



Quebec election: Québec solidaire ramps up the campaign page 2

Solidarity with IATSE local 58 page 7



Socialist Worker

\$2 | No 608 | September 2018 | socialist.ca



Doug Ford and the Tory government have only been in power for a few months but they have already done a massive amount of damage to the province. They have gutted environmental programs, gone to war with the poor, unilaterally dismantled the basics of democratic rule and provided comfort and support to bigots and racists of all stripes.

They have cut the universal basic income pilot project leaving hundreds of our most vulnerable people without any income. They slashed the projected increase for welfare recipients who have been waiting years for some relief from skyrocketing living expenses.

The cuts to environmental retrofit subsidies have resulted in hundreds of lost jobs already.

Indeed, if it weren't for the increase in the minimum wage to \$14 which has boosted job growth, Ontario would have been hard hit with losses this summer.

The revoking of the new sex ed curriculum is about pandering to the right wing Conservative base and it's homophobia and sexism. The teachers are fighting back and many teachers unions have vowed to continue with the new curriculum. The response from the Tories was to develop an anonymous snitch line so people could rat out their teachers if they dared talk to kids about issues like consent of sexual orientation.

And he has a particular rage for the people of the city of Toronto. Ford's plan to downsize council will mean even less access to the basic

levers of our already flawed democratic system. His new plan for the province to take over the subway system is a precursor for the eventual privatization of the system.

All this is straight out of the Tory playbook. Both Mike Harris in Ontario and Stephen Harper in Ottawa went full steam ahead on a whole series of right wing attacks at once. It is designed to keep any opposition at bay by throwing so many issues at us that it confuses the opposition.

We need to remember that this government, as with almost all others under our current electoral system, do not have the support of the majority of the people. In Ontario only 2.2 million out of approximately 10 million eligible voters actually voted for this agenda.

The seeds of the fightback are already there. The teachers are showing us the way by openly defying his regressive policies.

And there are strong majorities in favour of continuing with the plan to raise the minimum wage to \$15 in January. Activists with that campaign have already hit the streets and are fighting to make sure the raise goes ahead.

Over the next months there will be many opportunities to build the fight against Tory rule. If we are to be successful we will need to lay the ground work for those battles now. In our workplaces, your schools and over the kitchen table, people need to be discussing what they can do to join in the fight. There is a lot at stake and silence will not be an option if we wish to see a brighter future for working people.

Bernier's goal: drag the country to the right

by John Bell

In the space of a few short summer weeks, Maxime Bernier has gone from grousing about how the government protects dairy farmers, to tweeting about “radical multi-culturalism”, to quitting the Conservatives in a huff. He is setting out to redraw the political map.

“The Conservative Party is too intellectually and morally corrupt to be reformed,” he told a press conference at which he announced the formation of a new, as yet un-named party. Given his track record, we can expect it to feature a variation of far-right anti-immigrant politics, perhaps modeled after the UK Independence Party (UKIP).

Bernier stressed the importance of opposing “supply management”, using government policy to protect agricultural producers. This has been a source of conflict in the ongoing trade disputes between the Canadian government and Trump’s White House. While Bernier’s ideas about unfettered free markets appeal to “libertarians” and Ayn Rand disciples, nobody would seriously believe this sufficient to form a viable base for a national political party.

But add a heaping dose of xenophobia and bigotry to the mix and it might be a different story.

Bernier & the ‘cult of diversity’

Early in August Bernier launched epic twitter rants against “extreme diversity” that left his Conservative Party reeling. They scrambled to hide how many of their base completely agree with him.

He’s all for a wee bit of diversity, but against “more diversity” and dead set against “ever more diversity”. And don’t get him started on the “cult of diversity”. Bernier tweeted: “More diversity will not be our strength, it will destroy what has made us a great country.” This was no spur of the moment rant, but a long thread issued in both English and French.

“I hereby officially declare the death

of political correctness in Canada,” tweeted Bernier (in both official languages) on August 19.

Pressure grew for Tory leader Andrew Scheer to discipline Bernier, up to and including expelling him from caucus. After days of waffling, Scheer put out a bland public statement saying that Bernier held no official position, and therefore did not speak for the party. Far from stifling Bernier, Scheer’s response only emboldened him.

Not that Bernier needed egging on. He came a close second behind Scheer in the Tory leadership race to replace Harper. He is on record denying the existence of systemic racism. In May he engaged in a war of words with Liberal MP Celina Caesar-Chavannes, who called out Bernier’s rather obvious white privilege. He tweeted in response: “You think the world revolves around your skin colour. My goal is to bring better policies to all Canadians. That’s an MP’s job.”

Bernier has been carrying the Tory banner in Quebec since 2006. He held several cabinet posts in Harper governments. As Minister of Industry he was a privatization and deregulation enthusiast. So much so that his haste brought him into conflict with Harper’s more cautious approach. He was shuffled over to Ministry of State, where he distinguished himself by leaving a top-secret briefing book behind after a sleep-over at the home of a woman with whom he was having an affair.

He was booted to the back benches and spent the next few years rebuilding a base within the party, with an eye to replacing Harper. As he told the press: “[P]eople got to know me. They saw that I had good ideas, that I wasn’t an idiot.” Bernier is nothing if not an opportunist. Adding more overtly anti-immigrant rhetoric to his repertoire gained support in the old Reform Party bastions of the west.

Much of the secret to Stephen Harper’s unite-the-right success lay in recruiting members and votes from often socially conservative immigrant



Bernier and Jordan Peterson: peas in a racist pod

communities—and to do that he needed to muzzle but not extinguish his racist Reform Party base. Scheer has sought to stick to that template, but lacks Harper’s authority over the party gears, in part because of Bernier’s prominence.

