

**A People's
History of
Canada** PAGES 4&5



**Manchester
unites after
attack** PAGE 3



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ISLAM IS NOT THE ENEMY



WAR IS NOT THE ANSWER

After 16 years of the global war on terror the world is more dangerous and unstable than ever. The Manchester bombings are a product of that war. The bomber and his accomplices were all part of a Libyan group that was unleashed on the country by the NATO bombing campaign in 2011.

What's worse, our own government knew that chaos would be the result of the bombing. In emails released by Canada's Department of National Defence, Canada's role in Libya was described as being "Al-Qaeda's air force".

We destroy these countries and then have the nerve to ask, "Why do they hate us?" It's the

wrong question. Even a cursory look at the last few decades of imperial policy in the Middle East shows that the only question that makes sense is, "Why on earth would they like us?"

Each and every bomb we drop brings more anger against the western powers and more possibility of attacks at home. Each attack at home results in our politicians calling for more bombing. It is a cycle without end.

And once again, bigots around the world are blaming Muslims. They call on the Muslim community to be more vigilant in rooting out extremism and then these same people attack Muslims on the streets. It is Islamophobia that

isolates people and pushes them towards more extreme views, which is then used to justify more racism. Our governments rarely take action against the extremist violence of the Islamophobes themselves.

And the new Trump administration wants to ramp up the many wars in the region. There has been a steep increase in civilians killed this year in Iraq and Syria. The Pentagon was forced to admit that on March 17 they killed more than 100 innocent civilians in an airstrike near Mosul. The Canadian military is helping to choose the targets for airstrikes in Iraq.

A recent report by Iraqi photojournalist Ali

Arkady showed that the Iraqi commandos that Canada and the US are training and arming are using systematic torture against anyone suspected of being an ISIS member in the battle for Mosul. We know already that US forces in Iraq held many of those who would become the ISIS leaders and tortured them as part of the surge in 2007. There would be no ISIS if not for the US invasion, and yet our governments seem to believe that more of the same will somehow solve the problem.

Only a movement against war and the racism it breeds will be able to stop the cycle and bring true peace.

BC election

Eric Lescarbeau on why the NDP didn't win by a landslide

Page 2

Québec solidaire

Chantal Sundaram covers the party's momentum

Page 2

A new force for action

Valerie Lannon on the Indigenous Mobilization Team's initiatives

Page 2

Radical unionism

Peter Hogarth reviews Ralph Darlington's book

Page 7

Big win for \$15

Pam Frache on the struggles ahead

Page 8

QS makes historic strides

by Chantal Sundaram

At the largest convention in its 11-year history, Québec solidaire (QS) had a critical choice to make.

The Parti québécois (PQ) had been courting QS to join an electoral pact to defeat the Quebec Liberals, who have ruled for nearly 15 years.

The Liberals were briefly tossed out by the Quebec Spring of 2012. It brought the PQ to power and forced them to repeal the tuition hike that provoked it and the legislation passed to repress it.

But that PQ government fell before the end of its mandate, after introducing an austerity budget and a racist Charter of Values, particularly targeting Muslims.

Three years later, despite the mass desire to unseat the re-crowned Liberals, QS rejected strategic voting and the idea that the PQ is a party of the left.

It was a challenging debate for the five hundred delegates. Some high-profile QS members like Amir Khadir and Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois (GND) supported some kind of “open door” to potential pacts with the PQ.

Nevertheless, two issues made the choice for delegates clear.

Despite its ambiguous history as Quebec’s only “left” party, long linked to the labour movement, the PQ took yet another decisive turn towards right populist politics with the election of party leader Jean-Francois Lisée and his embrace of a renewed racist Charter of Values.

An Inuit member said this is a historic moment for QS to win Indigenous and racialized communities away from traditional politics, particularly the Liberal vote, and this can only be done through a clear rejection of the PQ’s politics of exclusion.

One speaker noted that whenever the PQ has been in power labour’s slogans go from fighting ones to apologetic ones. Others said electoral pacts deny poor and working people in non-urban areas their right to a left vote.

The PQ had far more to gain from an alliance than QS did. Though QS faced backlash for its decision, what it would have lost in credibility would have been far greater.

In the end the PQ’s courting of QS was exposed for what it was: a desperate attempt by a party in decline to secure a left cover.

Delegates did vote to negotiate a fusion with Option nationale, a party which also supports independence not as a goal in itself but as part of a social project for building a new type of society.

QS has now clearly opted for a true opposition to establishment parties, for politics done “differently”. Manon Massé told the convention: “Together we will see many more Springs.”



The Site C dam will mean the violation of Treaty 8 First Nations and destruction of their land.

Photo: Site C Vancouver Facebook

Why didn't the NDP win by a landslide in BC?

by Eric Lescarbeau

The NDP has secured the support of the three Green MLAs, giving them 44 seats to the incumbent Liberals’ 43. Why didn’t the NDP do better?

Just before the election an Angus Reid poll found that two in three British Columbians prefer the NDP’s budget strategy of increasing taxes to pay for social programs. In addition, 72% agreed with the statement “Too many people in BC are being left behind” and 71% agreed that “rising inequality is a huge problem in BC today.”

Why did this overwhelming support for the NDP platform result in a tie with the Liberals?

The short answer is that the NDP undercut the progressive aspects of their platform by refusing to roll back the bulk of the Liberal tax cuts.

The NDP promised 114,000 affordable housing units, \$10/day daycare, elimination of user fees like MSP premiums and road tolls, 30,000 jobs in the forest industry, 96,000 jobs in building schools and hospitals.

This would make significant progress in addressing inequality and dramatically improve the lives of

workers and their families.

John Horgan and the NDP committed themselves to delivering all these promises while adhering to the neo-liberal dogma of “fiscal responsibility.”

A “balanced budget” is code for prioritizing certainty for banks and investors over the needs of working class people. The NDP promised a very modest 1% increase to the corporate tax rate and reinstatement of the surtax on the top 2% of earners. Combined with other measures this would raise revenues by about \$1.4 billion per year.

