

**The NDP's betrayal
of Indigenous
peoples**

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**LEAP Manifesto:
the time is now**

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Original art by Julie Flett



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We live in an age of political polarization.

Capitalism is pushing more people into poverty while making the rich even richer. A recent Oxfam report found that 82% of the wealth created in 2017 went to the top 1% of the population.

The climate is in crisis – and the response from our political leaders is to build more pipelines and to find new places to drill for fossil fuels when we really need to be eliminating their use.

We are in a cycle of endless war that has created a global refugee cri-

sis beyond any in human history. Our political and business leaders respond to this crisis by selling more weapons to the combatants.

The racist far-right, emboldened by the election of Donald Trump, is on the streets in North America and is achieving electoral gains across Europe.

The stakes could not be higher. A better world is needed – and fast.

Yet in all that bleakness, there are seeds of hope and calls for real change are being picked up by millions. The election of Jeremy Corbyn as the

Labour leader in the UK, and the astounding campaign by Bernie Sanders in the last US election show that there is an appetite for unapologetically socialist ideas. Recent polling in the US found that a majority of people under 30 now reject capitalism, and more than 40 percent would prefer socialism.

The victorious Fight for \$15 campaign in Ontario proves that even in Canada, we can push for real change that helps millions – and win.

Unfortunately, at a time of polarization, when ideas are shifting to the

right and left, the NDP has decided to stake its claim to the political centre. There is no better way to become irrelevant in the current context. The decision to call for a balanced budget in the last federal election pushed the party to the right of the Liberals. It was an abysmal failure.

And the NDP is once again in danger of being outflanked to the left by the Liberals. Yet they fiddle with strategies to woo disaffected Tories rather than pose a real alternative.

How do we make real change here? The Leap Manifesto is a good start.

Clear and unrepentant support from the NDP for the ideas in the manifesto could provide a pole of attraction to millions looking for an alternative to war, poverty, racism and environmental destruction.

The German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, while observing the growing polarization in Europe in 1916, said that humanity faced a choice: “either transition to Socialism or regression into Barbarism.”

We are in a strikingly similar situation right now. We need to fight for a socialist future!

Québec solidaire and the NDP

by Chantal Sundaram

For nearly 20 years, progressives, social democrats and anti-capitalists have struggled to build a viable electoral left in Quebec. In the last decade, this has borne fruit with the founding of Québec solidaire, and its growth in the National Assembly, the popular vote, and in social movements.

On issues from climate change to neoliberalism and austerity, Québec solidaire has a more radical program and platform than the NDP either federally or in any province. But it also grew out of the remnants of the Quebec provincial NDP, and had a lot of crossover with what produced Quebec's Orange Crush that helped propel the NDP into opposition federally.

What caused a collapse of that support was not the niqab debate. In the 2015 campaign, the Liberals were more steadfast and clear on the right to wear the niqab than the NDP, and did very well in Quebec. It was the Liberals' outflanking of the NDP to the left on balanced budgets, public spending, and austerity – issues that run deep in Quebec.

Québec solidaire has worked diligently to fill the vacuum left by a Parti québécois no longer able to even mask as a party of the left with its turn to a racist identity politics and to Quebec bosses like Pierre-Karl Peladeau.

And in building this alternative within the Quebec context, QS has made every attempt to be solidaristic with the left in English Canada. It is not an accident that QS adopted orange as its party colour. And it has carried that colour not only at the ballot box but in the streets, to make a left electoral option relevant to those who want change but don't see it reflected in mainstream politics.

Mutual harm

This is why it is so unfortunate to see the NDP try to relaunch itself in Quebec to run candidates in the October 2018 provincial election. It is unlikely to have a great electoral impact, but it is a strategy that



NDP Quebec: putting electoralism above solidarity.

promises nothing but mutual harm to the left in both Quebec and English Canada in the big picture.

The goal is apparently to provide Quebec with a progressive "federalist" option. But who is the audience? Even those on the left who are lukewarm on independence support self-determination – which explains support for Jack Layton, an opponent of the Clarity Act, and why Jagmeet Singh is getting a more favourable reaction in Quebec than many predicted, as he too supports Quebec's right to choose.

While they say they want to reach political "orphans" the only audience this version of the NDP-Quebec is likely to reach will not be relevant to the movements that fuel social change in Quebec today. And if they do succeed in reaching some of the 35 per cent of people who don't vote, they will be steering them away from those very social movements, which will do a disservice to any progressive voters they may attract.

If the goal is to woo immigrant

communities, forming a party with no roots on the eve of an election is a spectacularly bad idea. Not to mention playing the old and false card that the Québécois are more racist (by a party that is itself very white in its provincial make-up) and need to be rescued by the NDP. Any attempt to play an anti-Islamophobia stance against Québec solidaire will be unproductive, as QS opposes the PQ Charter of Values and the Liberals' Bill 62 on the niqab.

The newly elected leader of NDP-Quebec, Raphaël Fortin, was quoted as saying, "What distinguishes us is that Quebec solidaire has made a turn towards independence in the merger with Option nationale." While Option nationale may have some different positions from QS on the specifics of independence, it was a smaller party with many other social goals in common with QS.

The other decision QS made this year, to reject all notion of an alliance with the PQ, shows that it does not see independence as a goal in itself

to create a "Quebec Inc" that would mimic the corporatist, neoliberal, pipeline and socially unjust policies tolerated and even implemented by the NDP when it has held power, but rather as a means to gain independence from those federal policies.

When Thomas Mulcair was federal leader, he argued for the NDP to run candidates provincially in Quebec. At this moment, the link with the federal party is unclear: Fortin has been quoted as saying the only links are the name and some progressive ideas, and that no federal members are involved. They have even adopted purple to avoid confusion with QS's orange.

Everything about this move is confusing at best, and paternalistic at worst. For those on the committed left in Quebec, it risks further undermining the hard-won trust of non-federalist progressives for the federal NDP, and squandering not only what's left of the Layton legacy in Quebec but the profile that Singh could now bring. And above all, it puts electoralism before solidarity.

Reproductive justice: NDP lurches to the right

by Valerie Lannon

The federal NDP has taken issue with the Trudeau government's decision to tie funding for summer jobs to respect for reproductive rights. Groups and businesses applying for funds for summer job creation need to confirm in writing that they support the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which includes reproductive choice.

What could be less controversial? But instead of supporting women when their movement has received new life in response to the election of Donald Trump and all he represents, the NDP moves to the right on the all-important issue of reproductive freedom.

