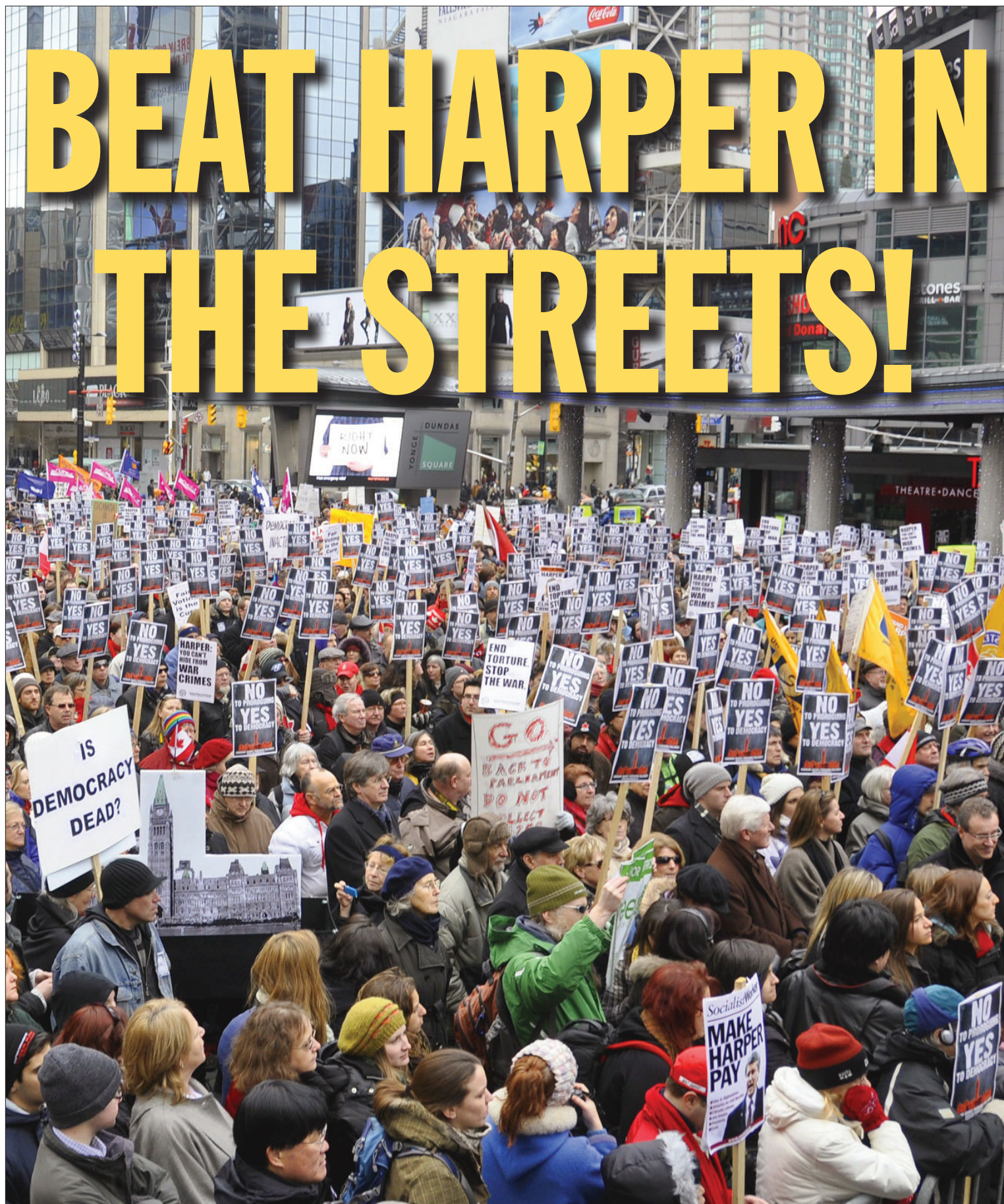


SocialistWorker

www.socialist.ca

\$2 | no. 544 | September 2012

Don't wait until 2015...



HARPER'S PARLIAMENTARY majority raised the spectre of an environmentally destructive and bigoted austerity agenda. But more than a year into the mandate, there has been significant opposition that is pushing back against the Tory attacks. While Harper dominates Parliament, the 99% is strongest when we unite in our workplaces, schools and communities—and push the NDP in Parliament to act as a megaphone for the movement.

Petro state

Harper wants to use the Tar Sands to make Canada a petro-state with massive pipelines, but there is increasing opposition. Years of indigenous resistance have raised

the Tar Sands as a national issue and united increasingly larger numbers.

When opposition in the US threatened the pipeline to the US, Harper promised to send oil west to China. But there is growing opposition in BC, which has pushed provincial governments to raise concerns and forced Harper to make more ambiguous statements about his drive for pipelines.

Pro-choice majority

On his path to a majority, Harper and the anti-choice zealots that fill his party have become increasingly open about their attacks on a women's right to choose—from cuts to maternal health during the G20, to Motion 312 that is working its way through Parliament.

While the Tory anti-choice majority dominates Parliament, the population outside Parliament is a pro-choice majority—and it is starting to mobilize. October 20 will be a pan-Canadian day of action for choice. Abortion rights were won despite a Tory majority under Mulroney, and they will be defended despite a Tory majority under Harper.

Refugees

To justify the austerity agenda, the Tories require scapegoats—provided by Harper's right-hand man, Jason Kenney, the Minister for Censorship and Deportation. Kenney has attacked Muslims, Tamils, Palestinians, Roma, Mexicans, war resisters, and even British MP George Galloway.

The Tories thought attacking refu-

gee health would be an easy target to justify cuts to Medicare, but the \$20-million cuts a year provoked a backlash by health providers across the country—who occupied Tory offices, confronted ministers and pushed back some of the cuts.

Against austerity

The Quebec student strike has inspired people across the country and united hundreds of thousands to strike back against the austerity agenda. The solidarity casserole demonstrations that erupted from coast to coast shows the mood to fight austerity. The Air Canada wildcat strike showed a glimpse of what's possible when workers gain the confidence to resist austerity, shutting down the profits of the 1%.

Algonquin Nation at Barriere Lake

Page 2

Valerie Lannon on the growing links between indigenous and student struggles in Quebec

Abortion Rights

Page 2

Michelle Robidoux on the failed anti-choice caravan

Saudi Arabia

Page 3

Yusur Al Bahrani on the mass protests

Sudan

Page 3

Ahmed El Bassiouny on the African Spring

Islamophobia

Page 4

Omri Haiven on racism in France

Rio+20

Page 5

Bradley Hughes takes on the myth of 'green capitalism'

Year of workers' struggles

Pages 6 & 7

Ritch Whyman looks at the lessons learned from a year of labour fights

Disability Pride

Page 8

Melissa Graham invites people of all abilities to show their pride

Teachers protest

Page 11

Pam Johnson on the resistance to McGuinty's education attacks



CPMA No. 58554253-99
ISSN No. 0836-7094

Indigenous and student struggles unite

by VALERIE LANNON

The Algonquin Nation at Barriere Lake (ABL), Quebec, has long defended its territory against clearcut logging by Resolute Forest Products (formerly known as Abitibi Bowater). Without consultation, Resolute sent loggers into the territory to begin clearcutting in early July.

ABL immediately set up a protest camp near the logging site and Quebec police have maintained a large presence there to escort loggers. The work is in violation of the Trilateral Agreement the Quebec government signed with ABL in 1991.

In solidarity with this struggle, hundreds organized a casseroles protest in Ottawa in front of the corporate office of Resolute and then marched to Premier Charest’s office.

Beatriz Munoz, a representative of the social struggle committee of the prominent student group CLASSE, stated “Support for Indigenous rights is central to our broader struggle for the common good.”

Meanwhile, back at the protest camp, Tillis Wawatie, an 18-year-old Algonquin student, cut out red squares for ABL campers. The Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement Ottawa stated “It’s the same government which created Law 78 to silence the movement against tuition fee increases and austerity measures that has granted companies the right to exploit the ancestral land of Indigenous people.”

For more information visit www.barrierelakesolidarity.org

Anti-choice caravan fails

by MICHELLE ROBIDOUX

AN ATTEMPT by anti-choice activists to galvanize opposition to abortion has failed miserably.

On May 29, the so-called ‘New Abortion Caravan’ left Vancouver on a cross-country trek that arrived in Ottawa on July 1. In every city they visited along the way, they were met by pro-choice protests and their message had no hearing.

In Toronto on June 28, the anniversary of the Stonewall uprising, a few dozen anti-choice zealots were confronted by 100 pro-choice activists. Chanting “Women’s rights are here to stay, We’re never going back!”, the pro-choice forces received strong support from local residents. Many stopped to sign petitions against the Tory motion 312, which would open the door to recriminalizing abortion.

Unions such as CAW, USW, OPSEU and CUPE were well represented at protests across the country. This kind of solidarity will be key to defeating Conservative attempts to roll back the gains of past struggles. In the spirit of the original Abortion Caravan of 1970, people across the country are once again mobilizing to make sure that women have full access to free abortion from BC to Newfoundland.



Resisting Kenney’s cuts to refugee health

by IAN BEECHING

In a bid to turn citizens against refugees and distract from cuts to Medicare, Minister of Immigration Jason Kenney has cut basic health care rights for the most traumatized, vulnerable and marginalized people in the world.

Claiming to create equality by limiting coverage, Kenney cut all but emergent health care for refugees not sponsored by the government. In a shocking display of racism, children needing medicine essential for life such as insulin will no longer be covered, and those with infections such as tuberculosis will only be covered if they are deemed a “threat to public health.” Life-threatening conditions like heart attacks are not considered public health threats and are not covered.

Removing the right for each refugee’s case to be heard on its individual merits, Kenney is declaring a list of “safe countries,” in which their cases may be dismissed and services denied. This also applies to the route of immigration, putting barriers to inland claimants such as those working in the highly exploitative guest workers program or refugees arriving through the American border. On this basis some groups of refugees may find even emer-

gency room visits denied due to cuts in coverage.