This falls billions short of funding all of the promises in their plan and placed a giant question mark over the whole platform. Christy Clark hammered away at what she claimed is a “\$6 billion hole in the NDP’s platform” implying that the NDP would have to raise income taxes or impose a new round of user fees, or worse, abandon their promises altogether.

Healthcare

The NDP’s promise to eliminate the profoundly unfair Medical Service Premiums is a significant improvement over the Liberals’

promise to cut premiums by half, but it would cost the healthcare system \$1.7 billion in revenue.

During the campaign Carol James and Gary Holman stated that under the NDP the premiums would be rolled into the income tax system, making the rich pay more.

“The key principle is that it looks at a progressive approach,” said James. “Right now with MSP, whether you make \$1 million or \$35,000, your families pay the same amount of MSP. That’s the principle that will be gone.”

However, John Horgan insisted that an NDP government would hire an independent panel to find ways to eliminate MSP premiums, and repeatedly dodged questions, claiming he doesn’t want to “prejudge” the panel.

This made NDP’s promises appear less realistic and undermined their credibility while simultaneously failing to stand up to the Liberals’ attacks on healthcare.

Site C Dam

Instead of committing to halting construction on the Site C dam, John Horgan promised to send the project to the BC Utilities Commission for

review.

This dam will drive Hydro rates through the roof while massively indebting BC Hydro, all for the sake of providing cheap power, heavily subsidized by working class taxpayers, to the LNG and fracked gas industry. It is also being built despite the opposition of the Treaty 8 First Nations whose lands will be flooded.

Doing nothing until BCUC’s report is complete means tens of millions of dollars more will be wasted, and the violation of Treaty 8 First Nations along with destruction of their land will continue for months.

Promising to cancel the project immediately and guaranteeing construction workers a replacement job would have cemented support from workers, First Nations, farmers and environmentalists.

The NDP sabotaged their platform by trying to balance the interests of the 99% for better government services, Indigenous rights, jobs and the environment with low taxes and megaprojects for the 1%.

Now it is more important than ever to build mass movements to force the new government to represent the 99%.

Indigenous Mobilization Team – a new force for action

by Valerie Lannon

There is a new education and action force for climate justice in Ontario: the Indigenous Mobilization Team (IMT), created by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) and the Chiefs of Ontario.

On May 5, 2017 over 150 people filled OPSEU’s downtown Toronto hall to hear presenters invited by the IMT, including LaDonna Allard (Tamakawastewin/Brave Bull) from Standing Rock, and Freda Huson, from northern BC’s Unist’ot’en camp.

‘It’s in my backyard’

LaDonna Allard is a member of and tribal historian for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. She co-founded the Sacred Stone camp during last year’s opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline.

She was moved to action when she realized the pipeline would be next to her son’s grave – “Oh my god. It’s in my backyard.” As with so many

other pipelines, neither the company, nor the regulators or government obtained informed consent from the First Nation.

Allard pointed out the painful coincidence that happened on September 3, 2016, when the bulldozers arrived along with government-sanctioned attack dogs, paper spray, mace and lots of guns. This was the anniversary of the Wounded Knee massacre of 1890 on the nearby Lakota Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, when the cavalry killed nearly 300 Lakota.

As of today, the pipeline has yet to be completed and the Lakota continue to use the land to teach youth how to “live green” using naturally available food and medicines.

LaDonna concluded with a call for unity among all those who wish to protect the earth and water. She stated, “The economic system has us by the throat. We can’t all afford electric cars, so every day we need to do something to divest from fossil

fuel. Indigenous knowledge can save the world.”

Unist’ot’en Camp

Freda Huson travelled from the Unist’ot’en camp at Wedzin Kwa (near Houston BC), part of the territory of the Wet’suwet’en First Nation. The camp was established in 2010 as part of the resistance to seven pipelines planned to traverse the area, including proposals by TransCanada, Enbridge and Pacific Trails pipeline companies and the Chevron oil company.

The pipelines would transport both tarsands oil and fracked gas, risking the land and water, with negative impacts on the people’s ability to survive on the land and hold traditional ceremonies.

The activists enforce a protocol that reflects the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. When company workers arrive in the Wet’suwet’en territory near the camps, they are told that they do not

have permission to be on the territory.

In addition to stopping pipelines, the camp serves as a forum for decolonization of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants, by organizing five-day “action camps” attended by hundreds of people to date. The group also started the Sacred Fire Network to connect all Indigenous activists and to train people to help out with other First Nations’ battles.

In 2015 construction began on a healing centre, which will primarily serve Indigenous youth who suffer trauma from the many tragic consequences of colonization. Allies raised \$50,000 and donated labour to help build the centre.

Huson concluded by saying “The government did everything in their power to take the Indian out of our children. And we will do everything in our power to put the Indian back in the child.”

For more information, visit www.unistotencamp.com

After Manchester attack: Don't let the right exploit horror

A horrific bombing killed 22 people, including five children, as they left an Ariana Grande concert at Manchester Arena on Monday night. A further 59 people were injured in what Greater Manchester Police said it is treating as a terrorist attack by a suicide bomber. Isis described the person who carried out the attack as a “soldier of the caliphate”.

Racists have already begun to whip up division. It's predictable that some people will seek to scapegoat Muslims and point the finger at migrants—such moves must be rejected and confronted. As Weyman Bennett from Stand Up To Racism said, “It is vital that we stand together at this time in unity and solidarity against all forms of hatred, division and violence.”

But it won't just be far right groups and Ukip that seek to exploit what's happened.

Tory home secretary Amber Rudd said the bombing's “intention was to sow fear, its intention is to divide, but it will not succeed”. But right wing politicians and newspapers are hoping to use it—precisely to sow fear and division.

More armed police officers are already patrolling London, and other major cities across Britain. Metropolitan Police commissioner Cressida Dick warned this will “continue for as long as it is needed” with a “mixture of armed and unarmed officers.” Her record on responding to terror



attacks should make us wary. After the 7/7 suicide bombings in London, Dick headed the police operation that gunned down Brazilian electrician Jean Charles De Menezes.

