

How Revolution Ended a War

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SAVE THE PLANET

STOP THE TRUMP-TRUDEAU PIPELINES

Trump has declared war on the planet. He appointed a climate change denialist to head the Environmental Protection Agency, and made deep cuts to water protection to further the coal industry. He appointed the CEO of Exxon-Mobil as Secretary of State, who will push for more oil wars.

Trump is trying to revive pipelines the climate justice movement stopped, including the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Keystone XL pipeline.

He is building walls to keep out climate refugees and others. He is trying to silence climate science.

When questioned about environmental protection, Trump said “We’ll be fine with the envi-

ronment. We can leave a little bit.” And that’s all that will be left of the environment if he gets his way. Even before Trump was elected, carbon emissions were heading towards climate chaos, and he has put his foot on the accelerator.

Trudeau no friend of climate justice

Trudeau came to office on a wave of opposition to Harper’s oily politics, promising real change.

He promised to respect Indigenous communities and to build a different economy. But he has done the opposite.

When Trump revived Keystone XL, Trudeau

reiterated his support for the project, boasting that “I’ve been on the record for many years supporting it”. Despite mass opposition to the Kinder Morgan pipeline, Trudeau has been pushing it.

When asked whether pipelines should be up to First Nations—as is guaranteed by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which Trudeau claims to support—he said, “No, they don’t have a veto.”

Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr even mused about the government defending pipelines by force, “through its defence forces, through its police forces.”

At the same time, the Liberals are doing nothing for the tens of thousands of tar sands

workers who have lost their jobs, who deserve a just transition to good green jobs.

All out April 29

That’s why April 29 is so important. It marks the 100th day of the Trump Administration. There will be a massive People’s Climate March in Washington, DC.

With Trudeau shoulder to shoulder with Trump, April 29 will be a key moment to build solidarity with the climate justice movement in the US while challenging our own climate criminals—and demanding alternatives including Indigenous sovereignty, a welcome for refugees, massive investment in green infrastructure and a just transition for workers.

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Climate and jobs platform

by **Bradley Hughes**

The International Socialists are too small to run in the upcoming provincial election in BC. However, we feel that the following planks should be in the platform for any party that would represent the working class. A complete election platform would cover much more than these few points.

\$15 minimum wage

Across Canada and the US workers are fighting for a \$15/hour minimum wage. This is barely lifts minimum wage workers above the poverty line, but it is a significant increase over the current minimum wage of \$10.85 and only \$9.60 for liquor servers. For each month that MLAs delay raising the minimum wage to \$15, the lowest paid workers will forego \$600 in wages. MLAs are paid over \$100,000 a year. Ask your candidates how they can justify making such wages while keeping minimum wage workers in poverty.

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 43 of the UNDRIP declares, “The rights recognized herein constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.”

Everything in the Declaration that falls within the responsibilities of the province should be enacted into law. That must include Article 14.3, that requires the state to provide “education in their own culture and provided in their own language.”

Article 26.1, “Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used” and Article 32.2, “States shall... obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories” would immediately bring a halt to destructive mega-projects like Site C Dam, the Kinder Morgan pipeline and the Pacific Northwest LNG terminal. All of which ignore Aboriginal opposition.

Tax the rich

The BC Liberals have given away tens of billions to the rich. It’s time to take this back. Income taxes on individuals making over \$100,000 a year (the richest 8%) should be restored to at least the rates used in 1999, when the BC NDP was in government. This would raise provincial revenues by \$2.15 billion.

Going back to the 1999 corporate income tax rate would increase revenues by \$2.9



Protesting the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline expansion

billion. This is \$5 billion more a year to make our lives better.

Climate jobs

We must cancel the environmentally destructive mega-projects that violate Aboriginal land rights.

The Site C dam, the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, and the Pacific North West LNG terminal, at their peak employment claim they will provide 21,500 mostly non-union jobs. Let’s put these construction workers, and many others, to work close to home in good paying union jobs.

The Columbia Institute reports that “retrofitting 100,000 homes per year in BC would keep 14,000 to 30,000 people directly employed.” For \$1.5 billion, 100,000 homes could be retrofitted a year, creating the same number of construction jobs as the combined total of the destructive mega-projects. The province could require that contractors be unionized, providing good union jobs close to where people live.

Expanding local public transit and adding rail links between cities and towns would

increase our standard of living, reduce green house gas emissions and provide good jobs. The Mayor’s Transit Plan for the Vancouver region will create 4,380 jobs per year. This is at a cost of \$530 million a year, plus money from the Federal government. Spending the same amount outside the lower mainland creates another 9,800 union jobs.

The Canadian Geothermal Energy Association has calculated that the same power produced by the Site C Dam could be created by multiple geothermal power plants. This would create 4,400 construction jobs, at a cost of \$400 million per year.

This spending plan would create 40,000 jobs and still leave \$2 billion to seismically upgrade our schools, expand our hospitals, reduce tuition fees, provide student grants in place of loans, build social housing, and more.

The only way to do this is to build a working class party in our workplaces, schools, communities. Such a party would fight for all these priorities between and during elections. The International Socialists want to build such a party. Join us!

Fight for \$15 in 2017

by **Peter Hogarth**

A two-day conference March 31 to April 1 brought together organizers from across Ontario to share and strategize on how to advance the demands of the \$15 and Fairness campaign.

