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MAKE 2015 THE YEAR WE

STOP HARPER'S AGENDA

AUSTERITY
BANK BAILOUTS
CHILDCARE DENIED
DEMOCRACY ERODED
E.I. CUTS
FIGHTER JETS
G20 ABUSE
HISTORY REWRITTEN
INDIGENOUS WOMEN IGNORED
JAIL EXPANSION
KYOTO ABANDONED
LGBT OPPRESSION
MEDICARE CUTS
NATO WARS
OLD AGE SECURITY CUTS
PALESTINE ATTACKED
QUEBEC BASHING
REFUGEES ATTACKED
SPYING
TAR SANDS
UNIONS ATTACKED
VETERAN PENSIONS CUT
WAR RESISTERS DEPORTED

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Facts & figures

0
Number of doctors who now stand in the way of reproductive choice in New Brunswick

15
Maximum number of days for solitary confinement before it becomes a form of torture, according to the UN

35
Average number of days male prisoners spend in solitary confinement in Canada

43
Number of students who disappeared in Mexico, likely to mass graves, triggering mass protests

56
Number of actions outside Ontario beer stores to support striking workers

\$60
Current price of oil

\$95
Price oil need to be for the tar sands to be profitable

850
Number of people in solitary confinement in Canadian prisons on any given day

1,000
Number of days Ashley Smith was in solitary confinement before killing herself

2,500
Number of Canadian corporations in Mexico

26,000
Number of pledges supporting First Nations opposition to Enbridge pipeline

40,000
Number of Egyptian political prisoners since the counter-revolution of 2013

In their own words

“Canada and Mexico share a special relationship as friends, allies and strategic partners in a broad range of areas.”
Stephen Harper

“There will not be a mass grave big enough to shut us all up.”
Protest slogan in Mexico after discovery of more mass graves

“It’s an abomination. It’s an embarrassment”
Coralee Smith, mother of Ashely Smith who killed herself after 1,000 days in solitary confinement, reacting to the government’s report defending the use of solitary confinement

“In light of everything we know about segregation, the government may want to think about including it in its list of ‘barbaric cultural practices’ that it seems to be so concerned about.”
retired Supreme Court justice Luoise Arbour

“Cataclysmic”
Impact of climate change if we don’t drastically reduce carbon emissions, according to IPCC



Support US Iraq War resisters

by ALAN WOOD

With a federal election looming as early as next spring, Stephen Harper’s Conservatives have stepped up their drive to force the remaining US Iraq War resisters out of Canada.

Since September, seven US war resisters have received negative decisions in their cases. Two veterans were given removal dates (i.e., dates by which they must leave the country). One resister received a stay of removal and the govern-

ment rescinded the second removal order at the last minute. These reprieves are extremely good news, but war resisters and their loved ones continue to feel stress and uncertainty.

The timing of these initial negative decisions was odd. After no movement on any cases for over a year, seven cases—allegedly independent of one another—were suddenly announced as Harper was trying to increase Canadian support for the US’s latest attack on the people of Iraq.

As the resisters continue

their fight, they know that a majority of Canadians are on their side. Nearly two-thirds of Canadians support allowing US Iraq War resisters to remain in Canada. However, the Harper government continues to ignore both the will of the people and the will of Parliament, which has twice passed resolutions calling on Harper to allow war resisters to stay in the country.

The War Resisters Support Campaign, which has been working to win a provision for US war resisters to be able to stay

in Canada, received some good news in October. Federal NDP leader Thomas Mulcair reiterated his strong support for such a provision, highlighting the motions which the NDP caucus unanimously supported in the past.

One way Harper’s Conservatives want to silence anti-war voices is by driving US conscientious objectors out of Canada. In the months ahead, we must resist the pro-war rhetoric and build a movement to stop the deportations and to let war resisters stay.

The fight for civil liberties

by CHANTAL SUNDARAM

The “Arar + Ten” conference in Ottawa examined ongoing attacks on civil liberties a decade after Maher Arar.

Maher Arar has resided in Canada since 1987. He was detained during a US layover in September 2002 on his way home to Canada from a family vacation in Tunisia. The US suspected him of being a member of Al Qaeda and deported him to Syria, where he was detained and tortured for almost a year. A Canadian commission publicly cleared Arar of any links to terrorism, and the government of Canada settled out of court with Arar for \$10.5 million.

But despite the publicity and outrage at the time of the Arar Inquiry in 2006, and the Iacobucci report of 2008 into the misconduct of Canadian officials in the treatment of three other Canadian Muslims, there has been a concerted

campaign to bury Canadian complicity in deportation to torture over the last decade.

Ongoing attacks

The Inquiry report noted that although the RCMP has a policy of bias-free policing, many of the intervenors raised concerns about racial profiling. A number of the recommendations targeted ethnic or religious profiling.

But since then the Canadian state has continued to demonize and scapegoat Muslims in the interests of prosecuting war in the Middle East. There have been innumerable attempts to target Canadians or Canadian residents of Muslim origin—some resulting in deportation, some in plea bargains, and so many others in ongoing surveillance, intimidation and harassment.

The Tories’ electioneering with the “anti-Barbarism”

bill, and their posturing around the Ottawa shooting death of Corporal Cirillo, holds very little weight against their own track record on women’s rights, and the statement by Corporal Cirillo’s widow that the issue should focus on accessible mental health.

From Security Certificates and the injustice they have done to the Secret Trial Five, to the recent extradition of Hassan Diab, the outrage to civil liberties continues. As Omar Khadr, kidnapped by the US and tortured at Guantanamo, wrote from his Canadian jail cell, “I was mired in a nightmare of injustice, insidiously linked to national security. I have not yet escaped from that nightmare.”

Resistance

But community protest can make a difference. In 2009, Abousifian Abdelrazik, a

Sudanese-born Canadian who was smeared and subsequently cleared of terror charges, received the support of hundreds of people in his attempt to return home to Canada.

In the words of lawyer Khalid Elgazzar: “In tandem with legal strategy, civil society can play a pivotal role, and the case of Abdelrazik is a prime example of that. An activist campaign that started in Montreal got people to donate (at risk of prosecution) towards a ticket to fulfill the requirement for reentry to Canada. It is not just about legal strategy with these types of cases: the Canadian public shouldn’t write themselves off.”

When courts make bad decisions, political pressure is the only thing that can work to safeguard civil liberties and social justice.

To support Diab visit www.justiceforhassandiab.org/donate

Stop healthcare privatization

by CATHERINE GENDRON

The Ontario Provincial Government is furthering its attack on community hospitals by cutting and privatizing their services.

Physiotherapy, lab tests, pain and fertility clinics are all but disappearing in our hospital’s public services. This means our communities’ most vulnerable members are subject to less accessible, more expensive and poorer quality care.

Overcrowding, wait times and safety concerns are huge concerns for our community hospitals, resulting in an issue of “warehousing”

chronic pain patients, rather than focusing on rehabilitation. We see Northern communities having to travel hours to receive basic care treatments. These problems are rooted in understaffing, unaffordable/overcrowded long-term care facilities, and a lack of funding and restructuring.

What is the government doing about this? For the fifth consecutive year, Ontario had increased its funding to community hospitals at a rate that is less than the rate of inflation, and for the last three years this rate has been frozen at

a 0 per cent increase. This translates into cuts: 18,500 hospital beds have been removed, and hospital staff are witnessing management offices go in their place. Kathleen Wynne’s so-called “progressive budget” continues this austerity. We may see cuts as high as 50 per cent in acute care beds, maternity and local services, with many people having no where else to turn to.

How does this affect our community hospitals? Welland, a town of 51,000 residents, is faced with the closure of their local hospital. Natalie Mehra, execu-

tive director of the Ontario Health Coalition, warns that the Ontario government is taking on “the most aggressive attack on public health care services that I’ve seen.”

Yet there is hope. Just a few years ago, there were threats to close down several small town local hospitals, but the people fought back. More than 4,000 people protested at Queen’s Park and stopped the plans for closures. We can do it again.

Thousands rallied at Queen’s Park on November 21, the first major healthcare rally against Kathleen Wynne.

Partial victory against NB anti-choice laws

by MAUREEN ASLIN

Reproductive justice is one step closer for the people of New Brunswick. Premier Brian Gallant repealed Regulation 84-20, which required that women seeking abortions get two doctors to certify that it is “medically necessary” and that the procedure be done by a specialist in a hospital. The change will be effective January 1, 2015.

Disappointingly the province still falls short in providing adequate access to abortion, by continuing to require the abortions be performed in hospitals rather than clinics.

“In failing to apply reproductive health best practices by refusing to fund services outside of hospitals, New Brunswick continues to be in violation of the Canada Health Act. In addition, clinics are the most fiscally responsible model for a province with limited resources like New Brunswick,” says Jessi Taylor, spokesperson for Reproductive Justice New Brunswick.

In Ontario about 6,000 abortions a year are performed in doctor’s offices.

RJNB along with other activists in the province and across Canada were critical in keeping pressure on the new government of Gallant to drop the regulation.

There were emergency rallies and a reproductive justice day of action across the country in the lead up to the election, and since then RJNB was running a “days of inaction” countdown on social media—tracking the number of days since Gallant took office and had not acted for improved abortion access.

Regulation 84-20 arose out of a backlash to the 1988 Morgentaler decision. For over 20 years the province refused to pay for abortions at the Morgentaler Fredericton clinic, despite being mandated to do so by the Canada Health Act.

The backlog of nonpayment put the clinic out of business in July of this year. So far RJNB has crowdfunded over \$131,000 to re-open the Fredericton clinic as a women’s health centre.

Over the past four months, with Regulation 84-20 still in place, women in New Brunswick seeking abortions have been forced to travel to a clinic in Bangor, Maine.

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NAFTA's gangster capitalism

by CRAIG FRAYNE

The false image of Mexico as a neoliberal success has been shattered. Mass protests against the mass murder of students have exposed NAFTA's legacy of poverty and violence.

Leading up to the recent disappearance and probable slaying of students in Mexico, much of the press was presenting President Enrique Peña Nieto as Mexico's neoliberal savior, praised for implementing more market reforms and privatization of the energy sector. Time Magazine even featured him on its cover with the headline "Saving Mexico," drawing outrage from Mexicans who live a very different reality.

Kidnapping and protests

On the night of September 26, police intercepted a bus of students from the Ayotzinapa teachers' college and opened fire, killing two students and injuring 17. During the attack, the police loaded 43 students into trucks and handed them over to the Guerreros Unidos ("United Warriors") gang. The students have not been found, and rather than assuming they are alive, investigators have been looking in mass graves.

These students recently began studies at the Escuela Normal Rural, where they were preparing to be teachers. Escuela Normal Rural has a long history of popular education, established in the 1920s following the Mexican Revolution and rooted in social and popular

resistance movements.

The 43 missing students are among tens of thousands of mostly young people murdered and disappeared in recent years in Mexico.

Months after the disappearance of 43 students in Ayotzinapa, Mexico, protests continue to rage across Mexico and draw international solidarity—with slogans ranging from "Ya me cansé" ("I've Had Enough" or "I'm Tired") to "Fuera Peña" ("Peña must go). This has provoked a crisis of legitimacy for the Mexican state, and exposed the legacy of NAFTA.

