, including the closing of the stock exchange that harmed nobody. That’s what sells tickets. And speaking of selling, the incredibly crass decision by some retail chains to capitalize on Sandy by holding a “Hurricane Sale” while millions of people remained without power, received the cold treatment it deserved on social media networks.

Sandy was capitalism’s monster, from start to finish, which is why some are calling for Hurricane names to be named after oil companies instead of individuals. These extreme weather events will continue, and will continue disproportionately affecting oppressed people, until we harness human activity to move beyond capitalism and its oil economy.

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Thousands rally to oppose pipelines in BC

by BRADLEY HUGHES

ON OCTOBER 22, under the stewardship of several BC First Nations, 5,000 people from all over BC came together to demand that the planned Enbridge and Kinder Morgan pipelines be stopped.

For the last few months, individuals all over BC had been recruiting people to join the rally and to engage in peaceful civil disobedience.

Over 4,000 pledged online to risk arrest either at the Victoria rally or at local events in their community. Protesters put up a 245 metre long banner on wooden posts, representing the length of one of the proposed supertankers. By staking the posts into the ground on the lawn of the legislature protesters were breaking the law and risking arrest. But the Victoria police department allowed this to go unmolested and no one was arrested.

Jolan Bailey, one of a host of event organizers, had this to say:

“This is about demonstrating that British Columbians are willing to do anything to stop these projects. To me this was never about getting arrested, it’s about showing Premier Clark and Prime Minister Harper just how far regular Canadians are willing to go to stop tanker and pipeline expansion.”

“The power in a movement is at that moment when people are willing to get arrested,” Bailey went on. “We’re putting the politicians on the defensive. What happened today was a powerful thing – people from all walks of life came together and committed to taking a stand ... everything that usually divides us didn’t today.”

The protesters, speakers and MCs represented a diverse cross-section of the people of BC. In addition

to the First Nations people were members of the BC Federation of Teachers, the Communication, Energy, and Paper workers union, the Canadian Auto Workers, and other unions had their banners and flags there.

From the stage, Art Sterritt, a Coastal First Nations leader asked, “Who is willing to lay down in front of the bulldozers to stop the pipeline?” The crowd replied “WE WILL”.

He asked, “Who is going to change the BC government if they don’t stop putting our coast up for sale?” The crowd replied, “WE WILL”

Some of the speakers included: Chief Rueben George (Tsleil Waututh), Art Sterritt (CFN), Chief Jackie Thomas (Saik’uz), Chief Karen Ogen (Wet’suwet’en), Susan Lambert (BC Teacher’s Federation), Dave Coles (CEP), Kaitlyn McDougall (BC CFS), Maude Barlow (Council of Canadians),

Zoe Blunt (Forest Action Network), Rex Weyler (No Tankers BC), Rob Fleming (BC NDP Environment critic), Elizabeth May (leader of the Green Party).

There were additional provincial NDP MLA’s present including Carole James, Nicholas Simons, John Horgan, Maurine Kauragianis, Gary Coons, and Lana Popham.

The speakers talked about the incredible solidarity that brought together so many First Nations, environmental groups and trade unions. They talked about the devastation facing us when these pipelines and tankers have a spill. But they also noted the climate damage we are already experiencing and that it will only get worse if we don’t stop oil extraction in the tar sands.

For more information, visit: defendourcoast.ca



Syrian revolution poses a severe test for Turkey's rulers

by **ALEX CALLINICOS**

THE FIRST real sign that the civil war in Syria could spill over into a wider conflict came last week. A series of mortar and artillery exchanges took place across the border between Syria and Turkey.

The Turkish parliament has authorised military action against Syria. Turkey's prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned that the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad would be making "a fatal mistake" if it sought to test Turkey's resolve.

Turkey under Erdogan has been asserting itself as a regional power. Rebuffed by the European Union, where racist opposition is blocking its application for membership, Erdogan has turned eastwards.

His hand has been strengthened by a booming economy. His ruling AK Party rests on a new thriving industrial capitalism centred on Anatolia, and has been boosted by a massive influx of speculative capital.

Israeli brutality and arrogance have effectively killed off its military pact with Turkey. Taking advantage of the power vacuum created by the Arab revolutions, Erdogan has projected himself as a champion of the

Palestinians.

Mohamed Morsi, Egypt's new Muslim Brotherhood president, says he will adopt the "Turkish model". By this he means a neoliberal Islamist government that poses no threat to the West.

But the Syrian revolution poses Erdogan a severe test. After trying unsuccessfully to persuade Assad to negotiate with the opposition, he eventually backed Western calls for his removal.

Buffer

When Syria shot down a Turkish jet in June, Ankara called on NATO and the United Nations to establish a buffer zone on the border between the two countries.

The swelling number of Syrian refugees (over 100,000 already in Turkey) could stay there, and Turkish villages would be protected from spillovers from the war.

Turkey is also widely reported to be acting as a base of operations for those outside powers—the US, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar in particular—that are arming some sections of the rebels.

But while Erdogan wants foreign intervention in Syria, he is unhappy

about the cautious policy being pursued by the US. Bulent Aliriza at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington says, "President Obama prefers to go down the path of a long drawn out struggle, like Afghanistan in the 1980s. But that's not good enough for Turkey."

"It does not want to be like Pakistan, which became the forward base for the Afghan rebels. If that were to happen it could confront all the pressures that Pakistan faced and from which it has never recovered."

There are three other complications. First, despite moves towards negotiations between the Turkish government and the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), fighting in Turkish-ruled Kurdistan has escalating recently. The Assad regime appears to be encouraging PKK guerrillas to attack Turkey from Syria.

Struggle

Second, Erdogan has been fighting a bitter domestic struggle against the high command of the armed forces.

Last month the ex-commanders of the army, navy and air force, along with 327 other defendants, were given long jail sentences for plotting a coup. So this isn't a good moment to be go-

ing to war, which could also reverse the inflow of capital into Turkey.

Third, Erdogan's policy of intervention in Syria is opposed by about two thirds of the Turkish public. Many of the inhabitants of south western Turkey, bordering on Syria, belong to the same sect of Shia Islam as Assad and his supporters. So Syria has become a dangerous trap for Erdogan.

His wariness is matched by that of the US. There has been much talk of the West and its allies arming the Syria rebels.

But the Financial Times reports: "Western governments fear heavy weapons might fall into the wrong hands as the armed opposition becomes more radicalised—sending anti-aircraft missiles."

The roots of the revolution and the civil war in Syria remain inside the country—in the clash between the Assad regime and the popular revolt.

Outside powers would like to bend this struggle to meet their own interests, but the dangers of intervention make their policies hesitant and confused.

This article originally appeared in Socialist Worker (UK)

Arab Spring continues in Kuwait

by **AHMED EL BASSIOUNY**

AS PART of the Arab Spring, protests continue across Kuwait against autocratic rule and systematic oppression.

The Western-backed Sabah family has ruled for over 250 years, considering itself "immune and inviolable" in the constitution. It has maintained a regime of oppression, especially towards the Bedoun—or stateless people—who face continuous systematic discrimination by the government and its agencies.

The Bedoun don't have citizenship of any country and are not eligible to attend schools or to get any services like other citizens. They have been under continuous attacks from Kuwaiti forces. On international non-violence day, October 2, Bedoun members were attacked severely, and the Ministry of the Interior blocked any medical help to the injured. According to a Bedoun's solidarity website (launched by Bedoun to cover the continuous oppression they face), there were many severe injuries

resulting from baton blows, violent dragging on the street, burns caused by smoke and sound bombs, and rubber bullets from the Kuwaiti special forces.

But the Arab Spring has inspired people to fight back. After mass protests last November the Prime Minister and cabinet resigned, and there have been ongoing battles demanding a Parliament that represents the opposition. This October 7 the Emir dissolved Parliament and called elections for December 1, and on October 19 announced

changes to the electoral system that the opposition describe as a "coup against the constitution."

On October 21 people took to the streets once more to march towards government headquarters. Kuwaiti police used tear gas and stun grenades—injuring dozens and arresting at least 15, including a former Islamist member of the parliament.

As elsewhere, the demands of the Arab spring have not been met in Kuwait—another military dictatorship armed by Canada and the West—so protests continue.

Egyptian doctors strike for better conditions

by **JOSH LALOR**

THE DOCTORS' strike is one of the many ongoing labour disputes striving for social justice and equality in Egypt's ongoing revolution.

On October 1, Egyptian doctors suspended outpatient and non-emergency services as part of a national strike protesting the appalling conditions of Egypt's public health care system. Only 4.8 per cent of the state's budget is allocated for health

services. Egyptian doctors want this increased to 15 per cent. Their demands also include higher wages and better security for healthcare workers and patients.

In response to the strike, the Morsi administration launched a smear campaign pitting doctor's demands for higher wages against the health care needs of the poor. Dr. Mona Mina of Doctors Without Rights and the Doctors' Union General Council states: "We want the patient to find a clean hospital, just as we want to

work in [a] clean environment... We want to work where there is respect, so that we can treat patients with respect. We want to take [home] a decent wage; so that we can offer a decent service... This is the social justice that our children died for in the revolution. This is the human dignity we have been looking for. For us, and for you."

Despite the administration's attempts to undermine the striking doctors, the campaign has received widespread support from political

parties, movements, and independent trade unions, both nationally and internationally.

Emboldened by this support, the Egyptian doctors launched a mass resignation campaign on October 18 in an effort to force the administration to take action. The striking doctors intend to collect 15,000 resignations and submit them en masse to the Ministry of Health.

For more information, visit: www.menasolidaritynetwork.com

United Arab Emirates: hidden oppression

by **YUSUR AL BAHRANI**

FOR MANY in the West, the United Arab Emirates is known for being a modern Arab country that appeals to international corporations seeking investments in an oil rich territory. However, behind those skyscrapers is a place where activists are chased, arrested, tortured and denied their basic human rights.

While the fire of revolution is blazing across the Arab world, activists in the UAE have not been in the streets protesting the regime. They have used the traditional way of voicing opinions by signing petitions seeking reforms within the current ruling system.

According to the Gulf Centre of Human Rights the petition that was directed to the UAE Head of State on March 9, 2011 called for reforms in the legislature, through ensuring a proper election of the National Council and allowing it to perform its role and powers in full. Prominent Emirati activist Ahmed Mansour, and four other supporters were arrested and then later released. He has been under continuous threats since then.

