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## A large crowd of people, mostly women, are gathered outdoors for a protest. Many are holding up handmade signs. Visible signs include "POLITICS IS IN THE STREETS", "EDUCATION CURS never heal", "Public Education, I do Public Education Don't You", "KY STUDENTS WILL NEVER FORGET THE GREED THAT YOU'VE THEM", "RISE UP!", "FUI", and "STUCKY". The text "POLITICS IS IN THE STREETS" is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the top and middle of the image. The background shows trees and a building.

In many cases, the student march-

This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the mass protests of 1968 which challenged the system on a global scale. Let us hope that the spirit of those uprisings can inform and lead us to even greater protests against the violence of capitalism.



# World history meets my lungs

by John Bell

Human beings are cooperative, sharing beings. It is our nature to work together to solve problems and share solutions with our peers. That is how we progressed over the long, slow yet brilliant development of our species.

Somewhere along the line we learned to encourage some types of plant to grow, and domesticated some animals. Societies appeared which meant we could plan and save. It also meant the development of a class to first administer the surplus, then to own it. Different periods of history had different class arrangements, but always there was a working majority and a minority defending its power with forces of armed men.

And our side has its mutual support and solidarity to console it. And we resist when we can. And over time from our midst comes a new idea about how to organize labour to be more efficient. A new elite emerges, and we support it as our champion. The new power butts against the old and revolution occurs. Society lurches ahead, and the elite that was our champion reveals itself as our exploiter or master.

The revolutionary movement of history offers hope because we can learn its lessons for our own self-emancipation and self-defence. And we labour, we look after each other as we can and we resist as we must. And the next time we make revolution we won't rely on champions, we'll do it ourselves.

Which brings me to the point: me and my lungs.

Here I write, recovering from a double lung transplant, grateful for the amazing skills and research that has given me a new life. This is the very best that our society has to offer,



Fighting healthcare cuts in Ontario

and I am one of literally handfuls of individuals lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time to enjoy it. Thank you capitalism.

And all I can think about are the naked contradictions that parade before me every minute I am here.

Let me explain. The care, kindness, effort, and expertise of workers like nurses is phenomenal. And they are burning out because hospital administrators are paid big bonuses to find "efficiencies". Instead of being on full time jobs with predictable schedules, many are on contracts, working brutal long shifts, overtime to fill gaps, and crazy quilt schedules. I see these forces grind against each

other every day in here.

As government cuts back support for health care (to give tax breaks to corporations to put in off-shore accounts, perhaps?) the super-rich step forward to show how generous they are. Here I am in a building endowed by a gold mining and resource extraction billionaire. His name is huge over the door. Peter Munk and Barrick Gold are responsible for brutal working conditions around the world; for propping up right-wing, anti-democratic regimes; and for relying on bodies of armed men to extract huge profits.

I cannot be unaware of the sweat and blood of those that produced the

wealth that resulted in the "miracle" of my care and treatment. It is not guilt I am talking about here, but my responsibility to look beyond the surface of this system, to find and expose its essence and fighting for change.

To do that I have tools like a class perspective, an historical perspective and confidence that the working class holds the power of self-emancipation, and ultimately revolutionary change. As Marx wrote, when capitalists organized workers in a new way, they created their own gravediggers.

The capitalist system is not in a good way. The post-war social contract (good jobs, decent futures,

comfortable pensions) is all but gone. The privatization and austerity beloved by Reagan and Thatcher doesn't work. Public Private Partnerships are falling apart leaving us holding the bag.

So we see the system flail around for ways to keep profits up: the "gig economy", robots, moving into the increasingly few places on the globe where wages are low. But none of it works without workers, and as soon as workers are assembled they begin to organize to improve their lot.

The gap between the oligarchs—the 1%—and the rest of us would make the pharaohs blush. But they sit on their hoards not knowing what to do next.

And our side is moving. Fights for fair minimum wages, college instructors striking in Britain and Ontario, American workers in "right to work" states like West Virginia striking and winning, millions of school kids marching for gun control and against the corporate ownership of their government.

It isn't all good. The far right can capture our discontent and turn it into a barbarous form of capitalism. Racism is the key for them, so standing up for immigrants and refugees and racialized communities is vital for us.

A new generation of workers who have nothing to lose but struggle is taking the stage. They face divided and visibly confused ruling class. Socialism and Marxism are becoming common tools among workers and students.

And capitalism has given me new lungs and new life to be part of it. It has re-created this gravedigger. I can't wait to be recovered enough to rejoin my comrades in the struggle, knowing that handfuls of well-organized socialists can make all the difference in the coming struggles. And I invite you to grab your gravedigging shovel and join me in making change.

## Doug Ford the drug dealer: breathing life into the mythologies of race, class and crime

by Krisna Saravanamuttu

I oppose the politics of Doug Ford. I oppose his hostility to a \$15 minimum wage, the sex-ed curriculum, and the autonomy of teenage abortion. And yet, I equally oppose the "drug dealer" discourse employed by some on the left since the PC leadership convention.

The history of drug policy and criminal prosecution is marred by colonialism, racism and contempt for the poor. Along with "guns and gangs," the discourse of drug dealers has been a pretense to harass and incarcerate the poor and the racialized for decades.

Drug mythologies have been propped up to justify the targeted exclusion of communities both within and beyond Canada's borders. Alcohol addiction is used to undermine Indigenous peoples and deflect attention from the Canadian state's settler-colonialism. In the early 20th century, the opium trade was carefully used to portray the Chinese community as a threat to white people. South of the border, J. Edgar Hoover propagated marijuana laws to preempt the deportation of Mexicans

once used as cheap labor to build the American railway. In the 1980's, the US "war on drugs" justified the racist policing and mass incarceration of young black males.

