

The enduring legacy of Vern Harper

Page 7

Abortion rights victory in Irish referendum

Page 3



Socialist Worker

\$2 | No 605 | June 2018 | socialist.ca

\$12 billion to fuel climate chaos



SINK TRUDEAU'S PIPELINE

by Bradley Hughes

Prime minister Justin Trudeau's government has committed to buying the existing Kinder Morgan pipeline and to spending whatever it costs to try to construct the new bitumen spewing pipeline. They will spend \$4.5 billion on the existing pipeline and the construction costs to complete the new line is currently estimated at an additional \$7.4 billion.

The Liberals are spending this money to protect oil company profits, trample Indigenous rights over their land and to fuel climate change. If their priorities are reconciliation, improving people's lives and fighting climate change, they would be funneling this public money onto those projects - not building a pipeline that we don't need.

There are much better ways to spend the

\$12 billion Kinder Morgan hand out.

Here are just a few:

For \$ 1 billion you could provide home energy retrofits for 60,000 homes, and create 16,000 person years of employment. This alone is more than the likely number of jobs created by the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion.

There are 174 drinking water advisories in Indigenous communities right now across what is currently called Canada. To provide safe drinking water in these communities (on par with what is commonly available in settler communities) it would cost \$3.2 Billion. This would create around 25,000 person - years of employment.

There are 3600 homeless people in the greater Vancouver area. It is still just possible to buy a new one-bedroom apartment in Vancouver for \$500,000. We could buy everyone

without a home a new condo for \$1.8 billion dollars. If we spent the money on constructing new buildings, the cost would be less, and we would create 16,000 person-years of employment.

A high speed rail link between Calgary and Edmonton would cost \$3.7 billion, it would cost \$2 billion for one between between Vancouver and Seattle. This would decrease pollution and carbon emissions from cars, decrease deaths and injuries on the highways and create nearly 100,000 person years of employment.

All of that would create more than ten times as many jobs as the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion and still leave you with \$300 million to spend on other projects.

If you were to spend the \$12 billion on a single project, you could cover tuition fees for three years for the two million post-secondary students in Canada. The Guaranteed

Income Supplement (GIS) provides a monthly non-taxable benefit to Old Age Security (OAS) pension recipients who have a low income and are living in Canada. Nearly 2 million low income seniors access this benefit million seniors for a total of just under \$11 billion. So this money would be enough to double the GIS for two million low income seniors. According to the Canadian federation of Students, the total Canada Student Loan debt for students is over \$19 billion.

This is half again as much as Trudeau wants to spend on the pipeline, but 50 % cost over runs are certainly possible.

The Indigenous lead climate movement has forced Kinder Morgan to abandon their pipeline project. We can build on this victory to defeat Trudeau. We need to build on that victory to create a movement for a just transition that can spend money on people not profit.

G7: Trudeau, Trump and the charade in Charlevoix

by Kevin Taghabon

Leaders from seven of the world's most prosperous countries met together in the idyllic town of La Malbaie, two hours northeast of Quebec City. Officials from Japan, the US, Germany, the UK, Italy and the European Union attended, all totaled representing nearly half of the global economy.

Following in Stephen Harper's footsteps in 2010, Trudeau has placed the G7 summit far from the prying eyes of a city dense with people, media and dissidents. The five themes, set by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government, include security, growth, gender equity, jobs and tackling climate change.

"Working together on climate change"

The most glaring of these hypocrisies is, predictably, their position on climate change. The G7's public engagement paper, *Working Together on Climate Change, Oceans, and Clean Energy* betrays the priorities of the Liberal government. After a few paragraphs of reasonably progressive rhetoric on this issue, we are reminded that our priorities must include, "...driving new solutions for the sustainable extraction and use of fossil fuels." This is the only mention of fossil fuels in the entire paper - let alone any discussion of tar sands bitumen.

The Liberal government just purchased a \$4.5 billion pipeline that oil mega-corporation Kinder Morgan considered too risky to move forward with. This will cost Canadians an additional \$7.4 billion dollars in upkeep. For some perspective, the average cost of healthcare in public funds per person per year is \$5,988 (2013 data). \$12 billion of public funds could cover the cost of 2 million people's healthcare. The fact that we have a new fossil fuel infrastructure purchased with public funds as opposed to a federal green jobs program or any myriad of improvements



Activists hit the streets in Quebec City June 8

Photo: Patrick Sicotte

to social programs encapsulates our government's vapid commitments to progress.

Question 3 in the engagement paper is "What are the most important issues facing our oceans and coastal communities today?". The image of filthy oil destroying the beautiful British Columbia coasts and the waterfront of Vancouver is unbearable for many. Not our government however, which has made it clear that it is more important to bail out a multinational oil company that made a bad, environmentally destructive investment than it is to protect the natural wealth and security of Canadians. As such, Canada now leads the G7 in fossil fuel subsidies. So much for the Paris Accord.

"Building a more peaceful and secure world"

Canada's public engagement paper on this topic is perhaps the most hawkish of all five sections of their G7 agenda. According to the paper, we face, "a shifting global balance of power, a growing trend towards authoritarianism, and persistent and challenging security crises." A child could tell our government that the "authoritarianism" referred to here

is first and foremost the government of Donald Trump. Perhaps our Prime Minister is naive enough to think that a productive conversation can be had with Trump at this getaway that won't immediately be trashed once Trump is out of the country. Last summer Trudeau said that Trump "really listens" to opposition viewpoints in good faith.

The paper also throws hostility at the governments of Venezuela. Justin Trudeau's government has continued Harper's fetish with regime change in Venezuela. Admonishment was also thrown at Russia - likely the input of Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland, who is barred from entering the country. This huge diplomatic hindrance is opposed by no one in the Trudeau government. Additionally, it has become clear over the past few years that NATO allies have been positioning themselves aggressively against Russia in a new Cold War.

The most dangerous episode in this saga was in April of this year. The US, UK, and France launched air strikes against the Assad regime in response to an alleged chemical weapons attack in Syria. This attack brought threats of "consequences" from the Russian ambassador in Washington. "[W]

are being threatened. We warned that such actions will not be left without consequences. All responsibility for them rests with Washington, London and Paris." These air strikes were supported by Justin Trudeau's government.

It bears repeating simply: three months ago a military action that Canada supported brought two nuclear armed powers (the US and Russia) to the brink of war. The Canadian government has never condemned the ongoing US-supported Saudi-led genocide against the Yemeni people. Justin Trudeau infamously sold \$15 billion of weapons and military gear to Saudi Arabia as one of his first international actions after being elected. The UN is now estimating that 18.4 million people will starve in Yemen by the end of the year, representing a staggering two thirds of the country's total population.