The Liberal move came in response to approval last year by two MPs for tens of thousands of dollars in grants to anti-abortion groups and in some cases for camps that discriminated against the 2LGBTQ community.

NDP's Nathan Cullen stated "I think the way the government has handled this conversation hasn't been very respectful of many of the faith communities in this country." In this argument, the NDP joined Tory leader Andrew Scheer.

There was immediate shock and opposition to Cullen on social media, and NDP leader Jagmeet Singh responded with a confirmation of the party's pro-choice position. Cullen eventually backpedaled.

The Liberals outflanked the NDP on the left, and Cullen exposed the party's shameful effort to be "electable". We must keep the NDP accountable on even the most basic parts of its policies.

2017 – A year of climate justice betrayals in BC

by Lisa Descary

Less than a year ago, the BC NDP formed government with the support of the three Green MLAs. Climate justice activists celebrated this result. After all, now we had a 'Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy' in George Heyman, a man who had been an environmental campaigner himself. This seemed like a dream compared to the past sixteen years of attacks on workers and the planet by Christy Clark's BC Liberals.

New Premier John Horgan explained that they would "immediately employ every tool available to the new government to stop the expansion of the Kinder Morgan pipeline (KMX)." "We're going to... make sure permitting and other issues are exhaustively reviewed," said Horgan. The West Coast Environmental Law Association published a number of legal "tools in the toolbox" for the new BC government to use to stall the KMX project.

Unfortunately, the new Environment minister soon announced that the province would not use the permitting process to hold up construction of the pipeline. Instead they would evaluate provincial permit applications for the project 'in an appropriate and fair manner.' This was because, 'There's no point trying to exercise authority that we don't have [in refusing to issue permits] because that is capricious, exceeding our jurisdiction and, ultimately, that won't be effective.' Meanwhile, Kinder Morgan was breaking the law by placing anti-salmon spawning mats in BC streams. The National Energy Board regulators hadn't noticed the illegal mats, so it fell to Indigenous activists to remove them!

The NDP government did take on intervenor status in Indigenous court cases against KM, but at the same time decided to continue the government's role on the side of Kinder Morgan against the Squamish nation.

The Site C Dam Betrayal

The BCNDP approval of site C dam is an enormous betrayal, especially of so many Indigenous climate defenders who worked hard to get the NDP elected, saw the NDP as their party, and put their trust in them to stop the megaproject that would decimate so much of their territory in the Peace River area of Treaty 8 Indigenous lands. Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Perry Bellegarde said, "The B.C. NDP government pledged to work towards reconciliation and this decision is completely contrary to that."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs promised, "With every court case, every delay, every budget lift, and every rate hike, we will remind British Columbians that it may have been the BC Liberals that got us into this mess, but it was the BC NDP who chose to abandon us there."

Premier Horgan defended his decision, "It's clear that Site C should

never have been started. But to cancel it would add billions to the Province's debt – putting at risk our ability to deliver housing, child care, schools and hospitals for families across B.C." Further, he claimed that the \$4 billion debt from money already spent and the costs of remediation would result in "massive cuts to the services they (people) count on."

Defending Liberal tax cuts

This is the politics of austerity and the Premier's argument, that there is no alternative, is not true. The NDP government could easily increase tax revenues by \$5 billion a year if they returned income taxes on corporations and on those earning more than \$100,000 a year to the 1999 levels.

These betrayals by the NDP will lead many to shift to the right, either by supporting NDP austerity policies or by supporting the BC Greens. The Greens are anti-worker. We can see this in how unhappy they were with the NDP decision to eliminate bridge

tolls (the Greens are happy to make workers who can't afford to live near where they work – due to sky-high house prices – pay more!) And it was the BC Greens years ago who argued that striking transit workers should be legislated back to work.

While the Greens threatened to topple the coalition government over a faster timeline to a \$15/hr minimum wage, they didn't make similar threats over the cancellation of Site C.

In order to defeat projects like the Kinder Morgan pipeline, we need to keep building a powerful grassroots climate justice movement that doesn't depend on the courts or the NDP to save us. If climate justice and Indigenous activists can unite with workers to push for a just transition for all workers away from building pipelines, and towards building green alternatives, then we know we can do more than just stop the pipelines; we can prevent our planet slipping further into climate chaos.

Carillion crash: the bankruptcy of privatization

by John Bell

In 2014 the press reported: “Carillion Canada fined \$900,000 for not properly clearing QEW (Ontario’s Queen Elizabeth Highway) during two storms.” What then seemed an isolated bit of corporate irresponsibility takes on a different character with the recent news that Carillion’s British parent company, a world leader in Public-Private Partnership (P3) deals, has gone bankrupt.

The crash of Carillion could have a big impact on Canadians in two senses.

First, if Carillion Canada goes under it could cost tens of thousands of workers their livelihoods and pensions. Carillion had its fingers in a lot more than snow plowing.

Second, the crisis of Carillion – here and in Britain – calls into question the free market logic which has held sway for decades: cut red tape; make government smaller; public services are inherently inefficient, and private business can do it better and cheaper.

Carillion’s Ontario snow job

While the press reported Carillion’s fines back in 2014, it is not evident they actually paid the \$900,000. They were appealing the fine. A subsequent auditor’s report noted the Ontario Liberals forgave \$4.8 million out of the \$13.3 million in fines it levied against private contractors in 2013-14.

The time it took to clear snow doubled when the service privatized in 2009 according to Ontario’s auditor.

When at least one private contractor complained they didn’t have enough equipment to do the job, the province generously purchased plows and sanders for them.

The Liberal’s largesse was a



A Carillion Maintenance vehicle

Photo: Chris McKenna (Thryduulf) [Flickr CC-BY-NC-2.0]

surprise to Wayne Gates, then ONDP transportation critic: “If I was the government I would have made sure the companies had the equipment to perform the job. I’m actually surprised they don’t have an out clause in their agreements so they can get out of them if the companies are not performing the work.”

Carillion Canada had 8 contracts to maintain highways in southern Ontario, worth \$87 million annually.

Most of Carillion’s Canadian P3 projects are in the area of health care, building and managing hospitals in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Northwest Territories. Ontario readers may be familiar with Carillion through its role building and running operations like the P3 Brampton Civic Hospital.

Independent auditors found that cost over-runs and missed deadlines building the hospital cost taxpayers \$200 million.