Targeting

The operation was part of a bigger police lockdown targeting

Muslims—and led to increased levels of Islamophobia. Calls from the right for more police, more guns and more repressive powers directed at minorities have always followed terror attacks.

After the attack Theresa May said, “We can continue to resolve to thwart such attacks in future—to

take on and defeat the ideology that often fuels this violence.” We should be in no doubt what May meant by fighting “the ideology”—ramping up repression against Muslims.

The Tory manifesto claimed, “Extremism, especially Islamist extremism ... undermines the cohesion of our society and can fuel

violence”. It warned that a Tory government would look into “new criminal offences” it could make up to “defeat the extremists”. May suspended the Tories' flagging general election campaign, but this hasn't stopped the Tories from outrageously trying to exploit the horrific deaths to bolster it.

Rudd said it was a “barbaric act”—then proceeded to use it for political gain. “The great city of Manchester has been affected by terrorism before,” she said, alluding to the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) bombing in 1996. May joined in during her speech, noting that “it is not the first time Manchester has suffered in this way”.

Their comments come after the Tories and right wing press smeared Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn for refusing to “condemn” the IRA last week.

May says “our way of life will prevail”, but when the right talk of “our way of life” it is a cover for a false unity behind “British values”. In reality, it is a racist and nationalist stick used to beat Muslims and the left with.

We need to build genuine unity from below—against the right and their attempts to divide us through racism and repression. And we need to keep fighting to kick out the Tories.

This is shared from **Socialist Worker (UK)**

Interview: Niki Ashton on running for NDP leader

Socialist Worker's Kevin Taghabon interviews Niki Ashton on her leadership campaign and the fight for climate justice

Kevin Taghabon: We set targets for no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius [at COP 21 in Paris], which was fought for at the grassroots level. It doesn't really seem like the current government is serious about following through on that. What would the NDP under your leadership do to make sure that happens, while considering just transition?

Niki Ashton: Absolutely. What we've said up to this point with respect to policy is that, absolutely, the creation of good jobs is really key. That includes the need for value-added jobs, that includes the need for diversification ...

I was out West just a couple of weeks ago, and there are people that want to work towards a green transition, that want to be part of a green transition. There definitely needs to be federal leadership on that front.

We will be releasing an environmental justice platform in the weeks to come, so there will be more details specifically on that.

But the one thing we have said is, with respect to new developments like pipelines or new resource developments, the NDP must have a principled position. So, clear opposition if there is no consent

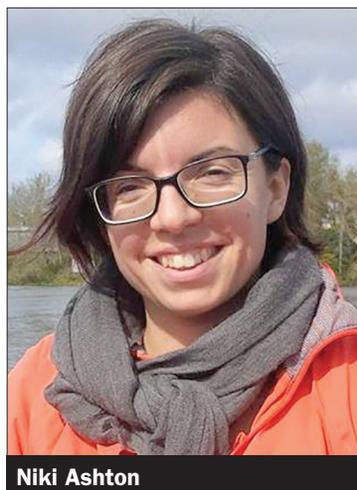
from Indigenous communities whose territory the project would be going through.

It can't go forward if it does not meet environmental regulations and our climate change commitments, and if there's no social licence. It's not the 1950s anymore where government can just run roughshod over the rights of Indigenous people and environmental rights. I think the struggle at Standing Rock, which was just south of my province, many people from where I'm from were very involved in that and followed it very closely. Some went down.

To me it's clear that this is a sign of where things are at today. The NDP needs to have a principled position, without question.

KT: You're supporting the full implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) into Canadian law as it exists. The current government has said that there were challenges in implementing that, and they abandoned the promise. Why do you think that this is possible to do, and what does that look like?

NA: Yeah, absolutely. Interestingly enough, Trudeau's government has used UNDRIP, has referred to



Niki Ashton

UNDRIP as a way of symbolically indicating their support for the nation-to-nation relationship. And yet, when you scratch the surface, they don't actually mean adoption and implementation. Minister [of Indigenous and Northern Affairs] Carolyn Bennett in New York mentioned it, then when she comes back to Canada, she doesn't.

And absolutely, I support the adoption and implementation.

It's been an honour to second the Bill put forward by my colleague

Romeo Saganash which is coming up for vote in the fall, Bill 262. This is also core to what it means to be a New Democrat.

In order to move forward in terms of that nation-to-nation relationship UNDRIP is the most comprehensive and substantive framework. It's been developed by Indigenous peoples. Within our own party, people like Romeo helped develop it. It's very much in line with our NDP principles and it has to be part of who we are going forward.

KT: What is your position on the Leap Manifesto?

NA: I support the principles of Leap. I do believe it's a great source of discussion. I do also believe that it's incumbent on the NDP to develop a vision that is rooted in those principles. But a vision that comes about through a process like the leadership, where we're engaging New Democrats, progressives, people across the country in terms of a vision of how to tackle inequality, how to tackle climate change.

KT: If riding associations on a national level, the majority of them, do end up endorsing or supporting the Leap Manifesto publicly, will you adopt that in your candidacy?

NA: I think what's happening right now is there's a lot of those kind of discussions. Some are very active, some are not. I certainly am looking forward to hearing back. And obviously if a directive is given at convention then that would have to be respected by the leader.

But what I am hearing right now is a lot of people are having very good discussions about the broader issues of inequality, climate change, jobs. I think that's part of it. For too long we haven't had discussions on the ground about policy, about the big issues that we're facing.

Certainly for the last few years the push has been government, from official opposition to government, and I think that's unfortunately pushed a lot of bigger picture discussions off to the side. People have been discouraged from having them.

I think we're now fully into that space. I think the leadership is an excellent opportunity to develop an NDP, a left vision for our country when it comes to tackling inequality and climate change.

This interview has been edited for space. Read the full interview at socialist.ca

This year the Liberals are spending half a billion dollars on celebrating Canada's 150th anniversary. This will have wide appeal, but for contradictory reasons.

