

SocialistWorker

www.socialist.ca

\$2 | no. 576 | September 2015

STOP HARPER

*NO TAR SANDS

*NO PIPELINES

*RESPECT FIRST NATIONS

*CLIMATE
JOBS NOW



Indigenous sovereignty

Page 2-3

Valerie Lannon remembers Gustafsen Lake, *Eric Lescarbeau* reports on Unistot'en resistance, and *Janahan Ravikuman* writes about Hawaiian sovereignty

Greece

Page 4

Panos Garganas reports from Athens about resistance to Syriza's austerity measures

Bernie Sanders

Page 4

Paolo Bassi examines the hopes and contradictions of the anti-establishment candidate

Haiti

Page 5

Jose Hiriart interviews Haitian socialist *David Oxygene* about the long struggle against imperialism

Stop Harper

Page 6-7

Jesse McLaren surveys the Orange Wave and the movements the NDP needs to reflect in order to stop Harper's agenda

Decolonization

Page 8

Bradley Hughes interviews Salish activist *Scott Clark* about his anticolonial work

Women's liberation

Page 8

Chantal Sundaram discusses the "Bare With Us" movement

Black Lives Matter

Page 10

Valerie Lannon reports on resistance to anti-Black racism in Toronto



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

Facts & figures

85

Percentage of tar sands that have to stay in the ground to avoid catastrophic climate change, according to the scientific journal *Nature*

18,000

Additional jobs created if the \$1.3 billion the federal government invests in oil and gas were instead invested in renewable energy and energy efficiency

135,000

Number of workers who would see a wage increase if \$15/hr minimum wage were granted to federal workers

400,000

Number of manufacturing job lost under Harper's watch

\$250 million

Amount Mulcair wants to waste training 2,500 new cops rather than investing in jobs and services

\$34 billion

Subsidies for Canadian energy companies in 2014, according to the IMF

\$36 billion

Amount the Harper government is cutting from healthcare

In their own words

“It will probably be one of the biggest solar installations in northern Alberta, especially in the tar sands. It’s right in the community, so young people can see that we don’t just have to generate power and electricity from fossil fuels, that we can power it from the sun.”

—Melina Laboucan-Massimo, member of the Lubicon Cree First Nation

“What is desperately lacking in this election campaign is a global vision, a desirable, viable and realizable solution that will replace the relentless exploitation of hydrocarbons.”

—Amir Khadir, Member of Quebec’s National Assembly for Quebec solidaire

“At what point do we as a society say, OK, that’s enough, let’s leave stuff in the ground, and we won’t be bullied by people who say, ‘Well, we’re gonna lose jobs,’ because I think we can be really, really innovative and creative in terms of how we create energy.”

—Winnipeg South Centre NDP candidate Matt Henderson

“I’m talking about First Nations. Can you show a little bit of respect please?”

—Tom Mulcair, using his speech about First Nations to silence Indigenous activists protesting tar sands

“One could argue that Israel’s intention was always to ethnically cleanse the region — there are direct quotations proving this to be the case.”

—Morgan Wheeldon, NDP candidate who was forced to resign for speaking the truth about Israel



Pipeline resistance & decolonization

by ERIC LESCARBEAU

With Chevron attempting to build the Pacific Trails Pipeline, Unist’ot’en chiefs are asserting title to their traditional territory and the right to free, prior and informed consent to anyone, including work crews, entering their territory.

Citing supreme court rulings including the 1997 Delgamuukw decision, of which the Office of Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs were co-complainants, as well as last year’s Tsilhqot’in decisions they state: “The Unist’ot’en settlement and camp is a peaceful expression of our connection to Unist’ot’en territory. It is also an expression of the continuing and unbroken chain of use and occupation of our territory by our clan. Flowing from this continuous use and occupation, our traditional structures of governance retain complete jurisdiction in our territory and further, dictate the proper use and access to our lands and waters.”

LNG threat

The camp has come under increasing pressure as the BC Liberal government desperately tries to seal Final Investment Decisions (FIDs) on LNG plants and pipelines.

The LNG industry has not been as high on people’s radar as tar sands pipelines like Enbridge’s Northern Gateway or Kinder Morgan’s Transmountain, but it should be. LNG in BC poses almost as big a threat to the climate as the Alberta Tar Sands.

The tradeoff is supposed to be the Liberal government’s ridiculous claims of 100,000 jobs but this has recently been soundly debunked by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. The report “LNG and Employment In BC” shows that “BC’s LNG sector could be expected to support only 2,000 to 3,000 construction jobs per plant over three years and 200 to 300 permanent workers once operational.”

Unist’ot’en Heals

In response to the LNG threat, the Unist’ot’en Camp focuses on restoring traditional relationships to the land, decolonization and respect for aboriginal title and rights. Standing under the banner “Unist’ot’en Heals” they enforce a camp protocol which requires the free, prior and informed consent of the Unist’ot’en people to enter the yinta or territory.

David DeWit, Natural

Resources Department Manager for the Office of the Hereditary Chiefs of the Wet’suwet’en (OW), explains the significance of this in the video “Your Voice, Our Future”: “We have a word for our territory and it’s ‘Yin Tah.’ But it’s not just a word. It’s almost a philosophy and it not only refers to the territory but the territory is comprised of the trees, the soil, the insects, the birds, the fish, the water and also human beings; and each action affects another component. Something that happens in the water will affect the bugs. The bugs feed the fish and there is a chain reaction. I think that’s what the ecosystem, the food web is. So the health and well being of a territory reflects the health and well-being of a people.”

For three summers since it was established, hundreds of supporters from across the region and beyond have travelled to the camp to support the blockade, receive decolonization training and assist in building the settlement. The Unist’ot’en have inspired and built solidarity with thousands of climate activists across the region and the world, and we need to increase this support to stop the Liberal’s LNG plans.

Colonization and resistance

After Chevron opened an office 40km from the camp, the RCMP began harassing camp supporters entering and leaving the camp.

In an effort to undermine First Nations’ opposition to the PTP and sow divisions, Chevron and the BC Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (MARR) set up the First Nations Limited Partnership (FNLP)—spearheaded by former Ontario NDP premier, Bob Rae, and using Indigenous workers to clear-cut for the companies.

The FNLP’s strategy has been to strong-arm local band councils into signing benefit deals while simultaneously shutting out traditional governance bodies and hereditary chiefs.

**Make a donation or find out how to register to join the camp at: <http://unistotencamp.com/?p=1149>*

**To learn more about how you can support the camp visit, <http://unistotencamp.com>*

**A “Frontlines Beat Pipelines” fundraiser will be held in Vancouver on Thursday, September 10 at the Wise Hall, 1882 Adanac Street from 7:00 to 11:00pm. Visit their FB page to get tickets.*

Remembering Gustafsen Lake

by VALERIE LANNON

Twenty years ago, Indigenous Sundancers resisted the RCMP’s largest operation in Canada’s history, under an NDP government. This took place at Ts’Peten, or Gustafsen Lake, in central BC, in Secwepemec territory.

In 1989 the Sundancers, under spiritual leader Percy Rosette, began holding their traditional ceremonies at Ts’Peten, a site that was surrounded by land used by non-indigenous rancher Lyle James.

Two spokespersons for the Sundancers, Wolverine (aka Jones William Ignace) and Splitting the Sky (aka John Hill) asserted the right of the Sundancers to occupy the site until the ceremonies were over, and that the site was part of unceded Shuswap territory.

The RCMP intervened with 400 officers. AFN Grand Chief Ovide Mercredi tried to bring the Sundancers, or Ts’Peten Defenders, out of the site. After Rosette issued a media release on August 24, 1995, to “seek a peaceful resolution to a crisis which

has been going on for 139 years,” the RCMP cut off communications to the camp and set up their own media centre.

The state and the NDP

Thus began a classic smear campaign, with police characterizing the Ts’Peten Defenders as “terrorists”, “criminals” and “thugs.”

This “standoff,” which began August 18, took place while the NDP was in power in BC. The Attorney General Ujjal Dosanj made the shocking statement “Where’s the other side of the story? There is only one side of the story. There is no other side.”

In other words, the Defenders had no right to speak about the site or about indigenous rights more broadly. And when the RCMP alleged they had been shot at (a charge later shown to be a fabrication, but consistent with the smear campaign), Dosanj used this as a pretext to have the Department of National Defense send in armoured personnel carriers and other equipment including land mines that were set around

the camp.

Two Sundancers hit a land mine on September 11, when they tried to drive out of the camp to get water. The RCMP shot at and wounded them while they attempted to flee, thought luckily not lethally.

Throughout this period, Sundancers trickled out of the site, trusting in their Indigenous negotiators. The crisis came to an end on September 17 when the last Defenders left the site, on assurances from the RCMP that there would be no arrests. But, consistent with historic betrayals by the state, the police arrested 18 people, including a sentence of four years in prison to James Pitawanakwat. Wolverine was forced to spend five years in jail following his arrest.

While there was not universal support for the Defenders from all Indigenous people, especially among the political leadership, the conflict was admired by most as an assertion of indigenous rights.

Unfortunately, there was not much in the way of widespread solidarity from

non-indigenous sources, a situation that was not helped by the NDP government’s negative characterization of the situation. This was the same government that established treaty tables in 1991, but only enabled a handful of “agreements.”

Afterwards

“Gustafsen Lake” is part of the “red thread” of resistance by Indigenous peoples and horrendous state repression. The position of the NDP is consistent with other betrayals when the NDP has formed government or even while in opposition, such as when Mulcair called on Chief Theresa Spence to call off her hunger strike, precisely when Idle No More was taking off. Thanks to Idle No More and other indigenous sovereignty activity, we are seeing the kind of alliances and mass action needed to support indigenous self-determination and respect for indigenous traditions and spirituality.

Canadian Disabilities Act

by MELISSA GRAHAM

This election, it’s time for an Canadian Disabilities Act.

From coast-to-coast across Canada, disabled people and organization have been breaking down barriers. Without the support of our federal government, the individualized “solutions” miss the mark; access to society and quality of life is not created through tax breaks and savings plans.

Now is a time to call for change. It’s time for bold policy that benefits all disabled people living in Canada. It’s time to call on our MPs and perspective MPs for a Barrier-Free Canada.

The following is taken from a letter written by the Barrier Free Canada Committee:

Canada is one of the few developed countries that does not have a comprehensive nationally legislated Disabilities Act. It is imperative to have the rights of disabled people legitimized, recognized, and protected and we believe that an initiative such as ours can make this a reality.

What’s in it for me?

Disabled people who are not currently covered, or who are insufficiently covered by their province or territory; people who care for their disabled family members; people who are forced into poverty because their disability has prevented them from being employed; aging Canadians, Veterans, and the extended family and loved ones of all of the above can be benefited by a national act.

Even the individual who is not affected by disability directly or indirectly can enjoy knowing that as a caring country, we are advocating for all our people.

What is the end goal?

A streamlined law that defines civil and human rights for all disabled Canadians.

We need all the support that we can gather and your participation is crucial in this regard. Our initiative has already obtained the endorsements of such organizations as the CNIB, March of Dimes, the MS Society of Canada, the Canadian Hearing Society, and Accessible Media Inc.