The British case – the gospel of privatization

UK’s Tory government claims it was blindsided by the bankruptcy. With so many built-in advantages, who could have predicted the collapse of Carillion? Well, the capitalist speculators who run hedge funds have been quietly dumping their Carillion stocks for months.

According to financial journalist Paul Mason: “Under neoliberalism, the role of the state is to continu-

ously create opportunities for profit in the private sector by extending market forces into areas where they did not previously exist. In this sense, Carillion was not the product of entrepreneurship but of government policy.”

In the process, important services needed for the public are given to managers who answer only to shareholders. Executive pay soars; a year before the crash, Carillion executive contracts were rewritten to give them protection for their bonuses in the event of bankruptcy. And when the crash comes, it is taxpayers who are left on the hook to salvage the projects and (hopefully) deliver the services.

These schemes have been around long enough for the facts to be known. Comparisons between public and privately delivered services has shown that private and P3 schemes are about 40% less efficient than public.

Despite this evidence, governments continue privatizing. Justin Trudeau and Finance Minister Bill Morneau want to put \$28 billion worth of public infrastructure on the table for their corporate supporters. We know, and Carillion’s crash proves, that eventually those costs will go up, and will get dumped on us in the form of declining quality, longer waits and user fees.

Isn’t 30 years of bad investments, declining services and crumbling infrastructure proof that we can do better? Time to renationalize services like rail, to revolutionize public transportation. Time to return all health services to the public realm along with real investment. And time to realize that it isn’t just this particular kind of neoliberal capitalism that is a monumental failure, it is capitalism itself.

Imperialism won’t end Kurdish agony

By Alex Callinicos

In a Middle East tormented by the domination of Western imperialism, the Kurdish people have been among the greatest victims.

When Britain and France carved up the Ottoman Empire nearly a century ago, the Kurds were denied their right to self-determination. Instead they were split between several states—Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran—that have usually oppressed them.

This torment continues into the present. Last weekend Turkish forces attacked Afrin, in the Kurdish-controlled region of Syria known as Rojava. But the problem isn’t just the oppressor states but the choice that Kurdish leaders sometimes have made to ally themselves to imperialist powers, particularly the United States.

This has long been the strategy of the two Kurdish nationalist parties in northern Iraq, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). They took advantage of the 1991 Gulf War led by the US against Saddam Hussein’s Iraq to carve out an enclave, benefitting from the protection of American air power.

The 2003 invasion of Iraq by the US and Britain allowed the Kurdish enclave to consolidate itself. It seemed an island of relative calm amid the chaos the rest of Iraq descended into.

The rise of Isis and its seizure of Mosul in 2014 seemed to offer more opportunities. Kurdish forces took advantage of the confusion in Baghdad to seize disputed areas, above all the oilfields around Kirkuk. And they received massive US support as they fought alongside Iraqi government forces to drive ISIS out of its strongholds.

Last September, as the US-led coalition’s grip tightened around Mosul, Masoud Barzani, president of Iraqi Kurdistan and KDP leader, called a referendum on indepen-

dence. Even though he won an overwhelming majority, he had badly overplayed his hand.

The US stood by while its Kurdish clients were humiliated in Iraq. Will it do the same in Syria?

The Iraqi government was able to retake Mosul thanks to the support, not just of the US, but also of Iran. Iranian-backed Shiite militias played a crucial role in Isis’s defeat. In October, after Mosul’s fall, Iraqi prime minister Haider al-Abadi redirected some to retake the areas the Kurds had seized in 2014. They fell rapidly, possibly because of a deal cut with Iran by Barzani’s PUK rivals.

Now there may be a rerun in Syria. Rojava was carved out by the Kurdish YPG (People’s Protection Units) when the regime of Bashar al-Assad, fighting for its survival after the 2011 rising, abandoned them. The YPG is closely linked to the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), which has been waging a generation-long war

against the Turkish state.

As in the case of Iraq, Washington latched onto the YPG as an ally. The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), backed by 2,000 US troops, played an important role in the campaign that finally drove Isis from its capital in Raqqa. They now control 25 percent of Syria.

The problem for the US is that Isis’s defeat strengthened Iran, which backs both Assad and al-Abadi. So Washington recently announced it would keep troops in Syria. The ostensible aim was to train up the SDF into a 30,000-strong border force in north-eastern Syria.

In reality, this move was aimed at Iran, towards which Donald Trump is adopting an increasingly confrontational approach. But in the complex, multi-dimensional chess game that is Middle East politics it inevitably antagonized Turkey. The government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan has escalated the

war against the PKK in the last couple of years, and it doesn’t want to see its enemy become stronger in Syria.

Another factor in the equation is Russia, which intervened in September 2016 decisively to tilt the balance in the Syrian civil war in Assad’s favour. Russia has also supported the YPG. But, after negotiations in Moscow last week, the Russian military police based in Afrin were pulled out.

In effect Vladimir Putin gave Erdogan the green light to attack, and he has. The US stood by while its Kurdish clients were humiliated in Iraq. Will it do the same in Syria?

Whatever the answer to this question, it is the Kurdish people who are suffering. Let’s hope its political leaders learn that there is no gain from allying themselves to imperialist monsters such as Trump and Putin.

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WHY DOES THE NDP KEEP BETRAYING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES?

by Valerie Lannon & Jesse McLaren

“I am not the first person to stand before you and disappoint indigenous people.” This was how BC Premier Horgan described the NDP’s support for Site C dam, which betrayed their election promise and Indigenous rights. As Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs explained, “a project approval will represent a complete betrayal of First Nation’s and the vast majority of British Columbians who stand in steadfast opposition to the Site C dam project... With every court case, every delay, every budget lift, and every rate hike, we will remind British Columbians that it may have been the BC Liberals that got us into this mess, but it was the BC NDP who chose to abandon us there.”

The NDP is the only major party connected to the labour movement, and in voting for it many people hope the NDP won’t be as damaging as the corporate Liberals and Conservatives. This was especially true for the recent BC election, which saw the NDP prevail over the hated Liberals. But the recent approval of the Site C dam by the BC NDP is not the first time the NDP has betrayed Indigenous peoples. Instead, Horgan made reference to a long legacy while committing himself to continuing it.

Colonialism and Indigenous suffrage

The Canadian state is based on the violent suppression of Indigenous sovereignty and for the first century of its existence it used the vote as a colonial tactic—offering it as the price to pay for relinquishing Indian status, or as a temporary measure to mobilize Indigenous soldiers. After the war, the Liberal government of St-Laurent discussed Indigenous suffrage, but cabinet minister CD Howe feared it would benefit the CCF, which had attracted some Indigenous activists. It was only in 1960 under the Conservative Diefenbaker government that Indigenous people were allowed to vote, and this came in the context of continued forced assimilation—from ongoing

residential school genocide, to the “60s scoop” that removed Indigenous children from their communities, to Pierre Trudeau’s “White Paper” in 1969 that proposed ending Indian status.