Ontario

Food service workers from York University attended and led sessions throughout the weekend, reflecting on their successful victory of \$15 and health benefits for both full and part-time workers. Malka Paracha talked about “winning back her dignity” and becoming a “newly born leader, a newly born fighter of the fight for \$15” who could be an “encouragement for the rest of workers fighting.”

These discussions took place as the final recommendations of the Changing Workplaces Review (a report with a range of options to amend Ontario’s *Labour Relations Act*) are to be presented to the Ontario Ministry of Labour.

The goals of the \$15 and Fairness campaign are to organize enough pressure to extract legislative concessions, and to keep organizing so that a \$15 minimum wage and other important legislative changes become key issues in the next provincial election.

There are positive signs that the campaign is already having that effect. A recent article from the *Toronto Star* notes:

“‘Go bold or go home’ is how some key Liberals describe the next 14 months leading up to the election. The initial signs of the new plan will emerge in the April budget. First, Wynne may announce a raise in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour in 2018. A Forum Research poll last fall found 72 per cent of Liberals nationally and 84 per cent of New Democrats support the idea.

“The current minimum wage for full-time workers in Ontario is \$11.40 an hour and will increase to \$11.60 an hour on Oct 6. Alberta, which already has the highest minimum wage in Canada at \$12.20 an hour, has promised to raise it to \$15 an hour by next year.”

United States

Kendall Fells, national director of organizing for the US Fight for \$15, spoke at the conference. The movement in the US has been an inspiration worldwide, winning wage hikes for 22 million underpaid workers and making \$15/hour the new labour standard in New York, California, Seattle and Washington, D.C.

Both he and Betty Douglas described with pride the Fast Food worker strikes that happened in 340 cities across the US just weeks after Trump’s election, the successful campaign to hound and harass Trump’s labour secretary nominee Andy Puzder, and the upcoming April 4 Fight for the Dream action across the country.

As Douglas stated, “Racial equality and income equality go hand in hand and the Fight for \$15 and Black Lives Matter are two of the most powerful movements in the US.”

She described plans for the two campaigns to come together on April 4, the anniversary of Martin Luther King’s assassination, when thousands of underpaid workers, local racial justice activists, elected officials and clergy will hold rallies, marches, teach-in and other actions, culminating in a march on the Lorraine Motel in Memphis – where King was assassinated – to “continue Dr. King’s fight for economic and racial justice.”

Québec solidaire gains ground with Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois

by **Chantal Sundaram**

When Gabriel Nadeau Dubois, leader of Québec students’ magnificent rebellion against austerity in 2012, announced his intention to run as a candidate for Québec solidaire (QS) in mid-March, no one guessed the electric impact it would have.

A week later, over 5,000 new members had joined QS and hundreds more had renewed their memberships and sent donations to the “party of the ballot and the street.”

QS emerged out of the anti-globalization, anti-war and women’s movements. In just 10 years of its existence, it has continued to link struggles against austerity, sexism, racism, homophobia and climate change and has given a voice to those movements in the legislature, electing three MNAs.

One of them, Françoise David, founder of the World March of Women, recently retired for health reasons. GND will run in her Montreal riding of Gouin. He will also run for male co-spokesperson of the party.

Manon Massé, who represents another Montreal riding and who is also a leader on women’s issues, in the LGBTQ2S community and a champion of First Nations, Metis and Inuit self-determination, will serve as female co-spokesperson.

The third MNA, Amir Khadir, known for his work with Doctors Without Borders in Palestine and Iran, will run again in the Montreal riding of Mercier in October 2018.

In addition to the two spokespeople, the party has a chair who does not have to be elected; there is no single party leader.

In the Outaouais region, QS welcomed the

90 new members who live in the riding with a meet and greet at a local bar in Hull. It was packed and even drew people who had not yet joined. By the end of the evening, there were another 10 new members.

It was announced that students in the Outaouais region are holding a “red week” this spring to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Red Square movement. What better way to commemorate than to welcome GND and the grassroots struggle he represents to QS.

However, beginning on April 8 and continuing at the QS convention in Montreal May 19-22, QS will engage in an internal debate on electoral alliances and pacts to defeat the ruling Liberals in 2018. Hopefully the result will be to uphold QS as a party that does politics in a new and radical way.

Resistance to austerity and racism builds

by Kevin Taghabon

After nearly three months into the new political era ushered in by the shocking American election, the emerging fault-lines and crises around the world have become even more pronounced. Countries such as France, the Netherlands and Britain, conventionally considered stable in the international political order, have instead been experiencing shock waves of turbulence and unrest. Racists around the world are mobilizing, including across Canada, but there are also growing mobilizations against racism and the austerity agenda that drives it.

The fight against Trump

Trump is going on the offensive for the 1%, trying to ban Muslim immigrants, deport undocumented migrants, gut healthcare, approve pipelines, cut corporate taxes and give billions to the military. According to the Southern Poverty Law center hate crimes have spiked in the past year, mainly Islamophobic and white supremacist in nature. This has coincided with the high profile legitimization of politicians' xenophobia not only the US but across the West, including Canada.

But mass resistance has stalled many of Trump's initiatives like his Muslim ban – and driven his popularity to a record low of 36%. This has opened fissures in the Republicans, and the combination of opposition to Trump and splits on the right defeated his attempt to repeal Obamacare.