Please take a moment to visit us at <http://barrierfreecanada.org/contact-us/>. As well, we are urging you to contact your local Member of Parliament (MP).

Follow us on Twitter @barrierfreeca and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/barrierfreeca>.

This is shared from <https://exposingableism.wordpress.com>

Socialist Worker

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

All correspondence to:
Socialist Worker
P.O. Box 339, Station E
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



Stop Harper: stop war

The US led war against ISIS in Iraq and Syria isn’t going well. According to US defence officials the year-long, multi-billion dollar bombing campaign has resulted in a stalemate, with “no meaningful degradation” in the number of ISIS fighters.

Of course it hasn’t. ISIS emerged from the catastrophic Western war and occupation of Iraq, and Western-backed counter-revolution against the Arab Spring. Bombing Iraq yet again will only make things worse, and encourage extremist groups to emerge. Now imperial powers are broadening the regional crisis by including Turkey, oppressor of the Kurds.

Kurdistan

Most NATO countries have historically ignored the oppression of the Kurds, or cynically used their oppression as justification for imperial intervention.

In the 1980s the West armed Saddam Hussein with chemical weapons to gas the Kurds. Then in 2003 the West used that crime as an excuse to invade Iraq, claiming to help the Kurds while continuing to arm the Turkish state against them.

One of the few effective ground forces against ISIS are Kurdish groups. They have been able to push back against ISIS in Syria and Iraq, and the West have trained sections of these forces and used

this as justification for the latest war. But if the West cared about Kurdish self-determination it would stop arming Turkey, and stop labelling Kurdish resistance groups as terrorists.

When ISIS lay siege to the Kurdish city of Kobane, which the West used it as justification for Western intervention, Turkey intervened to close the border to prevent Kurdish forces from coming to the defence of the city.

For the ruling AKP in Turkey, the Kurds represent a greater threat to their power than ISIS does. That is one reason why they are latecomers to the anti-ISIS party.

Turkey

But now Turkey has formally joined the imperial coalition against ISIS, and is using that war as an excuse to attack the Kurds.

The Turkish elections in June saw the Kurdish People’s Democratic party (HDP) receive 13 per cent of the vote and 80 seats in Parliament. It was this share of the vote that stopped the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan from forming a majority and implementing broad changes that would have given him even more power.

At that point the Turkish state decided to delay peace negotiations with the HDP which had been ongoing since 2012. After the attack on Suruc in July the gloves

were off and the Turkish generals decided to use he attack to brutally suppress the Kurds anew. Although ISIS carried out the attack, the state seized the opportunity to round up anyone suspected of being in opposition to the government.

What this means for the West is that the main NATO partner in the region is now working at cross-purposes to the other coalition countries. Yet at a meeting on Brussels, most western countries, including Canada, decided to allow the Turks broad leeway in fighting the Kurds.

Now the West is again supporting Turkey’s war on Kurdistan, because Turkey offered access to the Incirlik Air Base to launch attacks against ISIS. The base makes western bombing runs even easier.

This development adds another contradictory force to the already messy situation in the region.

Canada

The Canadian government is now arming Kurdish groups that it labels terrorists, while simultaneously supporting Turkish attacks on those same groups.

The Conservatives in Canada don’t really care however. They are more interested in using the war against ISIS for domestic purposes. If they can instill enough fear then they may be able to recapture power in the election. The fact that

the war is a disaster needs to be a news story in Canada but is largely being ignored.

At the leaders debate Tom Mulcair rightly challenged the latest war on Iraq and Syria, but he did so by counter-posing it to UN wars (like the bombing of Libya that the NDP supported) and even he defended NATO wars. This reduces the war to a simple policy decision that can be manoeuvred around, rather than a threat to oppose.

In 2003 the NDP similarly began by opposing the war if it was not under UN mandate, but the anti-war movement pushed the party to agree to “No war on Iraq, with or without the UN.”

In the midst of the economic crisis this is even more urgent. Not only is the war killing countless numbers of people abroad, but it’s diverting resources from jobs and services at home.

Minister of War Jason Kenney admitted the bombing of Iraq and Syria will cost more than half a billion dollars. Think of what those resources could do for healthcare, education, climate jobs, housing, or other urgent needs.

Rather than opposing the war because it’s not under the banner of NATO or the UN, the NDP should oppose the war on principle and campaign to divert military spending to fight the austerity agenda.

Iran’s nuclear deal

by NIAZ SALIMI

After 12 years of standoff, Iran, the United States and other members of the P5+1 struck a historical deal on July 14 to replace hostility with diplomacy and eliminate the possibility of another devastating war.

On the same day, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the press that the nuclear deal signed with Iran is “a stunning historic mistake.” Netanyahu keeps reminding the world about the threat Iran poses to Israel and basically everyone else. During his first speech to the congress, in 1996, he called Iran “the most dangerous regime in the region,” and warned about its ambition to obtain nuclear weapons. Twenty years later, he continues the same rhetoric and insists on military response, which is described as “adventurous delusions” by former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who also opposes Netanyahu’s views.

Hardliners

While many Iranians, along with the international community, are celebrating the victory of reason and peace, it is not surprising that Netanyahu’s grim vision has some support amongst the hardliners—be it in Iran or the United States. The most recent example is the reaction of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards, who denounced a UN Security Council resolution that endorsed last week’s nuclear deal. Top revolutionary Guards commander Mohammad Ali Jafari was quoted as saying “some parts of the resolution draft are not acceptable for us since they have clearly crossed the Islamic Republic’s red lines, especially in regards to our military capabilities.” Commander Jafari’s comments may sound as being in line with the Supreme Leader’s previous position, since after the agreement he has not taken

a clear position; but it may stem from the fact that when sanctions lift his organization will lose billions of dollars of annual revenue from smuggling goods into the Iranian markets.

The US Republican presidential candidates like Lindsey Graham, Donald Trump and Scott Walker are also attacking Obama’s nuclear deal, proving that they have learned nothing from George W Bush’s catastrophic foreign policy. The war-hawks are now in a race to prove who can offer the least understanding of this delicate situation and the most aggressive solution to it. A race front-runner, Scott Walker, has gone so far to declare that he is “prepared to launch war with Iran on his first day as president.”

Shabtai Shavit, former Mossad chief, who in an interview with US radio broadcaster Aaron Klein on July 19 suggested that the nuclear

deal with Iran offers Jerusalem an opening to join “a new Middle Eastern order,” presents another provocative view: “Israel now has even more impetus to make common cause with Sunni Arab countries like Egypt, Jordan and Gulf sheikhdoms that are nervous over the West’s overtures towards their common nemesis, Iran” he said.

Almost two weeks after the agreement, the joy and optimism continues to be the general mode of Iranians around the world. They are not celebrating the agreement as the achievement of the regime, but rather as a ray of hope, no matter how small. Many also believe that the new era will improve the Iran’s shady human rights record. Time will tell if they are right in their assessments.

Hawaiian sovereignty

by JANAHAN AERON RAVIKUMAR

June 26 was the 18th anniversary of the death of Hawaiian singer Israel Kamakawiwo‘ole. Though he’s best known for a medley of “Somewhere Over the Rainbow/What a Wonderful World,” he was the voice of Hawaiian sovereignty.

Colonization

European colonization decimated the Hawaiian population—which numbered a million people before Captain Cook “discovered” it in 1778. In 1893, US marines supported a coup against Queen Lili‘uokalani, and in 1898 the US annexed Hawaii.

As well as eliminating self-representation of the indigenous island population, the US and its Christian missionaries banned the teaching of the Hawaiian language.

While the US initially used the islands as a sugar plantation and whaling port, it also militarized Hawai‘i. The US Pacific Fleet is based in Pearl Harbour, on the island of Oahu, and during WWII the US declared marshal law throughout Hawai‘i and began using the island of Karo‘olawe as a training ground and bombing range. More recently Hawai‘i has been turned into tourist “paradise”—based on occupied land and appropriated culture.

Sovereignty and song

In the 1970s a Hawaiian sovereignty movement emerged alongside the anti-war, American Indian Movement and other liberation movements.

Israel Kamakawiwo‘ole was the most popular voice of this revival. Born on May 20, 1959, three months before Hawaii became a full state of the US, he played his ukulele for family, friends, and on stage in the bar that his parents worked at and managed. His talents grew and eventually his family moved to the island of Mākaha. There, Israel Kamakawiwo‘ole and his brother, Skippy, formed The Mākaha Sons of Ni‘ihau group in 1976, with musicians John Koko, Jerome Koko, and Louis “Moon” Kauakahi. It was through this group that their popularity and influence spread.

Both with his group and with his solo career that began in 1990, he used music as a platform to promote Hawaiian independence. His sovereignty work was exhibited through his music by the incorporation of traditional Hawaiian melodies with reggae and jazz, and the direct message of Hawaiian sovereignty in the music itself. Kamakawiwo‘ole became an icon and symbol of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement and was one of the influential individuals of its resurgence in the 1990s.

Twenty years later, the movement for Hawaiian self-determination continues. As part of the global spread of Idle No More, Hawaiians rallied on January 16, 2013—the 120th anniversary of the coup—to protect Hawaiian rights and the land on which they are based.

The music of Israel Kamakawiwo‘ole remains an inspiration to this ongoing movement.

Movements and elections

As we head into this federal election campaign there are some instructive lessons for activists and those on the left who want to see a radical change from the last 10 years of Stephen Harper and the Tories, in the trajectory of Syriza’s left-wing government in Greece.

The Harper government has shown itself over the last ten years to be the enemy of women, Indigenous communities, union members, environmentalists, immigrants and refugees, veterans, seniors—in fact, the vast majority of the population.

Recent revelations about the PMO’s office (and most likely Harper himself) being well aware of the \$90,000 payoff to disgraced ex-Senator and Tory hack Mike Duffy are the icing on the cake of Tory corruption and venality.

With the unexpected victory of the NDP in Alberta and the fact that federal NDP leader Thomas Mulcair is leading in recent polls, this election could see an NDP government in power federally for the first time in Canadian history. This is an outcome much to be desired and there are many people in ridings across the country who will work tirelessly during this election campaign to try to make this dream a reality. Any socialist worth the name should be on the side of those working and hoping for an NDP victory, since the NDP is the only party not wholly owned by and representing the interests of big business and capital.

Greece

But if we look to recent events in Greece and the trajectory of the left-wing ruling party Syriza, there are lessons to learn for activists in Canada. Just recently Greek MPs (including a majority of Syriza members) voted to accept a “bailout” from Greece’s international creditors with conditions that will only further hurt and impoverish Greek workers and the poor. It is the third “memorandum” of austerity to be imposed on Greece since the financial crisis.

As Ambrose Evans-Pritchard wrote in The Daily Telegraph after the memorandum was accepted: “The cruel capitulation forced upon Greece after 31 hours on the diplomatic rack offers no conceivable way out the country’s perpetual crisis. The terms are harsher by a full order of magnitude than those rejected by Greek voters in a landslide referendum a week ago, and therefore can never command democratic assent.”

This comes only a few weeks after Syriza leader and Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras exhorted Greeks to reject exactly the sort of austerity terms that the new deal he will impose demands of Greece and its people. He is now leading the attack not only on Greek workers and their families but on the left within his own party.

