

Socialist[★]Worker

www.socialist.ca

\$2 | no. 575 | July 2015

SYSTEM

CHANGE

NOT

CLIMATE

CHANGE

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CPMA No. 58554253-99
ISSN No. 0836-7094

Facts & figures

0
Amount the federal government is spending on creating a high-speed rail network, which could create 100,000 jobs and cut carbon emissions

40
Number of years that Line 9 pipeline has passed through First Nations without their consent

85
Percentage of the tar sands that must remain in the ground to prevent catastrophic climate change

40,000
Number of political prisoners the Western-backed Egyptian dictatorship has put in jail

92,000
Number of climate jobs the government could create with less than a tenth of what they are spending bombing Iraq

150,000
Number of Indigenous children the Canadian state forced to attend genocidal residential schools

\$2 million
Amount the Quebec Liberal government is wasting on an Islamophobic “anti-radicalization” centre

\$528 million
Conservative government’s conservative estimate for the costs of bombing Iraq

In their own words

“We take our responsibilities to taxpayers very seriously in this regard.”
—Tory Treasury Board President Tony Clement, justifying wasting \$2.3 million photographing cabinet ministers

“It has been baffling and disturbing to see the lengths they will go to in order to fight a case about treating children fairly.”
—Indigenous activist Cindy Blackstock on the Harper government’s discrimination against First Nations children

“What we need is real change, and leadership that fixes what Stephen Harper has broken.”
—Liberal leader Justin Trudeau, after supporting Harper’s Bill C-51, supporting Harper’s tar sands and supporting Harper’s austerity agenda

“Everyone and every roof can be a part of the solar solution. Solar energy production is spill proof and emission free. Canada should aim higher and set a goal and commit to 100% of its power coming from renewable energy. We’ve been looking down far too long and digging the bottom of the barrel in dirty fossil fuels. We must now turn our gaze towards the sun and realize the true energy potential that is available to us here and now.”
—Indigenous activist Melina Laboucan-Massimo



Next steps for real progress

by VALERIE LANNON

On June 2, Justice Murray Sinclair released the summary report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The full report will be issued later this year.

The Commission was mandated to report on the experiences of those who attended residential schools, which were funded by the federal government and operated by various churches from the 1840s to 1996. Some 150,000 children were forced to attend these schools.

The TRC report was six years in the making. Over 6,750 survivors shared their experiences in both public and private settings in 300 communities, and it is thanks to the bravery of these survivors that the Commission was able to prepare a report that is both jarring in its depictions of what happened, and action-oriented in its recommendations.

The cultural genocide carried out through residential schools took several forms. While the forced removal of children from their families, culture and communities was traumatic enough, further mistreatment took place as children were not allowed to speak their own

languages or wear their traditional clothes or hair lengths—the idea being to “kill the Indian in the child.”

Many children were further physically and/or sexually abused and, in estimates running from 3,500 to 7,500, some children died while at these schools.

TRC Commissioner Marie Wilson said throughout the history of residential schools, the federal government, through the Indian Affairs department, actively worked with residential school officials to keep reports of abuse under wraps despite inquiries from police agencies.

The report provides a wide-ranging set of recommendation (94 in all), available at www.trc.ca

The Canadian state
Both Liberals and Conservatives have been hypocritical when it comes to the treatment of Indigenous peoples in general and residential schools in particular.

Unlike the previous Liberal governments, Harper “apologized” for residential schools and “endorsed” the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigneous Peoples. But he is hostile to the report’s recommendations, refuses to use the term

“cultural genocide,” refuses to hold a public inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women, refuses to properly fund services for Indigenous peoples, and refuses to implement the Declaration.

The Canadian state has continued to oppress Indigenous peoples in many ways other than residential schools. In just a few from many possible examples:

*The government delayed the release of historical documents required by the TRC to do its work; the TRC had to go to court in order to gain access to the government documents

*the government tried to prevent a Human Rights case going forward, dealing with discrimination against First Nations in the funding of child and family services on reserve

*There continues to be serious under-funding of health and education services particularly on reserve

*There have been serious delays and other forms of bad faith bargaining in modern treaties and in honouring historic, signed treaties and other agreements between the federal government and individual First Nations and Inuit communities.

All of this stems from the government’s (whether

Liberal or Tory) unwillingness to be seen to give any ground to Indigenous claims over traditional territories, particularly the tremendous resources attached to them, whether oil, gas, fish, or forests. These parties’ friends, who are CEOs in the extraction industries, would go berserk if not allowed to have a free hand in these territories.

Where do settlers go from here?

As the TRC and other Indigenous activists have made clear, it is not up to Indigenous peoples to change or “progress”; it is up to non-Indigenous people to change. We are in a favourable environment to increase unity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, with Idle No More and higher levels of public awareness of the ongoing oppression of Indigenous peoples.

Here are some immediate actions we must undertake:

*press the government to implement the TRC’s recommendations

*show solidarity with unique indigenous struggles

*work together, under indigenous leadership, on common issues like climate justice.

criminal behaviour they should apply for a warrant before placing anyone under surveillance.

Any next steps for this particular complaint?

The federal government has 30 days to appeal the decision. We have to wait to see what they do. So far they have officially broken the law three times in relation to the First Nations child welfare discrimination case. It has been baffling and disturbing to see the lengths they will go to in order to fight a case about treating children fairly.

Looking ahead to the Human Rights tribunal decision about funding for child and family services on reserve, once the decision is issued, what would you ask non-Indigenous supporters to do?

You can learn about the case and sign up to witness it at www.fnwitness.ca and make clear to all elected officials that you expect all governments to ensure First Nations children receive equitable services.

Parizeau’s bourgeois nationalism

by BERNARD RIOUX

Living, Jacques Parizeau was inconvenient; dead, he triumphs. As an icon, as the architect of a past long gone, he is no longer feared.

His central concern, as the one who never gave up, was to figure out how to rebuild the movement for sovereignty. He said it over and over again, the hesitations and lack of resolve of the PQ headquarters are responsible for the destructive disorientation which only resulted in building up the camp of abstention.

As a pragmatist and a man of action, he was chiefly concerned with brining his party out of the rut. He didn’t spend much time trying to discover the historic roots of these ambiguities in the normal PQ discourse. Otherwise, he would have discovered the reasons for his own isolation and his tragic solitude.

The Québec opportunistic business class, in its overwhelming majority, belongs to no country and, while it doesn’t mind receiving government largesse as often as possible, it has renounced any political independence project. This isolation had tragic consequences. The money given by the Québec State, by the people of Québec, to Québec inc. the capitalist class kept it and immediately used its new strength to support Canadian federalism as the best way to achieve its goals of further accumulation. Indeed, independence was defeated by “money” and greed.

But it was also defeated by the nationalist leaders and the PQ political class. Governing the province became their obsession. In their hands, and their minds, it became a “sovereigntist governance”, a thin veil for an autonomism that didn’t dare say its true name. These nationalist elites didn’t hesitate to sacrifice their “option” while hiding their capitulation with endless rhetorical contortions. They in fact gave up the fight Parizeau never abandoned.

Jacques Parizeau was despondent to see that so many sovereigntists were “soft”, indecisive, lukewarm, and unable to act. But he was unwilling to recognize the reasons for that fact. The minority at the top uses sovereignty as a stepping stone to power. Only the popular majority can engage in this fight all the way. The sovereignty of the people is the only true foundation for the fight for independence. And one doesn’t call a people to fight for its future without also inviting it to define on its own the direction this future should take.

Translated by Benoit Renaud

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All correspondence to:
Socialist Worker
P.O. Box 339, Station E
Toronto, ON M6H 4E3

Published every four weeks in
Toronto by the International Socialists. Printed
in Hamilton at a union shop; member of the
Canadian Magazine Publisher’s Association
/ Canadian Publications Mail Agreement No.
58554253-99, Post Office Department, Ottawa
/ ISSN 0836-7094 / Return postage guaranteed



Bombing Iraq breeds ISIS

The Western war against ISIS is not going well. The takeover of the Iraqi city of Ramadi was a humiliating defeat for the US-led coalition.

This could lead to problems for the Harper government, intent on projecting a tough international image. It will also erode support for the war in Canada, something the Conservatives were relying on in the lead up to the federal election this year. A defensive Canadian Defence Minister Jason Kenney spoke about the loss of Ramadi and the best he could come up with was, “We’re not losing.” He went on to repeat the same talking point that the West is curtailing ISIS expansion.

Bombs spread ISIS

But the trends on the ground in Iraq and Syria don’t show that the US and Canada have degraded ISIS. In fact, the bombing campaigns are

increasing support for the group. Many Sunnis in Iraq find themselves stuck between militias allied with an Iraqi government they don’t trust and has a terrible track record of abuses, and ISIS—which they may not support but may be forced to side with. In Syria the players are different but the results are similar. Stuck between the Assad government and ISIS and its affiliates leaves no palatable options. It has become common for many in Iraq and Syria to describe their situation as between the hammer and the anvil. This is leading to increased support for ISIS—not a degrading of their position.

The loss of Ramadi also means the loss of huge amounts of US military equipment to ISIS. Already, they had gained possession of 2,300 humvees, 40 M1A1 battle tanks and tens of thousands of small arms. The US plans to send even more heavy and sophisticated weapons to

Iraq which may fall into the hands of ISIS. Essentially, Western governments are continually—albeit sometimes indirectly—arming the same people that they are fighting.

Imperial Arrogance

And yet, US and Canadian politicians have the gall to blame the failures of their war exclusively on the Iraqis themselves. After more than a decade of war and the obliteration the country, the blame for the current situation sits squarely with the US and its coalition partners. This fact is no longer being concealed. US presidential nominees are working overtime to distance themselves from the war in Iraq, with even Jeb Bush saying that he would not have invaded in 2003.

That hasn’t stopped them from being disgustingly colonial in their descriptions of the war. Donald Rumsfeld recently stated that the

real problem was that Iraqis were not ready for democracy and that the US should have realized that at the time.

There is a danger that the West will need to up the ante to preserve its interests in Iraq and Syria. The majority of NATO politicians are calling for more training for the Iraqi army as a means of stabilizing the situation. This isn’t going to work. The US spent a decade and more than \$26 billion on training in Iraq already.