While the Democrats remain focused on Trump's scandals with Russia instead of building resistance to austerity, it is movements on the ground that show the way forward. Trump's election caused a spontaneous outpouring of protest, and this took the form of demonstrations at airports, Fight for \$15 strikes and protests on November 29th and the massive women's march on January 21st.

On April 4th activists with Fight for \$15



Tens of thousands joined protests across the UK on March 18th against racism, islamophobia and antisemitism.

and Black Lives Matter will join forces for the "Fight Racism, Raise Pay" mobilizations invoking Martin Luther King's fight for racial and economic justice. On April 29th, there will be a huge People's Climate Movement demonstration in Washington, DC and many other cities including Vancouver and Toronto.

Racism & resistance in Europe

Mainstream media claimed the Brexit vote was simply a racist vote against immigrants. But on March 18th, anti-racist organizers were able to pull 30,000 into the streets of

London for the March Against Racism. While the fascists tried to take advantage of recent attacks in London, anti-fascists drowned them out. "They have yet to benefit from the racism that the Tories and UKIP are pushing", said Weyman Bennett of Unite Against Fascism.

Similar anti-fascist mobilizations in Holland were key to defeating far right xenophobe Geert Wilders in the Dutch election. The far right has benefited from the Labour Party's commitment to austerity, but anti-racist parties also increased their vote as

opinions polarize. The Fascists pose a similar threat in France, with Marine Le Pen feeding off the mainstream party's support for austerity, Islamophobia and blaming of immigrants. But 15,000 marched in Paris on March 20th. As a Senegalese worker Lhadji explained, "We are told that 'our way of life' causes problems. But this is a racist excuse to divide and isolate immigrants. Unity is our strength and that is why we are organizing in our neighbourhoods with the help of left activists. We are demonstrating today to show that we will not be intimidated by the police."

Canada: racism and attacks on civil liberties

The Conservative Party's leadership race has been rife with anti-immigrant sentiment. This is encouraging ultra-right racist groups, who have begun organizing periodic protests across the country – including three in March alone in Nathan Phillips Square, Toronto.

These have been self-branded as "protecting free speech" against Motion-103, which simply calls on the government "to condemn Islamophobia and all forms of systemic racism and religious discrimination". The motion has been passed and the protests have continued, exposing them for what they are – public gatherings espousing racism.

Civil liberties

While the Liberals (with the support of the NDP and the Greens) passed the motion, they have done nothing to undo Harper era civil liberties-eroding laws.

Despite campaigning to reform the draconian national security Bill C-51 in 2015, Trudeau has not begun any repeal or reform effort. Now law, Bill C-51 disproportionately targets Indigenous and Metis communities in surveillance and actual speech criminalization. C-51 also opens the door for terror charges to be leveled against political activists.

Trudeau has doubled down on his anti-democratic poison. His government is currently leveling criminal charges against the Independent journalist Justin Brake for covering an Indigenous led resistance action in Muskrat Falls, Labrador.

Additionally he has taken VICE journalist Ben Makuch to court to force him to turn over private chat logs between himself and a source. The Ontario Court of Appeal shamefully sided with the RCMP and the government in a ruling that will chill press freedom. Turning journalists into evidence-collection arms of the state security is very dangerous.

Whistle-blowers, as well as sources in dangerous organizations, will be unwilling to approach journalists who research these issues.

Resisting austerity & oppression

Despite the spread of austerity and bigotry, there are significant movements of resistance. In Toronto, CUPE 416 fought off the continued privatization of garbage collection with the help of community organizations such as ACORN and the Toronto Environmental Alliance.

The privatization of Toronto Hydro was also stopped by a community-labour coalition. Aramark food service workers,



Solidarity outside Toronto mosque

largely women and racialized people with Unite Here Local 75, won a strike and wages will be going up to \$15 an hour by the end of the year. They had the support of students at York University and Fight for \$15.

International Women's Day

The annual IWD march in Toronto brought out a record 11,000, under the theme Stop the Hate, Unite the Fight, Build the Resistance. It was very diverse, and took a strong stand against Islamophobia, racism and violence.

Local anti-racist efforts are becoming increasingly organized. The March 4th protest against Islamophobia in Toronto had 1,000 activists out versus 40 bigots, caged in with police with bikes.

Formal organizing against the far-right has been carried out by various groups including the Coalition Against White Supremacy and Islamophobia, which drew 100 to its recent organizing meeting.

On March 21, the Toronto and York Region Labour Council and the Urban Alliance on Race Relations marked the UN Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination by packing Toronto City Hall Chambers, with three hundred people from many communities answering the call to "Stop the Hate". Labour and community activists, including an Imam, spoke as well as progressive city councillor Kristyn Wong Tam.

A five-point action plan, unanimously adopted after discussion, was sent to labour councils across the country to follow suit. Similar gatherings will take place in York region, Scarborough and Toronto's west end. Trade unions are coming forward to work on the ground with communities to build a strong movement against Islamophobia, racism and violence.

How Revolution Ended a War



by **Faline Bobier**

This is what Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin wrote about the First World War, the so-called “war to end all wars”: “The war of 1914-18 was imperialist (that is, an annexationist, predatory, war of plunder) on the part of both sides; it was a war for the division of the world, for the partition and repartition of colonies and spheres of influence of finance capital.”