In polls on Canadian identity people rank the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as the most important national symbol above the flag, national anthem, and RCMP. The most important values were human rights and gender equality, and a majority think we should emphasize environmental protection over growth

Polls show two-thirds of people have "deep emotional attachment to Canada", though less than half young people, and only a third of people in Quebec. Levels of pride were greatest for Canadian history, Canada's armed forces, and Medicare. But polls also found pride outpaces knowledge: only 44% knew this year was the 150th anniversary, and only 11% knew the opening lines of the national anthem. As pollsters said, "What they're saying is, 'We feel great about where we are... and let's not worry about the details too much.'"

Mythology

This is patriotism: a mixture of myths and half-truths, where the details don't matter too much. Mythology claims that Canada was not a colonizing, slave-trading country like the US but rather a nation of friendly Mounties and peacekeepers.

There are also a series of half-truths: that Canada is bilingual and multicultural, provides universal healthcare, respects rights and freedoms, and protects the environment. Liberals especially like to present themselves as the providers/protectors of rights, while many progressives look to the NDP. These rights, to the degree that they exist, were not delivered from above, but were won from below, and have to be defended and expanded.

Instead of a contradictory history from above, we need to look at history from below, to expose the myths of the Canadian state – but also celebrate the resistance to it, whose legacy we need to continue. This article will focus on claims about Canada, addressing myths and half-truths about its origin, peacekeeping role, Medicare, and rights and freedoms. As Canadian history is built on Indigenous land, this review will rely on Indigenous scholar and activist Howard Adams—a key source for a people's history of Canada.



Origin

Mythology has it that Canada began fundamentally different than the US. As Justin Trudeau said, Canada is "without some of the baggage that so many other Western countries have, either colonial pasts or perceptions of American imperialism."

Adams would have disagreed: "After invasion and the holocaust, there are a number of succeeding homicidal actions before the Aboriginal people are exterminated or imprisoned. All Indigenous people of the colonies suffered the same fate: Canada, Australia, Africa. The Indians and Metis of Canada were no different. Canada probably had better public relations affairs than the other colonies. This is why Canada's history suffers from the greatest distortions and falsehoods of imperial nations."

These falsehoods include the myth that there was simply fair trade instead of colonization, and that slavery didn't happen. As Adams explained, "Indian communal society was trans-

formed into an economic class of labourers by European fur trading companies, particularly the Hudson's Bay Company... The term 'fur trade' is misleading because in the early years of occupation, Europeans did not actually trade with the Indians... the French plundered and raided Indians, forcing them to 'contribute' furs. As the fur trade flourished, so did Indian slavery."

If there were a film made about early Canadian history, it would be called 200 years a slave: from the 1600s to 1800s, Canada enslaved Black and Indigenous people. As Desmond Cole put it, connecting slavery of the past to carding in the present, "The history of Black people on this land—from enslavement to today—is that Black people are monitored. That's the Canadian way: you can have Black people, but you have to monitor them."

But there was also resistance: slaves escaped captivity, or burnt owner's houses. Abolitionists pushed legal challenge to slavery, and supported slaves escaping the US.

There's also the myth of a peaceful bilingualism, but Canada has a long history of oppressing the Quebecois, repeating British tactics used across the globe. From the 18th to the 20th centuries, Canada maintained Quebec in a semi-feudal state through an alliance between Anglo bosses and a conservative Catholic Church—using Quebec workers as a pool of cheap labour.

In the late 1800s a new industrial system arose, which came into conflict with the earlier "fur traders" of the Hudson's Bay Company. The new industrial order won out, creating the Dominion of Canada on July 1, 1867—but kept the British colonial flag for another century. That's what Canada Day celebrates: the triumph of industrialists over fur traders over who would control Indigenous territories.

As "Father of Confederation", John A. Macdonald symbolized the colonial state: he pushed residential schools, outlawed the potlatch, executed Indigenous leaders and used police force and starvation to force Indigenous people onto reserves. He also used migrant labour to build the railroad while imposing a racist head tax, and imposed British law criminalizing abortion and homosexuality.

Contrary to the myth of the friendly Mountie, the RCMP emerged as the repressive apparatus of the colonial state. As Adams explained, "It is not just a coincidence that the Mounted Police were established during the development of Indian reserves to ensure the 'success' of the treaty negotiations with the Indians and 'help' relocate Indians and halfbreeds to their reserves and colonies... The Mounties were not ambassadors of goodwill or unformed men sent to protect Indians; they were the colonizer's occupational forces and hence the oppressors of Indians and Métis."

But the conflict between the fur trading and industrial economies opened up space for Indigenous and settler resistance to the expanding Canadian state, which exploded in 1869 and again in 1885. At the same time, Macdonald faced an emerging working class movement, with the Toronto strike of 1872 and the movement for the 9-hour work day.

So there's nothing progressive about the founding of Canada, but we can celebrate the early resistance to colonization, slavery, and capitalism.

Peacekeepers

Canadian mythology denies its policies at home and abroad. WWI was supposed to be a war for freedom and democracy. But where was the freedom?

Canada was running residential schools, criminalizing homosexuality and abortion, banning Asian migrants, denying language rights in Quebec, and imposing conscription to force working class kids to war. And what democracy was there to defend? The vote was denied to women, indigenous people, Asian immigrants, and people with disabilities.

WWII was supposed to be a war against fascism. But Canada had its own eugenics program, sterilizing those deemed "unfit" including Indigenous, Black and disabled people. Under Liberal Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, Canada interned 20,000 Japanese-Canadians in prison camps and blocked a boat of Jewish refugees (the MS St. Louis), declaring "none is too many" and sending them back to the Holocaust.