The government claims the cuts will save tax payers \$20 million a year over five years—a drop in the bucket compared to the \$25 billion fighter jets, and a distraction from the massive cuts planned for Medicare. As many doctors have pointed out, the proposed cost saving is highly misleading as those deprived of medicine will find themselves increasingly in emergency departments where costs for a single visit can start at \$750 and reach the tens of thousands.

Many migrants arrive in Canada as a result of our country’s imperialist and exploitative foreign policies—such as resource extraction in Latin America that destroys the lands and livelihood of thousands of indigenous people, or the brutal and destructive barbarism our government has committed in Afghanistan, forcing one of the largest per capita migrations in modern history. Refugees often arrive traumatized and with serious and immediate health needs. With nothing to their names and discriminated against being able to work, many refugees are forced to the poorest strata of society with the lack of meagre welfare coverage.

Disgusted by the government’s lack

of consultation and disastrous cuts, thousands of doctors, nurses, lawyers, social workers and other health professionals have gone to the streets in protest. On June 18 protests organized by the newly-formed Canadian Doctors for Refugee Care saw over 2,000 doctors and nurses protest in 14 cities across the country. Doctors have confronted Tory ministers in Toronto, Ottawa and London, and a 17-year-old student and former refugee confronted Kenney at a Tory fundraiser in Edmonton.

Kenney is feeling the pressure. One day before the cuts were to be implemented, he reversed in part a previous announcement that would have seen health coverage for all groups of refugees cut, and will now provide care for government-sponsored refugees. This partial victory shows the power of protest, however the struggle is far from over as many refugees still lack coverage.

To continue the pressure a newly formed group in Vancouver—Sanctuary Health—has sought to bring together health care workers and refugees in opposition to the cuts. On August 2, a vigil was held in protest of the cuts with a beautiful mural painted by members depicting the struggle of migrants.

Poverty to blame for Scarborough shooting

by EVAN JOHNSTON

THE SCARBOROUGH shooting in the Morningside neighborhood on July 16 has left the community shaken to its core. Shyanne Charles, 14, and Joshua Yasay, 23, were killed at a block party on Danzig Street, near Morningside Drive and Lawrence Avenue. Twenty-six others—including an infant—were injured after an altercation led to an exchange of gunfire.

As Toronto has begun to reflect on this terrible tragedy, a profoundly racist discourse has emerged in the public discussion of the event, with social media buzzing with various forms of victim-blaming. It’s the fault of absent black fathers and the lack of a traditional family in the black community, some say. It’s the result of a romanticized ‘gangbanger’ attitude and therefore their own fault for participating, say others.

In each variation, people are blaming the victims, arguing that it’s an inevitable result of people ‘embracing a ghetto lifestyle.’

Less overtly racist responses have tended to focus on either the movement of illegal guns across the border, or on the lack of police presence in the Morningside community. But as one Toronto resident tweeted, “Poverty is

the proximate cause. Not border control, not gangs, not the police.”

Scarborough is being left behind, and one only has to take a quick look at the numbers to understand the unequal conditions that are giving rise to these forms of gang violence. According to United Way statistics, from 1981 to 2001, there’s been a 136.6 per cent growth in poor families in Scarborough. As of 2001, 83 per cent of poor families are families of colour, while 64 per cent are immigrant families.

In the Morningside neighbourhood where Danzig is located, 51.3 per cent of individuals 15 and older are classified as low-income, and 56.6 per cent in neighbouring West Hill. These statistics were collected before the economic crisis that began with the 2007-8 recession, and the inequality in these neighbourhoods has likely only grown more acute.

According to Respect Scarborough, a grassroots organization formed in 2011, “Large factories which once provided well-paying, permanent jobs have been closing up, going bankrupt, or shifting production south of the border (or overseas). Good jobs are harder and harder to find because of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the rising value of the dollar, and globalization.” Low-paying part-time and temp

jobs have increasingly filled the void, and immigrant workers in particular are often forced into extremely poor working conditions.

As we search for answers to these shootings, it’s crucial to connect the most visible forms of violence with the deeper, structural violence that may not be as visible, but that gives rise to these more visible ones all the same.

With unemployment and poverty on the rise, Toronto Mayor Rob Ford voted last January to cut funding for youth outreach workers, and in June voted against every one of the city’s development grants programs. Harper and McGuinty are also implicated in this deeper violence, as their austerity budgets have hacked at the social programs these communities depend on.

Recently, the Toronto District School Board announced that it was closing eight Toronto schools, two of which are in the Morningside neighbourhood: Heron Park Junior Public School and Peter Secor Junior Public School.

It’s within this context that the shooting occurred. The racists and Harper and the “tough-on-crime crowd” have their perspective, but we need to focus on the systemic reasons for this tragedy. As Scarborough begins to heal, we owe it to the victims and their families to fight for real solutions to gun violence.

Enbridge: cracks in the pipelines and the project

by CHARLOTTE IRELAND

ENBRIDGE INC. has recently come under much warranted criticism when the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) released its report on the company’s massive July 2010 oil spill in Michigan.

Enbridge, which was fined a mere \$3.7 million for the spill, acted like “Keystone Kops” as they failed to report the spill for 17 hours, the report confirmed. The incident, which leaked more than 20,000 barrels of crude oil in and around the Kalamazoo River, could have been averted. Enbridge failed to repair a defect on the pipeline that had been discovered five years before the spill. Adding to Enbridge’s already appalling record, another line rupture spilling over 1,000 barrels of oil in a Wisconsin field occurred on July 27 almost exactly two years after the Michigan spill.

Enbridge’s disastrous spills and the scathing NTSB report are adding to the growing public opposition to the \$6-billion Northern Gateway pipeline—which will carry oil 1,170km from the Alberta tar sands to the BC coast, then continue on its way to the US and Asia. The Vancity Credit Union announced August 22 that it has divested its holdings in Enbridge based on the NTSB report.

Cracks are appearing in the wall of Tory support for the pipeline. In early August, BC’s Tory MP, Heritage Minister James Moore, blasted Enbridge’s environmental record: “This project will not survive public scrutiny unless Enbridge takes far more seriously their obligation to...answer...about the way in which they’ve operated their business in the very recent past.” Harper wishes to push ahead, but Moore’s statements reflect the heat the party is facing.

Federal NDP leader Thomas Mulcair opposes the Tar Sands exports, instead calling for “developing, upgrading, processing, refining our own natural resources here.” Meanwhile, BC NDP’s Adrian Dix stated his party opposes the pipeline and, if elected, would withdraw from the federal government’s review process and initiate its own. The opposition to the pipeline is welcome, but we don’t want tar sands at home and we don’t need another pipeline review. We need to shut tar sands and pipelines down now.

Socialist Worker

e-mail: reports@socialist.ca

phone: **416.972.6391**

twitter: **@socialist_ca**

All correspondence to:

Socialist Worker

P.O. Box 339, Station E
Toronto, ON M6H 4E3

Published every four weeks in Toronto by the International Socialists. Printed in Hamilton at a union shop; member of the Canadian Magazine Publisher’s Association / Canadian Publications Mail Agreement No. 58554253-99, Post Office Department, Ottawa / ISSN 0836-7094 / Return postage guaranteed



‘No-fly zones’ will undermine Syria’s revolution

by **JESSE MCLAREN**

AS THE Assad regime turns to increasingly brutal methods in a desperate attempt to stay in power, the West is threatening to undermine the revolution with “no-fly zones.”

The revolution against Assad continues to spread, involving battles for control over every major city. Assad is losing control, with defections from high-ranking officials (the Prime Minister fled to Jordan) and troops refusing to fight and defecting. With his regime crumbling,

Assad is resorting to increasingly brutal methods to stay in power—including sending fighter jets to bomb cities. Already, 20,000 have been killed, 200,000 are refugees and Assad has threatened to use chemical weapons.

The West is arming sections of the Free Syrian Army through Saudi Arabia, and backing the right-wing leadership of the Syrian National Council—in order to hijack the revolution. The West has long wanted to remove Assad and impose a more compliant regime as a stepping-stone to confronting Iran.

As with Libya, there is inter-imperial rivalry over Syria: France (under its new “socialist” government) is joining the US in pushing for “no-fly zones,” while Russia and China continue to support Assad. “No-fly zones” in Libya allowed NATO powers to bomb and hijack the revolution, but the lack of forces on the ground limits their control.

The West’s hypocrisy over “no-fly zones” is revealed by the silent endorsement of Israel’s threats to bomb Iran. The US overthrew Iran’s democratic government in 1953 and installed the brutal Shah. When the

Iranian Revolution overthrew him, the US armed Saddam Hussein to fight Iran. The 2003 Iraq War was supposed to pave the way for invading Iran, but resistance across the region has so far prevented it. So the US unleashed Israel to attack Lebanon in 2006 (during which there were no calls for “no-fly zones”) and threatens to support an Israeli attack on Iran before the US elections.

The best way to support people in the region is by stopping Western military intervention—whether it be “no-fly zones” in Syria, arming Saudi Arabia, or support for Israel.

Libya’s unfinished revolution

by **JESSE MCLAREN**

ACCORDING TO mainstream media, Libya’s revolution is safely resolved, having ousted dictator Muammar Gaddafi and democratically elected a moderate leader, Mahmoud Jibril. Furthermore, commentators are hailing Libya as a step forward for the Arab Spring, as elections brought a secular leader, as opposed to the Islamist parties that won in Tunisia and Egypt. Such accounts are misleading.

The Arab Spring exploded in opposition to Western-backed repressive regimes that were implementing neoliberal policies. The combination of mass protests and mass strikes quickly toppled dictators in Tunisia and Egypt, threatening Western-control of the oil-rich region. So NATO intervened in Libya, both militarily and politically to support a National Transitional Council (NTC) dominated by former regime elements—like Mustafa Abdel Jalil (former justice minister)

and Mahmoud Jibril (former head of “economic development,” i.e. privatization).