This does not yet even mention the massacres that the Israeli state is gleefully carrying out against a grassroots Palestinian uprising (who have shunned Hamas in their organizing). Israel has proclaimed that the targets are killed by their snipers deliberately. "We know where every bullet landed," said the IDF spokesperson in a now-deleted tweet.

This includes journalist Yasser Murtaja (who was wearing a clearly marked PRESS jacket) and 21-year-old medic Razan al-Najjar, alongside scores of other people. Our government has never condemned these atrocities, playing the same "both sides" game that Trump played when a right-wing terrorist killed Heather Heyer in Charlottesville. Justin Trudeau and Chrystia Freeland have no business engaging in the construction of a "more peaceful and secure world" - nor do the warmongers from Europe, Russia, Syria, and the US who brought the world to the brink of war in April.

Safe playground for power

Canada's hosting of the G7 summit this year is also the first time that

President Donald Trump visits Canada - the longest time it's taken a new President to visit Canada in 40 years. Trudeau sequestering the summit to a far corner of Quebec was shrewd. Within days of Trump's victory in the 2016 US election, there were spontaneous protests which brought out tens of thousands of people in Canada.

It is no stretch to assume that if the summit had been held in a major city, the entire city would be shut down as during Harper's 2010 G20 summit. Trump infamously cancelled his visit to the UK last year after Britons promised there would be a large opposition ready to greet him with due hostility. Trudeau invited him to Ottawa then as well, which he declined. The handful of the most powerful people in the world were given a safe area to make worldly decisions by Justin Trudeau.

Movements speak real politics

We have seen what a sustained movement can do to halt and perhaps even cancel a planet-destroying project. Kinder Morgan was brought to its knees by an Indigenous-led climate justice movement that is just gearing up for the next leg.

We live under a government that has decided it is better to use public funds to build climate-killing economically precarious fossil fuel infrastructure instead of helping its people. The Trudeau government has decided that decisions about the wealth and power of half of the planet should be sequestered to the idyllic countryside of eastern Quebec. An orange tyrant with the ego of a lion and the skills of a blind duck occupies the most powerful office on the planet.

These figures, as well as their counterparts in Germany, Japan, and across the planet, derive their power from the support of the people. Without us lending them their legitimacy, they have nothing. Alone, we cannot communicate our displeasure. United in mass movements we can force their hand in our favour, until it is our hands building society without them.

Jean Swanson's campaign takes on the 1%

by Lisa Descary

It's that time of year in Vancouver when warm weather is here, and municipal political parties have begun to announce their candidacies for Vancouver city council. But long-time anti-poverty activist and COPE city council candidate Jean Swanson, did things quite differently by holding a kickoff rally in Shaughnessy, Vancouver's most affluent neighbourhood.

For those who followed Jean's campaign in the 2017 by-election, this shouldn't be a surprise. When it comes to class consciousness, Jean knows where she stands; with working people, especially renters, against the landlords and the mansion owners of the one percent. And that is why her 2017

campaign mobilized large numbers of people, and stands to do so again this year.

Swanson's launch rally was fun and entertaining, featuring a giant Kleenex box of 'Jeanex tissues' (for the tears of mansion owners complaining about proposed tax increases), and a skit involving Jean's 'therapy tent' for one-percenters needing counselling for their 'cognitive dissonance' as they perceive more progressive taxation as somehow unfair to society, as well as speeches.

But Jean's campaign isn't just witty and creative; it's a true grassroots movement that is inspiring people who wouldn't normally get involved in municipal politics to join in the fight for the 'city we need.'



Fighting for affordable housing

Housing Crisis

Jean Swanson has run for city council several times since the 1970s, but most recently her 2017 by-election campaign gained a wave of popular support by tapping into popular anger around inaction on Vancouver's housing crisis. Her campaign called attention to the acute lack of affordable

housing in Vancouver, which has the highest rents and lowest vacancy rates in Canada. Jean's call for a four-year rent freeze and a 'mansion tax' of an additional one percent on houses valued at over five million dollars were concrete demands that people could rally around. Jean was almost successful in gaining a position on council - she came close to winning despite her shoestring budget.

But in a statement that echoes the best of Bernie Sanders or Jeremy Corbyn, Jean was adamant that her campaign is not just about her, but is really about a movement. At her launch rally, speeches from Swanson and running-mate Derrick O'Keefe mentioned that they don't see just getting a seat on council as the goal of their campaigns.

As O'Keefe explained; 'Jean Swanson really embodies a very, very different type of politician.' ... we don't just want to get Jean on council, although that's goal number one. The goal is also to build the social movements in the city; to build the tenants' union, to build the power of tenants and renters across the city to give the progressive politicians in office the power, the authority behind them from a mobilized citizenry to make the changes [we need]."

As socialists, we agree that building strong social movements in the city is the only way to win the city we need. If only the NDP would take a page from Swanson and O'Keefe's campaign book, we would be in a much better position to fight for the world we need as well.

The Irish vote is a victory for all of us!

by Carolyn Egan

My mother left Inishmore, one of the Aran Islands off the coast of Galway, when she was five years old. She was born in Boston but shortly after her parents returned to their birthplace. She grew up speaking Irish and it was the time of the war of independence. They moved back to Boston and were actively involved in the Irish community always supporting “the cause”.

She worked as a clerical staff at a Catholic high school. During the raging debates on abortion she walked into a student assembly with a non Catholic teacher who had a sign proclaiming that she was pro-choice on her pregnant belly. My mother had six children and four miscarriages and keenly understood the reality of women’s lives and was prepared to stand with those who supported the right to abortion.

Though she died a number of years ago she would have been thrilled to see that Inishmore voted in its majority to strike down the 8th along with the rest of the country. It would be hard to find a more remote area in Ireland with a population of 840, a small island in the north Atlantic, but its people voiced their strong desire for change and support for women’s rights. The 8th was the amendment introduced in 1983 that put the life of a fetus on par with that of the person carrying the pregnancy. It was in the Irish constitution and outlawed abortion. Women have been traveling to the UK for decades, using the abortion pill at home illegally, alone and afraid, or having children they did not chose to bear.

It was a massive, grass roots campaign that mobilized people across



Savita Halappanavar mural in Dublin

Photo: ZcBeaton

the country. The strength of the vote showed the overwhelming support that had been organized. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) had a long time position against the 8th since it was first introduced, and was a strong supporter of the “yes” vote. It called it a fundamental obstacle to women’s equality and inappropriate in a democracy. Its affiliated unions urged their members to take a strong stand for the right to control your own body.

Labour has also played a key role in other countries such as Canada in overturning restrictive abortions laws. It’s very important that the organized working class mobilize on questions outside the workplace

and throw its weight behind reforms which make real differences in people’s lives.

