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Facts & figures

100
Percentage of electricity we could have from renewable resources if we make the climate justice leap

10,000
Number of Syrian refugees the NDP want to let in this year, compared with 25,000 called for by the Liberals

400,000
Number of times Toronto police carded people in 2012, of which 24 per cent were Black people (who are 8.4 per cent of the population)

\$350 million
Annual revenue that could be generated by ending federal oil/gas subsidies

\$2 billion
Annual revenue that could be generated by ending tax havens for the rich

\$3.5 billion
Annual revenue that could be generated by creating a new tax bracket on those earning more than \$250,000

\$6 billion
Annual revenue that could be raised by restoring the corporate tax rate to what it was when Harper took office

\$15 billion
Amount of weapons Canada has sold to Saudi Arabia, which has executed 175 people this year and bombed Yemen

In their own words

“We will make the wealthiest pay more in taxes... And we will stop sending cheques to millionaires just because they have children.”
—Justin Trudeau, pretending that his corporate party will challenge the 1%

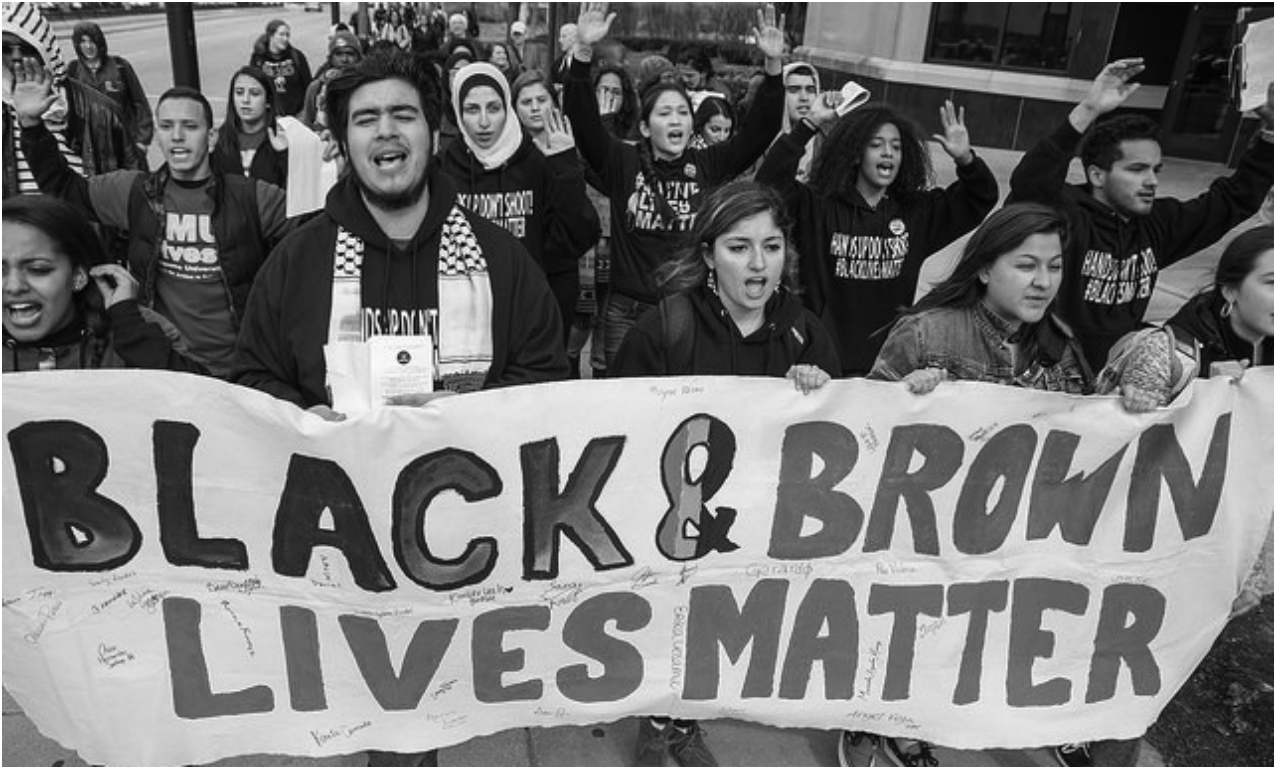
“We could live in a country powered entirely by truly just renewable energy, woven together by accessible public transit, in which the jobs and opportunities of this transition are designed to systematically eliminate racial and gender inequality.”
—The Leap Manifesto

“Why don’t they actually mind their own business and let me dress up in a way in which I want to?”
—Zunera Ishaq, who challenged Harper’s racist niqab ban, asks why the Tories are scapegoating her

“Stop the war.”
—Tima Kurdi, aunt of the Syrian boy Alan Kurdi who drowned, explains how to stop the refugee crisis

“We have been quite systematically re-orienting our immigration over the last several years to make it more focused on economic needs and focused on more long-term labour market needs.”
—Harper explaining to the Wall Street journal how the state uses borders to benefit the 1%

“Our military needs a new jet. It’s obvious we need a new fighter”
—NDP leader Tom Mulcair defending fighter jets and allowing Justin Trudeau to sound more progressive



Stop racist carding

by DEKA OMAR

Although, we often like to think of Canada as a paragon of inclusion and tolerance while scoffing at the US for its lack of racial harmony, it seems that our sanctimonious attitude about race has for too long swept under the carpet.
When discussions pertaining to race arise in this country, we are quick to remind the world and ourselves that race riots, police brutality and the mass incarceration of minorities are not “a thing” in Canada. This adherence to a Canadian national myth steeped in self-glorification is blurring the lines between fantasy and reality.

In our haste to declare our society multicultural and tolerant, we ignore Canada’s history of colonization and slavery, the appalling treatment of Canada’s Aboriginal population and the systemic discrimination found at every level of Canadian society.

Systemic racism, abject poverty, lack of opportunity, social isolation and violence are part and parcel of the Canadian underbelly. The present Canadian political climate — both at a Federal and provincial level — has been particularly instrumental in facilitating the adoption of policies that target and criminalize Aboriginal

peoples, Muslims, racialized Canadians and low-income communities.

While Bill-C51 garnered much attention in the media and has triggered many discussions, pernicious provincial policies such as carding have gone unnoticed by many Canadians.

Carding
Ontario, under the leadership of Premier Wynne’s Liberal government is seeking to introduce province-wide regulations on carding. Carding, or “street checks,” refers to the police practice of stopping and checking the identification of people who are not suspected of a crime, and imputing the gathered personal information into a police database. The people who get carded can then end up with records susceptible of coming up in background checks.

For many of its opponents, this police practice is reminiscent of New York’s infamous Stop and Frisk program, which was later deemed unconstitutional and abolished.

In fact, Ontario’s Ombudsman Andre Marin has called carding and illegal measure stating, “Whatever benefit the police get out of it is overwhelmed by the

breach of individual liberty involved in carding.”

Carding has long been criticized for being an outlet that facilitates and legitimizes racial profiling in policing. According to the Ottawa Police Service own data, Black and Middle Eastern men are overrepresented in the overall cases of carding from 2011 to 2014. In a city where Blacks make up only 5.7 per cent of the population and those of Middle Eastern ancestry less than 5 per cent, they represent respectively 20 per cent and 14 per cent of those being carded.

Yet, when given the chance to question the Ottawa Police chief about these findings the civilian board that oversees the Ottawa Police Service chose to not ask a single question on this matter, approving instead the force’s review of street checks in an attempt to develop guidelines to regulate the practice.

Past
The advent of policies such as carding might seem like a worrying new trend in Ontarian politics. Sadly, nothing could be further from the truth.

The Race Relations and Policing Task Force appointed by the Solicitor General of Ontario in 1989

revealed in its report the widespread belief amongst visible minorities of not being fairly policed. In 1992 Stephen Lewis’ Report to the Premier on Racism in Ontario — especially on the issue of police and visible minority relations— determined that visible minorities, particularly African Canadians, experienced extensive discrimination in policing and the criminal justice system.

Far from being a shocking aberration in the Canadian landscape, carding is just the latest example of scores of racist and discriminatory policies that have relentlessly targeted minorities in this country.

Resistance
But there is growing awareness and resistance. While Toronto mayor John Tory thought that appointing a Black police chief and trying to “reform” carding could allow it to continue, Black Lives Matter-Toronto has continued to challenge it.

By connecting carding to police violence and anti-Black racism that permeates society, there are growing movements that are challenging this racist policy and the racist system that breeds it.

First Nations and the federal election

by VALERIE LANNON

Most people in so-called democracies like Canada look to political parties and elections for change. But this has not typically been the case for Indigenous peoples, long estranged from the state that oppresses them.

Indigenous sovereignty and elections
Many indigenous people have not participated in voting for the same reason as other groups that have been impoverished and marginalized, i.e. they do not see any politicians who represent their interests. Changes made to voting procedures made by the Tories in 2014 make it even more difficult for people from these groups to vote.

But Indigenous people also have anti-colonial reasons for not participating in elections.

It was only in 1960 that the Canadian state allowed Indigenous people to vote, and a few years later Canada tried to forcibly assimilate First Nations through the White Paper.

As Red Power activist Howard Adams wrote, “All governments regardless of their political affiliations have discriminated against native people and denied them their rights as full citizens... The ballot box is a fraud that tricks us into believing that the next election can relieve us of our oppression.”

A generation later, Idle No More has sparked a new wave of extra-Parliamentary struggle for Indigenous sovereignty.

As Mi’kmaw lawyer Pamela Palmater wrote at the start of the election campaign, “I choose not to vote and do not believe

that we should rest our hope on a federal election any more than we should an Assembly of First Nations (AFN) election. The whole point of sovereignty is that Indigenous nations must assert, live, and defend our sovereignty, jurisdiction, and right of self-determination—not vote for federal politicians to do that for us.”

At the same time there appears to be an increase in the level of participation in Parliamentary elections. There are 53 Indigenous candidates in the 388 ridings: 22 NDP, 18 Liberals, 8 Greens, 4 Conservatives, and 1 for the Libertarian party.

The election and beyond
The Tory record is abysmal, as is their “platform”, which says nothing about the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission or missing and murdered Indigenous women. The Liberals, NDP and Greens all promise a national inquiry on missing and murdered Indigenous women.

But none of the platforms adequately address environmental justice, which is at the heart of indigenous sovereignty. By either agreeing to pipelines, or by supporting tar sands if the oil is refined domestically, the parties are at odds with indigenous self-determination.