Within Canada, the Harper government used the war to justify billions on fighter jets, and kick start a \$1-billion program for unmanned drones. Within Libya, “humanitarian intervention” was used to minimize revolutionary change. As the NTC’s head of reconstruction said, the new regime would honour all contracts signed between Gaddafi and the West (including Canada’s Suncor): “The contracts in the oil fields are absolutely sacrosanct...There is no question of revoking any contract.”

Labeling Libya’s leaders “moderate” just because they are not Islamist ignores the contradictions of Islamist parties and the complicity of Libya’s new leaders with Gaddafi and the West. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood was historically in opposition to the Western-backed Mubarak dictatorship. It is a contradictory formation with the leadership supporting neoliberalism and

the military regime, but a youth base that, along with the left, has been part of pushing the revolution forward. The revolution succeeded in stopping the election of Mubarak’s former prime minister, Ahmed Shafiq, and ongoing strikes and protests have the potential of preserving the revolution.

While Islamist parties are contradictory, the so-called moderate leadership in Libya consistently supports the neoliberal policies that provoked the revolution. Jibril has a history of working with Gaddafi, and an alliance with the imperial NATO countries that used to sell him weapons. NATO and Jibril are trying to smother the revolution and reduce it simply to elections.

But this is not guaranteed. NATO hijacked the leadership, but does not control events on the ground. It was the people of Libya who ousted Gaddafi, and ongoing demands could push the revolution forward beyond the narrow confines of elections. Last fall, oil workers at Waha Oil

(a joint venture with US oil giant ConocoPhillips) went on strike for two months and successfully removed a corrupt manager with ties to Gaddafi, despite attempts by Jibril’s regime to keep him in power. As oil worker Ahmed al-Mahmoudi said, “We are very cautious to rebuild our country in a new way and we don’t want to see the same names and figures that used to exist in the reign of Muammar Qaddafi, even for an interim period. Because it is disrespectful to the blood of the martyrs who have sacrificed their lives.” During recent elections, oil workers in the east went on strike to protest the lack of political representation in government.

If strikes and protests continue across the region, they could expose the Western-backed neoliberal policies of new regimes, both Islamist and secular, and continue pushing the Arab Spring forward. We can show solidarity by opposing our own government’s military and corporate intervention.

Anti-austerity protests in Sudan

by **AHMED EL BASSIOUNY**

SINCE JUNE 2012, streets in Sudan have been packed with upset masses of people, protesting against austerity, corrupt government and unjust laws.

The protests have been nourished by the revolutionary success across the Middle East during what is now being called the Arab Spring—which has spread across Africa.

The reality is that anger has been accumulating across Sudan since 2011, especially after the independence of Southern Sudan after two decades of bloody civil war. The north is still under control of Omar

Al-Bashir’s 23-year-old regime. The newly structured south gets three quarters of the country’s share of oil (thanks to US-driven partition). That leaves the north struggling for income to pay for imports. In addition, the South Sudanese troops invaded the Heglig oil field in April 2012, causing severe damage and leading to its closure. That resulted in another 20 per cent drop in oil revenue.

In an attempt to save the economy, Al-Bashir’s repressive government announced a new austerity plan on June 18, 2012. The new plan included an increase in consumer taxes, a drop in wages, an increase

in lay-offs, and a hike in the price of a gallon of oil by 5 Sudanese Pounds (from 8.5 to 13.5). The plan led to an decrease in fuel subsidies and an anger that further led the masses out to the streets.

On June 17, one day before the announcement of the new austerity plan, Sudanese students and other protesters erupted on the streets, fighting against the escalating prices of basic goods. After the announcement of the austerity plan on June 18, students started their anti-austerity campaigns. Riot police rushed in with tear gas and live bullets in an attempt to clear the streets. Police ran over peaceful protesters, but the

force of the Sudanese police could not stop the protesters’ demands.

After days of political unrest and violence, the Sudanese police spokesman, Al-Ser Ahmed, denied the use of excessive force. At the same time, the state media has repeatedly mentioned that Sudan’s police force has ordered an end to the protests, “immediately.”

The Sudanese people are still fighting for their rights, mainly in Omdurman, Khartoum, Burri, Daim, El-Obeid, Sennar and Bahri. Thousands have been arrested, while hundreds have been killed and injured. The protests continue despite repression and global silence.

Protests hit Saudi Arabia

by **YUSUR AL BAHRANI**

THE WESTERN-backed regime of Saudi Arabia has been a key counter-revolutionary force against the Arab Spring, but is encountering resistance of its own, including hundreds protesting the shooting of an anti-regime cleric and tens of thousands protesting the killing of protesters.

The Saudi dictatorship has long been armed by the West—including a \$60-billion arms deal signed by Obama—to support repressive regimes across the region. Saudi Arabia provided shelter for the Tunisian and Yemeni dictators when they were driven out by revolutions. Saudi Arabia has supported the military regime in Egypt and sent its own troops to help the dictatorship in Bahrain attack protesters. Despite these attempts to crush the Arab Spring, protests have spread to Saudi Arabia.

Police opened fire on peaceful protesters in the eastern province of Qatif, killing two and injuring others, following the arrest of prominent anti-regime cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir Al-Nimr on July 8.

According to activists, security forces shot Al-Nimr in an attempt to assassinate him. He was injured and then arrested by Saudi police. Pictures of him covered with a blood-stained white blanket in a police car were circulated in social media. Hundreds of outraged protesters occupied Qatif roundabout and flooded surrounding streets. Saudi security forces opened fire. Two protestors, Akbar Shakouri from Awamiya and Mohamed Filfil from Qatif, were killed.

Following the incident, the Interior Ministry denied targeting peaceful protestors: “Gun shots have been overheard in random areas of the town. However, there was no security confrontation whatsoever.”

In order to silence the pro-democracy movement and limit the spread of demonstrations, the Interior Ministry described peaceful protestors and Al-Nimr as “seditious instigators.” Al-Nimr is well known for his speeches that condemn the Saudi ruling family and other dictatorships in the region.

Following those statements, more than 30,000 demonstrators participated in the funeral of Muhamed Filfil chanting, “Down with Al-Saud.” The ruling class in Saudi Arabia is threatened by a deep movement against oppression that unites people under the famous chant, “No Sunni, no Shia, we are all brothers.”

Protests have not stopped. Saudi security forces killed Hussain Al-Qallaf, 19 years old. Again, tens of thousands participated in his funeral in Qatif on August 6. Protests have also spread across other parts of Saudi Arabia, including Riyadh, where activists, protestors and families of political prisoners and victims demand an end to oppression and arbitrary arrests.

Oil-rich Saudi Arabia is one of the most repressive regimes in the world, backed by imperialists and supplied with US and Canadian arms. By condemning the hypocrisy of Western governments, we can stand in solidarity with pro-democracy movements in the Arab Gulf states.

Communism and the colonies

THE FOURTH Congress of the Communist International, or "Comintern," in 1922 considered many issues that would be familiar to socialists today. In this politically explosive period—following World War One and the Russian Revolution—much attention turned to the “colonial question.”

The recently published proceedings, *Toward the United Front*, reveal the scope of debates that were characteristic of the first four congresses of the Comintern. As summarized by translator and editor John Riddell:

“At the time of the Fourth Congress, the Communist movement in Asia and North Africa was just getting established. Communist groups were beginning to take root among peoples in Soviet Asia, where the anticolonial revolution was unfolding at a rapid pace. Small Communist parties had been formed in Iran and Turkey, and a revolutionary group in Egypt had applied for membership. The newly formed Communist Party of China was small but growing rapidly, and Communists in India, led by M.N. Roy, were taking their first steps. In the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), Communists among the settlers had led the transformation of their nucleus into a wholly indigenous movement. In contrast, the Communist Party in Algeria was composed of colonial settlers who were uninterested in recruiting native revolutionaries to their movement.”

National liberation

The Fourth Congress had a solid foundation in earlier congress meetings, with a commitment to support national liberation movements against imperialism and colonialism. But applying this in practice on the ground proved a challenge. Even the allotment of a reasonable amount of time to discuss the “eastern question” was contentious. Manabendra Nath (M.N.) Roy, a founder of the Indian Communist Party and a delegate to the Fourth Congress, indicated the sense of frustration:

“Comrades, the Eastern question should have been dealt with many times already.... And now that this question finally is posed for debate, the time allowed for that is so limited that it is in practice simply not possible to handle the question in anything like a clear manner.”

Roy stressed the changes that had taken place since the revolutionary and anti-colonial upsurge of 1919. He implored the delegates to take heed of the variation among different eastern colonies and contexts, and to note the emerging role of the local bourgeois classes. In some countries, such as India, significant class divisions were emerging within the national resistance movements.

“[T]he various forces and social factors that comprised these movements have become more distinct, even as their economic foundations have developed.... Thus in the countries with more capitalist development, for example, the highest layer of the bourgeoisie, that is, the layer that already owns what one might call a stake in the country and has invested significant capital and built up industry, now considers it more advantageous for them to shelter under imperialist protection.... In other words, the industrial development of the bourgeoisie requires law and order, which in most of these countries was introduced by foreign imperialism. Given the threat posed to this law and order and the possibility of disturbances and revolutionary uprisings, it now seems more appropriate to the native bourgeoisie to conclude a compromise with the imperialist authorities.”

Marxism and Islam

Other delegates identified the changing relationship between Marxist and pan-Islamic currents within the anti-imperialist struggle. Tan Malaka, for example, a delegate to the Fourth Congress from the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia after independence in 1945), addressed the promise of uniting in practice, and the dangers of a sectarian attitude.

“We have a long experience of pan-Islamism.... In Java there is quite a large association called Sarekat Islam (Islamic Federation), which includes many poor peasants. Between 1912 and 1916 this organisation had perhaps a million members—it could well have been as many as three or four million.... Our party, with thirteen thousand members, went into the popular movement and carried out propaganda there. In 1921 we were successful in getting Sarekat Islam to adopt our programme. The Islamic association spoke out in the villages for control of the factories and for the slogan: All power to the poor peasants, all power to the proletarians! ... But in 1921 a split occurred as a result of clumsy criticism of the leaders of Sarekat Islam. The government, through its agents in Sarekat Islam, took advantage of this split and also made use of the decision of the Second Congress of the Communist International: ‘Struggle against Pan-Islamism!’ What did they say to the ordinary peasants? They said: You see, the Communists do not merely want to split your religion, they also want to destroy it.... So we had a split.”