For this reason, some Indigenous activists, like Cree leader John Tootoosis (whose great uncle Chief Poundmaker was incarcerated for challenging the early Canadian state in 1885) opposed the vote as a ploy to ignore treaties. Other activists, like Metis socialist Howard Adams (whose grandfather Maxime Lepine was also incarcerated in 1885) saw the vote as a tactic that Indigenous people could use to raise the issue of sovereignty.

1960-70s: Red Power

As an expression of workers opposition to capitalist parties, a social democratic party in Canada (first the CCF and then its offspring the NDP) was important to win reforms like Medicare. But its goal is to use the state to provide reforms, not challenge its colonial and capitalist foundations. As a result, while the early 1960s produced both the NDP and Indigenous suffrage, the new party did not mobilize Indigenous voters as CD Howe had feared.

As Howard Adams explained, “the Saskatchewan Native Action Committee (SNAC) ran independent candidates in the 1968 federal election. Several leading Aboriginal spokespersons were opposed to this action. They argued that because Indians had been excluded from voting until 1961, there was no reason why they should become involved now...”

“We understood that political parties were intimately connected to the capitalist system that impoverished our people. For this reason, we believed that all parties, Conservatives, Liberals, and NDP, were incapable of making real changes. They could only make minor reforms that would never the while providing benefits to Indians and Metis. Therefore, SNAC’s candidate, Carole Lavalee of the Cowesses reserve, ran as an independent...A couple of Aboriginals had been



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip fights the Site C Dam. (desmog.ca)

elected to Parliament before, but as a Liberal or Conservative member. They had done nothing to advance their people’s needs, nor had they promoted self-determination. In short, they were indistinguishable from white MPs. Our candidate’s election platform broke with this tradition. Her campaign for Aboriginal people was based on two central issues: self-determination and autonomous control of our local industries and Native communities”

The next year the Red Power movement emerged, sparked by the White Paper, but the NDP did not embrace it. The Dene Peoples were fighting for their rights when the MacKenzie Valley pipeline was being proposed.

During the Berger inquiry into the pipeline, at a meeting in Winnipeg, home to a large Indigenous community, the Manitoba NDP declined to make a submission, for fear of offending business. “Silence is consent” accurately describes this failure. In 1972, BC elected its first NDP government and Premier Dave Barrett thought he was doing the right thing by appointing Nisga’a leader Frank Calder to his cabinet. But Calder was given no portfolio; this was tokenism supreme.

1990s activism

In the late 1980s and early 1990s there was another wave of Indigenous land defense from coast to coast—from Innu blockade of a NATO base in Labrador, to Mohawks defending sacred land at Kanesatake, to Algonquins of Barriere Lake challenging clear-cutting, to the occupation of Ipperwash Park, to Sundancers asserting their ceremonial rights at Ts’Peten (Gustafsen Lake). In government again in BC, the NDP spent the 1990s defending land grabs through colonial courts and armed police—while also legislating striking teachers back to work.

The BC NDP government professed to be moving beyond the overtly racist and exploitive practices of decades of Social Credit/Liberal governments who refused to recognize indigenous land title. The NDP created treaty tables to negotiate “certainty” in a province where no treaties were in place. But these “treaties” relied on the governments (federal and provincial) extinguishing the land title of First Nations, then negotiating some of the land back into the control of each participating First Nation. In other words, the government formalizes its robbery of the lands, then gives a little bit back,

plus some cash. Twenty-five years after the BC treaty process began, very few treaties have been signed and the First Nations involved have run up debts of some \$500 million to pay for the lawyers, scientists and consultants who have to make their case to the governments.

When it came to Sundancers conducting ceremonies on their land, the BC NDP responded with the largest RCMP operation in history. Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh made the shocking statement “Where’s the other side of the story? There is only one side of the story. There is no other side.” In other words, the Sundancers had no right to speak about the site or about Indigenous rights more broadly. And when the RCMP alleged they had been shot at (a charge later shown to be a fabrication, but consistent with the RCMP’s smear campaign), Dosanjh used this as a pretext to have the Department of National Defense send in armoured personnel carriers and other equipment including land mines that were set around the camp.

Idle No More and climate justice

Facing the latest wave of Indigenous resistance, the NDP leadership took the side of “law and order.” Concurrent with the launch of Idle No More in late 2012, Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence conducted a fast on Victoria Island, across from “Parliament Hill.” Her community had only recently been in the news for appalling housing conditions. Support came from everywhere, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) issued a public letter of support for her and for Indigenous sovereignty. In contrast to CUPW’s letter of support, NDP leader Tom Mulcair called on the Chief to suspend her hunger strike, saying “the government seems to be moving so I think that the best thing to do would be to step back from that now.”

The next year, when Elsipogtog was building Indigenous-settler solidarity to stop testing which could have led to massive fracking in New Brunswick, the leadership of the New Brunswick NDP called for “the rule



Rally against Kinder Morgan oil pipeline on Burnaby Mountain. (Photo: Mark Klotz/Flickr)

of law” to remove all blockades, and defended the “investment and jobs” falsely promised by the fracking industry.

Criticizing Indigenous resistance has been part of supporting the ongoing colonization of Indigenous territories. When the NDP was elected in Alberta in 2015 there was hope for a new era. “As First Nations, we are optimistic to finally have a government that recognizes and respects Indigenous rights and territories,” wrote the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. But Nottley’s first call was to reassure Big Oil that things would be “A-OK,” and the NDP leader has become a major defender of tar sands that

Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) part of Canadian law, and during his leadership campaign Jagmeet Singh opposed pipelines for not respecting UNDRIP. But when it represents the Canadian state, the NDP reflects its colonial foundations.

Despite the fact the BC NDP has said it will do everything it can to stop the despised Kinder Morgan TransMountain pipeline, and even though it joined in the suite of court cases in 2017 to stop the pipeline, it also has a lawsuit against the Squamish First Nation, defending a decision by the previous Liberal government to approve the pipeline. Squamish Chief Ian Campbell

masters never had any intention of respecting Indigenous sovereignty. But alone among the major political parties, the NDP is not supported by big business. The party’s resolutions, put forth by NDP activists involved in movements, support the working class and Indigenous rights—for example, members are pushing the party to support the Leap Manifesto.