Even the rural areas came out in support, often said to be much more conservative with the Catholic Church still holding sway, they were also with the majority. At a National Ploughing Championship farmers, primarily male, supported the repeal by 64% which shows the depth of the sentiment against the amendment. Rural women of course are much more isolated and not as easily connected to the networks which helped people to make the trip across the Irish Sea to secure an abortion.

Local pro-choice groups were set up in communities throughout

Ireland with the heavy involvement of young people. The vote in support of gay marriage a few years ago pointed the direction the campaign was going but the final outcome was so overwhelming it amazed many activists. There was certainly a generational split in voting patterns which bodes well for the future.

Savita Halappanavar, a thirty-one year old dentist originally from India, suffered a miscarriage a number of years ago and was not allowed to have an abortion because the fetal heart was still beating. She died and it created a huge response within the country. Her parents said that the victory was a battle for Savita that had finally been won and thanked

the campaigners for all the work that they had done.

Young Irish returned to the country from as far away as Australia, the United States and Canada to cast a vote, with crowds applauding them as they arrived home. In Toronto, they held demonstrations at Nathan Phillips Square showing their support for change. A number of them came to the “hand maids” picket that the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics called at the leadership debate in the Ontario election outlining Doug Ford’s policies on creating barriers to abortion access in Ontario.

Northern Ireland still has a very restrictive abortion policy not in line with the law in the United Kingdom. Abortion is only allowed if the life or health of a woman is at risk. A large demonstration took place in Belfast after the success of the referendum in the south with signs, “We’re One All Irish Movement”, “Human Rights Shouldn’t Stop at the Border” and “We’re Unstoppable”, which shows the confidence a victory can bring. There is presently no government in the North since Sinn Fein withdrew from Stormont a while ago. It supported the campaign in the south while the Democratic Unionist Party is anti-choice.

It seems clear that the campaign will continue in Ulster and further mobilizations are under way. The success in the south is a huge step forward which shows that major gains can be won in these volatile times through strong movements from below. The working class has a significant role to play in fighting both exploitation and oppression in all its manifestations. This Irish victory is a concrete example for all of us that collective power can win against the forces of reaction.

The Nakba, Canada and Palestine: Interview with Hammam Farah

by Gustavo Monteiro

On Saturday, May 12 hundreds gathered in Toronto for a rally for Gaza and to commemorate 70 years since the Nakba and to say no to Israeli occupation, apartheid and massacres.

The rally started across the street from the Israeli Consulate and marched to the US Consulate. A group called the Association of Progressive Palestinian Canadians (APPC) organized this event which was endorsed by several progressive organizations and indigenous peoples.

Palestinians continue to suffer through apartheid and daily violence while the US blocks the UN Security Council calling for investigation into Gaza violence. The American government not satisfied by only backing up Netanyahu’s regime, de-

cidated to move and inaugurate a new embassy in Jerusalem while IDF snipers are killing demonstrators and injuring thousands of people.

Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland commented on the recent events in Palestine saying “All parties to the conflict have a responsibility to ensure civilians are protected” which is a very similar statement to what Trump said after Charlottesville car attack led by a white supremacist that injured several people and killed Heather Heyer.

Socialist.ca spoke with Hammam Farah, a member of APPC, to talk about the work of this new organization, the importance of the event and solidarity with people facing the violent regime of Israel in Palestine.

What’s the APPC and its mission?

HF: APPC is still on its launching



Protesting the Nakba in Toronto

phase, we’re still trying to work out the logistics on how we’re going to be launching and how we’re going to be organizing, but essentially what this group is going to be about is in the name, progressive values.

We feel that one of the biggest issues in being able to organize for Palestine and Palestinian rights in the city is there’s a gap between the Palestinian community and the Palestinian solidarity movement so we’d like to bridge that gap, that’s the role of APPC.

Considering what’s going on in Gaza right now, is completely atrocious that we see the Israeli military deploying hundreds of snipers on the Gaza boundary fence to shoot at unarmed demonstrators that are just trying to exercise their internationally recognized right to return home.

What’s the message from the Canadian Government which claims to be a Human Rights defender?

HF: We’ve seen nothing from Trudeau about what’s happening right now in Gaza. The main demand of this rally is for Canada to impose an arms embargo on

Israel. I think this where we’re at, this is what Canadian society has reached where we can now demand an arms embargo and I think a lot of Canadians would support that demand, but we need to do the education that is required, we need to continue to reach out to people, reach more people so they can come out and support us, we need to reach to other oppressed communities.

Israel is violating human rights, it’s in violation of international law, shooting at unarmed demonstrators.

At the end of the day, this is a human rights issue. It’s not a religious issue. It’s an issue of freedom, justice and equality of people fighting for freedom from oppression, from injustice, from ethnic cleansing, from apartheid, from the military occupation that is illegal under international law and for the recognized right of return.”

THE RESISTANCE BEGINS NOW

The Tory party has won a majority but has no mandate to rip apart social programs and cut services. Jesse McLaren looks at what happened with the election and Doug Nesbitt highlights the lessons of the last Ontario Tory government.

by Jesse McLaren

Doug Ford proclaimed a “strong, stable majority government,” but the Ontario election results don’t represent a surge to the right. Instead there has been a polarization to the left and to the right, and Ford’s own voting base includes both those pushing for austerity and those angered by it. While Ford is strong in the legislature he is weak outside, where cuts will alienate a section of his base. But because he has a majority of seats the NDP can’t just rely on opposition inside the legislature, and will need to amplify the opposition outside.

Liberal collapse: good riddance

After 15 years of Liberal austerity—with rising inequality and declining social services—voters had enough. In the 2014 Ontario election the Liberals temporarily tacked left and monopolized the anti-Hudak vote, gaining nearly 250,000 votes, but then returned to austerity.

They tried the same tactic in the past few months, raising the minimum wage under pressure from the Fight for \$15 and Fairness, but it was not enough to erase the accumulated experience of austerity. With their polling numbers collapsing they revealed their true colours as the twin party of Canadian capitalism—attacking unions and undermining the NDP vote, helping ensure a Ford majority.

Indeed, after conceding defeat a few days before the election, Wynne called for as many Liberal votes as possible in order to hold whoever forms government in check, equating the threat of brutal cuts under Doug Ford with an NDP majority.

The Liberals still clung on to 1.1 million votes, but the loss of 750,000 votes plus the surge in voter turnout from 51% to 58% cut their share of the vote in half—from 39% to 19% of the vote. This decimated their seats in the legislature, reducing them to 7 (their worst results ever) and costing them official party status. Voters surged to the polls to thrash the Liberals, and their vote hemorrhaged both to the right and to the left.