The so-called security apparatus detained about 61 pro-democracy activists who remain in custody. Not surprisingly, the government of the UAE claimed that those political prisoners pose a threat to national security. According to reports, the detainees have been placed in solitary confinement and tortured to extract forced confessions. One of the prisoners is Mohamed Al Roken, a human rights lawyer and UAE University Law professor who has been facing intimidation since 2006. The list of political prisoners also includes teachers, students and activists. The number of prisoners has swelled, as many of those arrested were arrested for protesting against the detention of others.

Most of the prisoners have been barred from seeing their families, or lawyers. One of them, Khalifa Al-Noaimi, has been on hunger strike protesting against ill-treatment and detention. Despite his deteriorating health condition, his demands are not yet met.

Despite several reports regarding human rights violations (including crackdowns on activists, denying rights to freedom of expression and assembly, and exploitation of migrant workers), Western media does not view the UAE as a place where oppression exists. The main reason is the capitalist interest in the oil rich gulf region: Dubai and Abu Dhabi remain attractions to corporations that seek profit at the expense of human rights.



Engels and indigenous feminism

THE ORIGINS of the Family, Private Property and the State, written by Frederick Engels in 1884, is one of the most important texts in classical Marxism. The text certainly has weaknesses as well as strengths, and has generated a great deal of contention. Indigenous feminists have a particularly important contribution to offer as we consider a volume written one and a quarter centuries ago.

Origins was restored as an important text for contemporary Marxist discussions largely through the contributions of feminist anthropology. A 1972 edition (International Publishers) of *Origins* included a new introduction by Eleanor Leacock, where Engels’ work was seen as a pathbreaking analysis. In the same year, another edition of the text was published with a similar introduction by another feminist anthropologist, Evelyn Reed (Pathfinder Press).

These interpretations of Engels’ work stressed that it was based on Marx’s notebooks, and indicated that Marx and Engels jointly shared an interest not only in studying the state and capital, but also women’s oppression.

A central argument of the book is about the origins of the family as an oppressive, hierarchical, and male-dominated (patriarchal) institution. *Origins* shows that these founders of the Marxist tradition understood the family as a social construction that coincided historically, thousands of years before the rise of capitalism, with the emergence of class society and the state. And, as a social construction, the family could be imagined differently, as a space where women could be freed from the stifling oppression of Victorian common sense.

This was certainly a groundbreaking argument at a time that predated first wave feminism, when women were considered to be—by the laws of nature—economically, politically, physically and spiritually subordinate to men.

But there are other dimensions to the *Origins* text that deserve consideration. The study was a theoretical one, based on empirical data provided by the observations of one Lewis Henry Morgan—a prolific American settler residing in the colonized Aboriginal territory of upstate New York.

Gantowisas

In her important study, *Iroquoian Women: the Gantowisas*, historian Barbara Alice Mann reminds us of the experiences that provided the subject matter for Morgan’s writings, and the context of his observations. She introduces non-Native readers to the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) term, gantowisas, in an effort to convey the egalitarian and respected role of women that Morgan observed in his work, *Ancient Society*, and that caught the interest of Marx and Engels:

“An Iroquoian equivalent of ‘woman’ is gantowisas, yet the term conveys more than woman. She is political woman, faithkeeping woman, mediating woman, leader, counselor, judge. Gantowisas indicates mother, grandmother, and even the Mother of Nations, as well as the Corn Mother, Herself, whose new shining face lies beneath the ground to rise again, each year. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the revered Cayuga Chief Deskaheh (1873-1925) of the Canadian Six Nations Council at Grand River, Canada, defined gantowisas as a mature woman acting in her official capacity. Her official capacity was public in every way. Her duties were frankly political, economic, judicial, and shamanic. Gantowisas, then, means Indispensable Woman.”

Mann is one of a number of contemporary feminist writers who are contributing to new—and reminding us of earlier but neglected—discussions regarding the distinct contributions of indigenous women to current critiques of capitalism and imperialism. Questions regarding issues like the origin of the family, private property and the state are central to issues of colonization, environmental destruction, and resistance.

Those who were the objects of fascination for Morgan, and through Morgan, for Marx and Engels, have continued to survive despite decades of ongoing colonization, and offer a set of rich lessons for those of us influenced by Engels’ *Origins* text.

The objects of this colonial history are the subjects of history in the present. For those of us in the Marxist tradition living in North America, the geographic region of Morgan’s study—Haudenosaunee territory—continues to be populated by indigenous communities, and continues to generate important lessons in the struggle for human emancipation.

Ely S. Parker

Indeed, Lewis Morgan was, at the time of his research and writing, assisted by a knowledgeable Haudenosaunee guide, Ely S. Parker. Morgan’s *Ancient Society: or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization*, was published in 1877. This was preceded, however, by Morgan’s *League of the Ho-de-no-saunee or Iroquois*, published in 1851. Morgan dedicated the book to the then 23-year-old Ely S. Parker, a missionary-educated member of the Seneca clan from the Tonawanda Reservation. Noting their ‘joint researches’ at the time, Morgan’s credit to Parker in fact merited more than a dedication. Parker is identified by Mann as the “ameliorating presence” serving as a “ghost-writer” for Morgan’s unusual understanding of indigenous practices in law, politics and social organization.

So, from the experiences of indigenous peoples in the late nineteenth century to the present, through a circuitous route—from Parker, to Morgan, to Marx, to Engels, to Leacock and Reed, to Mann and indigenous communities today—we come full circle to the indigenous peoples of Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory and the struggles of indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. The struggle against women’s oppression and colonization, then, continues.

INTERNATIONAL



A sleeping giant awakens as Indonesian workers strike

by PAUL KELLOGG

OCTOBER 3, as many as 2.8 million workers in Indonesia staged an enormous strike, bringing the entire economy to a standstill from 9am until 6pm.

It was the biggest mass action by labour in that country since 1965. The protests closed 5,000 factories in 12 provinces. In Jakarta alone, the machines at 800 factories went silent.

The strikers were demanding improved welfare and benefits. But the main issue was outsourcing. Yoris Raweyai, chairman of the Confederation of Indonesian Workers’ Union (KSPI), said that strikers wanted to change a law which allows management to hire temporary workers on annual contracts with almost no benefits.

January this year, Indonesia’s Constitutional Court ruled that the practice was illegal. Said Iqbal, president of the KSPI, announced at the end of the

strike that the government had agreed to facilitate talks with employers on this issue.

Indonesia—the fourth largest country in the world by population—has seen its economy growing steadily since a devastating slump in 1997-1998 sparked a revolution and the overthrow of the dictator Suharto. It was Suharto’s rise to power in 1965 and 1966 which shattered the Indonesian workers’ movement. Suharto’s rule was cemented by the slaughter of 500,000 activists and leftists.

Economic growth—an average of five per cent a year this century—has brought unemployment down from 12 per cent in 2005 to 6.8 per cent last year, giving confidence to the workers’ movement to make demands on employers.

But this economic growth has only marginally improved the lives of Indonesia’s workers. GDP per capita has increased 50 per cent since 1998,

but still sits at just \$1,200 a year, a fraction of the equivalent figure in Canada. In 1998 almost 50 million eked out a living on less than \$1.25 a day. That figure has fallen to 18 million—but there remain a total of 46 million living on the only marginally better sum of \$2 a day.

When revolution swept Indonesia in 1998, the power of mass action was revealed for all to see. Indonesia has a massive working class, 12 million in manufacturing alone. But numbers are not enough. A successful mass movement requires confidence, consciousness and organization, and in the first years after the revolution, it proved extremely difficult to rebuild these out of the wreckage left behind by Suharto.

October 3 was a message to the world, announcing progress in that rebuilding effort. The industrial revolutions sweeping Asia are producing not just new capitalisms, but new workers’ movements.

Wal-Mart workers threaten continued strike

by ZACHARY LOHNES

ON OCTOBER 4, the first ever strikes at Wal-Mart occurred, as walkouts and marches were supported by 88 workers in 28 stores, in over a dozen states across the US.

While there are differing reasons for individual strike actions, such as anger at low wages and anti-union tactics, the most prevalent reason surrounds the multinational’s notorious silencing and retaliation against workers who speak out about improvements within the job.

While the store has dismissed the protests as little more than “union pub-

licity stunts,” the walkouts are clearly a sign that something is increasingly wrong within the brick-inlaid walls of your local Wal-Mart, and these workers should be supported just as all minimum wage workers should be supported.

The opportunity could come on the Friday after US Thanksgiving, “Black Friday,” the biggest retail sales day of the year. Wal-Mart workers and supporters are planning boycotts, flash mobs and information pickets at stores.

Wal-Mart is the largest private employer in the world, and the wealth of the Walton family, the heirs to the Wal-Mart Stores Inc, is almost as much

as the poorest half of Americans combined. The Walton’s fortune (\$89.5 billion as of 2010) is equal to the net worth of 41.5 per cent of American families on the other end of the income inequality stick.

The average Wal-Mart worker gets less than \$11 per hour and works just 32 hours a week. An estimated 80 per cent of those workers rely on food stamps or some form of government assistance to subsist, and like other low income jobs are disproportionately women and people of colour. You can see just why Wal-Mart’s low prices come at such a high cost.

US Election 2012: America’s next top conqueror

by EVAN JOHNSTON

AMERICANS HEAD to the polls on November 6 to decide whether they want four more years of austerity under a Democratic administration or a Republican one.

And just like every other presidential election in recent memory, the left has been engaged in a familiar debate: should we vote for the lesser evil in order to stop the greater evil from gaining power? In this instance, it means the re-election of Barack Obama and Joe Biden in order to stop the more extreme policies of Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan.

While it is true that Romney and Ryan have put forward policies that are direct attacks on the poor, immigrants, women, people of colour, indigenous people, LGBT people, and every other group that faces the sharpest oppression in capitalist society, it is wrong to assume that the Democrats offer anything substantially different (as the last four years under Obama have made clear).

Many socialists have been turning

to the American socialist Hal Draper’s famous 1967 essay “Who Will Be the Lesser Evil in ‘68?”, where he notes: “the Lesser Evils who, as executors of the system, find themselves acting at every important juncture exactly like the great Evils, sometimes worse.”

Obama has gone to great lengths during his presidency to be “bipartisan,” and we have seen during the presidential campaign a bipartisan consensus on the need to reduce corporate tax cuts, though they disagree on how much and how quickly to implement them.