The difference between Bernier and his Tory caucus mates is often blurred. Scheer and the rest have spent months trying to demonize asylum seekers as a flood of “illegals” ready to storm our borders. Earlier this summer the Tories crossed the line from dog-whistle to overt racism, with a meme showing a Black man pulling a suitcase towards a broken fence, across a bridge made from a Justin Trudeau tweet. Outrage forced Scheer to remove the scummy meme from his web site.

Bernier would not have backtracked.

Tory turf fight

In the wake of Bernier’s bigoted tweets (and Scheer’s milk-toast attempts to reassert his control) came news that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s popularity rebounded.

A significant jump in Liberal Party memberships and donations led to rumours that Trudeau might call a snap election.

Not that the Liberals are above blowing the racist dog-whistle themselves. The appointment of former Toronto police chief Bill Blair to a newly created cabinet portfolio of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction showed the Liberals trying to stake out their own piece of anti-immigrant sentiment. But next to Bernier the Liberals seem almost benign. Here was a chance to shore up their left flank, and to distract from their nationalization of the Kinder Morgan pipeline.

As for NDP leader Jagmeet Singh’s response, it was slow and inadequate: “I’ve waited to respond to Maxime Bernier’s comments to see if @AndrewScheer would do the responsible thing & denounce these divisive words. He has not. To everyone that belongs to a diverse community—who’s been told you don’t belong—I’ve been in your shoes,

I get it.”

Waiting for a Tory to do the right thing? I’d say he doesn’t get it. Maybe he is more focused on winning his own seat in parliament than in mounting a spirited fight against the rise of the racism in Canada.

Signs of panic emerged in the Tory ranks. Calgary MP Michelle Rempel went to bat for Scheer, declaring: “[Bernier] has a choice to make: does he want Andrew Scheer to win or Justin Trudeau to win?”

Bernier has chosen. He is more intent on defeating Scheer than Trudeau, at least in the short term. He tweeted his defiance: “So, after disavowing me last week for raising the issue and telling me to shut up, my colleagues have just realized that this is something Canadians find important and want to hear about? Great example of strong leadership!” (Maxime Bernier, Aug. 22, 2018)

As I write, the wounded Tories are headed into their annual policy meeting. Normally I would welcome a Tory turf war, but this playing with racism can only be disastrous. Even if it ends with a rejuvenated Liberal Party, it will be one which is conceding ground to racist arguments. If you define “the right” as the Tory party, yes it cannot help but be disunited. But meanwhile the whole political terrain will have shifted to the right.

Mainstream commentators focus on parliament—whether other Tory MPs would follow Bernier as he bellows: “Racist Avengers, assemble!” Likely they will not, dependent on Party organization and coffers for their re-election and perks. But it will be at the roots of the party, in the riding associations and among door-knocking activists, that the disruptions will come. It is not inconceivable that Bernier will be able to pull enough support to become the racist gadfly this country does not need.

A quick look at the dangerous rise of the right around the world shows that this is no time for such political games.

Québec solidaire: “transition énergétique”

by Chantal Sundaram

The Québec election campaign officially kicked off August 23, with polls on October 1. Only Québec solidaire (QS) is campaigning for a just transition to sustainable energy and climate-friendly jobs.

Unfortunately this is something that distinguishes QS from the NDP, despite the heroic attempts of many NDP members to defend The Leap Manifesto, for a just transition to an economy respectful of indigenous and working people.

For QS, job creation and fair labour standards are linked to a long-term goal of environmental justice, joining economic justice with the future of the climate.

QS is campaigning on immediate, popular issues like public dental

insurance, a 50% reduction in public transit fares, increased funding for healthcare and free education from early childhood to PhD. These issues poll high with the electorate, but QS is also actively campaigning on a bigger, longer-term vision for the complete transformation of the economy away from carbon.

Letter to Trudeau

In an August 21 open letter to Justin Trudeau, former student strike leader and current QS co-spokesperson Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois (GND) accused the PM of a spectacular betrayal of the climate promises that helped bring him to power: with the purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline but also his affirmation to oil magnates in Texas that “we can’t leave 173

billion dollars of oil in the ground without exploiting it.” He tells Trudeau that by justifying this in the name of “the national interest” he has exposed the Canadian national project for what it really is: “Canada has made the oil economy its vision for society.”

But GND also points the finger at every party leader in Québec: “during the campaign, in front of the cameras, Messieurs Couillard, Lisée et Legault will do the same as you [Trudeau]. They will never miss a chance to express alarm over climate change. But the Québécois have to remember: Philippe Couillard opened the territory of Québec up to oil companies, Jean-François Lisée was part of the government that drilled in Anticosti Island and financed the polluting

cement factory in Port-Daniel, and it was François Legault who proposed a “third link” that will not decongest roads, and who supports oil exploitation on Québec soil. Nor will these leaders break with the Canadian political elite, which means Québécois tax dollars will be used to build your pipeline in Alberta.”

He goes on to say that QS will make energy transition the new national project of Québec: “We propose that Quebec look farther than a single election term of four years. We will invite the electorate to not be seduced by the comfortable denial of the old political class has to offer. We will wager that economic transition is not only indispensable, but also an exciting collective project.”

Narrative in English Canada

The main narrative likely to come out of the upcoming Québec election in English Canada is that Québec as a whole is moving to the right because of the anti-immigrant and Islamophobic politics that have fed the rise of the right-wing CAQ. This is happening in electoral politics throughout the West, not because Québec is intrinsically more racist than English Canada.

There is a weakness in Québec in challenging racism directly and effectively. But there is also great potential to build on the strength of movements that have challenged austerity and defeated the Energy East pipeline, to see beyond the results of one election to the possibility of a better world.

The Canada Saudi spat

Trudeau is no human rights defender

The government of Saudi Arabia has pulled its ambassador to Canada, called for Saudi students to be brought home from the country, suspended new trade and has publicly called out the government of Justin Trudeau. All this because of a tweet from Canada calling on the Saudis to release human rights activists Raif and Samar Badawi.