But because of its electoralist strategy, the party leadership subordinates these to the needs to be “electable” and thus cater to business interests. When elected to government, the NDP repeatedly turns its back on the working class and on indigenous rights. The NDP behaves like all social democratic parties around the world—to prop up capitalism, not overthrow it. In the context of a colonial settler state, this reformist strategy leads the NDP to choose the Canadian state over Indigenous sovereignty.

From Red Power to Idle No More, movements for Indigenous sovereignty expose the failures of the Parliamentary road to a better world, while building the solidarity needed to chart another path—intertwining Indigenous national liberation with working class revolution. As Howard Adams explained, “The New Democratic Party is very much like the other two bourgeois parties, except that it brings about small reforms in health, welfare, car insurance, etc.; it is equally a part of the capitalist system and therefore unable to bring about any real and basic changes in society.

“All governments regardless of their political affiliations have discriminated against native people and denied them their rights as full citizens. Parliament is an instrument of the ruling class and its main purpose is to support and protect the ruling class... Radical nationalism will mean greater class consciousness. It develops the understanding that a native liberation struggle is essentially the same struggle as that of the working class and all oppressed people against a capitalist ruling class. In this way, Indians and Metis can build alliances with workers and other oppressed and colonized groups of white society.”

Refusing to support climate justice, while promising ‘balanced budgets,’ Mulcair allowed Trudeau to tack left with progressive rhetoric and win the federal election.’

exposed the discrepancy: “When the NDP got into office, they were quite vocal about this issue. The response we are getting now is that they will challenge our position. It makes us wonder where the province stands.” At the same time the NDP government has gone against the expressed wishes of First Nations and others to approve the giant Site C dam, and in the latest development, Mr. Mulcair said shipping western oil to Eastern Canada is a ‘pro-business, common sense solution’ that will create jobs and boost the country’s energy security. Mr. Mulcair later told reporters he has long said he would not speak against the oil sands expansion.” Refusing to support climate justice, while promising “balanced budgets,” Mulcair allowed Trudeau to tack left with progressive rhetoric and win the federal election.

Last month, Cree NDP MP Romeo Saganash re-introduced a private member’s bill to make the UN Declaration on the Rights of

Reform or revolution

This is another betrayal, and one built into the NDP and which exposes its contradictions. The Liberals and Tories don’t betray because their corporate



PMO receives LEAP Manifesto. (Photo: Council of Canadians/Flickr)

Courage to LEAP

by Carolyn Egan

The LEAP Manifesto was developed through a participatory process in which over sixty activists, including a significant number of Indigenous people, trade unionists, and environmentalists met together for two days in Toronto. The call was put out by Naomi Klein and Avi Lewis, and an intense discussion took place among the participants, many of whom had never worked together before.

The outcome of these discussions was the manifesto and it immediately had a significant impact on the political dialogue taking place in this country on climate change. It broadened the terrain, bringing an anti-racist, class perspective to the debate with the intent of building a mass movement for climate justice.

It begins with the statement, “We could live in a country powered entirely by renewable energy, woven together by accessible public transit, in which jobs and opportunities of this transition are designed to systematically eliminate racial and gender equality.”

“Caring for one another and caring for the planet could be the economy’s fastest growing sectors. Many more people could have higher wage jobs with fewer work hours, leaving us ample time to enjoy our loved ones and flourish in our communities.”

Bridging the divide

It attempted to bridge the divide among workers, environmentalists and Indigenous people and put behind us the argument of jobs versus the environment. It argued that the shift must begin now, and put forward a vision for the future that took on the austerity agenda that had been running roughshod over working people and the poor.

This approach understood the need for a just transition for workers involved in resource-based industries, appreciating that workers are not interested in raping the planet but are simply taking the jobs on offer to feed their families. It argued that workers must be involved in building our future along with respecting the inherent rights and title of the “original

caretakers of this land”. The LEAP Manifesto has been discussed in NDP riding associations across the country as well as in union locals, faith communities, student federations and other progressive groups. More and more people are discussing the concepts that it puts forward and have signed on in support both as individuals and through their organizations.

It sparked a necessary debate on climate justice in its broadest sense. LEAP groups have been set up, Labour for Leap had a productive forum at the recent Canadian Labour Congress convention, and it called a meeting, Courage to LEAP, at the time of the federal NDP convention.

Building an alternative

We have seen the impact of a developing new politic, a socialist politic, through the Bernie Sanders campaign in the US and the movement that allowed Corbyn to win the leadership of the Labour Party in Britain. Hundreds of thousands of new and old activists have become involved in building an alternative to what has been on offer. People see and feel the effects of a capitalist system concerned only with profit, hell bent on ravaging the planet and the people who inhabit it. They are rejecting politics as it has been and are looking for alternatives.

The meeting in Ottawa is an important step forward in developing a new political movement in Canada, learning from the experiences of activists from the US and the United Kingdom. Any such movement must go beyond electoral politics and build campaigns on the ground, from the grass roots up, that will engage working people, racialized communities, First Nations and all those who see the need for change.

The moment is now – and we must take advantage of it. The capitalist system does all it can to divide us one from another, but collectively we have the power to overcome it.

We need to bridge the divisions among us, organize ourselves in mass movements and socialist organization to take on the attacks we are experiencing, and build together for a new world.

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.

Tim Hortons: Canadian capitalism, 'small business' and resistance

by Jesse McLaren

When the heirs to billionaire Tim Hortons founders cut paid breaks and benefits for the minimum wage employees at their Cobourg franchise, it exposed the massive exploitation that has always been at the heart of Canada's iconic coffee shop.

Canadian 'small business'

In 1964 hockey player Tim Horton started a doughnut shop in Hamilton, and in 1967 partnered with Ron Joyce, a cop who ran a Dairy Queen restaurant. While named after Horton and connected to the national sport he played, it was Joyce who ran the company. In the 1990s Tim Hortons merged with Wendy's (another company based on low wages) to expand into the US, and returned to Canada in 2000 to take advantage of low corporate taxes created by years of Liberal and Tory cuts.

Most stores are operated by business owners who run an average of three stores. But these are not separate, small businesses independent from the multi-billion dollar corporation. As former CEO Don Schroeder boasted to the *Globe & Mail* in 2011, "we are landlords, it is part of our business model...so we have a good re-occurring stream of income...and the real estate is a big part of that and it ties us close to the restaurant owners as well." Now 3G Capital, the Brazilian private equity firm that merged Tim Hortons and Burger King into Restaurant Brands International in 2014, is squeezing more from the franchises, sparking class action lawsuits from an association of owners.