We borrow the drug dealer trope from a collective imagination fueled by racist narratives about the proper place of whiteness and, in contrast, the criminality of the poor and racialized. After all, Ford is a failed white in the eyes of a society organized around class and race. He has betrayed his wealth and his race through his involvement with drug dealing and drug use—something only reserved for the poor, the black, the brown, and the yellow in the inner cities of this country. The mainstream loathe him for this reason. We, on the left, evoke the same logic when we attack Ford's drug dealing past.

We also betray our compassion as people committed to a better world for the most vulnerable. Drug abuse is marred by a lifetime of trauma and unbelievable emotional suffering. In *The Realm of Hungry Ghosts*, Dr. Gabor Mate writes, "... it takes a greater effort of emotional imagination to empathize with the addict. We readily feel for a suffering child,

but cannot see the child in the adult who, his soul fragmented and isolated, hustles for survival a few blocks away from where we shop or work." In disparaging Ford, we breathe life into a script that strips humanity from those plagued by addiction.

The categories of user and dealer are contingent upon power. Dr. Mate serves street involved addicts in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. He observes, "Many addicts who deal in drugs do so exclusively to finance their habit. There is no profit in it for them." In contrast, former police officers are running towards the multi-million dollar pot industry. Leading the pack is Julian Fantino, former Toronto police chief and Conservative cabinet minister, with his company Aleafia. The same Fantino once compared marijuana to murder and supported mandatory jail time for minor marijuana offences. White shop owners will cash in while countless others are shut out by drug laws with a disproportionate impact on the racialized poor.

Make no mistake about it: Doug Ford's ascension to the top of a major party reveals elite racial and class power. We should critique Ford's

propensity to privatize the profit from the legalization of marijuana. We are justified in critiquing the hypocrisy of structural violence that destroys too many lives through criminal prosecution.

We must organize ourselves in the coming months. We must confront the attack on workers' rights and a woman's right to choose. We must

prepare to struggle against cuts to public services like social assistance and legal aid. But in challenging that power, we must resist the temptation to look for "quick fixes" which unintentionally harm the very people we fight for. There's enough on the policy front to fight—and fight we must. Let's not validate the logic of the brutal systems we must oppose.

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# The forgotten progressive legacy of Stephen Hawking

by **Melissa Graham**

One of the world's most beloved and inspirational scientists, Stephen Hawking, passed away on March 14, 2018. While Hawking may be most well known for his contributions to theoretical physics, his writing that helped non-scientists understand how the universe worked, and even his robotic voice, Hawking was also very much an activist for the left.

Hawking spoke out against apartheid in Israel and canceled planned participation in scientific conference there. He also opposed war and supported nuclear disarmament.

Though Hawking had considerable finances to support his own health needs, he credited universal health care in Britain for saving his own life and spoke out against health care cuts in his home country. "The more profit is extracted from the system, the more private monopolies grow and the more expensive healthcare becomes," he explained.

Politically he was an open supporter of Jeremy Corbyn of Britain's Labor Party. He also accused Donald Trump of reckless environmental policy that was leading the world to catastrophe. We are close to the tipping point where global warming becomes irreversible. Shortly before his death Hawking said in an interview, "Trump's action could push the Earth over the brink, to become like Venus, with a temperature of 250 degrees, and raining sulphuric acid. Climate change is one of the great dangers we face, and it's one we can prevent if we act now". He has also remarked that we should fear capitalism, and that as technology improves we should instead focus on providing everyone with a living wage.



Stephen Hawking: Revolutionary physicist

Photo: NASA

Some of Hawking's lesser known advocacy was during the anti-war movement. When the US and UK illegally invaded Iraq in 2003, Hawking condemned the war. At a peace demonstration in London in 2004, he blasted the Iraq War as a "war crime" that was based on "lies." In 2013, Hawking even came out in support of the boycott of Israel, on behalf of

Palestinian human rights. He turned down an important scientific conference in Israel, and received a massive backlash

Hawking was one of many physicists with revolutionary ideas, but what made his situation unique was that he also lived with a disability called ALS. Like many activists with disabilities, his right-wing adversar-

ies used his impairments to slander him, and the mainstream media used it to make him an inspiration. Hawking himself had a very different point of view, his impairment "shielded him" from lecturing and administrative work and more time to focus on the mysteries of the universe and making the world better than he found it.

## In his own words

### On the Iraq invasion:

The war was based on two lies. The first was we were in danger of weapons of mass destruction and the second was that Iraq was somehow to blame for Sept. 11.

It has been a tragedy for all the families that have lost members. As many as 100,000 people have died, half of them women and children. If that is not a war crime, what is?

### On the Israeli siege of Gaza:

It is plain out of proportion ... The situation is like that of South Africa before 1990 and cannot continue.

### On public healthcare:

The crisis in the NHS has been caused by political decisions. The political decisions include underfunding, cuts and privatising services... We must prevent the establishment of a two-tier service, with the best medicine for the wealthy and an inferior service for the rest.

# What is Canada's agenda in Mali?

by **Parry Mudhar**

After promising early in their mandate to take Canada to war in Africa, the Liberals are now delivering.

Defense Minister Harjit Sajjan announced on March 19th the federal government's intent to join the UN's operation in Mali by August of this year. Canadian troops will most likely be replacing the current German contingent for a deployment which will last around a full year.

Although dubbed a peacekeeping mission, there are many unknowns currently surrounding this campaign on West African soil. As of now, six helicopters and an unknown number of personnel will be deployed. However, such details including Canada's rules of engagement, a true aviation and troop count, and actual logistics have not been determined.

On the matter Sajjan recently stated: "We have to be able to determine what type of planning figure we need to move forward on... Exactly where they're going to be based and what's



actually needed there, that determination... all those things will have to be taken into account."