Canada is supposed to be based on peace-



A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF CANADA

We should remember those who resisted Pierre Trudeau's tanks in Quebec, the Red Power activists who defeated his White Paper and the draft resisters who refused to fight.

keeping, following Liberal Lester Pearson. But Pearson helped partition Palestine and his intention for peacekeepers was to broker peace between imperialists to resolve the Suez Canal crisis. Peacekeepers emerged as a UN force serving imperialism, but Liberals have dropped the pretense of peacekeeping and partnered with other Western powers in occupying Afghanistan, overthrowing democracy in Haiti and bombing Iraq and Syria. When not directly involved, Canadian weapons manufacturers have profited—from the Vietnam War to the arming of Saudi Arabia.

That's Canada's shameful history from above. But there is a proud history from below.

In 1918 there were riots against conscription in Quebec, a general strike in BC and a mutiny in Victoria with troops refusing to take part in counter-revolution in russia. This paved the way for the 1919 general strike in Winnipeg, when tens of thousands of workers began running the town themselves. Similarly, the heroes of the Vietnam War were the tens of thousands

who refused to fight and the movement in solidarity with war resisters pushed Pierre Trudeau to declare that Canada should be a "refuge from militarism."

In 2003, peacekeeping came not from Chrétien, who wanted to join war in Iraq – but from a mass movement across Canada, as part of global anti-war movement.

On February 15, 2003, 30 million people marched around the world, including 250,000 in Montreal, thanks to union mobilization. The movement pushed the NDP to oppose the war without or without the UN, split the Liberals and forced Chrétien to bow out days before war. And the movement opened a campaign to support US Iraq War resisters, who like their predecessors in the Vietnam War, are seeking a refuge from militarism. The real peacekeepers are the anti-war movement and war resisters.

Medicare

Whereas the origin of Canada and the role of peacekeeping are based on mythology, Canadi-

an pride in healthcare is half-truth, as is the role of Tommy Douglas, voted most popular Canadian. There's nothing inherently Canadian about Medicare, and it wasn't delivered from above by benevolent governments but emerged from the process of struggle from below.

The CCF, which expressed this growing radicalism, was elected in Saskatchewan and brought hospital insurance after WWII. In 1960 the CCF campaigned to broaden insurance to all health services, and won a strong mandate despite opposition from the Liberals, the insurance corporations who backed them, and the medical establishment. When universal health coverage began provincially, most the province's doctors went on strike against it.

In response, labour unions and the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union set up health clinics, staffed by progressive physicians from inside and outside the province. The support for universal health care broke the reactionary strike and pushed the Liberals to institute Medicare nationally a few years later.



Left: soldiers march down the streets of Montreal during War Measures. Centre: standoff at Oka. Top-right: 1919 Winnipeg General Strike. Bottom-right: grave site of the Battleford Eight, commemorating the victims of Canada's largest mass hanging.

But since then, they've worked to undermine it. When it began, the deal was that the federal government would pay half the costs. But this has fallen to less than a quarter after successive Conservative/Liberal cuts. Harper cut \$36 billion from federal health transfers to provinces and it seems like Trudeau is just fine with that.

Rights and freedoms

Another half-truth about Canada is Rights and Freedoms. When asked about "Canadian values" in polls, people list human rights, gender equality, cultural diversity. But where do these come from?

The Liberals love claiming to be the "party of the Charter", associating Pierre Trudeau with right and freedoms and the constitution. Pierre Trudeau continued the foundational traditions of Canadian state: the colonization of Indigenous communities and oppression of Quebec. In 1969 Trudeau's White Paper tried to extinguish distinct status for First Nations. And to deal with a rising sovereignty movement in Quebec, he imposed War Measures and sent in the Canadian military. But the War Measures Act failed to quell resistance in Quebec, which exploded in a general strike in 1972. A Common Front united over 200,000 workers, who fought for equal pay, a higher minimum wage and job security. When the government arrested labour leaders, workers occupied towns across the province with strike committees running operations.

Justin Trudeau is trying to revive the mythology of Liberal progressiveness: marching in Pride, calling himself a feminist and saying he's pro-choice. It's good that he feels he needs to do this, but this shouldn't erase history.

In 1969, Pierre Trudeau decriminalized homosexuality and contraception and allowed abortion under some conditions, but these did not secure gay rights or abortion rights. In 1981, Toronto police arrested nearly 300 people in the bathroom raids, the largest mass arrest since the War Measures Act. But the next night, thousands

of people marched on 52 Division and then on to Queen's Park to challenge this repression. The next month a Gay Freedom Rally was held, Toronto's first Pride event and over the years the movement has raised LGBT rights.

In 1982 the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics was formed, to spread the lessons of Quebec where a doctor willing to risk arrest combined with a broad movement to challenge the federal abortion law. When Morgentaler opened his clinic in Toronto, OCAC organized clinic defense and mass mobilizations, and together they overturned the law.

The Liberals claim to be the party of the Charter, but have undermined civil liberties. The Liberals interned Japanese-Canadians in the 1940s, rounded up Quebecois in the 1970s, and scapegoated Muslims in the 2000s. After 9/11, the Liberals drafted "anti-terror" legislation allowing pre-emptive arrest and secret trials, which targeted Muslim men and created the precedent for Bill C-51. And when Harper adopted C-51, Trudeau and the Liberals supported it – in opposition to mass rallies across the country.

Celebrate 150 years of resistance

On July 1, we shouldn't be celebrating the state built on colonization and slavery. We shouldn't wave the Maple Leaf flag that adorned imperial interventions. We shouldn't seek common cause with Liberals who co-opt our gains.

Instead, we should celebrate the Rebellion of 1885, the protests, mutiny and strikes against WWI, and the movement that won Medicare. We should remember those who resisted Pierre Trudeau's tanks in Quebec, the Red Power activists who defeated his White Paper and the draft resisters who refused to fight. We should learn from the gay rights activists who fought for Pride, the pro-choice activists who defeated the law and the anti-war activists who stopped Chrétien's war. And we should work towards a sustainable world of climate justice, free from colonialism, capitalism, and the Canadian state.

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.

Revolution and sexual liberation

by Faline Bobier

The Pride marches of 2017 are happening a hundred years after the Russian Revolution, which was a "festival of the oppressed"—including for LGBT+ people.