Contradictions of “Ford Nation”

Ford rode the anger against austerity to victory, gaining 800,000 votes and

nearly 50 seats to win 76 seats in the legislature. The last time any party has had as many seats was Mike Harris’ 1995 victory, which was followed by rapid and brutal cuts.

Ford hinted at a repeat of those policies in his acceptance speech, declaring Ontario “open for business,” but he said nothing about tax cuts, layoffs, attacks on abortion, or destruction of the environment. Instead he led with the message that got him the victory, that “help is here,” and that he will inaugurate a “government that works for the people,” and deliver “prosperity for all.”

He is well aware it was not his planned cuts to jobs and services that earned him victory. In the last election, Tory leader Tim Hudak revealed his plan to rule for the 1% and suffered the consequences: after promised 100,000 job cuts, he lost 200,000 votes. By contrast, Ford repeated on the campaign trail that his government would hire “thousands” of teachers, doctors and nurses, tapping into widespread sentiment for improved public services.

Ford tried to mask his 1% roots by appealing to the 99% at the same time: although he promised Bay Street \$6 billion in cuts, he also promised workers he would be the “Premier for the people,” he would “stand up for the little guy,” there would be not one single job loss, and that he would end halfway medicine.

While he stoked anti-immigrant racism by saying “we need to take care of our own first,” he then campaigned as “a champion for new Canadians” to build a base in racialized communities. While he won the party nomination on a plan to stop the \$15 minimum wage he did not have the confidence to even mention this during the campaign, or at any of the debates.

Ford’s electoral victory was based on holding together the conflicting constituencies of “Ford Nation”—bosses eager for more austerity, and workers angered by it. These contradictions will become more obvious when Ford forms government and struggles to meet the massively raised expectations of all those who voted for him.

Ford’s “majority” does not even represent the popular vote: 40% voted for him but 60% voted against him. And looking at the combined Tory/Liberal vote, its share declined from 70% in 2014 to 60% in 2018. For the 1%, Ford rode the anger against austerity to victory, gaining 800,000 votes and



Protesting Conservative Doug Ford’s bigotry at a provincial leaders debate

instead of two, and there is increasing opposition both inside and outside the legislature.

Opposition inside and outside the legislature

During the 2014 election the NDP refused to support the higher minimum wage and were outflanked by the Liberals—who monopolized the higher

won. They attacked Joel Harden (NDP candidate for Ottawa Centre) for being a socialist, and he won—beating the Liberal Attorney General by over 8,500 votes. They attacked Laura Kaminker (NDP candidate for Mississauga Centre) for being a peace activist, and she nearly doubled the NDP vote, coming in second with more than 11,000 votes. But starting in third place and facing

majority inside the legislature intent on cuts, but there is still a majority outside in favour of a \$15 minimum wage, healthcare, abortion rights and the environment. Ford only achieved his legislative victory by riding the wave of anger at Liberal austerity and blurring his true intentions. So when Ford moves forward with his cuts, a section of “Ford Nation” will feel betrayed. Effective organizing that leads with class politics—not name-calling, smugness or denunciations—can win over a section of Ford’s base.

Next steps

The first opportunity to do so will be the critically important Rally for Decent Work on June 16. The movements need to spring into action now and raise the demand, “Hands off the minimum wage!” The Fight for \$15 and Fairness campaign engaged thousands of voters during the election, many of whom decided against voting for Ford when they discovered he promised to roll back the \$15 minimum wage.

There will be an even bigger audience of people, including those who did vote for Ford, who will be angry at any attempt to attack the minimum wage. June 16 is an opportunity to pry open that contradiction in Ford’s base, and begin the work of expanding the reach of movements outside the legislature to resist Ford.

By redoubling the Fight for \$15 and Fairness in every union and every workplace, opposing privatization and austerity, and challenging racism and discrimination in every form, we can fracture Ford’s base, push the NDP to amplify the resistance—and bring the real change that all political parties promise but only movements can deliver.

Ford may have a majority inside the legislature intent on cuts but there is still a majority outside in favour of a \$15 minimum wage, healthcare, abortion rights and the environment.’

voter turnout against Tim Hudak. This time the NDP had a more progressive platform including support for the \$15 minimum wage and increased funding for healthcare and childcare. A stronger platform at election time, combined with the higher voter turnout and collapse of the Liberals, doubled the NDP seats to 40. They gained 800,000 votes – just as many as Ford did – again showing the polarization to the left and right.

The failed smear campaign by the right-wing press also showed that people are eager for change. They attacked Jill Andrew (NDP candidate for Toronto St. Paul’s) for calling out police chief Mark Sanders who criticized the Black Lives Matter action at Toronto Pride in 2016, and she won. They attacked Gurran Singh (NDP candidate for Brampton East) for protesting the police, and he

a hostile corporate media, the NDP needed not only a decent platform to win; it should have been campaigning much more aggressively on these issues between elections.

Had they done that in the years—rather than just the months—leading up to the election, they could have monopolized the anti-Liberal vote and beaten Ford. With the NDP now the “Official Opposition,” there is a real danger it will retreat even further from the social movements that help generate its support, and adopt a far more cautious “government in waiting” stance. This would be a disaster, restricting their opposition to moderate voices inside the legislature instead of being a megaphone for the opposition outside the legislature.

Ford has his majority government but it is not stable. He may have a ma-

Lessons from the Harris years

by Doug Nesbitt

The last time the Tories took power under Mike Harris, we responded with nearly three years of intense protests, including city-wide general strikes, a province-wide walkout by childcare workers, and a two-week illegal teachers strike.

The Tories promised a better Ontario with the Common Sense Revolution, but the reality was ugly. Education was crippled by deep cuts, and healthcare decimated by hospital closures, bed closures, and the opening up of a low-wage for-profit long-term care and homecare sector. Privatization of the 407, road cleaning, service centres, saw services decline and user fees rise. Water safety privatization led to the Walkerton disaster killing 6 and making over 2,000 ill. The social safety net was shredded with a 22 percent welfare cut while income tax cuts overwhelmingly went to the top ten percent income earners. The minimum wage was frozen during the entire period of Tory rule, from 1995 to 2003, while employment standards were dramatically rolled back.

Protests and strikes did beat up the “Common Sense Revolution” agenda, and for most of their first term, the Tories were actually second in the polls. Measures like mandatory workfare were stopped, hospital cuts were blunted, some regressive laws defeated (like Bill 136), but on the whole we lost. The province-wide general strike, mandated by three separate Ontario Federation of Labour conventions, never came. Union leaders wound down union protest activity in 1998. The Tories regained confidence and strength and won re-election a year later.

What are the hard lessons we can learn from those years?