Looking back at Canada's involvement in war and conflicts in Eastern Europe and Afghanistan with NATO, our government's intent has been on regional power shifts for the benefit of western interests rather than the guise of peacekeeping.

Mali is currently in a tremulous state, with various groups vying for control over land, resources, and the continuation of local culture. The semi-nomadic Tuareg people

who stretch across the Sahara make up 3% of Mali's population of 18 million but are the majority in the North's vast desert expanse. The ethnic confederation first fought against colonial France in their invasion of Africa in the late 19th century, where borders were drawn across their lands and their native self-determination dismantled.

Again during the 1960s African independence movement, land that had been native to the Tuareg people was split into countries including Libya, Mali, Algeria, and Nigeria.

After a long period of economic growth and social stability in the 1990s a coup occurred in 2012 as a result of the government's handling of the latest Tuareg attempts to secure independence of the northern portion of Mali they called Azawad which was spearheaded by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA). During the coup's power vacuum, Saharan branches of al Qaeda were able to gain allies in the north and assert their own governance to regions which at times the Tuareg have worked with and at others fought against.

The "Scramble for Africa" during colonial European times didn't end in the 1800s. Mali is Africa's third largest producer of gold and Canadian mining companies didn't fail to notice.

Between 2005 and 2010, Canadian mining increased investment from \$6 billion to \$23 billion and increased to \$31.6 billion over the African continent according to Natural Resources Canada.

In 1991 there were only four Canadian owned mining companies operating in Mali. Since 2005 this figure has grown to 73, with assets in 2009 estimated at around \$500 million. While mining remains Mali's greatest export resource, 60% of mining revenue leaves the country to foreign shareholders mainly in Europe and North America.

Despite Mali's clear mineral wealth, around 60% of the population lives below the poverty line, the country depends heavily on foreign aid, and in 2009 the United Nations Development Program listed Mali at 178 out of 182 countries in their Human Development Index.

A compliant and stable Malian government is needed if Canadian mining companies are to be able to continue mining over native ethnic boundaries using cheap labour to maximize gold profits for North American and European shareholders. Canada is sending troops to Mali to make sure that colonialism in Africa doesn't end.



# ON STRIKE!

## Education workers hit the picket lines

*From West Virginia, Kentucky, Arizona and Oklahoma to Brazil, the UK and Ontario, educators are leading a wave of resistance to cuts and austerity that are eroding public education. In mass protests, strikes and walk-outs, teachers are saying ‘enough is enough’ of decades of deteriorating working and learning conditions. Faculty at **York University** and **Carleton University** are striking against precarious work and to save pensions, following on the recent 12,000 strong faculty strike in 24 Ontario community colleges. These actions show the power of collective resistance and labour solidarity to push back the attacks on public services and public sector workers.*

## Carleton University workers striking to protect their pensions

by **Rick Telfer**

**A**round 850 administrative, technical and library workers at Carleton University began picketing at campus entrances on March 5 as they went on strike to protect their pensions. The workers are represented by Local 2424 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). Negotiations with the university administration broke off early in the morning of March 5.

In a statement released by CUPE on March 5, Local 2424 president Jerrett Clark said, “Throughout bargaining, Carleton has placed obstacles in the path to a fair deal by insisting that a new collective agreement remove our bargaining rights around pensions.” In the same release, the union “expressed disappointment and frustration at the university’s continued attempts to strip pension language from its employees’ collective agreement.”

### Battling pension rollbacks

Defined benefit pension plans are considered generally favourable by employees because they specify the exact level of payments that retirees receive — a minimum guaranteed regular payment for the rest of their lives — according to a formula that is based upon earnings history, years of service and retirement age.

On the other hand, defined contribution plans are essentially individual retirement savings accounts that are employer-subsidized.

On March 4, CUPE 2424 posted an open letter from Clark addressed to interim Carleton President Alastair Summerlee. “You have stated the University does not plan to change or remove our existing pension benefits,” Clark said. “However, the University is demanding the deletion of key language that clearly protects our members from changes to pension provisions that may be decided without the agreement of the Union.”

At a well-attended community teach-in on the evening of March 14 in downtown Ottawa that was organized by some Carleton faculty members in support of CUPE 2424, Clark told the crowd that CUPE 910 — the union representing maintenance workers at Carleton — had the same pension-protecting language in its collective agreement until “a couple of years ago.” Being a smaller union, “they had to give it up” owing to pressure from the university administration during collective bargaining, Clark said.

Regarding the university administration’s other proposals, CUPE 2424 responded with a post to Twitter on March 7 stating that “the University indeed made offers concerning wages, other benefits, and a necessary internal wage equity process, but made their offers conditional upon a pension proposal that simply could not be accepted or recommended to our members.”

### Building support

CUPE 2424 has received strong



Carleton CUPE members walk the line against cutbacks

expressions of support both on campus and beyond, including from the Carleton Graduate Students’ Association, the Carleton University Academic Staff Association, the Ottawa and District Labour Council, the Ontario Confederation of Faculty Associations, the Canadian Federation of Students and CUPE 4600 — the union that represents teaching assistants, research assistants and contract instructors at Carleton.

Guest speakers have also canceled their scheduled appearances at Carleton University because they refuse to cross picket lines. OC Transpo bus drivers will not cross picket lines, either, as an

expression of solidarity with the striking workers.

On March 6, the Graduate Students’ Association, together with three employee unions at Carleton, published an open letter addressed to Summerlee. “The current deadlock over pensions is especially disconcerting given that Carleton has huge pension reserve funds. As demonstrated in the university’s audited financial statements, Carleton has also had massive annual surpluses,” they said.