This contradiction comes from a flawed political strategy: Tsipras and Syriza’s hope from the beginning was to negotiate better terms for Greece within the framework of the Eurozone and the euro. Panagiotis Sotiris of Antarsya (a grouping of the anti-capitalist left in Greece) explains it this way: “The euro is a whole set of institutional political and monetary arrangements that in a certain way sort of creates like an iron cage of austerity from which it is impossible to escape if you accept its terms.”

Some members of the Left Platform inside Syriza have been vocal in their criticisms of Tsipras and this latest deal. But what is needed now is more than a focus on Tsipras and his betrayal. It is not a question of this leader or that inside the party, but of reaching outside Syriza to the broad layers of Greek workers, students and the poor who voted ‘No’ to austerity and to other sections of the anti-capitalist left.

It is fundamentally the years of strikes and struggle on the ground in Greece that made it possible for Syriza and Tsipras to come to power in the first place and it is only in the strengthening of those struggles now that there can be any hope of rejecting the politics of austerity and misery for the vast majority in Greek society.

Orange wave

Likewise here in Canada the NDP’s current popularity is a result, not of better leadership, but of the wave of struggle and activism that began importantly with Idle No More. People are frustrated and angry with 10 years of Tory rule which have trod on democracy, the environment, workers’ rights, women’s rights, immigrant rights and much more.

But really fighting to defend those rights and to gain lost ground will not be achieved simply by electing Mulcair and other NDP MPs. It’s clear even in the first weeks of the campaign that Mulcair’s strategy of carefully controlling candidates who will be allowed to run for the party is about trying to appeal to some mythical “middle” in order to gain power.

So, potential NDP candidates who have made statements supporting the Palestinian struggle or who voice open opposition to pipelines or the tar sands, are prevented from running or strongly criticized by the party leadership.

This is a wrong strategy. Those looking to the NDP for hope in this election include the same people who have demonstrated against the destruction of the environment and on Indigenous land from Palestine to Turtle Island, who opposed Bill C-51 and austerity. They do not want more of the same, or a slightly watered-down version of more of the same. The NDP leadership needs to show at least as much courage as the people who are working to elect them.

But more importantly, activists cannot see electing the NDP as the end game. Any of the changes we hope to see will only come from the strength of our movements pushing for that change from below.

4 Socialist Worker September 2015

INTERNATIONAL



Greece: resistance continues

by PANOS GARGANAS

The glaring contradiction in Greece’s government is producing a political crisis. Left wing party Syriza was elected on an anti-austerity programme and now it is implementing the worst austerity measures yet.

To win a majority in parliament it is relying on the votes of the right wing and centre parties that supported a yes to austerity in last month’s referendum. But the yes vote was a minority. This situation isn’t sustainable. Prime minister Alexis Tsipras cannot go on governing like this. But he is between a rock and a hard place.

MPs voted last week to sign the third “memorandum of understanding” with Greece’s creditors. They confirmed support for the austerity measures they voted for last month as part of an agreement for a new loan from the European Stability Mechanism. The government hopes to receive the first instalment by Thursday of this week. It will go straight to the European Central Bank to pay for the last loan.

Every future instalment will depend on a green light from inspectors checking up on the government’s finances to make sure it is pushing ahead with austerity. In particular this is to speed up privatisations, creating a fund to oversee the selloff of everything the public sector can sell. But the mood for a fightback is there. Usually August is a month where nothing happens in Greece. This year there was a shutdown of the railways by workers fighting privatisation. And there was a strike against sackings at one of the main private TV channels that appears to have won at least a partial victory. The fact that left wing MPs inside Syriza voted against the deal reinforces this mood.

Pressure

It’s a virtuous circle. People’s anger puts pressure on MPs to vote against the deal, and when they do it makes people more confident they can fight back. Not all the 44 rebel MPs are in the organised Left Platform, and Tsipras is manoeuvring to try and divide them.

Government officials have said there will be a vote of confidence—a way of putting pressure on rebel MPs to see how far they will go. And Tsipras has promised a special congress of Syriza. This is being used as an argument against a split by the Left Platform.

A group including 17 MPs from all sides of the vote has called for unity, and if the Left Platform walks out before the congress it could lose some waverers. To create an independent group, Left Platform members will need to get themselves in order politically. What basis would they split on?

Most are opposed to the euro but they need to decide whether that also means a break with the European Union, for example. We in SEK, the

Socialist Workers Party in Greece, argue that they should break with Syriza—and follow the logic of this towards anti-capitalist left front Antarsya.

Even if Tsipras succeeds in splitting away some MPs he is expected to go for a new election. But that’s no easy way out. A new election will be confirmation of the political crisis. It will mean the government collapsing within eight months of the election as a result of going against the majority who voted no to austerity. And it will produce a shift to the left. If the Left Platform does split it could give visible form to this.

But if it compromises inside Syriza both Antarsya and the Communist Party expect to see their votes go up. And if Tsipras manoeuvres his way out of calling an election, he will run into a strike wave. There’s no way he can cut pensions, for example, without facing a strike.

The first major demonstration will be on the first Saturday of September, when the prime minister always opens the Thessalonica fair, and the unions call a protest. This year it will be Tsipras that faces the demonstration, and it will be dominated by left wing opposition to the bailout.

Panos Garganas is editor of Workers Solidarity, Socialist Worker’s sister newspaper in Greece. This is shared from Socialist Worker (UK)

The Bernie Sanders campaign

by PAOLO BASSI

Amidst widespread anger against inequality, racism and a climate crisis, the self-described “socialist” Bernie Sanders is running for President of the US.

Sanders appears as a radical and his language is in tune with the hopes of millions across America. Sanders wants a living wage, childcare, universal single-payer healthcare, guaranteed sick and vacation leave, free university education, a progressive income tax to indirectly redistribute wealth and laws to stop corporate tax evasion. Sanders is one of the few politicians who have even mentioned the “free trade” Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

That these demands have a wide audience shows the mood for change. His candidacy opens an exciting window for the next 12 months, which could make the start of the Presidential campaign a real debate on the issues facing the 99% and the need for real alternatives.

It should also be a lesson for the NDP that campaigning to the left can mobilize broad numbers, including all those disillusioned with mainstream politics. If he can pack stadiums on a call for political revolution and taxing the rich, why is Mulcair still supporting the tar sands expansion and timid about taxing the rich?

Democrat spoilers

But Sanders risks spoiling the ballots of all those his campaign is inspiring. Despite his radical rhetoric, Sanders is not running as an Independent but for the Democratic Party—the twin party of American capitalism.

In 2008 Obama beat Clinton, riding on the wave of the anti-war movement and the beginnings of the anger over the economic crisis. Despite his historical achievement (which Sanders lacks) as Black president, Obama has been the figurehead for the same old corporate policies—surveillance, torture, drones, warfare, racism, and climate crisis. It’s movements against these—Occupy, Black Lives Matter, Fight for \$15—that have created an audience for Sanders, but he wants to direct these right back into the same corporate party, promising to support Clinton if she wins the nomination.

Refusing to build an alternative to the Democrats means acting as their left flank, and becoming a safety valve for working class discontent—which has a long history. In the 1984 and 1988 primaries Jesse Jackson inspired millions and caused a panic within the Democrats and the wider establishment, and when he lost the primary his campaign disappeared into the party. In 2004 Howard Dean paid lip service to the anti-war movement and pulled it into supporting the Democrats, whose candidate John Kerry tried to be more pro-war than Bush.

Resistance movements don’t have to pour themselves into corporate parties but can give rise to alternatives. In 2013 the socialist Kshama Sawant defeated an incumbent Democrat to become a Seattle City councilor, by campaigning during and after the election to raise the minimum wage to \$15/hr.

Even if Sanders refuses, the intervention of movement activists in the next year could create a poll of attraction to build a real anti-capitalist alternative.

Haiti's long struggle

Socialist Worker's Jose Hiriart spoke with Haitian socialist David Oxygène about his country's centuries-long fight against colonialism and capitalism

David Oxygène is a progressive militant in MOLEGHAF (the movement for freedom, equality, and fraternity for every Haitian citizen) and one of the leaders of KOD (Dessalines Coordination) a new political party that has been created to support the masses in the class struggle.

Let's start by addressing the obvious question: Why is Haiti so poor?

We need to take a look at the cause of the hunger, the origin of the suffering—it's the big imperialist countries, like France, Canada, and the United States. They are applying something called neoliberal politics. They and their multinational companies steal all our wealth. They are stealing all that we have under the soil.

This neoliberal plan consists of several things like dispossessing the peasants from their land. We are no longer able to produce food. The imperialists import their leftovers here, like saying, “you have to depend on us, you have to consume; buy our products only, not produce.” So a lot of people come from the countryside to the city. If the children of a country can't eat, go to school, and develop; then that country is condemned to misery.

Another aspect of the neoliberal plan is turning public institutions into private institutions. There where about ten thousand mothers and fathers working in public institutions whom they have fired; they ruin these people. The neoliberal plan, what has it created? It creates a hegemony of capitalism; the capitalist, don't forget, makes his wealth from the exploitation.

Today Haiti is in a difficult situation, economically, politically, socially, culturally, because we are abandoning our culture to adopt a foreign culture. You can notice it, we are adopting the culture of the United States; we have abandoned the voodoo, we have abandoned our habits, our customs, we have abandoned a lot of things to adapt to the will of a foreign country.

Now, we are poor and in a difficult situation especially after the earthquake. It is as if we were paying for something. What are we paying for? We are paying for being close to the United States. We are paying for the big fight we have been leading against imperialism. We are paying for defeating the army of Napoleon. We are paying for the behavior of Charlemagne Peralte, Batravil, Pierre Sully and Acahos in 1915. We are paying for ousting the great dictator Jean Claude Duvalier in 1986. It's as if the big countries don't want Haiti to stand tall before all the nations of the underworld. We have to fight hard against those countries.

Haiti has a history of defeating empires, could you tell us a little bit about that?

You have to remember how Haiti became independent. Was it easy? Our independence came from a great fight led by our ancestors. And where did our ancestors come from? After the colonists exterminated the Tainos (the native inhabitants of this



land) the colonists then started to bring people from Africa with the only objective of putting them in slavery. They were from different tribes and couldn't communicate amongst themselves because they spoke different languages. They suffered all kinds of exploitation but they managed to organize themselves; they evolved during the exploitation.

Eventually, in late August 1791 the Congress of Bois Caiman took place. The slaves became conscious of their own situation and the uprising began. They united to revolt against their oppressor.

In those days it was all about the relationship between the master and the slaves. Slaves in one part and masters in the other; he is the one who took me from Africa, he has the right to me, he is my master, he is my chief, he is the one who has power over me. By fighting and mobilizing against the greatest armies of the time—England, Spain, and, in particular, France—we won our independence on January 1, 1804.

During one of the decisive battles against the French, our founding father, Dessalines—who was a great general—said, “whoever wants to be the slave of the Frenchmen, it's true that we are surrounded, get out from the fort to join them and whoever wants to die as a free man come and stand beside me.” This still makes me happy to this day, because all the mass of slaves were bound from one ideological rope, one behavior. They said, we all want to die for liberty, not even one went out to the Frenchmen.