NAFTA legacy: gangster capitalism

Twenty years ago Bill Clinton proclaimed at the signing of NAFTA that "an economic order that will promote more growth, more equality, better preservation of the environment, and a greater possibility of world peace."

Even in capitalist terms NAFTA has failed to produce growth: out of the 20 Latin American countries, Mexico ranks 18th in GDP growth since 1994, with average annual growth less than 1 per cent. The official poverty rate in Mexico has remained at just over 50 per cent, but the real rate is likely much higher, since GDP and other common indicators are not a measure of health and well-being.

NAFTA has also increased inequality—creating new billionaires and artificially high prices for basic commodities like food staples—and destroyed environmental regulation.

Agro-industrial imports have forced millions of Mexican farmers off the land, migrating to work in factories or fleeing across the border. Low wages and insecure work have forced many into poverty and the unofficial drug economy.

The result is a kind of uneven anti-development: speculative criminal economies rather than a stable agriculture or industrial base. By some estimates, 500,000 people are employed directly or indirectly in the Mexican drug trade, a \$25 billion a year business.

Enormous profits backed by heavily armed cartels created state entrenched narcopower. The newspaper *La Jornada* estimates 62 per cent of municipal, ministerial, and federal agents are linked to cartels.

US/Canadian gangsters

Far from being a Mexican problem, the biggest criminals are north of the Mexican border. Under the "war on drugs" the US has transferred billions in training and equipment to the Mexican police and military. This military assistance has not been used to fight drug cartels as it is claimed, but to arm the police against social movements that pose a threat to corporate power.

Canada, meanwhile, has pursued taxpayer funded police training programs with the Mexican narco-state, while cutting development assistance related to human rights and poverty alleviation. Over 2,500 Canadian companies operate in Mexico, from the garment industry to mining.

the conservatives have no qualms about using information gained by torture. This is despite mountains of evidence that information gathered by torture is thoroughly unreliable. When someone is being tortured, they will tell you anything you want to hear. It often leads intelligence agencies on wild goose chases which can result in erroneous suspicion and further violations of civil liberties for those accused.

But again, the conservatives have little problem with violations of civil liberties. In fact, they continue to support the use of solitary confinement in Canadian prisons despite the fact that it has been labeled as torture by the United Nations.

Of course, they don't call it

Due to its drive to mine and extract resources on Indigenous land, the Canadian government refuses to investigate more than a thousand missing and murdered Indigenous women within its own borders—and its no surprise the Canadian government is ignoring the deaths and disappearances of people in Mexico, dying while Canadian corporations profit.

Resistance and solidarity

The mass protests in Mexico are linked to alternate modes of development that communities are fighting for—including food sovereignty, ecological protection, and communal land rights. Many among Mexico's poor, Indigenous, and working classes are searching for alternatives, from autonomous regions to vigilante self defense groups. Students from the Escuela Normal have called on people to participate in protests. Solidarity rallies have also been held in numerous US cities.

Social movements in Mexico have a long history—from the revolution in 1910, the student movement in the 1960s, the Zapatista uprising in the 1990s, and the mass protests in 2006. But unless such actions force systemic change and confront transnational capital, violence and injustice will continue.

torture but refer to the practice as "administrative segregation".

Either way, at any given time there are 850 people in solitary in Canadian prisons. Most are kept in isolation for much longer than the UN convention which considers any detainment of more than 2 week to be torture.

Torture doesn't make us safe. It is used to strike fear into opponents. Given that this Harper government sees Canadians who oppose his agenda as opponents, we must demand accountability for any brutality used against detainees everywhere from "black sites" to Abu Ghraib to Canadian prisons.

Organizing in counter-revolutionary Egypt

A leading member of the Egyptian Revolutionary Socialists spoke to Judith Orr about the impact of the counter revolution—and the prospects for new struggles.

How do you see the current situation in Egypt?

We're facing a successful counter revolution, driven by the most repressive and violent regime in Egypt's modern history.

General el-Sisi's regime is far worse than anything the toppled dictator Hosni Mubarak was capable of. He's attacking all opposition, including the left and workers' movement.

Since the July 2013 coup 40,000 political prisoners have been jailed, over 3,000 have been killed on the streets and hundreds have "disappeared".

El-Sisi now has the full support of the West and Egyptian capitalists. However, the present situation is only sustainable in the medium term.

The brutality of the counter-revolution began against the Muslim Brotherhood. What wider impact has that had?

The regime claims that it's only acting against the Muslim Brotherhood, but in reality it's taking revenge on the Egyptian Revolution.

Its massacre on 14 August 2013 symbolised the level of repression. The regime murdered more than 1,000 protestors in several hours – that's a scale never seen before in Egypt.

Yet for two reasons all this should make us realistic, but not pessimistic. The workers' movement has been weakened by events and its leaders' betrayals, but it's not been destroyed.

Also the hundreds of thousands of young people who participated in the revolution didn't just experience its liberation.

They learned how to fight the police and how to organise – and be successful. This experience will not just evaporate.

What is the connection between the entrenchment of the counter revolution and the rise of the Islamic State?

The rapid growth of ISIS is partly a consequence of the disastrous US occupation of Iraq, but there's also a direct link with the failure of the Arab revolution.

The defeats created the conditions for a movement based on desperation to grow, with Arabs from across the region joining up.

This is rooted in a sense of frustration created by the counter revolution and the loss of the space they had won to express their discontent.

How do revolutionary socialists relate to this situation?

It's very difficult – especially for younger members who joined through the revolution. It's hard for them to think in the long term.

We face a long period of preparation for the next Egyptian revolution, which could take years. We need to rebuild and reorganise, and emphasise political education.

This is republished from Socialist Worker (UK)

CIA torture and Canadian complicity

The CIA torture report gave us some definitive proof of what we already know, torture by the US in "black sites" all over the world, is widespread, brutal and provides absolutely nothing in the way of security or intelligence against attack.

Only 10 percent of the report was released suggesting that there is much more that we may never hear about. The Obama administration is working overtime to try and limit what is to be exposed. They also continue to fight against the release of more than 2000 photos from Abu Ghraib. (link: <http://www.wired.com/2014/12/war-us-governments-unreleased-torture-pictures/>)

Canadians are used to that lack of transparency. When Stephen Harper

prorogued Parliament in 2010 it was because the house speaker at the time had ordered the conservatives to release the Afghan detainee files which would have shown the government knew that Canadian forces in Afghanistan were sending people to torture.

In his testimony at the time, former Canadian diplomat in Afghanistan, Richard Colvin told the house of commons that torture in Afghan prisons was routine including the use of beatings, whipping, electric shock and rape. Again we have only seen a small portion of the more than 36,000 documents related to the case.

But we do know that the government of Canada, starting under the Liberals but now under

Black Friday protests and strikes

While Buy Nothing Day has traditionally been based on consumer politics that denounce shoppers, the Walmart strikes and Ferguson protests have added working class and anti-racist politics.

Buy Nothing Day coincided with “Black Friday,” the day after Thanksgiving in the United States. There are typically media reports of huge scums in department stores and other retail outlets and scenes of people physically fighting with each other over bargains. Mainstream consumer politics feeds into this narrative by blaming shoppers for the state of the planet—like Adbusters ad from a few years ago showing North America as a pig, with the warning, “We are the most voracious consumers in the world.”

Overconsumption or overproduction?

But the response should not be to deride people for being so stupid or gluttonous as to fight over bargains. Working class people, people of colour and the poor are often the ones fighting over these bargains. Buy Nothing Day tends to focus on us as individuals, as consumers. This can be demobilizing for communities where the problem is not spending too much on frivolous things, but not having enough money to put food on the table or pay the rent. Blaming overconsumption also ignores the real root of the problem in capitalism: overproduction.

Profits don’t come from buying and selling, they come from exploiting the labour that produced the commodity in the first place. By paying workers less than the value they produce, capitalists extract profits that are realized when the commodity is sold. The competition between capitalists drives them to exploit workers and reinvest profits into greater means of production, giving the system a relentless drive to expand.

As Marx wrote in *Capital Vol. 1*, “Fanatically bent on making value expand itself, the capitalist ruthlessly forces the human race to produce for production’s sake.” The same competition that drives accumulation also prevents coordinating, leading to recurring crises. As Marx wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, capitalism “is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells... In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of overproduction.” We already consume less than capitalism produces—with economic crises to prove it—so demanding the 99% consume less will not alter capitalism’s drive to accumulate.

Last Black Friday was not an individual choice about buying or not buying the latest gimmicky invention of capitalist culture, but collective resistance—to a system that treats as throwaway and disposable not only the commodities we produce but also the producers of those commodities, workers ourselves. Walmart workers across the US went on strike demanding \$15 an hour, full-time hours and an end to the victimization of workers trying to unionize. The OUR Walmart campaign joined the Black Friday protests by encouraging people to call their local Walmart to support the strikers, and to donate to the strike fund. This collective response, by some of the most poorly paid workers in the US, is a means to push back against the root of capitalism—exploitation—and to inspire millions of others.

Hands up, don’t spend

This year the Black Friday protests also coincided with the protests against the grand jury decision not to charge police officer Darren Wilson in the killing of unarmed 18-year old Black youth Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Activists are encouraging Black consumers to boycott Black Friday using hashtags #NotOneDime, #BoycottBlackFriday, and slogans such as “No Justice, No Profit,” and “Hands up, don’t spend”. Protesters want to prove, in a language business will understand—the language of money—that injustice doesn’t come without consequences.

Blackout for Human Rights, founded by Ryan Coogler—director of the film *Fruitvale Station*, about the racist killing of Oscar Grant—is using Black Friday as the first event in a campaign: “We have witnessed enough. We mourn the loss of men like Oscar Grant, Eric Garner, Ezell Ford, John Crawford and Michael Brown, who met their deaths at the hands of police officers. We mourn the loss of life and the absence of justice for Trayvon Martin, Renisha McBride and Jordan Davis, killed by private citizens, in a climate where police action demonstrates this as acceptable. An affront to any citizen’s human rights threatens the liberty of all. So, we participate in one of the most time honored American traditions: dissent... Our First Action: To make Black Friday (November 28, 2014) a nationwide day of action and retail boycott. Blackout will be organizing grassroots events, nationwide, for people to come out and show their solidarity in the fight for equal human rights.”

Many of the Walmart workers are also Black or Latino. They are among the lowest-paid workers in the US. This Black Friday it seems it may be possible to unite the struggle for dignity at work and against racism and oppression. These two phenomenon are intricately linked under capitalism: the exploitation of labour and the oppression that people face both in the workplace and outside.



US midterm elections and the struggles ahead

by ALEX KERNER

The Republican Party won a decisive victory in the midterm elections on November 3, increasing its majority in the House of Representatives and winning control of the Senate. This follows years of disillusionment with Obama’s corporate agenda, but the elections also saw some votes for minimum wage and were followed by a delay on the Keystone XL pipelines—showing the impact of struggles and the way forward.

Many progressives interpreted the mid-term elections pessimistically. After all, the new configuration of power on Capitol Hill guarantees that the Obama Administration will not pursue any large legislative agenda in its last two years and likely means that it will cooperate with the Republicans on a series of austerity measures and cuts to social programs.