As that strategy falls apart there are few options remaining. One is to send in ground troops but there is little political appetite for that in many Western countries. The only solution for the besieged people of the area is for all foreign troops to be removed. The Conservative government in Canada has no interest in doing so. It will be up to us, therefore to remove the warmongers from Ottawa.

Egypt: resisting the counter-revolution

Sameh Naguib, Egyptian revolutionary socialist

When you look at histories of coup d’états, if you look at Chile as an example—even a clearly left wing leader and government. When it comes to power through a Parliamentary route and starts trying to face the deep state—the army, the judiciary and so on—it is extremely difficult. It requires enormous mass mobilization, and if you make concessions to the generals and the judiciary, you lose.

Muslim Brotherhood

Now imagine an organization that is not of the left, that is not particularly radical in any sense, but comes to power because of a revolution—because of an unprecedented mass mobilization.

Why do people chose the Muslim Brotherhood? It’s the only large, mass organization that is there and that seems to be in the opposition and seems to be less corrupt than the old, and the other organizations are too small.

So they come to power and they are paralyzed. Because to face the deep state, to face the big businesses that run the country, they would have to mobilize the streets on a much wider scale. They would have to keep Tahrir going, they would have to keep the strike waves going. And they are not that type of organization, they try to make a deal with those who have the real power rather than open the gates to a revolution.

It backfired sensationally.

Betrayals and counter-revolution

On the one hand you have real anger against Mursi and the Brotherhood for not achieving anything, not doing anything—same neoliberal policies, same relations with Israel, same relations with the US, same relations with the Gulf States. Nothing changed. So what was the point, where’s the revolution?

So in the eyes of many people who had been involved in the revolution, they had betrayed the revolution, they had betrayed the hopes created by the revolution. So part of that movement was genuine against Mursi.

But you had on the other hand the old regime, the remnants of the old regime, starting to use this movement on the streets to get back to power. And here you get the second betrayal of the revolution, which is by the old left and the liberals, and the Nasserists.

Part of this has to do with the history of the positions the left has taken towards the Muslim Brotherhood and towards Islamism—they have this analysis that this is a fascist movement, and that therefore even a secular dictatorship is better than having a religious state.

In 1965 the left dissolved their organizations to enter Nasser’s Arab socialist union, which was controlled 100 per cent by the army. So they have a history of doing that. But the tragedy is that in Nasser’s time you could understand

the mistake—Nasser was anti-imperialist, Nasser carried out land reforms, Nasser nationalized the industries, the Suez Canal.

But now it is a much worse situation because Sisi is offering nothing: he is not anti-imperialist, he is not anti-Israel—he is helping them crush Gaza, blowing up the tunnels the Palestinians use, helping secure Israel’s borders in every way he can—and he is 100 per cent neoliberal, and he is a close ally of Saudi Arabia.

So for the left to ally itself with such fervor is a result of their fear of Islamism. The left’s argument was that we should have an alliance with the old regime against the Muslim Brotherhood, that it’s wrong to try to fight two enemies at the same time. And you get clear statements from leaders of the opposition to Mursi saying “Yes, the army should intervene,” total capitulation.

Repression

The repression is unprecedented in Egyptian modern history. This is a state apparatus that is taking revenge on a people that dared to say no to the regime, that dared to challenge the regime on the streets. So they are acting on a level of viciousness. It’s like comparing Pinochet with previous dictatorships.

The repression is not only on Islamists and trade unions and workers. It is also on all those forces that played a role on the 25th of January revolution. There’s this new law that makes any demonstra-

tion illegal. There is widespread torture and widespread death because of torture in police stations.

Prospects

I don’t think the current situation is sustainable for any length of time. First of all, we have all the strategic problems that led to revolution back in place as they were—the same neoliberalism only worse. This is unsustainable, the level of repression is unsustainable.

Hundreds of thousands of young Egyptians experienced an actual revolution. This experience is not going to evaporate. The possibility for an alternative is there, and this is not just optimism.

What happened during the Egyptian revolution—the participation of workers, the size and scale of strikes, the creation of a whole new independent trade union movement, the participation of women—the largest even mass demonstrations by women against sexual harassment, against women’s oppression—the largest participation by the Coptic community—gave a real possibility for a left wing to be built.

The radical left was too small to affect the larger picture, but it grew dramatically during the revolution. So the possibilities for the radical left to emerge, in what will probably be a long struggle against this dictatorship, are there. And we saw the possibilities during 2011.

This is an excerpt of Sameh Naguib’s interview with Tariq Ali on the show The World Today.

Israel/Palestine: one state solution

Since 1948, three generations of Palestinians have lived without a country or security. Israel subjects them to colonial land grabs, terror, psychological trauma, poverty, humiliation and shocking violence.

Even without open violence the crisis worsens daily for Palestinians, through the expansion of settlements in the West Bank and the ongoing siege on Gaza.

Two-state “solution”

When confronted, Western and Israeli politicians offer up the phantasm of the “two-state solution,” but demand the occupied Palestinians renounce any armed struggle and recognize Israel—an odd demand given the vast majority of the violence is perpetrated by Israel.

The two-state solution sounds reasonable but assumes an unoccupied West Bank, a free Gaza and a return to the border prior to the 1967 War. The West Bank is now riddled with Jewish-only settlements and roads linking them. The two-state solution would not resolve the right of return of Palestinians forced out in 1948. And the two-state solution does not address anti-Arab discrimination within Israel.

Zionist leaders themselves have debunked demands for a two-state solution. Benjamin Netanyahu, leader of the right-wing Likud, having just won a fourth term, promised he will never allow a Palestinian state.

Zionism and imperialism

Zionism at its core is an expansionist ideology seeking an exclusive, dominant and unified ethno-religious polity. It is by its nature antithetical to the creation of a viable Palestinian state.

Zionism would be nothing without imperialism. Israel needs Western weapons, money and political support—including \$3 billion from the US every year. While the US refused the bomb the tracks leading to Auschwitz and turned away Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust, it has claimed the mantle of Jewish liberation in order to arm Israel and its Arab allies to the teeth—in order to repress the Arab masses.

One-state solution

But solidarity with Palestinian liberation and the broader Arab world shows the regional and international allies that Palestinians have—from those fighting the new Egyptian dictatorship, to the growing campaign for BDS.

Palestinian resistance and solidarity show there’s only one solution: a unified secular state for all, based on equal citizenship. A one state solution is the only way to unify the Palestinian liberation demands: end the occupation, the right of return, and equal rights for Arabs within Israel. But winning a state built on social, political and economic equality means challenging Israel, complicit Arab states and the imperial powers on which they depend.

For decades the Palestinian cause has been a key struggle against racism and imperialism. The Palestinian fight must be everyone’s fight.

Lessons from Greece

As we go to press Greece faces a critical 24 hours as European leaders hold an emergency summit that they hope will break the deadlock around the country’s debt crisis.

But the terms on which European leaders, the IMF and the World Bank want to break the deadlock imply more hardship, less pension security, more unemployment and even lower wages for the Greek working class, who have already suffered years of such treatment in the faint hopes this would restore Greek capitalism to health.

People vs profit

The waves of working class struggle, strikes and ongoing occupations which allowed for the left government Syriza’s sweep to power five months ago is critical now, to push Greek PM Alexis Tsipras to stay true to his tough talk, accusing the IMF of “criminal responsibility.” Tsipras has said that Greece would “never submit” to its, or Europe’s, “irrational demands.”

However, many Greek workers feel that Tsipras has already conceded too much to the bankers and the banks. According to Athens teacher Dimitris Papatheodourou, “Tsipras’s mistake is that he hasn’t toughened his stance. The government has already retreated on so many of its pre-election pledges. The 47-page proposal that it gave lenders [outlining reforms in return for cash] was horrible, a massive retreat.”

The outcome of the this week’s negotiations between Greece and other European leaders, the IMF and the World Bank will not only have massive repercussions for Greek workers, pensioners, the unemployed and the poor, but also for the whole of Europe and workers fighting austerity in other countries, such as Spain.

As Karl Marx wrote famously in *The Communist Manifesto* over 160 years ago, “Workers of the world, unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains.” Marx understood the working class as an international phenomenon, with workers being divided by the powerful boundaries of nation, gender, race, religion, from seeing their common interest.

Just as victory in one country can have repercussions in other places, so a defeat at this critical juncture can sow the seeds of defeat for workers in other parts of Europe. The mainstream media and mainstream economists try to portray Greek workers and Greece in general as the threat to stability and to workers jobs and living standards in other countries.

This is a lie. The real threat to workers jobs, wages, pensions are the very institutions—the IMF, World Bank, etc. —who are trying to bring Greece to heel. Their mantra is always that those who must pay for the crisis are the working class, the poor—those who have already paid over and over with their pensions, their living conditions, their very lives (the suicide rate, particularly for young people in Greece, has increased drastically since the beginnings of the crisis).

The hope is that those on the left inside Syriza and outside Syriza can organize with workers and the poor to reject any backtracking on the part of Tsipras. If the path ahead means a break with the Eurozone and the Euro and defaulting on the debt, this is not a defeat for unity but the only way to ensure that there is any hope of defeating the austerity agenda across Europe and for building a real unity among workers across borders.

Lessons

What lessons can we draw here in Canada from the struggles going on in Greece, as we face an election in the fall of 2015? Many activists are taking heart from the recent victory of the NDP in Alberta, something many thought would never happen. It now seems like a definite possibility that we could serve up defeat to Stephen Harper and his rapidly shrinking band of supporters.

So-called strategic voting (which has in the past led progressives, unions and some on the left to vote for the Liberal Party as the lesser evil) may be much less attractive this time around when voting with your heart and mind seems like it might actually bring the desired result—a government of the social democratic left and the first time an NDP government would form the federal government. It’s hard to see anything progressive about Justin Trudeau’s Liberals, who voted whole-heartedly with the Tories on supporting the hated Bill C-51 that attacks civil liberties.

But one thing we need to keep in mind throughout the coming months is that it’s only the struggles of working people and the social movements that will push the NDP, should they come to power, to bring in any of the changes we so desperately need. We know that politicians can’t do it for us. They won’t do it for us, as the history of many social democratic governments in power in various provincial governments has shown us.