For Lenin it was a matter of principle that socialists of all nations should not support their own side in such a war, since they would in essence be supporting the slaughter of workers in the “enemy” nations.

This was why he was shocked and disheartened when the largest social democratic (socialist) party at that time – the German SDP or Social Democratic Party – voted for war credits and to support the German ruling class in the slaughter that would come.

It’s not that Lenin supported one side over the other – he saw them all, especially and including his own autocratic, undemocratic, repressive state, as the warring band of brothers that Marx referred to:

“In reality, the object of the struggle of the British and French bourgeoisie is to seize the German colonies and to ruin a competing nation which has displayed a more rapid rate of economic development. And, in pursuit of this noble aim, the “advanced” democratic nations are helping the savage tsarist regime to strangle Poland, the Ukraine, and so on, and to throttle revolution in Russia more thoroughly.

The lesser evil

For us, the Russian social democrats, there can be no doubt that from the standpoint of the working class and of the labouring masses of all the nations of Russia, the lesser evil would be the defeat of the tsarist monarchy, the most reactionary and barbarous of governments, which is oppressing the greatest number of nations and the largest mass of the population of Europe and Asia.”

And although many socialists had supported the notion of revolutionary defeatism in the abstract, when the time came the vast majority

of them (apart from Lenin and the Bolsheviks in Russia) supported their own ruling classes in the attempt to wipe out workers of other nations in the name of patriotism and “love of country”.

When the war began, the majority of working class people from all nations were drawn into the patriotic fervour that often accompanies the drive to war, disguised as it is in the flowery words of courage, self-sacrifice and jingoistic nationalism.

‘Modern’ war

About 10 million people were killed or died, as a result of WWI. It was the first “modern” war that introduced killing on an industrial scale. This was combined with elements of 19th century warfare which translated into barbaric practices, such as generals intent on using cavalry and bayonets in a situation of entrenched warfare and machine guns. Soldiers would be sent out of trenches on mass to be mown down by machine guns on the other side. Millions of lives were lost and all for a few yards of gained territory.

As Trotsky wrote about the experience of the war, “‘Everything for the war!’ said the

“The history of a revolution is first of all a history of the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny”

ministers, deputies, generals, journalists. ‘Yes,’ the soldier began to think in the trenches, ‘they are all ready to fight to the last drop...of my blood.’”

However, WWI would end, not because world leaders recognized the pointless nature of the bloodshed but rather because ordinary soldiers mutinied and workers and peasants in Russia took up the cry of revolution. This revolutionary spirit spread to other countries and other armies.

The period before the outbreak of WWI

had not been one of social peace, particularly in Russia, where 1905 saw the first attempt at revolution (the Great Dress Rehearsal for 1917) with the creation of the St Petersburg soviet (workers’ council).

The soviets were grassroots organizations developed by workers themselves to take on the running of factories, workplaces and eventually even military barracks.

With the defeat of the St Petersburg soviet and the first attempt to overthrow the cruel tsarist regime, a period of reaction set in. However, this was not a permanent defeat and workers were again organizing before the outbreak of WWI.

The war itself would eventually act as a radicalizing force since ordinary Russians came to realize they were suffering on behalf of an aristocracy that had oppressed them for centuries and was more than happy to use them as cannon fodder in the folly of war.

Russian casualties were greater than those sustained by any nation in any previous war. Meanwhile, the Russian economy was hopelessly disrupted by the costly war effort, and in March 1917 riots and strikes broke out in Petrograd over the scarcity of food. Demor-

alized army troops joined the strikers, and on March 15, Nicholas II was forced to abdicate, ending centuries of czarist rule.

Provisional Government

In the aftermath of the February Revolution (so-called because of the Julian calendar), power was shared between the weak Provisional Government and the soviets of soldiers’ and workers’ committees.

The Provisional Government (led by liberals and reformist socialists) insisted on continuing

Russian participation in the war despite its now general unpopularity, but they too would be swept aside in October when the Bolshevik Party and the Russian working class would take control.

From the period of February to October 1917 membership in the Bolshevik party grew from 10,000 to 250,000. This was because the Bolsheviks’ slogan “Peace, Bread and Land” spoke to the real desires of ordinary workers and peasants: for an end to pointless war and the possibility of living truly human lives where they and their children might now live unburdened by the yoke of tsarist repression.

Self-determination

One of the first acts of the new government was to end Russia’s participation in the war. Of course, this was linked to a series of other changes led by Russia’s revolutionary government, which only became possible by ending the costly and deadly war: initiatives like launching communal kitchens and laundries to create the space for Russian women to truly participate in building the new society and breaking open the Russian “prison house of nations” by allowing autonomy and self-determination for national minorities that had previously been oppressed by the tsarist government.

Workers and soldiers in other countries looked to the events in Russia for inspiration. After 1917, a revolutionary wave swept through Europe, with revolutions first in Germany in 1918 and then Hungary and Slovakia in 1919. Workers struck and took to the streets. Soldiers mutinied in the trenches.

World War I ended, not because of a glorious victory by one or the other of the imperialist blocs that were vying for new territory and spheres of influence, but because the world working class, led by the example of Russia, entered onto the stage of history, not as victims, but as creators of their own destiny.

In the words of Leon Trotsky, “The history of a revolution is first of all a history of the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny”.

