

Who would  
Justin Trudeau  
bomb? PAGE 6



Anti-racists protest  
in Vancouver  
& Toronto PAGE 8



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DON'T LET THE RIGHT DIVIDE US

# FIGHT RACISM



## The dead end of road tolls

John Bell on Mayor Tory's  
proposed regressive flat tax

Page 2

## Protests rock South Korea

650,000 people took to the  
streets in the capital Seoul

Page 3

## Trump and the far right

Faline Bobier covers the  
growing resistance in the US

Page 4

## The fight for \$15

Alia Karim & Peter Hogarth  
discuss working class unity  
and workplace fightbacks

Page 5

## Liberal agenda

An analysis of Trudeau's  
neoliberal program

Page 8

**W**ith the new year upon us, Trump's election casts a worrying shadow – in the US, and around the world.

In Canada, Conservative leadership candidate Kellie Leitch is pushing racist "Canadian values testing" for immigrants. Just as Trump shifted the political spectrum to the right in the US, Leitch is using his playbook of Islamophobia and bigotry to bolster her fortunes and harden up racist sentiment.

The appearance of white supremacist leaflets and posters in different parts of the country, and an uptick in reports of racist incidents, has left

many fearing the growth of a hardened racist movement.

The spectre of the 1930s, of xenophobia and fascism, is on many people's minds.

There is certainly reason to be worried. The crisis of capitalism is driving people to despair, and the failure of traditional reformist parties to provide a meaningful alternative has left the door wide open for the populist right to make gains.

But this does not mean that Trump – or Trumpism – is unstoppable.

As Gary Younge writes in *The Guardian*, "The right is emboldened but it is not in the

ascendancy. The problem is that the centre has collapsed, and liberalism is in retreat."

The traditional parties have delivered nothing but austerity for many years.

In spite of campaigning in favour of stimulus spending to boost the economy, Trudeau is on track to continue much of Harper's agenda of diverting money from social programs towards military spending.

The failure of the NDP to connect with people's anger at years of austerity, and their embrace of neoliberal prescriptions, caused their disastrous showing in the 2015 federal election. Alberta Premier Rachel Notley's embrace of

"business as usual" on tar sands expansion is squandering an opportunity to pave the way for a just transition away from the dead-end of oil.

In these conditions, the right seeks to channel anger into scapegoating and bigotry.

But these conditions can also push people to the left. There is a huge audience for a progressive alternative based on solidarity against austerity and racism, as both Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn's campaigns showed.

The challenge ahead for the left is to build the fight against racism and islamophobia, while also fighting for a socialist alternative.



# The dead end of road tolls

by **John Bell**

When Toronto Mayor John Tory proposed tolls for the two main commuter arteries leading into Toronto, the Don Valley Parkway and the Gardiner Expressway, he sparked a debate which has shaken up the “progressive” community.

The majority of “left” City Councillors capitulated to the call for the \$2 per drive toll. That vote came in the context of a budget debate which portrayed the city as broke, demanding cuts of 2.6 per cent across the board. Transit fares have increased 10 per cent; as the city scrambles to pay for the new Presto fare payment system and other major capital projects, billions are required just to maintain existing, aging infrastructure.

Tax cuts brought in by Rob Ford and previous administrations – in particular cuts to commercial and industrial tax rates, and bargain basement charges for developers – left the city without revenue generating tools. Those tools were badly needed because financial support from higher up the government food chain that once supported the city are drastically reduced or gone altogether.

Public transit is the best example. Before the 1995 election of Mike Harris’ Tories, the Ontario government paid 25 per cent of capital costs and 20 per cent of operating costs of the TTC. Harris forced municipal amalgamation, and cut transfer payments for things like public transit. Today Toronto’s transit receives the smallest subsidy per rider of any major North American city.

The burden of paying for transit was shifted from society to the individual; between 1990 and today fares went up 200 per cent, far surpassing the rate of inflation. TTC fares are among the most expensive in North America.

Federal and provincial governments that claim they cannot afford to underwrite public transit have been generously cutting taxes for the rich, and for corporations, while isolated taxpayers pick up the burden. Between 2000 and 2014 Canadian corporate tax rates were cut in half; in the same period taxes for working people remained virtually stagnant. At the same time tax loopholes and use of offshore tax avoidance havens have skyrocketed. Canadian corporations avoid paying between \$6 billion and \$8 billion each year thanks to these tricks.

This is the context in which road tolls appear: relentless service cuts and user fee increases for working people and a system rigged in favour of the corporate elite.

## The Debate

The most vocal left supporter of road tolls is Yves Engler, co-author of *Stop Signs: Cars and Capitalism on the Road to Economic, Social and Ecological Decay*. His four-part series in defence of tolls, on [rabble.ca](http://rabble.ca), argues that toll

opponents “have objectively allied themselves with the private car’s awesome political, cultural and ideological power.”

As proof Engler describes how North American cities were redesigned around the private automobile. He argues, correctly, that capitalism maximizes its profits by foisting the broader social costs on the public: building and maintaining infrastructure to benefit the car, and the environmental consequences of fossil fuel burning private transportation.

I know of no opponent of road tolls who would not agree with the broad strokes of this argument. The private automobile is massively wasteful, toxically dirty, and utterly unsustainable. But, without any evidence, Engler spends a lot of words to portray critics of tolls as either ignorant or willing dupes of the auto lobby:

“Left-wing opposition to tolls disregards the longstanding financial incentives, notably road and mortgage subsidies, for people to purchase large single-family suburban homes. But, it’s also a brazen denial of auto hegemony.”

“Calling a toll a ‘flat tax’ is a tacit acceptance of a transport system where roads, highways and parking are endlessly subsidized (through public funds or hidden in prices everyone pays in higher store prices, rent, etc.)”

Engler portrays the “suburbs” as relentlessly right-wing, racist wastelands.

“Conducive to consumerism, disconnected and depoliticized, the suburbs are bastions of conservatism and infertile grounds for social movements to back [sic] the scale between rich and poor.”

“Right-wing politics reign supreme, intensifying as suburbs sprawl further outwards.”

As proof he cites the absence of protests outside urban centers. No one walks, so no one reads posters. There are no public centers for gathering. And suburban and ex-urban community elect only right-wing politicians.

It is true that activists in the suburbs face challenges to organizing, and it is true that social justice actions in these areas are rarer – but they do happen. Social justice activists might find it educational to escape their inner-city comfort zones the next time they organize something. And of course Engler doesn’t consider the kind of action that happens most often in the suburbs: strikes.

Engler is so focused on the car that you’d think suburbanites didn’t exist outside them. Tell that to the tens of thousands of people in suburban Mississauga who ride the bus to work each day. Where he considers people at all, it is to condemn them guilty of supporting or surrendering to “car culture”. They aren’t people with families and responsibilities, necessities and limited options for meeting them. Above all they aren’t workers who have the potential to change their lives.

Engler begins Part 3 of his series: “There’s no doubt tolls hurt poor people, but a car-dominated transportation system does far more damage and everyone who wants a more just society should support measures that help rid our over-heating planet of private automobiles.” That’s a hella big “but” – perhaps the poor should be grateful their suffering will bring social justice.

That “but” shows up whenever Engler wants to gloss over the burden on working class commuters: “To the extent lower income folks drive the Gardiner Expressway or Don Valley Parkway a \$2 toll is obviously a greater burden (though income-contingent tax rebates can remedy this). But driving and income are inversely correlated. Poorer people own fewer vehicles and drive less since shoes, a bike, or bus pass are cheaper than a personal car.”