Just as in Greece, workers must organize independently should Syriza falter and give in to more demands for working class suffering as the way out for Greek capital.

It’s instructive to keep in mind the guiding principle of the Clyde Workers’ Committee, which they put forward in November 1915: “We will support the officials just so long as they rightly represent the workers, but we will act independently immediately they misrepresent them.”

Or, as Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky wrote: “With the masses—always, with the vacillating leaders—sometimes, but only so long as they stand at the head of the masses. It is necessary to make use of vacillating leaders while the masses are pushing them ahead, without for a moment abandoning criticism of these leaders.

INTERNATIONAL



Ireland rises

by RORY O’NEIL

They say resistance can never happen here until it happens. Ireland has seen a seismic shift in the political landscape. For years we would hear that the Irish can’t resist austerity—unlike in Spain or Greece. But it transformed so quickly and now the previous era is buried. It demonstrates how quickly the class struggle can develop. But it gives the appearance of spontaneity, which underestimated the role the left can play.

We’ve had two major developments. First the government attempt to introduce water charges and the mass movement to oppose it. Secondly, the vote to legalize marriage equality—in a country with a reputation as ultra conservative country (where homosexuality was only legalized in 1992 and divorce in 1996).

Austerity and resistance

Ireland was one of hardest hit by the economic crisis. Overnight the private debt became public debt, and so began the start of austerity—with massive cuts. The peak was the IMF and EU bailouts, which came at a price of brutal austerity measures to make working people pay for the crisis of the capitalist class. One of those was privatization of water.

There had been demoralizing defeats. But we said there would be a tipping point; water charges was the tipping point. Right to Water, the initial coalition of trade unions and organizations, was founded in Richard Boyd Barrett’s office (a revolutionary

socialist member of Parliament). At the heart is revolutionary socialists and we knew we needed a wide reach.

We learned from Bolivia’s resistance to water privatization, and resistance to austerity in Greece and Spain. We built a demonstration for October and we knew we needed 10,000. But there were 100,000. We hadn’t had that since the 2003 protests against war on Iraq. I didn’t think that was possible. Integral to our tactics was a coalition of all the anti-austerity forces, no matter how many other disagreements we had. Then in December on a weekday we had 50,000 outside Parliament. It demonstrates what tactics can do, what a united front can do in the right circumstances.

But the movement has lost momentum. Those trade union leaders so important to the coalition are now focused on an electoral alternative—a radical left coalition like Syriza.

The labour party, supporting austerity, is on the verge of wipeout, replaced by Sinn Féin who could win. The vote for Sinn Féin is not a nationalist vote it’s an anti-austerity vote. Sinn Féin is appealing to the anti-austerity sentiment.

But it’s taking energy out of the streets and into electoral politics. They are calling for a “left-led government,” not a left government—which is a telling distinction. Sinn Féin won’t guarantee they won’t form an alliance with Fianna Fáil, the pro-austerity ruling class party. That strategy won’t win but will end in demoralization. We are pushing for protest to reinvigorate the movement.

Equality

Thankfully we had the marriage equality movement. The Catholic Church has represented the ideological arm of ruling class, and marriage equality represents a blow to the establishment. The Labour Party takes the credit but it was young people and it was a working class vote that won the referendum.

It’s a liberal trope to say social issues are middle class concerns, and economic issues are working class concerns—that working class people are bigoted. This referendum wiped that away. In working class areas there was 80 per cent support for marriage equality. The opposition claimed to care about children, but they didn’t mobilize for childcare; they only ever care about children when it’s about abortion or marriage, when it’s about control. Now the victory on marriage equality opens up the conversation about abortion. There will be another march for choice, which will be a marker of the potential to broaden the movement for reproductive freedom.

The Yes vote was an instinctive sense of solidarity with the oppressed. It represents a breaking of chains. But it’s just the beginning. We are for full LGBT rights, including upcoming transgender legislation recognition. We want full equality on our terms, not the narrow version of equality on capitalist terms.

Rory O’Neil is a student organizer with the Socialist Workers Party (Ireland). This is an excerpt of a speech he gave in Toronto.

After Nigeria’s election

by BABA AYE, NIGERIA

Muhammadu Buhari was sworn in as president of the west African state of Nigeria on 29 May—almost 30 years after he was overthrown as a military dictator.

Before he won he promised to fight corruption, defeat the Boko Haram insurgency and renew prosperity. The fate of his All Progressives Congress (APC) will be determined by whether it can improve the lot of the working masses.

It promised three million new jobs within a year. It offered a monthly cash transfer of \$150 each to 25 million poor people if they send their children to school and get them immunised. It promised a massive housing scheme for working people and to double the number of doctors in three years.

APC now has a majority in both the National Assembly and of the states’ governments so people expect results.

But it now says that it has discovered so much rot from 16 years of the previous government that no one should expect miracles.

Class

The working class is not buying this. Mass anger could explode if drastic improvements in living conditions do not materialise soon.

Public sector workers in 18 of Nigeria’s 36 states have been on strike over unpaid salaries since the last week of May. The unions have demanded the government start negotiations for a new national minimum wage, even as petrol shortages have almost shut down the oil-rich country.

Revenue is dwindling because of the global fall in oil prices and mindboggling corruption, so it is unlikely that the state could deliver APC’s promises.

But people are still most hopeful he will deliver over the defeat of

Boko Haram, ending a conflict that has claimed almost 20,000 lives since 2009. He promised the military command would be relocated to the front until the insurgents were defeated.

Poverty

Even if he succeeds in crushing Boko Haram that will not end the poverty that created the sect. And military victory is unlikely.

Boko Haram has shown an ingenious ability to change tactics, recently reverting to its earlier methods of urban terror.

The first few days of the new government are a period of calm before what could be a huge storm. Different sections of the elite will try to harness the simmering distrust in their own interests.

The need for socialist intervention and influence within the working class cannot be overemphasised.

Indigenous Marxism

Jesse McLaren discusses the politics of the Metis academic and activist Howard Adams, whose writings on indigenous resistance and class struggle are an inspiration for today’s movements

This year is the 40th anniversary of Howard Adams’ ground-breaking book, *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View*, and the 20th anniversary of his follow up work, *A Tortured People: the Politics of Colonization*.

This year is also the 130th anniversary of the Northwest struggle of 1885, whose politics he discussed in his work, and whose resistance he continued in his activism.

The intersection of autobiography with colonization

Adams was born in 1921 in Saskatchewan to a Metis family. He was the great grandson of Maxime Lepine—who was Louis Riel’s lieutenant and fought the Canadian state in 1885—but he grew up with internalized oppression that led him to reject his indigenous roots. This affected his early relationships, and he briefly joined the RCMP in the 1940s.

But in the 1960s he earned his PhD (the first Canadian Metis to do so) in Berkeley, which was in the midst of the student revolt. Inspired by Malcolm X and Black Power he reconnected with his indigenous roots.

Returning to teach at the University of Saskatchewan, Adams became a key leader of the Red Power movement—helping found the Saskatchewan Native Action Committee (SNAC) and being elected president of the Metis Society of Saskatchewan. He also connected with an older generation of indigenous socialists like Malcolm Norris and Jim Brady.

Adams wrote *Prison of Grass* “to examine history and autobiography and their intersection with colonization.” Reinterpreting his own experiences of racism and to connect it with centuries of colonialism, it was a key text of the Red Power movement.

For Adams, Indigenous history—written by and for indigenous people—is of direct relevance to the present: “written history should reflect the reality of our continued fight for self-determination.”

Canada from a Native point of view

Adams rejected the Eurocentric versions of history, and developed a Marxist understanding of Canadian colonialism and indigenous resistance: “The history of Aboriginal people in Canada is the history of their struggles against colonial oppression and economic exploitation by Euro-Canadian imperialism. To understand the history, it is necessary to understand the political economy of the fur trade system and the politics of colonization with regards to race, class, and oppression. Indian communal society was transformed into an economic class of labourers by European fur trading companies, particularly the Hudson’s Bay Company. Although imperialism has changed over the 400 years, the Aboriginal under class of casual, unskilled, manual labourers has remained relatively the same.”



The fur trading economy also encountered competition from the growing industrial economy. Whereas the Canadian state celebrates its anniversary July 1 and sings the praises of the “nation builder” John A Macdonald, Adams showed how it represented a civil war between two economic systems over who would control indigenous land.

Adams also showed how starvation was intentionally used to drive indigenous people off their land and onto reserves, reinforced with treaties, and to clear the way for the railroad and the capitalist economy—all with the help of the “permanent occupation force,” the RCMP: “it is not just a coincidence that the Mounted Police were established during the development of Indian reserves to ensure the ‘success’ of the treaty negotiations with the Indians and ‘help’ relocate Indians and halfbreeds to their reserves and colonies.”

Indigenous resistance and class struggle

As Adams documents, there was widespread opposition to the Canadian state in the northwest, which united indigenous and settler communities. “The term ‘Riel rebellion’ for the hostilities of 1885 is not only misleading but incorrect because it implies that Louis Riel alone was responsible for the hostilities. The truth is that he entered only the later stages of a long struggle involving many groups in the Northwest. The war of 1885 was the culmination of a complex struggle that had arisen over the previous two decades between the people of the Northwest and the industrial rulers of Ottawa. Western protests were made by local merchants, farmers, settlers, workers, Indians, and Metis, and their demands essentially centered around the need for a responsible government to make economic and land reforms.”

But Macdonald scapegoated Riel and used anti-Native racism to divide the resistance and justify

state repression.

Adams saw contemporary relevance to this history. Active in the early 1970s, he opposed the Canadian state repressing both the Red Power movement and the national liberation movement in Quebec.

Racism is a key tool the ruling class uses to increase the exploitation of indigenous workers and divide them from non-indigenous workers. For Adams racism is an “aspect of capitalist society, which serves to obscure class interests of Native and white workers, thereby reinforcing the existing colonial structures... The white society had excluded racial minority workers from the better and higher paying jobs. As a result, distrust was generated between the two groups. This racial condition prevented class solidarity. Such action deflects anger towards each working class, rather than against the corporate employers.”