Regardless of which party wins, Indigenous peoples and their allies will be using direct action, the courts, negotiations, and mass mobilizations to press for environmental justice, justice for Indigenous women, respect for territories and an end to racism.

Toronto Disability Pride March

by MELISSA GRAHAM

The fifth annual “Toronto Disability Pride March” is taking place on Saturday, October 3, 2015 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, starting at Queen’s Park and ending at Ryerson’s School of Disability Studies, 99 Gerrard St. East.

This year’s speakers include David Lepofsky, Chair of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance and a member of the steering committee for Barrier-Free Canada.

Diem Lafortune, 2013 Canadian Aboriginal Songwriter of the Year nominee, and social justice activist. Kevin Jackson and Melissa Graham will also speak.

Each year, over 100 disabled people and allies have joined in the march which has taken place annually since it began with Occupy Toronto. We march to bring recognition of the struggles and value of people with disabilities as we fight against ableism and other forms of oppression, to be visible and show that we have a voice in our community and a right to be heard by taking to the streets, and also to celebrate and take pride in ourselves as a community of people with disabilities.

It’s important to recognize that these issues are not limited to each individual’s daily challenges, but rather are compounded when other systemic barriers such as class, race, gender, age, sexual identity, ethnic origin, poverty, etc. place a bigger and more oppressive barrier to us as a whole.

Though the disability movement has made great strides, there is still not equity for disabled people. There are still many of us fighting for accessible transportation, or to keep existing accessible transportation in place. Disabled people who come to Canada as refugees and Aboriginal people face unique barriers to healthcare and accommodations. A great many of us are still fighting for accessible, affordable places to live, and for equitable lives that are not defined by our impairments.

All of this and more gives us cause to raise our voices on October 3rd, and to celebrate the various ways we fight back against ableism and oppression. Please join us.

To contact the Toronto Disability Pride March organizers, write to torontodisabilitypride@gmail.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
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Stop the war, open the borders

The image of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi, washed up on a beach in Aegean Sea may become a defining moment in this Federal Election. The image shows the impact of heartless Conservative government policy—from warmongering to scapegoating of refugees and migrants.

But the Harper Tories are doubling down and trying to use the refugee crisis to build support for their profit-driven war in Iraq and Syria. We cannot let them get away with that. Bombs and invasion caused ISIS to emerge; more bombs will not solve it.

Imperialism

Imperialism is responsible for this crisis. People would not be forced to take extreme measures to find refuge in Europe if the US, Canada and other NATO countries had not destroyed and pillaged their homelands.

The invasion of Iraq in 2003 unleashed a wave of displacement, death and terror on the people of Iraq. ISIS is simply a product of that war. Indeed, it is now known that many of the leaders of ISIS were held and tortured by the US in Iraq. It was the inhumanity of the US that created this terror group. And each civilian that is killed

brings more recruits into the arms of ISIS. That has been the same pattern repeated over and over again from Afghanistan to Somalia to Libya. Relentless bombing campaigns always build even more opposition to war and occupation. Canada owns its fair share of this chaos. They have killed civilians in Iraq and spent months trying to cover up that fact.

The crisis in Syria is likewise a result of the western manipulation. Western coalition states have flooded the country with weapons with little or no regard for who may eventually end up using them. Since the war against ISIS began, we have seen even more civilian casualties and even more people leaving Iraq and Syria. And for what? The war has not budged ISIS at all. In fact, according to the CIA and other US-based intelligence agencies, ISIS is as strong as it ever was. The West is engaged in a war without end and with no hope of bringing peace. We have yet to see a bombing campaign that has delivered the stated objective.

Libya is a key example, and a location where many of the refugees are coming from. NATO cynically used the uprisings in Libya in 2011 to assert their own control over the country. A “no-fly zone” quickly

morphed into a massive bombing campaign that unleashed chaos throughout the country. Canadian forces were entirely aware that this would be the case. Department of National Defence officials jokingly said that Canada’s role in Libya was to act as “Al-Qaeda’s air force.” And yet they refuse to open the borders to refugees fleeing the crisis that we helped create.

The partners of the NATO countries in the region need to share blame as well. Each of the regional actors has their own interests at heart and in many ways are working at cross purposes—resulting in even more chaos and death. Turkey has, for example been bombing Kurdish civilians which have been many of the strongest fighters against ISIS. Along with the Gulf States that have been the fountainhead of ideological support for ISIS and the regional dictatorships such as Egypt, that Canada supports, the prospects for any lasting peace are very dim.

Stop the war, open the borders

There is only one long-term solution to the current round of war and displacement that so tragically ended the lives of thousands who are fleeing the chaos. That is to get

the imperial powers out of each and every country in the area. That will not solve all the problems overnight—far from it. But it may give a chance for the people to act for a political solution not based on the manipulation of the major states. When asked by reporters what the world can do to stop these tragedies from happening, Tima Kurdi, the aunt of the children who dies said simply, “stop the war.”

In the meantime, Canada and countries around the world need to open up their borders, welcome refugees and stop the racist Tory attacks. The Conservatives deny refuge for Afghans fleeing the war (even those who worked with Canada while there), detained hundreds of Tamil refugees fleeing the genocide in Sri Lanka, and refused to open the borders for Syrian refugees. The Conservatives have denied basic medical care for refugees and used the Temporary Foreign Workers Program to exploit migrant workers and scapegoat them for the economic crisis.

In Canada that means we must use all the tools at our disposal to kick the racist Tory warmongers out of office. This blood is on their hands.

Stop the War - Open the borders - Refugees are welcome here!

West’s ally sentences activist to death

by YUSUR AL-BAHRANI

Saudi authorities confirmed a death sentence on young pro-democracy activist Ali Al-Nemer in its ongoing crackdown on dissents. More activists are awaiting the courts’ final decisions on their death sentences. Western governments, Saudi allies, are complicit in the international silence towards human rights violations in the kingdom.

While the sentence was confirmed on September 11, Al-Nemer was arrested on February 14, 2012 when he was a 17-year-old high-school student. His father, Mohamed Al-Nemer, wrote in a Twitter post after court’s final decision: “Young men like Ali Al-Nemer should be in school and not in prison or in courts.”

According to reports by the European Saudi Organization for Human Rights, Saudi police ran over him and injured him while

arresting him. Al-Nemer was subjected to solitary confinement, torture and a series of unfair secret trials. He was never aware of the charges against him until the first session of his secret trial in December 2013. Prior to that he was denied access to a lawyer. His family learnt about the charges through the government’s media outlets. The several charges include participating in demonstrations and attacking police. Subjecting Al-Nemer, and other activists, to secret trials violates basic human rights.

Other violations

Several other young activists in Saudi Arabia are at imminent risk of a death sentence or are already facing it. Ali Al-Nemer’s uncle, a pro-democracy leader Sheikh Nemer Al-Nemer, has been sentenced to death. Initially, the sentence was in the form of

crucifixion. Later, Saudi court confirmed death sentence in the form of beheading.

As well, Saudi forces have launched attacks on non-violent protestors in Awamiya and allegedly killed peaceful activists like Morsi Al-Rebeh. In addition, the Saudi military attacked Arab Spring demonstrators in Bahrain, home to the US Fifth Fleet.

Canada’s role

Saudi Arabia is Canada’s second largest export market in the region. Canada is one of Saudi Arabia’s largest arms exporters despite the kingdom’s deteriorating human rights record. In late 2014, a \$15-billion arms deal was reached between Canada and Saudi Arabia. “Trade and economic interests continue to be at the forefront of Canada’s bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia. However, Canada

is seeking to diversify its relations with the Saudi Kingdom,” according to the Government of Canada.

The Saudi authorities gain its strength from its Western allies that continue to have good relations with the kingdom. Being in solidarity with activists in Saudi Arabia, including Al-Nemer and other peaceful prisoners of conscience, means holding Western governments accountable for their exceptionally good relations and arms deals. Protestors and activists facing brutal sentences exposes the hypocrisy of Western governments, including Canada, who ignore Saudi Arabia’s record of violations. Canadians can take action against the brutal oppression in Saudi Arabia by putting pressure on politicians in next month’s elections.

Yemen’s civil war

by JANAHAN AERON RAVIKUMAR

On March 22, 2015, the Yemeni Civil War began—fuelled by competing powers in the region: Iran and their supporters versus Saudi Arabia and their allies. Since Canada is an ally to Saudi Arabia, the Harper Government has been supplying weapons and diplomatic support to Saudi Arabia’s bombing campaign.

For the past six months, Saudi Arabia has been trying to “bring peace” to Yemen by bombing it. For the residents of the city of Sanaa, Yemen’s capital, there is no peace.

Bombing

The people are living in constant fear of the sky, listening for the sounds of fighter jets ready to drop bombs on their homes at a moment’s notice.

The purpose of the bombings are to expel the Houthis rebels, which are supported by Iran, and who took the city last year.

Sadly, the apparently daily bombings on the city are “conservative” when compared to the north where Yemen borders Saudi Arabia. Near the border between the two countries, Saudi Arabia is bombing almost everything.

Many of the structures being destroyed are civilian targets (like homes and places of work), though the Saudi Government claims otherwise.

Humanitarian crisis

In 2013, Yemen was ranked 154 out of 187 nations on the human development index and since the war began, it has dropped even more. The civil war has killed more than 4,500 people and displaced more than a million.

The Saudi government is not helping at all, especially with a blockade around Yemen. The blockade itself is to prevent opposing forces and resources from entering the country but has also stopped the flow of all resources into the country.

Before the war, 80 per cent of food and fuel was imported but now nothing is. This has caused 84 per cent of the country’s population, approximately 21 million people, to lose rudimentary life necessities.

These people are in desperate need of humanitarian aid, not bombings.

Harper’s complicity

But that’s all that the Harper government is providing. As well as selling \$15 billion in weapons to the Saudi dictatorship, and ignoring its execution of activists, Canada has provided diplomatic support to the bombing campaign.

On March 27, Canadian Foreign Affairs Rob Nicholson said that “Canada supports the military actions by Saudi Arabia.”

Instead, Canada should stop arming and supporting the Saudi dictatorship, and provide real support for the people of Yemen.