Tsarist Russia was brutal and backward—life was strictly and violently controlled by the state and legitimized by religion. Sexual and domestic violence were built into everyday life. Poor women's existence was limited to producing children and working in fields. Several laws criminalized homosexuality.

Revolutionary Russia

The revolutions of February and then October 1917 ushered in a society that turned social relations on their head. Sexual relations weren't excluded from revolutionary change.

As a result of the huge social processes that began to transform society after the October revolution, homosexuality was decriminalized and gay marriage was legalized. Women won the right to immediate divorce and legal abortion on demand.

Two women who had married in secret before the revolution had the union legally recognized. "Same-sex love... no longer oppressed by [our] own lack of consciousness and by petty-bourgeois disrespect," said Evgeniia Fedorovna.

Revolutionary Russia became lauded internationally as the most progressive state in terms of LGBTQ rights. Many countries today are still backward by comparison to revolutionary Russia in terms of sexual liberation.

Dr Grigory Batkis, director of the Moscow Institute for Sexual Hygiene, wrote in 1923 that "Soviet legislation... declares the absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters, so long as no one's interests are encroached upon.

Concerning homo-sexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offences against public morality, Soviet legislation treats these exactly the same as so-called 'natural' intercourse."

Revolutionary strategy

The increased freedoms ushered in by the Russian Revolution—for oppressed nationalities, for racial minorities, including Muslims and Jews, for women, for lesbians and gays—were not an accidental outgrowth of the revolution,



Clara Zetkin (centre) and Alexandra Kollontai (right) at the Comintern

but consciously fought for as part of the project of overturning the economic system which underpinned all inequality.

The Bolsheviks set out to build a party that would be, as Lenin called it, a "tribune of the oppressed." This is why they organized among the Muslim peoples in the east, promising them freedom of religion in the new society.

This is why the question of women's oppression was not an add-on, but central to the task of overthrowing the old system with its age-old sexism and violence against women, and its dependence on unpaid and endless domestic slavery inside the private household.

Leading Bolshevik and member of the Central Committee, Alexandra Kollontai, fought alongside other women both for sexual freedom and liberation from stultifying and rigid gender roles and for the material improvements that would make it possible for women to truly participate in building the new society.

Kollontai, along with Inessa Armand and other Bolshevik women, set up the Women's Department (Zhenotdel), which organized communal kitchens and laundries to free women from domestic drudgery.

The Zhenotdel also encouraged literacy by travelling and performing agitprop theatre outside the cities, where women were often the most isolated and oppressed. But combatting women's oppression was not only the task of women in the party, although Kollontai did engage in critical battles to win over other Bolsheviks to the necessity of addressing questions of women's oppression.

Just as the Revolution challenged age-old beliefs about women's place in society it also opened up space for people who defined themselves outside the binary of male-female or who wanted to live openly as gay. Dan Healey in his book *Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia: The Regulation of Sex-*

ual and Gender Dissent describes how 'there was a sense [...] that gay people saw this as their revolution too.

I can think of one drag queen in Kursk, written about in a medical article, who really does seem to interpret these events of the civil war and the revolution as a licence to be quite flagrant and outrageous. For a while people seemed to be willing to go along with that."

Counter-revolution

Unfortunately, the immense gains that were won as a result of the revolution were eventually rolled back under the dual forces of material scarcity caused by civil war and the counterrevolution led by Stalin.

Stalin aimed to dismantle workers' control in the soviets in order to enter into military competition with the West. To do this he had to smash the freedoms that workers and peasants had won in other areas. The role of the family, the root of LGBT+ oppression, was reinforced through state-led initiatives such as awards for women who gave birth to many children.

The "Great Soviet Encyclopedia" of 1930 lists homosexuality as an "unnatural sexual attraction to persons of one's own sex (the opposite of the normal—heterosexuality)." This rolling back showed what was at stake in the fight for LGBT+ rights. It was impossible to separate the fight against economic inequality and the fight for other forms of human freedom.

A century of experience since the Russian Revolution shows that society does not gradually become more tolerant—there is a constant battle for which ideas win through.

The gains that have been won were fought for. But the rapid, and unprecedented, advances in the short years after the Russian Revolution show what is possible in the fight for sexual liberation today.



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Building for a green economy

by Valerie Lannon

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) held its convention in Toronto from May 7 to 12 and invited its members and community members to attend an evening on “One Million Climate Jobs Challenge”.

Several dozen attended and heard about the need to focus our efforts on just transitions for workers, so that “no worker is left behind.”

Speakers stated that the technology and skills are available to ease this transition, no government is taking this aspect of climate justice seriously.

Tony Clarke of the Green Economy Network (GEN) said that instead of subsidizing fossil fuels, governments should invest in the alternative energy sector, retrofitting buildings and mass transit.

Angella MacEwen, economist with the CLC, noted that GEN’s “Making the Shift to a Green Economy” provides a framework to ensure just transition plans are flexible to meet the requirements for specific skills in specific sectors.

John Cartwright of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council noted the small successes that have been achieved to date and said labour would be pushing for worker-based environmental representatives in every workplace, to ensure sustainability and good jobs.

Rosemarie Powell of the Toronto Community Benefits Network, a ten-year old initiative from the labour and community movements, has been part of important discussions leading to the municipal document “Transform TO”, which has yet to receive funding for implementation.

Marny Girard, with GEN, observed that none of the various federal or provincial governments’ climate plans feature just transitions for workers.

Limitations

And this lack of government action is precisely where we need to focus.

Unfortunately, none of the discussion at the forum pointed in the direction of creating materials that could assist those in the labour, environmental, social justice and indigenous rights movements lobby government regarding just transitions.

Just think what could happen if there were educational materials, petitions, “talking points” that could be used by potentially thousands when visiting politicians at all levels, or when contacting them by email or phone.

Union members will need to step up to make this happen. Fortunately, at the Leap discussions at CLC, great networking happened, which will help move the just transition agenda forward.