But the Red Power movement had inspired indigenous resistance and solidarity, including a campaign where farmers ignored government directives and took grain to starving indigenous communities. As Adams described, “Our actions, dubbed the Flour Power Operation, lifted the Native movement to its highest level yet. For one thing, it strengthened our alliance with white groups. The most important, however, was that the intensity and intimacy of this conflict instilled the Metis people with a revitalized and increased counter-consciousness as no other confrontation had done, and gave them a new realization of the inhumanity of the Canadian state.”

The politics of colonization

Adams also exposed the institutions of colonization, from the education system and Parliament to the Church and nuclear family. For Adams these institutions of colonization were rooted in capitalism, which had implications for the struggle for decol-

onization: “We need to liberate ourselves from the courts, ballot boxes, school system, church, and all other agencies that command us to stay in ‘our colonized place.’ This oppression of the native people is so deeply rooted in the capitalist system that it cannot be completely eliminated without eliminating capitalism itself.”

As the Red Power movement declined, despite the growth and federal funding of indigenous organizations, Adams saw that “the colonized have changed only from the white bureaucrat to the red bureaucrat.” He refused the offer to become deputy minister of the Saskatchewan Department of Indian and Metis Affairs, and in *A Tortured People* was scathing of how the Canadian state used “Uncle Tomahawks” to maintain its power. Adams also warned of a retreat into radical separatism, and the substitution of cultural nationalism for political struggle.

Radical nationalism

He also differentiated between the “revolutionary nationalism” of countries of the global south—where majority indigenous populations could overthrow the small number of colonial settlers—and “radical nationalism” where the minority indigenous population in Canada could assert its self-determination.

For Adams, radical nationalism built through local struggles could build alliances amongst the working class, and fuse the struggles against colonialism and capitalism: “Radical nationalism will mean greater class consciousness. It develops the understanding that a native liberation struggle is essentially the same struggle as that of the working class and all oppressed people against a capitalist ruling class. In this way, Indians and Metis can build alliances with workers and other oppressed and colonized groups of white society.”

Though Adams passed in 2001, his ideas remain a guide for indigenous resistance and solidarity.

A WORLD BEYOND TAR SANDS: THE FIGHT FOR CLIMATE JOBS

Tar sands science

The IPCC report from last year said that climate change would produce “severe, widespread, and irreversible impacts” if not reduced, and a report in the journal Nature this year showed that 85 per cent of tar sands must remain in the ground to avoid a 2 degree rise.

As the *Globe & Mail* explained, “Domestic estimates of Alberta’s oil reserves come in at about 168 billion barrels, with hundreds of billions more available for extraction if future oil prices make the resource more attractive. The study uses a more conservative estimate of 48 billion barrels as the current reserve and then finds that only 7.5 billion barrels of that, or about 15 per cent, can be used by 2050 as part of the global allotment of fossil-fuel use in a two-degree scenario.”

The Council of Canadians have done the math: “The proposed Keystone XL, Northern Gateway, Energy East,

Trans Mountain and Arctic Gateway pipelines. Together, those pipelines would move about 3.45 million barrels of oil per day or about 1.26 billion barrels a year. If all of these pipelines were to become operational, they would exceed the 7.5 billion barrel limit noted in this British study in less than six years.”

So what happens in Canada will have a major impact on the global climate

As NASA scientist James Hansen explained, “If Canada proceeds, and we do nothing, it will be game over for the climate. Canada’s tar sands, deposits of sand saturated with bitumen, contain twice the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by global oil use in our entire history. If we were to fully exploit this new oil source, and continue to burn our conventional oil, gas and coal supplies, concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere eventually would reach levels higher than in the Pliocene era, more than 2.5 million years ago, when sea level

Tar sands economics

For years we’ve been told to ignore climate change and communities affected because of the economy.

But the falling price of oil from \$100 to \$60/barrel has burst that bubble. The profit-squeeze on the tar sands is, unfortunately, not because oil demand has been decimated by a shift to a green economy or massive demilitarization.

Oil prices have fallen because US has massively increased natural gas from fracking. Saudi Arabia has refused to cut its output to maintain prices. And economic stagnation around the world has also reduced demand

None of these on their own promote alternatives and low prices won’t automatically put an end to the tar sands.

Despite myths of the “free market,” the tar sands only emerged with government intervention—both Tory and Liberal.

As the *Globe and Mail* explained: “In the mid-1990s, with

Tar sands politics

This economic shock has contributed to a political shock of NDP majority Alberta on platform to raise royalty rates and corporate taxes, support a \$15 minimum wage, invest in healthcare and education, and consult with First Nations

There was a wave of joy across the country. The Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation wrote that they “are ecstatic with the results of the last nights election ushering in a new NDP majority government in Alberta. It is clear that Albertans also want change and we are encouraged this government will take the time to do the proper assessments that evoke that change. As First Nations we are optimistic to finally have a government that recognizes and respects Indigenous rights and territories and look forward to sitting at the table with this new government to find effective ways to implement and respect Aboriginal rights across multiple sectors.”

oil prices at depressed levels, the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien had to provide tax breaks to rescue the industry, in particular the two major oil sands producers, Suncor and Syncrude Canada Ltd. It wasn’t until international crude prices began to soar in 2003—reflecting war in the Middle East and the rise in China’s demand—that the oil sands sector found firm economic footing and expansion began in earnest.”

Contrast that investment with climate jobs: according to a recent report by Clean Energy Canada, there are now more people employed in green energy than in the tar sands, but still no interest from the federal government: “Every major industrial sector in Canada—from the aerospace industry to the oil sands—has gotten off the ground with support from the federal government. But in the clean-energy sector, the federal government is really missing in action.”

But Notley’s first phone calls was to “partners in the energy industry” to reassure them “they’ll come to realize that things are going to be just A-OK.” As the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers said: “We’re looking forward to working with her on the building of Energy East, the Keystone XL and Trans Mountain expansion into Vancouver.”

The NDP is not against tar sands (and neither is green party). They both support more domestic refining that continues tar sands and makes no difference to climate change or Indigenous communities

As one article explained, “Notley isn’t broadly anti-pipeline. She supports Kinder Morgan’s proposal for a TransMountain line from Alberta to British Columbia as well as the proposed Energy East pipeline to the Atlantic, which would be bigger than Keystone XL and bolster the oil-sands industry. The one pipeline she’s soured on, the Gateway project to British

was at least 50 feet higher than it is now. That level of heat-trapping gases would assure that the disintegration of the ice sheets would accelerate out of control. Sea levels would rise and destroy coastal cities. Global temperatures would become intolerable. Twenty to 50 percent of the planet’s species would be driven to extinction. Civilization would be at risk.”

But this risk is not evenly distributed.

When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans it disproportionately affected poor/racialized. Hurricane Sandy and typhoon Haiyan’s destruction in Haiti/Philippines is linked to the history of colonialism and imperialism in the region. Tar sands disproportionately affect indigenous communities, from ACFN at ground zero, to Aamjiwnaang at refineries in Chemical. If Line 9 spills it will flow through Jane/Finch not Forrest Hill or Bay St.

While manufacturing has been devastated by economic crisis and austerity, jobs on tar sands and pipelines have been held up as the solution. But now the oil squeeze has led oil companies to balance their books on workers:

- *in January Shell fired 300 workers
- *in February Cenovus fired 800 workers
- *in March Husky Energy fired 1,000 construction workers
- *in April Suncor fired 1,000 workers,
- *in May Bombardier fired 1750 workers

The nature of these jobs has also been exposed: exploiting temporary foreign workers and creating isolating and dangerous jobs. According to Greenpeace, Fort McMurray has highest suicide rate men 18-24; five times more drug offences, 89% higher rate of assault; and 117% higher rate of impaired driving—and this was before the fall in the price of oil

Columbia, has little chance of being completed anyway, thanks to fierce opposition from First Nations.”

The NDP support the tar sands for two reasons. First because they orient to the Canadian state that exists to manage Canadian capitalism. Their slogan is that “a better tar sands is possible,” not “shut down tar sands” and there’s nothing we can do to change the NDP’s reformism. But secondly, the NDP is a party affiliated with the labour movement, and reflect the union bureaucracy’s low horizons of defending dangerous jobs, rather than fighting for transition to jobs that respect workers and the planet

This aspect we can change, by supporting Indigenous communities leading fight against tar sands, building labour movement that fight for climate jobs, building a climate justice movement that supports it, and demanding that the NDP reflect these demands, which can help build movt

WE > TAR SANDS

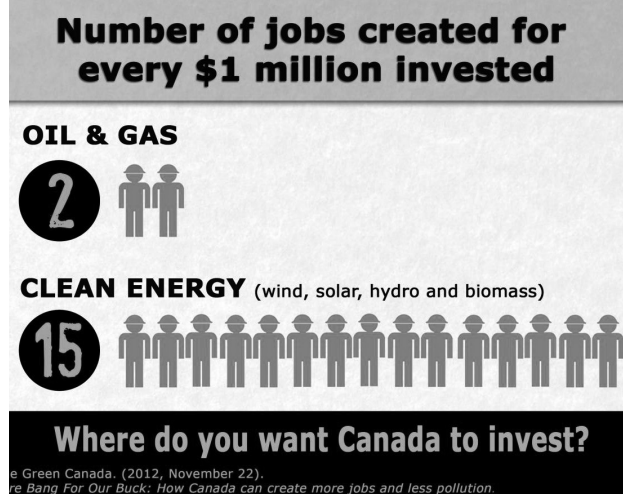
ACTION FOR JOBS, JUSTICE + THE CLIMATE

The fight for climate jobs

There are growing demands for climate jobs across Canada and around the world.

There have been conferences, like the 2009 Good Green Jobs for All conference in Toronto or the 2010 Jobs, Justice and Climate conference in Vancouver.

There have been studies, like 2012 Blue-Green Canada study that \$1.3 billion subsidies in oil/gas could create 18,000 more jobs in wind, solar, hydro and energy efficiency; or this year’s CCPA study on just transition.



There have been community initiatives like Tsleil-Waututh Nation using solar panels to power daycare and teach kids about alternatives.

