

VOTE LIKE AN EGYPTIAN



PHOTO: MATT JIGGINS

This election we can dash the hopes of the two corporate parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives. This is an exciting time for progressive politics in Canada and Quebec. Everywhere people are rejecting the old corporate parties and their agreement on war, inflated military budgets and cuts to social spending.

The Liberal and Conservative parties operate as an informal corporate coalition no matter who gets more votes. Harper could not have extended the war in Afghanistan without Liberal support. Ignatieff's attack on the Tory corporate tax cuts is purely for show. The Liberal Party

track record of rewarding its big business buddies is similar to the Tories; both parties have been cutting business taxes for decades.

The fossil fuel industry scoops at least \$2 billion in subsidies per year. Like Harper, Ignatieff is gung-ho on the tar sands, and neither of them will hurt oil company profits in order to avert climate change.

Tories and Liberals alike slander anyone who dares criticize the apartheid state of Israel. Previous Liberal regimes supported Israel's illegal expansionist policies, but paid lip service to Palestinian rights. Under Harper, that pretense is

gone, and Canada has become Israel's most uncritical ally.

Bay Street and the oil patch might prefer Harper, but they won't lose sleep if Ignatieff heads the next government. So voting Liberal to keep out Harper won't change parliament all that much. Which is why the unprecedented leap in popularity of the NDP is so exciting.

Winds of change

Despite the claim that the recession is supposedly over, for most people, life is just as hard and getting worse. The platitudes offered up by the ruling classes don't fit with the reality of most people. At the same time, a

growing number of people are outraged by the record profits and enormous salaries of the fat-cat executives. The mass sentiment against corporate tax cuts speaks to this anger.

The NDP is benefiting from a new mood of hope across the country, but the wind that fills the NDP sails is blowing across more than just Canada. The lift in the NDP comes from a new global movement for change.

When the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt erupted, millions in Canada and around the world celebrated. Across the Arab world, dictatorships and monarchies that have ruled for decades are being rocked by pro-

test and have been overthrown in Egypt and Tunisia. This has given people the sense that change is possible.

Likewise, in Wisconsin—people around the world were electrified by this enormous show of resistance in the belly of the beast. People are beginning to get a sense that life doesn't have to be as it is. Not only does everyone want change, but we can all see that it is possible.

In Quebec, the NDP has campaigned against the Afghanistan War, respected Quebec sovereignty, and benefited from the provincial left alternative Quebec solidaire, emerging as the only alternative to Harper. So all these factors—the Arab revolutions, Wisconsin, Quebec have helped shape the current electoral moment. For millions who have been aspiring for something more than what the Tories and Liberals are offering, there is no doubt that the expectations and aspirations that will embody every NDP vote are far higher than what's been promised in the NDP election platform.

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When the NDP does increase its share of seats in Parliament, the only way it will be able to push for real change (since the bosses, the media, and the Conservatives and Liberals will all be undermining them from the start) is to build support outside parliament for what it wants to do inside it.

That means we must all continue to mobilize and build the movements after the election, we cannot leave it to parliament. There will be tremendous pressure for the NDP to back down, only if we can produce more pressure, can we get real change. Public sector workers must be ready to strike to protect their wages and public services. Doctors and nurses must organize for more funding for health care. Students need to strike for lower tuition fees and grants not loans. Everyone should support the postal workers in their fight against two-tiered wage system and privatization.

This is the method that Egyptians and Tunisians are using to push their revolutions forward. They are not content to wait and trust that freedom and democracy will be delivered to them, they have continued to organize protests and strikes to make sure that they benefit from the revolution they have won. This election—vote like an Egyptian!

What next for the orange wave?

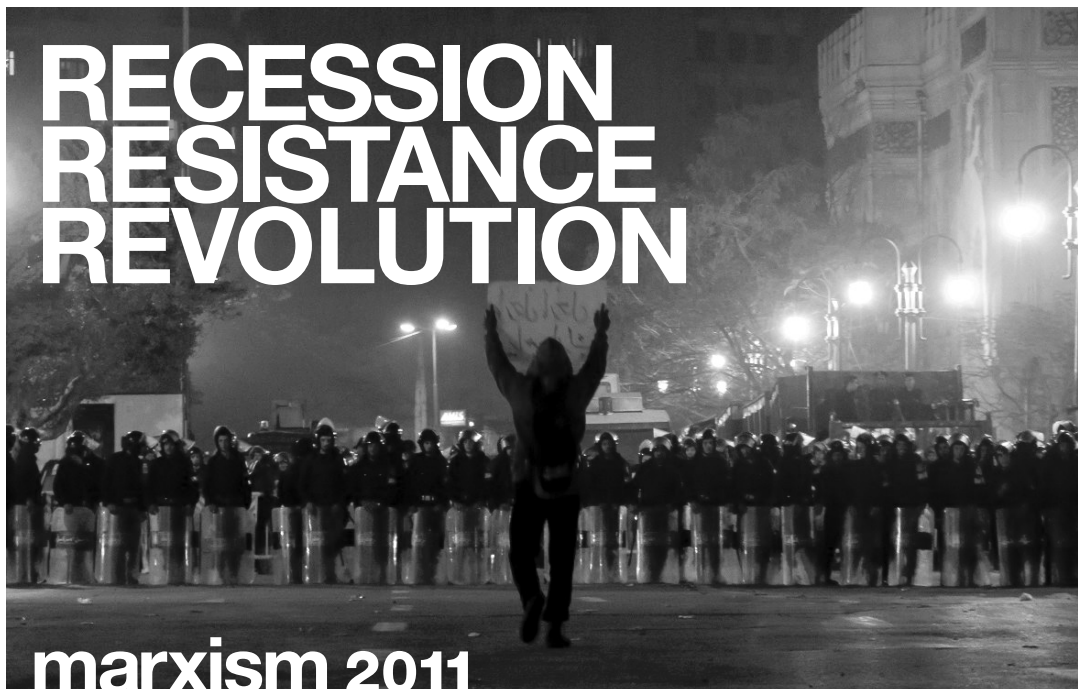
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