The Liberals are using this to show just how committed they are to human rights and have doubled down on the initial tweet that caused this uproar. For Trudeau, this spat is good news. He is able to promote himself as staunch human rights advocate who is not afraid to back down from a bully state.

The international and domestic press are smitten. Pundits all over the world are asking why their own country's leaders can't be just as principled as Trudeau.

But if we look beyond the 140 characters sent by Foreign Affairs minister Chrystia Freeland it doesn't take long to see that Canada is far from being a bastion of compassion. Indeed, if we look at the relationship with the Saudis, the veneer falls off pretty quickly.

To start, there is, of course, the \$15 billion sale of light armoured military vehicles to the Saudis. Although the deal for the weaponry was initially given the green light by the Harper Conservatives, the Liberals agreed to continue with the purchase, knowing full well that these would likely be used against civilians.

The Saudis have become Canada's largest recipient of military hardware amounting to 48



Meet Justin Trudeau: The global arms supplier

percent of all arms sales in 2017.

The brutal Saudi led war in Yemen has become a killing ground. In the last few weeks, airstrikes have hit markets, school buses and hospitals killing hundreds of civilians. It is impossible to know how many civilians have died in the war but most NGO's conservatively estimate the death toll to be 10,000 at the least. Many more are dying from disease and

starvation as the country remains under a blockade.

Canada has not stopped shipment of weaponry to the Saudis despite this carnage. We did send \$64 million in aid to help deal with the humanitarian crisis caused by the war but that is rather a token gesture if we refuse to halt the shipment of billions in weaponry.

In fact, Canada has quietly become the second biggest supplier

of weapons to the Middle east after the US and we have been pretty consistent in our support for dictatorships around the world. Lets look at a few examples.

Canada is the second largest supplier of weapons to Egypt since the coup that ousted Mohammed Morsi and installed the dictatorship of Abdel Fatah el-Sisi. War industries in this country sent \$48 million in hardware to the dictator between

2013 and 2015.

The government has just agreed to send Winnipeg made .50 caliber sniper rifles to the Ukraine. We send about \$50 million in weapons yearly to the Turkish government and Canadian weapons exports to Israel are also increasing having gone up from \$7.8 million in 2015 to \$9.7 million in 2016.

And of course, the US still takes tens of millions in Canadian made weapons and military tech each year.

The Canadian government say that they have rigorous export controls to stop sales of weapons to countries with bad human rights records but the numbers show they are not as rigorous as Ottawa would have you believe.

A recent study by *L'actualité* stated that, "Of the 7,310 applications submitted by arms producers in 2014 and 2015, only 10 were refused."

And Canada's dismal record of human rights violations domestically proves that the federal government will always put profits before people.

The long history of using the military against Indigenous land defenders is the most obvious example. Trudeau's own ministers have spoken about sending the military to BC to clear the way for the trans mountain pipeline which is being blocked by Indigenous led protesters.

Trudeau may like to bask in the glow of his public fight with the Saudis but his real record on human rights proves that if there is a profit to be made - he will always side with the warmongers.

Trump's tower begins to crumble

by John Bell

As close aides and allies are convicted of crimes, or "flip" to offer evidence to prosecutors in exchange for immunity, President Donald Trump's scandal-plagued regime is teetering.

Paul Manafort, Trump's election campaign chairman, was found guilty of 8 federal counts of bank and tax fraud. Trump declared: "Paul Manafort is a good man.... It doesn't involve me but I still feel—you know it's a very sad thing that happened."

Only minutes after the Manafort verdict came news that Trump's lawyer, Michael Cohen, had pleaded guilty to 8 counts of violating federal campaign spending laws and fraud, connected to payments of hush money to women with whom Trump had had affairs.

Cohen and Manafort join already convicted Trump aides Rick Gates, Michael Flynn and George Papadopoulos. They've been found guilty on a range of charges, from fraud and tax evasion to lying to FBI investigators and committing perjury. All are trading



incriminating evidence against Trump for lighter sentences.

Cohen's conviction has led to key Trump ally David Pecker, CEO of American Media Inc., turning state's evidence in return for immunity. He used his business to launder the cash payoffs from Trump to Stormy Daniels and Karen MacDougal. Pecker used his media empire (including the

National Enquirer) to savage Hillary Clinton during the campaign, often with fake news and absurd conspiracy theories. Pecker is also a leading figure in the hedge fund that controls the Post Media empire here in Canada, publisher of the National Post and the Sun chain.

The convictions are results of the Mueller investigation into

irregularities during the last election, including charges of Russian interference. Trump tries to spin it all in his infamous tweets and incessant campaign-style rallies, but his rants are becoming ever more unhinged and desperate.

"Fake news and the Russian witch hunt," Trump told his still loyal fans at a rally in West Virginia. "Where is the collusion?"

You know they're still looking for collusion. Where is the collusion? Find us some collusion. We want to find the collusion."

Trump has said he may issue a pardon for Manafort. A recent tweet reveals he has pardons on the brain: "As has been stated by numerous legal scholars, I have the absolute right to PARDON myself, but why would I do that when I have done nothing wrong?"

Trump also took time out to attack his own Attorney General, Jeff Sessions. Sessions is not cooperating with Trump's attempts to undermine the Department of Justice investigations. Trump tweeted: "Jeff Sessions said he wouldn't allow politics to influence him only because he doesn't understand what is happening underneath his command position." Time to update your resume, Jeff.

Whether all this will be enough to bring Trump down remains to be seen. Hopefully it will derail his Supreme Court nomination, and translate into midterm election setbacks in October. All that depends as much on Democratic timidity as on Trump's crimes.