Protest early and often

As soon as Harris was elected in June 1995, Ontario members of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women were encouraged by their Albertan counterparts to start protesting immediately and frequently. Albertans had already undergone two years of Ralph Klein’s government and Harris was seen as a copycat. The Ontario NAC activists, who had roots in unions and community organizations, formed the Embarrass Harris coalition. They held the first major protest on June 26, only 18 days after the election. Two thousand people rallied and kicked off a summer of growing protests.

Other organizations like the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty also organized regular protests. OCAP led a march of hundreds from one of Ontario’s poorest neighbourhoods, Regent Park, through Rosedale, one of

Canada’s richest. In late July, Toronto’s childcare workers also held a very successful illegal walkout against the prospect of major childcare cuts. Joining them were many parents, children, and even childcare operators.

By September 27, Embarrass Harris had won the support of labour councils and union locals and 10,000 people rallied at the opening of the legislature. It was the birth of a mass movement. Protests spread across the province and Tory MPPs were chased wherever they went. With the Tory agenda now attacking labour rights, the protest movement led directly to the first Day of Action in London, Ontario on December 11 1995. In -25

North Bay, all had Days of Action with strikes across the municipal and provincial public sector, private sector manufacturing, and Canada Post. Teachers went on a two-week political strike in October-November 1997. There were also rotating 10-minute illegal walkouts against hospital closures and cuts by healthcare workers in March and April of 1997.

Each political strike was built using similar methods. First, there was serious membership education through both face-to-face shopfloor organizing, informal meetings outside of work, and mass membership meetings. Unions printed up materials and trained up organizers to do this, but

diligent organization and education can overcome these obstacles of lack of experience, and a flat-footed union leadership.

Province-wide communication is essential

Protests and especially strikes were most successful when organization was tight and communications effective. In the lead up to OPSEU’s five-week strike in early 1996 against mass layoffs and weakened pension rights, government lies and propaganda were regularly countered through OPSEU Fax, a punchy union bulletin distributed through the government’s 3,500 fax machines. The teachers were also

between union leaders continually undermined the movement. The leadership of some unions refused to participate in the Days of Action strikes, and even openly opposed them. They believed the goal was electing the NDP in the next election, not protesting and striking the Harris Tories. Casting a ballot in protest is a weak strategy when workers can shut down businesses and create a crisis for a slash-and-burn corporate government.

The Days of Action were always meant to escalate into a province-wide general strike. Despite three OFL convention mandates for the general strike union leaders refused to take a lead. Other opportunities were passed up, including sympathy strikes when OPSEU was out from February-March 1996 and when the teachers struck illegally for two weeks in October-November 1997. Demands for the Days of Action to become larger regional strikes were also rebuffed. Instead, the Days of Action became predictable, routinized affairs and most employers soon learned how to absorb a lost day of work.

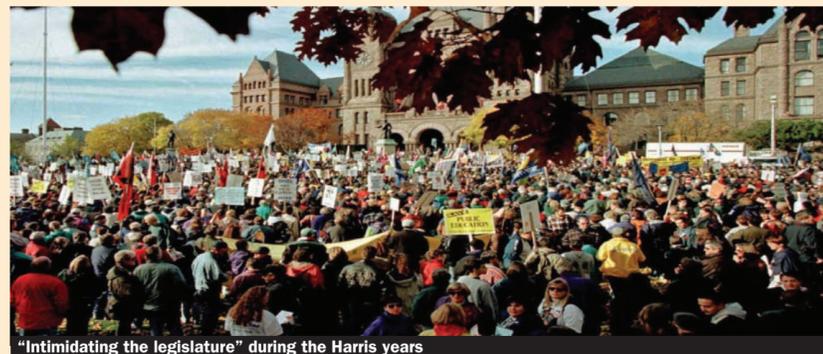
But even union leaders declaring strikes made fatal decisions. In late October 1997, 126,000 teachers in five unions struck illegally against the education-wrecking Bill 160. The government miscalculated and public support swung behind the teachers. A judge even threw out a government injunction to end the strike. But three out of five teacher union leaderships threw in the towel and within days the strike was over. Even though teachers were balloted for a strike, they were not balloted for ending the strike. Many teachers were enraged and called on union leaders to resign. Some locals rebelled and demanded a vote. Tragically, the two-week strike did nothing to stop Bill 160. In fact, the Tories made the legislation even worse once the strike was over.

Last but not least, the Days of Action were called off at an OFL meeting in July 1998, where union leaders decided a general strike would never happen. As soon as the union-led protests were over, Tory popularity began to climb and they were re-elected. The protests and strikes had created a permanent political crisis for Harris, provided a focus for hundreds of thousands, and kept the important issues on the media agenda. This was all lost when the protests were shelved.

And today?

If the union leaders are with us and represent us, we should work with them, but as soon as they decide on a different path, whether unilaterally or stage-managed vote, we should carve out an independent path that builds workers power on the shopfloor and in the streets to oppose Ford’s agenda.

• This article is shared from rankandfile.ca



“Intimidating the legislature” during the Harris years

degree weather, 30,000 people went on strike, idling most manufacturing and government services, and 15,000 marched. Even bigger protests and strikes were on the horizon.

Nothing was automatic about these early protests. Many union leaders counseled against protests being “too early”, and believed they could sit down with Harris and talk him out of his agenda. But organizers knew better and forged ahead. The early protests were important for showing thousands of people across the province that, like them, there was someone else prepared to fight. It channeled anger and fear, pulling new people into activity. As the Common Sense Revolution unfolded and reality set in, protest organizers inside the unions were able to win their unions and local labour councils to action. The small cog turned a bigger cog, and that cog turned an even larger one.

There is already an opportunity to begin this process. The Fight for \$15 and Fairness and Ontario Federation of Labour have already called a rally on June 16 at the Ministry of Labour for decent work. Be there.

Political strikes can be built

Nobody anticipated political strikes when Harris was elected. Cities big and small, including London, Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Metro Toronto, Peterborough, Windsor, and

success still needed the initiative and activity of local and shopfloor leaders. A big obstacle was overcoming the worrying number of union members who voted for Harris. This meant real political conversations with people about the issues that hit them the most. It meant showing how the rich would benefit most from tax cuts, and that privatization would drive down wages, raise user fees, and weaken quality of services.

Second, members were balloted for strike action. This happened in mass meetings, at conventions, or by ballot. When stronger unions took the lead in balloting, they also built confidence among workers in other unions.

An excellent tactic used in the Days of Action was cross-picketing so workers wouldn’t be around their own management and risk being caught. Management threats of discipline were ignored with many workers taking a loss of one day’s pay. In fact, discipline was very rare during the Days of Action.