They agree on the need to cut so-called “entitlements” (what remains of a social safety net), though they disagree on what kind of “entitlements” and the feasibility of cutting them in the short-term. From debt to social security to immigration, Romney and Obama might disagree on the minor details, but they share a commitment to neoliberalism, austerity, and maintaining US imperialism.

Most commentators noted after the third and final presidential debate on foreign policy that it was hard to dis-

cern where they differed toward Israel, Iran, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and China. During the debate, they both went to great lengths to prove their devotion to the apartheid regime in Israel, to out-do one another in their aggression toward Iran, and to reassert their support for the murderous drone strikes in Pakistan.

As the New York Times puts it: “While they varied in degree, the heart of their clash rested on who would pursue the same national goals more effectively and ensure America’s enduring economic and security role overseas.”

Romney summed up the present situation with the greatest clarity when he told Obama during their first televised debate that “the rich will do fine, whether you’re president or I am.”

Regardless of the outcome on November 6, progressives need to stop being put in a reactive position, stop accepting the blackmail of “lesser evil” politics, and continue building movements from below that don’t accept austerity and drone strikes as a progressive alternative.

Celebrating the Russian Revolution of 1917

*Nearly a century ago a revolutionary movement emerged in Russia that toppled Tsarism, overthrew capitalism and began a new society based on radical democracy—demonstrating not only that a better world is possible, but also the strategy to get there. This experience inspired people around the world and continues to do so today. **Jesse McLaren** revisits this incredible history.*

The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in historical events. In ordinary times the state, be it monarchical or democratic, elevates itself above the nation, and history is made by specialists in that line of business—kings, ministers, bureaucrats, parliamentarians, journalists. But at those crucial moments when the old order becomes no longer endurable to the masses, they break over the barriers excluding them from the political arena, sweep aside their traditional representatives, and create by their own interference the initial groundwork for a new régime.”

The Russian Revolution, described in these lines by Leon Trotsky, began 95 years ago. As people start to interfere once more in historical events—from the Arab Spring to the Quebec spring, from mass strikes in southern Europe to mass strikes in South Africa—the inspiring success and tragic defeat of the Russian Revolution offer lessons for the future.

From strike to revolution

Like many revolutions since then, the Russian Revolution began spontaneously—when women workers in Petrograd, angry at the war and rising food prices, went on strike on International Women’s Day and demanded that their male coworkers join them. Like the mass strike that finally drove Mubarak out of Egypt, the role of workers was key in toppling the Tsar by fusing political and economic struggles.

Like in Egypt, the first phase of the revolution toppled a tyrant but left a government that continued the same foreign policy and same police violence to maintain the same system of exploitation and oppression. People learned through a process of successive approximations that more radical demands and more democratic methods were needed.

During the Quebec student strike, mass general assemblies provided a mechanism to mobilize rank-and-file students to collectively make decisions on the tactics and demands of their strike for better education. In Russia in 1917, this mass democratic character was fused with economic power through the emergence of workers’ councils. Then workers were able to debate and enforce their decisions regarding their workplace and society as a whole. These sorts of councils have briefly emerged under different names at high points of struggle around the world—“soviets” in Russia 1905 and 1917, “cordones” in Chile 1973, and “shoras” in Iran in 1979.

Festival of the oppressed

When soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers democratically took full power in October 1917, it unleashed a festival of the oppressed. Emerging from a semi-feudal society, the Russian Revolution shows what leaps and bounds are possible when people collectively challenge capitalism, and through the process change themselves.

Russia withdrew from WWI



and the German Revolution put an end to the rest of the war the next year—making Remembrance Day a product of soviet democracy. Workers took control of factories and peasants took control of the land. Homosexuality was decriminalized and women won abortion and divorce on demand in addition to communal nurseries, dining rooms and laundries. National and religious minorities won self-determination—including the right to independence and religious courts and schools if they chose—and members of previously persecuted groups were elected to leading positions, like the Jewish socialist Trotsky. Russia developed the world’s first nature conservatory and all structures of society were rapidly transformed to meet human needs—including education, culture and leisure.

As one historian described the changes in the eastern port of Vladivostok: “Under the leadership of Sukhanov, the 24-year-old student, and three young Bolshevik women, the Soviet set out to democratize Vladivostok industry. Workers’ committees ramped up production of railway rolling stock and retooled the city’s Military Port to build and refurbish civilian ships and machines. Working-class housing was built closer to industry in order to increase workers’ leisure time, and the Soviet opened a people’s university, three theatres, and two daily newspapers.”

International socialism

The Russian Revolution was the leading front in a global movement against capitalism.

As British PM Lloyd George wrote, “The whole of Europe is filled with the spirit of revolution. There is a deep sense not only of discontent but of anger and revolt amongst the workmen against the pre-war conditions. The whole existing order in its political, social and economic aspects is questioned by the masses of the population from one end of Europe to the other.”

This was not confined to Europe. A revolutionary conference in Baku (Azerbaijan) built unity between workers’ revolutions across Europe and anti-colonial revolts across Asia, and over the next years there were revolutions from Egypt to China, and general strikes from Britain to Winnipeg.

As the Alberta Federation of Labour proclaimed in January 1919: “Resolved that this body places itself on record as being in full accord with the aims and purposes of the Russian and German socialist revolutions, and be it further resolved that this body gives the executive full power to call a general strike should the allied powers persist in their attempt to overthrow the soviet administration in Russia or Germany or in any other country in which a soviet form of government is or may be established.”

Revolutionary organization

But all these other revolutionary movements were defeated because they did not have the key subjective element of 1917: a mass revolutionary organization. As the Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin wrote, a socialist has to act as “the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation.”

By linking the fight against every form of oppression to the power of the working class, the Bolsheviks built a mass organization united through a revolutionary paper to win over the majority to self-emancipation through the process of struggle. This required democratic centralism—freedom of discussion and unity in action—in order to learn and generalize the lessons of struggle. The Bolsheviks passed through 15 years of struggle to combine firm principles with flexible structures and tactics—

from an underground party in 1903 when there were no civil liberties, to an open party during and after the revolution of 1905; boycotting elections in 1905 when they were a barrier to the revolution, then participating in Parliament when the revolutionary wave ebbed.

The role of the Bolsheviks in 1917 was the opposite of a coup, as Lenin argued before October. “The government must be overthrown, but not everybody understands this correctly. So long as the provisional government has the backing of the Soviet of Workers’ Deputies, you cannot ‘simply’ overthrow it. The only way it can and must be overthrown is by winning over the majority of the Soviets.”

Instead the Bolsheviks threw themselves into every struggle—including defending the government that was persecuting them when it was threatened by a military coup—and through the process patiently explained that soviets could and should take full power. Through the process the Bolsheviks earned a quarter of a million members and democratically won a majority of delegates in the soviets in Petrograd and Moscow in October—and it was only then, through the soviets, that they organized a mass insurrection.

Legacy

The threat of these lessons spreading around the world—from Azerbaijan to Alberta—sent a panic through the global 1%, who sent a dozen invading armies to crush the revolution, while undermining their own revolutionary movements at home who stood in solidarity with Russia. As a consequence of Russia’s isolation, an internal counter-revolution under Stalin reversed every gain of the revolution, purged the Bolsheviks of all their leading members, and turned socialist theory on its head.

But as new movements rise up, people are rediscovering the genuine socialist tradition, rebuilding socialist organizations, and joining the new struggles for a better world—struggles that benefit from the best lessons of 1917.

The Russian Revolution shows what leaps and bounds are possible when people collectively challenge capitalism, and through the process change themselves.

Marxism and ecology: a green world is possible

Capitalism’s uncontrolled drive to profit not only produces economic crisis, but destroys the planet in the process. What can we do? Socialist Worker reviews the past year of ‘extreme weather’ and argues that the market solutions on offer—from cap-and-trade to carbon offsets and taxes—are no solutions at all. Instead, we need good green jobs for all and an ecological revolution, and movements from below are the starting point for challenging capitalism and saving the planet for us all.



A year of climate disasters

by CHARLOTTE IRELAND & BRADLEY HUGHES

THE LATEST climate disaster is Hurricane Sandy, which brought widespread devastation to the Caribbean and the eastern United States.

But from the melting ice caps in the Arctic to droughts across the US and crop failures in Europe, 2012 has continued to follow the trend of worsening “natural” disasters and extreme weather due to global warming. By the end of August, Arctic sea ice levels had hit record lows and thinning is accelerating at a pace much faster than scientists had predicted.

“This is a defining moment in human history,” said Kumi Naidoo, director of Greenpeace International in Amsterdam. “In just over 30 years, we have altered the way our planet looks from space and soon the North Pole may be completely ice-free in summer.”

Rapidly melting ice caps may also be to blame for the lower temperatures that froze much of Europe last winter. Arctic Oscillation, which typically forces warm Atlantic air over Europe, while keeping Arctic air over the poles, suddenly changed and instead the jet stream swung northward into Siberia and pushed cold air over Europe.

After Europe suffered from extreme cold temperatures throughout the winter, much of North America once again faced record-breaking heat waves, drought and wild fires. July in the US was the hottest month ever observed and, as of September, 64 per cent of the country was experiencing drought. Wild fires burned over 8.6 million acres of land.

In the spring, the Fraser River—which originates in the Rocky Mountains and flows over 1000 km to empty into the Pacific Ocean south of Vancouver—rose to the highest levels in 40 years. Although the waters did not inundate the cities along its banks, a study from the University of Northern British Columbia concluded that climate change will eventually cause worse flooding. The study’s author, UNBC Environmental Science and Engineering professor, Stephen Déry, has said, “What we used to consider once-every-hundred-years flooding may now be happening more frequently, perhaps once every 10 years or so. On the opposite end, we are also seeing extremely low water flow years in some parts of the Fraser River Basin, which are also detrimental.”

In Britain, crop yields were down due to too much rain, while a lack of rain in Eastern Europe hurt farms there. Our climate has changed so dramatically that more frequent extreme weather, like Hurricane Sandy, is now the new normal.



The market won’t save us

by BRADLEY HUGHES

THERE ARE many market-based schemes that claim to deal with climate change without harming capitalism. None of them will work.

Climate change is occurring because we are digging up fossil fuels and burning them. Carbon dioxide (CO2) that was taken out of the atmosphere to make plants over thousands of years was stored beneath the earth’s surface and eventually turned into coal, oil and natural gas. By burning this fossil carbon, we are adding even more CO2 to the atmosphere, in addition to what is already circulating throughout the world.