REVIEW

Radical Unionism: The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism



Industrial Workers of the World protest, New York City, 1914

by Peter Hogarth

Ralph Darlington’s *Radical Unionism: The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism* is a valuable piece of revolutionary history and a useful read for anyone trying to get a good sense of the dominant radical labour traditions of the last 150 years.

Darlington traces the rise and demise of revolutionary syndicalism, as exemplified by the cases of the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) in Spain, the Confédération générale du travail (CGT) in France, the Unione Sindacale Italiana (USI) in Italy, the Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union (ITGWU), the Industrial Syndicalist Education League (ISEL) in Britain and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the US.

Radical upsurge

As Darlington explains: “during the first two decades of the twentieth century, amidst an extraordinary international upsurge in strike action, the ideas of revolutionary syndicalism connected with, and helped to produce, mass workers’ movements in a number of different countries across the world.

“An increasing number of syndicalist unions, committed to destroying capitalism through revolutionary trade union struggle, were to emerge as either existing unions were won over to syndicalist principles of new alternative revolutionary unions and organizations were formed by dissidents who broke away from their mainstream reformist adversaries.

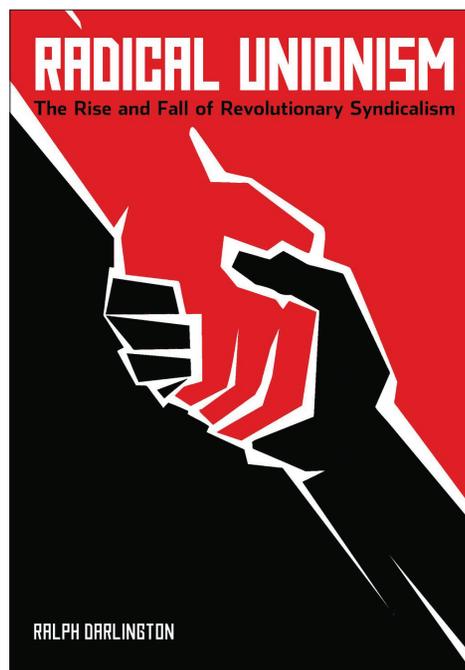
“This international movement experienced its greatest vitality in the period immediately preceding and following the First World War, from about 1910 until the early 1920s.”

The popularity of syndicalism reflected a growing radicalism in the international labour movement during that period and grew out of anger at the inability of social democratic parties and mainstream trade unions to deliver real improvements in conditions for the working class.

Syndicalism was attractive to those who saw parliamentary democracy and the conservatism, bureaucracy and corruption of the established socialist parties and trade unions as barriers to worker’s power and liberation.

Instead, syndicalists saw the hope of a better world for the working class in reconstructed and class-based (rather than craft-based) unions that would be militant organizations dedicated to the destruction of capitalism and the state through the intensification of industrial struggle.

The general strike was the height of the



struggle and, according to syndicalists, could achieve the overthrow of capitalism as unions became elevated to the frontline of struggle and could be turned into organs of economic and industrial administration after the overthrow of the old order.

Through the stories of the IWW, CGT, CNT and others, Darlington paints an inspiring picture of a real working class movement that organized outside the established labour organizations and put struggle and workers’ agency at the very centre of their vision for a better world.

Overtaken

The second half of the book details some of the reasons why this movement died. Primarily, the role of another insurgent method of socialism from below that also put the self-activity of workers at the centre of its vision for a new world: the revolutionary socialism of the Russian Bolshevik Party.

The victory of the working class revolution in Russia in October 1917 had the effect of winning many individual syndicalists converts and throwing into disarray the remaining syndicalist organizations. Darlington tries to summarize the relationship between syndicalism and the communism of Lenin’s Bolsheviks and their legacy for the theory and practice of working class liberation in the last chapter:

“The syndicalist movement not only made a

considerable and enduring contribution to the explosive wave of working class struggle that swept the world during the first two decades of the twentieth century (as well as Spain during the 1930s), but was itself a direct expression of workers’ rising level of organization, confidence and class-consciousness during this period.

“The movement displayed a powerful and inspiring capacity to mount uncompromising anti-capitalist forms of struggle which challenged both the structures of managerial authority within the capitalist enterprise and the legitimacy of ‘democratic’ state power within society generally. In the process it provided a devastating critique of the prevailing versions of political labourism and state socialism, as well as of bureaucratic and conservative trade union officialdom.”

However, “its efficacy as a strategy for the revolutionary transformation of society, can be seen to have been overtaken by a more developed and richer Marxist tradition.

“Of course, there were a number of commonalities between the two traditions, such as the advocacy of revolution from below and the self-emancipation of the working class, the antipathy displayed towards reformist socialist party and trade union leaders, and the attempt to transform the unions into revolutionary bodies.

“And to some extent the revolutionary Marxist tradition was itself refined as a result of the influence of syndicalism, notably with the placing of trade union struggle at the very core of the communist project.

But the Marxist tradition also crucially pointed to a number of crucial limitations within the syndicalist tradition, including: the need to link industrial struggle to political issues of broader nature and to direct such struggles towards the conquest of state power via insurrection; the need for a revolutionary political party that provided centralised leadership inside the working class movement; and the insufficiency of unions compared to soviets as the chief agency of revolution and organs of workers’ power.”

Radical Unionism is a great resource for those looking to understand the history of the labour movement, especially in the US, during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

It is also key for understanding what Rosa Luxemburg meant when she warned about the separation of economics and politics and underlines her argument that political and economic struggles are interconnected and that relationship is essential to topple capitalism and transform the system into one that is much more humane.

BIG WIN FOR \$15

by Pam Frache

As Socialist Worker went to press, the Toronto Star reported that on May 30, Premier Kathleen Wynne will “unveil dramatic labour law reforms, including greater employee protections, a push toward a \$15-an-hour minimum wage, more paid vacation time and measures to make it easier for workers to unionize.”

Such changes could mean substantial improvements in the lives of workers and, crucially, would open the door to bigger labour law changes, should the Ontario NDP adopt a much bolder vision for decent work.