It is not 1995. Doug Ford doesn’t have as much support among union workers as Harris did, but because of Harris, union strength isn’t what it was. In 1995, strikes were more common and there was a living tradition of militancy. But times are changing and anger against Ford is running high. The American teacher strikes in Republican Red States show that

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.

Trans Mountain pipeline and Canadian capitalism

by Jesse McLaren

Facing mounting opposition from the Indigenous-led climate justice movement, Justin Trudeau has committed to paying \$4.5 billion to Kinder Morgan for its Trans Mountain Pipeline—and at least \$7.4 billion more to expand the tar sands pipeline.

The state has always provided legal, economic and military support for capital accumulation—from England who in 1670 granted the Hudson's Bay Company a fur trade monopoly over Indigenous territory on Turtle Island. By the 1850s oil wells were spreading across Ontario, and in 1880 the Imperial Oil Company was founded in London, Ontario.

The gas guzzling World War 2 and ongoing imperial competition during the Cold War was intertwined with the growth of Canada's oil economy. In 1947 Imperial Oil began the oil boom in Alberta, and in the 1950s pipelines began to spread across the country. In 1950 Enbridge began its pipeline east, and in 1951 Trans Mountain Pipeline Company was created to take oil west—incorporated through an Act of Parliament, supported by the province of BC, and with imperial competition in mind. As the Trans Mountain president explained, "its existence is a military asset adding powerfully to the defensive strength of Canada and the United States."

Oil expansion continued through the 1960s and 1970s with the emergence of the tar sands, encouraged again by provincial and federal government across the spectrum. During the international oil crisis of 1973 Alberta Conservative Premier Peter Lougheed invested \$100 million in technology to increase tar sands extraction, and in 1975 Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau (with support from the NDP) created Petro-Canada as a crown corporation, invested with \$1.5 billion.

From Harper to Trudeau

Harper was elected in 2006 and was a vocal supporter of tar sands expansion for nearly a decade—abandoning the Kyoto protocol, destroying environmen-



tal regulation and criminalizing dissent through Bill C-51—but this sparked the climate justice movement to challenge tar sands and their pipelines.

Trudeau was elected on a promise to respect Indigenous nations, and signed the Paris climate accord "to finally fight climate change." In 2016 Trudeau was forced to reject the planned Northern Gateway pipeline, and in 2017 stood by as the Energy East pipeline proposal collapsed under the weight of Indigenous-led protests across Quebec and Canada. These were major blows to Canadian capitalists, and they don't want to see a third pipeline proposal fail to defeat.

Kinder Morgan wants to expand the Trans Mountain pipeline, increasing its capacity from 300,000 to 890,000 barrels a day. But the climate justice movement—led by Indigenous nations who have not consented to tar sands expansion—has pushed the NDP in BC to at least partially reflect the majority opposition—and has exposed the Alberta NDP for their concessions to Big Oil.

Now the Tories are trying to rebuild themselves on the frustrations of the 1%—from Jason Kenney attacking Rachel Notley in Alberta, to Andrew Scheer attacking Trudeau for having "chased away the investment" and calling on Trudeau to bail out Energy East.

Trudeau is risking his political career on the purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline. This corporate giveaway

(paying ten times what Kinder Morgan paid when it bought the time pipeline a decade ago), is a desperate reassurance to Bay Street that the Liberals will support the pipeline.

Indigenous sovereignty and just transition

This is a slap in the face to Indigenous communities who Trudeau promised to respect, but it is in line with the historical role of the Liberals as the twin party of Canadian colonialism and capitalism. While Morneau claimed that "this is the best way to protect thousands of good paying jobs," the Liberals are not motivated by the concerns of workers either. As NDP leader Jagmeet Singh explained, "\$4.5 billion to create what Kinder Morgan has indicated would be fewer than 3,000 jobs. That's almost \$1.8 million per job—jobs that are short-term and won't be there for the next generation."

There is growing support for Indigenous sovereignty and a just transition for workers in extractive industries—and Trudeau has just shown that billions of dollars could be available to build this better world. We can demand that the billions be redirected from toxic tar sands to clean water and proper housing for Indigenous communities, and green jobs for workers—as part of building a movement towards a world beyond the colonial state and its capitalist corporations.



Never miss an issue.

Mail in this form with a cheque or money order made payable to "Socialist Worker".

Prices per year (CAD dollars):
Regular subscription: **\$30**
Institutions, First Class delivery and U.S.: **\$50**
Other international: **\$60**

Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Mail to: Socialist Worker, PO Box 339
Station E, Toronto, ON Canada, M6H 4E3
Phone: 416.972.6391 / E-mail: reports@socialist.ca

Join the International Socialists

Name: City:

Address:

E-mail: Phone:

Mail to: International Socialists, PO Box 339, Station E, Toronto, ON Canada, M6H 4E3
Phone: 416.972.6391 / E-mail: reports@socialist.ca



Find us on:

@socialist_ca



socialistca

Asini Vern Harper: Red Power leader



by Valerie Lannon

One of the high points of the Red Power movement was the Native People's Caravan of 1974. Several hundred Indigenous activists travelled across Turtle Island, from Vancouver to Ottawa, to assert their inherent rights and to protest the federal government's ongoing betrayal of historic treaties. One of the Caravan's leaders was Vern Harper, a Cree activist who resided in Tkaranto and died this May at the age of 85 after a life full of commitment to Indigenous peoples.

Political development

Harper came from a long line of fighters as a sixth generation grandson of Big Bear, who fought the last battle between the Cree and the Canadian government in 1885. To escape a traumatic upbringing Harper joined the American military and at the age of 17 served in the 82nd Airborne Division in the Korean War. But within 10 years his overt political development had begun, influenced by the rise of the Red Power movement of the 1960s. He became a leader of the American Indian Movement after returning to his birthplace in Tkaranto.

By 1972 Harper was vice-president of the Ontario Metis and Non-Status Indian Association and along with the Ojibway Warrior Society of Kenora and the Regina Warrior Society, he helped create the Native People's Caravan. Harper offered the following analysis of events in 1974: "One of the key factors that made '74 a turning point was that native activists, for the first time in their generation, realized that there was non-native support for their cause. The isolation of the natives, used by the state, is no longer effective...We see trade unions, progressive left groups, church groups such as the Quakers, even liberal elements give support, such as funds, telegrams, participating in demonstrations, letters to Members of Parliament denouncing the tactics of the state, to help us. There's a more militant and revolutionary theme emerging, which is beginning to get support from all elements of the native movement...Native and non-native people are seeing that capitalism doesn't serve the masses. It only protects the capitalists' interests."