Karl Marx, workers and revolution

Karl Marx said revolutions would be instrumental in building socialism. Sadie Robinson argues that workers taking mass action is still necessary to change the world

Karl Marx believed that workers have the power to transform the world through revolution.

The working class, he argued, could create a new system based on meeting the needs of everyone, not making profit for a tiny few.

Marx called this system communism and later used the term socialism.

Along with his collaborator Frederick Engels, he wrote about how this new world could come about and what it might look like.

Marx was writing in the 19th century at a time when capitalism was still coming into being in many parts of the world.

He had seen how the bourgeoisie, the capitalist class, was sweeping aside the old feudal order.

For Marx “revolutions are the locomotives of history.”

They drive society forward. Marx described how revolutions happen when economic development pushes against ways of organising society that hold it back.

For instance, capitalism marked a huge advance on the feudal societies.

It revolutionised production and unleashed great potential. But while Marx saw the dynamism of capitalism, he also saw the horrors that it brought about.

He wrote that capitalism “comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt”.

Marx and Engels were revolutionary socialists actively involved in organising to overthrow it.

It isn’t simply that capitalism forces working class people to live in hovels, work in dangerous condi-

tions and suffer poverty. For Marx, it also has a deeper damaging effect.

Marx wrote that humans can be told apart from animals by many things, but importantly, “They begin to distinguish themselves as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence.”

So people have a unique ability to labour consciously on the world around them.

But under capitalism this is controlled by the bosses for their own interests.

Marx wrote that workers are alienated because of this—from their work, from each other and themselves.

In words many people will recognise, he said the worker “does not count labour itself as part of his life; it is rather a sacrifice of his life”.

This alienation is built into the way capitalism works, and can’t simply be reformed away.

Reactionary

Marx also argued that revolution is the only way to get rid of all the reactionary ideas that capitalism generates.

In Marx’s time just as today, ruling classes used racism to try and divide workers.

When Marx was writing, racism in England was mainly directed towards Irish workers.

Marx wrote that the “antagonism” between English and Irish workers was “artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short by all the means at the disposal of the ruling class”.

For Marx and Engels, the ruling

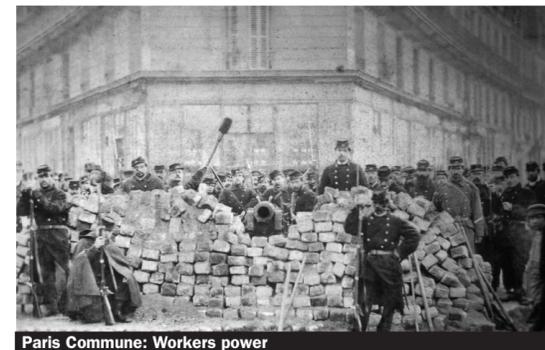
ideas in any society are “the ideas of the ruling class”. This doesn’t mean they are the only ideas.

But those at the top of society are in a position to promote certain ideas—respect for the rule of law, national-

ism, and so on—and these dominate. “Revolution is necessary not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew,” they wrote.

But Marx identified how struggle is built into the system. Capitalism is based on bosses competing with each other.

Each fights to accumulate more wealth than the rest—and those who



Paris Commune: Workers power

But those at the top of society are in a position to promote certain ideas—respect for the rule of law, national-

How would this revolution come about?

It might seem that the rich, with all the power and influence they wield, can quite easily protect their system. And much of the time, many workers don’t appear very interested in overthrowing capitalism.

Engels put it. But a successful revolution isn’t inevitable.

Ruin

Marx and Engels wrote that class struggle could lead to the “common ruin of the contending classes”.

But they did not waver from arguing that only a revolution could liberate working class people.

In an address to the Communist League in 1850 they said, “Our concern cannot simply be to modify private property, but to abolish it, not to hush up class antagonisms but to abolish classes, not to improve the existing society but to found a new one.”

And even when the bourgeoisie was still a relatively new class, in some cases fighting an old feudal order, they warned against putting any trust in it.

“In all the conflicts to come, it will be the workers who will be chiefly responsible for achieving victory,” they argued.

“The petty bourgeoisie, to a man, will hesitate as long as possible and remain fearful, irresolute and inactive.”

Marx argued that workers had to liberate themselves, not rely on any other group to win change on their behalf.

“The emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself,” he wrote.

A socialist society would do away with private property and put ordinary people in charge. Marx said that over time, society would be run on the principle of “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs”.

There would still be classes in the transition between capitalism and communism.

Workers will need to organise in order to protect the new society from a counter-revolution by the old ruling class.

Marx wrote that this transition would see the “dictatorship of the proletariat”. And Engels wrote that a revolution is where “one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part”.

Right wingers sometimes use such quotes to paint Marx and Engels as anti-democratic or in favour of repression.

Imposing

But a workers’ revolution would see the vast majority imposing its will on a tiny minority.

It would protect and extend democracy against a minority determined to hold onto its power.

As Engels asked, “Would the Paris Commune have lasted a single day if it had not made use of this authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie?”

“When plain working men for the first time dared to infringe upon the governmental privilege of their ‘natural superiors’ the old world writhed in convulsions of rage,” wrote Marx.

“Wonderful, indeed, was the change the Commune had wrought in Paris!”

Marx saw how the Commune didn’t challenge the centralised capitalist state, and kept many of the old structures. After two months it was drowned in blood.

For Marx, this confirmed that workers can’t just take over the “ready-made state machinery”. Instead they have to create new forms of organising.



The Winnipeg General strike

without any police of any kind.”

The Commune’s representatives were elected by universal suffrage—and they could be recalled. All took a workers’ wage. Education was opened up to all.

“When plain working men for the first time dared to infringe upon the governmental privilege of their ‘natural superiors’ the old world writhed in convulsions of rage,” wrote Marx.

“Wonderful, indeed, was the change the Commune had wrought in Paris!”