When it merged with Burger King in 2014, some labour leaders characterized it as "the sale of an iconic Canadian business to a group of foreign billionaires"—glamorizing a Canadian billionaire whose empire chased low corporate taxes while paying workers poverty wages for 40 years prior to the merger. But it the "iconic Canadian business" which has used the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to exploit migrant workers. Having temporary and disposable low-wage workers, who can be paid lower wages, denied labour rights



Rally in solidarity with Tim Hortons workers in Toronto.

and deported at the end of their contract, has served Tim Hortons expansion. But labour solidarity can push back—from the steelworkers who supported the migrant workers in Fernie in 2013, to the student and labour groups who supported the unionization of a Tim Hortons in Winnipeg in 2015.

Roll up the resistance

By building a broad campaign to raise in the minimum wage and improve labour standards, the Fight for \$15 and Fairness is raising class struggle. This is exposing the "Canadian icon" of Tim Hortons for what it has always been: a profit-hungry corporations that has made billions by exploiting workers and taking advantage of low corporate taxes. That Ron Joyce Jr and Jeri-Lynn Horton-Joyce, the children and heirs of the co-founders, should claim to be "small business owners" shows that this argument against a higher minimum wage has always been led by big business—including Tim Hortons, Wendy's, Macdonald's, Walmart, and Loblaws—not small business, many of whom support a higher minimum wage.

Class struggle is also driving a wedge into the business community, and exposing rifts. Tim Hortons owners have been happy to exploit

workers and treat migrant workers as disposable, but now find themselves squeezed between workers demands for higher wages and their parent company demands for higher profits. This is widening the pre-existing rift, with both sides blaming each other for attacking workers.

The Liberals, having been pressured into passing Bill 148 and seeing a majority support for the \$15 minimum wage, are banking their election hopes on presenting themselves as defenders of workers—and calling out Tim Hortons as bullies. This is convenient cover for a government that froze the minimum wage for years, cut corporate taxes and recently bullied teachers back to work. But it's a tactic that will work until the NDP wakes up and smells the brewing resistance. In 2014 the NDP refused to support the \$14 minimum wage because of "small businesses", and have been ambivalent about the Fight for \$15.

Many have instinctively called for boycotts, which is a welcome sentiment of revulsion that has shaken Tim Hortons' carefully crafted nationalist image. But the anger needs to be channeled towards supporting workers, reversing the cuts, and extending the Fight for \$15 and Fairness.



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Unifor-CLC split demands unity from below

by Doug Nesbitt, Gerard Di Trolio, Evan Johnston & David Bush

Unifor, Canada's largest private sector union, has left the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). This will have reverberations across the entire labour movement, and the Unifor membership has had no say in the decision

Divisions at the top

Unifor president Jerry Dias framed their decision in terms of democratic rights of union members to choose their own unions, and defending the autonomy of Canadian unions. But the subtext of the split is Unifor's involvement in the internal crises of other unions, and an ongoing dispute over the political direction of the labour movement.

In 2017 Unifor colluded with the president of Amalgamated Transit Union local 113 to attempt to change unions without any membership involvement.

Now Unifor is involved with UNITE HERE Local 75's fight against trusteeship, signing cards of Local 75 members.

At the 2017 Ontario Federation of Labour convention there was a motion from the floor for the OFL to offer partisan support for the NDP.

This evoked a heated debate which pitted Unifor delegates, whose old CAW side has backed strategic voting since the late 1990s, against delegates from most other unions.

The pro-NDP motion was passed and it was clear the leadership of Unifor was not pleased.

The divisions at the top are not new, but splits have a real effect on the ground.

Consider the timing of this split as Tim Hortons owners have sparked off an explosion of working-class anger against employers we haven't seen in years. There is a national discussion over working conditions and organizing the unorganized. This demands a coordinated, united and strategic response from all unions.

Our priorities: building unity from below

The split and its possible consequences are a propaganda gift to employers. If Unifor does in fact begin raids, it allows business to spin more stories about greedy unions who only care about union dues.

At the local level, it will be important that Unifor activists engaged in work with other union members are not ostracised because of the decisions of their union leadership. Activists pushing for unity at the local level will be absolutely necessary if the labour movement wants to fight and win.

While there is disorder at the top, keeping a fighting labour movement will require unity from below. Union members must hold their leaders to account to help solve this impasse and get back to fighting for the interests of workers.

There's a huge opening across the country to advance a \$15 minimum wage and organize the most unorganized sectors. The alternative is a divided labour movement that can be easily conquered by the bosses and hostile governments.

● See the full article at rankandfile.ca.



Jerry Dias

Photo: OFL Communications

REVIEW

American Fall: Anti-Flag's passion shows no sign of slowing down

by D'Arcy Briggs

With a cover featuring the Oval Office covered in stacks of money in the shape of a skull, it's not hard to guess what is fueling Anti-Flag's latest album.

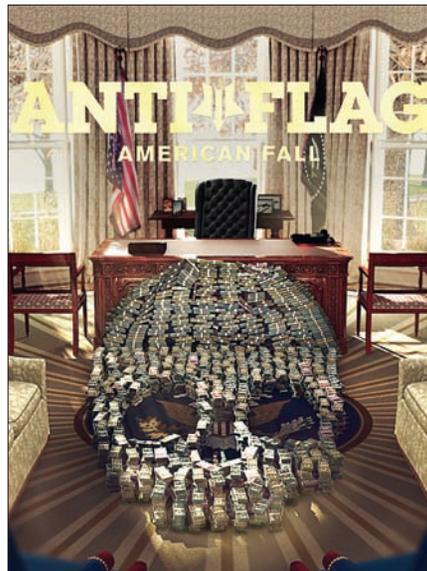
Since their last album's release in 2015, the state of politics in the US has gone from bad to worse; or rather, the kinks in the capitalist machine are starting to show. Trump has given a new confidence and a new voice to the abhorrent and odious right wing.

Attacks on democratic institutions and freedom are defended by centrists in the name of free speech. This puts Anti-Flag in the position where their views seem all the more radical, even if they haven't changed.

Politically, the album might not be their most direct or charged, but it does easily call into question much of what is occurring around the world.

As the track "The Criminals," cries: These are the days that test your heart and soul / Strap yourself in for the American Fall / Day after day it is all crash and burn / A nation hijacked by the criminals."