Then, on March 14, over 200 Carleton University faculty members published an open letter in support of CUPE 2424. The number of signatories to the

letter has since grown to more than 300. “Unions have the right to protect the pensions of their members; there is nothing exceptional about CUPE 2424’s effort to negotiate a just settlement on behalf of its members,” reads the letter.

“Every union at Carleton has ought to have some language in its Collective Agreement to protect members’ pension benefits.” The next day, on March 15, the Carleton University Academic Staff Association (CUASA) announced that it was pursuing a grievance against the university administration for “downloading” CUPE 2424 work to employees who are not members of the striking union — a practice known colloquially as “scabbing.”

“CUASA has been made aware of practices in various departments where CUASA members and others are being told to take on CUPE 2424 work. This practice is disrespectful to the bargaining certificates of 2424 and CUASA members and will not be tolerated,” reads the announcement.

On the same day, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported that Clair Switzer, one of two non-faculty staff members serving on Carleton’s board of governors had resigned her position the day before because she was advised by the university’s counsel that, as a member of the union, she was in a conflict of interest. “I think the board, unfortunately, is insulated. They’re sheltered. They’re getting the side that the university is choosing to give them.”



Fighting for pensions at the University and College Union, UK

## Why we strike

CUPE 3903 and the fight for dignity, equity, and job security at York

by **Rawan Abdelbaki**

**F**ollowing a wave of labour revolts in recent weeks by teachers and university workers in the Western world — from West Virginia to Louisiana, and Chicago to the United Kingdom and Ottawa, the members of CUPE 3903 — representing teaching assistants (Unit 1), contract faculty (Unit 2), and graduate assistants (Unit 3) — voted to take strike action after rejecting the employer’s final offer on Friday, March 2, 2018.

The rank-and-file’s decision came after six months of negotiations with York University’s recalcitrant administration. Despite the union’s willingness to bargain over the weekend to prevent the commencement of a strike on Monday, March 5, York refused to return to the bargaining table. Against mounting pressure, York made a return to the table during the third week of the strike, after which they once again walked away without reaching a settlement.

### Interference

In the weeks leading up to, and for the duration of the strike, York has “bargained in the media” rather than at the table, as CUPE 3903 Unit 2 member, Marc Weinstein, aptly stated. York continues to inundate the undergraduate student body and the general public with messages that specifically seek to pit strikers and students against each other.

For example, they published open letters to interfere with the strike mandate vote in the student newspaper, *The Excalibur*. They also followed up with radio advertisements and a website about the university’s labour relations.

So, why did the members of CUPE 3903 reject a supposedly “sector-leading” package, and subject themselves to financial strain, hours of arduous picketing in the cold, and time spent away from their classrooms? Succinctly put, the demands of the workers revolve around three core issues: job security for contract faculty, the protection of funding and unionized jobs for graduate students, and equity and accessibility in the workplace.

Contract faculty are an exploited underclass of academic workers

whose numbers have ballooned drastically compared to the number of tenured professorship hires. In the past two decades, the number of tenured professors has increased by 20 per cent, while the number of contract faculty has increased by 121 per cent. As course directors, contract faculty perform that same duties as full-time tenured professors at a fraction of the cost, and enjoy minimal job security protections: they have to reapply for the same positions every term, they are compensated poorly, and they often have to teach at multiple universities and/or colleges or take up alternative “side-hustles” to make ends meet.

Perhaps the most obviously concessionary offer is the one currently

President Lenton’s lavish personal spending from their tuition monies. York’s intimidation of students in response to this action has raised the concerns of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA). Overall, the past few weeks have revealed tremendous levels of solidarity with the CUPE 3903 strike from within and beyond the York University community, strengthening the resolve of the picketers.

### Neoliberal austerity

So, we strike to continue to raise the bar in a sector whose standards and labour practices have succumbed to some of the most pernicious attacks of neoliberal austerity politics.

We strike against the commodifica-



No to the neoliberal University

proposed for Unit 2 (contract faculty), who are being asked to settle for a meager two conversions per year into full-time tenure-track positions, rather than the eight conversions that were won during the 2015 strike.

### Undergrad solidarity

A response to these events comes from a contingent of inspiring undergraduate students in solidarity with 3903, who occupied the Senate Chambers on March 22 to reassert their claims to this symbolic university space.

They have demanded that the Senate uphold the principles of academic integrity and cancel all classes until a fair deal is made with CUPE 3903, that they receive full tuition refunds for the winter term, and answers about

proposed for higher education.

We strike for quality undergraduate education.

We strike because it is our historical militancy, not the benevolence of our employer, that gave us a sector-leading agreement.

We strike because the very existence of our union is at stake as York attempts to gut our union membership.

We strike for our most vulnerable members.

We strike because the way that’s been tried has led us astray.

We strike because we have to give life to this institution’s founding traditions of social justice and equity.

We strike for fairness.

This is why we strike. And this is why we have to win.

## Doug Ford is not the answer to workers’ anger



Ford: millionaire backing the interests of the elite

by **Carolyn Egan**

On March 22 an Op Ed in the *New York Times* asked the question, “Will Canada elect a tin pot northern Trump”. It was referring to the provincial election in Ontario where Doug Ford, brother of former Mayor of Toronto Rob Ford, is running to be Premier as the leader of the Progressive Conservative party.

Ford is way ahead in the polls and is championing a neocon agenda reminiscent of the Premier Mike Harris days in the 1990s when social programs, labour protections and employment equity were cut to shreds.

He has promised to stop the increase in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, rescind protection for women accessing abortion facilities, attacked the sex education curriculum, promised the wealthy, and will continue privatization and contracting out.

People are angry at the Liberals because of the sell-off of Ontario Hydro and skyrocketing costs, the overcrowding of hospitals, return to work legislation, backtracking on pensions and a whole range of other attacks on working people. The gains that have been made under the present government have come because of the strength of mass campaigns such as the Fight for \$15, the childcare mobilizations, and the labour movement which have pushed for change. The Liberals are scrambling to remain in power but people are desperate for something different, an alternative to what is. Doug Ford is clearly not the answer.