Whether downplaying the hardship on workers and the poor, or trying to justify privatization (“...often the less public space there is in a neighbourhood, the more pleasant it is...”) Engler’s approach is mired in his abstract “car culture” analysis.

If it were just Yves Engler arguing for tolls – yes, regressive flat taxes by another name – I would ignore him. Sadly, he speaks for far too many who consider themselves progressive or on the “left”. For them the working people stuck in cars on the DVP or Gardiner are the problem, certainly not actors with the potential to solve the problem.

There are no alternatives for workers having to commute into the city. Public transportation is scarce, underfunded, overburdened and inadequate. Living in the city to eliminate the commute is increasingly unlikely; the average Toronto one-bedroom apartment now rents for \$1500 per month. The condo building boom has seen almost no new rental housing created for decades.

Our opposition to tolls should demand: first, build adequate public transport with full funding from senior levels of government; second, implement a public housing program to increase urban housing density with good, affordable rental units. Closing off-shore tax avoidance loopholes would pay for the whole shebang.

When, and only when those alternatives are in place can we talk about strategies for reducing traffic. Sure, these are difficult demands that would require a lot of organizing. But if no one from the left raises these alternatives, imposing tolls will drive overburdened working commuters into the waiting arms of some home-grown Trump surrogate.

Are workers capable of self-emancipation from the automobile? Or do they have to be dragged kicking and screaming to their salvation by enlightened “progressives” like Engler? These are the questions at the heart of the tolls debate.

## Raising funds, awareness, confidence & solidarity

by **Valerie Lannon**

On November 30, the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation (COTTFN) had its Supreme Court of Canada case heard against Enbridge (and indirectly the National Energy Board and the government of Canada) for lack of consultation over the NEB decision to flow tar sands oil across sovereign territory.

COTTFN was looking to raise over \$400,000 to cover legal expenses. In total about \$150,000 has been raised. Activities by Toronto 350 directly raised over \$30,000, plus much more through funds given directly by donors made aware of the campaign through thousands of information leaflets distributed by T0350 and other groups.

We obtained contributions from trade unions and student unions, from special events like a dinner, political theatre, and by “bucketing” at 13 events.

We went first to local unions (e.g. in CUPE or University of Toronto) so that we could later have a better chance of receiving funds at the regional level.

We encouraged volunteers to work on activities with which they felt most comfortable. But some deliberately went outside their comfort zone knowing that important political and funding points needed to be made with their union or student local.

We met weekly, using our work plan as a guide, and ensuring weekly approval from COTT about our proposed activities. We recorded all our activities and funds raised on the T0350 website ([www.toronto350.org/chippewas\\_of\\_the\\_Thames\\_First\\_Nation](http://www.toronto350.org/chippewas_of_the_Thames_First_Nation))

## Challenges

We continue to have difficulty reaching wealthy donors, like celebrities who support indigenous rights, to give the financial assistance needed. COTTFN is working with their friends at Standing Rock to discuss this aspect of fundraising.

And more volunteers are always helpful to increase the reach of the campaign.

Fundraising provides a superb opportunity to involve volunteers with different backgrounds and skills. It means reaching out to workers to help them make links between their own struggles with those of Indigenous peoples and climate justice. In early 2017 we will continue this important work to support indigenous rights and fight the climate crisis.

## Sign the pledge to stop the Pipeline!

**With our voice, in the courts or the streets, on the water or the land. Whatever it takes, we will stop the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion.**

<http://bit.ly/2irvPTn>  
<http://www.coastprotectors.ca/>

# Protests rock South Korea

by Workers Solidarity

For the past eight weeks mass protests have rocked South Korea demanding the resignation of the president Park Geun-hye.

On December 10, 650,000 people took to the streets in the capital Seoul, despite the parliamentary vote to impeach Park the previous week.

People were angry to see Park—and her government—refusing to step down.

Park has brazenly submitted to the Constitutional Court, a body which needs to ratify the impeachment, that she had “done nothing wrong.” Park’s prime minister, Hwang Kyo-ahn, is now acting president and has made clear that he would continue her policies.

The establishment, from the right-wing press to the official opposition parties including the social-democratic Justice Party, has argued that people should allow the prime minister to stabilise the country and wait for the constitutional court to decide.

Last Saturday’s protesters defied that idea, marching towards the prime minister’s office and the constitutional court as well as protesting outside the presidential residence as usual.

People shouted, “Arrest Park, prime minister Hwang should also step down, the constitutional court should not delay ratifying the decision.” The number of protesters was much larger than the organisers expected, reflecting the anger and potential behind this movement.

A woman spoke on behalf of the families of victims of the Sewol ferry disaster that cost 305 lives. She said, “It is shame that Park and Hwang are out there while KCTU trade union federation president Han Sang-Gyun is still in jail. It is Park who should be arrested and Han should be released!”

The majority of the South Korean ruling class now seems to be prepared to save its own skin by removing Park and her immediate cabinet colleagues. But many people call Park’s policies “accumulated evils” and want them scrapped along with Park.



Park has been pushing through labour “reforms” and cutting welfare to maintain bosses’ profits at a time of deepening economic crisis. Park has also been pursuing policies to push South Korea closer to the interests of US imperialism.

The official opposition parties are reluctant to support the demand for halting “labour reforms”, closing US military bases or even freeing the jailed KCTU president. They voted for impeachment only when they were forced to and are refusing to demand the Prime Minister’s and his cabinet’s resignation, a key demand of the movement.

NGOs are still arguing that the movement needs to work with these parties.

## Movement

But Stalinists, previously aligned with the NGOs, are starting to vacillate because they feel the movement needs to attack the Prime

Minister.

Revolutionaries can provide the movement with vital demands that target Park’s policies in order to mobilise people to more actions in the streets, schools and workplaces. These demands are different from the ones being raised by reformists, including the NGOs, which are basically election platforms for the next presidential election.

The Workers’ Solidarity newspaper sells several thousand copies on every protest, and our key members are in the very midst of organising the protests.

We know socialist politics and organisation are very important. We need an independent revolutionary organisation capable of pushing the demands of the movement forward.

●Workers’ Solidarity is Socialist Workers’ sister publication in South Korea. This is shared from Socialist Worker (UK).

# Protests in the Philippines

by Anton Cu Unjieng

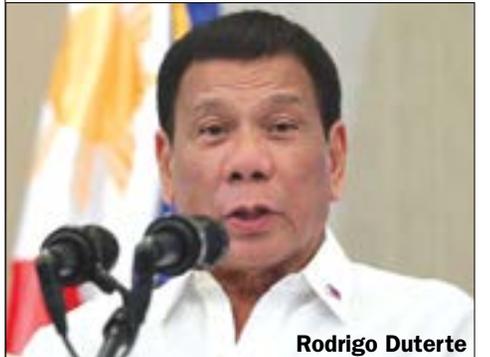
Since the elections in May, the Philippines has seen a growing and popular authoritarianism. Rodrigo “Digong” Duterte—who has been called the Filipino Trump—swept the elections on the basis of promises to “forget the laws on human rights” in a drive to clean up drugs by murdering enough drug users and pushers to “fatten all the fish” in Manila Bay.