We became the first Black Republic in the World: a model of liberty. Haiti, a little country on a little parcel of land defeated the biggest armies of the time. We taught a lesson of liberty, we taught a lesson of revolution, we taught a lesson of dignity, of unity. We took our independence by fighting—not by kissing, not by making love, not by asking for forgiveness.

How has the struggle evolved? What needs to be done to change things today?

The solution is communism. We have to change the state and get popular democracy, not the democracy of the bourgeoisie we have now. It's very hard. To go from capitalism to communism we need first to send people to school; to create a consciousness and educate all the minds of the individuals that want a revolution. Also, we need to have a very strong social movement and a press of our own.

So, you think that the revolution needs to be peaceful?

The bourgeois always talks about the peaceful revolution. The revolution is the revolution, without adjectives. The only adjective you could put before the word is “strong,” the strong revolution. Here we are looking towards the revolution, in any way it comes.

What is it like to be a communist in Haiti?

When you are a socialist you will have to fight for real. You will be sent to jail. I've spent a lot of time in prison. About eight times I've been sent to jail, sometimes for three, four months and others for five, seven days, without trial. Why do they send me to jail? Because I am defending the cause of the poor. They beat me. There are a lot of MOLEGHAF militants who have been sent to jail for the fight we are leading, but we do not lose hope. We keep going forward to help the poor.

And us, as socialists, we don't have any complexes. We have no problem talking to a foreigner here. You came in contact with me and now you are here. My father was a bricklayer and my mother used to sell some stuff on the market. I am very poor. I was born in this neighborhood. And you are here. I have no problem with that. I am a true communist. And I don't have any complexes. Everyone around here knows me.

What about Martelly, the current president?

We can say Martelly was put in power by the international community to protect their interests. I do not agree with his politics because in Haiti there is a struggle of classes, there's a class that is fighting against another class and I am part of one of the classes. I am part of the dominated class. I'm fighting against the other class, which dominates me, which dominates the peasants, the slaves, poor men and women of the popular neighborhoods.

How long has the UN occupation been going on? And how do they justify it?

The MINUSTAH (UN stabilizing mission for Haiti) came after the 2004 Coup with the objective of containing the masses. In one day they shot 22,000 bullets just in Cité Soleil, the biggest slum of the country.

Today we see that legally MINUSTAH's presence in the country can't be justified by the UN's own internal rules. Haiti is not at war, there is no genocide going on, Haiti is not a threat to other countries. That was also true in 2004. What justifies the presence of MINUSTAH in the country? Everyone can see that the soldiers of the UN are here to protect the interests and wealth of international community.

Finally, what can people from other countries do to help MOLEGHAF?

When we say we are fighting against the international community, we mean those who are doing the work of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists countries. We need international solidarity to change things in Haiti. If any other organization from another country wants to get in touch with MOLEGHAF to help us in solidarity they can send us an email to moleghaf17@yahoo.fr.

How do we beat Harper?



The Orange Wave

Harper has a clear strategy to win: use a long campaign to outspend the other parties, mobilize the Tory base while fear-mongering about alternatives, and depend on historically low voter turnout and support from the corporate media.

To defeat Harper, and to reverse his legacy, the NDP will need to mobilize on real alternatives to the Tories and Liberals, connected with the movements that have challenged Harper these past four years.

Orange wave

Harper has wrecked havoc on the planet and its people for almost a decade, but he hasn't done it alone. The first half of his rule was only possible due to an informal coalition with the Liberals, and when Harper won his majority in 2011 it merely concentrated the corporate vote. But the real story of last election was the historic rise in the vote for the only party associated with the labour movement, the NDP—based on accumulated anger against Harper, disillusionment with the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois, and inspiration from the Arab Spring.

Movements outside Parliament had pushed the NDP to oppose the Iraq War in 2003 and the Afghanistan war in 2006—which in turn provided a wider audience for the movements and greater support for the NDP. The NDP filibuster against attacks on postal workers showed the potential for using Parliament as a megaphone for the movements. But despite the pressure of movements, the main trajectory for the NDP (and every social democratic party around the world) has been towards the centre—including supporting the Liberal military budget in 2005, proposing a coalition with the Liberals based on dropping opposition to war and corporate tax cuts in 2008, and voting for war on Libya in 2011.

Movements rise but Orange wave recedes

As a result, since 2011 we have seen a rolling wave of resistance movements across the country, but a receding of the Orange Wave. As the Occupy movement exploded around the world against the 1%, the Ontario election had its lowest voter turnout—with an NDP centrist campaign that failed to mobilize the 99% around an alternative. As hundreds of Air Canada workers were on wildcat strike and hundreds of thousands of Quebec students were in the streets, the NDP

purged socialism from its constitution and elected an ex-Liberal, Mulcair, as its leader—who was silent on the strike but promised to run the NDP provincially against the left alternative Quebec solidaire. As Idle No More emerged across the country and Chief Theresa Spence challenged Harper, Mulcair refused to meet with her and instead called on her to end her strike.

As Mulcair explained in 2013, “In Nova Scotia, Manitoba—and coming soon in BC—New Democratic governments are setting the standard for good public administration.” Applied at the provincial level, the focus on ruling over resisting was disastrous. The NDP was voted out of office in Nova Scotia after only one term—which they used to raise tuition and attack paramedic's right to strike. Offering no climate job alternative to pipelines and fracking, the NDP failed to defeat the hated Liberals in BC and failed to pick up a seat in New Brunswick. The same centrism by Olivia Chow allowed John Tory to pose as an alternative to Rob Ford in the Toronto mayoral election, while a downright right-wing campaign by the Ontario NDP allowed the Liberals to outflank the NDP to the left. In the meantime the federal Liberals have resurrected themselves, burying their record and posing as an alternative to Harper. Trudeau hoped to replicate the Ontario election at the federal level, through “strategic voting” that transfers votes from the NDP to the Liberals—who would continue Harper's policies.

Orange wave rises again?

It's thanks to movements outside Parliament that the Orange Wave is rising again. The explosion of protests across the country against Bill C-51 exposed Trudeau's complicity with Harper and pushed the NDP to oppose the attack on civil liberties. Likewise, while the NDP refused to support the campaign to raise the minimum wage last year, the growing Fight for \$15 has won over the NDP federally. The promise to rip up Bill C-51 and deliver childcare and a higher minimum wage for federal workers is a good start, but the NDP will need to go further to provide a real alternative to mobilize people at the polls and undo Harper's legacy—like scrapping Bill C-45 and respecting First Nations, saving door-to-door mail delivery and restoring Harper's massive cuts to healthcare, stopping the bombing of Iraq and Syria and reversing billions in military spending, restoring corporate taxes while ending oil subsidies, and opposing tar sands

while creating a million climate jobs. These demands would put both Harper and Trudeau on the defensive and mobilize not only the NDP's base but also the millions who are too disillusioned with social democracy to bother to vote.

But the NDP has focused its initial ads exclusively on Harper's “corruption and mismanagement,” not his policies, while making overtures to the Liberals around a coalition—throwing them a lifeline when they are sinking, and reinforcing the myth that there's a substantial difference between the corporate Tories and the corporate Liberals. The focus on being better managers of a system in crisis, without offering real alternatives, is what cost NDP recent elections across the country—and is a reflection of what an NDP victory would look like. The historic election in Alberta, which the NDP hope to replicate at the federal level, shows both the inspiration of an NDP victory based on hope for an alternative and the immediate contradictions this raises—as Rachel Notley has promised to continue expanding the tar sands, and Mulcair has supported pipelines and police while silencing candidates who support Palestine.

Ballot box and the streets

Harper relies on historically low voter-turnout, which are a legitimate reaction to the experience of social democracy. To sustain the NDP through a long campaign and to mobilize people at the polls the party will need to articulate a clear alternative to Harper's agenda of austerity, war and climate chaos. Panicked by this possibility, the corporate press are calling on Mulcair to “tame his party's fervent base.” But Harper never falls into that trap; he knows that to win elections you need to mobilize your base, and the campaigns of Jeremy Corbyn in the UK and Bernie Sanders in the US show the left is just as capable of that strategy.

Meanwhile, developments in Greece show that even an electoral victory on a left platform isn't an antidote to austerity or a substitute for resistance movements. Regardless of the composition of Parliament we need stronger movements beyond the election, but can use the election as a tactic towards that—pushing the NDP to echo movement demands during and after the election. After 10,000 marched for jobs, justice and the climate, we need to inject these politics into the election campaign—exposing the Tories and Liberals, pushing the NDP to reflect the movements, and building resistance outside Parliament beyond the election.



Ten thousand march in Toronto on July 5

Linda McQuaig is right: leave the oil in the soil

“Oil has become the elephant in the room,” Linda McQuaig wrote in *It's the Crude, Dude: Greed, Gas, War and the American Way*. Turns out it's the Canadian way as well. As Toronto Centre NDP candidate, McQuaig stated a simple fact on CBC's *Power and Politics*: “a lot of people recognize that a lot of the oilsands oil may have to stay in the ground if we're going to meet our climate change targets.”

As punishment for speaking the truth, McQuaig is now the target of corporate power. Calgary Conservative MP Michelle Rempel immediately jumped on the remark, accusing McQuaig of having an “ideological aversion” to tar sands and opposing workers in the energy sector. Alberta Opposition Leader Brian Jean labeled McQuaig's remarks “anti-Alberta posturing” and called on Premier Rachel Notley to “actively repudiate this crazy idea in the strongest terms possible.” Presiding over his second recession, Harper warned that it's the NDP who would “wreck this economy.” The corporate media are calling McQuaig's remarks a “flap” that the NDP need to exert “damage control” to repair. God forbid a journalist and candidate raise in the mildest terms a basic scientific fact concerning the most pressing issue of our generation, in the hopes that an election could affect change.

Ideology vs science

McQuaig wrote *It's the Crude, Dude* in the wake of the Iraq War, to bring awareness to the dangers of climate change and the way the oil industry influences politics. Quoting a 2003 report from the Pentagon—hardly a bastion of left-wing ideology—she wrote: “There's been a tendency to regard global warming as a problem that will set in gradually, giving the world a chance to adapt and even possibly take advantage of what could be longer growing seasons.” This view of climate change may be a dangerous act of self-deception, as increasingly we are [already] facing weather-related disasters,” the report states. “Rather than decades or even centuries of gradual warming, recent evidence suggests the possibility that a more dire climate scenario may actually be unfolding.”

A decade later, Harper finally has the Iraq War he always wanted and climate change is even more of a clear and present danger—from wildfires on the west coast to record temperatures in the Middle East. But the corporate-backed Conservatives and Liberals have an ideological aversion to science, which calls for limiting climate change to 2 degrees to avoid catastrophic change. “Nearly all politicians across the world would like to develop all domestic sources of oil and gas and coal that they have and also search for new resources. What this analysis shows is that those two positions are inconsistent. Every country can't exploit all of their domestic reserves and keep to two degrees,” explained Christophe McGlade of the University College London. His report in the journal *Nature* this year showed that 85% of tar sands have to be left in the ground.