The unions seem to have been caught flat-footed, without the strong mobilizations that took place in workplaces throughout the province when the Tory candidate Hudak campaigned for “right to work legislation” during the last election. There has been close to nothing happening on the ground, with few exceptions such as the Toronto and York Region Labour Council hosting a political action conference on April 14th with a switch from the original municipal election focus to the provincial election as well.

Doug Ford has unfortunately

tapped into the real anger that working people are feeling. An ordinary worker can no longer afford to buy a home in the city of Toronto, rent is getting out of control as well, precarious work is the order of the day for so many, wages are not going up and the future is looking bleak. Ford pretends to be on the side of those who are being left out, railing against special interests, while he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth into a millionaire’s family. He owns a profitable company and has consistently backed the interests of the elite.

The New Democratic Party has to take advantage of the anger against the Liberals and not allow the Conservatives to fill the void. It has to be bold, learning from the Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders campaigns. If a left alternative is on offer women, racialized communities, young people and the broader working class will respond as we have seen in other countries. It has to move forward with a strong, anti-racist class perspective, defending women’s right to abortion, fighting for a \$15 minimum wage and taking on systemic racism. It has to bring Hydro back into public ownership and be accountable to the working class in all its diversity.

The election hasn’t yet begun and we have to push our unions and other progressive forces to organize workplace meetings explaining clearly what is at stake in this election and that the Liberals and Tories are both parties of business which are not working in the interests of working people. We call for a vote for the NDP understanding that it is the movements on the ground that make real change. Whoever wins this election, we need to continue independent working class action.

We need to build the confidence that change can take place and that we need not only defend what we have won, but move forward to win further gains.

There is tremendous anger at the base of society, and we have to do all we can to organize a left alternative that truly speaks to the needs and aspirations of working people.



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.

Support the Soaring Eagle Camp in Tkaronto

by Gustavo Monteiro

On a Sunday afternoon, March 4, a group of Indigenous youth and allies set up the Soaring Eagle’s camp in Tkaronto (Toronto), in front of the Old City Hall where they could be visible and able to apply pressure on public institutions to do a better job in regards to accountability to those who commit crimes against Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island. After Colten Boushie and Tina Fontaine’s verdicts were made public, camps were part of a nationwide strategy to send a clear message to the settler government of Canada.

The first action took place in Winnipeg on February 22, organized by Darla Contois, and then spread across the country. *Socialist Worker* spoke to Koryn John (Indigenous youth) who started the Soaring Eagle’s Camp in Toronto.

Why did you decide to set up a camp here in Tkaronto?

KJ: When we found out Gerald Stanley [was acquitted in the murder of Colten Boushie], it was a big shock in the community and it was really upsetting considering the details of the case. We had a rally at Nathan Phillips Square and a lot of people spoke and talked a lot about accountability and a lot happened that night and we sang, we mourned, we cried. We all started to heal a little bit and on Facebook there’d be comments from other people in the country saying that “Colten deserved it” and the messages that I got from a lot of people saying that “all you Indians deserve to die and Colten is just another out of many that are going to come” and that also was very upsetting. Not feeling safe, feeling like as Indigenous people we have gone through a lot of injustices and I felt like there’s not a lot of sensitivity or support or understanding and so that was a big shock, the backlash from the country and a lot of people.

Two weeks later as we’re still feeling down and talking about Colten and still doing vigils and rallies, we found out about Tina Fontaine so that was while we’re down. We got kicked while we’re down. I think particularly these two cases were so close together and I think it seemed a little silly to



Camping for justice outside Old City Hall

get and go rally again two weeks later, vigils again two weeks later. Once you do things like it, it loses its meaning. Come on! We’re just here. Are we going to come back in two weeks? In a month? When does it stop? How long is it going to continue? I felt like a lot of people felt the need to do something more, rallies and vigils are great, they’re great to do it and it’s healing for the community, but because they’re so close together, it just seemed like a double way, it was really shocking.

We definitely had to do something more. I was thinking of things to do. I talked to people, my first original idea was to maybe having a bunch of youth do a long walk from Toronto to Ottawa and then march up to the Parliament building and then either camp out there, occupy there, but then as I was thinking the logistic and reaching out to people, then I saw Eagle’s Camp opened up by women in Winnipeg and it was good to see the other people in the community had that same “We need to do something!”, “This ends now, this isn’t enough!”. Then Calgary opened up a camp, Soaring Eagle’s camp, then Regina opened up and so I spoke to few people from those camps and I said what can I do here in Toronto and they said: “Open up a camp!”. I reached out to Indigenous Youth Movement, reached out to Idle No More, reached out to few organizations to see if it was possible, because I nev-

er organized anything, never planned an event, normally don’t do public speaking and that’s why on Saturday, at the Tina Fontaine’s rally, I spoke and told everyone this is my plan.

What are your goals in setting up the Soaring Eagle’s Camp here in Toronto?

KJ: The goals what we want to see a lot of accountability in these institutions, in child welfare, in justice system, someone needs to be held accountable and also need a lot of people to admit that they’re wrong and then right their wrongs so then it doesn’t happen again. As far as demands, once we get more youth here, we’re going to try and have a meeting for youth to speak and see what things they want to see, because that’s why we are here. Colten and Tina were both youth, so we’re going to talk about things we’d like to see.

Since March 4 folks at the Soaring Eagle’s camp have received support from organizations such as Black Lives Matter, No One is Illegal, Idle No More Toronto and other people have showed a lot of support assisting with donations, holding space when folks need to be absent and keeping the camp a safe space.