There’s been growing solidarity within labour movement for climate justice. In 2012 Canadian Auto Workers mobilized for the sit-in in Victoria: “The ongoing risks that these tar sands pipelines and tankers pose aren’t worth any price. Tens of thousands of unionized and other jobs depend on healthy river and ocean ecosystems.”

The next year Unifor signed the Solidarity Accord with the Save the Fraser: “We, the undersigned, say to our First Nations brothers and sisters, and to the world, that we are prepared to stand with you to protect the land, the water and our communities from the Enbridge pipelines and tankers project and similar projects to transport tar sands oil.”

Last year Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs got a standing ovation at the BC Fed of labour when he announced he would join those getting arrested on Burnaby mountain protesting Kinder Morgan

Last year a number of labour locals sent resolutions to the OFL against Line 9 including Toronto steelworkers, who spoke at rally. Labour unions have been part of climate marches, from New York to Quebec City, and there’s a campaign for one million climate jobs across Canada.

Million climate job campaigns

This idea began in UK in 2009 when windmill workers occupied their factory. As British climate campaigner Martin Empson explained

“Many of us involved in the trade union side of the Campaign Against Climate Change had been trying to bring together the environmental movement with organised workers. But in many ways this had been an abstract argument. This wasn’t to say that Trade Unionists weren’t interested in environmental questions, nor was it to say that all environmentalists had the stereotypical view of unions as only being interested in jobs. But breaking down the barriers was slow work. That changed when Vestas announced the closure of their plant on the Isle of Wight with the loss of 600 jobs... Vestas brought together the environmentalists and the trade unionists in a campaign that made the abstract real. Workers and environmentalists uniting could be powerful and inspiring... In the context of growing economic uncertainty, we launched our pamphlet, arguing that the solution to climate change was the creation of climate jobs that could reduce emissions.”



Their pamphlet has sold thousands and launched million climate jobs campaign. With 20 billion, which could be raised by taxing rich, they are demanding: 400,000 jobs in wind/tidal, 185,000 in retrofitting; 310,000 in buses/trains/bike lanes, 35,000 education.

In 2011 the One Million Climate Jobs campaign spread to South Africa, calling for:

- *50% electricity from wind/solar: 150,000 jobs
- *20% energy efficiency in industries: 27,000 jobs,
- *reduce energy use through retrofitting: 120,000 jobs
- *shift 10% car commuter to transit: create 70,000 jobs,
- *small scale organic farming: 500,000 jobs
- *water/soil/biodiversity restoration: 400,000 jobs

Demands and action calendar

Now campaign for One Million Climate Jobs has spread to Canada, with a Green Economy Network including labour/envt:

*\$4.65 billion dollars could create 92,000 public sector jobs in wind/solar/tidal/geothermal. That’s half what Harper gave the military in the latest budget

*Transportation accounts for 25% of greenhouse gas emissions and governments are spending \$0 on high speed rail. With \$25 billion (less than half of what Harper has given corporations in tax cuts) the government could build high-speed rail that would create 100,000 jobs and cut our emissions

As Naomi Klein wrote in *This Changes Everything* “Today’s climate movement does not have the luxury of simply saying no without simultaneously fighting for a series of transformative yeses—the building blocks of our next economy that can provide good clean jobs, as well as a social safety net that cushions the hardships for those inevitably suffering losses... There is no more potent weapon in the battle against fossil fuels than the creation of real alternatives. Just the glimpse of another kind of economy can be enough to energize the fight against the old one.”

There are a few upcoming events that can help us fight the old oil economy and support the new climate justice economy

- * On July 4 join “we > tar sands” actions across the country and on July 5 join the March for Jobs, Justice and the Climate
- * On September 4-5 join the Toxic Tour in Aamjiwnaang
- * On September 14-15 join the global union climate conference in Paris, in the lead up to the global climate conference
- * In October put climate politics, including indigenous sovereignty and climate jobs, into the federal election

One Million Climate Jobs

A just transition to a low carbon economy to combat unemployment and climate change



Bill C-51: Trudeau joins Tory terror yet again

Despite widespread opposition, Bill c-51 passed in the Senate on June 9, with a vote of 44-28. Justifying the draconian secret police bill, Minister of public safety and emergency Stephen Blaney claimed, “The international jihadist movement has declared war on Canada...Because they hate our society and the value it represents.”

There has been some shock at the level of Liberal support for the Bill, against a backdrop of campaigns for “strategic voting” against the Tories. But it shouldn’t be surprising that the Liberals joined the Tories in attacking our civil liberties.

Trudeau

Justin Trudeau has tried to justify his support for the bill—and alliance with the Tories—at the same time as paying lip service to the growing opposition. He first claimed “matters of national security should be beyond partisanship.” When opposition swelled, Trudeau then tried to say he had to support it tactically: “Tactically the government would be perfectly happy if the opposition completely voted against this bill” and their “desire to bash people on security.” “I don’t want this government making political hay on issues as important as national security,” he claimed.

But the Liberals didn’t even try to hide their support: every Liberal who showed up in Parliament voted in support of Bill C51. So even though the Tory majority guaranteed the bill could pass, the Liberals in Parliament unanimously supported it. The vote was more important for Trudeau than Harper, who didn’t bother to show up. Justin Trudeau promises to “reform” Bill C-51 should he be elected. But to paraphrase a Black Panther, Bill C-51 is a piece of shit—you can shape it in to a ball or into a square, but no matter how you reform it, it is still a piece of shit.

With mounting backlash in the streets, the Senate vote was much narrower, with opposition from 25 Liberals and 3 Tories. But it still passed with the help of some Liberals—and no one should be surprised, given the Liberal history.

Liberal record

It was the Liberal government who interned Japanese-Canadians during WWII. It was the Liberals, under Pierre Trudeau, who sent tanks into Quebec as part of the War Measures Act. It was the Liberals who initially let Omar Khadr (then a child) be tortured in Guantanamo, and who were complicit in the torture of Maher Arar. It was the Liberals who passed the first “anti-terror” legislation, Bill C-35 and C-36. As the Liberal’s own website admits, “there has been some form of anti-terror legislation in place since 2001.” It was the Liberals who created CSIS (in 1984, of all years), and it’s no surprise the Liberals would be in favour of giving it more powers. It was the Liberals who created “security certificates” that have been used to justify secret trials against Muslims.

It was the Liberal/Tory declarations of war—from Afghanistan to Libya and Iraq—that provoked the fringe terror backlash. Now both corporate parties are using the backlash to their bombs to justify restricting civil liberties.

“Strategic voting”

Despite support for the Bill from the twin parties of corporate capitalism, support for Bill C-51 has fallen—from 82 per cent to 33 per cent. This is entirely because of opposition outside Parliament, including rallies from coast to coast to coast. Now 42 per cent believe it would have a negative impact on their daily life—which puts a lie to Harper and Trudeau’s claim that C-51 is necessary to protect our society.

Because the opposition pushed the NDP to oppose the Bill (which they didn’t initially), the NDP have risen to the top of the polls—gaining 16 per cent in just four months. Meanwhile support for the Liberals has fallen. Some Liberal MPs, like Adam Vaughan, have had their facebook pages inundated with opposition to Bill C-51, while some ordinary Liberal members have publicly shredded their membership cards.

Combined with the NDP victory in Alberta, this has exposed the politics of “strategic voting.” The Liberals and the Tories strategically voted to erode our rights and freedoms—especially targeting Indigenous and Muslim populations—and it will require real strategic voting against the twin parties of Canadian capital.

Bill C-51 has revealed once again the real agenda of the Liberals and the weakness of so-called “strategic voting.” We need to ensure Bill C-51 is an election issue to push for it to be ripped up—and at the same time support Indigenous and Muslim communities who are most at risk of being targeted by it.

Real “strategic voting” is not only using the ballot box against the Liberals and Tories on October 19, but encouraging people to keep voting with their feet every day before and after. It was mobilizations outside Parliament that undermined support for the bill before it passed, and mobilizations outside Parliament that will determine how confidently people resist.

ANALYSIS

DAS ENVIRONMENT



by MICHELLE ROBIDOUX AND VALERIE LANNON

For today’s radicalizing climate movement, the works of Marx and Engels still have much to offer.

Far from being an uncritical proponent of the unbridled development of the forces of production (as we see in both free market capitalism and state capitalism), Marx was one of earliest and most consistent advocates of what we would today call “ecological” thinking. Engels wrote extensively on this topic as well.

Bourgeois laws

In 1842, Marx was writing for the newspaper *Rheinische Zeitung*. His contributions to the debates on the “Law on Thefts of Wood” were, according to his own account, an intellectual turning point in his life.

These laws were by no means a minor issue. Five-sixths of all prosecutions in Prussia during this period were related to the “theft” of wood for people who collected fallen wood in the forests for cooking and to heat their homes. At issue was the elimination of the last remaining rights of peasants in relation to what had been common lands—rights they had held since time immemorial.

According to Marx, the state, was turning ordinary citizens into “enemies of wood,” into criminals. From then on, and for the rest of his life, Marx opposed the parceling out of parts of the globe to owners of private property.

Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts and Grundrisse

Marx’s *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* are best known for developing the concept of the alienation of labour. From the start, this concept was connected to an understanding of the alienation of human beings from nature. As Marx put it (in the male-dominated language of the time), “Man lives from nature, i.e. nature is his body, and he must maintain a continuing dialogue with it if he is not to die. ... man is a part of nature.”

Under capitalism, human beings are increasingly divided into two camps: the minority of owners and controllers of property, vs the vast majority who have nothing but their ability to sell their labour in order to survive. The precondition for this was the creation of a property-less class of workers, which was dependent on transforming the human relationship to the land.

This process took a number of specific historical forms. In Europe it came about through the enclosure of

the commons and the displacement of the peasantry and through laws like the Law on Thefts of Wood. In the rest of the world it was the forced disposition of Indigenous land and removal of labourers through capture in slavery. In all cases, it meant the complete alienation of humans from nature.

Marx identified human labour—the capacity to apply conscious direction to shaping the elements of nature—as the thing that above all else that defines us as a species. In capitalist society, workers produce commodities through their labour, but they don’t do so under their own conscious control. The capitalist determines what is produced, and under what conditions. Labour power itself is reduced to the status of a commodity, governed by the laws of supply and demand. Workers are therefore alienated from the product of their labour.