Marx saw how the Commune didn’t challenge the centralised capitalist state, and kept many of the old structures. After two months it was drowned in blood.

For Marx, this confirmed that workers can’t just take over the “ready-made state machinery”. Instead they have to create new forms of organising.

Fords attack on sex ed reinforces oppression



Rally in Toronto to Save the new sex ed curriculum

by Carolyn Egan

A province-wide campaign opposing the Ford government’s attack on the progressive sex education curriculum has been gathering momentum. School boards are speaking out, and very importantly teachers’ unions such as the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Association (OSSTF) have taken strong stands against the changes. They are vowing to defend any teacher who refuses to implement the new curriculum. ETFO held a large demonstration at Queens Park, concretely showing its members’ commitment to this fight and pledging that it will bring it into the workplaces.

A community coalition has also been meeting that includes LGBTQ organizations, women’s groups, students and unions. It was involved in organizing the student led demonstration that took place at the provincial legislature, which highlighted what’s at stake if these changes are allowed to take place. Young women, queer, trans and students of colour spoke about the risks they face and how the 2015 curriculum made a real difference in their lives.

Assault and harassment are unfortunately a part of everyday life for so many. Systemic violence is embedded in capitalism and manifests itself in our communities through agencies of the state such as the police, immigration control, border security etc. We are seeing the rise of anti-Black racism and Islamophobia. Far-right groups are showing themselves more and more in our public spaces and attacks on communities of colour and LGBTQ people are on the rise.

Organising together to fight for the change is the task that faces us all.

For further reading see: *Civil war in France—the Paris Commune* by Karl Marx

The Revolutionary Ideas of Karl Marx by Alex Callinicos

Available at: bookmarksbookshop.co.uk

This article was originally published in Socialist Worker UK

change.

The sex ed curriculum that the Tories are trying to roll back took on many of these issues in an attempt to educate, and create safe spaces so that students can grow and develop in a supportive and secure environment. Bigotry unfortunately is being fueled by governments and right-wing movements everywhere.

We have seen this in Trump’s America and Doug Ford’s pandering to the homophobia and misogyny of the evangelical backers who helped him win the leadership of the Conservative Party is aiding and abetting this as well. They have announced a bare bones consultation process and are urging parents to report teachers who are “jeopardizing their children’s education by deliberately ignoring Ontario’s curriculum”.

This is an outright attack on teachers in an attempt to reinforce conservative values. Far-right candidates are also running for mayor in cities such as Toronto and Hamilton emboldened by these policies. They want to create a world that reinforces the exploitation and oppressions that so many of us have spent our lives fighting.

But the campaign is growing. Faith groups such as the United Church are mobilizing across Ontario. Over one hundred organizations have signed on to a province-wide network. The HIV Aids Legal Clinic and Justice for Children and Youth are filing a human rights complaint. Mobilization kits have been developed, and students are planning school walkouts to protest this attack, as well as a provincial day of teach-ins working in conjunction with the unions. This will bring the strength of the organized labour movement to this struggle.

The Ford Tories are attacking fast and furiously on a whole range of issues. It is critical that the campaign around the sex ed curriculum link with other movements such as the Fight for \$15 and Fairness so that there is an integrated fightback that takes on this right-wing government hell bent on turning back all the gains that we have made.

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.

Gatineau nurses fight austerity

by Chantal Sundaram

On August 4, when a nurse at the Gatineau Hospital in Hull was told she needed to stay after a 12-hour shift to work mandatory overtime – and responded she was too exhausted – eight of her coworkers held a two-hour on-the-job protest in solidarity.

They stayed to work with her, demanding that the hospital pay two hours of overtime to all of them. They called it "travailler ensemble" ("working together") or a "sit-in": a job action that would not have an impact on patient care. Their message: "management has taken us hostage."

After a meeting with the union, which backed them, all nine nurses were sent home, and in the end no one did mandatory overtime. "It's not up to them to make up the shortage," said their rep.

Before the protest, a union petition had already been circulating amongst nurses in the Outaouais region, of which Hull is the major centre, for better working conditions, particularly short-staffing. But this was also the second time hospital employees in the region had taken direct action against the impacts of underfunding.

Regional inequity

Last February, Hull attendants, maintenance workers, and food service staff sat down in hallways to protest the extra workload and hours required to make up for staff shortages. Their union, the Syndicat des travailleuses et des travailleurs de la santé et des services sociaux de l'Outaouais (STSSSO-CSN), represents about 4,200 health and social services workers in the Outaouais, but their action in February was part of Quebec-wide sit-ins to protest burnout of overworked healthcare staff.

Still, there is no denying that the Outaouais region has it particularly hard: it gets \$250 million a year less in funding than other Quebec regions.

Last spring Outaouais nurses produced a "Black Book" detailing the impacts of regional underfunding. In August the coalition "Équité Outaouais"



Quebec nurses take on inequality

released the results of a study it commissioned from IRIS, a progressive Quebec think tank, which painted a dismal picture not only of healthcare but also of funding for education and social justice. The region represents 4.7% of the population but 3.5% of healthcare funding, which means \$1,938 per resident versus the Quebec average of \$2,569.

Just to be equal per capita to other already underfunded regions, the Outaouais would need 202 more specialist doctors and 1050 more nurses. The system lacks 185 short-term beds – the equivalent of a hospital – and 466 long-term beds, forcing tens of thousands to seek care across the nearby border with Ontario.

After the IRIS report came out, Liberal Health Minister Gaetan Barrette announced \$300 million for interregional equity in healthcare. However, the share of this for the Outaouais is only 16 million – well short of the missing annual 250 million.

Election and job action

Healthcare is the number one issue on voters' minds in the region and in many parts of Quebec. With an election coming up on October 1 the Liberals are scrambling to appear responsive to healthcare job actions. So have the opposition candidates of the CAQ and PQ.