The only hope in averting even more catastrophic climate chaos is to stop adding CO2 and other greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. The way to do that is to eliminate our use of fossil fuels.

The various schemes on offer have another goal: to reduce our use of fossil fuels. They also fail at this less useful goal.

Carbon offsets

The most transparent failure is the use of carbon offsets. You can now buy carbon offsets online. In BC, public institutions are required to spend tens of thousands of dollars each year purchasing offsets.

The idea behind the offset is that, for every ton of CO2 that you expect your activities to generate, you pay someone else to do something that will absorb the same amount of CO2. You can see the problem: if I add one ton and you remove one ton, then we haven’t reduced the amount of CO2 in the atmosphere.

It gets even worse, since many offsets are based on reductions that will occur in the future: for example, planting trees that will absorb CO2 and turn it into wood. It may take decades to absorb as much CO2 as I’ve emitted this year. Plus, these offsets are purely speculative. Because the world is getting hotter, the trees may grow more slowly or die sooner, and

no matter how much the trees absorb, they will re-emit it when they die.

In addition, lots of offsets are simply scams: no trees are planted, or the same land is planted, bulldozed and planted again, year after year, to sell more offsets. As the Christian Science Monitor reported in 2010, “Voluntary carbon offsets are a ‘Wild West’ market ripe for fraud, exaggeration and poorly-run projects that probably do little to ease global warming.”

In the same article, the Monitor notes, “Carbon offsets are the environmental equivalent of financial derivatives: complex, unregulated, unchecked and—in many cases—not worth their price.” The article goes on to detail offsets projects that were never completed or that would have been implemented, even without the money from the offsets.

As Tom Goldtooth of the Indigenous Environmental Network explains about REDD, a carbon-offset scheme, “We’re dealing with an emerging issue here that’s really perverse. It involves the financial institutions of the world, the oligarchies of the world; it involves multinational corporations; it involves the northern countries and specifically industrialized countries pushing forward to a next level economic globalization that is nothing but privatization of nature.”

Cap-and-trade

Carbon trading is a solution to the climate crisis brought to you by the same people who brought you the financial crisis. Back in 1997 when the Kyoto Accord was signed, it included carbon trading as a means of reducing carbon emissions. The European Union (EU) has followed up with its own cap-and-trade mechanisms. Governments issue carbon permits equal to the amount of CO2 they want to see emitted. Businesses that are able to emit less than their limit can sell the excess to other businesses that aren’t able to reduce their emissions sufficiently. Those who reduce the most are rewarded by being allowed to sell their permits, while those who don’t reduce enough are punished

by being forced to buy more permits.

The problem with this scheme is related to those of carbon offsets, since one way to reduce your emissions under this scheme is simply to buy carbon offsets. The other problem is that governments that want to look like they are doing something about climate change, without actually doing anything about it (all governments around the world), have issued so many carbon permits that the bottom has fallen out of the carbon market: the cost is now so low that there is little incentive to reduce emissions in the EU. In October, carbon permits were as low as \$10 a ton. On top of that, only 40 per cent of the EU’s total greenhouse gas emissions are involved in the scheme.

Carbon tax

In what seems like a much more straightforward solution, carbon taxes put a direct tax on fossil fuels, supposedly encouraging people and businesses to switch to renewable energy sources. In BC, where this has been implemented, the tax is at a very low level. Fossil fuels for export are exempted, so the burgeoning liquid natural gas and coal mining industries don’t pay the tax. In other words, it is designed to be revenue neutral, so the money collected does not go to creating green jobs: 67 per cent of it goes to business in the form of tax cuts.

By itself, this approach will never change the habits of most people. A large enough tax could convince people to switch from heating their homes with natural gas, or upgrade their insulation. However, those changes require money up front, and the paycheck comes in increments on the reduced monthly bills. Worse still, by forcing individuals to pay, it lets the real polluters—the energy industry and corporate Canada—off the hook.

This approach is even less effective if you’re trying to get people to use less gasoline by way of a carbon tax. The transit systems in many suburbs of our big cities are so underfunded, and hence slow and ineffective, that paying for



Where does the NDP stand on pipelines?

by VALERIE LANNON

IN THE last couple of months, the NDP has been speaking out both sides of its mouth when it comes to pipelines. While the party says it opposes the Northern Gateway pipeline proposed by Enbridge, it makes other statements that contradict and undermine that opposition.

NDP energy critic Peter Julian supports the notion of a refinery on the west coast of BC to treat the bitumen that would be transported there from the oil sands, in the interests of “job creation.” But the pipeline is the only option being actively talked about to transport the bitumen from Alberta.

And as noted in the *Globe & Mail*, “In a speech aimed at easing fears that his party is opposed to oil sands development, Mr. Mulcair said shipping western oil to Eastern Canada is a ‘pro-business, common sense solution’ that will create jobs and boost the country’s energy security. Mr. Mulcair later told reporters he has long said he would not speak against the oil sands expansion. ‘I said you have to include the environmental price in the way you are doing it and enforce legislation,’ he said.”

And at the October 22 rally in Victoria to oppose the Enbridge and Kinder Morgan pipelines into BC, the BC NDP’s Rob Fleming said that the current federal review process should be scrapped and replaced with a “made in BC” review. This falls far short of saying “stop the pipeline.” It is no wonder, then, that Green Party leader Elizabeth May received far louder applause than Fleming with her unequivocal opposition to the pipeline.

It’s time we take the NDP leadership to task for undermining the efforts to stop the development of the tar sands and all the refining, pipelines and shipping associated with them. Instead, the NDP should be spearheading action to create a green economy, with green jobs and sustainable energy.



Green jobs and ecological revolution

by JOHN BELL

ALL THE material conditions for an ecological revolution are here now. All the techniques for reducing energy consumption and replacing toxic and destructive fuels with clean, renewable sources are at hand. But they are out of reach from lifestyle changes or market solutions. We need an ecological revolution, and a growing movement for green jobs is the first step.

We need to stop burning fossil fuels immediately. To do that we need a massive program to fabricate and install wind turbines and solar panels, to tap geothermal and tidal power, to impose serious environmental regulation on all construction, to retrofit existing buildings, and to stop wars driven by and for oil. We need all this now if we are to have any chance of mitigating the dangers of a warming climate.

A better world is possible

All this is possible. Despite the propaganda from the fossil fuel lobby and its government adjuncts like Harper’s Tories, alternative technologies are here now, proven and ready to go.

For example, energy consumption could be radically reduced if buildings were constructed without a furnace—even in northern climates—and instead heated by a solar-powered water heating system, triple-paned windows and high efficiency insulation to keep it cool in summer and warm in winter. The entire energy consumption—including hot water, heating and all electric needs—would be just 10 per cent of what it costs just to heat a conventional home. This futuristic building is actually old news. The Saskatchewan Conservation House was first built in Regina in 1977 and has inspired an international movement called Passivhaus—with thousands of similar buildings being built.

Green jobs

The trouble is, a low-consumption sustainable future is highly economical but not profitable. On the other hand, exploiting fossil fuels like Alberta’s Tar Sands is not economical but is highly profitable. So despite being pioneered in Canada, no level of government in this country—no matter which party is in office—has championed these resource-saving, anti-pollution houses. Without a market drive or government intervention, these technologies are left up to individuals—which makes them inaccessible for the 99%.

Instead we need society to be reorganized and retooled, and this too is possible. During WWII entire economies were transformed overnight to prioritize the war drive, and to commit unlimited sums to build an atomic bomb. We need that level of change in the op-

posite direction, not to promote global war but to stop global warming.

To introduce measures on a mass scale, reduce pollution, conserve energy and other resources requires millions of green jobs that can unite the labour and environmental movements—and resistance to austerity is already producing this unity. In 2009 British wind turbine workers occupied their factory against closure, demanding “save jobs, save the planet” and sparking a campaign for a million climate jobs. Later that year thousands took to the streets in Copenhagen—uniting indigenous people, environmentalists, students and workers to demand “system change not climate change”—and the same forces converged in Cochabamba in 2010.

In Canada, indigenous-led resistance to tar sands has created a growing movement that includes the labour movement. As a member of the Canadian Auto Workers said in the lead up to the October 22 sit-in against tar sands in Victoria: “Tens of thousands of unionized and other jobs depend on healthy river and ocean ecosystems. We will be standing in solidarity with thousands of working people in BC and our First Nations sisters and brothers.”

Ecological revolution

These movements can raise our horizons to the radically different world necessary to stop capitalism’s war on the planet—a world free from the profit-driven market, complicit governments, and the limits of lifestyle change. To effect the change we need to see, we will have to take the productive power in society out of the hands of the few greedy individuals who control them.

It is not enough to “nationalize” resources and production in the hands of capitalist governments. We need to “socialize” production in the hands of the 99%, democratizing production and recognizing that as part of the natural world we have to make nature’s well-being central to our plans, not a luxury extra.

In a recent paper, Carl Cloete, head of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa put it brilliantly: “When we talk about social ownership of energy systems we are expressing our determination to resist commodification of electrical power and our desire that energy systems should not be for profit but have as their mandate service provision and meeting of universal needs.”

Capitalism is incapable of changing course. Left to itself its inhuman “logic” of competition and production for its own sake will take us all over the cliff. We have the tools to turn things around. We need to claim democratic ownership of those tools. And that means the ecological revolution cannot be achieved without a socialist challenge to the world order.

Sex-selection abortion: the latest anti-choice ploy

WHILE THE Tories lost the vote on anti-choice Motion 312, they used it as a launching pad for Motion 408, yet another attack on choice.

Minister of Status of Women Rona Ambrose was one of 10 Tory cabinet ministers to vote for Motion 312, and said she did so in order to “raise concerns about discrimination by sex-selection abortion.” Ambrose has been pushing the UN to declare an International Day of the Girl and now it’s clear why: Tory MP Mark Warawa used it as an opportunity to introduce Motion 408, which asks “that the House condemn discrimination against females occurring through sex-selective pregnancy termination.”

In his petition to support Motion 408, Warawa claims that “millions of girls have been lost through sex-selection abortion”, and that it constitutes the “worst form of discrimination against females”—despite no data existing on its prevalence. Motion 408 is trying to manufacture a crisis that accomplishes three goals for the Tories.