Even before taking office he made it known that neither civilians nor police would be prosecuted for the extra judicial killing of suspects. Since taking office in July this year, human rights watchdogs estimate that more than 5,000 people—mostly the poorest of the poor—have been killed in these so-called “extra judicial” murders. Remarkably, Duterte’s almost unprecedented approval ratings seem to have actually been helped rather than damaged by these murders.

Since taking office, no serious opposition has emerged against any of the administration’s policies. That is until November 18, when the nation was rocked by large and spontaneous protests against the sneak burial of the late dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, in the Heroes Cemetery (Libingan ng mga Bayani, or LNMB). The largest of these gathered in front of the memorial to the first EDSA revolution and reached over 5000 at its peak, populated mostly by youths and students. These protests represent the first militant challenge to any of the regime’s policies and may prove to be a turning point in building the opposition to Duterte.

## The Marcos-Duterte connection

This is an event long in the making. It has its roots in the concerted and largely successful attempt by the Marcoses to claw their way back into politics. The dictator’s children, Imee and Bongbong, and his widow, Imelda Marcos have all



Rodrigo Duterte

held public offices of various significance. Perhaps most terrifyingly of all, Bongbong almost won the vice presidential race in the last election. At the time of writing he is preparing a challenge to the count, and the president has openly stated that Bongbong may indeed become vice president yet.

But the Marcoses’ political resurrection will not be safe unless they can bury the spirit of the EDSA revolution that deposed the dictator himself.

## A turning point

And so yes, Marcos was buried. But far from marking the death of the spirit of EDSA, they have re-awakened it. Not only has this been a setback to the Marcoses, it has also provided the left with the first opportunity to make arguments against Duterte himself to an angry and receptive audience. Clearly, there is a big difference between saying that people are opposing a particular Duterte policy and suggesting that they are breaking from Duterteism wholesale. But there is a massive opportunity to use this as leverage against Duterte’s political project.

## SYRIA

# Stop Western intervention

by Sid Lacombe

**The Syrian government assault on Aleppo resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe. The offensive was accompanied by the same brutality we have seen far too often since the Syrian revolution rose in 2011. Estimates of casualties are notoriously difficult to verify, but civilian deaths always peak when an offensive squeezes civilians into smaller and smaller areas.**

The western media described the carnage in great detail—a courtesy never afforded to the people of Fallujah or Tripoli or Sana. That sort of hypocrisy is all too common. When describing the evils of far away and unaligned regimes, the gloves are off while the war crimes of the western powers themselves are glossed over.

Nevertheless, the brutality of the assault caused people across the world to call for the west to “do something” to end the brutality. It is an understandable sentiment, but one that carries many risks when being implemented. That’s why we have and remain opposed to any western intervention.

US-led NATO powers are not benign humanitarian states who have simply made some mistakes over the past few dozen wars. They are aggressive imperial powers whose ultimate goal remains control of resources, markets and strategic areas for the benefit of domestic capital. The Middle East is in chaos, not because there has not been enough western intervention—but because there has been far too much.

The illegal and brutal invasion of Iraq, which killed a million people, facilitated the rise of Al-Qaeda in Iraq and ISIS in

the first place. Prior to that, decades of western manipulation—from sanctions to regime change to outright war—attempted to control every country in the region. US sponsorship of the Israeli state and of the dictatorships in the region has created the powder keg that blew up with the arrival of the Arab Spring in 2011.

The sheer scale of US-led military interventions over the decades has caused some to see the intervention of Russia on the side of the Syrian government as some sort of counter balance to the untrammelled imperialism of the US. This misses a crucial point about the nature of imperialism and allows for the crimes of the Russian and Syrian state to go unchallenged. It is also a negation of any discussion of class, which is crucial for our understanding of how the world works.

The ruling classes in Russia and Syria are the enemies of working people as much as the rulers of the NATO forces are. Their ascendancy will not mean liberation for the people of Syria or anywhere else in the region. Russian control simply shifts the burden of imperial proxy occupation from one set of ruling stooges to another.

And we also need to be clear that the US wants no part in supporting a true Syrian revolution from below. The history of US interventions from Latin America to the Middle East to East Asia has always been led by the destruction of any democratic forces that would seek independence from US domination.

If a US “No-Fly Zone” were implemented, it would only ever be used to serve the interests of the US empire, not the interests

of the people in revolt. In Libya, an uprising under threat became a call for NATO intervention that left the country in ruins, killed 30,000 people and left the people, revolutionary or not, beholden to anti-democratic forces that are making deals with the west.

In the case of Syria, a western no-fly zone also has the added complication of requiring direct military confrontation with Russia. The consequences of that potential inter-imperial clash would be enormous and would lead us to a world of conflict that would dramatically shrink the spaces open for an internationalist left globally.

At the Cairo anti-war conferences in the mid-2000s, the phrase “The road to Jerusalem goes through Cairo” was heard again and again. The phrase came to mean that the liberation of the people of Palestine and of the whole Middle East cannot be achieved unless the Arab dictatorships are overthrown by revolutionary forces on the ground.

At that time, the destruction of the Iraqi state by the US was proof that western invasions, while they may topple dictators, will not bring freedom to the people. Similarly, the Syrian state was included in the list of dictatorships that needed to be eliminated to allow for true liberation to occur.

The only solution must come from the people. As Afghan revolutionary Malalai Joya said, “No nation can donate liberation to another nation. These values must be fought for and won by the people themselves. They can only grow and flourish when they are planted by the people in their own soil and watered by their own blood and tears.”

“This is how fascism comes to America, not with jackboots and salutes (although there have been salutes, and a whiff of violence) but with a television huckster, a phony billionaire, a textbook egomaniac ‘tapping into’ popular resentments and insecurities, and with an entire national political party—out of ambition or blind party loyalty, or simply out of fear—falling into line behind him.”

The above was written by American neoconservative Robert Kagan in May 2016, while Trump was still on the campaign trail. Trump has been labelled a fascist by many in the aftermath of the election, as he stuffs his Cabinet with extreme right wingers, racists, misogynists and corporate hucksters. And definitely the election of an openly racist, sexist buffoon who spewed his vile rhetoric against Mexicans, Muslims and women throughout his year of campaigning has rightfully struck fear into the hearts of many inside and outside the US.

But Trump is part of a global phenomenon which we need to understand if we are to build an effective fightback. There is a worldwide rejection of the neoliberal consensus that has reigned for the last 40 years. Workers in country after country have seen their living standards plummet, their social safety nets savaged, and the future for their children looking ever bleaker.

This disaffection with “the way things are” is erupting in both right- and left-wing directions: in France, Greece and Hungary we have seen the disturbing increase in popularity of proto-fascist or openly fascist political formations.

But at the same time, and often in the same countries, we have seen significant sections of the population move to the left. In Greece, there have been mass strikes and demonstrations to defend wages and living conditions, as well as defending the rights of immigrants and refugees.

Millions of South Korean students and workers have demonstrated over the last eight weeks, demanding the resignation of the president Park Geun-hye, who has been pushing through attacks on workers—“labour reforms”—and cutting welfare at a time of deepening economic crisis.

Similarly, in the US, we need to look beyond the election results to see the wider picture. In the same year as a bigoted billionaire was elected President, millions of ordinary Americans looked to the message of democratic socialist Bernie Sanders as the way forward. Socialism, banished from the mainstream for 50 years, reappeared as working class Americans took to Sanders’ message against the greed of bankers and corporations and for the end of inequality.