But the only party in the race that

has had a consistent position for a massive reinvestment in healthcare in both its election platform and party programme is Québec solidaire (QS). Since February QS has been reaching out to healthcare workers to build a movement that can push back against the pressure on staff to make up the shortfall.

While the election will give voice to the anger over underfunding and regional inequity, there is a danger the right-wing CAQ's campaign against the Liberals failure will capture that sentiment, even though it does not propose the solution that's needed. That solution lies not only in regional equity, but in prioritizing Quebec's public healthcare network of hospitals, community clinics and health centres, which was a model before it was starved of funds.

This is what motivated specialist doctors across Quebec to refuse their salary increase last spring and demand that it be invested in nurses and other healthcare staff, and in funding the system – a demand which they made again the day before the Hull nurses' action.

This is why the fight for healthcare must be both at the ballot box and in the streets – and why it must continue in the hospital hallways where nurses and other healthcare workers are taking resistance into their own hands.



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

Solidarity With IATSE Workers

by Pam Johnson

On July 19, the Board of Governors of Exhibition Place locked out members of stagehands and stage technician's union, IASTE 58, rather than bargain in good faith. These workers do all of the stage and technical work at Exhibition Place venues.

Although negotiations have been going on for months, nothing meaningful has been accomplished at the bargaining table. A 12-hour attempt to resume bargaining on Aug 24 ended when City lawyers refused to take language about contracting out work to non-union labour off the table. IATSE negotiators accuse the City of refusing to bargain in good faith.

The real agenda, spearheaded by Mayor John Tory, who appoints the members of the Exhibition Place board, is to drive the union out and replace the workers with non-unionized workers at a lower wage. Driving out unionized workers at the Ex also benefits other corporate interests, especially Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment, who use venues at the Ex for sporting events and concerts.

The Ex brought in scabs right away to do IATSE work. Scabs are being paid \$16/hour, but the agency hiring them is charging the Ex \$38/hour, which is more than IATSE members make. So there can be no claim to saving money.

On the first day of the lock out picketers observed scabs unloading equipment in flip flops.



So it is clear, too, that Tory and the Ex board have no concern for workers' safety or the safety of the public. It was lack of proper inspection by a non-union crew that caused the collapse of the stage at the Radiohead concert in 2012 killing a stagehand.

Toronto is a Union Town

Picket line solidarity at the Canadian National Exhibition are having an effect. Revenue is down from previous years and a letter to City Council warns of losses in the millions of dollars. And shows and acts—like the Just For Laughs Festival and Classic Albums Live—are canceling CNE venues rather than cross picket lines.

Stagehands and technicians work on-call shifts at all hours. They are highly skilled at rigging heavy equipment, working with high voltage electricity and they must know the in and outs of the different venues at the Ex. As Local president Justin Antheunis said, "Our skilled members have helped make the events at Exhibition Place successful and safe for nearly a century".

Exhibition Place asked Local 58 to suspend picketing until after the CNE closes. But as Antheunis says, "That's not going to happen, we are not going to surrender our rights under the law and jeopardize the safety of Torontonians and other visitors to Exhibition Place as a favour to Tory's friends. Nor will we put visitors at risk. We will not be pushed around."

Show your support

- 1) Respect the picket line. Don't attend events at the Exhibition Place.
- 2) Tell John Tory to end the lock out and get back to the table. His phone:416-397-2489 or mayor-tory@toronto.ca
- 3) Visit the picket line!

REVIEWS

Poisoned people fight for clean water and environmental justice

by Valerie Lannon

The Poisoned City by Anna Clark emphasizes the Flint water crisis of 2015 has its history in racism and economic crises. Being segregated into crowded, polluted neighbourhoods helped fuel the anger that exploded in the uprisings by blacks in 1967.

Today 57% of the population is black and the locations of black neighbourhoods made them most vulnerable to the water crisis.

Resistance to racism happened alongside worker resistance to Flint's auto bosses. The best-known example is the lengthy 1936-37 workers' sit-down strike. 2,000 workers won their demands and strengthened the United Automobile Workers.

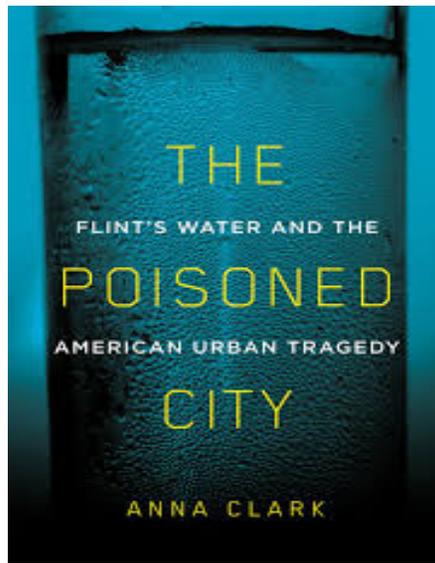
So much, so wrong

Flint was part of the deindustrialization that accelerated after the year 2000. Lower revenues to the city led to deficits, so the state enforced non-elected "Emergency management".

As a cost-saving measure the Emergency Manager switched the source of Flint's water from the Detroit system to a yet-to-be-built system, in the meantime using Flint River water. But Flint's treatment plant failed to use corrosion control.

Immediate complaints included skin rash, hair falling out and compromised immune systems. Most concerns came from the black neighbourhoods because the water had to travel farther to reach them, increasing exposure to the lead in the pipes. Soon, the first of several boil-advisory notices was made. Lead poisoning was identified as the culprit.

Meanwhile GM said the water was corroding engine parts, so the company switched back to Detroit water. As one UAW member



asked, "If it's too corrosive for an engine, what's it doing to the inside of a person?"