First, it is a direct attack on abortion rights, by pitting abortion on demand against human rights. Like the previous “fetal homicide” Bill C-484, and Motion 312 seeking to redefine when human life begins, Motion 408 equates an aborted fetus with a human. The logic, like any anti-abortion policy, is that to protect fetuses we must infringe on the rights of women. Already some have called for limiting ultrasounds to pregnant women to guard against sex-selection abortion, a paternalistic attitude that undermines a woman’s reproductive choice.

Second, Motion 408 is a nod to the Tories’ racist base. There is no data on sex-selection abortion besides anecdotal evidence from South Asian communities. Like Jason Kenney’s ban on women wearing the niqab during citizenship ceremonies, Motion 408 allows the Tories to make the xenophobic claim that discrimination against women is exclusively a problem of immigrant communities, and that the Tories and the Canadian state are the protectors.

Third, like the ban on the niqab, Motion 408 makes sex-selection abortion a scapegoat for the Tories’ broader attack on reproductive justice and women’s liberation. The Tories might care about “female fetuses” but they don’t care about real discrimination against women—including missing and murdered aboriginal women, women workers facing discriminatory employment insurance criteria, women refugees facing criminalization and healthcare cuts, lesbian and trans women fighting for basic human rights recognition, mothers denied a national childcare program, women’s rights groups that Harper defunded, or women internationally denied abortion funding by Harper’s “maternal health plan.”

The campaign against sex-selection abortion is about creating a sexist and racist decoy that provides a cover for the Tories and their austerity agenda. The best way to stop discrimination against women is to build a mass movement to defend abortion rights, connected to broader struggles for reproductive justice and women’s liberation. This means taking on the Tories and their latest anti-choice motion.

Latin America

After Venezuela’s election

ON OCTOBER 7 the people of Venezuela elected Hugo Chávez president for the third time in a row, in elections that have seen successive increases in his total vote.

Despite an organized right-wing campaign, that had to campaign to the left, promising to maintain some reforms, people democratically decided that Chávez best represented their aspirations for a better world. With a mass voter turnout of 80 per cent, a majority of voters demanded “socialism for the 21st century,” a rebuke both to the imperialism and austerity that dominate the world, and to claims that Chávez’s rhetoric has no support.

After decades of neoliberalism, the Bolivarian revolution has challenged the corporate agenda from below through assemblies and protests demanding change. Chávez has given a voice to this movement, while using increased state control and distribution of oil resources to bring policies that have reduced poverty, and improved health care and literacy. But capitalism remains, and the right-wing—backed by Western powers—have tried to undermine this process at every step and with every means—violently through a coup, economically through lockouts, and politically through elections. Everytime the masses of Venezuela have mobilized to defend Chávez, but there is growing tension.

Despite Chávez’s greatest total vote, his share of the popular vote has fallen to its lowest. While he won the 2006 election with 62 per cent of the vote and a 25 per cent lead, in 2012 it was down to 55 per cent with a 10 per cent lead. This can’t just be attributed to the right-wing menace, which has been there all along. There is also growing frustration at the base of Venezuelan society, which is starting to shift away from Chávez—not because of his radical words, but because of the limits to his ability to make them a reality. After 14 years in power there remains widespread inequality, corruption and bureaucratization within the ruling party that threaten the self-organization of the masses upon which the revolution depends.

21st century socialism will only be won through self-emanicipation, and across borders.

With capitalism intact and a right-wing taking advantage of creeping disillusionment, it will take deepening self-organization in workplaces and neighbourhoods to push the Bolivarian revolution forward and shift power from the state to the masses. The best way people in the West can help is to challenge our own state and corporations, and spread the inspiration and best lessons of Venezuela.

OPINION



Aboriginal students being left behind

Gabrielle Castilloux, a third-year social work student at Carleton Univeristy, describes the sad truth about post-secondary education funding for aboriginal students.

AS AN aboriginal student, who works three part time jobs to pay her tuition fees and rent, I often get stopped and asked why don’t I get free post secondary funding? Is that not what the government promised the aboriginal people of Canada?

The sad truth is that although this was promised, many aboriginal students are not seeing their fees paid, and it has come to a point where last year 19,000 aboriginal students were not funded for post secondary studies and because of this many of them were unable to attend schools.

According to the Canadian Federation of Students: “The federal government provides funding for Status First Nations and Inuit people (as defined by the Indian Act) through the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP). Funding for the PSSSP is distributed by band councils under their own eligibility criteria. For example, some bands fund more students at a portion of the total cost of their education, whereas other band councils give a grant covering all of a student’s expenses.”

However, the government funds each band differently, depending on several factors including population, incomes, revenue etc. Therefore some bands may not have the funding to send their youth and adults to post-secondary schools, for several reasons such as spending their money on other objectives or sim-

ply not having enough in their budget to fund students because the government has not given them enough funds.

Even more frustrating is that since 1996 funding for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada’s (INAC) Post-Secondary Education Program, which includes the PSSSP, has been capped at 2 per cent.

The aboriginal population is the fastest growing population in Canada with aboriginal youth counting for the highest youth population, and with these growing rates comes a halt from the government to provide funding. It is complete backwards thinking to cap funding when there is a much higher demand especially with a rising population.

The Harper government apologized for the downright disgusting treatment of aboriginal peoples, but has yet to recognize the genocide that the government inflicted upon these people. Harper stated that “the Gouvernement of Canada would like to sincerely apologize for failing the aboriginal people so profoundly.” Yet, the government still continues to fail us.

When it comes to the aboriginal population on Carleton University campus, most of the people that I know are getting funded. However, what concerns me more, is the people who live on my reserve or other reserves who do not attend post-secondary institutions due to the fact that they will not get funding and do not think that they

can make ends meet while attending school.

The sad truth, is that the Canadian government is still perpetuating the genocide that began hundreds of years ago.

Currently, aboriginal youth in high schools receive \$2,000 less per student per year than non-aboriginal high school students in Canada. Not only is there an attack on our post-secondary funds, but also at our secondary school level—which already puts aboriginal students at a disadvantage when attending university to take notes and do assignments at the level of other students.

Access to a degree or diploma is a way to be successful in life to not only ensure that you can create a career for the betterment of your future, but to attend a space where you can learn to think more critically and to pose questions about the world that surrounds you.

Canada promised to give us access to free post-secondary education as part of their apology for the horrible treatment that indigenous people have suffered for generations and continue to suffer. They have yet to uphold that promise and even further are going against their word.

It is time for the government to be held accountable for their promises. To realize that the first people of this land matter, and to realize that without us, this country would not be as it is.

Socialist Worker fighting fund

Thanks to the generous support of our readers, we have reached our goal of \$25,000 for the Socialist Worker fighting fund! Thank you to all who supported Socialist Worker financially over the past year; we could not continue publishing without your generosity and dedication. Thank you!

\$25,000

REVIEWS



BOOK

People’s history of WWII

A People’s History of the Second World War: Resistance versus Empire

Written by Donny Gluckstein

Reviewed by Peter Hogarth

A PEOPLE’S History of the Second World War is an incredibly valuable resource for any socialist, anti-war activist or progressive who has felt stymied or at a loss when confronted by people who bring up the Second World War as an example of war as humanitarian intervention.

Parallel wars

In *A People’s History*, Gluckstein attempts to come to terms with the fact that despite the mass carnage of WWII (some figures state that 50 million died, 28 million of them civilians) it is still widely considered “a ‘good war,’ when righteousness triumphed over injustice, democracy over dictatorship, tolerance over racism, and freedom over fascism.” In recognition of this, Gluckstein’s premise is that WWII was neither an imperialist war for national interests nor a people’s war for a better society, but rather it was both.

Gluckstein applies the idea of parallel wars to World War II as a whole because, as he writes, “on the conventional battlefield those giving commands and those performing them acted in concert, however different their thinking.” Thus, the two wars were indistinguishable even to those involved.

From the perspective of the ruling classes of the various nations, Gluckstein argues that the Second World War was not a fight against world domination, but rather a quarrel between Allied and Axis governments about who should dominate. While the naked brutality of the Axis powers was quite obvious and well-documented, Gluckstein emphasizes the cold calculation of the Allies. These examples include Stalin’s refusal to send supplies to resistance fighters in Yugoslavia until the worst of the fight-

ing was over and Allies’ interests assured in the region; Churchill backing reactionary forces in Greece to crush the resistance that had just liberated the country; Stalin waiting for the Nazis to kill off the non-Communist Poles before coming to the rescue; British and US bombers intentionally targeting German civilians; Britain’s veto of rescuing 70,000 Romanian Jews; Allied refusal to stop Auschwitz concentration camp by bombing rail lines or crematorium; the nuclear assault of Hiroshima; and on and on. This is the untold story of competing imperialist war, unconcerned for humanity, during WWII.

On the other hand, people’s war took many different forms and provided the energy and passion to defeat fascism in conjunction with the military power of the Allied nations. The people’s war did not just beat fascism, it also transformed the people fighting, raising their expectations, hopes and confidence to fight for a better world.

People’s war

In Greece, that meant the National Popular Liberation Army (ELAS) featured a women’s regiment.

In Poland, the people’s war and the fight against Allied and Axis imperialism broke down the divisions between soldiers and citizens. The Underground Home Army (AK) methods were unlike a regular army, as General Bor-Komorowski noted. “It had all the drive and enthusiasm of a revolutionary uprising [and] we attributed our success of the first few days to the impetuous fervour of this first onslaught. It more than made up for the poor quality of our arms.”

This is the story of WWII. The ambitions and aspirations of the people fighting it went far beyond the limits of the rival imperialisms’ drive for a better share of world power. In Britain, a rank-and-file soldiers’ movement developed with independent newspapers and a soldiers’ parliament, calling for a people’s war as opposed to an imperialist war.

ering diplomatic relations, and a hard-right Republican ticket is trying to use the attack on the American consulate in Libya to propel itself into the White House, the film can’t help but seem a little convenient. And, indeed, it will have millions of viewers flocking to theatres to hear the story of how innocent Americans were victimized by the menacing Iranians and the CIA came in to save the day.

But with that disclaimer aside, it’s worth acknowledging that *Argo* consciously tries to avoid being nauseatingly pro-American. The opening sequence outlines the history of American imperialism which preceded the revolution and hostage-taking—including the 1953 coup against the democratically-elected Mohammed Mossadegh for daring to nationalize the country’s oil resources, and American support for the Shah and his brutal secret police, the SAVAK. The film also provides an honest depiction of American reactions to the hostage-

Bosses were forced to include workers in the control of production and meet their needs or face “revolution” in the work place, as one managing director warned his colleagues.