War provoked the revolution. Ultimately the revolution put an end to it.



US revolutionary John Reed participated in the Baku conference in 1920.

The Russian Revolution and the Peoples of the East

by **Chantal Sundaram**

“Workers of all lands, and oppressed peoples of the whole world, unite!”

This was a historic change to the call of the *Communist Manifesto* for only “workers of the world” to unite. And it was made in Baku, Azerbaijan, in 1920.

Russian Bolshevik Zinoviev (later murdered by Stalin) proposed the change in his closing remarks to the First Congress of the Peoples of the East in 1920. He said that it was now possible to broaden the call first made by Marx and Engels in 1848 to include all colonies and countries oppressed by imperialism.

This new call was made possible by a revolution that had just risen up in 1917 against an empire that imprisoned dozens of oppressed nationalities, many of them Muslim.

‘Prison-house of nations’

The revolution against the “prison-house of nations” known as Tsarist Russia had happened in the Western part of the empire, just as Muslim nations to the East had been roused to rebellion by the imperialist bloodshed of World War One. What happened in the West fed what continued in the East.

From October 1917, the Bolsheviks took extensive measures to protect religious freedoms, particularly of ethnic minorities. Muslim workers and farmers were promised that, “henceforth your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions are declared free and inviolable.”

In 1922, Moscow introduced reforms in Central Asia that returned lands confiscated by the Russian State back to the mosques, reopened religious schools, and brought back Islamic courts as a legal alternative to Soviet courts.

In 1923, the Moscow central government authorized “Muslim spiritual schools” in order to encourage Muslim parents to educate their children. At the same time, Russian Muslims became the first in the world to vote to free women from traditional Islamic restrictions. In 1917, the first All-Russian Congress of Muslims voted for equality of political rights for women, and an end to polygamy and forced purdah.

What happened to the East

In 1920, the Congress of the Peoples of the East proposed in its opening rally “a single union of the working people not only of Asia and Europe but of the entire world, so as to put an end to capitalism and begin a new and better life.” By the end,

the assembled representatives of diverse Eastern nationalities and religions had sworn to begin a holy war against imperialism and capitalism:

“Comrades, the first two days of our congress were spent discussing what our attitude should be towards the Entente, toward imperialism. That moment when the assembled representatives of the peoples of the East swore to begin a holy war, that moment will be preserved in our hearts as a sacred experience. That was the basis for everything else, that is what unites us all. Yes, a holy war against the plunderers and capitalists!”

The Chair during the closing remarks declared that “the congress we have just held went down in history from the moment when it began and the enslaved, oppressed, exploited peoples of the East assembled here. The bourgeoisie has been afraid that the workers in the West would revolt. And then, just as it was sleeping sweetly on its soft pillow, at that very moment a congress of the oppressed peoples of the East assembled, gets organized, and goes onto the attack with unprecedented, amazing, heart-lifting unanimity.”

Counter-revolution

By the late twenties, the Russian revolution was destroyed in all but name.

The new ruling class that asserted itself under Stalin reintroduced both the persecution of religious freedoms and the chauvinist Tsarist policies of Russification and empire. It also imposed forced collectivization of the peasantry in the Soviet republics of Asia as in the western Soviet republics, and wreaked counterrevolutionary terror against all who tried to defend the revolution.

All the speakers from Asia at the Baku congress who were in reach of Stalin’s purges were killed.

Internationally, the policies of Communist parties toeing the Stalinist line, especially in the West, went over to the nationalist – and ultimately imperialist – ideology of “socialism in one country.” But the legacy of the Baku Congress lives on, as a real-life story of what workers can do when they take down an empire. It’s not only the empire that falls, but the hatred and racism it tries to sow inside us:

“Let us tear out of our hearts whatever can disunite us. Let us remember we have one enemy – imperialism. Let each of us devote our lives to liberating the peoples of the East and of the world as a whole.”

The United Front: A Strategy for Today

by **Carolyn Egan**

We are seeing the rise of racism and Islamophobia across the country: a Koran torn up at a public meeting in Ontario, mosques being picketed, women wearing hijab being attacked on the streets, Kellie Leitch and Kevin O’Leary spouting racist slogans and calling for the return to “Canadian Values”.

At the same time, women in Toronto organized for International Women’s Day under the banner of “Stop the Hate, Unite the Fight, Build the Resistance” – bringing thousands out to march. More recently, the Toronto and York Region Labour Council in conjunction with the Urban Alliance on Race Relations packed Toronto City Hall chambers with a forum entitled “Unite to Stop the Hate” with leaders of different communities leading a discussion on how to stem the rise of reaction. Many ideas came forward from the very diverse crowd that had come together.

There are ongoing discussions taking place on how we best build a broad based movement. The left has experience, through many years of struggle, of organizing successful campaigns for change – whether they have been about defending public services, fighting racism, or for women’s rights. One of the strategies used has been the united front.

This was first articulated by Leon Trotsky when looking at the rise of Nazism in Germany in the 1930s. He called for the social democrats and the communists, both of whom had large memberships, to come together in common cause, not giving up their own organizations or identities, but to fight the rise of fascism together. Sadly, his advice was not heeded – and we saw the horrific results.