- To support Soaring Eagle’s Camp, you can check their Facebook page to find out about donations and updates: sectkaronto (Facebook) / @soaringeaglescampa (Instagram)



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# The Black Left: left out and underestimated

by Ashley Marshall and Kevin Taghabon

Hosted by the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University, *Black Portraits IV: The Color of Silence* is a conference that advances the institute's aim to excite interest in the field. From March 21st to 25th, I (Kevin) had the pleasure of accompanying Ashley Marshall, whose project *The Black Left: Left Out and Underestimated*, was accepted for presentation. Ashley, a professor of communications at Durham College, was flanked by Allison Hector-Alexander, the Director of Durham College's Committee for Diversity, Inclusion, and Transitions; Maya Annik Bedward, a Toronto based documentary filmmaker and founder of Third Culture Media; and LeRoi Newbold, member of Black Lives Matter – Toronto and Director of the Freedom School. These panelists illuminated conversations about the grassroots left, most powerfully by critiquing the reputation of former President Barack Obama.

My (Ashley's) aim writing this is a combination of forces. I want to celebrate my culture and relish in the joy of learning so much about it. I also want to recognize that this conference happened at the same time as the Boston March for Our Lives rally. The combination of these occurrences led me to realize many facets of my activism.

As educators, Allison and I discussed the impact that culture has when forming identity and ideology. We agreed that in the academy, much emphasis needs to be placed in building relationships with students foregrounded in "encouraging Socratic reflection, critically examining everyday life." Such a project requires the understanding that societies change when people – namely students – see themselves reflected in that society, which is a particularly contemporary conversation. My lecture was given with my position as an educator deliberately centered, for teachers, of all stripes, will be called upon as leaders on the fronts of any social change. In this moment, it is timely and necessary to be pre-occupied with the following concept: "what are today's young activists dreaming about?"

The theme of this year's conference was the "colour of silence." I made a point to pay tribute to Courtlin Arrington during my presentation. I made a point, also, to commend the students of the Parkland school massacre and their sister demonstrators, namely those who walked out of school for 17 minutes to commemorate the 17 people who lost their lives. I made a point, meanwhile, to also express that the occupancy should have lasted 18 minutes (at least) so that Courtlin too could be mourned. Such an act would unite various experiences of gun violence and weave together a stronger example that many oppressions can be opposed simultaneously, much like several shows of socialism can – and do – operate alongside one another.

In his text "Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South," Robin D.G. Kelley outlines the tradition described by James C. Scott called "infrapolitics": "the circumspect struggle waged daily by subordinate groups is, like infrared rays, beyond the visible end of the spectrum. That it should be invisible...is in large part by design – a tactical choice born of a prudent awareness of the balance of power." Beware our spectacles, or the instances we make spectacular.

While the media frames narratives, organizations such as the Federation of Black Canadians flies under the radar, or Obama goes uncriticized for 8 years, or Courtlin Arrington goes unmourned. Beware our spectacles. For me, Black spaces like the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, and their Hip Hop Archive, grounded me to recognize the weight of our history, the weight of our resistance, and encouraged me to learn more.

But learning that does not circulate to the pauperized masses means little to me. There is much work to be done.

## REVIEWS

# Capitalist restructuring and working class resistance

by Ritch Whyman

**K**im Moody's latest book *On New Terrain: How Capital is Reshaping the Battleground of Class War* is a refreshing and necessary look at the debates around the shape and state of the working class today.

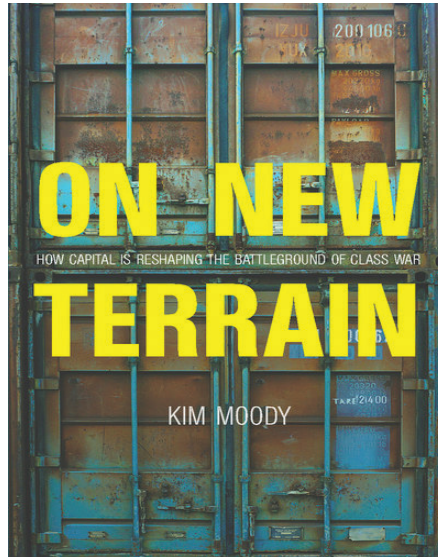
It is a wonderful tool for anyone struggling with the dire predictions thrown around about the restructuring of work, the death of the working class, and how precarious work has transformed the nature of workers struggle today. It also points out possible ways and locations for struggle to re-emerge.

The first section breaks down via labour bureau statistics and other studies, whether it is true that work has fundamentally changed and if there are changes, what has driven that change. Interestingly statistics show that the numbers employed by temp agencies hasn't grown as many think it has.

Many workers find themselves in precarious positions and jobs from construction workers to temporary agencies to university teachers. The seeming collapse of big industry in the 70's and "deindustrialisation" along with an increase in the proportion of people working service jobs seems to give credence on the surface to the notions of the "precariat."

He points out that many of these "new" jobs – freelancers, contractors etc. are not new and in fact in previous generations would have been seen as "moonlighting." His statistical research shows that not nearly as many people are solely dependent on these jobs as is made out to be.

Moody draws the conclusion that perhaps the root of change isn't precarity or offshoring, but rather the drive to increase profits by cranking up productivity. He shows that speed ups in assembly lines and "total quality management" processes have enabled employers for the past 30 years to squeeze more and more out of fewer workers. This has meant that in



many industries employment has sank or stagnated while the amount of goods produced has increased.

For example, in Canada, roughly 70,000 jobs were shed in auto parts and assembly in Canada during the 2008-9 recession. By 2016 production had grown to 109% of 2009 levels while employment had only recovered by 34%. This is a clear example of business using a crisis (and bailouts by governments) to restructure parts of their business to squeeze more work out of less employees and therefore increasing their profits.