Legionnaire's disease killed 12 people and affected dozens more. Up to 12,000 children were exposed to lead and it will be years before we know the full impact.

Because the pipes have not been fully replaced (and may not be until 2020) residents continue to use bottled or filtered water.

Accountable to whom?

The examples of government irresponsibility include the cost-cutting decisions of the Emergency Manager, the failures to act and false statements by the state Department of Environmental Quality, and the Centre for Disease Control's contesting early lead readings.

By October 2015 the governor reconnect-

ed Flint to Detroit water. By December the Mayor declared a State of Emergency, and a state task force blamed the Department of Environmental Quality as mainly responsible for the catastrophe.

Community struggle

As soon as the ill effects of the water became evident, residents began organizing. They attracted allies like scientists and public health experts trained citizens to test the water. They showed that earlier city tests were improperly conducted and that there was widespread lead contamination. As a result of a class action lawsuit the state must pay \$87 million to replace water lines, at no cost to homeowners. Clark quotes one resident: "Flint proved that even while poisoned...we are not just victims. We are fighters."

In Canada we are familiar with the numerous boil-water advisories in First Nations. And we saw the Walkerton crisis of 2000. Seven people died and more than 2,300 became ill after a deadly strain of E.coli polluted the drinking water.

Much of the blame for tragedy rested with lack of enforcement and monitoring by the Ministry of the Environment. This was a result of cuts made by the Tory government of Mike Harris. Today's Ontario premier Doug Ford promises millions in cuts to ensure "efficiencies"; could another Walkerton be too far away?

We need to take on conservatives who are hell-bent on "finding efficiencies" and ignoring the ravages of global warming, which make clean water an increasingly rare resource.

This article was adapted from an earlier publication in climateandcapitalism.com

Blueprint by Alice Bag: Glam-punk Riot grrrl dance party

by D'Arcy Briggs

Alice Bag has been an active performer and frontwoman in punk bands since the late 1970's when she formed Los Angeles', The Bags. She is also a feminist archivist, author, and an educator. 2018 marks the release of her 2nd solo-release, Blueprint.

The album features a band comprised of industry vets such as Eva Gardner (Mars Volta, Moby) and Danny McGough (Social Distortion). The album also features more than a few guest vocalists, including Kathleen Hanna (Bikini Kill) and Martin Sorrondeguy (Los Crudos, Limp Wrist).

The album jumps around musically many times within the punk genre, but seems to be most firmly rooted in Bag's glamrock-inspired vocals. Some tracks are certainly along the lines of standard melodic punk, while others might be more at home on a power-pop record. Still, Bag's unique voice and lyrical penchant keeps it all recognizable and cohesive.

The album itself is inspired by the ideas of blueprints themselves: how a plan can be laid out perfectly, only to find a problem and have to switch gears. A blueprint, for Bag, is something that is set as a guide, but must be open to



change. "We're all constantly building structures of many different kinds," says Bag. "So, it's up to us keep things on track and moving in the direction we want to see them go. Otherwise, we end up with an idiot in charge."

The lyrics are where this album really shines. From personal battles to political struggles, the album covers a myriad of topics over its relatively short runtime.

The track "77" musically pays tribute to the punk sounds of the period, but lyrically address the wage gap faced by women and other marginalized groups.

One verse belts "I make 77 cents and it's not right / It's bad for women / And worse if you're not white / You're head of household? So am I / It's not just about me - I need to provide!" The track "White Justice" addresses contemporary racist populism with the struggles of the pro-Chicano Brown Berets organization during the 1970's. The song presents a narrative of rally and counter-rally, opening with "Blue skies, brown berets / This march feels like a parade / My neighbor and her children came / No one could stay away. / Rest on a green lawn / Agua fresca, yellow corn / Oh no, stormtroopers in uniforms / Are swinging their batons."

The rest of the album focuses on introspective matters of mental anguish, resilience, and change.

Blueprint is an incredibly focused album thematically. It's lyrics are just as haunting and beautiful as they are poignant. It addresses many issues faced by those fighting for social change today, both in terms of political and personal struggles. It offers support in the struggle just as much as it offers solidarity in sadness - that's quite a lot for such a short album. For those who are looking for a glam-punk Riot grrrl dance party in 2018, I can't think of a better album than Blueprint.

Ten reasons to volunteer for Jean Swanson's campaign

by Darlene Bertholet and Lisa Descary

In Vancouver this Fall, there is an inspiring campaign happening. A group of activists are taking a page from Bernie Sanders and Kshama Sawant, and are running on a platform of ambitious reforms that would make life more affordable for working people. This platform is called 'The City We Need.' We think you should sign up to volunteer with the campaign. Here are ten reasons why.

1. The City We Need platform includes a four-year rent freeze, as well as other reforms.

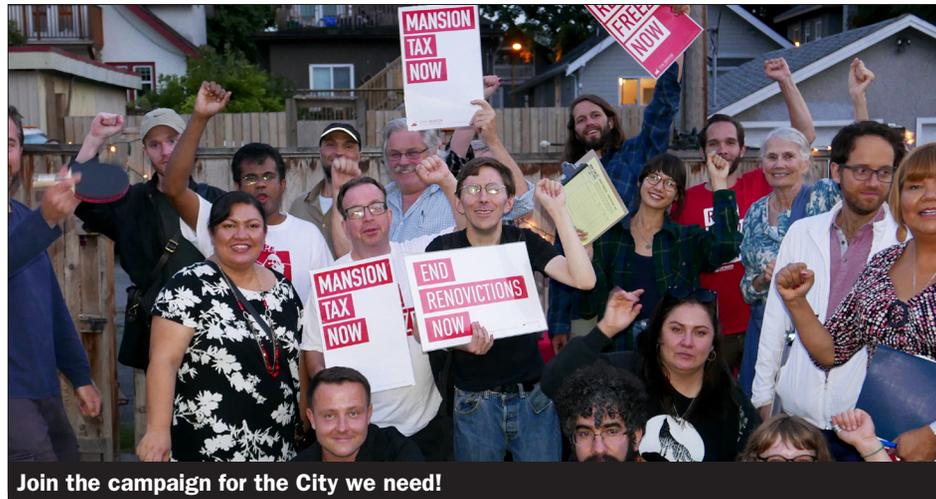
Vancouver rents are sky-high, which when combined with low wages makes our city the most unaffordable in North America. So a four-year rent freeze just makes sense; it would be a helpful stop-gap measure while council works on more long-term solutions, like building affordable housing.