It was a great disappointment and a betrayal when Sanders, after losing the nomination, stood in support of Hillary Clinton and urged his followers to do the same. Clinton represents all that is wrong with the neoliberal agenda and everything that Sanders’ supporters were fighting against: Wall Street, the greed of corporate America, the destruction of the environment and of working class people’s lives and communities, the racism at the heart of American power.

It should be no surprise that half the American electorate chose not to vote at all. Only about one quarter of eligible voters elected Trump, and Clinton actually won the popular vote, with about 2.7 million more votes than Trump.

It is true that among Trump voters there will be a hard core of racists, homophobes and sexists, who could be the soldiers in a new fascist movement. But to write off the white working class as a whole as racist is not to understand why in the Rust Belt states—which essentially won Trump the election—people who had previously elected Obama (twice) in those same states might have turned to Trump.

Trump promised to “make America great again,” to invest in infrastructure projects to put people back to work, to bring back all the coal-mining jobs that have been lost in states like West Virginia, Kentucky and Pennsylvania. But Trump will not come through with any of those promises.

Clinton wasn’t even promising to bring back jobs: as she said repeatedly during her campaign, “America is already great.” Tell that to the Latina single parent trying to raise her kids on a fast-food worker’s salary; to the older out-of-work factory worker with no pension, living on the edge of homelessness; or to the parents and family members of the myriad young Black men murdered at the hands of racist police.

**Fascism**

It’s important to understand that Trump is not a fascist. He is a member of one of the twin ruling class parties of American capitalism, which is why Re-

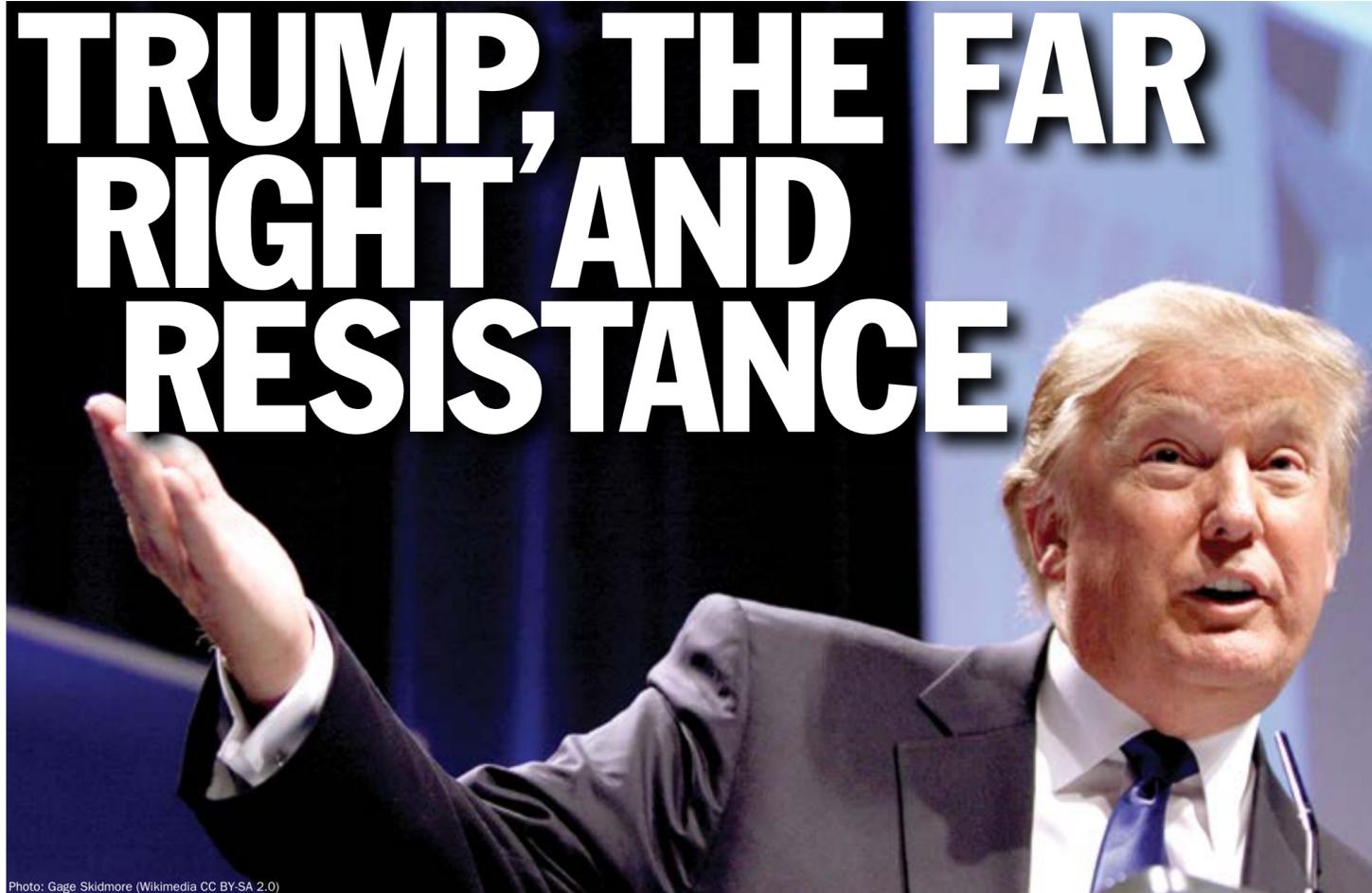


Photo: Gage Skidmore (Wikimedia CC BY-SA 2.0)

# ‘Trump has definitely moved the political spectrum to the right and in doing so has opened the door to right-wing racist scum.’

publicans by and large stood behind him, although he was not their preferred candidate. Trump has definitely moved the political spectrum to the right, and in doing so has opened the door to all kinds of racist scum—including the Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, who congratulated Trump on his win.

But Trump does not have an army of fascist Stormtroopers, which is one of the characteristics of fascist parties. These parties have an electoral face (such as the National Front in France) but they also have a hard racist core that serves to intimidate and use violence on the streets to build a street-fighting cadre.

The ultimate goal of fascism, as Trotsky wrote in the 1920s and 1930s—watching from exile the rise of Hitler in Germany—is to smash working class solidarity and power, in order to disarm the only class that has the potential to halt fascism in its tracks. Trotsky described fascism as a system that capitalists will turn to if they feel there is no other way for them to hold on to their power. They would prefer to hide behind the sham of bourgeois democracy but will discard it if necessary.

Trump is definitely a symbol of capitalism in decay, but he is not backed by a fascist army and

doesn’t have that kind of power. It’s important to understand this so as not to be paralyzed by fear.

**Turn despair into hope**

Thousands of Americans protested against Trump the day after the election. People poured into the streets, including thousands of high school students, to say “Trump is not my president.” “Refugees are welcome here,” “Black lives matter.”

The plans for a January 21st Women’s March on Washington is another sign of the movement responding in the only way that can really challenge Trump’s politics and fight against the opening up of space for real fascists.

A united fightback can turn despair into hope and arm us for the struggles ahead. Recent events at Standing Rock in North Dakota, where Indigenous communities camped out for months to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline, along with hundreds of allies, provide a beacon for the kind of movement we need. The water protectors continue to defend not just their own land and people, but the right to clean water and a real future for all of us. Two thousand veterans of America’s many unjust wars decided to support justice and oppose the greed and environmental destruction of the fossil fuel companies.