In short, the united front is a strategy for working class people and their allies in different organizations to come together to fight for a common cause. We have seen recent successful examples of this method, such as the anti-war movement in Canada, when unions, faith groups, students, Muslim communities and the left joined forces to build a grass roots movement which brought hundreds of thousands out across the country. The same method has been used by reproductive justice activists, anti-racist, Indigenous and other movements around the world.

Its goal is unity in action by groups that might have differences in political goals or out-

looks, but share progressive views and decide to work together to fight for a particular issue. It is an attempt to bridge the gap among groups and allow them to fight shoulder to shoulder against a common enemy.

People from many different political viewpoints come together, not necessarily agree on every issue, but can build the unity to win. It is a very important political strategy that can bring real victories in the here and now. Every win we have can strengthen the movement for change, move the struggle forward, and give momentum and confidence to those who have taken up the fight.

The stakes are very high today. There is a tremendous amount to win or lose. We see the rise of Trumpism in the US, the National Front in France, Golden Dawn in Greece, preying on people’s fears and anxieties for the future. They fan the flames of racism and misogyny, as the rich get richer and the austerity agenda marches on.

We need to build the unity necessary now so that progressive forces can come together and defeat the rise of the right in Canada and Quebec. The united front is a strategy for today.



February 15, 2003 – The Global Day of Action against the War in Iraq saw millions of people take to the streets.

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.

Striking York food service workers win \$15 and Fairness

by Alia Karim and David Bush

Last month striking York food service workers, represented by Unite Here Local 75, voted to accept their new contract. The workers went on strike for and won a \$15/hour starting wage and fair working conditions. Their victory paves the way for workers right across the province to achieve \$15 and fairness.

The workers won major improvements to their contract in the nearly three week strike. They will see an immediate bump in their starting wage from \$12.21 per hour to \$13.21, which will apply retroactively back to last September. There will be a further wage increase this coming September and by the end of the first year of the contract the starting wage for all workers will be \$15. By the end of the contract, all workers, both full-time and part-time, will be on the health and dental plan.

Building support

The 160 Aramark food service workers at York University had been preparing for this round of contract negotiations since last year. The low pay, bullying, racial discrimination by management, and the poor working conditions bred widespread discontent amongst the workers. They built up the confidence to take on a powerful multinational corporation and the York University administration by marching on their boss, holding demonstrations, and organizing mass meetings with other food service workers across the GTA.

Other workers and students organized an extensive solidarity campaign to help the workers achieve a victory. Organizing began many months before.

The Real Food Real Jobs campaign started in the winter semester of 2016 at York University. The goal of this campaign was to build solidarity with York food service workers and fight for healthier food options on campus.

The Fight for \$15 and Fairness, a provincial wide campaign to fight for labour law and employment standards reform, formed an active group on the York campus at the end of the 2015, and then joined in the efforts of Real Food Real Jobs last spring.

The Cross Campus Alliance (CCA), a coalition with representatives from the main employee associations and student federations on campus, was also a crucial element in the solidarity campaign. The CCA produced thousands



of solidarity posters which students put up right across campus. The CCA also helped set up a website, York15.ca, which generated a solidarity letter for all community members to sign on to that would automatically be sent to the president, the chair of the Board of Governors, and all of the vice-presidents.

Engaging in solidarity

When the strike was called a wide range of solidarity actions were initiated to get more students and community members involved. One tactic that proved successful was the solidarity coffee. Everyone entering the location was handed a leaflet, got an explanation about the strike from a volunteer about why they should support the workers, and then was offered free coffee.

Beyond the thousands of posters, leaflets, and emails targeting the university administration, the solidarity campaign also set its sights on disrupting the "Experience York" Day, York's two big recruitment and orientation days. The solidarity campaign planned a big "Experience York on Strike" greeting for prospective students and their families.

The York administration, feeling the pressure from students and workers and concerned about any hit to potential enrollment, began to get involved informally in the negotiations in the week leading up to the settlement. Aramark, which cares little about its already tarnished brand, was upset that its client was being targeted because that could endanger any future contract.

Why this matters

The victory is a huge win for racialized workers in low-wage industries who are forced take the hardest and least desirable jobs without basic labour

protections. The majority of Aramark food service workers are women of colour. Harassment and intimidation from managers was targeted at women, physically pushing them to work harder and if they didn't comply they would be disciplined through suspension or a cut in hours. Some female workers were told they are not going to be promoted because they were Muslim and wore a hijab. There were pregnant workers who have been bullied and harassed to continue working despite their need for proper breaks.

These women decided to fight back and were very vocal about their experiences at work. They asked for an end to harassment, racism and Islamophobia and for respect and dignity. Their struggle shows that \$15 and Fairness is not just about economic justice for workers, but it is also about justice for racialized women who face intersecting exclusion on the basis of class, race, sex, gender, and status. Their demands for respect and dignity were inherently tied to demands for higher wages and fair working conditions.

The victory at York belongs above all to the workers, whose confidence and organizing galvanized the entire York community and the whole Fight for \$15 and Fairness movement. The strike was also a victory for the students and other unions on campus.

Lessons going forward

The strike also shows the true power of the Fight for \$15 and Fairness campaign. The campaign is aiming to reform labour law for unionized and non-unionized workers alike. The goal is not just to win legislative reform, it is also to build the confidence and capacity of workers to engage in this fight.