As Tan Malaka appealed to the delegates to understand this error, and to apply the tactic of the united front consistently, the chair interrupted, “Your time is up.” But Tan Malaka replied, “I come from the Indies; I travelled for forty days.” At this point, the proceedings indicate “Applause,” and Tan Malaka continues to draw lessons for the Comintern.

Clearly, there are rich lessons in these discussions for socialists who continue to challenge imperialism and to strive to build global solidarity today.

INTERNATIONAL



Bolivian indigenous communities win take-over of Canadian mine

AFTER PRESSURE from indigenous communities, the Bolivian government nationalized the Canadian corporation South American Silver’s mining project in Malku Khota. The *Financial Post* calls this the action of an “outlaw nation,” but the real outlaws are the imperial states and corporations that have been stripping wealth from Bolivia for centuries.

Malku Khota is in the department of Potosí in southern Bolivia. For 100 years, after being conquered by Spain, the mines of Potosí, through the use of forced indigenous labour, produced half of the entire world’s gold and silver. None of that wealth stayed in Potosí.

The social movements sweeping Latin America brought Evo Morales to office. Under the new constitution, indigenous communities are supposed

to have official control over their land and its use.

But when Vancouver-based South American Silver failed to get the last three of the 46 communities in Malku Khota to sign a deal, 50 police officers broke into people’s homes on May 5. In response, community leaders detained two of the police, releasing them later.

The theft of resources by transnational corporations have pitted communities against each other, and on May 18 three people were injured in a confrontation between those for and against the project—which police used as a pretext to arrest anti-mining leader, Tata Cancio Rojas.

On June 7, indigenous people fought riot police outside the vice-president’s office—demanding President Evo Morales cancel the agreement with the Canadian subsidiary. On June 29,

anti-mining forces detained two engineers working for South American Silver. Police responded on July 7 with a “rescue” operation that shot and killed Jose Mamani, one of the anti-mining activists.

As a result of the revolt, Morales met with local indigenous leaders who were opposed to the mining project, urged the Public Ministry to carry out an investigation into the killing of Mamani, and nationalized the mine.

This is the latest nationalization won by the social movements that carried Morales into office. As the *Financial Post* noted, “Under Morales the country has become a world leader in this department. He nationalized Bolivia’s national gas industry in 2006, its biggest telecommunications company in 2008, its hydroelectric complex in 2010 and its leading power company in 2012.”

More Islamophobia in France

by OMRI HAIVEN

A HIGH-profile incident of Islamophobia involving a town hall on the outskirts of Paris shows that, within a culture of xenophobia, the parties of the left can be just as reactionary as those on the right.

A unique Iftar broke the day’s fasting for Muslims and their allies who celebrated the sixteenth day of Ramadan in the Gennevilliers suburb of Paris.

Opponents of the town hall’s decision to fire camp counsellors who had been fasting for Ramadan assembled at twilight to voice their displeasure.

The town’s Communist Party government has continued in its refusal to admit wrongdoing in a case that has brought it closer to a host of unlikely allies on the national stage. These allies include, most notably, the right-wing federal opposition party, the UMP (for-

merly of Sarkozy notoriety) and the crypto-fascist Front National.

Four camp counsellors were dismissed, based on a clause in their contract that stipulates that they must properly hydrate and eat when working. The legality of the decision was questionable, given the wide definition of what “properly” constitutes, while the morality of a town hall’s imposing its cultural norms on religious practitioners called up much bigger questions.

Despite retracting the dismissals, and eventually the offending clause in the contract, the town hall has refused to acknowledge wrongdoing, even refusing to accept the services of the local mosque that has offered to help de-escalate the situation.

Despite widespread condemnation of the firings from groups such as the New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA), the town

hall still maintains that it was only acting for the best interest of the children, basing its decision on a loosely worded portion of a contract—which itself came from the unfounded assumption that an accident involving a camp counsellor and two children two years ago was the direct result of weakness induced by the Ramadan fast.

But, as one commentator has put it, “tens of millions of Muslims around the world have observed Ramadan for centuries; if this indeed caused disasters, we would know by now!” This is just the latest in a troubling trend of Islamophobia that continues to plague France.

The complicity of the Communist Party shows the legacy of Stalinism that purged religious freedoms, but in this case the NPA is demonstrating the right response: fight racism and Islamophobia.

Protests against private education in Chile

by SARAH VARNAM

HIGH SCHOOL and university students in Chile have been protesting for over a year. Thousands of students have marched through the capital and other cities, banging pots and pans to draw awareness to their cause.

There are reports of violence by both students and police, including burnt buses and tear gas. Students in Chile are demanding a solution to their debt crisis. They cannot afford to pay up to \$10,000 a year on tuition when the aver-

age income is \$16,000. The school system has been privatized since Pinochet. Students complain of low quality and high costs. They say that poor students suffer because they can only afford under-funded state schools.

What is the solution? The government has proposed to raise \$1 billion toward thousands of new scholarships and reduce student loan interest (from an average 6 per cent to 2 per cent). The students, however, want to see a free school system.

Some Chilean students see their

struggle as one they share with Quebec students. A letter to Quebec students has been circulating the internet in which “Chilean academics and student leaders, denounce to national and international public opinion the persecution of the student movement in Quebec, Canada, expressed in Act 78, which was enacted on Thursday, May 19 by the government of Prime Minister Jean Charest.” These academics and student leaders further state that “the struggle of students, academics, and workers in Quebec is also our struggle.”

RIO+20: leaders agree to more consultations before rearranging deck chairs

Bradley Hughes looks at the failures of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 to address climate change and the real solutions proposed by the People's Summit for Social and Environmental Justice.

The outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 is full of words like “We recognize,” “We take note,” “We reaffirm our resolve,” and “We stress the importance of.” Missing entirely is language like, “We will.”

Known as “Rio+20,” the three-day conference was held in Rio de Janeiro on the twentieth anniversary of the first Earth Summit in that city. In the intervening twenty years, carbon emissions have increased by nearly 50 per cent and we have seen the effects of climate change in devastating hurricanes and typhoons, droughts, floods, heat waves, forest fires and more. In response, the world's governments decided to do less.

No targets, no goals, no nothing

The wording of the outcome document does not commit any government to anything. There are no planned reductions of carbon emissions, no funds provided from the rich nations to aid the underdeveloped nations in improving standards of living via carbon-free technologies, no development programs to aid those dispossessed by climate change, or anything else concrete. Not even some flowery phrases “affirming” or “recognizing” the right to a healthy environment.

In place of action, the outcome document reads, “We resolve to establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on sustainable development goals that is open to all stakeholders, with a view to developing global sustainable development goals to be agreed by the General Assembly.” A committee of 30 nations will produce these goals and present them to the General Assembly. In other words, they agreed to talk about it later.

Green economy

The outcome document discusses three dimensions to sustainable development—social, environmental and economic. However, it is clear that economic sustainability is given the most importance. It's also interesting that, when they use the word “dimension” in math and physics, a change in one dimension can be made without affecting the other two. There is no recognition that under capitalism economic growth always comes at a cost to our environment and our well-being.

The solution to the environmental and social problems caused by capitalism, according to the outcome document, is more capitalism. The “green economy” is to be implemented by placing a dollar value on everything. For a business, the only values are those attached to prices. So under capitalism, if something has no price, it literally has no value. People value fresh air, abundant oceans and forests, and the kind of stable climate that arose over the last 10,000 years. But capitalism as a system doesn't. So their solution is to try to put prices on everything and let market specu-



lators determine the correct price. Through the magic of the market, all of these “commodities” will now be preserved. Much the way putting a price on cod preserved the Atlantic cod fishery, or putting a price on wood preserved the forests of Europe and North America.

From the rice fields of Asia to the corn fields of the US, climate change is happening now. Rice production has declined and is expected to drop drastically due to alternating droughts and floods, and increasing salinization from rising seas. In the US, recurring droughts have reached “dust bowl” proportions. This year corn production is down 45 per cent and soy beans 35 per cent. This means higher prices and shortages in a world where millions already starve.

This is good news for those who speculate and profit from food. Chris Mahoney, one such trader, told the *Guardian*: “In terms of the outlook for the balance of the year, the environment is a good one. High prices, lots of volatility, a lot of dislocation, tightness, a lot of arbitrage opportunities.”

Human rights

“The G7 countries, the Holy See, and Canada formed a shameful alliance against making a commitment to human rights, on occasion aided by the US,” said Jan Egeland, deputy executive director at Human Rights Watch, at the close of the conference.

Canada and its allies united against reaffirming the responsibility of businesses to respect rights. Governments also failed to address their human rights obligations when

they sit as shareholders of international financial institutions.

The opponents of gender equality, led by the Vatican, which has a seat at the UN as a Permanent Observer, were successful in removing any mention of reproductive rights from the draft outcome document. As a consequence, the final version does not recognize that women's rights are central to sustainable development. The opponents of women's rights were clear that reproductive rights include access to abortion, which they oppose.

Explicit references to freedom of assembly, freedom of association and freedom of speech were also removed from the draft document.

People's Summit

While the official representatives were inside avoiding the problems of climate change and other environmental disasters, thousands met at the People's Summit for Social and Environmental Justice, in defence of the commons, and against the commodification of life, to propose real solutions.

On the opening day of the UN summit, tens of thousands marched in the streets to demand economic and climate justice.

The march included trade unionists from Brazil and other countries. The delegation from the Landless Peasants Movement of Brazil carried a banner that read, “no to the false solutions of green capitalism.”

The final declaration of the People's Summit described how participants saw themselves. “The People's Summit is a symbolic moment in a new cycle of the trajectories of global struggles, giving

rise to a new convergence among movements of women, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, youth, family and peasant farmers, workers, traditional peoples and communities, defenders of the right to cities and religions from around the world.”