He also explores the changing nature of who does what work and the role of people of colour in reshaping the working class. Moody shows how this process took place. In previous periods business used capital to buy up other companies in different or related industries creating huge conglomerates like GE, Nabisco, etc. These conglomerations meant that workers who were in unions based on industry, not company, lost some of the leverage as companies had multiple revenue streams even

if one area was shut down due to strike action.

Today he argues capital has gone through a restructuring that has seen many companies sell off components and return to their core business. Examples are US Steel selling off its Marathon Oil division, auto companies shedding their financial divisions etc.

Moody, following on others, points to and analyses the growth of logistics, transportation and warehousing and sees them as a possible site of future struggles.

Around the world huge transportation and warehouse hubs have sprung up over the past decade to meet increases in trade, just in time production, and delivery. In Canada these can be seen around greater Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver areas. Linking rail, highways and ports these huge areas employ tens of thousands. A drive along the privatized 407 highway in Toronto is a drive through a warehouse district with over 130,000 workers employed in warehouse and transport jobs.

Critically the book points out that these hubs are built around neighbourhoods with large racialized populations. A quick visit during shift change to any of the thousands of warehouses and logistics depots in north Toronto or Vancouver will show one the demographics in the industry.

These hubs are the chokeholds for modern capitalism. Striking them, jams up the whole system and gives employees tremendous possibilities to win gains.

However for that to happen, we need a revolt from below in and outside of the labour movement to push aside the ossified official "leadership" of the unions and embark on audacious organising drives. Also vital is the movement outside of the official unions that raise demands across the whole of the working class such as the \$15 and Fairness movement.

*On New Terrain* is a must read for anyone looking to understand the forces that got us into the mess we're in, and to look at the forces that can get us out.

## Young Karl Marx: a film for our time

by Faline Bobier

*The Young Karl Marx* is directed by Haitian filmmaker Raoul Peck and was first screened at the Berlin Film Festival in February 2017.

How fitting, though, that it is only now reaching North American audiences in 2018. At a time when it seems the ideas of Marx couldn't be more relevant, 200 years after his birth. When hundreds of thousands of youth organized across the US in huge 'March for our Lives' events.

The speeches on the day were inspiring for the political sophistication and bravery of the very young. It is this spirit of rebellious youth that Peck captures in his film about Marx.

Rather than trying to cover Marx's entire lifespan, Peck wisely focuses on a short period from 1843-1848, during which time Marx meets Friedrich Engels and embarks on a lifetime political collaboration and friendship.

At the time Marx and Engels meet in Paris, Engels is 24 and Marx only a couple of years older. The film clearly shows how the ideas Marx and Engels develop don't just spring fully-formed from their super brains. They use the currents of thought that exist at the time and the lived experience of the poor and working class to develop what will become historical materialism.

When Marx first meets Engels, he praises his recent book, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, as a first-rate work. Engels likewise praises Marx's writing, although he suggests that Marx may want to

read Ricardo and Adam Smith, in order to better understand economics, which is fundamental to understanding this new system of exploitation. Here we see Marx struggling with the beginnings of his labour theory of value, which will point the way to the actual agent of change – the working class, the potential gravediggers of capitalism.

We see Marx's frustration with the idealism of the young Hegelians, his rejection of anarchism when he says to Bakunin, "I am no anarchist." He sees much to admire in the work of Proudhon, a French utopian socialist of the time: "Your book is the French proletariat's first scientific manifesto."

However, Marx will eventually break with the utopian socialists because, as he says: "They dream of improving a system that naturally produces poverty. Not of transforming it."

If there is an over-arching theme of *The Young Karl Marx* it is the idea of constant transformation. In a scene where Marx is addressing a craft workers' meeting in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine in Paris, one of the workers shouts out that there's no point in railing against the slavery of the new industrial system because "There'll always be bosses and workers".

Marx replies: "There'll always be" is a bourgeois notion. Capital wants us to think that. But everything moves. Everything is subject to change. Nothing lasts. All social relations – slavery, serfdom, salaried work – are historical and transient."

Marx and Engels are themselves trans-

formed by the experience of meeting each other, of exchanging ideas, of coming into contact with the radical ideas of their age and their interactions with workers, as in Engels' contradictory experience as the son of a factory owner in Manchester, England.

As he says to Mary Burns, an Irish factory worker who is sacked by Engels' father for speaking out about injustice in the workplace, "I hate and despise the bourgeoisie". Burns and Engels would become life-long companions, but Engels would remain conflicted about his class position, although it allowed him to support Marx and his family through their years of exile in England.

The film ends with the publication of *The Communist Manifesto* on February 21, 1848. A month later would see the revolutions of 1848, a series of republican revolts against European monarchies. They would ultimately end in failure, but that wouldn't be the end of the story.

And neither is it the end of Marx's story. The voiceover at the end of the film refers to Marx's eventual exile in London where he would be financially and politically supported by Engels, so that he could work on *Capital*, which he left unfinished at his death: "An open, immeasurable work because the very object of its critique is in perpetual motion."

Peck's film comes at a time in history when new challengers are showing themselves willing and able to take on this monstrous system that Marx understood so profoundly.

May *The Young Karl Marx* give them inspiration for the struggles ahead.



## \$15 fight builds on successes

by Alia Karim, Peter Hogarth and Jesse McLaren

**O**n March 23 and 24, 2018, the Fight for \$15 and Fairness movement organized their third annual provincial strategy meeting to look back on the lessons of the past year and plan for the months ahead.

### Fight for \$15 and fairness

Over 250 participants attended to discuss how to defend the movement's gains and fight for more. The Fight for \$15 and Fairness has already won significant victories through Bill 148—including a \$14/hour minimum wage in 2018 and \$15/hour in 2019, equal pay for equal work, 10 personal emergency leave days (two of them paid) for all workers, card-check certification for building service workers looking to unionize, and important changes to liability requirements for temporary labour agencies and the companies that hire them.