A former US Marine who travelled to Standing Rock explained why he was going: “Our police departments, that we pay for, are acting as private security, dressed up in uniform and go out and execute violence on peaceful American citizens.” National Nurses United donated \$50,000 to support US service veterans who went to Standing Rock as peaceful, unarmed defenders for the water protectors.

The election of Trump is a huge setback for Black people, people of colour, the LGBTQ community, women and a multiracial working class that will gain nothing from his presidency—in spite of any promises made during his campaign. But if the movement can come together to fight any attempts to roll back gains, as well as to push for another kind of society, one where inequality and oppression are things of the past—to fight for socialism, as opposed to the dead-end of capitalism and the frightening possibility of fascism raising its ugly head—we can look to a future where Donald Trump and his ilk are consigned to the dustbin of history.

# The contradictory appeal of Trump

by Bradley Hughes

“My Contract With The American Voter begins with a plan to end government corruption—and to take our country back from the special interests.”

“A Trump Administration will renegotiate NAFTA and, if we don’t get the deal we want, we will terminate NAFTA and get a much better deal for our workers. We will also immediately stop the job-killing Trans-Pacific Partnership.”

“We will cancel billions of dollars in global warming payments to the United Nations, and use that money to invest in America—including the roads, ports, bridges and waterways of North Carolina.”

“We will stop illegal immigration, deport every last criminal alien, and dismantle every criminal gang and cartel threatening our citizens. When we win, you will finally have a government on YOUR side, fighting for YOUR community, and protecting YOUR family. We will also repeal the Obama-Clinton defense sequester and rebuild our badly depleted military.”

—Trump speech in North Carolina two days before the US election.

Trump addressed problems that face workers, problems that the other candidates refused to address. As the remarks above show, he talked about class issues, but usually had a reactionary solution. On the one hand he talks about stopping trade deals, saving jobs, and building infrastructure, and then he talks about mass deportations, removing funding for mitigating climate change and increasing military spending. This

is alongside his many public racist and misogynist statements.

People are not stupid, and people in the US and Canada can feel that their lives are getting worse—and it’s obvious that the mainstream parties won’t talk about this or offer solutions. So it’s not surprising that when someone does point out that the elite don’t care about the problems most of us face, they will get a hearing.

Too often on the left, we can mistakenly assign people to a category or label based on their opinion on one issue like pipelines or immigration. In reality, people have a variety of positions from across the political spectrum. Trump knew this, tapped into real concerns and then offered reactionary solutions.

As the Italian revolutionary Antonio Gramsci wrote in The Prison Notebooks, in a discussion of working class consciousness, “One might almost say that he [the worker] has two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with all his fellow workers in the practical transformation of the real world; and one, superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed.”

Our challenge on the left is to listen to what workers are saying and provide solutions that make sense and will make their lives better. We will never build a mass revolutionary party if we dismiss the opinions of the very people we need to bring into our movement.



Photo: Fibonacci Blue (Flickr, CC by 2.0)

# Fighting racism and fighting for \$15

by Alia Karim & Peter Hogarth

What was true before the US election, and is even truer today, is that if we want to win we need to unite the working class through collective struggle.

There have been numerous debates on the motivations of US voters in support of Donald Trump; many arguing that white voters were motivated by Islamophobia, misogyny, and homophobia, and in defence of white nationalism. Articles by liberal commentators declaring “there is no such thing as a good Trump voter”, and “stop asking me to empathize with the white working class,” miss the point as much as the pundits asking people to “give Trump a chance.” The election revealed a sharp divide between the living conditions and aspirations of the majority of people in the US and liberalism’s inability to give them any solutions beyond more of the same.

The election of Trump and the apparent growth of the “alt-right” movement, that has claimed him as their hero, has had serious consequences. This is evidenced by a dramatic upsurge in hate-crimes and open racist sentiment across the continent. For many, especially those facing the brunt of the alt-right’s hate, Trump’s election is a chilling reminder of deep-rooted racism in the US. Many are calling it a “whitelash” based on white fears of losing privilege in a country thought to be theirs. Forty-two per cent of eligible US voters didn’t vote at all, many finding the vitriol of a sexist billionaire as off-putting as the insincere platitudes of the Clintons’ long history of “pay-for-play” dealings.

At the same time, many have pointed out that Trump’s win was a result of the desperation of working class people who have experienced layoffs, underemployment, precarious work, and the flight of industrial jobs. This narrative played out in a few key “rust-belt” states, many that previously elected Obama, but in 2016 swung the balance in favour of Trump.

Labour-activist Buzz Malone recently argued: “People who have had little or no interest in voting before came out and voted because their health care premiums have skyrocketed (they blame Obamacare), or they remember losing their factory jobs when Bill Clinton’s NAFTA took effect. Many of them were Democrats once (or still are). They voted in overwhelming numbers, not for Trump, so much as against what they perceive to be the pre-ordained establishment candidate being crammed down their throats.”

He claimed that American voters did not necessarily support Trump’s character, particularly his racist and sexist sentiment, but they did want to see some kind of economic change. This was a hope and change that Barack Obama offered but never delivered.

Let’s be clear, Trump will not deliver this change either. He has played on people’s fears and desperation against a candidate that simply offered the status quo. A quick look at his own business history (bankruptcy of his Atlantic casinos, consistent failure to pay employees and contractors, shifting personal debts to the casinos while collecting millions of dollars in salary and bonuses) and his cabinet selections of Goldman Sachs and Fast Food executives show he has no interest in creating policies that favour the working class.

While many working class voters may have cast their ballots in the hope of Trump’s empty promises of a return of well-paying coal mining or manufacturing jobs, he also mobilized racist and sexist fears to stoke division and identify some “other” as the reason for America not being “great again.” Crucially, the point here is not to say that working class interest is more of a significant factor than racial identity. Rather, it is to state that it is in the interest of the ruling class to divide workers based on their race, gender, sex, (dis)ability, location, and status. When workers are pitted against each other it is much easier for the ruling class to dominate and exploit them. There’s no doubt that Trump will try to reinforce these divisions so that oppressed and exploited groups don’t organize together against him.

It is also worthwhile, amidst all the post-election “hot takes” and “think pieces” to look at some of the bright spots in the 2016 elections; numbers that reveal a great deal about the potential for working class people, of all races and genders, to unite, fight and win something much better than was on offer between the two presidential candidates.

Despite Trump’s victory, there were several notable minimum wage victories that labour and community groups have won. On election night, the following measures were passed:

- Arizona, Colorado, and Maine workers will see their minimum wage rise to \$12.00/hour by 2020—all gains of more than \$3.75/hour.
- Washington’s minimum wage will increase to \$13.50/hour by 2020—an increase of \$4.03/hour.
- Arizona also passed mandated sick-leave measures.

In total, at least 2 million Americans will get raises after ballot measures passed. These are significant increases that add to the momentum

of the \$15 minimum wage legislation passed in New York State, Los Angeles, Seattle, SeaTac, and San Francisco. These were also clear working class demands that motivated people to come out and vote (many who voted for these ballot measures left their choice for president blank). These were also fights largely led by immigrant and racialized women workers.