Writing in the *Grundrisse* in 1858, Marx alluded to the need for a coherent conceptualization of humanity’s relationship with the earth: “It is not the unity of living and active humanity with the natural... which requires explanation, ... but rather the separation between these inorganic conditions of human existence and this active existence, a separation which is completely posited only in the relation of wage labour and capital.”

Das Kapital

It is in *Capital* that Marx uses the concept of “metabolism” to define the labour process as “a process between man and nature, a process by which man, through his own actions, mediates, regulates and controls the metabolism between himself and nature.” But an “irreparable rift” emerged in this metabolism as a result of capitalist relations of production and the antagonistic separation of town and country. This concept of metabolic rift in the relation between town and country, humans and the earth, allowed Marx to develop a critique of environmental degradation that foreshadowed modern ecological thought.

In the first volume of *Capital*, he wrote: “Capitalist production collects the population together in the great centres, and causes the urban population to achieve an ever-growing preponderance. This has two results. On one hand it concentrates the historical motive force of society (the working class); on the other hand, it disturbs the metabolic interaction between man and the earth, i.e. it prevents the return to the soil of its constituent elements

consumed by man in the form of food and clothing; hence it hinders the operation of the eternal natural condition for the lasting fertility of the soil. . . . Capitalist production therefore only develops the technique and the degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the worker.”

This concept of metabolism has a specific ecological meaning, but also a wider social meaning. It allowed Marx to express the human relationship to nature as one of both “nature imposed conditions” and the capacity of humans to affect the process.

Engels’ later work

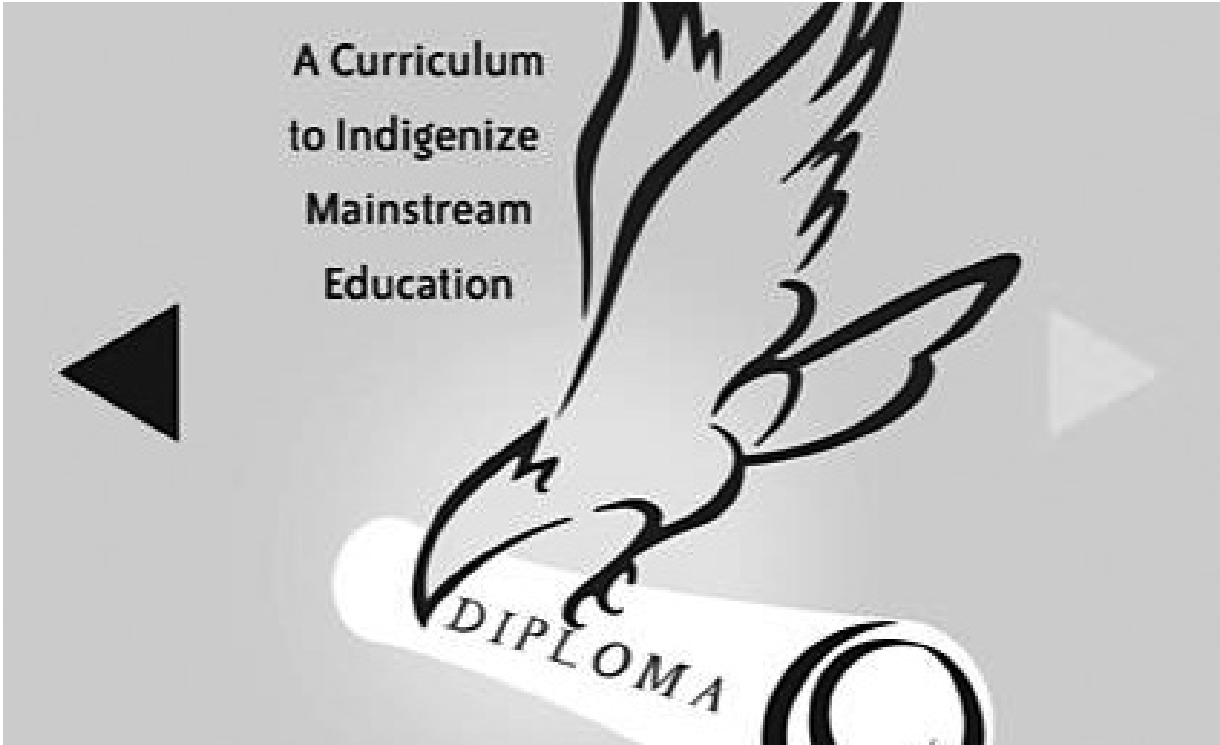
Engels consolidated his work on nature in a series of essays taken together in *The Dialectics of Nature*. One of his better-known essays was entitled *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*, which he wrote in 1867. He noted:

“What cared the Spanish planters in Cuba, who burned down forests on the slopes of the mountains and obtained from the ashes sufficient fertiliser for one generation of very highly profitable coffee trees—what cared they that the heavy tropical rainfall afterwards washed away the unprotected upper stratum of the soil, leaving behind only bare rock! In relation to nature, as to society, the present mode of production is predominantly concerned only about the immediate, the most tangible results; and then surprise is expressed that the more remote effects of actions directed to this end turn out to be quite different.”

Conclusion

Marx denounced the destruction of nature before a modern ecological conscience was born. But he also provided a revolutionary theory that pointed a way out of false juxtapositions between humans and nature, or science and nature. He outlined the possibility of human beings working collectively under their own design, to consciously repair the rift caused under capitalism, by regaining a relationship with nature through asserting a specifically human nature — the conscious control of our labour.

Marx saw that the multifaceted, complex and rapidly accelerating destruction of the environment was traceable to the economic and social system we live in. Uprooting the system that generates unprecedented ecological destruction is also the solution to the unending cycle of wars, economic crises and oppression.



Decolonize education

BOOK

Teaching Truly: A Curriculum to Indigenize Mainstream Education
Written by Four Arrows
Review by Bradley Hughes

For thousands of years the Indigenous peoples of what is now the Americas lived in sustainable relationships with the world around them.

This healthy relationship extended to their relationships with each other, resulting in a much more harmonious existence than anything we have ever seen under capitalism. Despite (or more likely because of) this, their languages, their philosophy, their science and their approach to physical and mental health have been excluded from mainstream education at all levels.

Four Arrows wrote this book to change that.

The book is “a curriculum to indigenize mainstream education.” This is a necessary process for many reasons. We have an obligation to end the ongoing genocide of the First Nations, their languages and culture. In Canada in the form of residential schools, the education system was used as a weapon to try to destroy the First Nations and their wealth of knowledge. To deal with this we must

welcome First Nations’ students and cultures into our classrooms.

At the same time, capitalism is an implacable enemy to our health and the health of our planet. Our education system is largely complicit with this assault on us and our world. “Mainstream education is largely responsible for our era of crises. Its authoritarian assumptions of superiority over other creatures, races, cultures, spiritual beliefs and Nature, along with its continual dismissal of Indigenous, nature-based values, have brought humanity to the brink of near extinction and has helped cause many other species to already become extinct.”

Every chapter in this book has given me ideas on how to change things in the college physics’ classes that I teach. The chapter on Phys Ed led to me to realize that even though physics claims to be the study of the natural world (we even grandly refer to our field with its archaic description of “natural philosophy” on occasion) I have never taken a physics class, or conducted one, that went outside. This distance from nature can only contribute to the ease at which the natural sciences are used against nature. Citing other writers, Four Arrows argues for using “indigenous knowledge to counter Western science’s destruction

of the Earth.”

The book is written in a very holistic manner. Ignoring the connections between science, literature, economics, politics etc, is one of the ways in which capitalism tries to hide its evil ways. The book is full of general suggestions to change the way the class operates. Such as, “Make the group more important than the individual . . . in terms of both the learning process and learning goals,” “Native speakers and authors must be prioritized in learning,” “Native views are allowed to challenge the dominant worldview and values,” and “Knowledge is for the sake of decision and action.”

There is also a section of chapters relating to school subjects, like geography, language arts, mathematics and sciences. Each is a treasure trove of great ideas and references for further reading.

Educators inspired by Marxism will find that the books philosophy and curriculum suggestions easily fit into and broaden a Marxist approach to teaching. Teachers whose daily goals include showing students the need for an end to hierarchical class societies will learn lots from the philosophies of the First Nations that lived in such societies before the European conquest.

“omnipotent” state.

Elitism

By seeing neoliberalism as an ideological aberrancy imposed on capitalism, and which has obliterated opposition, Hedges’ view of resistance retreats to the ideological plane. He calls for a “radical shift in consciousness,” but where this will come from if the state is indeed omnipotent and ordinary people supposedly unable to resist?

The vast majority of the book is about how powerful the state is in crushing rebellion—from surveillance to torture, and from vigilante violence to prisons. He says nothing about the Black Lives Matter rebellions or of the historic strikes and protests for a \$15 minimum wage.

With ordinary people apparently incapable of resisting the omnipotent state, Hedges looks to heroic individuals. By focusing on persecuted individuals that gave rise to them, Hedges holds up a model that is elitist and moralizing. This is problematic when it comes to movement building, which Hedges doesn’t discuss at all. More than radical rhetoric and heroic individuals, it will require linking the mass movements for reform with a revolutionary transformation of society.

LEFT JAB

John Bell

Victims of capitalism

Just about all that is worst in the Stephen Harper regime is about to be made concrete in Ottawa: the Memorial to the Victims of Communism.

There has been a complete lack of consultation and transparency around the project. It has “privatized” the creation of a public historic site, while stealthily underwriting the project with public resources.

It hands the rewriting of 20th century history over to narrow corporate and ideological interests. It plays to the most reactionary elements of the Tory party base.

Ottawa’s city council voted 18 - 6 to oppose the memorial. They call for the monstrosity to be moved somewhere else.

It will occupy the last piece of open space in downtown Ottawa, space that had long been earmarked for a badly needed new court facility. The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada is opposed to both the location and design.

One architect who was part of the jury to select the design and site for the memorial resigned her post and went public with her opposition.