**STOP THE CYCLE OF
ENDLESS WAR**

☪ Stop the War in Iraq and Syria

☪ Refugees Welcome Here

☪ Say No to Islamophobia



Capitalism and borders

Recently Joe Daniel, a federal Tory candidate seeking re-election, had this warning for voters in his riding. He was referring to the current refugee crisis which has seen thousands of people fleeing countries such as Syria in the wake of Western bombing:

“I think there is a different agenda going on in terms of these refugees. Whereas at the same time Saudi Arabia is putting up money for 200 mosques in Germany I think the agenda is to move as many Muslims into some of these European countries to change these countries in a major way. That is something that I certainly don’t want to see happening in Canada. I think Canada is the greatest country in the world.”

Harper’s racist strategy

This is not something Daniel dreamed up on his own. It has become central to Stephen Harper’s Tory party strategy to boost their sagging ratings in voter polls. It is a strategy which seeks to divide and conquer here at home, to try and convince us that our main enemy is not the continuing cuts to jobs and social programs—such as EI, healthcare, etc.—at the hands of Harper’s Conservative party, but rather that we should look at desperate families fleeing death and destruction in their home countries as the main problem. The anti-immigrant hysteria is also hypocritical coming from a colonial settler state.

The Tories still insist that continued Canadian support for bombing campaigns in countries like Syria and Yemen is the best way to help refugees. Twisted logic if there ever was, since it’s Western bombing that has created the desperate situations for people on the ground in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan that are forcing them to flee in the first place.

NDP leader Tom Mulcair has rightly said that Canada should stop participating in the war, but he defended fighter jets and only called for limited refugees to be let in—allowing the Liberals’s rhetoric to outflank the NDP to the left. With this kind of humanitarian crisis they should be saying open the borders. If the Tories would use the billions of dollars they are wasting on fighter jets (used for more bombing in the Middle East to create more refugees) instead to welcome Syrian refugees and others to this country, no more refugees would need to perish.

Capitalist borders

Under capitalism, we are led to believe that borders between countries are “natural” and that immigration controls are necessary to ensure that we don’t “let in” more people than we can handle as they might steal “our” resources or “our” jobs.

But capitalist borders are artificial lines—especially in countries like Canada that have imposed themselves on Indigenous territories—and these artificial lines serve to divide the 99% for the benefit of the 1%. Capital and the wealthy are always able to cross borders whenever they want—and increasingly so, through “free trade” deals. But the people who are restricted in their ability to move, even when they face death or starvation if they stay, are working class people and the poor.

When capitalism is in an economic boom period and capitalists are falling over themselves to expand their operations there is usually a labour shortage. This is overcome by drawing people into the labour force from wherever there is a cheap and convenient supply: women from the Philippines to work as domestic labour in middle-class homes, immigrants from poorer countries to work in the fast-food industry.

Programs like the Temporary Foreign Worker Program show how borders benefit capitalists: by allowing Canadian corporations to increase the exploitation of migrant workers while denying them status, and at the same time scapegoating them for austerity. When the boom turns to slump, nothing suits the system better than to be able to treat these workers as “surplus” and to suggest they are responsible for the crisis, rather than the economic system itself.

Solidarity across borders

As socialists we argue against all immigration controls because we know that borders are there to enforce the rule of capital. They are there to prevent workers and the poor from moving in an attempt to find a better life for themselves. They also serve the purpose of convincing workers of the same nation that they have more in common with members of their own ruling class than with workers from other nations who struggle just as they do to survive. And they serve to bolster the colonial nation state, built on the ongoing colonization of Indigenous territories.

That’s why it has been heartening to see ordinary people resisting the lies of their own governments in country after country and reaching out in solidarity to those seeking survival by leaving everything that they know to face great dangers and even death in their pursuit of a better life.

When Tories scapegoat immigrants, refugees and Muslims for the problems in Canada, they are trying to take the focus away from their ongoing attacks on all of us—the attacks on union organization, on funding to healthcare, on funding for Veterans Affairs, on Old Age Security, on the right to protest. The more they can divide us from each other or get us to focus on a false enemy in the guise of the “Muslim threat,” the less able will we be to fight back. That’s why we need to oppose every attack, every cut in services and every racist rant against immigrants and refugees.

INTERNATIONAL



Hungary’s war on refugees

by PETER VOTSCH

While rallies to welcome refugees have spread around the world, the nation of Hungary has made the news for creating a barbed-wire fence to keep refugees out.

Hungary has become the shame of the European Union; how did this happen?

The market takes over

After the 1989 fall of the Eastern block of Stalinist states including Hungary, Hungarians like the rest of Eastern Europeans yearned for the lifestyle they thought existed in the West. The shift from state capitalism to free market capitalism privatized industries and flung the door open to international capital in the hopes of investment—which for the most part did not come.

Rising unemployment and poverty pushed governments to borrow heavily from Western banks, leading to a debt crisis in the 1990s that was addressed then, as now, with the policies of austerity: cuts in services to ordinary people in order to pay the banks.

In Hungary these policies were implemented by the “Socialist” Party, modelled on Western European social democracy. In opposition were the cheerleaders of the West, FIDESZ (the Hungarian Civic Union), in power today, which then as now was led by Viktor Orban—the racist demagogue who is leading the charge against refugees today. At the time though, even FIDESZ opposed the cuts.

The Left and the unions

Left wing ideas in Hungary have been almost completely discredited

following decades of state capitalism that called itself communist, followed by so-called Socialist parties imposing neoliberalism.

In addition, the pre and post 1989 “socialist” regimes did much to weaken the trade union movement. Previously having one trade union federation, ruled from above under the Stalinist regime, Hungarian workers found themselves able to form new unions after 1989—and they formed six trade federations along with many independent sectoral unions. Some emerged from the old regime and allied with the Socialist Party, while others, fiercely anti-communist, allied themselves with FIDESZ and the right.

The divisions between unions, and their ties to one or the other ruling party, weakened their ability to fight back against an onslaught of cuts and layoffs.

FIDESZ, led by Orban, was swept to power in 2010, in the aftermath of a major crisis involving the previous Socialist prime minister. Orban imposed a Thatcherite “Flat Tax” that disproportionately targeted the poor, and the divided Hungarian labour movement unable to defeat it.

Racism and JOBBIK

While FIDESZ has been the main conservative party in Hungary since 1989, it is also characterized by its right-wing populism. This means that, as in the 1990s, they have opposed Socialist government cuts in nationalist terms, and railed against “outsiders” accused of attacking the Hungarian “nation.” This can be foreign capital, as much as

it can be an internal minority—principally the Roma, but also the Jews.

It can be hardly surprising that JOBBIK, an openly racist party riddled with Nazis, has risen since its origins in 2003 to become Hungary’s third party behind FIDESZ and the Socialists.

Building an alternative

Hungary’s rulers have felt emboldened in this atmosphere to build the fence on the southern border, and refuse 91 per cent of refugee applications. Orban has declared, to the disgust of most outside Hungary, that “Muslim refugees are subverting the character of Europe.” The “Socialists” meanwhile have stated that parliament must “work with JOBBIK members.”

But largely unreported by the North American media were the many Hungarians who braved police lines at Keleti train station in Budapest to bring food, drink and supplies to the refugees attempting to get to Germany. Thousands of Hungarians, who had had enough of the hateful pronouncement of their Prime Minister, took to the streets of Budapest to let Europe and the world know that Orban does not represent all Hungarians.

Still, it will remain a difficult task for those circles of left wing activists that do exist to forge a new tradition that rejects the bankruptcy of the official “Left,” and to create alliances with the Roma community, other communities of colour, and organized workers to build the fightback we can all see is very much needed.

After Jeremy Corbyn’s election

by NICK CLARK, UK

Everyone who hates austerity, racism and war was celebrating the news of Jeremy Corbyn’s election as leader of the Labour Party.

Corbyn’s spectacular victory was built on the back of a widespread desire for change and a break from old politics. Tens of thousands of people turned out to see Corbyn at campaign rallies across Britain in the run-up to the vote. More than 100,000 people registered as Labour supporters, and thousands more joined the party—most of them to vote for Corbyn.

Corbyn’s huge support was reflected in the election result. A total of 121,751 Labour members cast their vote for Corbyn, while 88,449 registered supporters and 41,217 affiliated union members did the same. In all three categories Corbyn took more than twice as many votes as his closest rival, Andy Burnham.

Mood

Corbyn’s acceptance speech at the conference on Saturday spoke to this

mood. He said, “The Tories have used the economic crisis of 2008 to impose a terrible burden on the poorest people in this country—those that have seen their wages frozen or cut, those that can’t afford to even sustain themselves properly, those that rely on food banks to get by. It is not right, it is not necessary, and it has got to change.”

Corbyn was set to speak at TUC conference in Brighton as Socialist Worker went to press. His first move as leader was to speak at a demonstration to support refugees. In his first debate in parliament he told Labour MPs to vote against the Tory trade union bill.

But Corbyn will be under pressure from Labour figures to his right to back away from some of his more radical policies, such as scrapping the Trident missile system. Others will do all they can to undermine him. Within seconds of his election some right wing MPs said they would refuse to join Corbyn’s shadow cabinet. And failed leadership hopefuls Chukka

Umunna and Tristram Hunt set up a new faction inside the party—Labour for the Common Good.

Challenge

But it will take more than trying to change the Labour Party from within to bring the kind of change that Corbyn’s election represents. Another supporter, 20 year old kitchen porter Joe Dillion, told Socialist Worker, “Now we need to build a movement. That’s what it’s about.”

And speaking at a fringe meeting at the TUC congress, PCS union leader Mark Serwotka said, “We can’t get that through just Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party in parliament. We can use it to popularise our message against austerity and have it allied to the type of movement we want to see. We still have the ability to stop austerity in its tracks and topple the government.”

This is shared from Socialist Worker (UK)

Why won't governments make the climate leap?

Michael Fenn looks at the Parliamentary roadblock to climate justice

The federal government under Harper, and provincial governments—most notably Alberta Tories and BC Liberals—have pursued with vigor resource extraction as the answer for economic growth and job creation in Canada.

But the new NDP government in Alberta and federal NDP in the current election campaign seem just as committed to tar sands, along with governments around the world who look set on accepting climate catastrophe at the upcoming climate talks in Paris.

Climate justice leap

Even if a small portion of bitumen and LNG makes it to market, this will drive us over the 2 degree threshold and climate disaster. Bitumen and LNG extraction wastes and pollutes vast amounts of fresh water, is a menace to wild life ecology, and threatens Indigenous communities.