In 1976 Harper co-founded the First Nations School of Toronto to instill Indigenous students with a strong sense of pride and cultural strength. As a respected "urban" Elder, he went on to become a spiritual leader in prisons, leading traditional ceremonies and providing traditional counselling. Activists in Idle No More and Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) defenders of the land and water stand on the shoulders of leaders like Asini (Cree word for "stone") Vern Harper.

REVIEW

Music for a time of simmering chaos

by Kevin Taghabon

Toronto's own hardcore punk heroes, Cancer Bats, have delivered a ferocious sixth record dense with themes of fearlessness, unshackled youth, and even environmental justice. The band recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of their seminal record "Hail Destroyer", an LP which shot the band from the beloved sticker and sweat encrusted walls of the Ontario's local rock venues into international stardom.

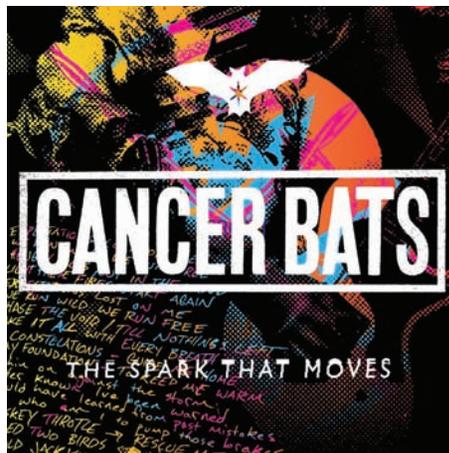
Cancer Bats is not a political music group – at least not constantly. Still, many of their previous songs have spoken to the alienation felt in our society, especially among young people struggling to carve out rewarding lives in a decaying system.

There are barely-cryptic references to political tensions and events throughout *The Spark That Moves*. Trump's nuclear deathwish gets shots fired across the bow in the opening song, "Gatekeeper": "Scorched earth/ annihilation/ without a second thought/...You're past the insane/ You've got this rust inside your veins." The threatening sound of the track is perfect for lead singer Cormier's words.

This message isn't alone in one song. "Heads Will Roll" includes much of the same disgust coupled with a call to stand up and fight. "Detonation, all guns blazin'/ Burning down what you fabricated/ Hypocrite and lie distorter/ But you're judged for your chaos now...Heads will roll!/ Is nothing sacred anymore!...I know I must be stronger/ I know I must resist/ I must be patient/ I must rise above."

Cormier spares no expense on "Space and Time". The track may as well be a cutesy poem for Elon Musk and Rex Tillerson's petri-dish starchild. "We must go to the cosmos/ Our de-

structive ways belong in outer space/ We must go to the cosmos/ We treat our home with such disgrace/...Set your sights to the stars/ We've ignored the facts/ There's no turning back/ We're all corrupt/ Leave it behind/ The Earth deserves



so much better than the human kind/ Space and time is my state of mind/ Leave behind the human kind?." Cormier virtually endorses Musk shooting his class into the sun. "Space and Time" reminds us that humanity has abused the natural world to the brink of collapse. But it is our collapse, our eviction. The planet belongs here without our pillaging, colonization, and climate denial, and pipeline buyouts from oil lackeys in our federal government.

The majority of *The Spark That Moves* is about being free. Truly free, not in some crass commercial sense, but in the pursuit of a fulfilling life that meets persons energy and potential. "Expectations are so mean/ We run

wild and we run free/...Pushin' on against the storm/ Better know I've been warned/ Should have learned from past mistakes/ Who am I to pump those brakes?/...Kill two birds so it makes three/ My agenda's always on me/ We are what you have made us/ Don't ask us how we fit in/ We are what you have made us/ So keep the lights on!" Cormier screams on "We Run Free". This is a rejection of mainstream culture. More specifically, it is as a retort to the "lazy millennial" criticism that right-wingers love to bandy about as an excuse for the virus of capitalism and its side effects. "Bed of Nails" doubles down on this: "We take this life/ We make this life/ What it is, and what we want/ Our own rules/ Our own tools...Forget anyone who's gonna tell you how to love and live."

We live in a time of simmering chaos, which also presents once-in-a-generation opportunities for radical change. This can go either way, but young people are decidedly on the left in this equation. Leaked research from the conservative Manning Centre in 2017 found that only 16% of millennial Albertans consider themselves politically conservative – in the most conservative province in the country. In 2016 (long before the election) a Harvard study found that a majority of millennial Americans reject capitalism. These numbers have likely increased.

The generation that these musicians belong to is ascendant, and their politics have largely shed the 20th century hangups about anti-capitalism and reaction. With that in mind, take the advice of our angsty Bats here on "Brightest Days": "We might be wrong but feels too right to know/ It don't make sense just go with the flow/ The brightest days are yet to come/ Heads!/ Held!/ High!/"

The case against climate geoengineering

by Valerie Lannon

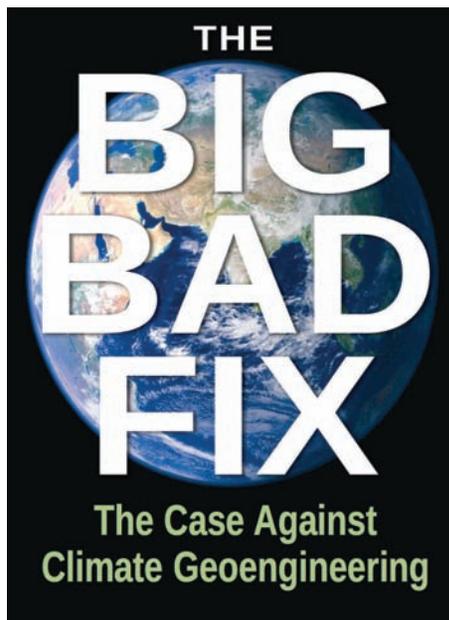
There are full-blown climate change deniers, including Scott Pruitt, the head of the US Environmental "Protection" Agency. Then there are those who acknowledge the seriousness of global warming but are confident that capitalist ingenuity will save the day somehow "just like we always have." Last but not least are those who are concerned about global warming, are not overly confident in capitalism-as-saviour but who are so desperate to avoid climate catastrophe that they pray that the far-out solutions they hear about from Bill Gates (for "storm modification") will keep the global warming wolves at bay.

It is for these last two large categories of people that the arguments in *The Big Bad Fix: The Case Against Climate Geoengineering* are ones we have to make. This 77-page report was prepared in 2017 by Biofuelwatch and the Heinrich Boll Foundation, and is an update of their 2010 report *Geopiracy*.

What is climate geoengineering?

The report defines geoengineering as "large-scale, intentional human manipulation of climate or Earth systems." (emphasis mine to distinguish geoengineering from humanity's historic interaction with nature, including our earliest technologies). Its proponents see it as a solution to the devastation caused by climate change. So far, all attempts at geoengineering have either had to be abandoned or, if tried, resulted in further threats to people and the planet.