In the one ska song featured on the album, which could be Anti-Flag's first ska song to date, they tackle intersectional issues such as gender, class, and race with lines like "Look outside your window, there's a woman being grabbed / They've voted with their reverence and a Bible in their hand / Maybe we should go outside and try to stop her pain / The anthem started playing and



I'd hate to miss the game."

While lyrically this album doesn't seem as eloquent as some of their classics like *The Terror State* or *Underground Network*, it's still surprisingly diverse.

Tracks cover a wide range of topics, such as checking our privilege, substance abuse, as well as the group's standards of anti-imperialist anthems.

There isn't necessarily an immediate standout on the album, with a chorus or message that will stick in your head for days, but I would move that "Racists" has an outstanding chorus with "Just 'cause

you don't know you're racist / A bigot with a check list / Just 'cause you don't know you're racist / You don't get a pass when you're talkin' your shit," and an incredibly sharp verse with "Black lives matter and you don't know why / And reverse racism isn't a real thing / No you weren't alive in the time of slavery / But that's no excuse to ignore its legacy / Not afraid of refugees / But don't want a mosque built on your street."

Musically this album follows the same steps that we've seen Anti-Flag take in recent years. It's very anthemic, very polished, and draws more than a few comparisons to early Rancid, mid-career Green Day, or any band that was on Hellcat in the early-2000's.

It's fun to see them play the melodic pop-punk route, but fans of their more straight-ahead style might find the album lacking. As mentioned earlier, the album also features a ska track, perhaps a first or at least a rarity for the band.

Does it work?

It certainly doesn't fall flat, but I won't be upset if the band sticks to the styles they're known for.

Anti-Flag has been a powerful and popular voice with radical politics for decades, and this album shows the band playing with a passion that shows no sign of slowing down.

While many have cried foul as they have worked with major labels, their unwavering support for grassroots movements and social justice is nothing but admirable.

"887": Language, identity and class

by Chantal Sundaram

Je me souviens. The Quebec license plate is the backdrop to renowned theatre-maker Robert LePage's study of memory, "887."

Named for the street address of his childhood apartment in Quebec City, it is a true story of the Quiet Revolution – first performed mostly in English, to a largely anglophone audience, when it was commissioned by the Toronto 2015 Pan Am Games. It went back to Toronto by popular demand in April 2017, and played at Ottawa's National Arts Centre in January 2018, again in English with some subtitled French, to a mostly anglophone audience.

In this solo show, LePage is unable to memorize the 1968 poem "Speak White" by Michel Lalonde, about the forcing of English on Quebec, for an official commemoration of the founding of Quebecois poetry. He tells us how he created a memory device: the apartment where he grew up in the 1960s, from the emergence of the Quiet Revolution to the FLQ crisis. The places of his childhood are enacted onstage with scale models.

Memory can be inhibited by a performer's lack of resolution with a text. But LePage's real lack of resolution may be with the audience he had to memorize the poem for: federal and provincial dignitaries and media. He says the only person worthy to recite the poem would be his taxi driver father who worked long hours to give the family a better life. By creating a memory device based not only on the Quebec of the 60s but also the working-class world he grew up in, he brings the poem to life.

Language and identity are tied up with class: LePage tells an anecdote about going to a Quebec Conservatory performance to hear theatre students perform Aristophanes. He comments on how beautiful



their French diction is to the director, who says, well yes, in your day it was all about physical theatre for the masses; today those people would not be able to afford theatre school.

It is this class anger that is at the heart of the poem "Speak White," which starts with the words "We are an uncultured, stammering people." The Quiet Revolution changed that in many ways, but this is at the heart of the contradiction LePage faces in reciting the poem to a room of dignitaries far removed from the world that produced it as a cry of anger in 1968.

That world is brought to life from a 12 year-old's conversation with his father while the FLQ manifesto was being read live on TV, where he can't understand his father saying "they're right in what they say, but not in what they do," to the same 12 year old having his newspaper bag searched by a soldier under Canada's War Measures' Act: "I wanted to say, you idiot, the bombs aren't in my bag but in my head."

And in the end it is the poem itself that explodes like a bomb:

*A bit stronger then, speak white
Raise your foremen's voices
We're a bit hard of hearing
We live too close to the machines*

*And we only hear the sound of our
breathing over the tools*

*Speak white and loud
So that we can hear you
From St-Henri to St-Domingue
What an admirable tongue
For hiring
Giving orders
Setting the time for working yourself to
death
And for the pause that refreshes
And invigorates the dollar*

*Speak white
Talk to us about production profits and
percentages
Speak white
It's a rich language
For buying
But for selling
But for selling your soul
But for selling out*

*It is a universal language
We were born to understand it
With its teargas words
With its nightstick words*

Speak white

*Tell us again about Freedom and
Democracy
We know that liberty is a black word
Just as poverty is black
And just as blood mixes with dust in the
streets of Algiers
And Little Rock (...)*

*We
are not alone*

● **887** can be purchased as a book in French. An English version is to be published in August 2018.

Mass support for Tim Hortons workers

by Kevin Taghabon

On January 19 the Fight For \$15 and Fairness and labour movement allies launched actions at 50 Tim Hortons locations from Vancouver to Halifax. The actions are part of a continued pushback against Tim Hortons bosses who have come out of the gate openly abusing workers over Ontario's new minimum wage and labour laws.

"Roll up the Min to Win" and "Honk if You [Love] Tim Hortons Workers" were among the signs at actions at multiple locations along Bloor Street in Toronto. Demonstrations were met with broad support from pedestrians, customers, and drivers alike. In Vancouver, activists handed out over a hundred leaflets, reaching every single Tim's customer during the morning rush at the Langara College location. In Ottawa 60 people rallied, leafleted customers, and heart labor allies from the CLC and Ottawa & District Labour Council. In Kingston over 100 people gathered to show their support for workers.

The evening before the day of action, the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' Association, representing over 3000 Toronto Fire Services employees, tweeted out support for the movement. "A rising tide lifts all boats...We support the struggle of all precarious and vulnerable workers."

In the Bloor West Village of Toronto, representatives from Toronto 350, a grassroots climate justice organization, joined the rally to lend support. "Minimum wage jobs tend to be low carbon or no carbon jobs...The battle for climate justice cannot be won without winning economic jus-



Rally at Tim Hortons in Cobourg

...tice, and so we are happy to support the Fight for \$15 and Fairness." At the Tims near Toronto's downtown hospitals, health workers rallied for workers: "Tim Hortons share the wealth, decent work is good for health."