“This would seem, by any meaningful standard, to be a problem worthy of serious attention at the very highest levels. But, oddly, it's a problem that is largely unacknowledged in official quarters,” McQuaig wrote a decade ago about US politicians refusing to face reality about oil politics. The same applies to Canadian politicians: “Our wanton over-consumption of oil might be about to create a whole new kind of terror in our lives. Yet the Bush administration, which had consistently ignored and downplayed the threat of climate

change and done its best to sabotage the international Kyoto accord aimed at dealing with the problem, was not about to change horses in its ‘war on terror.’ Its defense strategy would remain fixated on shadowy men in long-flowing robes, not on ones wearing business suits and bearing large checks made out to the Republican Party.” Harper is continuing the Bush legacy—stoking Islamophobia to justify wars abroad and attacks on civil liberties at home, while fueling the climate crisis.

Anti-Alberta?

It is not “anti-Alberta” to question the tar sands; the tar sands themselves are anti- Alberta, undermining the traditional territories and the communities in what is called Alberta. As McQuaig wrote a decade ago, “Getting the oil out of the tar is a horrendous task; it involves a massive, high-tech operation that causes serious environmental damage...By any logic, then, most of that tar sands oil should be left in the ground.”

Harper has tried to undermine this logic by making people in Alberta so dependent on the tar sands that they put the profits of Big Oil ahead of their own lives. When the price of oil fell, the only solution the Conservatives offered was to slash public services to balance the budget, but Notley's election was a rejection of this blackmail. The Conservatives are trying to undo the provincial election and win the federal election—attacking Notley at the start of the campaign and now demanding she attack McQuaig.

But what we need to actively repudiate in the strongest possible terms is not a debate on the tar sands but the tar sands themselves. As Melina Laboucan-Massimo from the Lubicon Cree First Nation said at the March for Jobs, Justice and the Climate: “What I have seen is immense changes to the land, to the air, to the climate, to the water, to the people, and to the animals. Where I come from, until my generation my family was able to live sustainably off the land. And it becomes harder and harder to do that. People and animals are sick and dying. And now across the tar sands we are surrounded by operations across Northern Alberta. We have also seen immense oil spills like the one that happened near my family, just a few miles away. It was one of the biggest oil spills in Alberta's history in 2011... What we need now today, is Canada needs to accelerate the transition from destructive climate polluting sources like the tar sands and build a green, just economy that many of our communities so desperately want and need now...Even in the heart of the tar sands we can build a different kind of economy, with clean energy and green jobs, without compromising our families and our communities.”

Jobs

Harper has been silent while the economic crisis destroyed 400,000 manufacturing jobs, and stood by while the drop in oil prices led to thousands of further layoffs in the oil industry. But now the Conservatives are attacking McQuaig and the NDP for being anti-worker.

What the climate justice movement has made clear is that the choice between the environment and jobs is “fear-mongering at its worst,” in the words of Jerry Dias, president of Unifor. As the union representing thousands of workers in the oil and gas industry, Unifor is a signatory of the Solidarity Accord against the Northern Gateway pipeline and was a major participant in the recent March for Jobs, Justice and the Climate.

As the report by Blue-Green Canada makes clear, the \$1.3 billion in subsidies to the oil and gas industry could instead create 18,000 more jobs in renewable energy and energy efficiency. From the UK to South Africa, there are campaigns for a million climate jobs, to solve the economic and climate crises, and now these demands have spread to Canada. For \$4.65 billion (less than half what Harper recently gave to the military), we could create 92,000 jobs in wind, solar, geothermal and tidal power. For \$25 billion (less than half what Harper gave in corporate tax cuts) we could create a high-speed rail network could create 100,000 jobs and reduce our dependence on oil. And \$1 billion on a home and building retrofit program (the amount Harper spent attacking civil liberties at the G20 protest) could leverage \$50 billion to create a million jobs that would reduce carbon emissions.

Damage control

In order to control the damage done to the planet and its people we need to leave the oil in the soil, respect First Nations and create a million climate jobs. Unfortunately climate justice was largely absent from the first leaders debate, which instead displayed unanimity on tar sands expansion—with only minor differences on which pipelines should transport it, or where it should be refined. Both the Green Party and the NDP have advocated more domestic refining, while Mulcair supports west-east pipelines and calls for “objective reviews”—as if the increasingly dire climate science and the lived experience of Indigenous communities is not objective.

As the upcoming Toxic Tour in Aamjiwnaang First Nation makes clear, domestic refining and alternate pipelines are no solution: “In Aamjiwnaang everything is polluted air, soil, water, and people. Some of the land Industry has now made their empire on is stolen land or ongoing projects that have little to no consent. This is a prime land for industry because it is used to refine and export. The colonial fight against industry has left indigenous communities like Aamjiwnaang in a constant daily struggle.” This daily struggle by Indigenous communities most affected by the climate crisis is leading a rising climate justice movement. In April, 25,000 marched in Quebec City to Act on Climate and in July, 10,000 marched in Toronto for Jobs, Justice and the Climate.

The corporate parties and the corporate press are calling on the NDP to repudiate the slightest comment that echoes these movements. The same development happened in the BC provincial election, where NDP comments against the Kinder-Morgan pipeline were said to be the cause of their defeat. But after the election, opposition to Kinder Morgan exploded—showing the NDP's electoral loss was not because of its timid opposition but because they didn't go far enough in outlining bold alternatives. If the NDP leadership see statements against tar sands as more damaging than the tar sands themselves, they will sever themselves from the climate justice movement and provide no alternative at the ballot box.

Instead they should defend McQuaig for helping spark a real debate this election, spend the next two months repudiate in the strongest terms the Conservatives' and Liberals' ideologically-driven wrecking of the climate, and be a megaphone for the climate justice movement that is trying to control the damage and promote alternatives.

This is shared from rabble.ca

Debate winner: tar sands

It’s the media’s duty after a leadership debate to declare a winner, and here at *Socialist Worker* we take our duties seriously. After much review of the Maclean’s Leaders Debate, we can confidently write that the winner was the oil industry.

Harper of course defended all of the proposed tar sand pipeline projects and the “review process” that was rigged to give them approval. What was depressing to watch was the Green party and NDP leaders explaining the need to build better pipelines and more domestic refining.

“Objective process”

Trudeau’s opposition to Harper is that he “cannot get our exports to market because there is no public trust anymore. People don’t trust this government to actually look out for our long term interests.” Trudeau is criticizing Harper for the success of the climate justice movement in delaying every major pipeline project, and is trying to convince Bay Street—including Big Oil and the other corporate power that fund the Tories and the Liberals—that he can do a better job of undermining the movement and ramming through pipelines.

Unfortunately Mulcair made the same argument, that his criticism of the Tories wasn’t in their support of the tar sands pipeline projects, but how they went about it. “Getting our resources to market is critical. But Mr. Harper has gotten the balance wrong, he’s gutted our environmental legislation and he knows that’s hurting jobs in our resource sector, it’s hurting our economy and frankly it’s hurting Canada’s international reputation.” He went to explain that if we had an “objective” review process we could get people who oppose environmentally destructive projects to approve them.

Mulcair removed any last credibility he might have gained for opposing the Enbridge pipeline project when he said, “Opposing these pipelines in advance is just as wrong as supporting them in advance because in both cases what you need is an objective study.” He must believe that an “objective” study would disregard the opposition of First Nations’ and their rights to control their lands. He must also believe that an “objective” study would disregard the decades of climate science that shows we need to leave the oil in the soil.

Domestic refining vs climate jobs

The Green Party is not opposed to tar sands, and instead calls for more domestic refining. Similarly, Mulcair opposes the Northern Gateway and Keystone XL pipelines because they export unprocessed bitumen, but called the proposed Energy East pipeline a “win-win-win,” for the economy, environment and jobs. But Energy East would devastate the climate, continue pouring resources in the least efficient job creator (the oil industry) and continue basing the economy on the destruction of the planet.

Regardless of the destination of tar sands or where its processed, tar sands expansion continues industrial genocide against First Nations, from the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation at ground zero to the communities all along the pipeline routes. “Domestic refining,” using Canadian nationalism to continue to devastate Indigenous land, is no solution.

The way to deal with the recession and job losses is to spend public money on building clean energy sources like solar, geothermal and wind projects, not to keep expanding the oil and gas sector by building refineries. From the UK to South Africa there are campaigns for a million climate jobs, and this has spread to Canada. May seemed to be on this track early in the debate, when she explained that “We need an army of carpenters, electricians, and contractors going out to plug leaky buildings. Thirty per cent of carbon pollution comes from the energy we waste and the money we waste heating the outdoors in the winter and cooling it in summer.” She never returned to this idea, and neither did Mulcair.

Climate justice

There is a large and growing climate movement across Canada and around the world. In April 25,000 marched in Quebec City to act on climate and in July 10,000 marched for “Jobs, Justice and the Climate” in Toronto—including Unifor, which represents some of the tar sands workers. There are blockades put up by the Unist’ot’en in BC defending their land from pipelines, and there is an Anishinaabe water walk against Energy East. Over a hundred First Nations in BC have signed the Fraser River Declaration to prevent pipelines from crossing their land. All across America people have chained themselves to construction equipment to try to stop the Keystone XL pipeline.

We already have a real “objective process”: the increasingly dire warnings of climate science, and the lived experience of Indigenous peoples who bear the brunt of the climate crisis and who are leading the climate justice movement. The climate justice movement quite rightly dismisses every tar sands project, and the NDP should do the same. Siding with the Tories and their corporate backers to support pipelines and refineries while quibbling over the details will only turn off voters. The NDP in BC tried the strategy of being only midly different from the ruling party and it didn’t mobilize people to vote for them. The federal NDP runs the same risk, if they try to play it safe and if they don’t tap into the movements and the anger people have over the climate, the wars, and the economy, they risk losing the election. Or if they win on a commitment to tar sands it will be more of the same, adding to the long history of social democracy.

INTERVIEW



Working against colonialism in Vancouver

Bradley Hughes talked to Scott Clark, a Salish activist in Vancouver, who is the Executive Director of Aboriginal Life In Vancouver Enhancement – ALIVE about his work.

“It’s about assimilating non-Aboriginal people into the Aboriginal world view,” is how Scott Clark described his approach to activism and reconciliation.

ALIVE uses “a place-based strategy . . . to create avenues for Aboriginal citizens to have meaningful impacts in their communities and to negotiate their role in the urban ‘place’ on their own terms.”

Place-based strategy

Scott explained to me that a place-based strategy is the opposite of what the traditional NGO’s are doing. The traditional NGO’s work on building up a program for their intended “clients” (a term Scott detests) without involving those people. Once the funding is gone, the program disappears leaving nothing behind. Along the way, there is little or no measurement of results. In addition, as Scott points out, the location of many services for urban Aboriginals creates a “pipeline to the downtown East side,” Canada’s poorest neighbourhood.

The place-based strategy is an “empowerment model,” where people are given a chance to organize themselves in their own neighbourhoods to get the services they need for success from “pre-natal to post-secondary.”

Taking this holistic approach,

Scott points out that the “health of a community impacts the health of individuals. We have to look at the social, economic, and environmental variables that harm or help vulnerable peoples.”

A place-based approach looks at “what is here, what assets, what services, and develops a strategic approach. We identify what the needs are and go after them.” “If we can do that in Canada’s most impoverished urban area, we can do this nation wide.”