Their declaration addressed issues of gender and sexual equality, calling for “women's autonomy over their own bodies and sexuality” and LGBT rights. In the same paragraph as they demand that the work of the family no longer rest mostly with women, they also called for rights to organize and bargain collectively, and the right to a social safety net.

They called for democratic control over energy production and the right to determine how energy is produced and what it is used for. In order to do this, decentralized renewable energy resources need to be developed.

The People's Summit clearly identified the cause of our many problems: “the patriarchal, racist and homophobic capitalist system.”

In this vibrant organizing model that combines street protests with workshops and debates and cultural events, we can see what the solution to the climate crisis is.

“The People's Summit strengthened our conviction that only the people, organized and mobilized, can free the world from the control of corporations and financial capital.”

The official UN Rio+20 website can be found at <http://www.uncsd2012.org>

The final declaration of the People's Summit can be found at bit.ly/T1h3x8

References

to freedom of assembly, association and speech were removed from the conference document'

THE WORKING CLASS AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT TODAY

*As the attack on workers intensifies across Canada, **Ritch Whyman** assesses the labour movement and the ability of the working class to resist the austerity agenda.*

LABOUR DAY is always a good time to reflect on the past year of struggles, and there have been many in 2012. The year began with lockouts of Electro-Motive Deisel (EMD) workers in London, Ontario and Rio Tinto Alcan (RTA) employees in Alma, Quebec. This followed the pattern of large industrial multinationals that have targeted sections of workers with a strong and militant tradition.

Both lockouts received much solidarity and support from the broader labour movement. In London, a mass demonstration drew several thousand people, primarily from the surrounding area. While the lockout ended in defeat for the workers—Caterpillar eventually closed the plant—lessons are being drawn by activists in the union about what could have been done differently to stop future closures. These discussions are extremely important.

Unity

In Alma, the workers pushed their union, Métallos/United Steelworkers, to fight the lockout more aggressively. Families and workers mobilized in the community and linked up with RTA employees around the world. Crucially, workers at other RTA sites in Canada donated tens of thousands of dollars through special assessments on their wages to prevent the lockout in Alma from forcing employees to accept a bad deal. This example of cross-union, cross-workplace solidarity demonstrated the possibility of resisting a multinational corporation, and the potential for unity between workers in Quebec and English Canada. In the end, Alma workers saved hundreds of union jobs and defeated most of RTA's concessions on contracting out.

Air Canada wildcat

In the spring, a major development in the fight against austerity was the wildcat strike at Pearson International Airport in Toronto by Air Canada (AC) ramp and baggage crews. The wildcat effectively shut down AC operations in Canada for a day and spread to Montreal, Calgary and Vancouver. Previously, the Tories had removed the Canadian Union of Postal Workers' (CUPW) right to strike, along with AC workers from the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), and had stopped the Machinists (IAM) from engaging in a legal strike, by taking away their right to strike, too.

There are three factors that made the wildcat so exciting. First, it was a wildcat—a spontaneous, rank-and-file-led strike—a tactic not seen on such a big scale for a long time. Second, it was a *political* wildcat, opposing the firing and disciplining of workers for mocking the Minister of Labour Lisa Raitt. Third, it sent shockwaves through the left, and gave union activists a boost of confidence—especially when the suspended employees got their jobs back.

Behind the scenes, small groups of employees from different unions have been getting together to develop strategies and support each other, overcoming the sectionalism of their union leadership. Actions called by these groups, along with CAW and IAM workers, have helped create a space for anti-austerity resistance at the airport—the beginning of a rank-and-file network of militants.

Postal workers, teachers

Like postal workers at Canada Post, Machinists at Pearson Airport are locked in a war against the employer, which is trying to use anti-union laws to curtail the union's power on the shop floor. As a result, the union has been forced to instruct all shop floor stewards to return their steward's badges, as the employer continues to target militants. Also in the spring, teachers in British Columbia went on strike, shutting down schools for several days. Workers in some regions even argued for breaking the law, in order for the strike to continue.



Toronto library workers

Toronto library workers defied expectations by successfully pushing back right-wing Mayor Rob Ford's austerity agenda—the only municipal union to do so. Their success was primarily the result of preparatory work led by the union and rank-and-file activists, in generating public support for library services. This was a crucial victory, which helped turn the tide against Ford and right-wing councillors in Toronto, and which helped block—even if only temporarily—the contracting out of city janitors.

CP rail workers

At the end of May, a small group of workers once again attracted national attention—and the ire of the Tories. Four thousand engineers from CP Rail walked off the job over attacks on their pensions and working hours. The strike was national news and, in many small communities, had support from other workers.

Despite the small numbers involved in the strike, its effect on the economy was potentially massive. One report suggested that, if the strike had lasted two weeks, it could have cost half a billion dollars to the economy. This fact alone demonstrated the significant potential power that workers have at the point of production.

While the CP strikers were ordered back to work, the Tories were much more muted about the legislation, and took longer to enact it. The AC wildcat was a major embarrassment for the Tories, and has clearly helped push back their aggressive anti-union attacks.

Peel Region workers

Another important labour struggle was the recent strike by social service workers in Peel region, who resisted attempts by the employer to force cutbacks on the workers. Based in the

suburbs, these workers had built a strong tradition of solidarity in their union. The local even owns a school bus, which it runs for its flying squad, and is a regular fixture on picket lines and demonstrations across southern Ontario.

The Peel strike generated a number of impressive solidarity rallies and big lively picket lines at sites across the Brampton/Mississauga region—and showed that the mood to resist exists in areas not traditionally seen as hotbeds of labour radicalism.

State of the class

All these examples demonstrate that, despite the depth of employers' attacks on workers and unions, there is still a willingness to resist and fight back, amongst sections of the organized working class. The Occupy movement and its ability to address class issues on accessible terms—the 99% versus the 1%—have had a big impact on the wider public, giving workers the confidence to defend their rights against increasingly hostile and emboldened employers.

But these advances don't necessarily mean that all is well in the labour movement.

Strike statistics

There has still been no recovery from the decline in strike activity and working-class resistance at the point of production since the mid-1980s. From the high point of 1976 to today, there has been a tremendous drop in not only the numbers of days lost to strikes, but also the number of strikes and workers involved.

Starting in 2006, the number of strikes each month started to dip more frequently into the single digits, and the number of workers involved began to fall from the tens of thousands to the thousands. This shows that the unrelenting attack on workers' conditions has had the

effect of discouraging workers from going on strike in a bad economic climate. In addition, union leaderships have become far less inclined to support strikes, and far more ready to settle for the status quo (at best) or for concessions without a fight (at worst). Despite the severity of these attacks, and the general decline in strike action, the employers' offensive has not been as successful as elsewhere.

Union membership

Union membership has actually gone up over the past several years, primarily due to an expanded public sector, but also due to an increase in organizing by private sector unions. There are now 4.3 million unionized workers in Canada.

Density has fallen to under 30 per cent of the total workforce, and to around 16 per cent in the private sector. This is cause for alarm, but it hardly means that private sector unions are a spent force—as some observers, on both the left and right, like to argue.

If one looks at the levels of density by broad job category, a more nuanced view emerges about union density in Canada. Close to 70 per cent of the public sector is unionized, including universities, hospitals, schools and many government workplaces. Warehousing and transportation—strategic job categories, as shown by the CP rail strike—have a unionization rate of 45 per cent. Construction is unionized at 30 per cent and, surprisingly, manufacturing is still at least 25 per cent organized, despite plant closures and layoffs at unionized manufacturing firms.

However, private sector union density drops dramatically when it comes to food and accommodation, finance and insurance, and professional and other trades. Many of these categories

have never been unionized, but have grown in importance and size due to changes in the economy.

This is a rather different picture from what typically gets generalized by political pundits—that private sector unions are irrelevant and a thing of the past. It also belies the argument that unions can only grow by turning to "precarious" or "low-wage service workers."

These numbers show that, in some very important sectors of the economy, unions still have sizable memberships, much more than a toe-hold. But it also shows that, if the labour movement is to reverse the decline in its power, unions still have a lot of work to do to help organize workers in traditional industrial fields.

Upcoming battles

The proposed merger between CAW and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) is happening in the lead-up to what could be the toughest negotiations that CAW has faced with the Big Three automakers. Soon after Labour Day, the target company will be chosen to set the pattern, and there is no soft target this round. All three automakers are pleading poverty in Canada, despite all being profitable.

In Ontario, thousands of workers at colleges, school boards and nursing homes could soon be in strike positions. All these disputes will raise the question of who should pay for the economic crisis, and who decides the priorities in society—education and care for the elderly, or more money to enrich Bay Street and corporate executives?

Contracts will also expire in the fall and winter months for teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador; Dalhousie teaching assistants in Halifax; Provigo workers in Quebec; BC Ferries workers; aluminium workers in Bécancour, Quebec; Saskatchewan government employees; and VIA, CP and CN workers from various crafts and trades.

Again, the potential for strikes is no guarantee that strikes will actually happen, but activists should nevertheless remain on watch for workers who do go into struggle. Furthermore, labour militants should start discussing now all options for possible intervention before strikes happen or deals are made. In the process, there will surely be occasions to raise the political level—for solidarity with Quebec students, support for other workers, "peace and prosperity, not war and austerity," and so on. These questions always help workers face up to the tough questions posed by the class struggle.

Class anger

In the five years since the start of the financial crisis, there has been a slow-burning fire inside millions of working people and students. It has erupted most spectacularly in Egypt, Greece and parts of Europe, although there have also been significant eruptions in North America, from the Wisconsin labour battle, to Occupy Wall Street, to the Quebec student strike.

At every rally or picket line, there is a minority of workers struggling to make connections between their fight and those of other workers. During the CP rail strike, many workers (especially younger ones) drew the link between their struggle and the fight against EMD in London, against concessions by Air Canada workers, and against tuition fee increases in Quebec—all the while raising the slogans of the Occupy movement. Beyond that minority, the same sentiment exists. Inside the organized working class, there is a growing sense that something has to give.