What this shows is that when people are motivated by clear class demands, collective struggle can unite people across racial boundaries. This is why the Fight for \$15 is so important. It has the potential to overcome sexist and racist divisions through a shared fightback that brings together union and non-union workers while pointing to the real division in America between the 1% and the 99%.

Undeterred by the election results, The Fight for \$15 continued to bring the heat to employers through their National Day of Action on November 29. Hundreds of activists were arrested in non-violent demonstrations in over 340 municipalities while they rallied in front of fast food chains and airports. Actions took place in Detroit, New York, Newark, Oakland, Chicago, San Diego, Cleveland, and Miami.

“We will take our first steps together to fight back for our families and communities,” Mary Kay Henry, president of the Service Employees International Union, told members in a call to join Tuesday’s events. “Together we will keep fighting for \$15, a union, racial, immigrant, and environmental justice.”

The coordinated effort of Fight for \$15 presents a unique moment for Canadian workers to act upon. Together we can build on the momentum of Fight for \$15 and fight the intimidation and fear presented by Trump’s win, the alt-right movement, and racist movements around the world. But to do that we must organize on the ground—in our workplaces, community and faith centres, unions, schools, and more.

This kind of organizing is an opportunity to build a coalition that unites racial, labour, and community groups across urban and rural divides. Workers across North America face increased unemployment and underemployment, low wages, the drastic increase of contract and temporary work, and constant attacks on workers’ protections. These sad realities can be mobilized by the right or the left; those anxieties can be organized for hate or hope. It is our job to make sure that we can create the kind of movement and political organizations that can point that anger where it belongs: against the racism, sexism and scape-goating of the 1% and their defenders.

## 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 transgender 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.



Photo: Tom Fennario

The victory of water protectors at Standing Rock, North Dakota is the first major victory in the post-election period in the US. While mobilization continues to ensure that the Dakota Access Pipeline is stopped for good, there are many lessons to learn from this courageous struggle. It shows that state violence can be resisted, that pipelines can be stopped, and that unity and solidarity can win. With Justin Trudeau's approval of the Kinder Morgan and Line 3 pipelines, these lessons of successful struggle will be vital. As Grand Chief Stewart Philip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs said about these upcoming battles, "This is about water versus oil and life versus death, and ultimately, survival versus extinction."

## WHO WOULD JUSTIN BOMB?

# Liberals redirect health funding to buy warplanes

by Parry Singh Mudhar & Bradley Hughes

In November the Chief of the Defense Staff along with three of Trudeau's Liberal ministers announced they will change Harper's plan to replace Canada's CF-18 fighter jets. Instead of replacing them with F-35 warplanes, the Liberals plan to acquire a starting "interim fleet" of 18 Boeing Super Hornets, while they make up their minds as to which warplanes to buy.

The Liberals estimate the costs of these warplanes will be over \$10-billion by 2020. This is \$274 per person in this country.

The previous Conservative government set aside \$16-billion to acquire the controversial F-35 jets; however at \$10-billion for a small "interim fleet" the Liberal's election promise of utilizing more cost effective measures for the fleet's replacement may come short once the total projected costs for the entire fleet are calculated.

Both Defense Minister Harjit Sajjan and Public Works Minister Judy Foote declined to put a financial cap on the plan's projections citing they needed time to speak with the U.S government and Boeing.

Death and destruction doesn't come cheap. Each Super Hornet can be equipped with multiple air-to-air, air-to-surface, and anti-ship missiles as well as guided and unguided bombs each with the intent of ending human life. These warplanes are designed to carry 1000 lb cluster bombs costing over \$400,000 each and 2000 lb cruise missiles costing over \$1 million each. Each warplane is equipped with a rotary cannon that fires ¾ in (2 cm) explosive bullets at a rate of 6000 rounds per minute. These bullets can cost as much as \$5 each.

Although the Liberals and the Tories may disagree on which warplane is best fitted to Canada's numerous wars, they definitely agree that they prefer to spend money on warfare rather than healthcare.

Shortly after the warplane announcement, the Liberal government met with the provinces to demand that they accept the Harper government's planned cut to increases in the Canada Health Transfer. The Health Transfer has increased by 6 per cent per year, but before they lost the election, the Tories had planned to lower increases to 3 percent a year. The Liberals have announced they intend to stick to the Tory plan. The current health transfer is \$34 billion a year. By implementing the Tory cut to the increases the Liberals hope to save \$11 billion by 2020. Which is nearly the same amount that they intend to spend on new warplanes.

As usual our government is taking money that could fund infrastructure at home and using it to buy armaments that they will use to destroy infrastructure overseas. We need a working class alternative to the corporate parties and their endless wars.



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# The Vimy Trap is an anti-war celebration

by Pam Johnson

This timely book drops a grenade on the almost sacred notion that the WWI battle at Vimy Ridge was the moment of Canada's "birth as a nation".

With the centenary of this event fast approaching – April 9, 2017 – and planning for a nationalistic extravaganza that started under Harper and continues under Trudeau, this is a moment to learn the true history of this battle. Authors, Ian MacKay and Jamie Swift deftly undo the myths of "vimyism."

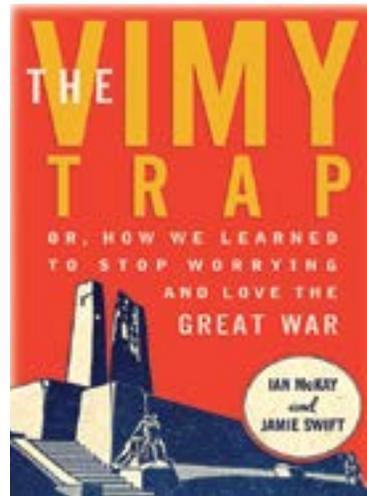
The facts of the battle are undisputed. On April 9, 1917 the Allies, under British command, including four Canadian battalions, went "over the top" and caused the Germans to retreat at Vimy Ridge in France. The total gain of land: 4,500 yards. The total Canadian casualties: 10,600 including 3,500 dead.

Some Canadian historians and governments have claimed that this was the battle that turned the tide of war. Based on extensive research, McKay and Swift handily debunk this notion by noting that nearly every major historical account of WWI lists Vimy as a minor and inconclusive battle, if it is listed at all.

Moreover, the initial enthusiasm in Canada for involvement in the war in 1914 turned quickly when the horrific slaughter and carnage, squalid conditions of soldiers and inept actions of officers became apparent. To make matters worse, PM Robert Borden reneged on a campaign promise and called for conscription in 1917, sparking riots by Quebecers refusing to be forced to fight for the British.

McKay and Swift describe the events of the aftermath of the war in which many who initially supported it changed their minds. The casualties were so high that nearly every family was affected or knew some one who was. Returning soldiers, many wounded and unable to find work, rioted.

Group of Seven artist, Fred Varley,



returned from the war and produced his most famous painting *For What?* He said, "We'd be healthier to forget [the war], and that we never can. We are forever tainted with its abortiveness and its cruel drama."

Canadian veteran, Charles Yale Harrison, wrote, *Generals Die in Bed*, that according to the authors "demolished the central theme of war commemoration: the equality of sacrifice in death." The novel's scathing indictment of the WWI military elite became an international bestseller.

Even the post-war Prime Minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King, actively monitored the development of the Vimy monument in France to insure it bore no hint of militarism or any glorification of the battle. Both the artist Walter Allward and King, intended it to be a monument to peace.