I asked Scott how this place-based strategy for building community and community services was related to the work of earlier activists like the Black Panthers. “It’s exactly like that. It goes back to the Black Panthers, to Saul Alinsky, to Marx. It’s based on the social, environmental and economic interconnectedness of healthy and unhealthy communities.”

Midway through our interview at a coffee shop on Commercial Drive, Scott recognized a woman passing by. She shows the success of ALIVE’s approach. A few years ago, they were able to get her help with childcare and housing. She got involved in the Ray-Cam Co-operative Centre and ALIVE. She was able to find work and move out of the downtown east side and enroll in post-secondary education. However, in her new neighbourhood she can’t afford the community services offered at the local community centre where children “play if you can pay.” There is a subsidy program for the centre’s services, but they don’t publicize it.

Scott told me about another success of this strategy. A developer was planning on building an apartment building across the street from the Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre. Activists from ALIVE and the community centre organized a town hall meeting with the developer and got 150 people out to it. Through the discussion, they got the plans changed from single room occupancy units to family units. They also got an agreement to employ 150 people from the neighbourhood, to have the developer purchase local goods and services, and employ local artists. This way some of the money stays in the neighbourhood.

On the subject of reconciliation Scott believes that “people feel so isolated and powerless. They don’t know how to begin to engage in their communities...I look at reconciliation as a big concept, we all can do something in a coffee shop, in the business improvement associations, in our community centres, in transit and so on.”

Scott couples revolutionary methods with clear goals in the fight against the wreckage racism, colonialism and neoliberalism produces. For every 10 Aboriginal people who are pushed out of the education system, if he can help two find the support they need to make it to university, “then I will have done my job.” “My spot in this moment of struggle: I can’t change Canada, this province or this city, but I might be able to change something in my community”

What we wear: a woman’s right to choose

by Chantal Sundaram

Despite several decades since the women’s liberation movement raised the notion that women should have control over our bodies and what we choose to wear on them, we live in a society just as obsessed with regulating what women wear.

Women are blamed for the sexualisation of their body if they choose to reveal too much. Or they are blamed for blindly accepting “barbaric” beliefs if they choose to wear the hijab or niqab. You’re either covering too much or not enough: either way, women are robbed of the fact that our bodies are our own.

In Waterloo on August 1, around 300 people rallied at a protest called “Bare With Us” with signs reading “Nudity isn’t sexual” and “They’re boobs, not bombs” to support the Mohammed sisters—three young women who were stopped by Kitchener police for riding bikes home topless on a hot summer night. One of them is Juno-nominated Alysha Brilla (her stage name), and she appeared at the rally side by side with a topless Gwen Jacob—who as a 19-year university student in 1991 overturned a an “indecentcy” conviction against her

for going topless, making toplessness legal.

At the time, the debate was about “indecentcy,” and feminists, socialists and others on the left defended the right of women to challenge being held to a different standard of decency than men. At the same time, there was also a critique of the purely legal right, abstracted from the systemic sexualization of women’s breasts, that prevents most women from exercising it for fear of harassment—particularly women who are already most vulnerable to harassment and sexual violence, including racialized, queer and disabled women.

Rape culture

The timing of the recent topless protest in Kitchener-Waterloo raises two issues. The ongoing “war on terror,” and attack on cultures that sexualize the uncovering of hair like the uncovering of breasts, is one. But there is another: the Ghomeshi, Cosby, and Dalhousie Dentistry scandals, and the growing challenge to rape culture.

Some have suggested that women and men should show more modesty in an effort to combat sexual violence. But such arguments harken back to the

impetus for the “Slut Walk” movement, which began in 2011 after a Toronto Police officer suggested that “women should avoid dressing like sluts” as a precaution against sexual assault.

It’s not about decency

The issue is not “decency” but the systemic sexual oppression of women that relies on the role of women in the home and in procreation.

Because the female body and its role in procreation and domestic care has not been fully liberated from being defined in that way, our capitalist society continues to assign it a fundamentally sexualized role. And because the market turns everything into a commodity, including sexuality, and because our relationship to sexuality is distorted by capitalist society, the female body remains a battleground.

The decision of what to cover and what not to cover can only be a truly free one when women are free of the much broader constraints over the role ascribed to gender in society. In the meantime, the choice to go topless or to wear the hijab or niqab, even if we don’t all feel comfortable doing so, must be respected.

REVIEWS



Indigenous resurgence and Marxism

BOOK

Red Skin, White Masks
Written by Glen Sean Coulthard
Reviewed by Jesse McLaren

Twenty-five years since resistance at Kanesatake, and in the midst of Truth and Reconciliation recommendations and the ongoing Idle No More movement, Glen Sean Coulthard’s book is a must read.

The recent release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report has highlighted how recognition and reconciliation dominate the discussion of Indigenous politics. But as Coulthard explains, this new tactic by the Canadian state—a response to waves of Indigenous resistance—is meant to mask an old strategy.

The 1969 White Paper aimed to forcibly assimilate Indigenous peoples, but was defeated by the Red Power movement. Through Section 35(1), the 1982 Constitution recognized Aboriginal and treaty rights on paper but made little difference on the ground, and the resulting frustration culminated in the defeat of the Meech Lake accord and resistance at Kanesatake in 1990. In response the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples made a series of recommendations that have since been ignored, and the Harper government “apologized” for residential schools while continuing to attack Indigenous rights—sparking Idle No More, the latest cycle of Indigenous struggle.

Coulthard critically engages Marx in two ways. First he uses his theory of “primitive accumulation” to explain the twin processes of colonization (dispossession and proletarianization) while focusing on the experience of Indigenous communities. By stressing Indigenous peoples’ experience of dispossession, Coulthard shows that

primitive accumulation is a process that is ongoing but not necessarily violent. This insight challenges the economic reductionism that has dominated academic Marxism (picked up from Stalinism), and also questions the past four decades of land claims.

Coulthard also draws on Marx’s concept of “mode of production” to highlight the Indigenous understanding of culture. As well as debunking pseudo-Marxist claims that cultural demands are divisive or reactionary, the history of his own Dene Nation’s struggle for self-determination shows that it was capital’s drive to accumulate that de-coupled cultural demands from social, economic and political transformation:

Reconciliation vs resistance

Whereas truth and reconciliation initiatives historically emerged from countries that went through a formal transition—like Apartheid to liberal democracy in South Africa—no such transition has taken place in Canada. As Coulthard explains, exercises in “reconciliation” in the Canadian context serve to ideologically manufacture a transition: characterizing residential schools as “sad events” firmly in the past, rather than part of an ongoing process of colonization. As a result Indigenous people become the object of repair rather than the colonial relationship.

This pacifying discourse attempts to discipline Indigenous resistance by labeling anger and resentment as negative emotions about “the past” instead of critical consciousness in the present.

Coulthard concludes with a call for cultural self-affirmation and Indigenous resurgence, critically assessing Fanon’s writings on the role

of self-recognition in anti-colonial struggles and connecting them to contemporary Indigenous scholars—Mohawk political scientist Taiaiake Alfred and Anishinaabe feminist Leanne Simpson. After reviewing the emergence of Idle No More, which has exposed the failure of the tactic of recognition and reconciliation, Coulthard concludes with five theses on Indigenous resurgence and decolonization.

He defends direct action not only for its immediate effect—blocking the state from entering, and capital from leaving Indigenous communities—but also as a method to loosen internalized colonialism and prefigure a renewed relationship between Indigenous peoples and their land. He exposes gentrification as a new wave of dispossession of urban Indigenous populations, and stresses gender justice within decolonization. And he calls for moving beyond capitalism and the nation state, along with an openness to non-Indigenous allies.

Red Skin, White Masks brings to mind the writings of Indigenous Marxist Howard Adams, a leading activist and theorist of the Red Power movement. Contrary to the academic Marxists and left-materialists Coulthard challenges for subordinating anti-oppression and national liberation struggles to economics, Adams pointed to the potential of intertwining Indigenous radical nationalism with a class struggle against capitalism—from the “Riel rebellion” to the Red Power movement.

As part of the latest wave of resistance, Coulthard has made an important contribution to Indigenous resurgence and contemporary Marxism, whose intertwining is critical for our time.

I have already posted Le Blanc’s “What to do/What not to do” tactical outline for the emerging Neo-Marxist groups. Standpoint politics are particularly emphasized – it’s possible to maintain one’s own standpoint (e.g. Neo-Marxism) while still being able to interact and act with other radical groups.

If nothing else, Unfinished Leninism will make you run for the classics; I re-read *The State and Revolution* for the third time, and the fresh approach that Le Blanc provides created new viewpoints and interpretations of work with which that I was already richly familiar. Furthermore, it dragged these Leninist works out of the grave and into the present, making them dynamic handbooks rather than curios from the past.

*This is shared from
<http://betterreadthandead.com>*

LEFT JAB

John Bell

Thin soup from the NDP kitchen

While Tom Mulcair’s NDP is holding on to its tenuous lead in the pre-election polls, their campaign is not exactly setting the nation on fire.

Increased support seems due to growing dislike and distrust of Stephen Harper’s Tories more than any great enthusiasm for Mulcair and his policies. That the disaffection for Harper has swung behind Mulcair rather than Justin Trudeau’s Liberals is a result of the one, clear, courageous stand taken by the NDP: to vote against Bill C-51 and to promise to repeal it if elected.

Thanks to that strategic error by Trudeau’s braintrust, subsequent Liberal attempts to outflank the NDP to the left have not found much traction. His promise to raise taxes on the wealthiest 1% would seem to custom-made for the NDP platform, but Mulcair instead promised to keep corporate taxes low. “We want to make sure that the Canadian tax rate for our large corporations remains below the US combined rate and we’re going to continue to work on that,” Mulcair told reporters.

Despite a couple of positive promises—raising the minimum wage for federally mandated employees, decriminalizing (not legalizing) marijuana, starting a national day-care program—Mulcair’s campaign seems more concerned with calming jittery right-wing voters than with attracting new, young or disaffected ones. His disappointing statements on energy and resource extraction have been dealt with elsewhere.

Worryingly, the NDP leadership has turfed several quality candidates because of their public support for human rights in Palestine.

These decisions suggest that—despite opposition to the specifics of Bill C51—an NDP government would continue Canada’s recent history of militarism and “national security” hysteria.

Finally, when confronted with past examples of his praise for Margaret Thatcher’s free market policies, Mulcair doubled down. “A government should never pretend it can replace the private market. It does not work,” Mulcair said in 2001. “It didn’t work in England. Up until Thatcher’s time, that’s what they tried, the government stuck its nose everywhere.”

Now he says: “My No. 1 priority is to get good services to the public. That hasn’t changed and that’s what that statement was about.”

As if Thatcherism was about improving service! It was about privatization, union-busting, and imposing increasing austerity on working people. The “New Labour” direction epitomized by Tony Blair adopted the “free market” mantra and transformed the British Labour Party into something barely distinguishable from the Tories.

Wanted: more Corbyn, less Blair

This is the direction a Mulcair government would want to take. But timing is everything. Even while those at the top of the NDP want to emulate “New Labour,” there is a rousing, growing movement to restore the British Labour Party to its social

democratic roots—sparked by the leadership campaign of Jeremy Corbyn.