Economically, studies and research points out how the massive tax breaks and subsidy giveaways to oil and gas provide little, no, or even negative trade-offs in terms of jobs and tax revenues when compared to investment in renewables. With the drop in oil prices even mainstream economists like Jeff Rubin are calling for divestment from fossil fuels. Renewables are on the rise, becoming cheaper and more competitive on markets. And of course as the effects of climate change impact communities and nations, pressure will mount on governments.

Would it not make sense for our government to get behind renewable energy instead? They could provide solar, wind, and sustainable technologies and industry—using the mass subsidies, tax breaks, favourable regulations that “Big Oil” gets—and make these the engine of economic growth and job creation.

Released in the midst of the federal election, the Leap Manifesto calls for a transition to a climate justice economy that respects First Nations, reduces emissions and provides climate jobs.

As an article in *The Guardian* explained, “all the manifesto’s proposed policies – respecting Indigenous rights, debating a guaranteed annual income, taking back public control of energy systems, funding clean transit and public investment in low-carbon sectors like education, health and childcare, promoting sustainable farming or raising taxes on corporations and the wealthy, and scrapping trade deals that prevent governments from banning extreme energy extraction – are more or less within the bounds of classic social democracy.”

Social democracy

Yet in their platforms, or once elected on what at first glance seems like a “progressive” platform, they betray the public trust, implementing only feeble and ineffectual reforms.

Case in point would be the upstart NDP government in Alberta. After riding a wave of populism to end Alberta's dependence on "Big Oil," and steer the economy toward more ecological and



self-sufficient trajectories, the new NDP government is already showing signs of caving in to big oil.

At the federal level both the NDP and Green party support tar sands and refineries, and Mulcair has kept his distance from the Leap Manifesto rather than campaigning with it.

What is the explanation by left wing pundits for this curious paradox concerning our so called "democracy"? Simple really: corruption! Somehow corporations and the wealthy have been able to capture the entire political establishment across the entire political spectrum.

Andrew Nikiforuk says the state has become “captured by special interests,” Naomi Klein blames “free market fundamentalists” who have hijacked and deregulated capitalism, and *The Guardian* blames “neoliberal or austerity ideology.”

There is however another way to look at this problem: from a Marxist paradigm that roots the climate crisis in capitalist accumulation and that sees the role of the capitalist state—whether democratic or not, and no matter who is at the helm—to manage the capitalist economy.

Profits

In a capitalist economy what matters is not reason, and

certainly not democratic sentiment, but profits—no matter how nonsensical and horrendous its consequences to the environment and economy, and regardless of whether they are driving the human race like lemmings off a cliff of ecological devastation.

Our so-called obsession with economic growth is not a byproduct of consumer culture or neoliberal ideology, nor the fancy of corrupt policy makers. It is an absolute imperative of profitability.

Under capitalism the ruling class controls the means of production, and exploits workers to extract profits, which are then reinvested in greater means of production. Because capitalists are in competition with one another, they are driven to exploit people and the planet without end.

Capitalist state

As well as economic competition, capitalism is also based on geopolitical competition between states. Corporations look to their own states to protect their interests at home and abroad, and states use their corporations' power to compete internationally.

As Marx wrote, "The executive of the modern state is nothing but the committee for managing the common affairs of the whole Bourgeoisie."

Governments pander to their

current corporate power, of which a considerable portion belongs to the oil and gas industry, rather than placing their hopes in future growth from renewables.

We saw this clearly in the leaders debate, where every candidate tried to convince Bay Street they would be best in protecting Canadian capital and “getting our resources to market,” rather than a just transition to climate jobs.

Revolution

The window to prevent climate catastrophe is narrow, and the trend towards renewables won't materialize in nearly the time to avert ecological disaster without some rather radical government intervention in the economy.

In the 1940s governments took over industries and reorganized production to wage global war. But now we need international cooperation to stop global warming, which strikes at the heart of capitalist economic and geopolitical competition.

A climate justice leap requires a large scale socialization of the economy to not only rapidly transition from fossil fuels to renewables, but also to redistribute wealth and power to the exploited and oppressed. None of these measures are possible under a capitalist system. By fighting for climate justice reforms, we see the need for global revolution.

THE ELECTION AND THE STRUGGLE

Ritch Whyman looks the legacy of corporate Canada’s parties, why we should vote NDP, and where change comes from

STOP JUSTIN HARPER:

Reversing the Tory (and Liberal) legacy

The past 10 years of Harper’s rule, first in a minority and then with a majority, have seen a relentless attacks economically, socially and environmentally.

Household debt is 163% of annual incomes, the highest ever, and 51% say they live paycheque to paycheque. There’s the largest wealth gap largest since 1920’s. Less than 40 per cent of people qualify for EI, while Harper has taken billions from the EI fund to “balance” the budget. Harper has refused to launch an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women, while blaming Indigenous communities. There have been attacks on workers across the country and their unions.

Attacks

There have been corporate giveaways--the selling off of the wheat board, the ending of door-to-door delivery to privatize mail.

Harper has attacked women--from the denial of affordable daycare, cuts to women’s groups and international aid organizations that discuss abortion.

There have been attacks on migrant workers--from the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to allow Canadian corporations to further exploit workers, and then mass deportation and denial of citizenship.

There have been huge hikes in military spending at

the same time as cuts to veterans services, unconditional support for Israel and Islamophobia “terror” scares.

Harper has promoted tar sands and pipelines, attacked environmental groups and scientists, and criminalized dissent with Bill C-51 while suppressing basic voting rights.


For all these reasons and more, there’s palpable anger at how to get rid of Harper, and during an election year the focus is on the ballot box.

Liberals

But the Liberals are no alternative. The Liberals began the attacks on Canada Post, began the attacks on social programs and student loans, cuts to EI, attacks on First Nations

The Liberals are the twin party of business and the wealthy in Canada with the Tories. Since day one they have ruled in the interests of the wealthy and acted the same as the Tories when in Power.

Trudeau junior may claim hes about real change, but really he’s about being tweedle dee to Harpers tweedle Dum. Corporate Canada favours the Liberals like it does the Tories.





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ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR

Why vote NDP?

The NDP is a different party and is the only viable alternative to Harper in this election.

Many hoped that after the defeats of provincial NDPs in Nova Scotia, BC and Ontario after right-wing campaigns, and the victory in Alberta on a more social democratic campaign, that the federal NDP would sense the mood and move left.

At first many felt it was – support for \$15 minimum wage, support for a national daycare program and campaign against Bill C-51. And by campaigning on these issues the NDP began the federal election with a strong lead.

Palestine, police and pipelines

But sadly the logic of seeing change coming about via winning seats in parliament reared its head. Now we have an NDP who’s priority is ensuring no discussion of Israeli war crimes takes place, that more cops on the streets are a priority, that tar sands are ok if the refining is done here, that taxes on the rich are out of the question and now even increasing taxes on corporations is looking shakey.

In essence an NDP showing business it firmly believes that it can run a better, nicer capitalism. Nothing about the NDP’s campaign is about building confidence to fight austerity or challenging the rich or stopping environmental destruction, its all about winning seats and power. The results: Trudeau has campaigned to the left, on taxing the rich and deficit spending to pay for infrastructure, and eroded the NDP’s lead.

Elizabeth May from the Green Party is gaining ground amongst progressives as she is more honest and clearer n many points. But many Greens are still “Tories on bikes” in most places – to the right of US greens. They are also not staking out anything really to the left in terms of austerity and resistance to cuts.

Why vote NDP?

What is key about the NDP though isn’t its platform but what it symbolically (less and less so) represents.

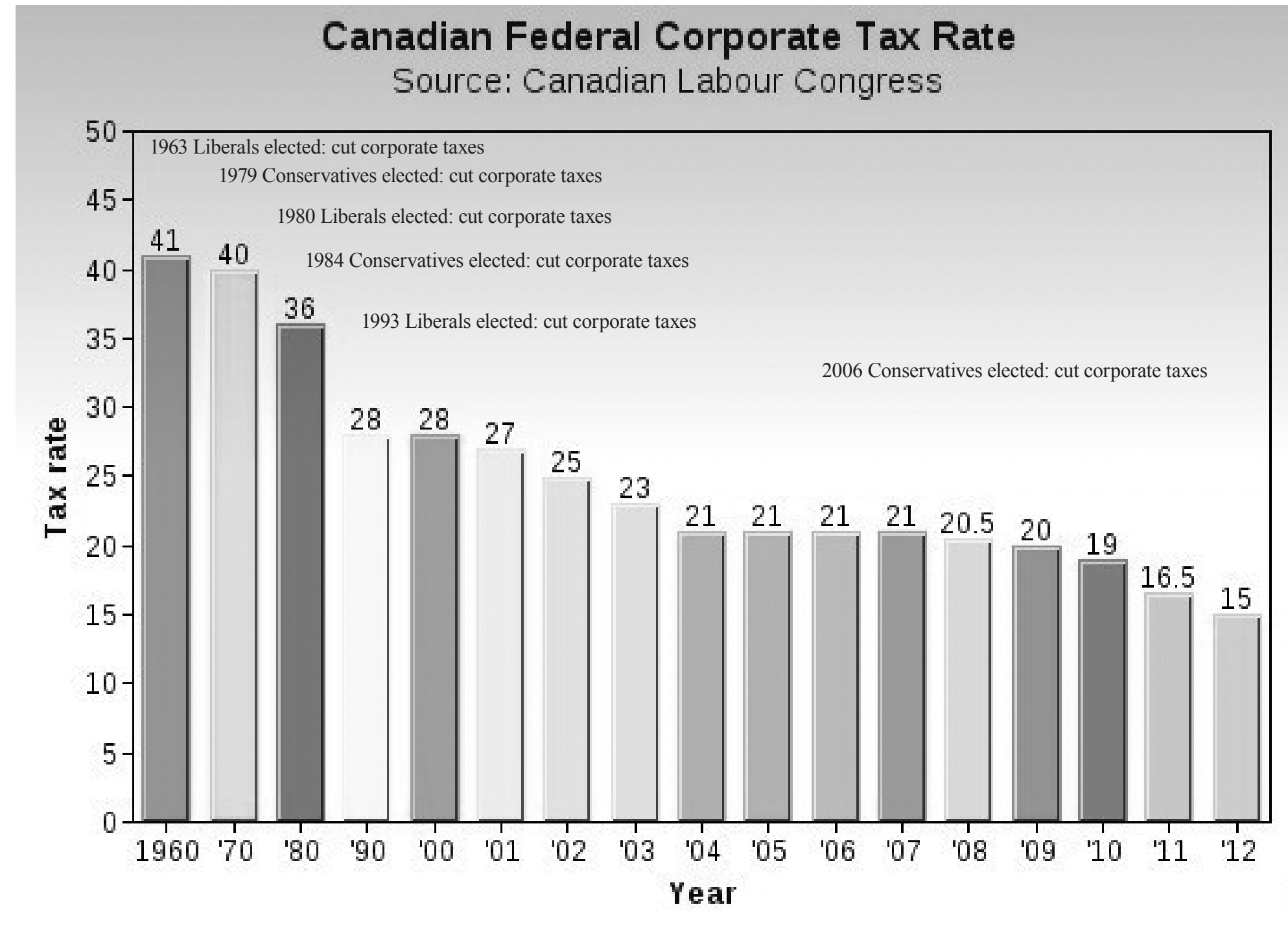
The NDP is tied to the organized labour movement, and counts among its members many trade union and social

movement activists. Historically the NDP is seen as a party for working people and an expression of the need for a more equitable system

It represents the need for working people to have their own political expression separate from the bosses parties. This is why despite the shit that Mulcair serves up, the base of the NDP is dramatically different from the other parties. The base of the NDP is to left of the leadership, but the Tories and Liberals bases are to the right.