What this successful strike demonstrates is that the campaign can be used by workers to achieve substantive victories in the collective bargaining process. What we saw firsthand was the Fight for \$15 and Fairness can raise expectations, it can help build a wide layer of support, and it can be a useful framework to galvanize workers and students into action. By building a broad based class movement for all workers, the campaign can help raise the floor of working standards so that unionized workers can have the power and confidence to fight for more.

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The racism of 'polite society'

by Faline Bobier

Jordan Peele's new movie *Get Out* is a cautionary tale for Black people in Trump's America and a funny, biting, ironic horror movie that entertains as it lampoons white liberals and uncovers the racism oh so close to the surface.

Peele is one half of the comedy skit duo Key (Keegan-Michael Key) and Peele, who mixed humour and politics to great effect on Comedy Central.

The story opens with a young Black man searching fruitlessly for an address in a leafy all-white suburb. It is a nice turning of the tables on countless movies where white characters are shown to be terrified walking in the inner city and encountering only menacing Black or Brown faces.

This first scene will come back to haunt us later on in the movie, but all is seemingly well as Chris (British actor Daniel Kaluuya) and his girlfriend, Rose (Allison Williams) leave for a long weekend in the countryside to stay with Rose's parents.

Although the fact that Chris feels compelled to ask his girlfriend about her parents ("Do they know I'm Black?") before they set off for the country, sets off some alarm bells. Chris' buddy Rod Williams (played by Lil Rel Howery to great comic effect) has a pretty strong gut feeling that this is NOT a good idea.

Rod is a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officer and as Howery says about his character, "This is the first time in the history of cinema that a TSA agent is the hero." And certainly, he's an anomaly in the current context of airport harassment of minorities and Muslim bans.

In the time-honoured tradition of horror movies, all is sunny and cheerful as the young couple in love set off for Rose's parents' country home, but an incident involving a deer and a white police officer foreshadows that all may not go well in this rural paradise.

When Chris meets the parents, Dean and Missy Armitage (Bradley Whitford and Catherine Keener), all seems fine on the surface. They seem unfazed by the fact that Chris is Black, but there is something about their efforts to appear welcoming and liberal that creates an uneasy feeling that all is not as it seems.

Dean insists that he would have voted for Obama a third time if he could have (as Rose predicted he would), awkwardly sprinkles his conversation with what he clearly believes is 'urban' slang and tells a very weird story about his father (and also Hitler, incidentally) having been humiliated by Black athlete Jesse Owens in the 1936 Olympics.

In some ways, Missy is the more chilling of the two, with a piercing stare behind her kindly facade. She is a psychiatrist who sees patients in her home and who offers to hypnotize Chris to help him stop smoking, a 'filthy habit', according to Missy. Tea cups have never been more full of menace than they become in Peele's movie.

Peele cleverly uses the horror trope in *Get Out* to get at some home truths that are clearly designed to unsettle and make us question our assumptions. The horror in this film comes from Chris's perspective of being an outsider by virtue of the colour of his skin, no matter how much Rose's family and their friends put up a civilized front.

The other thing that puts Chris off-balance from the moment of his arrival at the Armitage's charming "colonial" home are the two Black servants who have stayed on after



Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience

by Valerie Lannon

"I could not think of any history paintings that conveyed or authorized Indigenous experience into the canon of art history. Where were the paintings from the nineteenth century that recounted, with passion and empathy, the dispossession, starvation, incarceration and genocide of Indigenous people here on Turtle Island? Could my own paintings reach forward a hundred and fifty years to tell our history of the colonization of our people."

Cree artist and filmmaker Kent Monkman wrote this in the foreword to the booklet that accompanies his fabulous exhibit "Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience." And, yes, his art absolutely captures the impact of colonization. His style is unique among Indigenous painters, with attention to the urban environment and historical "white" settings. The paintings

are never devoid of the natural world, though, with numerous depictions of trees, birds, bears and other animals within his cityscapes, in works that explore violence, despair, addiction and humour. The last is partly achieved through the use of his drag queen persona, Miss Chief (ok full name Miss Chief Eagle Testickle). As Monkman explains, "A gender-bending time traveller, Miss Chief lives in the past, present and future. She embodies the flawed and playful trickster spirit, teasing out the truths behind false histories and cruel experiences."

The exhibit, now touring Canada and Quebec, features nine chapters covering the time from the settlement of New France to the modern day "Urban Res."

In a surprisingly positive review (coming from Maclean's magazine that is) can be found the following description of Monkman's send-up of the famous scene of "The Fathers of Confederation": "You'll find Miss Chief, lover of Louis Vuitton and pink

heels, in, for example, a cheeky send-up of Robert Harris's famed portrait of the Fathers of Confederation. She's nude, seated facing them, her legs akimbo. The men look on in horror, and in lust. He called it The Daddies."

But there also are very moving depictions of children being torn away from their parents to be taken to residential schools, or the violence of urban gangs, or commonplace hunger and poverty.

At a time when the Trudeau government is bent on "celebrating" 150 years of confederation, the Monkman exhibit is a beautiful and necessary reminder of the tragedies handed down by the Canadian state to the many Indigenous peoples who inhabited this land.

For examples of his art, visit www.canadianart.ca/artists/kent-monkman. For info on the touring exhibit, visit www.kentmonkman.com.

the death of Dean's parents. As Dean says, he couldn't let them go, although he realizes "the optics aren't great".