Obama’s record

While some blamed potential voters, especially young people for not showing up to the polls, the real blame lies with the Democrats. Disillusionment with the Obama presidency played a huge role in assuring massive defeat for the Democrats.

In 2008 Obama was carried to victory on a wave of enthusiasm for a very different political and economic agenda. Millions of new voters rallied to his campaign, which promised to end the war in Iraq and distance itself from the economic policies of not only the Bush regime but the Clinton administration of the 1990s.

Instead, we have seen the continuation of a similar agenda, expanding drone warfare and launching another war on Iraq. As journalist Amy

Goodman pointed out: “Hours after 400,000 people joined in the largest climate march in history, the United States began bombing Syria, starting yet another war... President Obama is again leading the way to war, while simultaneously failing to address our rapidly worsening climate. The world is beset with twin crises, inextricably linked: global warming and global warring. Solutions to both exist, but won’t be achieved by bombing.”

In terms of economics, Obama spent billions trying to save the banks deemed “too big to fail” and the auto industry. He took advice from the likes of Larry Summers and other Clinton Administration players, who helped create the lax regulatory climate that helped produce the housing market crisis. The result has been some new regulations, but nothing with the teeth required to stop the profit feeding frenzy that allowed for subprime mortgages and increased speculation in derivatives.

The one grand legislative accomplishment of the Obama years has been the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare). Its most positive attribute has been ending the odious practice of insurance companies denying health insurance to those with pre-existing conditions. But a single-payer system or even a public option were not on the table. Instead what resulted is a confusing and complex system where everyone is required to purchase health insurance through private providers. This is a huge boon for the insurance companies.

Movements

All this was the backdrop of the midterm electoral defeat for the Democrats. That said, however, it is

not the case that millions have now espoused Republican values and rejecting the idea of progressive policies. Events such as Occupied Wall Street and the \$15 Minimum Wage Campaign have greatly changed the landscape of political discourse in the United States. Even in these midterms, with notoriously low turnout, four notoriously Republican States (Alaska, Arkansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota) passed propositions requiring an increase to minimum wage. There was also the signal that political alternatives to the Democrat-Republican dichotomy are welcome. In New York, the gubernatorial campaign of labour activists Howie Hawkins and Brian Jones only received about 5 per cent of the vote but managed to gain significant enthusiasm at those tired of the pro-business policies of Democrat governor Andrew Cuomo.

The victory of socialist city councillor Kshama Sawant in Seattle in 2013 and the minimum wage campaign that she was leading has motivated similar initiatives across the country. Furthermore, the fight for a living wage is now inspiring the rise of strikes across the fast food and retail industries, areas of the economy that unions have had little success in organizing. The climate justice movement pushed Democratic senators to delay approving the Keystone XL pipeline and will need to push the new senate even harder.

The key for change is never in election outcomes but the fight on the ground. This is especially the case in the US, with two huge parties dominated by money owning the system. But there are outbreaks of struggle around a number of issues, and it’s building these struggles that is the key.

Brazil: austerity, elections and resistance

by GUSTAVO CARLOS

The Worker’s Party (PT) was re-elected in Brazil despite increasing disillusionment. Brazil is pursuing capitalist development at all costs, but it is sparking resistance.

The past couple of years have seen mass protests against austerity in Brazil. A local movement in Sao Paulo that was mobilizing people to fight against the public transportation fare increase escalated quickly to a nationwide movement. The government and private sector have worked to attract big events to Brazil like the World Cup, spending billions on stadiums while millions are living in poverty—resulting in a massive wave of protest against government priorities and the police brutality that enforces them.

President Rousseff didn’t open space for a negotiation with the social movements nor defend the protesters over the police brutality, demonstrating how far from a leftist government she is. PT was elected in 2002 in the hopes of an alternative to neoliberalism but they have embraced the market, and as a result their vote has

fallen.

PT was launched from a trade union, based in Sao Paulo and led by former president Lula (Luis Inácio Lula da Silva). Considered as a center-left party, PT has been leading the nation since 2003, and the current president is Dilma Rousseff (Brazil’s first woman elected to presidency). PMDB is the largest nation’s party and follows a center-right orientation. Even though this party is numerously significant, it hasn’t run for any presidential election in two decades, surviving only by their alliances with other parties and, eventually, achieving important management positions.

PSDB is the center-right rival of PT, but there are hardly any differences any more. PT isn’t following a real progressive agenda and it keeps using social programs created during their government as a trophy—forgetting about other issues as well as its own corruption.

Election and the struggle

The mainstream media worked hard against PT to help Aécio Neves from

PSDB to win more ground, but PT supporters mobilized to stop him. The real left parties, like PSOL, supported Rousseff with a condition of maintaining strong opposition to her government—based on the argument that it is better having Rousseff as president, with a light liberal agenda, than Neves selling our nation’s resources without any scruples.

PT lost more than 4 million votes in the first round, and five per cent of the vote, but still won the election. But the incoming finance minister, Joaquim Levy—a forming banking executive nicknamed “Scissorhands”—has already promised the cut spending. Rousseff has promised the neoliberal fantasy that “the economy will be balanced to guarantee that we can continue advancing socially,” when it’s clear the economy is only ever balanced on the backs of the poor, undermining social progress.

The real hope is in social movements, which in Brazil and across South American countries in general, have been mobilizing and occupying public spaces.

Stop racist police violence

The police killings of Mike Brown and Eric Garner have sparked outrage around the world, and shone a light on systemic racism. Jesse McLaren looks at the roots of racism and the importance of building solidarity amongst the 99% to fight it.

“I see America through the eyes of the victim. I don’t see any American dream, I see an American nightmare.”
—Malcolm X

The nightmare continued for the families of Michael Brown and Eric Garner when the police who killed them walked free. “We are profoundly disappointed that the killer of our child will not face the consequences of his actions,” said Mike Brown’s family. “We need to work together to fix the system that allowed this to happen.”

Systemic violence

St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney Robert McCulloch claimed the “physical evidence” did not merit indicting Darren Wilson. But the evidence was clear: an armed white cop executed an unarmed Black teenager. Some have asked for police to have body cameras to document their behaviours, but clear footage didn’t get justice for Eric Garner after he was choked to death.

President Obama responded saying “there’s never an excuse for violence,” but he was targeting the victims of violence, not the source of violence. In his address to the nation he claimed “we are a nation built on the rule of law” and that “nobody needs the police more than poor communities with higher crime rates.” But the police are the major source of crimes against poor and racialized communities, to enforce a racist system. SWAT teams were first created to attack the Black Panthers, who were resisting racist police violence.

The situation is no different north of the colonial border. Canada was founded on genocide against Indigenous people and has its own history of slavery. The Canadian police continue to target racialized communities—like the killing of Sammy Yatim last year, and Jermaine Carby last September—and the police response to the G20 protests in Toronto show how the Canadian state also uses violence to maintain an economic “order” that only benefits the 1%.

Many hoped the election of the first African-American president in the US would put an end to racism. But as Angela Davis wrote recently, “Although racist state violence has been a consistent theme in the history of people of African descent in North America, it has become especially noteworthy during the administration of the first African-American president, whose very election was widely interpreted as heralding the advent of a new, postracial era. The sheer persistence of police killings of black youth contradicts the assumption that these are isolated aberrations. Trayvon Martin in Florida and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, are only the most widely known of the countless numbers of black people killed by police or vigilantes during the Obama administration. And they, in turn, represent an unbroken stream of racist violence, both official and extra-legal, from slave patrols and the Ku Klux Klan, to contemporary profiling practices and present-day vigilantes.”



New York Police choke Eric Garner to death

The origins of racism

It can seem like racism is timeless, but for most of human history people lived in egalitarian hunter-gatherer societies where there was no systemic oppression. The development of agriculture led to a surplus and an economic class that emerged to control it. The rise of class society based on exploitation saw the first forms of slavery, but these were not based on racism.

As the Trinidadian Marxist CLR James explained, “Historically it is pretty well proved now that the ancient Greeks and Romans knew nothing about race. They had another standard—civilized and barbarian—and you could have white skin and be a barbarian and you could be black and civilized.”

Racism did not produce slavery, the trans-Atlantic slave trade produced racism. As Karl Marx wrote, “The colonies secured a market for the budding manufactures, and, through the monopoly of the market, an increased accumulation. The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder, floated back to the mother-country and were there turned into capital.”

The US colonies exploited black slaves and white servants, who often united in struggle. The state responded with segregation laws and a racist ideology to divide the resistance. As the slave abolitionist Frederick Douglass explained, “The hostility between the whites and blacks of the South is easily explained. It has its root and sap in the relation of slavery, and was incited on both sides by the cunning of the slave

masters. These masters secured their ascendancy over both the poor whites and blacks by putting enmity between them. They divided both to conquer each.”

Dividing the 99%

This explains the persistence of racism after the end of slavery, as a central tool for capitalists to divide workers. As Marx described, “Every industrial and commercial center in England now possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he regards himself as a member of the ruling nation and consequently he becomes a tool of the English aristocrats and capitalists against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself. He cherishes religious, social, and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude toward him is much the same as that of the ‘poor whites’ to the Negroes in the former slave states of the U.S.A. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker both the accomplice and the stupid tool of the English rulers in Ireland. This antagonism is 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 classes. This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And the latter is quite aware of this.”

We can see how the Canadian

ruling class artificially keeps racism alive to benefit its agenda: racism against Indigenous people to justify taking their land; Islamophobia to justify wars abroad and attacks on civil liberties at home; anti-migrant racism to increase the rate of exploitation of migrant workers, and scapegoat refugees for cuts to healthcare. Meanwhile the police continue to criminalize the Black community, from carding to shooting, to justify the structural violence of poverty and the physical violence of the police.

Solidarity against oppression

To unite the 99% we need to support every liberation struggle—including Indigenous communities defending their land, migrant workers fighting exploitation, Muslims defending civil liberties, and the Black community challenging police violence and the real crimes of capitalism.

The victories over Apartheid in South Africa and Jim Crow in the US, led by blacks and with broad support, showed how multiracial strikes and protests can defeat racist policies, and link social and economic demands.

The ongoing fight for a higher minimum wage and unionization, which disproportionately affects and is led by communities of colour, is a continuation of that fight.

The working class unites all oppressed groups in society, and has the economic power to bring capitalism to a halt and to build a new world based on peace, justice and equality.

A better world is possible. Black and white, unite and fight!

“These masters secured their ascendancy over both the poor whites and blacks by putting enmity between them. They divided both to conquer each.”

--Frederick Douglass

CLIMATE CHAOS or CLIMATE JUSTICE



UN climate change report: climate change bad and getting worse

by Octavian Cadabeschi

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has published its fifth report on climate change and the results are frightening, if not surprising.

They conclude climate change is already happening, it is human caused, and at this point, even if all greenhouse gas emissions were to stop today, it is too late to completely stop a number of harmful climate change effects from taking place. Furthermore, greenhouse gas emissions need to reach zero before the year 2100 if we are to avoid irreversible impacts.

"In recent decades, changes in climate have caused impacts on natural and human systems on all continents and across the oceans." These effects include increased heat waves, and heat related human mortality, extreme precipitation and flooding, extreme sea levels, as well as droughts, floods, cyclones, and wildfires.