In the US, people’s war manifested itself in the rebellion and resistance of African-American soldiers in the army, who were tired of fighting for “democracy” in Europe while experiencing none at home. In Italy, armed resistance and industrial strike action combined to defeat Nazi occupation. In India and Indonesia, armed militias battled against the rule of both Axis and Allied powers. In Vietnam, the war against Japanese invasion took on a people’s war character as the people who defeated the troops saw their own power and began to demand: “Land for the peasants! Nationalization of the factories under workers’ control! People’s committees!”

Legacy

The horror of WWI left a lasting memory on people. The broken promises of those post-war reforms and economic crisis meant that ordinary people were disgusted by the violence of wars and the motives of the ruling class who started them. Allied governments knew that simplistic pleas to patriotism and nationalism would not motivate their populations to support another blood-bath. Hence, WWII was fuelled by official rhetoric emphasizing the fight for freedom, equality and post-war improvements.

While the motivations of Allied governments were still the imperialism and a greater slice of the world’s pie, they mobilized people through their expectations of liberation and reform. These motivations were impossible to restrain and were demonstrated by the passion of rank-and-file soldiers, workers and others—who fought, occupied factories, and formed militias and underground organizations to fight against fascism, for national defense and for much, much more.

taking, including archival footage of a brutal assault by American protestors against an Iranian-American.

Taken solely on its artistic merits, it is an enjoyable movie. The cloak-and-dagger CIA operation makes for an exciting thriller, and the diplomats’ cover story as scouts for a fake science fiction movie called *Argo* leads to some funny scenes set in Hollywood. Ben Affleck, John Goodman and Alan Arkin all turn in convincing performances as the CIA “exfiltration expert” and movie industry big wigs, respectively.

On the whole, the movie’s entertainment value and attempt at objectivity make it easy enough to recommend, and in a different political context one could leave it at that. But with the prospect of another US-led war of aggression hanging over Iran and its constant demonization in the Western media, it behooves us to think more critically about the way this movie plays into the dominant narrative and the hands of those promoting it.

LEFT JAB

John Bell

Dodo Harper abets ‘ocean fertilization’ crimes

A MASSIVE geo-engineering “experiment” in the Pacific west of Haida Gwaii encapsulates everything that is wrong with capitalism’s response to climate change. And it looks like Stephen Harper’s government is up to its angrily flared nostrils in the scam.

Haida communities in the Queen Charlotte Islands have been suffering due to the depletion of salmon. Salmon stocks have been ravaged by over-fishing, by pollution of the coastal rivers that are their spawning grounds, and by increasing acidification of the oceans due to climate change.

Enter California businessman Russ George with a fantastic scheme to clean the waters and restore the fish. The plan was to use “ocean fertilization” to create a widespread bloom of surface algae; the algae would absorb massive amounts of carbon dioxide (one of the greenhouse gases chiefly responsible for our warming planet) and sink to the ocean depths. At the same time it would provide a smorgasbord for salmon, encouraging a rise in the population. All that was required was dumping 100 tonnes of iron sulphate in international waters.

George sold his idea to the Old Massett village council in Haida Gwaii. The First Nations community invested \$2.5 million and the Haida Salmon Restoration Corporation was born. That investment would be recouped and more by carbon trading credits.

Win, win, win?

Except, of course, that peer-reviewed research has shown that algae blooms, which occasionally occur naturally, do not actually reduce CO2 levels.

In experimental trials, artificial algae blooms have been shown to do more harm than good to complex ecosystems like ocean environments. In 2007, a major study at the University of Miami’s Rosenstiel School of Marine & Atmospheric Science debunked the ocean fertilization idea.

Not only is ocean fertilization ineffective, it is illegal. According to Professor Rosemary Reyfuse, an expert in International Law and the Law of the Sea at the University of New South Wales, Australia, “All States have an obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment and to ensure that all activities carried out under their jurisdiction and control, including marine scientific research and commercial ocean fertilization activities do not cause pollution. Ocean fertilization is ‘dumping’ which is essentially prohibited under the law of the sea. There is no point trying to ameliorate the effects of climate change by destroying the oceans—the very cradle of life on earth. Simply doing more and bigger of that which has already been demonstrated to be ineffective and potentially more harmful than good is counter-intuitive at best.”

In 2007, Russ George set out to prove his discredited theory in international waters off the Galapagos Islands. Scientists in the US raised an alarm and the government forbade him to sail under the US flag. The Ecuadorian government banned his ship from its ports. George decided to sail to the Canary Islands and try it there, until the Spanish government banned him as well.

His business, Planktos Corporation, went bust.

Then he hooked up with John Disney, an economic development officer working out of the village of Old Massett.

Disney has been working on ways to cash in on the carbon trading market for years. In 2007, the Tyee newsmagazine reported that Disney was promoting a scheme to cut down alder forests along two major salmon breeding rivers in Haida Gwaii and re-seed them with bigger coniferous trees that would suck more CO2 out of the air.

There was no science to suggest that the plan would actually work, no way to quantify the improvement in order to calculate the carbon credits, and real concerns that the river ecosystems would be damaged. The plan ground to a halt.

I lack the space here for a full critique of the multi-billion dollar carbon trading system at work (and not working) around the globe. Suffice to say that these increasingly desperate schemes are designed to allow polluters to keep on spewing out greenhouse gases. In an overwhelming number of cases they are imposed on, and take advantage of, indigenous populations like the people of Haida Gwaii.

They do anything but address the “unthinkable” reality that we have to stop burning fossil fuels as soon as possible. That is doubly unthinkable for Harper’s Tories, who are devoted to pumping/digging/boiling/fracking/selling as much toxic sludge as our increasingly tired old planet can cough up.

But where the US, Ecuador and Spain have rightly refused to deal with George and Disney, it seems the Harper government has given them a go-ahead to break international law and violate UN rules.

John Disney told interviewers on CBC Radio’s *As It Happens*, “I’ve been in touch with many departments within the federal ministry. All I’m saying is that everyone from the Canadian Revenue Agency down to the National Research Council and Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Environment Canada—these people, they’ve all known about this.”

Russ George told Britain’s *Guardian* newspaper, “Canadian government people have been helping us. We’ve had workshops run where we’ve been taught how to use satellites resources by the Canadian space agency. [The government] is trying to ‘cost-share’ with us on certain aspects of the project. And we are expecting lots more support as we go forward.”

It is likely that the ship that did the illegal dumping flew the Canadian flag, and the load of iron sulphate originated in Alberta.

Since the story broke government agencies have refused comment.

At a recent UN-sponsored Convention on Biodiversity meeting, Canada used its clout to block banning geo-engineering schemes. For that, along with the rest of its environmental policies, Harper’s government was awarded the Dodo award for having the world’s worst biodiversity record.

It remains to be seen whether Russ George and John Disney will be rewarded by the government with carbon credits. If so, they will have profited from crime—with profits coming at the expense of indigenous communities, the broader public, and the environment.

FILM

Argo: a good film with bad timing

Argo

Directed by Ben Affleck

Reviewed by Eddy Roué

ON NOVEMBER 4, 1979, amid the Iranian Revolution which overthrew that country’s US-backed monarchy, a group of armed Islamist students stormed the American embassy in Tehran.

They took its staff hostage, holding them prisoner for 444 days, in one of the most humiliating cases of blow-back faced by the US before 9/11. On the day of the attack, however, six members of the staff working in a separate building on the embassy compound managed to slip out unnoticed, ultimately hiding out in the Canadian ambassador’s residence. *Argo* tells the story of the CIA operation to smuggle these six diplomats out of Iran.

Coming out at a time when Israel is openly threatening to bomb Iran, the Harper government has ramped up its campaign of fear-mongering by sev-

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 kills the earth itself with pollution and unsustainable extraction of natural resources. Capitalism leads to imperialism and war. Saving ourselves and the planet depends on finding an alternative.

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 capital-ism 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 collect-ively 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.

Reform and revolution
Every day, there are battles between exploited and exploiter, oppressor and oppressed, to reform the system—to improve living condi-tions. 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 NDP and many trade union leaders say. It has to be overthrown. That will require the mass action of workers themselves.

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, po-lice and judiciary developed under capitalism and are designed to 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 democ-racy, and that requires an entirely different kind of state—a workers’ state based upon councils of workers’ delegates.

Internationalism
The struggle for socialism is part of a world-wide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We oppose everything which 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.

Canada, Quebec, Aboriginal 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 the Aboriginal peoples and the people of Quebec.
We support the struggles for self-determin-ation of Quebec and Aboriginal peoples up to and including the right to independence. Socialists in Quebec, and in all oppressed nations, work towards giving the struggle against national oppression an internationalist and working class content.

Oppression
Within capitalist society different groups suffer from specific forms of oppression. Attacks on oppressed groups are used to divide work-ers 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 discrimina-tion and homophobia against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered people. We oppose discrimination on the basis of religion, ability and age.

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 democ-ratic. We are an organization of activists committed to helping in the construction of such a party through ongoing activity in the mass orga-nizations 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.



The US and the 1953 coup in Iran

by PAUL KELLOGG

IN SEPTEMBER, US President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu “reaffirmed that they are united in their determination to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.” Netanyahu went further, asserting his country’s right to act unilaterally saying that, even if the US does not want to act, the US does not have the “moral right” to prevent Israel from attacking Iran.

There is a nuclear threat in the region, a rogue state that defies inter-national law: Israel. Unlike Iran, Israel already has hundreds of nuclear weapons. It is also without parallel in its open defiance of international law. Richard Falk has provided a partial list of United Nations’ General Assembly resolutions openly defied by Israel, including:

Resolution 181 which “establishes the parity of the two peoples with respect to their respective rights to estab-lish states on the former mandated territory of Palestine;”

Resolution 194 which “affirms the right of Palestinians to return to their original homes and lands;”

Resolutions 242 and 338 which “require Israeli withdrawal from ter-ritory occupied during the 1967 and 1973 wars;” and

Resolution 465 which “orders Israel to dismantle existing settle-ments on an urgent basis, including those in Jerusalem.”

Clearly there is more at play here than morality and international law. The real story has to do with Iran’s central place in the story of the world’s most important commodity—oil.