A victory for the NDP, regardless of what its platform is today, will still be seen by thousands of working class activists as a victory for our side. Employers and the wealthy will see it as a defeat for them.

So voting out Harper is a start, but it won’t change much. The NDP in power has shown itself to just a ruthless in riding out crises on workers and the poors backs as Tories and Liberals.



Where does change come from?

The real question is where does change come from and why do parliamentary parties end up attacking their base?

Parliament for most in the NDP represents where change comes from, it’s where power resides. So if you get enough people elected you can pass the laws you want. According to this theory, the problem with past NDP governments has been bad leaders – like Bob Rae, the former leader of the Ontario NDP – and all we need is a better NDP leader.

Parliamentary democracy

But Parliament is not where power resides in society. Parliament is an institution designed to manage capitalism, not overthrow it or undermine it. It is an instrument of class rule, as well as being a byproduct of both demands by workers for a say/ representation and the need for something to pass laws to prevent capitalists from robbing eachother.

The idea that you could just win enough seats in parliament as then pass a series of laws enacting socialism, doesn’t seem to work if you think about it. Would the owners of mines, tar sands, tech companies, factories, bank etc.. all of a sudden say “democracy rules” and give up their wealth and power?

Around the world we’ve seen this not to be the case, and the horror the wealthy will inflict in situations like that, from the 1973 coup in Chile to the current imposition of austerity in Greece despite a clear referendum against it. Even in small examples – paying taxes, respecting environmental law, labour law – employers flout the law.

Struggle vs electoralism

So parliament isn’t where our side has power. In fact when you look at the gains usually held up as positive changes from Parliament, they’ve been won because of struggle outside of Parliament: post-war strikes that won the welfare stake, medicare won through a mass campaign, maternity leave won from a postal workers strike. All the good aspects of the NDP campaign--from a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women, \$15 minimum wage and national childcare, and the repeal of Bill C-51--all came from struggles outside Parliament.

Parliamentary democracy might reflect these demands, but it also subordinates them to what’s possible within the confines of the current capitalist market, and is passed on a passivity that a small number of politicians will make change while the majority of people stay passive.

According to the logic of electoralism, winning the majority of seats requires pandering to majority sentiment regardless of the issues. This has led Mulcair to purge pro-Palestinian candidates, support tar sands and to refuse to tax the rich. But even electorally this is counter-productive, as it demobilizes people, lowers expectations and undermine support for the NDP. This is the same problem in every social democratic organization--even the radical left alternative Syriza.

Change

The real power to challenge capitalism is in the workplace

where profits are made, and where workers can collectively shut down production. But at a time of low level of struggle where workers don’t feel confidence to challenge the boss, Parliament takes on heightened importance as a substitute for struggle.

While we should vote NDP to ditch Harper to give confidence to the 99% against the 1%, there shouldn’t be any illusions about what Mulcair will deliver, even if he wanted to, and he doesn’t.

Around the world there’s excitement about electoral projects--from Jeremy Corbyn becoming leader for the old British Labour Party, Bernie Sanders running as a “socialist” for the Democrats, or radical alternatives like Syriza and Podemos, despite their limitations. The danger in Canada will be that people will bury their hope because of the NDP’s behaviour inside Parliament, instead of seeing the mood for resistance outside Parliament.

But resistance doesn’t build itself spontaneously, we need organization. While we should vote NDP on election day, we need to build a network of militants outside Parliament that can build the struggles to challenge whoever is elected and to build the confidence of the 99% to think outside the ballot box and challenge capitalism itself.

Don't let Liberals capture anti-Harper sentiment

The start of the federal election saw the NDP in a clear lead, campaigning to raise the minimum wage, provide national childcare and end the secret police Bill C-51. But now the Liberals are in the lead, pretending to be anti-austerity and anti-war. With a few weeks left there's still time to expose the Liberals, but the NDP leadership will have to return to the party's roots.

Trudeau's left tack

October 19 is the 42nd Canadian general election, and for the previous 41 the Conservatives and Liberals have taken turns colonizing Indigenous territories, launching imperialist wars, and attacking the 99% for the benefit of the 1%. From the 35th to the 37th Parliaments, the Liberal majority under Chrétien imposed the biggest cuts to social services in Canadian history. The 38th to 39th Parliaments were minority governments where the Tories and Liberals took turns propping each other up while extending the war in Afghanistan, and in the last Parliament Trudeau supported Harper's Bill C-51.

For 41 consecutive elections Parliament has been dominated by the corporate Liberals or corporate Conservatives, and the 42nd Parliament has the chance of being the first federal victory for the NDP—the only party associated with the labour movement. But with NDP leader Tom Mulcair promising “balanced budgets,” and defending small businesses and fighter jets, Liberal leader Justin Trudeau is capturing the anti-Harper sentiment and pretending to be the anti-austerity candidate. Mulcair is risking the election by trying to look like the old discredited Liberals.

Orange Wave rises and recedes

The NDP began the election with a large lead, reflecting movements for \$15/hr minimum wage, national childcare and the opposition to Bill C-51. The Liberals, having tied themselves to Harper's secret police bill, were in a well-deserved last place, and calls for “strategic voting” had faded. As *Socialist Worker* argued at the start of the election campaign, “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.”

Resistance movements have articulated clear demands that the NDP could have campaigned on during the election and beyond. A campaign of promising to deal with climate change, a plan to end austerity, and plans to stop Canada's endless wars would have had enormous appeal in this election. But the NDP leadership has turned its back on its supporters and campaigned to the right, focusing instead on reassuring Bay Street it could manage Canadian capitalism.

The Palestine solidarity movement has challenged Harper's militarism, but Mulcair silenced his pro-Palestine candidates and defended fighter jets. The climate justice movement has challenged pipelines from coast to coast but Mulcair still supports the tar sands and Energy East. Black Lives Matter have challenged police brutality but Mulcair has promised thousands more police.

Not only does this sacrifice principles, but it has also eroded the NDP's lead in the polls. As Rosa Luxemburg warned more than a century ago: “Opportunism is a political game which can be lost in two ways: not only basic principles but also practical success may be forfeited. The assumption that one can achieve the greatest number of successes by making concessions rests on a complete error. Here, as in all great matters, the most cunning persons are not the most intelligent.” That's why those on the left who have challenged Mulcair's shortcomings are right: not only to defend basic principles, but to warn against electoral defeat.

Déjà vu?

The NDP has a record of abandoning the things that make them popular when it looks like they might win. In Ontario the NDP refused to support the campaign to raise the minimum wage, allowing the Liberals to capture the anti-Conservative sentiment and then impose austerity. In Toronto Olivia Chow campaigned to the centre, allowing John Tory to pretend to be an alternative to Rob Ford, and the impose austerity.

Now the federal NDP are allowing Justin Trudeau to fill the vacuum and monopolize the anti-Harper mood—and now that the polling numbers have narrowed, the pro-Liberal “strategic voting” arguments will return, further threatening the NDP. In addition, agreeing to low corporate taxes, “balanced budget”, pipelines, police and fighter jets is breathing new life into the Tories, who are rising in the polls and could win again.

This is unfolding at the same time as Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders campaigns are showing the mass audience that exists for progressive change. The same mood exists in Canada, as can be seen from the Leap Manifesto. Voters shouldn't be fooled by the Liberals, and should vote against the twin parties of corporate Canada and for the only party associated with the labour movement--while building the movements that can push it left and challenge it if it wins.

But for the NDP to regain their lead, they need to return to how the election began: echoing movement demands and exposing the Liberal's support for Harper's austerity, war and climate chaos.

ANALYSIS



Is society moving towards post-capitalism?

By Justin Easterbrook

In a widely-shared article in *The Guardian*, Paul Mason claims that the dream of the Left is dead, and that rather than a forcible overthrow of the ruling class by the working class, “post-capitalism” emerges out from capitalism through a “new route out”:

“Capitalism, it turns out, will not be abolished by forced-march techniques. It will be abolished by creating something more dynamic that exists, at first, almost unseen within the old system, but which will break through, reshaping the economy around new values and behaviors. I call this postcapitalism.”

Of course he doesn't explain what this “more dynamic” thing is, or more importantly how it will be created, but just simply supposes it will come into being, and with no resistance on the part of capitalists. He assumes that this ‘new route out’ is what will end the domination of capital over labour, that it will be willfully accepted by those who currently use capital to dominate labour, and that the workers will not eventually have to enforce a domination of their own.

“Post-capitalism”

He offers us these three points as a rationale for why “post-capitalism” is possible:

“First, it has reduced the need for work, blurred the edges between work and free time and loosened the relationship between work and wages.” This implies that there will be some kind of dissolution of work as we know it, or that somehow people will not have to work in “post-capitalism.”

“Second, information is corroding the market's ability to form prices correctly. That is because markets are based on scarcity while information is abundant. The system's defence mechanism is to form monopolies.” The author doesn't actually explain how consumer information affects the prices of commodities. One could take a wild guess and assume he means that freely available information has affected the price on particular commodities, but this doesn't reflect a change in the price of commodities in general.