Role of socialists

This creates an opening for revolutionary politics that socialists need to take seriously. In moments like these, however, there are two responses on the broad left that usually dominate: one of pessimism that often leads to predictable denunciations of both union leaders and activists for not being militant enough, or one of desperation that often leads to over-the-top



praise for any (and every) leftist statement or gesture from the union leadership.

As revolutionary socialists, we argue that labour activists need to be both "with and against" the union leaderships—with them when they act to defend and support workers, and against them when they don't.

We also have to understand that many of the struggles emerging now are part of a longer-term process, not just one-off events that are isolated or make or break the class struggle. We have to relate to these struggles and the workers engaged in them, not as the "Popes of class struggle," who will either bless or condemn their actions, but as their unconditional allies, showing solidarity and support, regardless of the strategy, and always arguing for a clear way forward and generalizing the experiences of other workers.

A crucial aspect of our role as allies must be staying in touch with workers we meet from

various struggles, helping to continue and deepen discussions after every action they take, and in a way that recognizes and appreciates the difficult terrain workers face.

Socialists should always be honest about the depth of the economic crisis and the weaknesses of the left and labour movement. At the same time, they have to avoid falling into the usual pessimism of the left. What is developing in the broader working class represents a shift in consciousness and a desire to resist. It isn't an upturn in union struggles, but it isn't a one-sided battle, either. We can play a role in generalizing the lessons of some of these struggles and in helping shape the debate about how we can move forward. In the process, we can also win people to a revolutionary perspective and to the need for revolutionary organization—our fight is not just to win this or that labour struggle, but to help build a bigger movement that can get rid of capitalism, once and for all.



Quebec needs solidarity, not opportunism

AS QUEBEC’S student strike was gaining momentum, federal NDP leader Thomas Mulcair instructed his MPs to not vocally support the students. And now, as the left is poised for an historic electoral breakthrough, Mulcair has announced that the NDP will run candidates in the next Quebec election.

Sadly, both moves undermine the social movements and Quebec’s right to self-determination, and threaten the success of last year’s Orange Wave.

Since Conquest in 1760, Quebec has been an oppressed nation within the Canadian state. The War Measures Act in 1970 and the Clarity Act in 2000 are both examples of this fact.

Quebec’s trade unions and social movements have traditionally supported the bourgeois nationalist Parti Québécois (PQ)—which generally shares the program of the Quebec Liberal Party, except on sovereignty—and the Bloc Québécois, federally. In Quebec, politics have centred around the national question, and not along a left-right axis. This situation has been a challenge for the left.

But three important developments have dramatically changed Quebec’s political terrain: the emergence of the left-wing political party Québec solidaire, the historic Quebec student strike, and the Orange Wave during the 2011 federal election.

The Orange Wave that catapulted the federal NDP into Official Opposition represented a surge left by the general public: deepening anger against Harper’s austerity agenda, disillusionment with the Liberals and Bloc Québécois, inspiration from the Arab Spring, and the hope that the NDP could provide a real alternative to the status quo.

Within Quebec, the NDP surge was not a rejection of sovereignty, but an electoral expression of the growing anti-austerity sentiment that eventually exploded among students. Simmering below it was ongoing resistance to national oppression, which has helped make Quebec the home of mass movements against globalization and war, and for labour and student rights.

Out of these mobilizations emerged Québec solidaire (QS), “a party of the ballot box and the street,” and the result of a merger between Option citoyenne and Union des forces progressistes—the latter of which was a continuation of the Parti de la démocratie socialiste (PDS), the former Quebec NDP.

Québec solidaire

Since its founding in 2006, QS has been a megaphone for the social movements: labour, anti-poverty, student, feminist, environmental. During the 2011 federal election, many QS members and other activists backed the NDP as a tactic to fight Harper—but not as a way to abandon independentism. QS co-spokesperson, Amir Khadir, explained: “The Quebecers who voted for the NDP in a large majority did it to block the Harper government, not to bring an NDP to Quebec.”

Since then, QS has continued to support the social movements, especially the Quebec student strike—helping connect them to labour fights like the Rio Tinto lockout in Alma. Khadir, QS’s only elected Member of the National Assembly (MNA), called for civil disobedience against Bill 78—and was arrested and had his house raided.

By connecting the ballot box and the street, and by supporting self-determination, QS has created the conditions for a break from the PQ. QS membership has risen to 12,000 (up by 5,000 in six months), and formerly striking students are now QS candidates in several ridings. Longstanding CLASSE student leader, Renaud Poirier St-Pierre, explained his decision to join QS: “The PQ is more or less the Liberal party. The only political party who really embodies the political values that were present in the strike is QS.”

QS’s other co-spokesperson, Françoise David, is expected to win her seat, and there has been optimism about other candidates like Manon Massé, a Canada Boat to Gaza participant and a tireless activist against Islamophobia and for women’s rights, and Andrés Fontecilla, a community organizer of Chilean descent who has rallied students around his campaign.

Outside Quebec, the rapid spread of casserole demonstrations has challenged the media’s usual anti-Quebec chauvinism, and shows a widespread mood to fight austerity. Supporting QS within Quebec and showing solidarity with the student strike are the obvious steps to building the fight against austerity. Unfortunately, Mulcair is pushing the NDP in the opposite direction.

When the federal NDP fails to support Quebec’s right to self-determination, it disappears from Quebec politics. For example, in 1995, the Quebec wing of the NDP split from the federal party over the national question.

Drawing the wrong conclusion that the Orange Wave was against sovereignty and that it creates space for the NDP to fill the electoral centre, Mulcair seems unaware that a big section of QS has its roots in the old Quebec NDP, and that many QS members helped make the Orange Wave possible. These facts alone should demonstrate the risk Mulcair runs in sinking the NDP’s chances in Quebec.

Mulcair, a Liberal cabinet minister from 2003 to 2006 under current Quebec Premier Jean Charest, may be trying to position his party to benefit from a Liberal defeat on September 4. But this move will only serve to divide the left in Quebec, at a time when QS—an openly left-wing, anti-neoliberal alternative—is enjoying its best support since its founding in 2006. It could also undermine pan-Canadian solidarity with the Quebec student strike, by imposing a federalist party in Quebec in competition with the left-sovereigntist QS.

Quebec’s movements are leading the fight against austerity and creating an exciting new electoral alternative in QS, while solidarity is building between Canada and Quebec. We need to deepen this process by supporting Quebec’s right to self-determination, and by learning the lessons of the printemps érable—building mass movements from below, and using electoral parties to amplify, and not dampen, movements.

OPINION



Marching and rolling on the streets for Disability Pride

by MELISSA GRAHAM

ON SEPTEMBER 22, the disability community will once again make their voices heard on the streets of Toronto. The goal is to recognize of the struggles and value of people with disabilities, as we fight against ableism and other forms of oppression, but also to celebrate and take pride in ourselves as a community of people with disabilities.

The Toronto Disability Pride March began in the fall of 2011, inspired by the events of Occupy Toronto, and the marches against cuts to disability services that were happening in the UK. The march was also intended to raise awareness to cuts and events that affected the disability community locally, such as

cuts to social housing and incidents with the Toronto Police. The march was a great success, as one hundred people gathered at Nathan Phillips Square and marched down to St. James Park.

The UN has noted that people with disabilities are largely excluded from civil and political processes, and are overwhelmingly voiceless in matters that affect them and their society. Many people with disabilities are unemployed or underemployed. Though people with disabilities are seen as less or not exploitable by the owners of the means of production, they are further oppressed by being left out of it. To put it in terms of the Occupy movement, they are often the lowest 1% of the 99%.

For too long, the rights and oppres-

sion of people with disabilities have been discussed behind closed doors, or not at all, but through actions like the Toronto Disability Pride March, we find our voice, and make ourselves heard in the chorus of movements.

This year we are calling on all of our allies, people of every ability from the labour movement, the student movement and beyond. We call on those whose struggles have long been supported by people with disabilities to join our struggle.

Join us on September 22, 2012 as we march from Queen’s Park to Nathan Phillips Square to support the rights of people with disabilities in Toronto.

For more information, visit <http://torontodisabilitypride.wordpress.com>

Police are the real source of violence

by JOHN BELL

BETWEEN THE slaughter in Aurora, Colorado and the shooting in Toronto’s east end, seemingly unexplainable gun violence has crowded everything else off the front page.

Political opportunists like Rob Ford and Stephen Harper will use the stories to beat the law-and-order drum, and demand more money for police.

But these sensational stories have covered over other reports of violence coming from cops. These reports are even more disturbing, revealing a form of state-sanctioned violence and institutionalized racism.

United States

The United States is infamous for police violence, from the brutal beating of Rodney King by a gang of LA police, to the murder of Amadou Diallo, who was shot 41 times by New York police. Both men were black and unarmed. These high-profile cases are the tip of the iceberg.

In San Francisco, reports have emerged that police executed a suspect with mental health issues. Pralith Pralourng, a 32-year-old who had slashed a co-worker with a box cutter, died from two gunshots to the chest from short range.

Police told reporters the man had attacked them. But a videographer named Robert Benson was on the scene and interviewed eye-witnesses who told a

different story: “The police shot somebody. In the chest, twice. They said that the man had a gun or something but he didn’t. He was just a civilian.”

Benson: “What was he doing?” Witness: “Nothing. They had him in cuffs. And they shot him. Twice.” Benson’s video is posted to YouTube.

In Anaheim, California, residents of a mostly Latino working-class apartment complex were horrified to witness the police shooting of a local man. They report that Manuel Diaz was shot in the back of the legs; then he was shot in the head as he lay on the ground. The killing took place in broad daylight in front of a group of neighbours, including children, enjoying a Saturday afternoon.

The outraged group confronted the police, who unleashed dogs and fired rubber bullets and tear gas into the crowd.

Witnesses described a cold-blooded execution: “He was already down on the ground and clearly not going anywhere when the officer shot him in the head. They didn’t have to kill him. Why couldn’t they have just used a Taser or something?”