Oil and empire
Oil in Iran and throughout the Middle East is extraordinarily inexpensive

to get out of the ground—particu-larly when compared to Canada’s or Venezuela’s tar sands.

President Nasser of Egypt exposed the secret in 1974 in his book *The Philosophy of a Revolution*. “He had then just been reading a trea-tise on petroleum published by the University of Chicago, which re-vealed to him that it cost only ten cents to extract a barrel of oil from Arab countries.” But at the time, the oil companies were selling it for be-tween \$3 and \$4 a barrel.

This was not an isolated moment. In the mid 1970s oil from Kuwait could be produced at 7 cents a barrel. There is so much oil and it is under so much pressure, that no pumps are needed. The price of oil then was about \$12 a barrel.

It was this kind of cheap oil that made Iran important to the Great Powers throughout the 20th century. In particular, Iranian oil was crucial for Britain, which had early on in the 20th century established control-ling interest in the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). Oil from Iran fuelled Britain’s military, particularly its still immense navy. In addition, most of the money made by AIOC went to Britain. So profitable was AIOC—and so dominant was Britain in its operations—that it helped off-set Britain’s deficit.

In March 1951, the Iranian parlia-ment (the Majlis) voted to end this situation by nationalizing the com-pany. It followed this the next month, by elevating Mohammed Mossadegh to the position of prime minister. Mossadegh, a former law profes-sor, had been a key organizer of the National Front, a coalition opposing British domination of Iranian oil.

From 1953 coup to 1979 revolution
What followed was two years of extreme turmoil. Britain launched a

boycott of Iranian oil, and sabotaged production in the AIOC oil fields. The turmoil peaked in 1953, when the CIA and the British secret ser-vice colluded to stage-manage a coup d’état to depose Mossadegh. Years later, the United States admitted its role. In 2000, then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, in remarkably frank testimony, said that: “In 1953 the United States played a significant role in orchestrating the overthrow of Iran’s popular Prime Minister, Mohammed Mossadegh” consoli-dating the power of the Shah, who “brutally repressed political dissent.”

This story is the indispensable background to the revolution of 1979, which finally overthrew the brutal Shah. This revolution cannot be subsumed under the heading of “Islamic revolution”. It was a much more complex event, involving among other elements, a massive up-surge of women, worker-occupation of oil refineries, a millions-strong student movement, and in particular, an assertion of national sovereignty against Great Power interference.

It was the latter—opposition to Great Power interference—which partially explains one of the most controversial moments of the revolu-tion, the occupation of the US embassy and the holding of US hos-tages. According to one commenta-tor: “many Iranians feared a repeti-tion of 1953” and this “was one of the motives for the student seizure of the US embassy.”

This history is rarely referred to in the press. We are to believe that the Great Powers—Canada among them—are operating with the highest motives in their confrontation with Iran. At the very least, an examina-tion of the very long and very crim-inal record of the Great Powers in Iran and throughout the Middle East, should raise a few questions about these claims.

international socialist events

TORONTO
South Africa: Working Class Militancy Shakes Neoliberalism
Sat, Nov 3, 6pm
Oak Street Co-op
Organized by the Coxwell-Gerrard branch of the I.S.

A People’s History of the War of 1812
Sun, Nov 4, 5:30pm
USW Hall, 25 Cecil St.
Organized by the Toronto-Centre branch of the I.S.

Toronto-West branch meeting and discussion
Thu, Nov 8, 7:30pm
For more info:
torontowest.is@gmail.com

The Tar Sands come to Ontario—no Line 9
Resistance, education and alternatives workshops
Sat, Nov 17, 10am - 5pm
Sidney Smith Hall, 100 St. George St
Part of OPIRG Rebuilding Bridges conference
Info: boliviacimatejustice@gmail.com

General Strike Against Austerity: Europe in Revolt
Join us for an eyewitness report on the movement against austerity in Europe and discussion on building the fight in Ontario.
Tues, Nov 20, 7pm
OISE, 252 Bloor, room 2289
Organized by the Toronto district of the I.S.
Info: reports@socialist.ca

YORK UNIVERSITY
Is Canada a Force for Good in the World?
Speaker: Evan Johnston
Wed, Nov 14, 2:30pm
307 Student Centre

Is Women’s Liberation Possible Under Capitalism?
Speaker: Pam Johnson
Wed, Nov 21, 2:30pm
313 Student Centre
For more info:
yorkusocialists@gmail.com

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
What’s Wrong with Men’s Rights Groups?
Speaker: Jesse McLaren
Mon, Nov 5, 3pm
Sid Smith, 100 St. George St
For more info:
uoftinternationalsocialists@gmail.com

OTTAWA
Climate Crisis, Austerity and Revolution: A Better World is Possible
Thu, Nov 1, 6pm
University of Ottawa
For more info:
ottawa.socialists@gmail.com

VANCOUVER
Socialism or Barbarism: The Future After Capitalism
Thu, Nov 8, 6:30pm
Langara College, room A218

Socialist Book Club
Lenin’s “State and Revolution”
Sun, Nov 18, 2:30pm
For more info:
vancouver.socialists@gmail.com

HALIFAX
For info:
halifax.socialists@gmail.com

ALBERTA
Info: reports@socialist.ca

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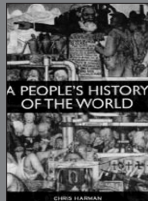
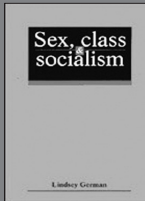
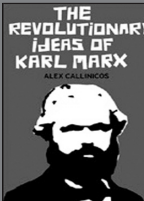
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SISTERS IN SPIRIT

by YUSUR AL BAHRANI

HUNDREDS GATHERED in Allan Gardens Park in Toronto to honour the lives of missing and murdered native women in Canada. Although people across Canada gather every year for Stolen Sisters vigils, no effort has been made by the Canadian government to bring justice and peace to the families of these women.

The event began with a ceremony, and a prayer to remember the lives of missing and murdered women—victims of colonialism, racism and sexism. Speakers included aboriginal women and members of the community, trans activists and politicians.

The Native Women's Association of Canada has documented more than 580 cases of missing and murdered indigenous women in the last three decades. Speakers and participants at the vigil insisted that sadness and anger are not enough to put an end to discrimination against aboriginal women in Canada. Emotions are to be translated into action that will put pressure on the government to deliver justice and end the violence.

One of the speakers, Liberal MP and Critic for Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development, Carolyn Bennett, described violence against native women as a national tragedy and disaster that must end immediately. She also said, "We are going to make this a Canadian problem, not only an aboriginal problem, not only a women problem."

However, the tragedy continues and the crisis is deepened with more men and women sharing their horrific stories at the vigil every year. Just like previous years, members of aboriginal communities talked about their beloved women who either are missing or were killed.

According to Amnesty International, the Government of Canada has acknowledged the discrimination and violence faced by indigenous women and girls in Canada but to date has taken insufficient action to stop the violence committed against them.

REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

by DARREN EDGAR

OCTOBER 20 was a pan-Canadian day of action for reproductive justice and equal access to abortion.

There were various events in cities across the country and in Toronto a small but spirited crowd of a couple hundred braved the cold rain to gather on the steps of Old City Hall. They unfurled their banners, waved their flags, and raised their placards in triumph over the recent defeat of Motion 312, but also to defend their hard-won rights and decry their still unmet demand: equal access to free abortion on demand.

The crowd heard from many speakers—including indigenous, disability and labour activists—and then took to the streets in a raucous march past Dundas Square, to the office of Campaign Life: organizers of the cross-country anti-choice caravan.

October 6 demo: 'End Sanctions! No War! Don't Attack Iran!'



SECOND ANNUAL DISABILITY PRIDE: PROUDLY MARCHING AGAIN

by JANET RODRIGUEZ

ON OCTOBER 13, an eclectic group of eager listeners and soon-to-be marchers gathered on the south lawn of Queen's Park for the second annual Disability Pride March.

By noon, people from ages 2 to 82, along with their loved ones, showed up and showed off their support—with written banners, rainbow flags, and personalized slogans and stories, ready and willing to participate in this demonstration.

The previous march in 2011 from City Hall to the "Occupy Toronto" site proved to be an effective stage to bring our moving message of disability oppression and accessibility rights. Afterwards, a tireless group of grassroots activists started working with other like-minded individuals in this year's march, and our Second Annual "Disability Pride" March came a few months later with the same

passion, determination, and commitment.

Before the march some sipped hot coffee; others greeted long time friends and huddled to keep warm while listening to the speakers from the mad movement, workers movement and disability movement. They shared stories of past struggles; continued discrimination at work and from the government; and messages of unity with allies from across the movements.

Once we started moving, a loud voice urged the crowd to "Stand Up!" for our rights and "Fight Back!" the systemic abuse that all three levels of government have imposed upon us by way of cuts, the austerity agenda, and the lack of a fair long-term plan to address much needed accessibility measures.

We often hear that 60 per cent of communication is through body language. In that case, we were not only sending a message, but we became the message:

"We are here! We are disabled people and we are proud! Look at us! Talk about us! Ask us!"

While marching a few of us on wheelchairs chanted our own, and more realistic, version: "Sit Down and fight back!"

Approximately fifty people with visible and invisible disabilities along with friends, family members, and allies, came from different areas of the GTA, braving the cold and the rain, to be present and raise their voices against oppression; and to carve out a space in the social dialogue for justice and rights. We marched because we need everyone to include accessibility issues in their conversations at work, at home, at school. We need these conversations to be daily and often. The more we talk about accessibility the more obvious it will be to others that people with disabilities are not often included and continuously discriminated and segregated from participation.

STRENGTHENING THE STUDENT MOVEMENT: 2012 ACTIVIST ASSEMBLY

by CANDACE GHENT

THE WEEKEND of October 12-13 saw a few hundred students from across Ontario participate in the Activist Assembly, put on by the Canadian Federation of Students—Ontario.

The highlight of the weekend was the panel of speakers involved with the student movements in Chile, Greece, Spain and Quebec. They provided both insight and inspiration to new and old members of the student movement in Ontario. As Sara from Guelph University said, "For me the experience of coming to something like this makes the idea of organizing around and fighting for an idea less intimidating—I know I'm not alone."

Although undoubtedly chock full of experienced and knowledgeable activists, the real benefit of the Assembly was for the new voices and minds it hosted. The fight against rising tuition fees is one that is growing as more and more students are feeling the financial strain of costs of living, textbooks and even just survival. It is a powerful and unifying cause that has the potential to create co-operation between fields

of study, campuses and even to bridge the gap between students and workers.