The author also believes that the forming of monopolies is some kind of defense mechanism the market uses, which implies some kind of planned intent on part of the capitalists, as opposed to what a monopoly truly is— which is simply the inherent result of the contradictions within free market capitalism. In other words, it is simply profitable to buy up competitors, not part of a grand strategy con-

spiratorially thought up by a group of capitalists as a “defense mechanism.”

“Third, we're seeing the spontaneous rise of collaborative production: goods, services and organisations are appearing that no longer respond to the dictates of the market and the managerial hierarchy.” This argument is not new, in fact Rosa Luxemburg explained over 100 years ago why worker's co-operative production is not capable of competing in industry, and is just as incapable of replacing capitalist production. If people would bother to read the classics, we wouldn't have to re-hash century old political economy.

As she explained in *Reform or Revolution*, “As a result of competition, the complete domination of the process of production by the interests of capital—that is, pitiless exploitation—becomes a condition for the survival of each enterprise...In other words, use is made of all methods that enable an enterprise to stand up against competitors in the market. The workers forming a cooperative in the field of production are thus faced with the contradictory necessity of governing themselves with the utmost absolutism. They are obliged to take toward themselves the role of capitalist entrepreneur—a contradiction that accounts for the usual failure of production cooperatives, which either become capitalist enterprises, or, if the workers interests continue to predominate, end by dissolving.”

But most importantly, none of these points actually contribute to any rational argument for dismissing the likelihood of necessity for a “force applied by the working class,” a forcible overthrow of the state and capitalism. None of these points bring us any closer to a peaceful conclusion, no “new route out” which the author claims to have. The author glorifies co-operative efforts such as time banks and parallel currencies. Although these are interesting, they are not a prospective alternative to capitalism, but a desperate way for people who cannot acquire a means of production of their own to deal with our hyper exploitative era of late capitalism.

Neoliberalism

So how have things changed in such a way as to change the nature of everything we know about the world around us?

“Neoliberalism, then, has morphed into a system programmed to inflict recurrent catastrophic failures.” Again, nothing has been “programmed,” as this implies a planned intent on part of the capitalist class. Periodic crisis are the result of the inherent contradictions within capitalism, and nothing

here has morphed into anything: capitalism has been generating crises from its very inception, and the current global crisis is not an exception.

The answer to this question is that capitalism has not fundamentally changed. Although our author provides a valid analysis of neoliberalism and information technology to some degree, none of these ideas pose a fundamental change in understanding our mode of production, because our mode hasn't fundamentally changed.

As unique as the happenings of price surrounding information is, we still operate in a commodity production based economy, and none of these ‘new’ developments fundamentally change the way we do things. A commodity's value is equivalent to the socially necessary labour which went into producing it—without question. A commodity's price is obviously affected by supply and demand, but it always tends to gravitate towards its natural price (as recognized by Adam Smith, and properly understood by Marx).

“Post-capitalism” = more capitalism

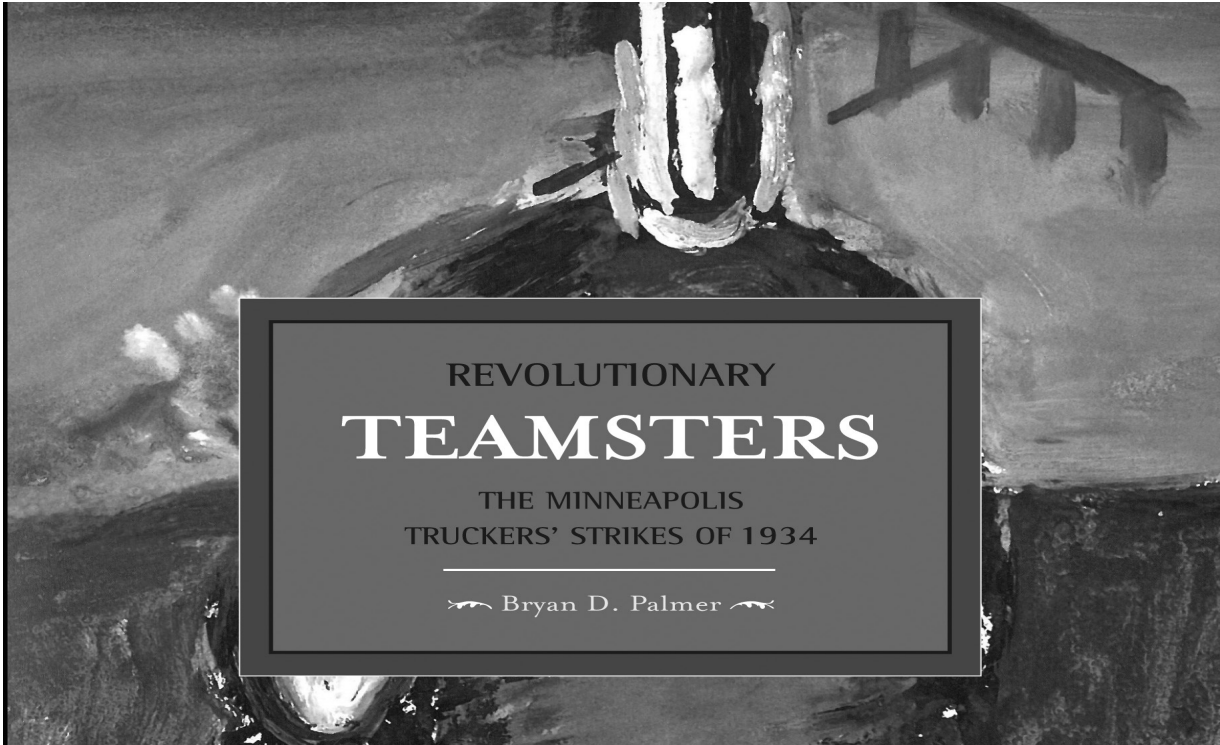
Moving on, our author continues: “Once you understand the transition in this way, the need is not for a supercomputed Five Year Plan – but a project, the aim of which should be to expand those technologies, business models and behaviours that dissolve market forces, socialise knowledge, eradicate the need for work and push the economy towards abundance. I call it Project Zero.”

So we have finally arrived at our author's conclusion, which is to support business, and that we as a human race will transition out of capitalism like magic. Very good theory indeed, but not at all a significant departure from what every other Social Democrat of the past has proposed, from Bernstein to Kautsky.

Just what will be the result of this “eradication of the need for employment” be? Firstly, rampant unemployment, secondly, a resulting driving down of wages, thirdly, increased debt, etc. Do these sound like the conditions for a “peaceful transition”, or a revolutionary situation?

The absurdity of putting money into the market to expand business models until they paradoxically dissolve the very market you're cranking money into is hardly something worth deconstructing. Mason appropriately calls his idea “Project Zero,” a fitting title.

REVIEWS



Revolutionary Teamsters

BOOK

Book: *Revolutionary Teamsters*
Written by Brian Palmer
Reviewed by Glen Truax

Like tectonic plates, radical politics and organized labour in the United States have often crashed into each other throughout history, creating seismic social upheavals in the unlikelyst of places.

For those who believe that radicalism is some sort of foreign contagion, shipped in from Europe into the US, one need only to glance at the history of America: from Thomas Paine to the IWW to the Black Panther Party, radicalism has imbued the US from its inception.

Revolutionary Teamsters is a glimpse of one of those collisions mentioned above, as revolutionary fervor became intertwined within one of the most reactionary labour groups in the States, the Teamsters. The ensuing mass strike in the chilly city of Minneapolis during the 1930s is one of the seminal events in the radical history of a country that would like to believe that it is allergic to militant socialism.

Context

By the beginning of the 1930s, organized labour had already diverged into reactionary and progressive camps; the Red Menace scare of the early 1920s had dealt a death blow to the IWW and other domestic socialist organizations, but it was hard to deny the appeal of a Marxist system during the worst period of the Depression.

On the other hand, conservative labour organizations such as the AFL and typified by personalities like Sam Gompers had risen to take the premier seat of “respectable” labour, labour that the bosses could “do business with.” The Teamsters were almost

a caricature of that sort of conservatism; it was a reactionary, racist body that had already begun to embrace the gangster lineage for which it is infamous.

In Minneapolis, the teamsters and other even less enfranchised working groups found themselves bereft of aid, during a period when work was an employers’ market. Bosses felt free to push their employees in whatever direction they felt like—knowing the desperation of those in need of a job—by cutting wages and extending hours. In an environment such as Minneapolis, where the real effects of basic living conditions were brought to the fore with every passing winter, workers (as exemplified by the Teamsters) had to make do with whatever pittance that their bosses tossed out to them. These Teamsters were denied any kind of assistance by their “Fraternal” Order (who were entirely in bed with management and opposed to anything that smacked of progressive/radical measures) and the situation had become desperate.

In the realm of organized radicalism, Stalinism had gone worldwide by this point, and the Communist Parties of the world (and their fellow traveller brethren, such as the Workers Party in the US) had followed suit. Those who held contrary beliefs to the crushing autocracy of Stalinist politics were branded Trotskyites and were promptly ousted. The disenfranchised Red rebels found themselves in the same sort of position as the independent Teamsters, locked out of their own creation by backwards, dictatorial elements.

Mass strike

These two forces joined together in the despondent days of the early Depression in Minneapolis, with

Marxists and ex-Communists linking hands and adding organizational skill to the mounting numbers of disenfranchised Teamsters.

They created a new union, a safe haven for workers who had grown sick of the total inaction of their supposedly protective “Fraternal” organization. Following a clash with predatory employers, they went on strike. This triggered a snowstorm of sympathy strikes throughout the normally radical-free city, creating a mass strike on par with the earlier mass strike in Winnipeg. Please note the similarity in unforgiving physical environments of the two cities: the strikers were literally fighting for their lives in the most adverse conditions.

Bryan Palmer outlines all of this in masterful prose, with an excellent breadth of knowledge of the forgotten/forbidden history of the Teamsters, an organization now synonymous with organized crime (the first inklings of that direction were felt in Minneapolis). Palmer is well acquainted with both organized labour and organized radicalism, two movements that were not inextricably linked in the US.

History is narrative, and the best histories read almost like exciting works of fiction—*Revolutionary Teamsters* falls neatly into that category. Palmer also includes an incredibly depressing post-script of the fate of Trotskyists in the US, a chilling reminder of what international Stalinism was capable of, even in the heartland of liberal capitalism. As Jon Stewart once said, “The eternal fate of the noble and enlightened is to be crushed by the armed and dumb”, and the actions of violent Stalinist thugs mirrors the violence displayed by the reactionary strike-breakers.