Costs

She also warned that published numbers for the memorial’s costs (\$5.5 million) were dishonest. “The way it is now, it’s at least two or three times that, with the technologies they are proposing for the concrete.

Speaking about dishonest estimates, Ludwik Klimkowski, head of the private “charity,” Tribute to Liberty, which is raising money to pay for this shit show says the land is valued at \$1 million. The federal Public Works department says it has not performed any evaluation because “the land is not being disposed of.”

Ottawa architect Barry Padolsky estimates the true worth of the land at between \$16 and \$30 million, depending on the building occupying the site.

So the stealthy public underwriting of this “private” enterprise is exponentially higher than the Harper government admits. When the project was first proposed, the feds said the public cost would be no more than \$1.4 million. Even without factoring in a true land evaluation, public contributions have grown to \$4 million, coming from three ministries. You can bet there is a lot more public money under the table.

Rewriting history

As bad as all these things are, they are arguments for the memorial to be moved to a different location, not scrapped.

But besides being ugly, wasteful and badly located, the monument views history through the lens of Stephen Harper’s right-wing ideology, not historical scholarship.

The waters begin to get murky when you consider that many of the “victims” of so-called Communism were Nazis or members of Eastern European regimes that sympathized with fascism.

Also, many Communists were Jews fighting against the Holocaust.

Compounding the confusion is the rise of Stalin in the Soviet Union, beginning in the late 1920s and truly

consolidated by the late 1930s. Through a process of bureaucratic maneuvering, show trials and purges Stalin and his allies exterminated almost all of the Bolshevik leaders and activists who had made the successful 1917 revolution.

While the rhetoric and symbolism of “Communism” was retained, the essential ingredients of Communism—internationalism, working class self-emancipation, liberation from all forms of oppression—were rolled back or crushed. In their place arose a new Russian nationalism and a form of capitalism controlled by the state and its bureaucratic functionaries.

The epitome of Stalinism, the idea of “Socialism in One Country” would have been an anathema to the real communists of 1917.

So, many of the victims of Stalinist “Communism” were the communists themselves. You can be sure that Leon Trotsky, the great revolutionary theorist and writer murdered by Stalin’s assassin in 1940, is not one of the victims intended to be remembered by Harper’s monument.

Under Stalin’s control, the USSR used brutal methods to build up capitalist infrastructure in record time, in order to compete internationally. Forced relocations of entire ethnic populations, slave labour camps for political dissidents, and driving much of the peasantry off of the land and into urban factories: Stalinism did claim millions of victims.

But Western regimes made things worse by attempting to blockade and strangle the USSR economy. In Ukraine, a multi-year drought, Western economic sabotage and Stalinist appropriation of crops led to a famine that killed millions. But to boil this down to “Victims of Communism” is a gross historical revision.

When Hitler invaded, a section of the Ukraine population enthusiastically joined in. Right-wing Ukrainian nationalists committed atrocities against Ukrainian Jews, Roma people, Tatars and ethnic Poles. Many Ukrainians welcomed the Red Army as liberators when they drove the Nazis out in 1945.

But Harper and his crew want to rewrite a complicated history as a simple-minded good guys versus bad guys fairy tail. The Memorial to the Victims of Communism is part of that myth making.

Victims of capitalism

Happily, even if they don’t know all the historical details, most people across Canada can smell a rat. In May, a national poll revealed that a majority (51 per cent) strongly opposed the memorial on this location. Opposition among those living in the Ottawa area was 83 per cent.

Encouragingly, a majority think the land should become a memorial for historical injustices committed against First Nations within the Canadian state—the victims of colonialism and capitalism. As the horror stories from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are made known, that is the memorial Ottawa needs, and the historical truth we all need to learn.

WHERE WE STAND

The dead-end of capitalism

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

A system that is killing the planet

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

Socialism and workers' power

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

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

Oppression

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

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

Canada, Quebec, Indigenous Peoples

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

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

Internationalism

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

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

Elections and democracy

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

Reform and revolution

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

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

The Revolutionary Party

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

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



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STOP BILL C-51

May 30 was another day of action across Canada against the secret police bill C-51.

Continuing the waves of protests that have decimated support for the draconian bill, there were rallied from coast to coast including a march on Parliament. The demands are: repeal Bill C-51, affirm the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, honour treaties and the rights of Indigenous people, honour First Nations right to be consulted, and stop racist legislation and fear mongering.

In Toronto, in the midst of torrential downpour, around 200 people rallied at Queen’s Park and marched through downtown. “This shows the commitment against the bill and against the government trying to take away our rights,” said the MC.

The first speaker, Indigenous activist Heather Milton-Lightning, welcomed the rain and connected the fight against C-51 to the historic struggles of Indigenous people and the ongoing climate justice movement to protect the land. “Our ancestors fought for a long time against the state of Canada. It’s not new for us to be surveilled and targeted.” She connected opposition to C-51 with the march happening today on the east coast against the Energy East tar sands pipeline, and the ongoing history of Canadian colonialism to extract resources—from the fur trade to the tar sands.

NDP MP Andrew Cash recalled the mass arrest of 2010 during the G20, and warned that Bill C-51 tries to justify such attacks on civil liberties. “Some politicians say we have to choose between security and civil rights. That’s a false choice and we won’t accept that false choice...We can’t let Harper and Trudeau take away our rights.” He said an NDP government would rip up Bill C-51, and urged people to “keep fighting, speaking truth to power.”

Human rights activist Josephine Grey, from Low Income Families Together, said that “Pass or no pass, it’s an illegal law and must be defeated through all means.” She urged people to keep opposing the bill and to support those who will be disproportionately targeted—Indigenous people and Muslims. The rally ended with lawyer Rocco Galati reminding people that Harper’s secret police bill is an extension of Jean Chretien’s attacks on civil liberties.

COMMON FRONT



by PETER VOTSCH

Public sector workers in Ontario are facing an intransigent provincial government bent on imposing the austerity agenda at the bargaining table.

In addition to introducing a net zero policy, in which, as it implies, the government is committed to limiting even the most modest gains, they have introduced concessions in ongoing negotiations with the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) and teachers unions.

These include issues such as class sizes, prep time and micro-management of teachers, and a two-tier wage system and privatization (leading to job and service cuts) with workers in the Ontario public service. It should also be noted that a net zero stance on wage and benefit compensation is itself a reduction, with inflation in the province running at just over 1.5 per cent per year.

Secondary teachers at the Durham board of education, represented by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF), have been on strike for four weeks, and have been joined by teachers in the Rainbow (Sudbury) board and the Peel board. Workers at the Ottawa-Carleton and Halton boards are set to walk out in the coming weeks. They had been met with a refusal to bargain from the beginning, are now facing a possible back-to-work order as the rainbow board has gone to court asking that it declare the strikes “illegal,” forcing workers back to work.

CUPE members at the boards, who are at the beginning stages of nego-

tiations, are facing the same attacks by a government whose strategy has been to centralize bargaining across the board in order to tie the hands of local employers—and limit any gains workers may make.

It is more than likely that this strategy of limiting gains from the top will be applied to CUPE members throughout all sectors. “Net zero” will thus become a baseline for public sector employers across the province, making it that much easier to wrench other concessions. Predictably, employers will say their hands are tied (too bad, so sad) on wages and benefits, while gleefully presenting concessions of “their own.”

Common Front

We need a strategy of our own, as public sector workers, to “fight fire with fire” and we need not look far. The strategy of a common front of unions, facing the employer together, has long been the strategy of public sector unions in Quebec. Coordinated bargaining across such diverse sectors such as education, health-care, transportation and municipal services has been coordinated since the great common front strike of 1972—which brought out workers across Quebec in a coordinated general strike against the government.

It’s “raison d’etre” is quite is simple: take on the employers together, don’t let them divide us. An injury to one is an injury to all. This is an approach that is overdue among Ontario’s public sector workers. We have seen time and again, workers taking on anti-union legislation such as Bill 115 separately—with-

out a coordinated approach that can lead to victory. In the end, the strategy has been, “wait for the next election.” Clearly, with the re-election of the anti-labour Wynne government with a majority, that has gotten us nowhere.

CUPE has demonstrated in support of the teachers throughout Ontario this spring, and joined their picket lines. This is an excellent start, but more needs to be done. Public sector leaders need to move toward the common front model adopted in Quebec as soon as possible. When we say, that the teachers’ is our fight, we must make it concrete. Collective agreements should end at the same time, and we should bargain together, and strike together. In that context, calls for a general strike would not simply be a rhetorical flourish—it would be a reality, one that could pull in our sisters and brothers in the private sector.

We have in CUPE introduced discussions around coordinated bargaining in various sectors. This is good, but the progress is slow. We need to ramp this process up, way up! In order to meet the increasingly aggressive stances and demands for concessions from employers, we cannot afford to wait. Our timetable must match theirs, if we are to hold on to what we have, and make new gains.

The austerity agenda has always meant austerity for us, the working class, and never the employing class. Our discussions need to centre around the most important issue—how can we take them on, and win!

STICKING WITH THE UNION

Carolyn Egan

Solidarity against precarity

For many years activists in the trade unions have been fighting for their leadership to take on issues that relate to workers who are not unionized. The campaign in Ontario a number of years ago for a \$10 minimum wage was championed by labour and won a 28 per cent increase over three years. More recently the Fight for \$15 has also been widely supported by trade unions including the British Columbia and Ontario Federations of Labour.

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers has led a national movement to keep door to door delivery, putting front and centre the needs of the people they serve and not their own potential job losses. They have won strong support in community after community. This has become a major issue in the upcoming federal election—with seniors organizations, disability rights groups and tens of thousands of ordinary citizens coming to the fore denouncing the move to “efficiency” at their expense. This campaign has put the austerity agenda on the defensive.

After major pushing from organizations such as the Workers Action Centre—which has led the Fight for \$15 in Ontario—the Liberal government has initiated public consultations on a “Changing Workplaces Review.” It is to look at issues affecting workers in today’s world and assess existing labour and employment law.

Organizations ranging from the United Way, McMaster University and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives have been publishing research findings on the rise of precarious work and the changing workplace. The percentage of those working without benefits, sick days or job security is rising and employment standards and labour law are lagging far behind in providing even the most basic protections.