2. The COPE candidates are activists, not politicians.

Jean Swanson, Derrick O'Keefe and Anne Roberts are inspiring activists involved in the social movements for affordable housing. (Jean was even given the Order of Canada because of her anti-poverty advocacy.) Elected politicians feel pressure to compromise to appease business interests, but in the case of the COPE candidates, their social movement base can counter that pressure.

3. You'll Meet Some Famous Badass Activists!

The campaign includes some great community organizers from all over the lower mainland.



Join the campaign for the City we need!

For example, Wendy Pederson is well known in the Downtown Eastside for starting the SRO Collective and the Vancouver Tenants Union.

4. This election is an opportunity, since many incumbents are stepping down

Many people think that the ruling Vision Vancouver city councilors aren't running for re-election because they know there is widespread anger at them for failing to solve the housing crisis. With so many of the old guard stepping aside, there is an opportunity for the City We Need candidates to make a breakthrough.

5. If the centre and right-wing parties are unopposed, they will do even more damage

The NPA candidates want to rezone the city to make it even easier for their developer friends to tear down rental units and replace them with high-priced condos that will just sit empty. The best way to oppose the NPA is not to vote for centrists like Vision, who have done little to stop rezoning, but to elect COPE candidates who are willing to take on the one percenters.

6. Gain practical experience talking to people about working-class issues

Socialists argue that it is important to test our ideas by discussing them with working people. There we hear the counter-arguments, and learn how to defend against them when engaging with folks signing our petition.

7. Jean Swanson understands what solidarity looks like

Because this campaign focusses on both climate and social issues, it has begun to bring together activists from these different areas. (We saw this in the court support rallies for Jean.) This is a great opportunity to build bridges between activist silos and make the argument that these really are the 'same struggle; same fight'.

8. These folks are artistic

This group of activists is creative, committed and makes the campaign fun. Join us, and you can wear original designs, like the hand-sewn rainbow capes with 'Renters' Power' stenciled on them that volunteers wore to march in the Pride Parade!

9. The volunteers are great people

The folks in the campaign will make you feel right at home.

10. This is how real change happens- in an ongoing, grassroots movement

"Elect me, and I'll fix it for you" is the mantra of so many politicians, even on the left. But socialists and activists know that it is the pressure from the movement that forces governments to make positive change.

Be part of this movement, and help us fight for the City We Need!

To volunteer, go to <http://cityweneed.votecope2018.ca/events>

The bosses lie Ontario wants \$15 and Fairness

by Peter Hogarth

The Fight for \$15 and Fairness has worked hard to mobilize working class people across Ontario to fight for decent work. Along the way, those active in the campaign have had to fight against claims that \$15 would never happen, that their demands were too pie in the sky (or not revolutionary enough), that the minimum wage was outside the scope of the Changing Workplaces Review, or that union members needed their own separate campaign to mobilize their members. Through determined organizing and province-wide mobilizations that a beleaguered Liberal Party could not ignore, the campaign won significant changes to Ontario's labour laws and a \$15 minimum wage in Bill 148.

Since the passing of Bill 148 \$15 and Fairness activists have had to do hand-to-hand combat to defend their victory from aggressive mobilization by the capitalist class in Ontario and their spokespeople. The Toronto Sun, the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and even critics in the Conservative, Liberal and NDP parties have cast doubt and sown fear in the decent work changes.

The business community predicted massive

job losses. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario, TD Bank and the Fraser Institute, all claimed that raising the minimum wage would be a disaster for the Ontario economy, predicting between 50,000 and 185,000 lost jobs. As David Bush reported at RankandFile.ca: "the business lobby's grim job loss predictions have been demolished by reality. Over the last 12 months Ontario has added over 182,000 jobs, accounting for some 74 percent of all job growth in the country during that same pe-



riod. Since February, a month after the minimum wage increased by over 20 percent, over 130,000 jobs have been added. The unemployment rate has hit an 18-year low." To no one's surprise, these facts have not been dominating headlines like the round-the-clock fear mongering featured prominently in so many media outlets.

One of the big areas where this will be the case is the equal pay changes to the Employment Standard Act under Bill 148. As of April 1, 2018, employers are required to offer the same

rate of pay to: "part-time, contract, casual, temporary and seasonal employees who are doing substantially the same work in the workplaces as their full-time/permanent counterparts [and] Temporary agency workers who are doing the substantially the same work, in the same workplaces as directly-hired employees of the client company." This will have huge effect from temp workers in warehouses to faculty on college and university campuses and is likely to be a key battleground.

Despite the all-out assault by the capitalist class, 66 percent of Canadians support a \$15 minimum wage. To defend and expand the gains made in Bill 148 the Fight for \$15 and Fairness campaign will have to stick with the methods that achieved substantial gains in the first place: organize; getting out into street corners, workplace lunchrooms, campuses, places of worship, door-knocking, phone banking, organizing community members to visit MPP offices and fighting tooth and nail for positive media coverage.

Countering the bosses' lies requires us to keep the pressure up and use every available avenue to organize and mobilize workers. Our job is to turn the passive support for a \$15 minimum wage and decent work into the broadest and most active working class movement possible.