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LEFT JAB

John Bell

How low will they go

From the hysterical media attacks on newly elected British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn to the #PigGate scandal; from the boardrooms of the auto giants to the naked greed of big pharma; the question of the day is: how low can they go.

Judging from the recent evidence, pretty damned low.

Corbyn, the left-wing Labour MP, was elected leader of his party with a smashing 60 per cent of the vote. He campaigned hard against the vile waste of militarism and war, and the cruel austerity cuts unleashed against Britain’s workers.

It is hard to know who was more terrified by his success: the Tories or the Blairite hacks who have held sway in the Labour Party for almost a generation.

Contempt for democracy

The corporate media didn’t miss a beat. They unleashed a campaign of vilification, from the silly to the outright slanderous.

One paper accompanied a picture of Corbyn, who rides a bike to work, with a caption describing his “Chairman Mao-like” bicycle. Everyone knows that it was Lenin who was the cycle enthusiast. C’mon gutter press—fact-check, factcheck, factcheck!

Corbyn’s refusal to sing God Save the Queen at a public ceremony was shocking, shocking I tell you, as was his sartorial crimes (sport jacket and slacks instead of pin-striped suit).

The “impartial” BBC constantly referred to him as “the left-wing Labour leader,” prompting a petition campaign to have the Beeb start addressing David Cameron as “the right-wing Prime Minister”.

Its all fun until someone threatens a military coup. The Sunday Times quoted an unnamed senior army general doing just that. Corbyn has said, if elected he would stop Britain’s nuclear weapons program, begin to withdraw from NATO, and immediately pull out of wars in the Middle East.

The anonymous General threatened “direct action”: “You would see a break in convention with senior generals directly and publicly challenging Corbyn over vital policy decisions ... to emasculate and shrink the size of the armed forces. The Army just wouldn’t stand for it. The general staff would ... use whatever means possible, fair or foul to prevent that.”

For Britain’s military elite, democracy is just a “convention” to be tossed aside if necessary. All the elites, corporate, political and military—let’s call them the ruling class just for fun—are united in the horror at Corbyn’s vision of left social democracy.

Then came PigGate. The scandal quickly moved beyond exposure of David Cameron’s individual creepy behaviour; laid bare is the soul-sick cynicism of the class he belongs to and represents.

The PigGate scandal should give Corbyn and his supporters some breathing room, but it won’t stop the back-room plotters and mutineers. Their contempt for us, for the collective power of democracy, is total and bred in the bone.

Deadly profits

There is no difference between Cameron and his schoolboy buddies, gleefully burning 50 pound notes in front of homeless people, and the sociopathic behaviour of Martin Shkreli. He’s the hedge fund billionaire who bought the rights to a long-available drug essential for the treatment of cancer and HIV.

Overnight the cost of the drug rose from \$13.50 to \$750 per dose, a 5500 per cent jump. Shkreli was genuinely bemused, laughing as he defended his right to exploit the misery of others. “I think profits are a great thing,” he said.

Social media notoriety quickly earned Shkreli the title of “the most hated man in America,” but he was just doing what the whole pharmaceutical industry does every day.

Admittedly, sometimes there are rules to keep capitalists on the straight and narrow. You know, like the emissions testing that auto makers must submit to. Volkswagen knew its diesel vehicles could not meet the standards, so they were faced with a choice: redesign their cars or cheat. They did the only thing that made sense in terms of profit—they cheated.

They programmed their cars to reduce emissions under specific test conditions, but spewed out 10 to 40 times the legal limit of pollutants when actually on the road. This went on for eight years before they were caught. They will be fined, but the fine will barely cut into their profits. By cheating to meet industry standards, Volkswagen was simply meeting industry standards of cheating.

In 2012, Toyota was forced to pay \$1.2 billion in fines and recalled 9.3 million vehicles worldwide. It seems their cars might accelerate to dangerous speeds of their own volition. The problem surfaced in 2009, but for three years the corporation blamed driver error, and poorly maintained floor mats. In fact executives knew there was a design flaw.

As early as 2004 GM knew that ignition system flaws in its Chevy Cobalts and Pontiac G5s could cause the cars to turn off while in motion, deactivating airbags and braking systems and causing deadly accidents. But they also knew it would cost too much to fix the flaw, so they covered it up. The GM cars have caused over 90 deaths, and a \$10 billion civil suit is before the courts.

The boardrooms of the car companies and drug corporations—and every other business you could name—are staffed with the mercenary clones of Martin Shkreli. Capitalism requires them, it trains them, and is prepared to discard them if they get caught.

David Cameron and his debauched, inhuman brethren prowled the corridors of political power the world over. The threat of democracy, even one as mild as that embodied by Jeremy Corbyn, drives them to slander and the threat of naked violence.

How low would they go? They’d throw any of us into a meat grinder if it would turn a dollar or preserve their class position. We have to know that as we move, inevitably, to face them.

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



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www.resisters.ca

**After the election:
winning asylum for US war resisters**


A fundraising dinner and letter-writing soirée
Monday October 26
Steelworkers Hall: 25 Cecil Street, Toronto
Dinner at 6:00 pm, Speakers at 7:00 pm



Global People's Climate March

Sunday November 29
Cities around the world

International Socialist events



Why is Canada bombing Syria?

A discussion of Harper, Islamophobia, & Imperialism
Tuesday October 6 at 6:30pm
Spartacus Books: 3378 Findlay St, Vancouver



After the election: next steps in the fight against austerity and climate change

Thursday October 22
7pm in Toronto
For details visit www.socialist.ca

Socialist Worker

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PROTECT SCHOOLS

by CHANTAL SUNDARAM

On September 1, the start of the school year for Quebec primary students, nearly 20,000 people surrounded 260 public schools across Quebec in a human chain, each in their own neighbourhood. That was one out of 10 schools protected that day, by those who best understand why schools need protection.

It was initiated by a group of Montreal parents, joined by teachers. The target was the cuts to the primary and secondary school system by the Liberal Couillard government, and the turnout exceeded even the most optimistic predictions.

Quebec’s Liberal Minister of Education, François Blais, accused parents of manipulating kids for political ends: “What disappoints me is using children for slogans they don’t understand, to repeat half-truths that they can’t understand.” Pascale Grignon, parent spokesperson, responded that these comments sickened her because it is foremost children who are targeted by the budget cuts to school boards.

And in fact, Quebec parents are not the first to understand this.

Lessons

Parents in British Columbia brought their kids to “play dates” to support BC teachers on strike for better teaching and learning conditions like smaller class sizes a couple of years ago. And at several secondary schools in Ontario last spring, students demonstrated support for their teachers by refusing to participate in things like class trips not run by their teachers, who were refusing extracurricular activities in order to secure a contract that would allow them to deliver the education students deserve. And during the successful strike by Chicago teachers in 2012, teachers, parents and students built a strong coalition to protect public education.

Ontario’s 55,000 Education Assistants—who have been without a contract for a year and began work-to-rule on September 10—would do well to remember the potential for such public support. They are key to providing resources to children with special needs, the ones that are on the frontline of harm in Quebec and other provinces where the cuts have targeted such “frills.” Parents understand this in Quebec: the human chain is not just about opposing cuts but supporting the teachers they know are being pushed to their limits to do the best for their students.

In Quebec, the movement against austerity has been very smart about clearly linking good public sector jobs to good public services, and opposing cuts to both. The “human chain” is another great example: not only does it protect the schools from neoliberal attacks from the outside, it unites teachers, parents and kids from the inside. It doesn’t manipulate kids, it gives them a voice they wouldn’t otherwise have.

TOXIC TOUR 2015



by JESSE MCLAREN

On September 5 over 500 people joined the annual Toxic Tour of Canada’s Chemical Valley.

Organized by Aamjiwnaang and Sarnia Against Pipelines (ASAP), the toxic tour exposes the companies driving the climate crisis, the environmental racism they impose on Indigenous communities, and the growing resistance.

CO₂lonialism

Chemical Valley, in southwestern Ontario, produces 40 per cent of Canada’s petro-chemicals, and includes more than 60 industrial facilities—which completely surround Aamjiwnaang First Nation.

As the organizers explain, “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.” While the settler village of Blue Water was relocated a generation ago, Chemical Valley continues to expand and poison Aamjiwnaang—unleashing daily doses of environmental racism.

As the Toxic Tour showed, massive refineries loom over the community baseball field and basket-

ball court, and encase the community cemetery—continuing to poison those whose lives were cut short by toxins.

Along the way, community members told their experiences of being poisoned by chemical releases and the local hospital having no idea what the cause or treatment was. None of these companies have taken any responsibility, so sisters Vanessa and Lindsay Gray have raised their own funds to test the water for chemicals.

The tour passed by multiple signs warning of hydrocarbons, and by factories bearing the names of the major polluters—including Dow chemical, Suncor and Imperial Oil. But despite the endless stretch of refineries there was not a worker in sight.

While the NDP and Green parties oppose some of Harper’s pipelines, they support refineries supposedly because of jobs. But the petrochemical industry is the least efficient job creator, and it destroys the planet on which all our jobs and lives depend. As one community member reminder us on the tour, “the earth is the economy.”

Resistance

As well as exposing chem-

ical colonialism, the Toxic Tour revealed the growing resistance. As ASAP explained, “Aamjiwnaang has fought back. Grassroots members have done speaking tours, petitions, lawsuits, rallies, blockades, scientific testing, and built networks of supporters to help share the story of what is happening to our lands, and our people.”

Vanessa, Lindsay and other local organizers have not only exposed Chemical Valley’s impacts on their own community, they have also helped build the climate justice movement across the region against Line 9 and tar sands.

This growing climate justice network rallied the largest Toxic Tour to date—with buses from Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Kitchener Waterloo, Guelph and London. Anger against environmental racism was matched by climate justice inspiration.

Along the tour, the lifeless factory sounds were broken by political hip hop and climate justice chants: “No more chemicals in the valley! Clean water, clean air, healthy families!”

For more information visit aamjiwnaangsolidarity.com

STICKING WITH THE UNION

Carolyn Egan

No jobs on a dead planet

“No Jobs on a Dead Planet! Trade Union Climate Summit” was the name of the labour conference that took place in Paris recently 80 days prior to the United Nations Climate meeting COP 21.