The keynote address on the opening night was by Clayton Thomas Muller of the Indigenous Environmental Network, who through his own personal story talked about the process of radicalization and the importance of broad-based grassroots movements.

The second day of the assembly was broken up into blocks of workshops hosted or presented by passionate and experienced activists. Themes included: Educate, Agitate, Organize!; Activists in Court; Building an Inclusive Movement; and the Economics of Free Education. For many students, these workshops facilitated important conversation around real issues facing students today, in addition to the issue of the growing cost of education. There was also opportunity for skill-building and networking both in and outside of the workshops. For the attendees, discussing their passions and campaigns with other students was just one of the many steps taken for change over the weekend.

"It is not enough to just

be against something," said Rodrigo Echeopar who is a part of the student movement in Chile. This message is well understood by the students who attended, as the conversations were focused not just around the cost of education but also around other equity issues facing both students and workers. Even if a person is able to make it into school and able to afford to stay in school, if there is oppression on campus what are the chances they will continue? The answer is different for everyone, but the consensus among progressive minds is to eliminate the root of the question altogether.

Every person has the right to equal access to high quality education, free of cost, discrimination and oppression. In his book *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*, Chris Hedges reflects on what the purpose of education is and writes, "We should not forget that the true purpose of education is to make minds, not careers." It is safe to say that this point is not lost on the students present at this year's Activist Assembly. And if they have anything to do with it, the rest of the world will understand it too.

STICKING WITH THE UNION

Carolyn Egan

Labour and the fight for reproductive justice

THE TRADE union movement in Canada has long held pro-choice policies and was extremely instrumental in the campaign to overturn the federal abortion law that took place in the 1980s. The Canadian Labour Congress, provincial federations of labour and most national unions were strong supporters of the abortion rights movement.

When the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics was formed in 1982 and began to work with Dr. Henry Morgentaler to challenge the federal abortion law and open a freestanding clinic, one of the first outreach approaches was to the Ontario Federation of Labour. Resolutions were passed at local union meetings and submitted to its convention. A major organizing campaign took place and when the resolution came to the floor it was widely supported and passed with a strong majority. This was a huge boost for the movement and showed the broad popular support that existed.

This was the first step on the way to many unions taking up the cause and standing shoulder to shoulder with the women's movement in the fight for reproductive rights for all women. It was very important that the definition of "choice" was broadened to include a whole range of women's issues: the right to birth control in our own communities and our own languages, the right to childcare, the right to a decent job, the end to coerced or forced sterilization, the right to live freely and openly no matter what your sexuality and, of course, full access to free abortion. All of these were necessary if women were truly to have choices in this society.

This reproductive rights perspective was instrumental in building strong support and allowed us to organize a broad and rooted movement that could change the balance of forces in the country to overturn the federal abortion law and legalize freestanding clinics performing medically insured abortions.

Once again we have to fight to defend reproductive

rights in this country. There are still no abortions performed in Prince Edward Island and women have to pay for procedures done at clinics in New Brunswick. The federal government refuses to allow abortion to be part of its maternal health policy and will only provide money for International Planned Parenthood in countries where abortion is illegal. Private member bills are being introduced in the House of Commons to create barriers for women's access and attempts are being made to defund abortion services in Ontario and other provinces.

When an anti-choice caravan recently drove across the country from British Columbia to rally support to ban abortions, the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) rallied its women's committees. They joined with reproductive justice activists to counter the anti-choice activists in cities and towns in every province on their way to Ottawa. In most instances, turnout for the pro-choice actions outnumbered that for anti-choice actions, and the fact that the CAW made this a priority was very important to the success of the pro-choice counter protests.

Recently the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada called a Pan-Canadian Day of Action for Reproductive Justice and Equal Access. In Toronto once again the CAW provided a speaker for the event and the vice-president of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council also spoke strongly in support of women's rights.

We are in the process of organizing once again a movement for reproductive justice that will push back the attacks and make further progress in the long struggle for women's liberation. The ongoing support of the labour movement is critical to its success and the fact that trade unionists as individuals and through their organizations are once more rallying to the cause is very positive. The austerity agenda is attacking our rights and our services at every level and the attacks on abortion funding and the support services women require to bear the children we choose to have are part and parcel of this and must be fought at every level.

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United strikes against austerity in Europe

by JESSE MCLAREN

ON NOVEMBER 14 there will be general strikes across Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Greece, along with solidarity demonstrations in other European countries. This internationalism and working class resistance is essential to fight the economic crisis and to confront the fascist threat it is breeding.

After five years of economic crisis there's no end in sight, and the only solutions from Europe's rulers are "bailouts" that enrich the 1% while attacking everyone else. In Spain, unemployment is near 25 per cent (double that for youth) and the Red Cross has launched an appeal to help feed 300,000 more people across the country. This is on top of the two million who needed food last year. Despite all this, the 2013 budget calls for massive cuts to education, health care and unemployment benefits, while maintaining military spending and corporate tax cuts, and spending more to pay the interest on the debt than the combined salaries of public sector workers who have been blamed for the crisis.

These austerity measures are coming from parties across the political spectrum, revealing a crisis in social democracy and exposing the trade union bureaucracy that orients to it. "Left" governments in Britain, Spain and Greece imposed austerity, leading to the return of right-wing governments that have continued it—a pattern that could repeat itself in France. Meanwhile in Italy, anger at Berlusconi led to his re-



placement by the unelected technocratic government of Monti that has continued its policies.

Fascism

Like the last severe economic crisis in the 1930s, there is a polarization to the right taking place in society. Fascism is emerging to channel people's despair into hatred and violence, using electoral platforms to build street fighting armies to unleash on oppressed groups and the left.

Media and conservative governments in Britain and

France have scapegoated Muslims for the economic crisis, encouraging the rise of the fascist British National Party, Front National and their street fighting squads. But in Britain, Unite Against Fascism has built a multi-racial working class movement to confront the right-wing menace and keep them at bay.

In Greece, the fascist Golden Dawn is the third most popular party, using their recent electoral gains to call on their supporters to "drag migrant children

from their kindergartens." Their paramilitary wing has growing confidence to attack migrants, queers and the left. The mainstream media encourage this scapegoating, while the police have stood by or even participated in fascist attacks, but anti-fascist campaigners have confronted Golden Dawn in the streets.

This is the Europe—of austerity and rising fascism—that was just awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Resistance

But there's also been a

polarization to the left, and interplay between social movements, students and the labour movement.

In Britain, mass student occupations against the Gaza war of 2009 and against tuition hikes last year have given confidence to workers to take action. Last November, two million workers went on strike. Last month 200,000 marched across the country and there is a push on the union leadership to call a general strike.

This September, Portugal had its biggest protests since

the 1974 revolution and was the first to call for a general strike on November 14. Spain has been gripped by mass protests—from the Indignados movement, to student protests, to striking miners. Now the pressure from below has pushed the union leadership to call its own general strike on November 14, and to ask the European Trade Union Confederation to call for broader protests across the continent.

In October, 100,000 people marched through Rome on a "No Monti Day," and now Italy's biggest trade union has called for a general strike on November 14. Greece's election saw not only the rise of the fascists but also a new left party, Syriza. Since the election there has already been a general strike and Greek workers will join the November 14 general strike movement as well.

In France the trade union bureaucracy is pushing for negotiations under the Hollande government but there have already been strikes in the auto industry, and rank-and-file workers are pushing solidarity demonstrations for November 14.

Building working-class resistance against austerity and scapegoating are twin tasks required to confront the economic crisis. As the Spanish group En Lucha writes, "14 November must be a great day of collective action, of international solidarity, of stopping the economy and showing that it is the workers who make society work, showing the power they have to stop the cuts." The power to stop fascism lies in that same working-class resistance.

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Stop Western sanctions on Iran

by NIAZ SALIMI

WESTERN SANCTIONS are worsening the economic crisis and austerity measures in Iran.

Cutting into oil-dependent government revenue is combining with rising unemployment and a currency crisis to devastate the lives of ordinary Iranians, as food and medicine become expensive and scarce.

In a recent update, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) reported that since 2010 80 per cent of Iran's foreign currency revenue and over 60 per cent of its overall budget depends on oil income. After Saudi Arabia and Canada, Iran has the third largest oil reserves, with 133.3 billion barrels, and it's the fourth leading oil producer, with 4 million barrels a day.

However, after the imposition of a new round of

Western sanctions, this number was reduced by almost a third. Iran's Oil Minister announced on October 24 that the maximum production per day is 2.7 million barrels, which could be an inflated number.

Sanctions are worsening the currency crisis of the Rial, which had lost almost 50 per cent of its value in early 2011. Intensified sanctions in 2012 and a nervous rush to swap rials for hard currency dollars combined to push the Rial down to 10 per cent of its original value this October—one of its worst declines ever.

Recently, Fars news agency published an open letter from Iranian technological analysts calling on president Ahmadinejad to tackle the "dangerous economic situation" and claiming most of the country's economic problems are caused by the weakness of the currency, as

imported raw materials used by manufacturers need to be paid for in hard currency.

The rulers of Iran are trying various solutions—from total denial, to blaming each other for the economic crisis, to some efforts to control the rising prices of basic foodstuffs, inflation and the currency crisis. Ahmadinejad describes the sanctions as part of a "heavy battle" that has succeeded in driving down oil exports "a bit" but claiming that Iran has enough hard currency to meet the country's needs.

While the sanctions are not affecting Ahmadinejad and the 1% in Iran, they are worsening the economic crisis for the 99%. The official rate of unemployment stands at well above 24 per cent, with some estimates claiming that up to a million Iranians have lost their jobs in the past year.

The closing of small and

midsize workshops and factories are a daily occurrence and hundreds lose their jobs every day. Food and medical items are scarce and expensive and the majority cannot afford their basic needs. There have been reports that gunmen have raided meat shops and doctors have fought in hospitals over the limited medical supplies.

In the midst of this grim picture, Israel's finance minister, Yuval Steinitz, said Iran's economy "is not collapsing, but it is on the verge of collapse," and called for additional sanctions. But Western sanctions, which the Canadian government supports, are only increasing the suffering of ordinary Iranians, letting Iranian rulers escape blame for austerity measures. If we want to help the people of Iran against their rulers, we need to stop Western sanctions and threats of war.