The report outlines a number of scenarios based on the degree to which carbon emissions are limited. "A stringent mitigation scenario (RCP2.6), two intermediate scenarios (RCP4.5 and RCP6.0), and one scenario with very high greenhouse gas emissions (RCP8.5)"

Surface temperature is projected to rise over the 21st century under every one of the assessed emission scenarios. Though the best case scenario would result in a raised

temperature of under 2°C the majority of scenarios would result in a temperature rise of more than 2°C with the worst case scenario (the one we are currently on track for) reaching up to 4°C.

The best case scenario, the one with a higher chance of avoiding irreparable effects will require a massive reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. "These scenarios are characterized by 40 per cent to 70 per cent global anthropogenic GHG emissions reductions by 2050 compared to 2010, and emissions levels near zero or below in 2100."

On the other hand, without any additional efforts to reduce GHG emissions beyond those in place today, "global emissions growth is expected to persist, driven by growth in global population and economic activities. Global mean surface temperature increases in 2100 in baseline scenarios – those without additional mitigation – range from 3.7 to 4.8°C above the average."

The report concludes that climate change will result in:
* "A large fraction of species faces increased extinction risk due to climate change during and beyond the 21st century."
* "Marine organisms will face progressively lower oxygen levels and high rates and magnitudes of ocean acidification."
* "Climate change is projected to undermine food security."
* "Global temperature increases of ~4°C or more above late-20th century levels, combined with increasing food demand, would pose large risks to food security globally."
* "Until mid-century, projected climate change will impact

human health by exacerbating health problems that already exist."

Due to the localised nature of some of the effects, climate change is expected to both increase poverty in some regions, and amplify the likelihood of armed conflict as a result of resource scarcity. Furthermore "Populations that lack the resources for planned migration experience higher exposure to extreme weather events, particularly in developing countries with low income."

According to this UN report, at least some of these effects are now unavoidable, thus the report calls for a global effort to both mitigate further greenhouse gas emissions as well as adaptation to a world experiencing climate change.

The report also stresses the importance of international cooperative action over the actions of individual actors, and argues for transformational change over incremental change. "Restricting adaptation responses to incremental changes to existing systems and structures, without considering transformational change, may increase costs and losses, and miss opportunities."

Decades of inaction on regulating and eliminating greenhouse gasses have shown that capitalism is incapable of saving us from the climate chaos it has produced. The only solution is an international anti-capitalist mass movement that can put control over our economy in the hands of the people.

made."

The deal comes nowhere close to achieving what the science tells us is necessary to avoid "catastrophic" climate change. In its recent report the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concludes that emission reductions will have to be drastically cut by 40-70 per cent by 2050, and then to zero by end of the century, if the world wants to avoid breaching the 2 degree mark that would cause "cataclysmic" climate change—which would produce widespread food and water shortages, increasing frequency of devastating "super storms" and rising sea levels that would put much of the world's islands, coastal regions and population under water.

Furthermore, the IPCC estimate of keeping CO2 concentrations at 450 ppm, to keep average global temperatures below 2 degrees is probably too high, given the climate chaos we are already experiencing with only a 0.8 degree increase.

The only reasonable and safe mark is 350 ppm, well under current concentrations of 390 ppm.

This will require massive amounts of public investment, planning and regulation, and redistribution of income and wealth, both between nations and within them.

While such magnitudes of public interventions are in the realm of possibility—as indeed industrial nations were able to make similar transformations to their economies during WW2, in less time, maintaining living standards while mobilizing the nations labour and resources to fighting the largest war in human history—unfortunately the continued imperative of profits and growth in a global capitalist system militates against it. As does the cynicism of world leaders responsible for the future of human civilization.



First Nations winning against tar sands pipelines

By Bradley Hughes

This year has seen a tremendous showing of solidarity to stop the planned tar sands pipelines that, if built, will bring oil spills and increased climate chaos.

At the end of 2013 the Yinka Dene alliance announced the creation of the Solidarity Accord. The Solidarity Accord is in support of the Save The Fraser declaration. The Save The Fraser declaration is a statement by over 130 indigenous nations to defend the Fraser River from tar sands pipelines. The Solidarity Accord, signed by Unifor (which represents some tar sands workers) and the BC Teachers' Federation, pledges to support First Nations in their opposition to tar sands pipelines.

At the same time Yinka Dene Alliance also launched Holdthewall.ca, where people can sign up to pledge to support the signatories of the Save the Fraser Declaration. There are now 26,000 signatories to this pledge.

First Nations hold the legal power to STOP the Enbridge pipeline.



2014: a year of resistance

All of 2014, the First Nations in BC have led the fight to stop the pipelines.

At a gathering on April 12, hereditary and elected leaders, elders, youth and other representatives from the First Nations of the Yinka Dene Alliance provided their reasons for banning the tar sands pipeline from their land to Canadian officials. Chief Fred Sam of the Nak'azdli First Nation explained, "Our decision to refuse consent for the Enbridge pipeline is a decision according to our own laws. It is binding and clearly set out in the Save the Fraser Declaration." He continued, "This gathering is about our people giving the reasons for our rejection of the Enbridge pipeline, in our voices, on our lands, under our laws."

In May, representatives of several nations travelled to Calgary to speak to Enbridge's annual general meeting of stock holders. Over 2000 supporters sent along letters to deliver to the company. Yinka Dene Alliance member Jasmine Thomas told the meeting, "We will continue to uphold our legal ban against this project and will assert our Aboriginal rights and title to the fullest extent possible. Whether Canada, or your company, decide to move forward with this pipe dream despite all opposition, thousands of Canadians have committed to hold the wall with us." She then dared the company to come to her land and "look our people in the eyes, and say face-to-face that Enbridge does not believe our nations have the authority to say NO to its unwanted project in our own unceded territories?"

Thousands in Vancouver joined the Convergence 2014 march and rally to Protect our Sacred Waters from Tarsands Oil. The event was organized in June by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and included a march across the Burrard bridge in Vancouver.

In July, Eight First Nations, four environmental organizations and the trade union, Unifor, went to the Federal Court of Appeal seeking leave to judicially review the federal approval of the Enbridge project.

The step of seeking leave to appeal before the appeal is heard is an extra step to the legal process added by the Harper government in 2012 to make it harder to contest National Energy Board decisions. Their first victory came in October when the Federal Court of Appeal gave all the cases permission to go forward. The court cases include 5 judicial reviews of the report of the Northern Gateway Joint Review Panel, 9 judicial reviews of the federal cabinet approval of the Enbridge Northern Gateway project, and 4 appeals of the National Energy Board certificates approving the Enbridge Northern Gateway project.

In November: victory on Burnaby mountain! Protests led by Tsleil-waututh First Nation and Burnaby Residents Opposing Kinder Morgan Expansion (BROKE) won a major victory against the tar sands pipelines. Kinder Morgan began exploratory drilling on the mountain to support their proposal to the National Energy Board to drill a tunnel through the mountain. The charges against protesters who defied the company's injunction were dropped, Kinder Morgan was unable to get its injunction extended and was unable to complete its survey work on Burnaby Mountain. This was possible due to the work activists across the province have done for years, and the growing solidarity with, and support for, the First Nations on whose land these ecocidal projects are being built.

You can support these crucial efforts. Go to Holdthewall.ca and sign the solidarity pledge. At the website pull-together.ca you can donate directly to support the court costs and help build on line and off line fund raising events. Next year we can all join together to spread the protests to actions in our workplaces, college and university campuses and neighbourhoods across the country.

US-China climate deal: nothing new and not good enough

By Michael T Fenn

The US-China deal, announced on November 11, has been lauded by many, including many progressives and environmentalists, as "ambitious", "historic", and "game-changing."

The deal commits the US to a reduction in carbon emissions of 26-28 per cent by 2030 (from 2005 levels). And China to have its emissions peak by that same year (earlier if possible), with a commitment to have 20 per cent of its energy from non-fossil fuel emitting sources (solar, wind, nuclear) by that time.

The Deal according to Climate Interactive and MIT will keep 640 billion tons of CO2 out of the atmosphere this century.

It finally dislodges the diplomatic impasse that has stymied international negotiations to address climate change, as the two largest emitters of CO2, who together account for 40 per cent of global emissions (China 25 per cent and US 15 per cent), have failed to reach an agreement on "equitable" and mutually binding targets. Now with both countries on board it is hoped that others, such as India (the second largest growing economy in the world behind China), Russia and the EU (which has already pledged to reduce emissions by 40 per cent by 2030) will now come together for the next climate summit in Paris in 2015 to hammer out a deal that will adequately address the issue.

The deal also boosts renewable green energy expansion in private markets, further increase their cost effectiveness, while signalling to investors the ominous prospects for fossil fuels in the future.

As Naomi Klein wrote, "Recent years have seen a prolif-

eration of movements blocking the infrastructure needed to export dirty fossil fuels to Asia. This deal makes it clear that the market for such dirty products is winding down in China, which is one more reason for companies not to invest billions in new pipelines or export terminals. Low oil prices are already taking a toll on more expensive extraction methods like tar sands mining and this deal will be another strike against them."

Many of the deal's critics claim that the targets set by both Obama and Chinese president Xi Jinping are not major concessions at all, because both nations are already on a trajectory to achieving them.

Despite the fact that China's rapidly growing economy projects a massive increase in their CO2 emissions over the next 15 years, it has been a world leader in building renewable energy capacity. So much so that its promise to have 20 per cent of its total emissions come from renewable sources is well on its way to becoming a reality. This promise amounts to adding a whopping 800-1000 gigawatts of zero emission generation, more than all the coal fired plants that exist in China today and almost as much as all the electricity generated in the US today.

The US is also on it's way to achieving it's pledge without any new action. Policies passed to improve fuel efficiency and those slated for coal-fired electrical plants in the coming year, combined with the expected with market expansion of renewables, mean that the US will likely meet its end of the bargain by 2030.

Ethan Zindler, an analyst at Bloomberg New Energy Finance noted, "The commitment on the US side is a summation of a variety of commitments that have already been

YINKA DENE ALLIANCE

Save the Fraser
DECLARATION

SOLIDARITY ACCORD

"A threat to the Fraser and its headwaters is a threat to all who depend on its health. We will not allow our fish, animals, plants, people and ways of life to be placed at risk.

We have come together to defend these lands and waters from a grave threat: the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines project.

This project, which would link the Tar Sands to Asia through our territories and the headwaters of this great river, and the federal process to approve it, violate our laws, traditions, values and our inherent rights as Indigenous Peoples under international law...

Therefore, in upholding our ancestral laws, Title, Rights and responsibilities, we declare: We will not allow the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines, or similar Tar Sands projects, to cross our lands, territories and watersheds, or the ocean migration routes of Fraser River salmon."

- Save the Fraser Declaration, 2010

WHEREAS: Representatives of more than 130 First Nations have signed the Save the Fraser Declaration.

AND WHEREAS: The future of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is bound together by our shared reliance on the lands and waters that sustain us.

AND WHEREAS: Mutual respect and cooperation is essential to ensuring that our collective future is a just and healthy one.