Corbyn is a long-serving Labour MP who has remained staunchly on the left, opposing his own party’s positions on war and austerity and using his platform to regularly aid those building grass-roots movements. Corbyn was allowed into the race to elect a new Labour Party leader literally at the last second, receiving nominations from a number of sitting MPs who don’t support him but were pressured to do so by local party members. They and the party leadership were confident that he represented only a tiny fraction of the membership, and could be largely ignored. They were wrong.

Corbyn has brought opposition to austerity and privatization into the mainstream. He says he will reverse the cuts to the health care system; will reverse privatization of the post office and rail systems; will scrap tuition fees and restore grants for a national education plan. He has called for an end to attacks on welfare and for restoration of state support for affordable housing. He promises to reverse Tory cuts to social support for people with disabilities.

His campaign has turned into a movement. Rallies became mass meetings. The largest venues routinely turn away hundreds. At one rally Corbyn stood atop a fire truck to address hundreds who had been unable to enter a hall. Thousands of people are joining the Labour Party to support him. Many are young people, but he is also re-invigorating older party members who had opposed Blairism.

Predictably, the Labour Party bureaucracy is freaking out. They are unleashing the worst kind of red baiting. They are moving to revoke the voting privileges of Corbyn supporters, not just new ones but also some who have been members for decades. Some Labour MPs have stated they would refuse to serve in a Corbyn-led government.

As a socialist I find this a joy to behold. The decades old consensus that there is no alternative to cuts and austerity is being shaken to its core. I’m also aware that Corbyn’s success—polls show he would stand a good chance of becoming Prime Minister—pose huge problems and debates.

Pat Stack, a comrade from Britain and author of a pamphlet entitled *Can Socialism Come Through Parliament?* (spoiler alert: the answer is no), writes: “Corbyn’s campaign is offering us all hope, and an opportunity to make socialist ideas seem relevant and real, and can pave the way to the more complex debate of how we actually achieve these aims.” Compare that excitement of a real movement for change with Mulcair.

Don’t get me wrong, I’ll be voting NDP and using what opportunities the election affords to raise arguments about the viability of socialist ideas and tactics. But I’ll do so while noting the thin soup coming from Mulcair’s kitchen. And I’ll do so hoping a Corbyn-style movement from the NDPs rank-and-file will light a fire under his ass, should he become PM.

WHERE WE STAND

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

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

Socialism and workers' power
Any alternative to capitalism must involve replacing the system from the bottom up through radical collective action. Central to that struggle is the workplace, where capitalism reaps its profits off our backs. Capitalist monopolies control the earth's resources, but workers everywhere actually create the wealth. A new socialist society can only be constructed when workers collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution to satisfy human needs, not corporate profits—to respect the environment, not pollute and destroy it.

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

Canada, Quebec, Indigenous Peoples
Canada is not a "colony" of the United States, but an imperialist country in its own right that participates in the exploitation of much of the world. The Canadian state was founded through the repression of Indigenous peoples and the people of Quebec. We support the struggles for self-determination of Quebec and Indigenous peoples up to and including the right to independence. In particular, we recognize Indigenous peoples' original and primary right to decide their fate and that of their lands, heritage, and traditions. Socialists in Quebec, and in all oppressed nations, work to give the struggle against national oppression an internationalist and working class content.

Internationalism
The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We oppose everything that turns workers from one country against those from other countries. We support all genuine national liberation movements. The 1917 revolution in Russia was an inspiration for the oppressed everywhere. But it was defeated when workers' revolutions elsewhere were defeated. A Stalinist counter-revolution, which killed millions, created a new form of capitalist exploitation based on state ownership and control. In Eastern Europe, China and other countries, a similar system was later established by Stalinist, not socialist, parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

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

Reform and revolution
Every day, there are battles between exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed, to reform the system—to improve living conditions. These struggles are crucial in the fight for a new world. To further these struggles, we work within the trade unions and orient to building a rank and file movement that strengthens workers' unity and solidarity. But the fight for reforms will not, in itself, bring about fundamental social change. The present system cannot be fixed or reformed as the NDP and many trade union leaders say. Nor can the system regulate itself to prevent environmental destruction and climate injustice. It has to be overthrown. That will require the mass action of workers themselves.

The Revolutionary Party
To achieve socialism the leading activists in the working class have to be organized into a revolutionary socialist party. The party must be a party of action, and it must be democratic. We are an organization of activists committed to helping in the construction of such a party through ongoing activity in the mass organizations of the working class and in the daily struggles of workers and the oppressed. If these ideas make sense to you, help us in this project and join the International Socialists.



Activist calendar
movement events

TOXIC TOUR 2015
september 4 & 5
Sept 4: Opening Feast 5PM
@ Maawn Doosh Gumig Youth & Community Centre 1972 Virgil Avenue

SPEAKERS TO BE ANNOUNCED
Sept 5: WALK 10AM
@ AAMJIWNAANG FIRST NATION

SARNIA, ON
#ToxicTour #FrontLineExperience
#AamjiwnaangSolidarity #IdleNoMore
@TakeActionASAP @ASAP
@TakeActionASAP
WALK TOGETHER IN SOLIDARITY
AGAINST CANADA'S TOXIC CHEMICAL VALLEY
WWW.AAMJIWNAANGSOLIDARITY.COM

A FUNDRAISER FOR THE UNISTOT'EN CAMP HEALING CENTER
FRONTLINES
PIPELINES
THURSDAY SEPT 10TH | 7 PM | WISE HALL
1882 Adanac Street Unceded Musqueam, Skwxwú'mesh, & Tsil'it Waututh Territories

Silent art auction
All Indigenous, Black & POC lineup in alliance with Unist'ot'en Camp & Indigenous liberation.

TICKETS
frontlines.bpt.me

International Socialist events

RAGE AGAINST THE SYSTEM
a conference of resistance and revolution
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26
TORONTO: University of Toronto, Sid Smith Hall, 100 St. George St.
VANCOUVER: Langara College, Room C509, 100 W 49th Ave

More info and registration at
www.RageAgainstTheSystem.ca

Socialist Worker
IDEAS FOR THE STRUGGLE

Socialist Worker is an anticapitalist paper that seeks to be a resource in the struggle to change the world – from the bottom up.

Not only do we cover the struggles that mainstream media silences, we also want to build links and develop ideas and analysis needed to confront a system in crisis.

Unlike most publications, Socialist Worker is not supported by the 1% – the millionaires and billionaires who fund the corporate media. Instead, we completely rely on donations from our readers and supporters to continue to appear each month.

Socialist Worker and Socialist.ca are produced and distributed entirely by volunteers and contain no advertising.

If you support an independent anti-capitalist alternative to the mainstream media – from the perspective of the exploited and oppressed of this world – please donate today.

Your contribution will make all the difference in helping to expand our coverage and reach.

Donation of \$60 or more: receive a subscription to Socialist Worker

Donation of \$180 or more: receive a subscription to the monthly Socialist Review

Donations of \$360 or more: receive a subscription to International Socialism Journal

To donate visit
www.socialist.ca/donate or send a cheque to
Socialist Worker Fighting Fund
PO Box 339, Station E, Toronto ON

Help us raise \$15,000
☒ **Yes! I would like to make a pledge to the Socialist Worker Fighting Fund**

RESISTANCE PRESS BOOK ROOM
ideas for struggle

OPEN SATURDAYS, 12-3pm
427 Bloor Street West, suite 202, Toronto ; 416-972-6391; www.facebook.com/resistancepress

SYSTEM CHANGE NOT CLIMATE CHANGE
Abortion and the struggle for reproductive justice
ISLAMOPHOBIA: What is it and how to fight it
ECONOMIC CRISIS, WAR & RESISTANCE
Students Austerity & Resistance
A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE WORLD

PUBLIC SERVICES

by CATHERINE GENDRON

A grassroots campaign, made up of labour and community groups, has come together in Saskatchewan, with a call for people to protect and take back our public services.

The campaign is called Own It!. This statement attracts peoples’ attention, and drives hard at what matters; the fact that Saskatchewan belongs to everyone. Not business, not public-private partnerships, but everyone.

Public services

Saskatchewan is known for its ties to the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), a political party that aimed to ensure public ownership of the economy. Saskatchewan still maintains public ownership over its telecommunications (SaskTel), car insurance (SGI), and hydro (SaskPower), to name a few.

The comparisons in pricing with privatized businesses that offer the same services are stark. For example, big cell phone companies like Bell, Rogers and Telus offer prices are half (or less) of what is offered in Ontario.

Privatization

The Own It! campaign is all about talking to people, and listening for what matters to them. Almost always, people talk about how they do not want to leave their kids worse off than they are (alas, we’re already there). They don’t want to see corners cut in our basic needs like health and education either.

With privatization, negative affects are sure to occur. Businesses would not invest or purchase something unless they know they can make a profit—and they achieve this by cutting wages, casting out good unionized jobs, putting safety measures in jeopardy, increasing user fees and weakening quality standards.

A prime example would be the recent privatization of laundry services within hospitals. Previously under control by the public, this service was contracted out to a private company in Alberta, named K-Bro Linens. They cut 300 good paying jobs, and severely cut the wages of those who remain. Horrifyingly, linens are coming back blood-stained, and some have included needles in them.

Conservative governments tend to favour “small government” when it comes to public services (but not when it comes to the police or military), allowing investments into public services to crumble. Yet privatizing MRI’s won’t work: in privatized MRI clinics in Alberta, wait times are three times as long as they are in Saskatchewan.

The answer is not to privatize, it is to invest and strengthen our public services. Supporting the Own it! campaign means supporting our responsibility to look out for each other. It also ensures the people have control in how their basic services are run. Ownership is not for business, it’s for us.

To join the campaign visit ownyoursaskatchewan.ca.

BLACK LIVES MATTER



by VALERIE LANNON

“Every single day, Black bodies in this city face violence—whether it’s carding, whether it’s surveillance, whether it’s physical violence, whether it’s death. This is life and death for us, and we are here to let you know and to put you on watch that we will take action, and that Black Lives Matter.”

This was the statement by one of the Black Lives Matter-Toronto organizers at the July 16 meeting of the Toronto Police Services Board, as part of demands for action around the police killing of Andrew Loku in a building for those living with mental health issues.

Andrew Loku

On July 5 police went to the home of Andrew Loku, a refugee from South Sudan living in an apartment complex for people with mental health issues. Less than a minute after arriving on scene, police killed him.

Working with the family and friends of Andrew Loku, Black Lives Matter-Toronto delivered the following demands to Toronto Mayor John Tory and Toronto police chief Mark Saunders:

1. The immediate release of the name(s) of the officers that Killed Andrew Loku.
2. Charges to be laid against the officers who killed Mr. Loku.
3. The immediate and public release of any video footage from the apartment complex where Andrew Loku was murdered.
4. A public apology from the Mayor, Chief of Police and the Toronto 5. Police Department to the family and broader community.
6. The funeral of

Andrew Loku to be funded completely by the City of Toronto.