Residents have organized protests against this and other recent killings by Anaheim police. Six Latino men have been shot by police since January, five fatally. The community complains of racial profiling and continual harassment.

“White kids in a rich white neighborhood don’t get rousted by police

and, when they do, they don’t have to fear the police. But that’s not true with brown kids in a poor neighborhood,” said Dana Douglas, lawyer for the Diaz family.

Canada

Canada is presented as a kinder gentler version of the US, but our police are no different: the Vancouver taser killing of immigrant Robert Dziekanski, the Ipperwash shooting of indigenous activist Dudley George, the Toronto shooting of mental health patient Michael Eligon outside a hospital, or the suffocation death of 18-year-old Junior Manon.

Besides these killings of individual unarmed youth and people of colour, the Canadian police have imposed collective violence on people protesting the G20 in Toronto or tuition fee hikes in Quebec.

Under capitalism, the state maintains a monopoly on the use of force (the police, the army, the courts), which it uses to defend the interests of the 1%, by crushing protests and attacking oppressed groups.

In Toronto, police have been rightly slammed for violating civil and human rights, and provoking violence during the G20 protests. Voices on all sides were calling for Chief Bill Blair’s resignation. Now Blair is using the Scarborough shootings to manufacture a fresh wave of support for the cops. In the context of austerity, we need to demand “money for jobs, not cops.”

Socialist Worker fighting fund

Help Socialist Worker go viral! We are relaunching our revamped website, socialist.ca, and every financial contribution—no matter how big or small—will help us continue to provide a socialist alternative in today’s struggles. Please mail cheques to PO Box 339, Station E, Toronto ON M6H 4E3 or visit socialist.ca

\$25,000

REVIEWS



BOOK

War of 1812: myth and reality

Tecumseh & Brock: The War of 1812

Written by James Laxer

The Civil War of 1812

Written by Alan Taylor

Reviewed by John Bell

THE HARPER Tories are spending at least \$28 million to commemorate the War of 1812 as the event that “defined” the nation. This fits in with their general campaign to rebrand Canada as a “warrior nation.”

Sadly this is not just a right-wing endeavour. Just in time to cash in on the anniversary, veteran left-nationalist James Laxer has produced *Tecumseh & Brock: the War of 1812*. Laxer argues: “The fires of war were forging an identity in Upper Canada, whose elements would be evident for many decades to come. Indeed, the contemporary political culture of Ontario has its roots in the war.”

It would be absurd to pretend the war had no impact on the “identity” of Canada, but Laxer, like most Canadian commentators, took the questionable step of declaring Britain (for “Canada” did not exist) the victor in the war. It is just as logical to argue that the US identity was also defined by the political and military struggles of 1812-14, but Laxer dismisses that idea as American propaganda and “self-evidently absurd”. To admit it would put in jeopardy the cherished notion that “we” beat “them.”

Happily, there is a far better book available that begins with the premise that in North America, in 1812, there was no “us” and “them.” Alan Taylor’s *The Civil War of 1812* is a masterful work of historical research that argues that there was little or no difference between settlers on either side of the northern border. Internal divisions and struggles on either side of that border were just as important to the outcome as military battles.

The US was split by partisan political rivalry. Federalists, who held the majority in the New England states and in the New York territory along the border, absolutely opposed the war, refused to serve in the militias, and did what they could to undermine those who were supportive.

Divisions

Pro-war Republicans representing the southern slave states, western frontier and growing cities bursting with new immigrants (especially pro-republican Irish) held the majority in Congress and elected James Madison president. But these “War Hawks” were also fanatically anti-tax and opposed to any real power for the federal government. Wars and armies cost money, yet right up to the eve of war, they refused to raise taxes to form an army and especially to build a navy.

Laxer and most Canadian nationalists latch onto this War Hawk rhetoric about “manifest destiny” and that absorbing Canada through military or other means was seen as a god-given right. Leave it to Taylor, a better historian with no nationalist axe to grind, to point out that the fate of the Canadian colonies was debated in Congress, and plans to absorb them into the Union were easily voted down. Southerners worried that admitting more anti-slave territories would upset the delicate balance, and business interests thought it best to use them as bargaining chips to get better access to markets controlled by British naval power.

Canada would probably have remained a separate state even if the war had been decisively lost.

On the Upper Canada side (what is now Ontario), settlers were overwhelming drawn from the US, lured by the promise of 200-acre farmsteads virtually free, with no taxation. The builders of empire called these “Late Loyalists,” to differentiate them from

the United Empire Loyalists who had fought alongside the British in the Revolutionary War.

Late Loyalists were practical people, and most waited to see which way the wind was blowing before coming down on one side or the other. Since the first six months of the war saw stunning defeats to the US, public support swung behind the British.

First Nations

Even the role of First Nations reveals the character of a civil war. The best part of Laxer’s otherwise plodding book is the section on Tecumseh, and the “Creek War” between US southern militias and First Nations traditionalists inspired by the great Shawnee war chief. The Americans excelled in manipulating divisions between and among nations, and Native fighters were on both sides.

Laxer works mightily to create the idea that the British, and especially Brock, were more respectful of First Nations allies than the Americans. He even floats the argument that, had Brock lived, the British might have honoured the promise to create a Native buffer state in the Ohio/Indiana territory. Not bloody likely: this was the first demand the British dropped at the bargaining table that produced the Treaty of Ghent. Both sides exploited and betrayed their Native “allies”; any differences were more style than substance.

If you are going to read anything on 1812, make it Taylor’s brilliant and readable history. It exposes a war resembling a comic opera one moment, and marked by fratricidal atrocities the next. He shows that both the US and Canada are transformed more by the economic and political struggles leading up to, during and following the war, than by the actual battles. Not only is it a great read, it is a powerful antidote to Harper’s 1812 propaganda campaign.

LEFT JAB

John Bell

Kenney: an abuse of office

“I BELIEVE that this tactic of trying to intimidate an immigration critic into silence, by trying to get him sanctioned professionally, is an abuse of [Mr. Kenney’s] office,” Toronto lawyer Guidy Mamann recently told the *Globe and Mail*.

Mamann had the nerve to publicly suggest that allowing Conrad Black—the man who renounced his Canadian citizenship so he could assume the mantle of Britain’s “Lord Black of Crossharbour,” and who was convicted of fraud and served two prison terms in the US—to return to Canada stank of Tory political interference.

“The idea that the minister didn’t wink or nod in favour of this thing is impossible to imagine.”

These criticisms were directed at Immigration Minister Jason Kenney and his office. Kenney bristled at any such suggestion, repeating his mantra that he would never, ever interfere in the decision making of the “highly trained professionals” in his ministry.

Kasra Nejatian, one of Kenney’s aides, initiated a complaint against Mr. Mamann with the Law Society of Upper Canada for “implying corruption or malfeasance by our office in our dealing with matters related to Conrad Black.” The Law Society has found Mamann innocent of any wrongdoing.

It is inconceivable that any staffer would launch such a complaint without Kenney’s knowledge, blessing or even urging. And, I believe, like Mr. Mamann, that it is inconceivable that Kenney and his office didn’t meddle in the decision to allow Black to return to Canada.

Kenney’s past performance supports this opinion.

Minister of Censorship & Deportation

Back in 2010, the Immigration Ministry rewrote the citizenship manual for newcomers to Canada. Prominent references to gay rights and same-sex marriage were removed from the previous version.

It was discovered that the “highly trained professionals” who wrote the first draft had included such references. Kenney, who has staunchly opposed extending gay rights throughout his career, personally overruled the objections of his writers and ordered all these references deleted.

“We can’t mention every legal decision, every policy of the government of Canada,” he said at the time.

Public outrage forced Kenney to do something he truly hates: he backtracked and grudgingly restored the information.

In 2009, British anti-war MP George Galloway was barred from entering Canada, where he had visited and toured before. Immigration officials informed him he would not be admitted because he was a “security threat.”

Galloway is a long-time supporter of Palestinian rights. Kenney is an unapologetic cheerleader for Israel’s Zionist policies.

At the time, Kenney denied having anything to do with the decision by the “highly trained professionals” at the Canadian Border Services Agency. Unfortunately for Kenney, a subsequent investigation turned up an email sent by Kenney’s top aide, Alykhan Velshi, to officials at Canada’s High

Commission in London, advising them of plans to ban the MP.

In 2010, a federal court judge overturned the ban on Galloway, citing interference from Kenney’s office and evidence that Velshi had directed the CBSA decision. Judge Richard Mosley wrote that Kenney’s office had used “a flawed and overreaching interpretation of the standards under Canadian law for labelling someone as engaging in terrorism or being a member of a terrorist organization.”

A civil lawsuit by Galloway against Kenney and Velshi is before the courts.

With that track record, it is hard to doubt that Kenney and his office instructed his underlings to make a rare exception and grant permission for convicted felon, British citizen and right-wing blowhard Conrad Black to enter and reside in Canada.

Gary Freeman

Lawyer Mamann wasn’t the only one to question the Black decision. NDP leader Thomas Mulclair rose in Parliament to ask why Black was admitted and Gary Freeman was denied entry. Freeman is a black man who had fled the US to escape violence and trumped up charges of shooting a police officer.

Despite being in Canada without legal sanction, Freeman spent over 30 years building a life, marrying a supportive partner and raising children. He was hard-working and respected by those who knew and worked with him.

Arrested and held in pre-extradition custody in Canada for almost four years, Freeman voluntarily returned to the US in 2008. He was convicted of aggravated battery and given 30 days in jail and two years probation—a far less serious crime and sentence than Black.

When Mulclair exposed the Tory hypocrisy of admitting Black but denying Freeman, Jason Kenney responded by calling Freeman a “cop killer.” This was entirely a lie, and Kenney was subsequently forced to apologize.

Gary Freeman has been denied admission on the grounds that he is a threat to security because of an alleged past membership in the Black Panthers Party (BPP). The BPP were never considered a “terrorist” organization. Even so, Access to Information Requests show that CSIS has informed Kenney’s ministry that there is no evidence Freeman had any connection to the BPP. When one is accused of being a security threat, there is no appeal.