AND WHEREAS: Enbridge's Northern Gateway proposal would threaten thousands of existing jobs and expose communities to unacceptable risks.

NOW THEREFORE, IN RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT OF THE SAVE THE FRASER DECLARATION:

We, the undersigned, say to our First Nations brothers and sisters, and to the world, that we are prepared to stand with you to protect the land, the water and our communities from the Enbridge pipelines and tankers project and similar projects to transport tar sands oil.

Oil prices and climate justice

All of a sudden the 1% are in a panic over the tar sands—not its toxins that poison Indigenous communities, or its emissions that are pushing the climate to the tipping point, but its profitability. As a portfolio manager at a Toronto-based asset management company described, “The velocity of the downturn (in oil prices) has led to profound shell shock.”

The price of oil has fallen from \$100 to \$60 per barrel, which challenges tar sands economics. As financial analysts at Carbon Tracker explain: “Nine out of every ten barrels of potential oil sands production from discovery stage projects require over \$95/bbl... Several high cost projects have already been shelved by majors including Shell, Total and Statoil.”

If oil prices are low, this monstrous project—which violates Indigenous rights and exploits workers to clear cut trees, ravage the earth, pollute air and water, and produce toxic crude—doesn’t even make sense in capitalist terms. As Jeff Rubin, former head of CIBC World Markets, wrote recently: “I didn’t divest from the oil sands to save the world. I did it to save my portfolio.”

This is in sharp contrast to just a few years ago. As Naomi Klein wrote in 2007, “Alberta and Iraq have been connected to each other through a kind of invisible seesaw: As Baghdad burns, destabilizing the entire region and sending oil prices soaring, Calgary booms.” Now, despite another Iraq War and more destabilization, oil prices are in free fall.

Supply/demand and imperialism

The profit-squeeze on the tar sands is, unfortunately, not because oil demand has been decimated by a shift to a green economy or massive demilitarization—and low prices won’t automatically put an end to the tar sands.

Despite myths of the “free market,” the tar sands only emerged with government intervention. As *The Globe and Mail* explained: “In the mid-1990s, with oil prices at depressed levels, the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien had to provide tax breaks to rescue the industry, in particular the two major oil sands producers, Suncor and Syncrude Canada Ltd. It wasn’t until international crude prices began to soar in 2003—reflecting war in the Middle East and the rise in China’s demand—that the oil sands sector found firm economic footing and expansion began in earnest.”

Part of the squeeze on tar sands is coming from increased supply from other sources: the US has had a surge in fracking, doubling production in less than a decade, while Saudi Arabia has refused to cut its output to maintain prices.

There are also imperial motives behind the fall in oil prices, which disproportionately affect countries that depend on oil exports. According to Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro, the US has “flooded the international market to batter the Russian economy..., Iran and the hurt us.”

Economic crisis and austerity

But if growth in China was one reason for the rise in the price of oil, falling prices are symptomatic of stagnant growth across the world—including China whose growth is slowing, Japan (which just re-entered recession), and Europe. This is especially hitting countries dependent on oil, with Russia’s currency in crisis and Venezuela on the edge of defaulting on its debt.

The drop in the price of oil is both a symptom of weak recovery and a potential harbinger of another crisis to come. As Marxist economist Michael Roberts warns, “What inflation of prices there has been has mainly been due to the sharp rise in energy prices... Now, with the sharp fall in energy and other commodity prices (metals, food etc), deflation is the spectre haunting the globe. Some argue that this is good news... Falling prices, particularly in energy and food, will raise consumer purchasing power, and help boost demand and thus economic growth. But for profitability, it is bad news. Inflation of corporate producer prices is another temporary counteracting tendency to falling profitability. If it disappears, then the downward pressure on profitability from any new technology investment will be greater as falling prices squeeze profit margins. In that sense, deflation is not good news for the capitalist sector, especially if it is burdened with heavy debts (small businesses in particular). So the crisis brewing for Russian businesses may be followed by others. It could be another factor leading to a new global slump, this time based in the non-financial productive sector of capitalism.”

Deflation is also a risk for Canadian capitalism, which is sustained by consumer demand. Despite low interest rates, household debt has reached a record high of 162 per cent of household income. Deflation has the effect of making debt more expensive, which discourages the borrowing and spending that are maintaining the economy. At the same time governments that have made themselves dependent on oil revenues are responding to the fall in oil prices by promising more austerity. As the *Globe and Mail* reported, “(Alberta) Premier Jim Prentice has a new message for the province: Expect spending cuts soon, since plummeting oil prices could cut provincial revenue.”

Climate justice is priceless

The fall in oil prices have exposed the absurdity of tar sands economics and the urgent need for green jobs to help both the ecologic and the economic crisis. We need to demand the government redirect the billions that prop up the tar sands into green jobs instead, while supporting Indigenous communities defending their land from tar sands and fracking.

Ultimately we need a world based on the needs of people and the planet, not profit. Under capitalism the price of oil will rise and fall, but climate justice is priceless.



Labour and the fight against austerity

by PAM JOHNSON

It has been seven years since the global economic crisis of 2008, which produced bailouts and tax cuts for banks and corporations—and sweeping attacks on wages, benefits and trade union rights for workers

The market driven neoliberal agenda of the previous two decades that attempted to prop up sagging capitalist profit has morphed into a sharper, harsher project of austerity.

In Canada, the austerity agenda has come down from employers and all levels of government following on an already protracted crisis—especially in the private sector, with the loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs. Combative tactics by employers including lock-outs, unilateral imposition of contracts and demands for huge wage cuts and concessions have become the norm.

Federally, the Harper government enacted back-to-work legislation to shut down strikes by postal workers, CP Rail and Air Canada workers. Harper has proposed anti-union bills to open trade unions to unprecedented financial scrutiny and challenge union dues checkoff and a hugely unpopular plan to end door-to-door postal service.

Provincial governments of all political stripes have enacted anti-worker legislation stripping bargaining rights from BC teachers and Ontario teachers. NDP governments in Nova Scotia and Manitoba have toed the austerity line enacting tax cuts for corporations and concessions for workers.

Global and local resistance to austerity

The impact of austerity is global and workers outside of North America who faced it first have fought back. Dozens of general strikes in Greece, the Arab Spring, mass protests and strikes in Spain, Italy, Brazil and South Africa have raised resistance and are continuing.

There has also been resistance in North America. In the US, 2011 saw the occupation of the capital building in Wisconsin and the Occupy movement spread around the world. In 2012, a rank-and-file led strike by Chicago teachers won. In 2013, a \$15 minimum wage campaign was built by non-unionized retail and fast food workers and is continuing to gain steam. In Seattle, a socialist city councilor was elected on this platform, sparking a \$15 minimum wage victory for Seattle city workers.

There has also been resistance across Quebec and Canada. In 2012, the Quebec student strike morphed from a fight against tuition fee increases to a referendum on austerity which brought down the government and reverberated across Canada. At the end of 2012 and into 2013, the Idle No More movement for indigenous rights and sovereignty also broadened into challenging the austerity agenda.

Where is the sustained fightback in Canada?

Despite the deep anger and frustration of workers, growing disparity and the widely held view that the 1% are benefiting at the expense of the 99%, there have been only intermittent moments of struggle.

How do we assess this situation? Ralph Darlington, a British socialist, characterized a similar situation in the UK: “The crucial problem that trade union activists and socialists are confronted with at the moment is the big gap that exists between the level of workers’ anger at austerity and employers’ attacks on the one hand, and the lack of rank and file confidence to engage in struggle without a lead from the trade union bureaucracy on the other.”

It would be too simplistic to say that labour leaders are merely holding back masses of workers waiting to move into action. But it is also not the case that Canadian workers are demoralized and unwilling to act.

Workers’ consciousness and resistance

The protracted capitalist crisis is polarizing workers’ consciousness: pushing some to the left and some to the right, with many pushed and pulled in both directions.

Italian socialist Antonio Gramsci, in the *Prison Notebooks*, called workers consciousness “contradictory” and described it as the combination of their real material experiences and the historical weight of ruling class ideas and social relations that have supported the development of the capitalist system. These contradictory ideas are a continual push and pull on workers consciousness.

So even with a relentless anti-union, anti-worker message from right wing governments, employers and the media, there is also a rising level of solidarity and recognition of the needs to support workers’ struggle. Workers from BC and Ontario, UK, South Africa and Australia gave international profile to striking Steelworkers in Alma, Quebec against global corporation Rio Tinto.

Recent long strikes by workers at Vale Inco, Porter Airlines and currently at Crown Metal Packaging, indicate a willingness to fight on the picket line. Non-unionized workers, like the barristas in Halifax who successfully fought unfair working conditions and unionized, show the appetite to fight. The popularity and immediate mainstreaming of the slogan “99% vs 1%” from the Occupy movement points to rising class consciousness.

But economic crisis has also pushed some workers to the right, with right-wing parties exploiting people’s insecurity—including the anti-immigrant UKIP in the UK, the neo-fascist Golden Dawn in Greece, or the right-wing populist Tea Party in the US and Rob Ford in Toronto.

Are trade unions still relevant in the fight against austerity?

A growing layer of activists have placed blame for the lack of escalating struggle on the sluggishness of the trade union leadership.

It is the reality that trade union leaders, whether they are left or right, do not necessarily see themselves as the leaders of militant struggles. Their role is to negotiate with the employer, and they are removed from the day to day experience of workers.

But despite the reality of the compromised position of the trade union leadership, the existence of trade unions as mass organizations for workers—although they are not revolutionary—is still critical to mount a challenge to austerity.

In Ontario, the recent sound defeat of Tim Hudak’s Progressive Conservatives running on an anti-union “tea party”-like platform was achieved, in part, by a united effort of the organized labour movement. The Chicago teachers strike victory in 2012, against huge odds, is another example.

Even bureaucratic unions provide some minimal support to members through collective agreements. But, most importantly trade unions provide a network that can be mobilized.