The whitewash of the real history and glorification of Vimy did not begin until decades after the war. Swift and MacKay's research tracks the development of "vimyism" beginning in the 1960s in response to Cold War militarism and the build up to Canada's centenary in 1967. The myth of a martial nationalism is embodied in the slogan "Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific," a glorification of the fact that a Quebec unit, the Van Doos,

fought with English Canadian regiments at Vimy. But, the authors note that it is hard to imagine "francophone Quebecers cheering on the enforcers of armed conscription."

It would be the publication of Pierre Berton's *Vimy* in 1986 that would lend the most momentum to vimyism. Berton championed the notion of the "birth of a nation" in this hugely popular work. But, the authors note that his intention was not so much war glorification as the attempt to conjure a unique Canadian character. The valour of Vimy was based on the fanciful notion of the adventurous, frontier spirit of Canadians according to Berton.

Berton's myth-making about the war and Canadian character have become almost the official history now. Stephen Harper's Conservatives rode these myths to significantly ramp up martial nationalism to justify expanding militarism. Trudeau has followed in lock step and even upped the ante with new commitments of troop deployments to NATO and arms deals for Saudi Arabia.

This book is an important antidote to the war glorification and triumphalism that will be served up in April.

"Yeah, yeah, Vimy-fucking-ridge, I was there. 'Birth of a nation' they called it on TV, but I didn't see nobody being born, just a lot of people dying..." So says Rosie Rollins, in David Fennario's *Bosheviki: a Dead Serious Comedy*.

Anglo-Montreal playwright, Fennario, had put out the call for mass readings of his two WWI anti-war plays, *Bolsheviki* and *Motherhouse*, on April 9, 2017, to counter the nationalist extravaganza that the Trudeau government is planning for the Vimy centenary.

Help build a massive, noisy protest to challenge the spectacle of war!

● To find out more or to organize a reading in your area please go to: [www.vimyridging.weebly.com](http://www.vimyridging.weebly.com).



TCBN executive director Rosemarie Powell

## Toronto Community Benefits Network wins green jobs

by Carolyn Egan

In 2008 during the financial crisis, which saw the loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs in Canada and Quebec, an organization was founded in Toronto: the Good Jobs for All Coalition (GJFA).

It held a founding conference attended by over 1,000 trade unionists, environmentalists and members of the diverse communities which make up the city. Those present developed a shared vision of creating a new economy with good, green jobs for all. They came together recognizing that we were faced with an economic crisis, an environmental crisis and a crisis of equity in our society, and that we needed to build the unity necessary to overcome all three. It's a labour-community coalition which has made its mark on the city.

Strong relationships were built over the last eight years and one of the accomplishments was the founding of the Toronto Community Benefits Network, whose role was to ensure that the diversity of Toronto was fully represented in the massive investment in infrastructure that was taking place. Mass transit is a key part of building a green economy and pressure has been put on all levels of government to provide the resources to allow for significant expansion which will reduce the dependence on cars. This means jobs – good union jobs – but it was a question of who was getting them.

Outreach was done in the affected communities that the transit growth was impacting. Untold meetings took place with local residents and a priority of providing good, green jobs for racialized youths was decided upon. Years of negotiations took place with community pressure on both the provincial government and Metrolinx, the agency that was overseeing the expansion. A three year study was done by the GJFA with academics at a local university, which determined that green jobs were not going to racialized communities and it was imperative that this change.

A Community Framework was agreed on with Metrolinx in 2014, but there were no guarantees. Pressure continued and the TCBN wanted a minimum of 10 per cent of the hours on the Crosstown line to be done by workers from historically disadvantaged communities and equity seeking groups. Unions in the building trades came on board and after long negotiations an apprenticeship plan was agreed to with the consortium that was building the project, Crosslinx Transit Solutions. Interestingly, the jobs include those in administrative and technical areas, not only construction.

After a long battle, the Metrolinx board affirmed their commitment on not just the Eglinton Crosstown but on all future transit builds, which is a huge breakthrough. The provincial government, in a declaration signed by Metrolinx, the contractor, and others including the Toronto Community Benefits Network, agreed to a program of training and hiring workers from the above mentioned groups. The idea is to have apprentices and journeypersons from these groups in long term, skilled, union, climate jobs. This would never have happened if labour and community did not come together and fight for green jobs for those who were historically excluded.

In a city like Toronto, the environmental movement must make a priority of working with unions and racialized communities to work for climate jobs for all. In order to build a broad based movement for change it has to put the needs of working people in all our diversity first in organizing for climate justice, and push back against the corporate elites who are trampling on the rights of the Chippewas of the Thames, the Standing Rock Sioux, racialized youth and laid off tar sands workers. The corporations care nothing for the needs of the environment nor the needs of workers, Indigenous peoples or community members. Recognizing this and fighting for equity has to fully integrate into our struggle for change.

## Moonlight: beauty and complexity

by Faline Bobier

Moonlight, the second film by director Barry Jenkins, could be described as a coming of age film about a young Black boy living in Miami in the early 1980s, with a crack-addict mother and a tortured school life, where he is routinely bullied and called "fag" by his fellow students.

But the bare bones of description do no justice to the remarkable beauty and complexity that has been wrought onscreen by Jenkins and his co-writer Tarell Alvin McCraney. The screenplay for the film was based McCraney's play, *In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue*.

So much of Chiron's character is revealed, not through what he says, since he speaks very little, but through his physical presence and his gaze. This must have been a challenge for the three actors who incarnate the different ages of Chiron.



Chiron as a young boy is befriended by Juan, who finds him hiding in an abandoned building after being chased there by schoolmates. Juan takes him home and feeds him when Chiron refuses to say where he lives, wanting to hide out, at least for a while, from his mother's erratic behaviour. The way that Juan responds when Chiron asks him what a "fag" is, an epithet

he's been taunted with at school, shows empathy and understanding—behaviour which is not routinely portrayed or allowed in these kind of characters.

This is a film that rewards a second or third viewing because so much of what happens reverberates and echoes with the complexity and reality of what the filmmaker manages to capture on screen. The slow and sometimes dream-like camera shots, the achingly beautiful music and the integrity of Chiron and the other characters in *Moonlight* are a wonderful antidote to Trump America. These are the real stories of the people that Trump and his ilk want to demonize. They are a testament to the notion that Black Lives Matter and that they matter in ways that have rarely been explored on film.

● This is an excerpt of a longer review of *Moonlight*. Read more at [socialist.ca](http://socialist.ca).

# LIBERAL AGENDA LAID BARE

by John Bell

Just over a year after his government's election, the glow has faded from Justin Trudeau's Liberals. While the leader is left to try to double-talk and selfie his way into our hearts, look to his Ministers to reveal the real Liberal agenda: privatization, war, environmental destruction and precarity.

During negotiations over the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and European nations, Chrystia Freeland stormed out, fighting back tears, when the Belgian province of Wallonia blocked consensus. The Walloons had the nerve to demand protection for their trade union organization, defence of their social services and provision against privatization.

In other words the Liberal Trade Minister was outraged that Wallonia would not give up the very things you would like to think your government would be fighting to protect.

In the end a watered-down CETA was ratified, one that allowed jurisdictions like Wallonia to dismiss legal actions brought against it by corporations. But the deal let Freeland save face, and Canada to move on to try and finalize the even more unpopular TPP.