7. Monetary compensation for the family of Andrew Loku for the damages caused by the Toronto Police department.

8. The adoption of all recommendations made by the African Canadian Legal Clinic: A systemic inquiry by the Office of the Independent Police Review Director to guage whether there has been adequate disciplinary action taken against officers who use force against black people living with mental health issues, body cameras to be worn by all police officers, the release of data on number of SIU cases involving racialized people, and racialized people living with mental health issues, an inquiry by the Ontario Human Rights Commission into the disproportionate use of force used against black people with mental health challenges.

9. The adoption of the 84 recommendations in the 2014 report by Frank Iacobucci, aimed at reducing fatal encounters with people in emotional distress.

The Iacobucci report is a product of the outrage to police killing 18-year old Sammy Yatim on a streetcar last year.

Jermaine Carby

This comes at the same time as the “Special Investigations Unit” has cleared police for their murder of Jermaine Carby. On September 24, 2014 Peel police pulled over the vehicle claiming the licence plate was obscured, even though footage shows it was clearly visible;

asked Carby to identify himself even though he was the passenger and not the driver; and shot him multiple times, claiming he was holding a knife. But as Carby’s cousin, LaTanya Grant, one of the family spokespersons for the campaign for justice, explained, “There was no knife found on the scene. Jermaine Carby’s prints were not found on the knife, just his DNA. The knife was given over to the SIU several hours after the event...that alone just shows me that there was no knife.”

The SIU has refused to give the name of the vehicle’s driver to Carby’s family, refused to release the name of the officer who shot Carby to death, and refused to release the name of the officer who produced the knife. The complete inability of police to safely and peacefully interact with people of colour speaks to both their racism and professional incompetence.

Black Lives Matter

On the evening of July 27, Black Lives Matter-Toronto organized a rally near where Andrew Loku was killed, demanding justice for him, Jermaine Carby and all other Black people brutalized by the Toronto police.

Hundreds joined the rally, which then marched to Allen Road (a major expressway in Toronto) and occupied it for two hours, stopping traffic and getting Mayor John Tory on the phone to promise a meeting.

The organizing continues. No justice, no peace, no racist police!

ordinary Iraqi people. The film sympathetically gives voice to Jeremy Brockway’s change from a confident Marine who wanted college benefits and “to defend freedom,” to an ex-soldier struggling to survive PTSD and disillusioned with US foreign policy in Iraq.

What can you do to help? This election, ask Liberal candidates whether they will join the NDP and Greens who are committed to creating a provision to allow U.S. resisters to stay in Canada.

US, and of their arrival in Canada.

The Path of Glory (www.presstvdoc.com) is 50 minutes in length and was made by Iranian filmmakers. It begins with horrific scenes of the initial siege of Baghdad and then tells the separate stories of resisters Kim Rivera and Jeremy Brockway and their families.

Kim Rivera left the US in 2007 following a tour of duty in Iraq. During her deployment there, Kim concluded that she could no longer be a party to what the military was doing to

STICKING WITH THE UNION

Carolyn Egan

Lessons of the Crown strike

The Crown strike is over after 22 long months and the workers fought til the very last. Only two crossed the line out of 120 and the strikers understood that they were fighting not only for themselves but for every worker in this country.

The vote was close: 53 to 45. Crown, a vicious employer, had targeted 34 activists who they had refused to take back, and were demanding that all the scabs keep their jobs. Its intent was to break the union because the workers fought back.

In the end the tentative agreement contained a lot of concessions including wage cuts, and lost both the defined benefit pension plan and “30 and out” pension eligibility. It was a bitter pill to swallow, but all the strikers who choose have their jobs back and the scabs will be gone. After almost two years on the line workers bit the bullet and accepted the agreement with no strikers left behind.

They were clearly split on the contract but were very comradely to each other even though they voted differently in the end. Some in the leadership of the Steelworkers wanted to end it long ago, which could have led to a total defeat.

Campaign

In the fall of 2013 the Steelworker Toronto Area Council took a bus load of members including strikers to the US picketing a Crown Plant in Massachusetts, Crown headquarters in Philadelphia and a director’s company in Allentown, Pa. The strikers maintained this type of activity throughout the strike. In many ways the membership ran the strike on the ground. There were committees set up to keep the line going at the plant, do picketing at operations that used the scab cans, do solidarity work in the US and other areas of Canada. Workers who never took part in union activities in the past became activists through the strike.

There was a “bottles not cans campaign” with beer stores throughout the province being leafleted by workers from many communities. But broader solidarity in the labour movement was slow to build until about six months ago when the Toronto and York Region Labour Council called on trade unions to step up the solidarity. Other unions set up pickets three days a week at the Minister of Labour’s office for months. The strikers occupied and picketed Liberal MPP’s constituency offices. More momentum was built and a lot of pressure was put on the company and the Liberal government.

There was also inter-

national solidarity with strikers visiting a plant in Turkey to show solidarity with Turkish workers who had organized their workplace. That support was reciprocated in actions by those workers. Unite, a major union in the United Kingdom and Ireland, held demonstrations against Crown plants in the UK. This gave confidence to the workers in Toronto that they were not alone.

Lessons

There is much to be learned about the need for solidarity from the start, showing that it is not just 120 workers who are facing off against the employer but the entire union movement. The USW leadership has to understand, as do all leaders, that these battles need the active support of every union. It is the work on the ground that will make the difference and an inability to move quickly can lead to disaster. This is critical to the battles ahead.

There will undoubtedly be more strikes ahead, because the austerity agenda that corporations and governments around the world are imposing on workers and the poor is not stopping. Building rank-and-file strength on the ground is the key to any fight back. It is the workers themselves who are facing the battles and have so much to loose.

The attacks on both public and private sector workers are unrelenting, but when workers show up on each others strike lines they build connections that aren’t soon forgotten. The workers at Crown know they create the wealth that the stockholders benefit from and that pays the \$12 million yearly salary of the CEO. They understand the battle going on between the 99% and 1% in this country and around the world, and they fought for themselves and their class.

The rank-and-file was very active in this fight, more so then in most strikes today, and for 22 long months. Many of the strikers have become activists and are committed to supporting workplace struggles where ever they may occur. They have given their heart felt thanks to those fellow workers who supported them though thick and thin. They are going to remain active in the Toronto and York Region Labour Council and the Steelworker Toronto Area Council.

It was a tough battle with significant losses. Many lessons have been learned for the battles that are sure to come. The workers are going back with their heads held high knowing that they fought back and fully understanding the meaning of solidarity.

SocialistWorker

FIGHT FOR \$15

by Pam Frache

There is a growing consensus across Canada -- and indeed across North America -- that all workers deserve at least \$15 an hour.

So popular is the notion of a \$15 minimum wage that the matter is now a key issue in the federal election.

Tellingly, opponents of a federal \$15 minimum wage are not discussing whether low-income workers deserve a raise. Nor are they debating the merits of \$15 an hour. Instead, they are trying to focus the debate on who's going to get it.

For proponents of a \$15 minimum wage, this in itself is a victory. It shows that a \$15 minimum wage has become such a common sense notion that not many politicians are confident to tell voters that low-income workers don't deserve to earn wages that bring them above the poverty line.

Of course, it is true the federal government can only make laws that apply to federally regulated workers. This isn't the choice of any political party. This is the reality of Canada's legal system. And it's a reality that may be disappointing for the millions of us across Canada who earn less than \$15 an hour and whose hourly income falls well below the poverty line, even when we work full-time.

But if a political party genuinely cares about raising the wages of low-income workers then it is their responsibility to use every available policy lever at their disposal from establishing a decent federal minimum wage to restoring the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act.

This is precisely why a \$15 federal minimum wage



is not insignificant, as some have claimed

In fact, achieving such a standard would be a crucial step toward winning a \$15 minimum wage for every worker, in every province in Canada. Here's why:

Federal \$15/hr

First, a \$15 federal minimum wage would directly improve the wages of over 135,000 federally regulated workers who earn less than \$15 an hour. Such workers include bank tellers who earn poverty-level wages (the average wage of bank tellers is about \$13.80), while banks make billions in profit year after year.

Such workers would also include airline workers, transportation workers,

railway workers and many other trans-Canada employees where workers are responsible for the health and safety of passengers and communities and for the wellbeing of the environment and natural resources. Such workers will have more disposable income and, as customers, will help stimulate economic activity that will in turn create more jobs.

Second, raising wages for low-income workers in one sector of the economy helps raise wages in other sectors. When low-income workers have better employment opportunities, they may leave one low-wage job for another that pays higher wages. Employers may then choose to pay higher

wages in order to keep their employees. In this way, a \$15 federal minimum wage will indirectly help thousands of other workers including those already earning \$15 hourly.

Third, federally regulated workers comprise a greater proportion of the population in some provinces than in others, which means the effects elaborated above will have an even greater, positive impact on the provincial economy.

Perhaps most importantly, a government elected on a platform of enacting a \$15 minimum wage federally will reflect a consensus among voters across Canada and Quebec that workers deserve at least \$15 an hour. Such a consensus will

make it easier for voters to persuade provincial governments to implement a \$15 minimum wage in their respective province.

The minimum wage debate is a litmus test for a political party's commitment to decent work, whether we are talking about banks, pipeline companies, or telecommunications firms. In this context, the attempt to discredit the \$15 federal minimum wage proposal by railing against the constitutional arrangements of Canada (over which no political party has control) is clearly a red herring.

NDP

Ultimately, the precise number of federally-regulated workers who would benefit

from a \$15 minimum wage is irrelevant, and debating the proposal on those terms privileges economic bean-counters while alienating the very people with a stake in the outcome of the debate.

Mulcair should agree that federal laws are inadequate and call on the provinces to immediately implement an annually indexed, \$15 minimum wage. Given the recent victory of the NDP in Alberta and its promise to implement a provincial \$15 minimum wage (faster than its federal counterparts) such a statement could be electric for the movements, and bolster the electoral fortunes of the NDP both federally and provincially.

But doing so would also put a spotlight on the failures of other provincial NDP governments to bring the minimum wage above the poverty line when in office. Indeed, in Manitoba, where the NDP currently governs, there is an awkward silence on this issue. Even in Ontario, the NDP has yet to correct its shameful decision during last year's provincial election to refuse supporting the \$14/hr minimum wage campaign.

This isn't to detract from the importance of the NDP's commitment for a federal \$15 minimum wage. Even a partial victory on this front would send a sorely needed message to workers across Canada that it is possible to fight for better wages and win. But we must never forget that it is workers' collective action from below that creates conditions for change and we don't have to accept the parameters set out by our elected representatives, no matter who they are.

For more information visit: 15andFairness.org and WorkersActionCentre.org

Never miss an issue.

Mail in this form with a cheque or money order made payable to "Socialist Worker". Or complete the form online at socialist.ca/subscribe

Prices per year (CAD dollars):
Regular subscription: \$30
U.S.: \$50
Other international: \$60



Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Mail to: Socialist Worker, PO Box 339
Station E, Toronto, ON Canada, M6H 4E3
Website: www.socialist.ca / E-mail: reports@socialist.ca

RAGE AGAINST THE SYSTEM

a conference of resistance and revolution

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26

TORONTO: University of Toronto, Sid Smith Hall, 100 St. George St.
VANCOUVER: Langara College, Room C509, 100 W 49th Ave

More info and registration at
www.RageAgainstTheSystem.ca