Building the rank and file networks and the role of socialists

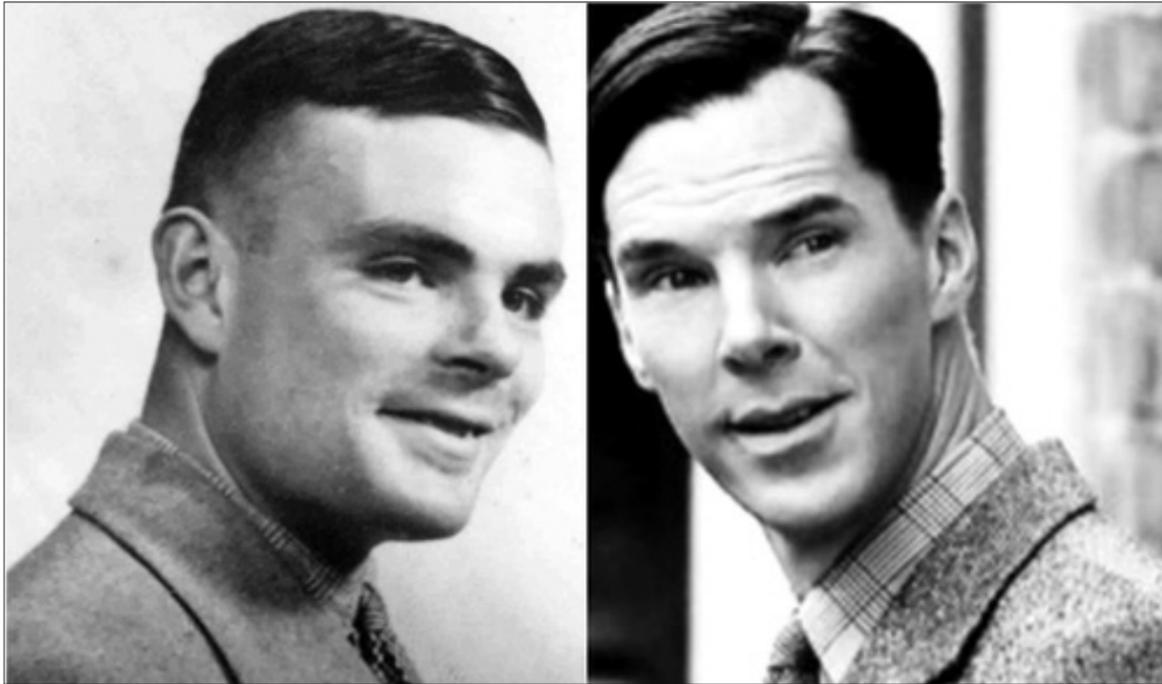
A key question is how to overcome the conservative tendencies of the labour leadership. For the growing layer of activists and socialists ready to act despite sluggish leadership in their union, rank and file organizing is the key to start building a labour movement that can fight austerity.

Rank and file organisation can perform two functions: 1) it can act as a pressure on the trade union bureaucracy, making action more likely, 2) it can, if necessary, allow workers to fight independently of the bureaucracy by taking unofficial action.

In periods of heightened struggle, workers can develop rank and file movements. Rosa Luxemburg in her work, *The Mass Strike*, talks about the moment of mass action by workers as historical process rather than an isolated event. For example, the Chicago Teachers strike began two years prior when a rank and file caucus organizing at the base was able to pressure and then take over the leadership with broad support from the membership.

Trotsky referred to this as the “fundamental” process of revolution in which workers comprehend their situation through a series of “successive approximations.” Organized socialists are critical to help shape rank and file activity in this direction, while understanding this will be a process not an event.

This was an excerpt from an upcoming Resistance Press pamphlet.



MOVIE

'Imitation Game' breaks the code about WWII

Reviewed by Jesse McLaren

Building support for the latest U.S. war, Hollywood seems bound by a code to produce at least a movie a year glorifying the Second World War by portraying the Allied countries as bastions of human liberation. By telling the true story of Alan Turing, *The Imitation Game* has broken the code.

Turing was a British mathematician who worked at Bletchley Park, a secret centre for cryptographers who were trying to break the German Enigma code—allowing the Allies to read Nazi military communications. By designing a machine that could rapidly process information, Turing broke the code—which ended the war an estimated two years sooner, saving millions of lives—and through the process laid the foundation for modern computers.

How was Turing rewarded? The British state drove him to suicide, and wrote him out of history, for being gay. He was persecuted in 1952 with the same law that destroyed Oscar Wilde, avoided prison only by agreeing to be chemically castrated, and ate a cyanide-laced apple in 1954 (urban legend claims Apple's original logo of a rainbow apple is an homage to Turing).

Reviving Turing

The Imitation Game intertwines Turing's early life as a schoolboy, his work breaking the code, and his post-war persecution. As Benedict Cumberbatch (who plays Turing) said of the role, "The feeling you have for the man after getting to know him through the duration of the film is really exacerbated by the frustration and anger, not just at the injustice served him, but also at the fact that, why don't I know this story? It seems unbelievable that someone who is a war hero, someone who is the father of

the modern computer age—and a gay icon—could remain in such relative obscurity to the scale of his achievements in his brief time on this planet. One of the main reasons I was really attracted to playing him was to try and bring his story to as wide an audience as possible."

Bringing Turing to the big screen is a process that has taken decades—a biography in 1983, a BBC film in 1996 and finally a major film—and been part of a campaign to challenge his persecution. In 2009 the British government issued a posthumous apology but in 2012 refused to pardon him—and the other 49,000 gay men criminalized under the former law. The Queen issued a Royal Pardon to Turing last year, but as Cumberbatch said, "It's an insult for anybody of authority or standing to sign off on him with their approval and say, 'Oh, he's forgiven.' The only person who should be (doing the) forgiving is Turing, and he can't because we killed him. And it makes me really angry. It makes me very angry."

WWII: the good war?

As Cumberbatch said, "To think that a society and a democracy—that Turing could save from fascism in the Second World War—rewarded him with that (punishment) is the most sickening irony of all." But this irony pervades the history of the war. Films that glorify the Second World War use the horrors of Nazism to obscure an understanding of how fascism arose, whitewash the history of the Allied countries, and pave the way for more Western intervention.

Fascism did not emerge from the deranged mind of Hitler but from the economic crisis of capitalism (which has reappeared and given rise to new fascist parties across Europe), and the defeat of the workers' movement in challenging it. Before WWII it was clear what the Allies thought of fas-

cism: they were "neutral" towards fascism in Spain, Ford and General Motors collaborated with the Nazis, Hitler was Time Magazine's "man of the year," and Germany was rewarded with the Olympics. When Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King met Hitler in 1937 he described him as "one who truly loves his fellow man."

WWII has been called a "war for freedom and democracy," but at the time the US was running it apartheid Jim Crow system, Canada has its concentration camps—the residential schools—and both countries interned families of Japanese descent, and turned away boats of Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust. Canada had the same homophobic laws as Britain, criminalized abortion and had eugenics programs in BC and Alberta based on forcible sterilization. Meanwhile Britain and France were repressing their colonies while sending their soldiers to die. (France belatedly acknowledged the role of Algerian soldiers, documented in the movie *Days of Glory*). The Allies refused to bomb the train tracks to Auschwitz, and carried out their own atrocities -- from the firebombing of Dresden to the atomic bombing of Japan.

After the war the US recruited Nazi scientists like Werner von Braun, while Britain supported fascists in Greece. The WWII mythology around Churchill erases the rest of his career, including sending troops against British miners in 1910, using chemical weapons against Iraqis in 1920, and supporting Greek fascists after WWII.

The Imitation Game leaves the impression the persecution of Alan Turing was an isolated abnormality in an otherwise noble war effort—instead of a symptom of imperial rivals bombing each other while repressing their own citizens. But by breaking the official code it encourages us to learn more, and to challenge the bigotry on which war depends..

a local news station that only certain kinds of violence are newsworthy. If the victims are poor or live in low-income neighbourhoods, if they are Black or Hispanic, he won't get much for his footage. But violence, when it happens to white victims in affluent neighbourhoods, will fetch the highest prices.

Nightcrawler shows us how the nightly news is twisted and manipulated to tell a certain story—about the rise of crime visited upon well-to-do whites by mostly Black or Hispanic criminals—whether or not reality or the statistics actually bare this out.

Lou Bloom is mentored in his new "profession" by a canny news producer, Nina, brilliantly played by Rene Russo. But eventually, as Lou becomes more successful, he turns the tables on Russo's character and

demonstrates his own ruthlessness in negotiating a sexual relationship with her as part of what he wants to get out of their association.

The assistant Bloom hires so he can get to accidents or crime scenes more quickly is a young guy, Rick, until very recently homeless. Bloom, having learned all the lingo from the Internet and his own unsuccessful attempts to find work, explains to his potential "employee" that this is an "intern" position, so of course he won't be paid.

In fact, much of what Lou says could be coming straight out of the mouth of a corporate executive or a self-help guru. In his interactions with others there is absolutely no human emotion that can be gleaned in his lean, maniacal gaze. He has been schooled well by the hucksters of capitalism.

LEFT JAB

John Bell

Democracy on its deathbed?

There is an old saying: democracy ends at the factory gates. This sums up the fatal limitation of even the most "liberal" democracy under capitalism: workers have no control over what we make and how we make it.

Since our social labour—our ability to work collectively—is essential to our human condition, having that control hijacked by a handful of people who own capital is a pretty serious impediment to democracy.

So we live in a society where we are told we are all equal, where we periodically get to choose who wields political control; yet this same society is fractured into classes, where economic power and control is concentrated in the hands of a few, the 1 %.

That is a hell of a design flaw that remains festering at the heart of our democracy even at the best of times. But these are not the best of times.

Wealth gap

In my lifetime I have seen the gap between classes widen inexorably. In 2013, the average US CEO was paid 331 times more than the average worker. The same boss got 774 times the wage of a full-time minimum wage worker. Said CEO enjoyed a nine per cent raise from the year before. Did you get a raise last year?

So, behind the factory gate things have got much worse for us since the great social upheavals of the 1960s and 70s peaked and began to ebb.

Inevitably, as more and more economic power is concentrated in fewer hands, those hands will grab hold of more and more political power. International trade deals, court decisions giving corporate entities the same rights as individuals, political party financing shenanigans: there is a mountain of evidence detailing how the ruling elite buys control of official political machinery.

The reason I have been pondering that old saying is that Stephen Harper wants it to become obsolete. New anti-union laws are just part of his assault on our democracy. At first glance it seems like our rights and freedoms are going down the drain.

All our rights and freedoms—right to assemble and organize, right to speak and write opinions openly, right to a fair trial and presumption of innocence before the law, freedom of religious belief, equality of race, gender and sexual identity—were fought for and won, often at the cost of lives and much sacrifice and suffering. Not one was simply granted by a benevolent ruling class. To quote the great US abolitionist Frederick Douglass: "Those who profess to favor freedom, yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground."

Tug of war

All class societies feature a tug-of-war between those who rule and those whose work. In our capitalist society, when workers are winning the tug-of-war we get more democracy. We may even be strong enough to get a toehold

of democracy in the workplace itself, through our self-organization and our unions. The ruling elite can concede that without their system falling apart.

When they are winning we see our democratic gains eroded. In my own lifetime I have witnessed: cold wars and endless hot wars; massive popular movements demanding peace, civil rights and respect for human diversity; imperialist coups overthrowing democratically elected governments; anti-imperialist struggles freeing colonies and dependent states; a US president driven from office for corruption and crimes; and, today, regimes seemingly impervious to breaking international and domestic law.

Most of my working life I have seen the slow, steady erosion of my rights and freedoms, and a decline in my economic situation. The current "war on terror" has shifted that erosion and decline into high gear.

It hasn't all been downward. People do not take these things sitting down, and there have been magnificent struggles. Some have been victories, some merely stalemated the attack from the other side, some were inspiring even in defeat.

In my case, that experience is what helps me put the current assault on our democracy—through mass surveillance, draconian new security laws and the militarization of policing, among other things—in historical perspective.

Happy New Year of struggle

That perspective gives me hope as we head into a new year. Here's why.

While I clearly see the continuing racism that results in the execution of young Black people by police, I also see a growing fight back. There is a new anti-racist movement growing in response to the new "Jim Crow."

In Canada, a growing opposition to the fossil fuel industry's hold on our economy and politics has resulted in the Harper government labeling anyone who stands up for the environment as a "terrorist." Yes, the 11-year-old kids and senior citizens who got arrested on Burnaby Mountain to halt the Kinder-Morgan pipeline are "terrorists."