There are three main approaches to geoengineering. The first is called Solar Radiation Management (SRM) (aka albedo modification), aimed at reducing the amount of heat in the



atmosphere by turning sunlight back into space. There is no attempt to try to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; instead it releases "inorganic particles such as sulphur dioxide into the upper layer of the atmosphere—via cannons or hoses or aircraft—to act as a reflective barrier to reduce the amount sunlight reaching Earth... the unknowns are many, including the possibility of ozone layer depletion and significant weather pattern changes."

The second broad approach, with many variations on the theme, is Greenhouse Gas Removal (GGR), which does not focus on the sun but, as its name describes, removing the excess greenhouse gas that is already in the atmosphere;

again no focus on reducing the production of greenhouse gas emissions.

Lastly is the stuff of both science fiction movies and of actual use in China, namely weather modification, usually to either make rain or suppress rain, e.g. via "cloud seeding." The report explains all three approaches in greater detail and provides eight case studies, all of which point to extreme dangers and, in many cases, irreversibility.

How to respond?

The authors of the report make four excellent recommendations to address the problems raised with current geoengineering "solutions." These include:

- End the production of carbon dioxide from fossil fuels by phasing out fossil fuel infrastructure, using renewable sources with communities' consent, efficient public transport, reducing energy consumption, transforming agribusiness to smaller holdings and "agroecology"
- Restore natural ecosystems, including forests, rainforests, moors and oceans, with full involvement of local communities
- Ban outdoor testing of geoengineering, enforced through a global governance body, since geoengineering has global impacts
- Debate proposed geoengineering solutions using the "do no harm" principle.

The longstanding Indigenous worldview of humanity's symbiotic relation with the rest of nature is incompatible with colonization and capitalism's need to profit from the extraction of resources. Fighting for an end to capitalism—and for a better world through socialism, in alliance with struggles for Indigenous sovereignty and just transitions for workers to low carbon jobs—is our only hope.

Defend the \$15 minimum wage

Emboldened by Doug Ford's electoral victory, the 1% are coming for low-wage workers. The morning after the election the *Financial Post* declared, "Let's undo the damage of Wynne's cruel and unfair minimum wage crusade."

Businesses not only want to stop the planned minimum wage increase to \$15/hr in 2019, they want to roll back the \$14/hr minimum wage that was won this year.

There are already Liberal loopholes in the minimum wage that make it lower for student and liquor servers, and bosses want to massively expand these. They are cruelly saying minimum wage workers are not worth \$14/hr, and are especially targeting disabled and immigrant workers.

Ford's victory will give confidence to those spouting ableism, racism and other forms of oppression, and bosses will be coming for non-unionized and unionized workers alike.

They are also using all the old arguments that raising the minimum wage causes job losses. They said the same thing in January when the \$14/hr wage took effect, and the sky didn't fall. There was a big business backlash, with Tim Hortons clawing back wages, but there was also an outpouring of support for minimum



We won't back down! Don't let Ford roll back wages

wage workers.

Polls show a majority of people across the province support the \$15/hr minimum wage, including 40 per cent of PC voters. That's why

Doug Ford, while briefly mentioning his intention to stop the wage increase, couldn't campaign on stopping it.

We saw the same contradiction in the US. At

the same time as Donald Trump was elected, people voted to increase the minimum wage in a number of states. Mobilizations by the Fight for \$15 were crucial to expose this contradiction and give people the confidence to fight against Trump. Heading into the election the Fight for \$15 planned a day of action after the election regardless who won, and this became the first major action against Trump—giving confidence to other mobilizations.

The June 16 Rally for Decent Work was planned before the Ontario election, because the Fight for \$15 and Fairness and the Ontario Federation of Labour knew that whoever got elected would need to be pushed to defend and extend the gains of the campaign.

With Ford elected and the 1% on the offensive, June 16 will be crucial to show the support that still exists for low wage workers.

Ford calls himself the "Premier of the people" but the people are clear: we want \$15 and Fairness, all workers deserve it, and we are going to fight to get it.

- On June 16 join the Rally for Decent Work, 1pm at the Ministry of Labour, 400 University Ave, Toronto.

Cops and bigots not welcome at Pride

by Pam Johnson

In a statement the day after the election Ontario Premier-elect Doug Ford said that "if the police are allowed to march", he might attend the Pride parade in Toronto.

This is a nod to his homophobic base of religious right and social conservatives that take credit for his victory.

This shamefully reignites a contentious issue that the Toronto Pride committee has already settled – that the police are welcome to attend out of uniform, but that there will be no uniformed contingent in the Pride parade.

Toronto Police are no longer pursuing this issue and have withdrawn their application.

This is a divisive and potentially dangerous ploy that fuels homophobic hate and intolerance. Anti-gay preacher Rev. Charles McVety and former PC candidate Tanya Granic Allen showered Ford with praise on election night for vowing to scrap the new sex-ed curriculum. Ford claims that the revised curriculum, which includes LGBTQ and consent information, forces students to learn about "six different genders and all the nonsense".

The strained relations between the police and the LGBTQ community cannot be 'overcome by a parade' according to the Toronto Pride committee. The Bruce MacArthur serial murder investi-

gation, targeting of trans people and anti-black racism are all issues that have been raised by LGBTQ community members as evidence that a problem with police continues to exist.

Resistance to the police presence in Pride is not just happening in Toronto. Protesters in the Edmonton Pride parade stopped the march on June 9 in a similar action to what Black Lives Matter



Black Lives Matter began the resistance to police at Pride

Photo: Uranranebi Agbeyegbe

Toronto did in 2016, demanding that the police and military not be allowed in future parades.

LGBTQ activists in other parts of the world have also shown resistance to right-wing governments using homophobia to further their agenda. Pride parades in Poland and Romania have been drawing thousands.

Pandering to social and religious conservatives, with the current rise of the far right and neo-fascist hate groups is a dangerously toxic mix.

Just recently, Christian bigots disrupted the Haldiman Norfolk Pride event in Dunnville by blocking the stage with their hateful messages.

We need to move swiftly to fight Ford and build the resistance to the bigots have been emboldened by his victory and who are using him to build their hateful movement.

When BLM Toronto held its protest during Pride in 2016, opposing the police presence at Pride, they and their many supporters faced a backlash in the media, and in sections of the community. Today, more people have come to the same conclusion that they had put forward then. This is an important step forward.

But it shows the importance of building solidarity with marginalized communities under threat from police and the bigoted attacks fueled by politicians like Ford. Our unity can defeat their attempts to divide and conquer.