## War

Trudeau campaigned against the Iraq War and to scrap Harper's plans for F-35 fighter jets, but it turns out that "real change" just meant changing the nature of the war and the type of jet. Last year Trudeau simply tweaked Canada's involvement in the war in Iraq and Syria, and now the Liberals have announced they'll be spending more money on replacing CF-18 jets while buying 18 Super Hornet jets.

On November 11, the day to remember the "war to end all wars," Liberal Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan announced Canada will be sending troops to a number of unspecified African countries. And he wants to make it clear this is not peaceful: "These missions, all of them, have the level of risk where peacekeepers have been

hurt, they have been killed. And we've been looking at the risk factor in a very serious way... This is not the peacekeeping of the past."

## Environment for sale

Did you know that "environment" is just another word for "economy"? So said Liberal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna at the recent Canadian Climate Forum in Ottawa.

When asked directly if she supported new pipelines to carry tar sands bitumen to market, she replied: "People want to know they're going to have a job. A lot of people are just trying to get by every day, figuring out how they're going to put food on the table." She went on to explain that she was "as much an economic minister as I am an environment minister."

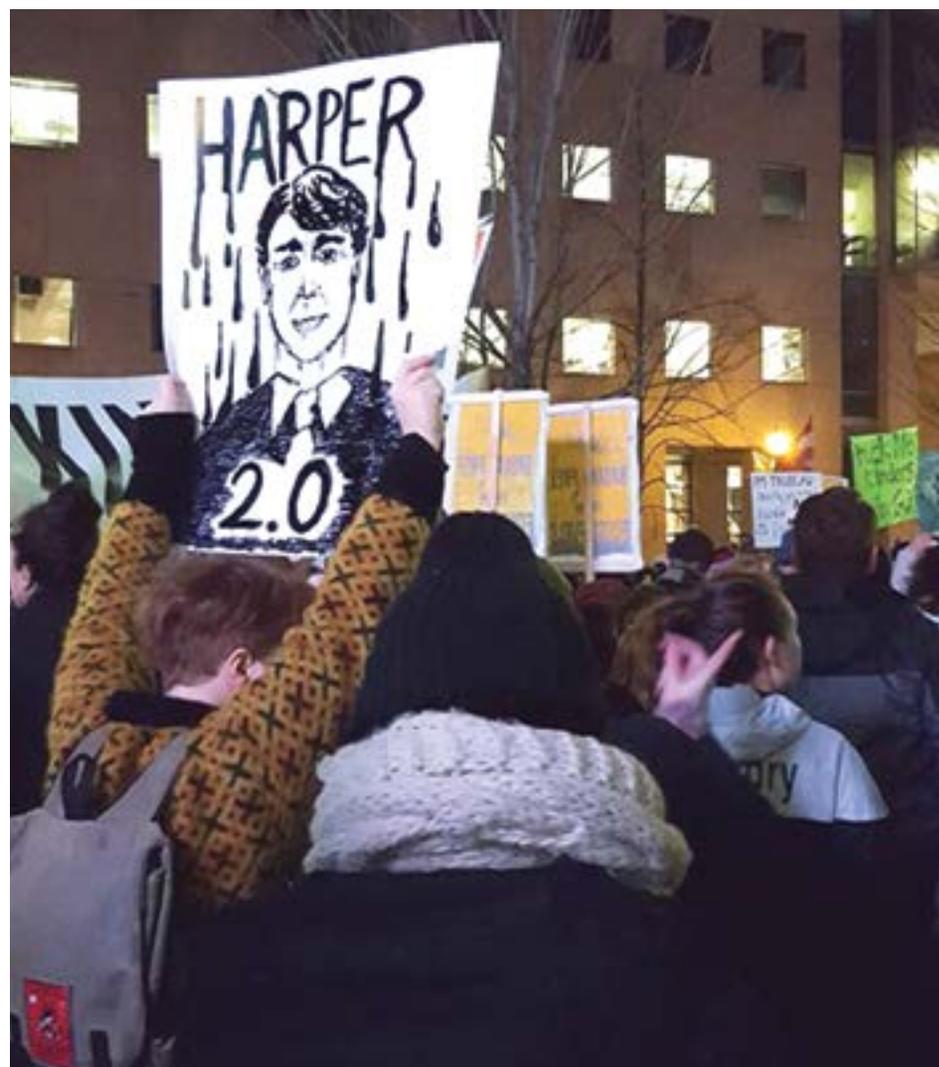
The Liberal message didn't go over well, and McKenna acknowledged that she feared she was losing support even in this middle-of-the-road forum. "I'm going to lose some people on the way," she admitted. Just so long as her Party didn't lose out on oil industry support, which they committed to by approving the Kinder Morgan and Line 3 pipeline.

## Get used to it

Those future jobs Enviro/Economic Minister McKenna is so concerned about will probably be part-time and short-term. So said Finance Minister Bill Morneau at a recent Liberal Party meeting in Niagara Falls. If you have a problem with that, well, get used to it.

"We also need to think about, 'How do we train and retrain people as they move from job to job to job.'" Morneau said. He also called for "a recognition that people aren't going to have the same pension benefits" as their parents.

Don't worry though, they will come up with some way to "soften the blow," although beating us in the first place does not seem to onW the agenda. He went on to crow about already announced tax cuts. This is the same Morneau who is on record saying: "Instead of expansion of the social safety net, there must be moderate cutbacks in social spending phased in over time."



Morneau—former CEO of Canada's biggest private provider of corporate pensions and benefit services—says that all this must come to pass. "Because it's going to happen. We have to accept that." Evidently precarious work is

beyond the ability of mere mortals to prevent. It must be ordained; there is no indication whether Morneau shifted his gaze heavenward as he spoke, or across the lake in the direction of Bay Street.

## Anti-racists protest in Vancouver and Toronto

by Michelle Robidoux

The election of Donald Trump has emboldened racists and neo-nazis everywhere – including in Canada. There are reports of racist incidents, including distribution of anti-immigrant flyers and posters, in a number of communities across the country.

But the anti-racist response has been rapid.

When racist leaflets demonizing Chinese immigrants were distributed in West Richmond, B.C., local activists organized and protested. Hundreds of people turned out, holding placards that read "Immigrants are welcome here" and "No racism".

Window signs saying "Richmond is a Racism-Free Zone" have been distributed widely and taken up in other communities.

Similarly, in Toronto's east end, community activists were quick to respond when white

supremacist posters appeared outside Parkside Elementary School. A rally was organized within days, and counter-posters were created and displayed around the school. City councillor Janet Davis and school board trustee Jennifer Story participated, along with many local parents and kids who were disgusted by the posters.

Since then, East Enders Against Racism have organized a number of local activities, including a book drive to get anti-racist books into east-end schools, and a renewed push to shut down the racist and misogynist local publication, *Your Ward News*.

And in Ottawa, there was a rapid mobilization right after the US election against the appearance of fascist graffiti at multiple locations, including a local mosque, a United Church, a private residence and a synagogue.

This response shows that there is an appetite

across the country to fight back against racism and fascism, wherever they appear. The forces that seek to channel anger at capitalism's failure to meet people's needs in the direction of scapegoating can be defeated.

Trump's election has given hate-mongers greater confidence, but if they are met with broad, organized resistance wherever they try to get a toe-hold, we can make sure they crawl back under their rocks.



Photo: Laurel Dykstra