Chris tries to talk to both the groundskeeper and the maid, but can't find any way in. Their reactions to him and their lack of any kind of normal conversation puzzles him and us. There is something 'off' about them that Chris tries vainly to pinpoint or understand.

The most chilling scene of the whole movie is probably the "party" that happens while Chris is there – an annual event which Rose forgot was happening on this particular weekend. Her parents' friends, all a certain age and all of course almost blindingly white, are scarier than any zombies or ghouls you might meet in any run of the mill scary movie.

The paranoia that Chris begins to feel seems only too justified and reminded me of a film from the early 1970s, the *Stepford Wives*. In that film, it's independent women who become the targets of a frightening sexist culture, just as *Get Out* paints a picture of the reality of racism bubbling under the surface of so-called "polite" society.

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Trudeau shows his true colours

The Trudeau government is showing its true colours. Despite talk of sunny ways, he has shown once again that his policies are almost as brutal as those of his predecessor.

He has refused to open the borders to let people fleeing the US come to Canada. On March 29, Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen said that Canada would not revoke the Safe Third Country Agreement with the US. This agreement is forcing people to go on perilous overland treks to reach Canada rather than present themselves at an official border crossing. Many have been severely injured and most have to endure the humiliation of arrest when they arrive. The RCMP has decided they will no longer release statistics on how many people are crossing the border, making it even more difficult for agencies to serve the needs of the refugees.

The Liberal position also represents a tacit approval of Trump's policies by suggesting that the US is still a safe haven for refugees. When pressed as to whether he sees the US as a safe haven, Trudeau has refused to answer the question. To any observer watching the daily raids on immigrants and refugees in the US it is absurd to think the country is welcoming to those in need. The country isn't even safe for citizens of Muslim background let alone for those without legal protections.

There have been increasing calls from groups such as the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and Amnesty International to suspend the agreement. Harvard Law School wrote a report detailing the fact that the US under Trump is not a safe haven for asylum seekers.

Even the Reeve of Emerson, Manitoba – a town that has been one of the destinations for many refugees – has called for the agreement to be scrapped. He and other townspeople have decided to set up a tent with support services at the border to help people coming in.

To make matters worse, Trudeau also decided this week to extend Canada's war in Iraq without allowing any debate. The 15 year long war



Canadian Special Forces are on the ground in Mosul, Iraq, where innumerable civilians have been killed by US bombing

on terror is laying the groundwork for more chaos and brutality in the region.

Canada is now actively supporting the increase in bombing by the US in Iraq. Our special forces are on the ground in Mosul, helping to identify bombing targets. The US military has, it seems, dropped all pretense of avoiding civilian casualties. In March alone, the US killed more than 1,000 civilians in Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

And the Canadian military is warning that it

may ramp up its mission in Iraq even further. General Jonathan Vance told the CBC that the new Canadian Defence Review will reflect the pressure being placed on Canada by the US to increase military spending to NATO's target of 2 percent of GDP.

The western powers are responsible for creating the chaos that exists in Iraq and Syria. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 set off a downward spiral of sectarianism and violence that has engulfed the region. More Canadian forces on

the ground will not improve the situation. More reconnaissance flights by Canada helping the bombers find targets will only make matters worse.

Trudeau may have tweeted about his support for peace and for those seeking asylum in Canada, but his actions show the opposite. He is both ensuring that there will be even more refugees created by supporting open-ended war, and simultaneously shutting the door to those fleeing the mess that the west created.

Liberals betray First Nations children – again

by Valerie Lannon

In a battle now running ten years, the federal government refuses to correct its discriminatory funding for First Nations children's services on reserve. These services are funded at a lower level than services provided off-reserve for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and families.

The complaint brought to the federal Human Rights tribunal by the Assembly of First Nations and the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society faced years of obfuscation by the Harper Tories.

When the case was finally heard and the tribunal sided with the First Nations organizations in January 2016, the Trudeau Liberals show they are big on talk and nothing on action.

While the Liberals said they "agreed" with



Cindy Blackstock

the ruling, they have not implemented the tribunal's recommendations, which would have meant increasing funding for on-reserve

child and family services by \$200 million immediately.

The tribunal issued two more compliance orders in 2016 and from March 22 to 24, 2017, the tribunal held another non-compliance hearing to get to the bottom of the issue.

"Bottom" fits the Liberal position perfectly; it argued that the tribunal does not have the authority to enforce its decisions. "The tribunal does not have the statutory authority to enforce its own orders," wrote the Department of Justice, which is headed up by Jody Wilson-Raybould, a former regional chief with the Assembly of First Nations.

In other words, the government can ignore the Human Rights tribunal. This should make us all afraid.

But it doesn't deter Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society. According to

APTN, if the federal government won't abide by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling on First Nations children, Cindy Blackstock says she'll take them to the Federal Court: "We see this as a track to the Federal Court."

She said if the federal government didn't believe the tribunal had authority to enforce its own orders, why did it agree to the ruling? She said the government has said it can't move forward until it finishes its "engagement strategy" that has Ottawa talking to groups and organizations to determine their need.

"We asked them what is it that you need to know that you don't know? They have no idea," said Blackstock. "They don't know when this engagement is going to be finished."

To stay up to date with this ongoing struggle, go to fncaringociety.com (and "I am a witness" on the site.)