But there is no room for complacency.

If the government proposes legislation – which it must if it intends to guarantee the changes before the next provincial election – this opens up a new terrain of struggle. Even after it is tabled, legislation must go through three readings, including committee hearings after second reading.

While this will give the Fight for \$15 and Fairness another chance to fight for improvements in the legislation, it also gives the business lobby time to organize, intimidate and threaten both workers and government.

That’s why we must be ready to redouble our efforts in the Fight for \$15 and Fairness, to push for more and counter any backlash.

Should the Ontario government announce plans for \$15 minimum wage – a measure that does NOT require legislation – we can be certain that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the retail lobby, temp agency lobbyists and other members of the 1% will be out in full force opposing it, even if there is a prolonged phase-in period that renders it meaningless. For our side, we must continue to insist that workers need a \$15 minimum wage *immediately* and should not be held hostage to the outcome of the June 2018 provincial election. But if the only thing we are debating is how fast workers need to get to \$15, then that in itself is a major accomplishment for the movement.

For example, at the outset of the campaign, the Ontario government firmly stated that the



We celebrate the gains in the fight for \$15, while redoubling efforts to push for more and to counter the backlash from the 1%.

minimum wage rate was “out of scope” and that they were not prepared to do anything more than they had already done in 2014 when, in response to the previous minimum wage campaign, they raised it to \$11 and indexed it to CPI. Even some labour leaders argued it would be un-strategic to focus on a \$15 minimum wage during the Changing Workplaces Review.

That a \$15 minimum wage – and other important issues like union rights and greater protections for workers – are even on the agenda is due entirely to organizing efforts of workers and students across the province to make it happen.

For example, if the Liberals do “ensure that Ontario workers earn equal pay for equal work, regardless of their full-time, part-time or temporary employee status” as the *Toronto Star* predicted, then this will be a significant improvement for women and workers of colour who are over-represented in part-time employment due

to their family caring responsibilities or because of structural barriers in the labour market that put equity seeking groups at a disadvantage.

It will also be a boon for union members who haven’t been able to close the wage gap between full-time and part-time members through collective bargaining. And of course, any extension in bargaining rights and changes that make it easier to join unions is a tremendous step forward for the working class.

And while we must prepare for a backlash from the 1%, we can also anticipate negativity from progressive quarters, such as “Everything is disappointing!” Such messaging is a mistake. It sends a terrible message to all the activists who have been working tirelessly for years to bring the struggle to this point and understates the significance of any forward movement in workers’ rights.

Few of us seriously believed we would be

handed our entire wish list by a neoliberal Liberal government. But we do need to use any concessions as milestones to refuel and energize for the struggles ahead. If we want better results – and we surely do – then more of us have to make organizing for decent work a priority in every workplace, every campus and every community.

And while it’s no secret that getting labour and community groups to prioritize the Fight for \$15 and Fairness has been an uphill battle, we must celebrate the extent of our accomplishments and imagine what the struggle could be with more people engaged.

It will take time to fully assess the new terrain of struggle after the Premier’s announcement. But make no mistake: getting these issues as far forward as we have in such a short time is an incredible accomplishment. It gives us a glimpse of what’s possible when we organize seriously, strategically and – crucially – for the long haul.

Workers for the Leap: A great step forward

by Carolyn Egan

The Canadian Labour Congress convention took place in Toronto in May. Thousands of trade unionists came together to assess the state of the labour movement and develop strategies for the future. Many were first time delegates. Unfortunately, there are usually more policy statements than direction for action coming out of these gatherings.

There were a number of highlights, one of which was a side meeting on the Leap Manifesto. About 65 delegates attended, including members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers from both Alberta and Ontario, the president of a large Unifor local in Fort McMurray, autoworkers from GM in Oshawa, the presidents of a number of labour councils, postal workers, steelworkers and others.

The manifesto is making the rounds of NDP riding associations, as was mandated at the last party convention, and has been getting strong endorsement from members across the country.

Building on that momentum, it was felt that it



made sense to go directly to unionized workers attending the CLC convention to have a conversation about what needs to be done, and to start a new organization to press for change: Workers for the Leap. Avi Lewis spoke, as well as others including myself. It was a very good dialogue with many intervening and addressing the need for strong policies to be implemented for a just transition for workers.

Many of those present felt that we have to pressure our unions to demand the needed infrastructure, mass transit, high speed rail, retrofitting of buildings, etc. that will provide good green jobs for workers. These jobs must be long

term, union and environmentally friendly so that workers don’t have to depend on fossil fuel extraction to put food on the table.

There was a tremendous urgency in the discussion and a concreteness in the steps that need to be taken. The *Greenprint* put out by the Toronto and York Region Labour Council was seen as a document that could be duplicated in other jurisdictions, pointing out specific areas such as Tower Renewal (dealing with older apartment buildings), expansion of mass transit including public ownership and operation, the renewal of community housing etc. A follow-up meeting has been planned with the involvement of more workers across the country. It was a great step forward.

Another high point of the convention was a session by Black activist and intellectual, Angela Davis, well known for her writings on class, race and gender in the United States. She spoke at the Human Rights Forum to over eight hundred participants. She spoke of how she was fired from her first job teaching Marxist philosophy because she was a Communist, and went on

to say that “demonstrations are a rehearsal for revolution”. She urged us to stay in the streets and stated that we will be post-Marxism after demolishing capitalism, not before, and that we need a richer working class consciousness. She also said that for feminism to succeed, it must be grounded in Marxism.

Although there may be differences among the left, and those can be debated out and proven in practice, it was very refreshing to hear someone speaking clearly about the need for a revolutionary theory at a national labour convention.

Another lesson that I learned from Quebec workers was about the real fights that have been going on through strong strikes and strike votes against two-tiered pension plans. The employers are on an offensive to take away defined benefit pensions, which will harm new hires. Quebec workers have drawn a line in the sand and are fighting back hard and winning victories.

This should give all workers the confidence that our battles over concessions and good jobs for all can be won if we take them on with determination and unity.