Union members from across the globe came together from the Philippines, Brazil, India, African nations, the United States, Canada and many more. There was an urgency to the discussions recognizing the natural disasters that have been devastating the lives of working people and the poor because of climate change.

“Unions have been disappointed to see that workers and their families have been left out of the draft climate agreements and have called on the Presidency to ensure just transition language is reinstated,” said the general secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation.

Wars, the refugee crisis, the ongoing attacks of corporations and governments through the austerity agenda are making the lives of ordinary people more and more desperate. The ruling classes in every country are ignoring the devastation of our climate in the name of increased profits.

The whole issue of climate jobs must be front and centre, as well as public ownership of our natural resources. Trade Unions for Energy Democracy has been raising these important points and developing educational presentations and actions involving rank and file members. These issues cannot be left to the leadership but must involved those whose lives are directly effected.

Leap manifesto

As this was happening in Paris, a press conference was taking place in Toronto presenting the Leap Manifesto, a call for a Canada based on caring for the earth and one another.

A number of months earlier a two-day symposium was held here with representatives from indigenous groups, environmental organizations, unions and some

local community groups to discuss their visions for a sustainable future and to dialogue about differences past and present.

It was a productive coming together of people many of whom had never worked together before. Out of it came the organizing for a climate justice march which brought out 10,000 in July. This was much broader than the original meeting and drew out a very diverse gathering.

The march was not meant to be a one off and work continued. The Leap Manifesto was a product of the ongoing dialogue, and incorporates a strong, anti-racist class perspective recognizing the inherent rights of indigenous peoples and takes a strong stand against the austerity agenda.

The old divisions between “jobs and the environment” are disappearing. Trade unionists, community organizations and environmentalists with the active involvement and leadership of indigenous peoples are coming together in a strong united front to take on governments and corporations who are trying to drive us all down.

The manifesto states that research shows that it is feasible for Canada to get 100% of its electricity from renewable resources within two decades and demands that it start now and that communities should collectively control these new energy systems. It called for programs to build energy efficient homes, high-speed rail and affordable public transit in place of pipelines and exploding trains that endanger and divide us. It also called for a national child care policy and other services that are desperately needed. It declared that “austerity is a fossilized way of thinking that has become a threat to life on earth.”

This is a call to action and town hall meetings will be taking place across the country to organize locally. “Now is the time for boldness. Now is the time to leap.”

Visit leapmanifesto to sign on

FIGHTING SEXISM ON CAMPUS

In response to an anonymous blog post threatening violence against women in the Departments of Sociology and Women’s Studies at UofT, a mass and march reclaimed campus as a safe space.

Organized by the women’s caucus of CUPE 3902, there was also support from CFS students and campus Steelworkers.

While Harper has defunded women’s organizations, he has designated as “charitable organization” the Canadian Association for Equality, a so-called “men’s rights” organization that has been establishing a presence at UofT.

In 2012 campus protests exposed the reactionary backlash of “men’s rights” groups, which use the rhetoric of equality to attack feminism and scapegoat women.

It’s no coincidence that the emergence of these

sexist groups on campus would pave the way for threats of violence against women. But the mass rally and march today showed the determination to drive misogyny off campus.

After acknowledging the Indigenous territories the campus occupies, and denouncing the disproportionate levels of violence directed as Indigenous women, the rally heard from grad students from the Department of Sociology. They read an open letter in response to the attacks, vowing not to be silenced and to uphold their right—and the rights of all those who identify as female and all those who experience oppression—to attend school and work without fear.

The rally also challenged the administration’s approach of simply increasing the numbers of police—who have already stated there’s “no credible threat” despite

the online threats calling for “killing feminists” and specifying which departments.

Rally speakers like city councilor Kristen Wong-Tam recalled the 1989 Montreal massacre, while NDP candidate Jennifer Hollett promised an NDP government would launch an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and increase the number of shelter beds for women.

As the rally MC explained, “the solution is not increased security but coming together and eliminating misogyny.” So the rally spilled out into the street and marched through campus, chanting “We are UofT, we fight against misogyny! We are UofT, show your solidarity!” and reassuring students on campus that “UofT, we got your back.”



SocialistWorker

MAKE THE LEAP!

by Parry Mudhar and
Bradley Hughes

“This is our sacred duty to those this country harmed in the past, to those suffering needlessly in the present, and to all who have a right to a bright and safe future. Now is the time for boldness, now is the time to leap.” -The Leap Manifesto

While NDP leader Mulcair is attacking Harper for not getting oil pipelines through the regulatory process fast enough and Green Party leader May proposes that Canada needs more oil refineries, there is an exciting new political project in Canada that takes climate change seriously.

The Leap Manifesto is a collaboration of many individuals and groups who put it together during a weekend conference earlier this year, and following the 10,000 strong March for Jobs, Justice and the Climate. The result is an exuberant proposal to take on the challenges we face and in facing them build a better future for us all. The subtitle says it all: A Call for a Canada Based on Caring for the Earth and One Another

Climate justice

The Leap Manifesto is summarized by fifteen demands, and as it should, it starts with recognition of the First Nations with a call to fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. As well, the Manifesto demands that “Indigenous Peoples should be first to receive public support for their own clean energy projects. So should communities currently dealing with heavy health impacts of polluting industrial activity.

The demands also include



starting the shift to clean energy immediately and aiming for 100 per cent renewables by 2050, training and resources for workers in carbon intensive industries for clean jobs, upgrading infrastructure to deal with our new extreme climate, a program to build energy efficient homes and retrofit existing ones, and building high speed rail and affordable transit.

The justice part of a just transition shines through the manifesto. Because so much of the work of caring for each other is unpaid work done by women the manifesto calls for a discussion on introducing a guaranteed annual income. Canada’s devotion to war and fossil fuels is creating

refugees and the manifesto demands immigration status and full protection for all workers and calls on Canada to welcome refugees and migrants. Reducing military spending will simultaneously reduces Canada’s ability to continue its tradition of wars for resources and will help pay for the transition from fossil fuels that we so urgently need.

Make the rich pay

The Manifesto outlines the ways we could pay for these demands and on the webpage includes a report by the Canadian Centre For Policy Alternatives (CCPA) with more details. The short version is that we can achieve the goals if we eliminate useless govern-

ment spending. Eliminate the decades of tax cuts for the rich and corporations, eliminate subsidies to the oil and gas industries, and increasing the royalties that corporations pay when they make profit of natural resources.

In the CCPA report the authors discuss introducing a progressive carbon tax and increasing it to \$200/tonne. The progressive part is that half of the income from the tax would go to low and middle income people, those who have made no profit from the climate crisis. The other half would go to fund the Leap Manifesto demands. This would be a huge improvement over the provincial carbon tax in BC that is at \$30/tonne and

does not go to green projects at all. Over all, the CCPA calculates that the revenue generating proposals in the Manifesto could bring in around \$50 billion per year, and dramatically increase as the carbon tax increases.

Reform and revolution

These are fairly straightforward proposals to deal with the problems in our society that many people can see. The only thing that makes them radical or extreme is that they go against the common sense that the profits of the 1% should outweigh the needs of the rest of us. But that common sense is built into our every institution from the family, to schools, through

our workplaces, and into every level of government. Unmasking the defense of profit woven throughout our society will be a big job.

The manifesto began as a press conference, and calls for town hall meetings to discuss what this leap will mean in every community. We will need more than this. The opposition to this will be fierce, and the propaganda organs of the 1% have already started. The Globe & Mail editorial was headlined, “Leap Manifesto gets poor marks for timing and content, otherwise fine.” A National Post columnist compares it to the records of Mao and Stalin and writes that it would require the sorts of living conditions found “in places like sub-Saharan Africa.”

If the Leap Manifesto gathers the support and organizing talent it deserves, from labour and community organizations across the country, we will see even more resistance from the corporate parties and the state itself. Its demands have already gone far beyond the NDP platform, and its set of demands would challenge whoever is elected next month. To mobilize enough people to overcome this opposition, as we organize and discuss, we will be able to see how little democracy we are allowed in our communities, and workplaces and schools. As we discuss how to increase that democracy in order to implement the Leap Manifesto, we will see that we can rely on each other, and it will become apparent how little we need our bosses and the whole apparatus that sustains the power of the 1%. Then the real challenges will begin.

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Harper out, refugees in!

by Graeme Cheadle and
Eleanor Riley

The Harper government has fueled the refugee crisis by supporting war abroad, refused to open the borders to refugees, and scapegoated and deported refugees who have made it into Canada. But an explosion of rallies from coast to coast show that people across Canada support refugees.

Vancouver rally

Impassioned speakers at the rally led the crowd of 600-700 in chants of “Refugees welcome!” “Freedom for refugees!” and “Alan should be here!”

Local representatives of the host nations of what is today called Vancouver (the Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh) and other indigenous activists welcomed the crowd, and

bestowed a ceremonial gift of tobacco to members of the Kurdi family.

From there a boisterous march snaked its way to the Canada immigration offices at Georgia and Hamilton streets. More speakers led the crowd in criticism of Canada’s increasingly hostile position toward refugees, pointing out that Canada accepted over 60,000 refugees from Vietnam between 1978 and 1980, and in one 4-day period alone actually processed 1,200 refugee claims—more than the entire number of Syrian refugees admitted into Canada in the year 2013.

Finally the march ended with song, as the crowd joined in the old spiritual “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” with the lyrics amended to “Refugees are welcome here/mother earth

is everyone’s home.” It was an inspirational moment for everyone, and those present left feeling determined to make all necessary efforts required to improve Canada’s abysmal record on refugees.

Ottawa rally

Approximately 300 people gathered for a lively rally in Ottawa, featuring speakers from Amnesty International and No War Paix.

Amid calls for the government to let in more refugees, organizers urged the crowd to go out and vote in the upcoming election. Though some tension regarding various flags marred an otherwise peaceful event, media attention and the focus of the rally stayed on the subject of refugees, the ongoing crisis and our responsibility as Canadians.

The organizers, three

strangers who met two days before the event was organized, have promised to keep the pressure on politicians during the election period—perhaps through another rally or event.

Many in the crowd expressed their desire to sponsor, donate and above all help refugees. Though drawn together by shock and sadness at the image of the dead little boy, organizers and the crowd remained positive that change could be made—especially in an election year, when all eyes are on our politicians.

NDP leader Tom Mulcair rightly announced that he would withdraw troops from Iraq and Syria, but regardless who wins the election the the anti-war and migrant justice movements will need to keep mobilizing to stop the wars and welcome refugees.