In one sense, we are terrified: our government is terrified of us. They launch assault after assault on First Nations because they are afraid of them. They pass laws against unions because they are afraid of them. They make it illegal to oppose pipelines because they are afraid of us all getting together in the fight against them. They buy tanks for their police forces because they fear we are coming for them.

Their fear is a reflection of our great power, if only we have the vision to see it. And it seems like more and more of us—rallying in the streets against austerity or linking arms on a mountain top—are seeing it clearly.

That is what keeps me in the struggle with all of you, and that is my hope for this and every New Year.

MOVIE

'Nightcrawler' points the camera at capitalism

Reviewed by Faline Bobier

Jake Gyllenhaal—lead actor in the new film *Nightcrawler*, directed by Dan Gilroy—said in an interview that when he imagined his character, Lou Bloom, he imagined a coyote. And most likely, a starving coyote, one of the many who come into Los Angeles from the desert, searching for food and survival.

Much of the movie takes place at night, which is fitting, given the way Bloom decides to try and make his living: as a "nightcrawler": someone who makes their living as a freelance video journalist, selling footage to the highest TV news bidder.

As the cameraman tells Bloom, "If it bleeds, it leads." Bloom soon finds out when he sells his first footage to

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 transgendered 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.



Activist calendar movement events



Election preparation conferences

January to March in cities across Canada
Organized by Canadian Labour Congress
www.canadianlabour.ca



Anti-war teach-ins

February 15
visit <http://canadianpeace.org>



International Women's Day

Saturday March 7
<http://iwdtoronto.ca>

Fight on every front: join the International Socialists

Do you oppose exploitation, war, oppression and climate chaos?

Do you want to be part of building resistance movements to all these symptoms of capitalism, towards a revolutionary transformation of society?

Then join the I.S. today!

email reports@socialist.ca
or visit www.socialist.ca

International Socialist events



Capitalism and resistance: austerity, war, climate change

Saturday January 31
The Jack Purcell Community Centre
320 Jack Purcell Lane, Ottawa
1pm Austerity, War, and Climate Chaos: the symptoms of Capitalism
2pm The roots of Austerity 3pm The roots of War
4pm The roots of Climate Change
5pm Can we get rid of Capitalism?



Racism and resistance

Thursday Jan 8, 4pm
Room A218 Langara College
100 west 49th ave, Vancouver



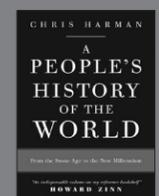
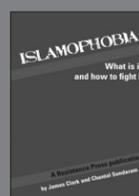
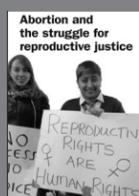
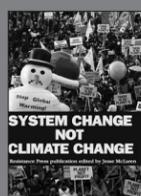
How do we win women's liberation?

Saturday Jan 24, 2pm
Coxwell Public Library
1675 Danforth ave, Toronto

OPEN SATURDAYS, 12-3pm

427 Bloor Street West, suite 202, Toronto ; 416-972-6391; www.facebook.com/resistancepress

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ANTI-WAR THEATRE

by CHANTAL SUNDARAM

Fennario: The Good Fight tells the story of the making of Motherhouse, a play about women in the trenches of the home front of WW I in munitions manufacturing—in particular in Verdun, Quebec, the source of more WWI casualties than any other community in Canada.

The premiere was well-attended, including by some known personalities in the theatre world—such as Maurice Podbrey, co-founder and for 29 seasons artistic director of the Centaur Theatre in Montreal.

During the Q&A the film's director, Martin Duckworth, talked about its political importance. Like the play, this film can have an impact that goes well beyond the festival circuit or theatre venue where it was professionally produced. Those who are drawn to see both film and play, and who might not otherwise come in contact with a critique of war that makes so much sense from the past to the present, can be motivated beyond the immediate experience where they happen to encounter it.

The set of the Centaur production of Motherhouse featured a wreath of white poppies. It was a powerful visual to an ironic and more truthful reading of the poem of "In Flanders' Fields," at the beginning and end of the play. After the play run, "Echec a la guerre" featured that same wreath in its own venue: the street. It did so twice in the lead-up to the film screening: on the October 25-26 pan-Canadian day of action against the war in Iraq and Syria, and again on Remembrance Day.

POLICE VIOLENCE

by ERIC LESCARBEAU

On December 21, about 100 people attended a vigil today at the corner of 41st and Knight to mark the place where Phuong Na (Tony) Du was gunned down by Vancouver police on November 22.

Du grew up in rural Vietnam and war forced from his home by an imperialist war.

Many at the vigil were angry that police made no attempt to bring someone to the scene who could communicate with Du in his native Vietnamese, or bring anyone with expertise in dealing with mental health crises as he had schizophrenia. One witness said that police shot Phuong, who later died in hospital, less than a minute after arriving on the scene.

The murder of Phuong Na Du shows that little has changed since the 2007 RCMP death by tasing of Polish immigrant Robert Dziekanski at the Vancouver airport.

If any justice is to be had we will have to continue to speak out and put public pressure on the 'Independent Investigations Office and crown counsel to lay charges in the incident and call for major changes in how police treat immigrants and people with mental health issues.

THOUSANDS RALLY FOR PUBLIC HEALTHCARE



by VALERIE LANNON

Three thousand people from across Ontario rallied on November 21 against private clinics and in defence of public healthcare, exposing Liberal austerity.

Last election many worried about the prospect of Tory Tim Hudak coming to power and implementing his promised 100,000 job cuts. When the NDP campaigned to the centre, the Liberals tacked to the left and monopolized the anti-Hudak vote. Liberal leader Kathleen Wynne has portrayed herself as a "social justice premier" and many called her budget "progressive."

But a closer look revealed deep cuts to social services—including a healthcare funding freeze that amounts to cuts. Over decades, federal and provincial governments across the political spectrum have

cut healthcare, and now the Ontario Liberals are moving ahead with a plan to privatize.

But 3,000 people rallied at Queen's Park against privatization and in defence of public healthcare. Organized by the Ontario Health Coalition and with a strong presence from the labour movement, the rally drew buses from across the province.

As Steelworker Michelle Robidoux said, "I am concerned about the hiving off of outpatient services to for-profit agencies. I am also concerned with the closure of community hospitals across Ontario, all of which is happening under Kathleen Wynne—who portrayed herself as a kinder, gentler Liberal, which helped get her into power."

The labour movement was central to winning

Medicare in the first place. Labour solidarity played an important role in defeating Tim Hudak and will need to continue to oppose austerity from the provincial Liberals and federal Conservatives. As Andy Savelle, member of Unifor and an RPN for 18 years, said, "We should be heartened by our defeat of Hudak during the election, and we need to build on this victory."

As Haldie Wicke, from the Ontario Nurses Union and the Ontario Health Coalition, "We need more solidarity among unions and with communities. When this happened in St. Mary's we were able to stop the proposed closure of the ER; we went to the Local Integrated Health Network, told our stories, had our statistics, and won."

125,000 contre l'austerité

by LAURENCE LAUZON

Le 29 novembre, 125 000 personnes de tout âges se sont regroupés dans les rues de Montréal et de Québec pour manifester contre les politiques d'austérité du gouvernement Libéral.

Ces politiques auront de graves répercussions sur la qualité de nos services sociaux, ce qui nuit davantage à la classe moyenne et aux plus pauvres. Plusieurs syndicats, des étudiants et des familles étaient donc présent pour faire com-

prendre au gouvernement de M. Couillard qu'on ne veut pas perdre nos acquis sociaux.

La manifestation fut très pacifique malgré notre grand nombre, on pouvait sentir que la police était avec nous puisqu'ils sont aussi très affectés par les coupures budgétaires. La présence des syndicats avec leurs drapeaux identiques et la grande organisation de l'évènement enlevaient toute fois un peu à l'intensité du tout, il manquait peut-être un peu

de spontanéité. On sentait parfois qu'on ne dérangeait pas assez.

Il y avait tout de même une bonne complicité entre les manifestants, qui s'est développée, entre autre, à travers les chansons de manifestations. On pouvait entendre des gens de tout âge et de toutes les régions crier en coeur "Un peuple, unis, jamais ne sera vaincu".

Ce fut une réussite et ce n'est que le début de notre lutte contre l'Austérité!

Solidarity for Crown workers

by DAVID BUSH and GERARD DI TROLIO

On December 13, the USW organized a province wide day of action in support of the 124 striking workers at Crown Holdings' factory in Toronto, who are represented by USW Local 9176.

The workers, who have been on strike for 15 months, make beer cans for Crown Holdings, the dominant beer can manufacturer in Ontario.

The company made \$557 million in 2012 and its CEO John W. Conway makes \$13 million per year.

Crown Holdings is looking to impose a two tier contract on the union. The company is demanding a 33 per cent pay cut from the current workers, a tiered contract that would see new hires paid up to 42 per cent less than current workers and the changing of their defined benefit pension plan into a defined contribution plan.

The December 13 day of action focused on taking the boycott of beers can out to customers of the Beer Store across the province. 56 stores in Ontario, from

Thunder Bay to Ottawa, were targeted, encouraging them to "buy bottles, not cans".

To win against any large multinational, especially for a small group of workers, means marshalling the collective forces of the labour movement and channelling it into boots-on-the-ground action. This is what solidarity is all about.

This is an excerpt of a longer article originally published on rankandfile.ca

STICKING WITH THE UNION

Carolyn Egan

Labour vs violence against women

At a recent meeting of the Assembly of First Nations, Rinelle Harper called on delegates to press for a national inquiry into the missing and murdered Indigenous women. She is the young woman who was assaulted by two men and left for dead on the banks of the Assiniboine River in Winnipeg.

She said "I am here to talk about an end to violence against young (Indigenous) women." as she called for action. The federal government has consistently refused to initiate an inquiry, ignoring the demands of Indigenous women and their supporters across the country.

There has been a global dialogue on violence against women in recent times. The rates of domestic violence and sexual assault are staggering. Women have been demanding action on university campuses, in workplaces and in our communities.

Governments have been slow to act and usually do so only after demands have been made by women's organizations, trade unions and others concerned about the issue. The Harper government has been defunding women's groups that have been asking for stronger policies and advocating on behalf of women's needs.

Workplace violence

At a rally for Reproductive Justice in Toronto a while back Andria Babington, a hotel worker and member of Unite Here local 75, spoke about the harassment and sexual violence that she and other women like herself had been routinely subject to on the job. As housekeepers they have to clean the rooms of customers, and propositions and outright assaults are regular occurrences. There was very little that was being done before there was a union.

She said that the situation they were facing was one of the reasons they organized. Things are not perfect in a unionized environment but they have substantially improved. Not only is there a grievance procedure in place where complaints can be taken up by the union, but harassment is also a health and safety issue. Women are no longer on their own to deal with abuse when it occurs.

Unions have been pushed by their women members to make violence against women a major issue for labour. Women's committees have demanded that information on violence be integrated into union education. Harassment and bullying language has been negotiated into collective agreements. Many union members—men, women and transgender—have a

greater understanding of the issues and refuse to tolerate abuse of this sort in their work places. The trade union movement has pressed for legislation against workplace violence—pushing provinces such as Ontario to pass bills requiring employers put policies in place.