Unions have been meeting with community organizations and strategiz-

ing on putting forward deputations at the hearings. Labour leaders are presenting but there has been a major effort to have those workers who are effected front and centre, speaking of their workplace experiences and the exploitation they are subjected to.

Thanks primarily to community organizing the Toronto Star and other media have been full of stories about the terrible conditions that many workers are facing on a day-to-day basis. The lack of regulation and oversight is shocking.

I spoke recently to a recent immigrant from Pakistan who along with her husband is being paid only \$8.00 an hour because “they don’t speak English.” This is significantly below the minimum wage and employers are allowed to get away with it because they are exploiting the most vulnerable workers who are afraid to speak up. A unionized plant where the same work is done pays over \$20 an hour. A real concern is that the Liberal government has made it clear that the review will not consider the need to raise the minimum wage.

Deputations must be done but the work in the community and in our unions to mobilize is critically important to ensure that real change takes place. The Ontario government must understand that there is a broad movement on the ground fighting for the most vulnerable workers. The Workers Action Centre is continuing the Fight for \$15 and the Toronto and York Region Labour Council has included this it demands. There is a real opening for significant changes to take place if the pressure is strong enough.

Trade unionists must continue to work with community organizations to push back against employers and governments and make significant breakthroughs in workers rights on the job. There is an appetite for change in this province and we must do all we can to build unity between union and non-union workers to force the hand of the government.

COURTS

by LISA DESCARY

in a 4-1 decision, the BC Court of Appeal ruled that the province did not violate teachers’ constitutional rights when it introduced Bill 22 in 2012 — legislation that temporarily prevented teacher bargaining on class size and composition.

Teachers were understandably upset, especially since the ruling meant the government was under no legal obligation to restore class size limits and ratios stripped out by Bill 28 in

2002 — legislation that has since been deemed unconstitutional. The BCTF executive has decided to appeal this decision to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Court costs: time, money and priorities

Because the 13 year court battle has been so costly, funding it has meant diverting money from other places, like our strike fund. This meant that we had less than a week’s worth of strike pay per teacher for our recent five-week strike.

Another problem with putting our faith in the

court case is that whatever the results in the courts, teachers are still going to have to negotiate to get class size and composition back into our contract.

Giving the court battle priority over job action and the activity of rank and file workers is not a good strategy because it affects our ability to fight. I spoke to teachers on my picket line during job action who wanted to defy the Labour Relations Board rulings that required us to submit grade 10, 11 and 12 final marks while we were picketing in June. The message that

I and fellow staff reps heard at our meetings was that we should not do anything illegal, since that would jeopardize the court case. This was incredibly demobilizing for teachers.

Telling teachers to wait for the court case to win their demands also teaches them the wrong lesson: that other people will win your strike for you, rather than encouraging teachers to have confidence in their own ability to fight for gains. This is why I think that it is very hard to pursue the legal avenue without it having a negative effect in

this case.

The message coming from the leadership of the BCTF as well as the BCFed has been to put our faith in the courts (and in electing an NDP, or at least a non-Liberal government), and they will fix this for us.

Class action

As socialists in our union, I think it is our job to keep reminding people of the history of how gains have been made in the past—by strikes and mass movements that made it so that governments and courts had no choice but to support

progressive changes

The fight for \$15 in the US is one great example. Minimum wage workers in LA just won a 67 per cent pay increase over 5 years. That was not the result of negotiations or court battles but the result of mass mobilization and class solidarity.

Likewise, we should make building solidarity with parents, students and working people in our communities a priority, as well as developing a layer of activists in our union who are willing to push for this alternative strategy.

SocialistWorker

QUEBEC vs AUSTERITY & RACISM

by Chantal Sundaram

Quebec has been at the forefront of struggle against neoliberalism, war, austerity and climate change. But the ruling class in Quebec, and across the Western world, is using Islamophobia in an attempt to divide and conquer.

Social movements in Quebec organized mass protests against the Free Trade Area of the Americans in 2001 and the Iraq War in 2003. In 2012 a historic student strike defeated a tuition hike. Recently the climate justice movement mobilized 25,000 people in Quebec City, and stopped TransCanada from using Cacouna as a port for the tar sands pipeline Energy East.

In an attempt to stop this radicalization and divide resistance, successive governments have used Islamophobia: the PQ tried to pass a racist “Values Charter,” and now the Liberals are proposing an Islamophobic “de-radicalization centre” and Bill 62 to ban face-coverings.

Islamophobia

But Islamophobia is not unique to Quebec. The Harper government has used Islamophobia to justify the draconian Bill C-51, passed the xenophobic “Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act,” and banned the wearing of the niqab while voting or taking the Canadian citizenship oath.

The Harper Tories lost no time in throwing their support behind the Bill 62. Multiculturalism Minister, Tim Uppal told the media: “We broadly support Quebec’s legislation regarding the uncovering of faces



for giving and receiving public services.”

The renewed stoking of Islamophobia and racism in Quebec is in lock-step with initiatives throughout the West to boost support for military intervention in Iraq and anti-terror initiatives at home that profile and target the Muslim community.

It should not come as a surprise that the new Bill on “religious neutrality” was introduced as part of Quebec’s “de-radicalization” plan.

There is one notable difference, however: unlike in English Canada, the debate in Quebec has not focused on “barbarism” but rather very specifically on “secularism.” There is a historical reason for this.

From Quiet Revolution to Austerity

The debate over “secularism” in Quebec dates back to the struggle against the predominance of the Catholic Church over all aspects of life as a means of social control to redirect desires for national self-determination and defense of the Quebecois language and cultural identity into a state of religious submission.

Since the revolt against both the Quebec Church and the English Canadian state which became known as the Quiet Revolution, there have been various attempts to redefine Quebec nationalism and identity, but the ideal of secularism has remained important.

However, in an era that has targeted Muslims under the guise of “secularism,” the historically progressive nature of this ideal has been fundamentally turned on its head.

This distortion of the early hopes and dreams that many progressive Quebecois had invested in the PQ culminated in the racist and Islamophobic Charter of Values and the election of arch-capitalist Pierre-Karl Pelladeau as PQ leader.

Recent debate over secularism in Quebec has not escaped the hypocrisy and double-standard that we see across the West. While debate rages over the hijab and niqab, a crucifix hangs in the Quebec National Assembly.

From Charter of Values to “de-radicalization”

“Secularism” as a feature of Quebec identity continues to be an attempt to distract from resistance to austerity. The PQ tried to distract from its austerity agenda with an Islamophobic “Values Charter,” but the people of Quebec rejected them at the polls.

Now it’s the Liberals’ turn. On June 10, Montreal hosted a “living together” summit on security, terrorism, racism and repression, attended by mayors of 30 cities around the world. The summit was part of the Quebec Liberal government’s “de-radicalization” plan.

Montreal Mayor and

former federal Liberal MP Denis Coderre announced the creation of a “de-radicalization centre” in Montreal complete with a “radicalization hotline” in March 2015. In June the Liberal government in Quebec announced \$2 million for the “anti-radicalization centre” to two new bills: one on hate speech, one on the “religious neutrality” of the state. The latter, Bill 62, would ban women wearing niqab from working in the public sector and from accessing government services.

Resisting austerity and racism

The real threat is not fundamentalism, but austerity, in Quebec as in English Canada. In Quebec, so far, these debates don’t seem to be slowing down or decisively dividing the movement that exploded during the Quebec Spring of 2012 and that continues to be visible today.

The best recent indications have been the attempt to revive the student strike movement this spring (which stalled but showed the ability to restart when necessary) and the coordinated local protests against austerity across all regions of Quebec on May 1.

The brewing show-down between public service unions and the Couillard government this fall will be the next test.

Anger can always be turned towards scapegoating false and easy targets, and Quebec is no exception. But the people of Quebec are more than capable of deciding their future: a Quebecois identity based not on social or ethnic exclusion but on resistance to austerity and the possibility of a Quebec, and a world, beyond capitalism.

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First Nations call for solidarity against Line 9 pipeline

by REG MCQUAID

Leaders of the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation (COTTFN) were in Toronto mid-June, pursuing their legal challenge against the National Energy Board (NEB) approval of Enbridge’s plans for Line 9B.

Direction of flow in the 40-year-old pipeline is soon to be reversed, to carry tar sands oil and other petroleum products to the East Coast.

Chippewas of the Thames
Chippewas of the Thames First Nation (COTTFN) Reserve covers 40 sq. km., and is located on the Thames River, 24 km. west of St. Thomas, in south-western Ontario. COTTFN has a population of about 2,500, of whom less than

1,000 live on reserve. The Line 9B pipeline crosses the Thames River, which runs through the Chippewas traditional territory and provides a source of drinking water to the First Nation.

As Chief Joe Miskokomon says, “we are in the position of having to argue about this pipeline in the Federal Court of Appeal on the issue of aboriginal consultation. Regardless of the outcome of our appeal, we need to raise awareness about the environmental concerns and scientific uncertainty with a pipeline dating back to the 1970’s that will have new stresses that will be placed on it.”

Pumping toxic tar sands through Line 9 raises the risk of a spill, and continues to deny the consent of the 18 First Nations whose territory it crosses.

As Myeengun Henry of

COTTFN explains, “Line 9 has been flowing light crude oil through Chippewas of the Thames traditional territory for 40 years without our consent. It is time for industry and governments to honour the treaties and wampum belt agreements. Indigenous nations and all residents of Canada are responsible for the safety of our Mother Earth!”

Truth and Reconciliation
The Truth and Reconciliation calls on Canada to “fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples as the framework for reconciliation.”

It also calls on Canadian corporations to “commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the

free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.” We indeed have a long road to travel!

First Nations continue to lead the way in protecting our land and water for future generations. As Chief Miskokomon said, “We need to public and First Nations across the country to see this appeal as an opportunity to lend their support to Chippewa. And to strongly encourage government and industry to pursue alternative approaches to address how natural resources are developed to benefit the seventh generation.”

To sign a petition and donate visit <http://you.leadnow.ca/petitions/demand-the-neb-respect-indigenous-rights-sign-to-support-chippewas-of-the-thames-first-nation>