Tims: corporate Canada

Tim Hortons' Frequently Asked Questions page states that one needs \$1.5 million in net worth and \$500,000 of liquid assets to open a Tim Hortons location. Additionally, the average franchisee

location makes \$265,000 a year after expenses and labour have been paid (as of 2011, most recent numbers publicly available). Franchisees are neither victims of the wage increase, nor as they simply "small business owners."

Two independent provincial special advisers confirmed that in franchise-franchisee relationships virtually all aspects of the business are dictated from the corporate head office. The "rogue franchisees" line advanced by corporate ignores how much control they exert, but it does hint at

the growing rifts inside the company.

Tim Hortons was foolish enough to overplay their position and turn themselves into public villains after decades of PR linking the brand to Canada. The motivations behind Tims' minimum wage backlash are the exact same incentives every employer has to cut corners.

The Rainbow Foods supermarket in Ottawa recently announced that it had reversed its decision to cut breaks in response to overwhelming public backlash. Canada's largest Asian supermarket with seven locations in Toronto has also canceled plans to take away workplace benefits. Without the united movement fighting back against Tim Hortons' abuses, many other businesses would have steamrolled over their loyal workers for a few dollars.

Unspoken treasure

Tim Hortons employees hand people their coffee at rest stops on exhausting trips on the highway. They are there to energize students during arduous study sessions on campuses across the country. They are there kickstarting groggy workdays for thousands of people.

In fostering and maintaining organized networks of working people across the country we can win against those fighting to keep living standards low today, and be ready for the aspirational battles of tomorrow. Tim Hortons has chosen to treat their employees as pawns. We have the power to make them heroes.

● For the full report and analysis, visit socialist.ca.

Women's marches buoyed by #MeToo

by Lisa Descary and Michelle Robidoux

One year after Donald Trump's inauguration, hundreds of thousands participated in women's marches across the US, Canada and around the world, rejecting Trump's policies of misogyny, racism and anti-Muslim bigotry.

While the march numbers overall were not as high as 2017, they were impressive by any measure. They represent a sustained mobilization that has been buoyed by the eruption of #MeToo movement exposing sexual harassment and abuse.

In Los Angeles, an estimated 600,000 people rallied. In New York City, hundreds of thousands marched. There were mass rallies in Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco and Boston, as well as many smaller cities and towns.

In Canada, actions took place across the country, including in Whitehorse, Montreal and Edmonton.

Vancouver

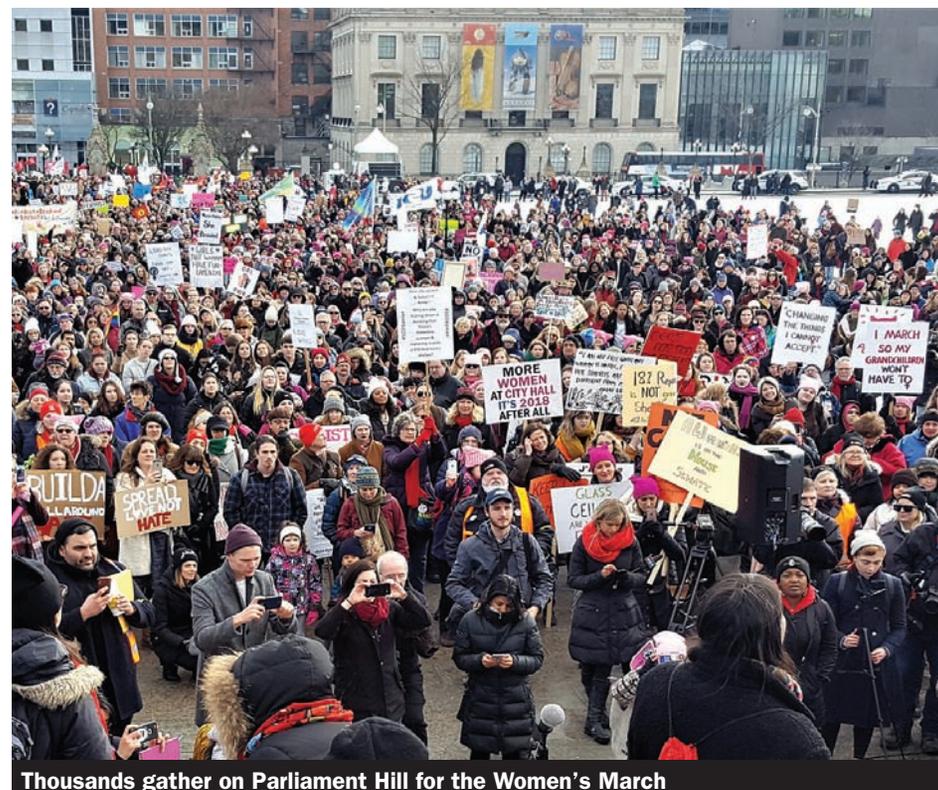
In Vancouver, despite the windy, rainy day, about 5,000 people gathered for this year's march. The diverse speakers addressed not only sexism but a variety of issues of oppression, from racism and Islamophobia to transphobia.

Speakers included Hailey Heartless, who spoke to the importance of including rights for sex workers and transgender people in the

demands of the women's movement, and Noor Fadel, the young hijabi woman who faced an Islamophobic attack on public transit last year.

Although this year's rally was smaller than last year's march of 15,000, it is encouraging that so many people were willing to brave the

inclement weather to rally and march against Trump and the racism, sexism and homophobia that has been fueled by his presidency.



Thousands gather on Parliament Hill for the Women's March

Ottawa

In Ottawa, several thousand marchers rallied on Parliament Hill, listening to speeches from a wide range of activists before being led by Indigenous drummers on a march through central Ottawa.

Toronto

Led by a group of Indigenous women hand drummers, a spirited march of over 15,000 people took to the streets of Toronto. Under the banner "Defining our Future", the march challenged hate and misogyny, and underlined the ongoing crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

Speakers included Indigenous educator Dawn Maracle, Rohingya refugees Zainab and Tasmeen, and city councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam. Union flags and home-made signs mingled side by side, and while it was not the 60,000 of last year's event, there was a feisty mood among the crowd.

In Toronto, keeping the momentum going includes building the annual International Women's Day march on March 3rd. Last year's IWD march drew 11,000 people in freezing weather, to unite the fight and build the resistance.

● For more info see iwtdtoronto.ca