Andria spoke very clearly about the difference working in a unionized environment meant in her day-to-day life. It allowed her to hold her head high and feel confident that she would have the backing of her fellow workers if anything untoward happened. The fact that the trade unions have spoken out loudly and clearly against violence of any sort provides for a safer working environment for all.

Domestic violence

The Canadian Labour Congress recently did a survey on domestic violence at work. It found that \$77.9 million was lost due to direct or indirect impact of domestic violence in workplaces. Eight per cent of those experiencing this had lost their jobs. 53 per cent were Indigenous, people with disabilities or LGBTQ. Thirty-five per cent of respondents said that they felt they had at least one co-worker who experienced domestic violence and 11.54 per cent believed they had a co-worker who was a perpetrator of violence. Twenty-seven per cent said they received information from their union about the issue, which shows more work has to be done.

We have seen where some unions such as the Yukon Teachers federation have bargained leave to be used by members who experience domestic violence. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers have trained social stewards to develop skills in this area to support fellow workers. Union counselling course by labour councils and individual unions have also provided information for union members to assist others in their work places.

The question of domestic violence is not going away and trade unions alongside women's organizations are making real impact, but much more has to be done. No one should have to put up with this type of violence and harassment. The fact that concrete actions are taking place in workplaces and the broader community by so many can only help to take on this fight.

This is part and parcel of the broader fight for women's liberation. We have to continue the struggle for a new society controlled from the bottom where exploitation and oppression are a thing of the past.

Socialist Worker

PIPELINE RESISTANCE SPILLS ACROSS CONTINENT

The tar sands extends its pipelines like tentacles across the continent—Keystone XL goes south, Northern Gateway and Kinder Morgan go west, and Line 9 and Energy East go east.

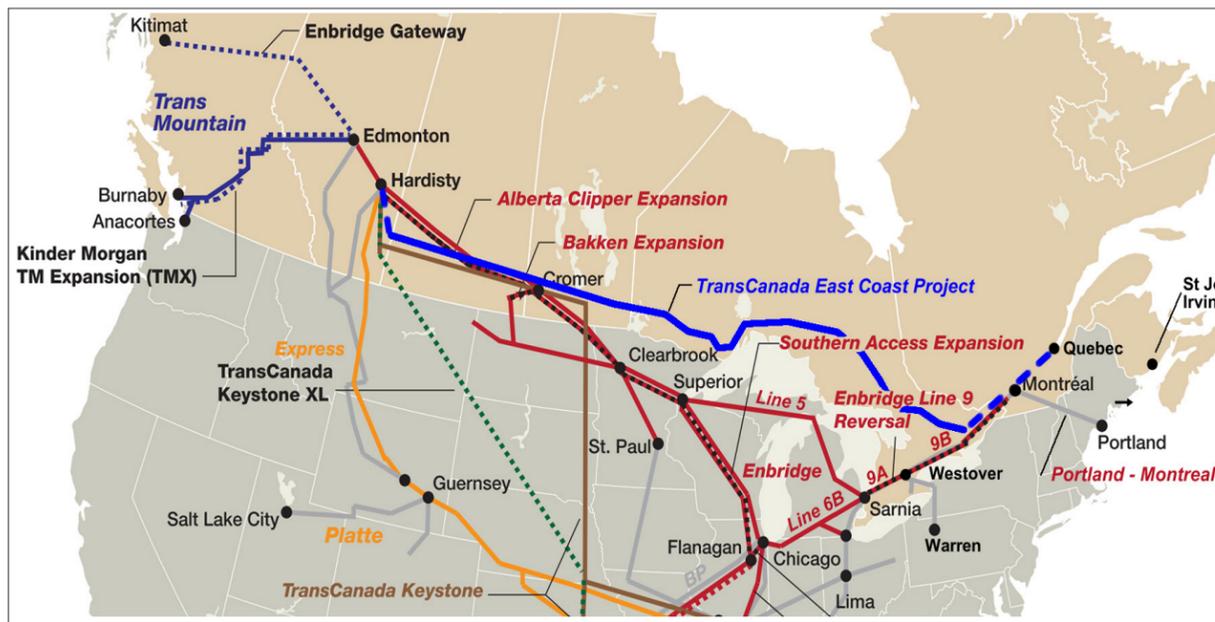
Canada's tar sands threatens local Indigenous communities by clear cutting their forests, poisoning their water and polluting their air—causing cancer. To expand the tar sands, oil companies with government support are expanding pipelines across the continent.

But communities at ground zero of the tar sands are challenging the tar sands and pipelines—like the Grand Rapids pipeline, which plans to connect Fort McMurray to Edmonton in order to feed the Keystone XL and Energy East pipelines. As Chief Allan Adam of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation explains, “Our peoples rights, and our way of life, are being threatened by out of control development in the region.”

Northern Gateway and Keystone XL

For years the major focus has been on the Northern Gateway and Keystone XL pipelines, which the Indigenous-led climate justice movement continues to delay. This movement against Northern Gateway has included a mass rally and PowerShift conference in Victoria, a mass march in Vancouver, the Save the Fraser Declaration that unites First Nations against the pipeline, and the associated Solidarity Accord that has won union support including from Unifor.

South of the colonial border, there have been



climate justice protests—from tens of thousands who protested outside the White House last year, to hundreds of thousands who joined the People's Climate March this year. While many were depressed about the mid-term election results that saw Republicans make gains, it's clear this has not stopped the movement—and Obama was forced to delay the Keystone XL pipeline yet again.

Kinder Morgan

While there is widespread opposition to the Northern Gateway pipeline, many interpreted the 2013 BC election results as vindication for the Kinder Morgan pipeline—rather than the failure of the NDP to propose green job alternatives.

But since then resistance to the pipeline has exploded—including City Council opposition, a legal challenge from the Tsleil-Waututh Nation whose land it crosses,

and mass direct action.

The movement pushed the courts deny an injunction extension and dropped the charges against the 120 people arrested.

Line 9

With delays to pipelines west and south, oil companies are looking to pump tar sands east through Line 9 (as part of the Trailbreaker project) and Energy East. But resistance continues to delay Line 9.

Last year hundreds protested outside the National Energy Board (NEB) hearings, and a number of unions at the OFL convention presented motions against Line 9 and in support of green jobs. This year 1,500 marched from City Hall to Queen's Park to deliver motions from City Council opposing Line 9. There has also been direct action from First Nations, and the City Council of Portland, Maine has opposed the use of their

port for export.

While the NEB approved the project, the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation launched a legal challenge based on the fact they were not properly consulted. Recently the NEB has delayed Line 9 because Enbridge has not installed valves near major water ways—which indicates how little Enbridge cares about the water upon which we depend, how likely a spill is going to be, and that the NEB is trying to rebuild its image as a regulator.

Meanwhile opposition has opened up small cracks in the legislature, and the delay on Line 9 has renewed calls for an Environmental Assessment.

Energy east

As a sign that mass movements are working against pipelines, the oil industry is trying to manufacture its own movement. Greenpeace obtained documents

showing TransCanada has hired a public relations firm to fabricate “grassroots advocacy” in support of the tar sands pipeline.

But it's not working. Energy East's export terminal at Cacouna is an important site for endangered beluga whales, and environmental organizations won a temporary injunction against drilling. Recently former Quebec student strike leader Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois—who attended the Healing Walk at ground zero of the tar sands last summer—donated a \$25,000 literary prize to Quebec organizations fighting Energy East, which triggered a gush of donations that have raised over ten times that amount.

NDP stuck in the tar sands

Heading into a federal election against the pro-pipeline Tories and pro-pipeline Liberals, the NDP have a

golden opportunity to be an electoral alternative, amplifying the flow of the climate justice movement. But instead they are acting like a valve, containing the movement.

While opposing the Northern Gateway and Keystone XL pipelines for nationalist reasons, the NDP leadership supports domestic refining and pumping tar sands east.

According to the recent IPCC report, we are headed for “severe, widespread and irreversible impact globally” if we don't dramatically curb carbon emissions. The tar sands are Canada's fastest growing source of carbon emissions, so our collective security depends on stopping pipeline expansion and shutting down the tar sands.

Domestic refining is no alternative to export, and has been a catastrophe for Indigenous communities like Aamjiwnaang. Challenging the oil economy also makes sense from a jobs perspective: the oil industry is the least efficient job creator and a study by Blue Green Canada shows that the billion dollar subsidies in oil could create 18,000 more green jobs.

No pipelines, no tar sands

Pipeline resistance across the continent has delayed ecocidal projects, exposed the regulatory and law enforcement apparatus of the state and the limits of social democracy, built solidarity with Indigenous communities defending their land, and highlighted the need for green job alternatives. We need to open up the valves and convert this flood of resistance into a torrent.

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Victory on Burnaby Mountain

by BRADLEY HUGHES

Protests led by Tsleil-waututh First Nation and Burnaby Residents Opposing Kinder Morgan Expansion (BROKE) have won a major victory against the tar sands pipelines.

The charges against protesters who defied the injunction were dropped, the company was unable to get its injunction extended and Kinder Morgan was unable to complete their survey work on Burnaby Mountain.

The proposed Kinder Morgan Trans mountain pipeline is a plan to add a second tar sands pipeline along the route of an already existing 1100km long pipeline. The pipeline will end in Burnaby in the unceded territory of the Tsleil-waututh First Nation and over 400 super tankers will travel in and out of the

Burrard inlet to collect this oil for delivery to markets in Asia. The existing pipeline has seen seven spills of more than 800,000 litres of oil since 2005. One of those spills was in the city of Burnaby itself.

In September, Kinder Morgan came to Burnaby Mountain to prepare for drilling to survey the interior of the mountain. This drilling is to support their application to the National Energy Board to route the pipeline through a tunnel through Burnaby Mountain. They began by clear cutting a section of forest inside the park. Protests began building from then on. The city of Burnaby won a court case to stop the planned drilling, but Kinder Morgan was able to get a ruling from the NEB allowing them to proceed. However, everywhere Kinder Morgan went they

were obstructed by protesters. After a week in court, the courts sided with profit over people and granted an injunction to take effect on November 17 at 4PM.

Eight hundred protesters showed up at that time and the RCMP did not enforce the court order. Three days later the RCMP began arresting people. Over 120 people were arrested for crossing the police line. At the same time hundreds more cheered them on. Grand Chief of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Stewart Phillip, announced to the assembled delegates of the BC Federation of Labour that he was going to Burnaby Mountain to get arrested. He was greeted with thunderous applause. The arrestees included university professors, doctors, parents, grand parents, children, authors and at least one 87 year old.

Mass civil disobedience discredited the injunction and pushed the courts to throw them out on a technicality. It turns out that the company that wants our trust to build and operate an 1100 km long pipeline doesn't know how to operate a GPS device properly. On Thursday, November 27, the courts threw out all the charges and denied the request to extend the injunction, and Kinder Morgan beat a hasty retreat off the mountain the next day.

These victories were possible due to the work activists across the province have done for years, and the growing solidarity with, and support for, the First Nations on whose land these ecocidal projects are being built.

This resistance and solidarity will need to continue, against all pipelines.