These substantial gains were won by a broad-based, grassroots movement, uniting non-unionized and unionized workers, students, faith and migrant communities, health workers, injured workers, and others.

But the movement is still fighting for more, including the extension of paid emergency leaves; ending the unfair sub-minimum wage rates for farm workers and workers under 18 and extending protection for migrant workers; capping the number of workers that can be hired through temp agencies; and making it easier for workers to unionize.

Precarious work disproportionately affects women and racialized workers—and it is they who are leading the fight.



Fight for \$15 campaigners meet to strategize and plan demonstrations on June 16

### Stop the corporate backlash

Since January, when the minimum wage increased to \$14, there has been a growing backlash from the 1%. Tim Hortons franchisee owners began to claw back hours and paid breaks. Temp agencies are furious that equal pay and health and safety provisions remove incentives to exploit temp workers.

And newly-elected Progressive Conservative leader, Doug Ford, wants to cancel next year's raise to a \$15/hr minimum wage and improvements to labour law passed in Bill 148.

Like Trump, Ford is appealing to low-income communities who have suffered through years

of Liberal austerity, claiming that he will cut "waste" and support "the little guy." But opposing the legally-enshrined minimum wage increase is a warning that he will open Bill 148 legislation and gut it.

Instead of being fearful and paralyzed by the Conservatives, and instead of narrowly focusing on electoral politics, we must push our issues front and centre and force all candidates to reflect their election promises on demands of the Fight for \$15 and Fairness.

Guest speakers emphasized how the fight for decent work in Ontario is part of broader fights here and around the world. As climate justice ac-

tivist Avi Lewis explained, the fight to improve the wages and conditions of existing low-carbon workers is a climate solution.

Meeting participants then sent a solidarity photo to the Indigenous-led climate justice movement on the west coast working to stop the Kinder Morgan pipeline.

Bhairavi Desai, an organizer with the New York Taxi Workers' Alliance, explained how the fight for decent work is part of the fight against racism and Islamophobia: New York taxi drivers who are a predominately racialized workforce, went on strike against Trump's racist travel ban—sparking the shutdown of the JFK airport and an online campaign against Uber.

Later, Ekyeong Kwak, LGBTQ activist from the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, told of how the fight for the minimum wage and against oppression was the foundation of the mass movement that toppled the repressive South Korean president last year.

The way in which struggles against sexism, racism, and capitalism are connected, and fought through workers' movements, was on display throughout the two-day meeting. Every session showcased the impressive women that are at the forefront of the fight for decent work in Ontario, organizing in their communities, schools and workplaces for \$15 and Fairness.

Borrowing from the Fight for \$15 in the US who planned nation-wide minimum wage strikes across the country after the 2016 presidential election, Ontario's Fight for \$15 and Fairness and the Ontario Federation of Labour are organizing a demonstration for decent work on June 16, 2018, the week after the election, to pressure whoever is elected to reflect the decent work demands that workers are raising.

## Indigenous-led protests will stop the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion

by Graeme Cheadle, Parry Mudhar and Ryan Schebek

Nearly 200 people have been arrested for blocking the entrance of the Kinder Morgan facility in Burnaby, in some cases even chaining themselves to trees, gates, and earth-moving equipment in an effort to slow the company's attempt to clear forest in preparation for construction on the new project. The arrested include They includes a former TransMountain environmental engineer who warned about the impossibility of cleaning up an inevitable spill and a 76-year-old retired teacher who had "rarely had a parking ticket in [her] life" previously. Even NDP MP Kennedy Stewart and federal Green party leader Elizabeth May showed up to get arrested.

The protesters' strategy is two-fold: each day of delay costs the company an estimated \$3 million in additional expenses; furthermore, it is under pressure to complete the clearance work by March 26th, when migratory nesting birds are expected back in the area, after which it will be forced to wait until August or September to continue. This extra delay is expected to cost it an additional \$536 million. As Tsleil-Waututh activist Will George put it, "We have reached a critical point in the fight against Kinder Morgan and [its] destructive expansion project."

One focal point for these protests was the

building of a traditional Watch House in Burnaby's Forest Grove Park. This Watch House, built by Tsleil-Waututh Nation (TWN) members, currently serves as a rally point for protesters heading up to Kinder Morgan property. The watch house was opened with a rally and

march involving 10,000 people in Burnaby. This sent a loud message to Kinder Morgan and its allies in the federal government that indigenous rights would be respected and the natural environment and climate protected. "Based on the undeniable jeopardy we would be placing

our inlet, the people and creatures of the inlet, the surrounding communities in, as well as, in fact, the global community, TWN has denied it's free, prior and informed consent," said Chief Maureen Thomas, Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

Recently Kinder Morgan has lost a case with the supreme court of B.C. to extend the exclusion zone to include where the Watch House was built. Instead BC Supreme Court Justice Kenneth Affleck has decided to allow an exclusion zone of only five meters from Kinder Morgan property in an act of sympathy with the Watch House project stands for.

Challenges in the courts are also ongoing. Tsleil-Waututh Nation, six First Nations, two cities and several other organizations are challenging the National Energy board decision to approve the Kinder Morgan pipeline. The Federal Court of Appeal has consolidated all of these cases into one. Indigenous nations are hoping that the courts will recognize their right to defend their lands from oil spills and further climate change. The hearings started in October of 2017 and have not yet reached a decision.

Whether through court challenges or direct action and campaigning, the resilience of the Indigenous land defenders and their supporters can stop this destructive pipeline project once and for all.



Traditional Watch House in Burnaby: A rally point for the resistance