Conrad Black, besides being a felon, destroyed the lives of countless workers as a ruthless CEO. He once gleefully described laying off workers as “drowning the kittens.” In contrast, Gary Freeman worked hard and built a decent life. Who would you rather have as a neighbour?

I believe that Kenney abused his office to allow Black in. I believe he abused his office trying to intimidate Guidy Mamann for daring to speak out. I believe he abused his office to ban George Galloway, by applying the term “security threat” haphazardly. And I believe that Kenney continues to abuse his office in the same way by denying Gary Freeman his return.

That makes Jason Kenney a serial abuser.

Find out how you can support Gary at www.web.net/~freemandrump/

FILM

The Dark Knight: Batman is Romney

Batman: The Dark Knight Rises

Directed by Christopher Nolan

Reviewed by Benoit Renaud

THE LATEST installment of Christopher Nolan’s Batman trilogy makes one last desperate effort to make us care for a brooding billionaire with the emotional range of a teaspoon, in other words: Mitt Romney. *The Dark Knight* seems like a fantasy for the current Republican Party in more ways than its uninspiring billionaire leader.

The whole story revolves around an idealization of cops, prisons and the law-and-order agenda. First, Bruce Wayne is justified in dedicating the resources of his mega-corporation into his vigilante obsession because

his parents were killed by criminals. Then, the plot of this third movie revolves around the cops of Gotham being trapped underground while the big baddie (Bane) releases the criminals from prison and launches a caricature of a revolution.

With no explanation but revenge against Wayne, we find out that Bane, after taking over the city, just wants to nuke it after a few months of terror. What would be the point of that? Supposedly, this should restore some kind of balance to civilization.

The order that Batman has to restore is the one in which the 1% can enjoy the respect of their property, where cops rule the streets and the prisons are full and growing.

The only redeeming quality of *The Dark Knight Rises* is the character of

Catwoman, brilliantly played by Ann Hathaway. Her character could be a hero to cheer for. This kick-ass jewel thief has a working-class background and a girlfriend, and she doesn’t let herself be intimidated by the cops, by the rich, or by other criminals. Hathaway’s performance is the only one with some depth and complexity. She is constantly torn between her instinct for self-preservation, her sense of right and wrong (which is not a Republican one) and her emotional connection with Wayne.

It is only a question of time before this lucrative franchise brings us another. Why not make him a rebel against his own class? A symbol of honesty in a city plagued by corruption? Perhaps that is too much to ask.

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 kills the earth itself with pollution and unsustainable extraction of natural resources. Capitalism leads to imperialism and war. Saving ourselves and the planet depends on finding an alternative.

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.

Reform and revolution

Every day, there are battles between exploited and exploiter, 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 NDP and many trade union leaders say. It has to be overthrown. That will require the mass action of workers themselves.

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 developed under capitalism and are designed to 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.

Internationalism

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We oppose everything which 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.

Canada, Quebec, Aboriginal 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 the Aboriginal peoples and the people of Quebec.

We support the struggles for self-determination of Quebec and Aboriginal peoples up to and including the right to independence. Socialists in Quebec, and in all oppressed nations, work towards giving the struggle against national oppression an internationalist and working class content.

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 discrimination on the basis of religion, ability and age.

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.



Workers push back Rio Tinto

by MICHELLE ROBIDOUX

ON THURSDAY, July 5, workers at Rio Tinto Alcan (RTA) in Alma, Quebec signed a new collective agreement after six months locked out by the employer. RTA had demanded huge concessions from United Steelworkers local 9490, which represents the 780 workers at its Alma operations. When they refused these concessions, the company brutally locked them out of the plant on New Year's Eve and forced them onto the street.

Now, after a battle that built solidarity across the country and internationally, the workers have held the line against the bulk of these concessions.

Contracting out

RTA wanted all retiring employees to be replaced by non-union contract workers earning half the wages and no pensions or benefits. It also wanted to contract out existing jobs in some of the trades. After six months of determined struggle, the workers managed to push back RTA, and have won a ceiling on contracting out that limits the number of hours of work that the company can contract out to ten per cent relative to the hours worked by unionized workers.

According to local 9490 President Marc Maltais, it will now be impossible for the employer to reduce the number of unionized workers without affecting, in a directly proportional way, its ability to contract out.

As Maltais stated, "It's a victory. I wouldn't say it's a resounding, crushing victory... But, it's still a union victory in relation to the goals we had stated in terms of job protection and limiting contracting out."

Unfortunately, the contract includes a major concession for the 56 workers in the pot-lining section of RTA's operations. The current jobs will be phased out through attrition and replaced with contract workers. None of the current workers face lay-off and they will have first option on any job openings in RTA's operations in Alma or elsewhere.

RTA, the world's third largest mining company, deployed a huge arsenal against the Alma workers. With the help of a secret agreement it had signed with the Quebec government and Hydro-Québec, RTA was able to finance its lockout through public money to the tune of \$15 million a month because Hydro-Québec purchased unused electricity during the lockout at a gold-plated tariff. This led to the rebranding of RTA as "Hydro-Tinto."

Despite the huge forces lined up against them, the Alma workers launched an international solidarity campaign, travelling to California and Utah, then Australia and New Zealand.

They connected with other locals

throughout the region, both within the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec and beyond. Very importantly, early on they received the support of Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) members at Rio Tinto's local port installations who donated \$50,000 to the lockout fund. They travelled to Sorel, Quebec where they held a rally outside RTA's titanium and iron plant, whose workers are organized by a different union, and received strong support of \$5 per worker per week for the duration of the lockout.

In Alma, the electricity and energy workers' union, the Syndicat des employés d'énergie électrique Québec, manned the picket lines while locked-out workers held mass meetings. The president of the local, Pierre Simard, was given a gag order by RTA who didn't want him to talk about the sweetheart deal between RTA and Hydro-Québec.

RTA workers in Kitimat, BC, members of CAW local 2301, donated over \$60,000 per month to the Alma workers over the course of the lockout. They were in negotiations with Rio Tinto, with a July 23 strike or lockout deadline.

Eight weeks into the lockout, 50 Toronto steelworkers who are part of the Steelworkers' Toronto Area Council travelled 26 hours round-trip by bus to bring solidarity to Alma workers. They made the trip again on March 31 to join a mass rally that drew 8,000 people to this town of 30,000.

International delegations also attended the rally, including representatives of the Maritime Union of Australia, the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. Hundreds of students, including the leader of CLASSE, Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois, bussed to Alma on that day to show their solidarity.

This intra-union and inter-union solidarity, on a pan-Canadian and international level, is a break with the pattern of recent years. Not since the strike by Inco miners in Sudbury in 1978 has there been such a cross-Canada movement of solidarity. That solidarity has been a two-way street. In February, Alma workers joined striking students in the streets of Montreal. In March, Marc Maltais joined CEGEP students in Alma in a solidarity protest, and on April 22, RTA workers joined the mass Earth Day demonstration in Montreal.

Creativity

One of the hallmarks of this historic fight was the degree of creativity of rank-and-file workers.

To mark International Women's Day, women (workers and spouses of workers) organized a special solidarity event for spouses. They then organized "Wife Picketage" in response

to CEO Etienne Jacques' saying that the 'wife factor' (spouses putting pressure on their husbands to settle) would soon put an end to the lockout.

A superhero helped spread the word of the strike. A locked-out worker wrote an anthem for the strike. Workers packed out local hockey games, wearing their trademark orange t-shirts and sweatshirts.

In May, workers walked across the Parc des Laurentides to deliver petitions bearing 12,000 signatures to the Quebec National Assembly, demanding the secret deal with RTA and Hydro be repealed.

This display of energy and creativity had ripple effects. Toronto steelworkers videotaped their superhero counterpart to build for the March 31 rally.

Dynamics

Whether the fight could have resisted all the concessions is a difficult question. The campaign to get Rio Tinto off the Olympics podium was starting to bite, and there is no doubt the multinational did not want the negative attention the campaign was bringing.

But considering similar battles of the past few years, they achieved a lot, against incredible odds. Alma workers faced a huge multinational, a bosses' strike, injunctions against picketing, a deal between RTA and the Quebec government that allowed RTA to ride out the lockout at taxpayers' expense, and a barrage of negative media coverage.

They knew about the recent bitter, long lockouts and strikes at US Steel and Vale Inco, which ended with huge concessions. They saw the brutal shutdown of Electro-Motive Diesel by Caterpillar in London, putting 460 people out of work.

The fight in Alma points to the possibilities that exist in what has been a very grim context, and what it takes to begin to challenge the agenda of austerity that the ruling class is pursuing at every level. In the context of the massive student struggle currently underway in Quebec, it showed that the mood of resistance extends beyond the campuses into communities across Quebec.

The question of what it will take to change the relation of forces is a huge one. Everywhere, employers are locking out workers or forcing long strikes, and then starving people back. In the bitter battles of the 1930s, it was the use of the sit-down strike – of factory occupations – that turned the tide and tilted the balance back towards workers. This is a key question for the workers' movement today.

The Alma struggle holds lessons that are vital to the renewal of workers' ability to resist austerity in Canada and around the world. Now let's prepare to roll out those lessons in support of Rio Tinto workers in Kitimat.

international socialist events

TORONTO

'I am a revolutionary'

Sat, Sep 15, 1pm
Bahen Centre, 40 St.
George St, room 2185
A one-day conference on radical activism; for full schedule and to register: www.iamrev.wordpress.com

Study session: Colonial Peoples and Socialism 1922

Fri, Sep 7, 6pm
Asteria Souvlaki Place
661 Danforth (just east of Pape)
Info: torontosocialists@gmail.com

A People's History of the War of 1812

Sat, Sep 29, 5:30pm
Oak Street Co-op
Community Room
Speaker: John Bell
Fundraising dinner and discussion; suggested donation \$7-15 (sliding scale)
Organized by Coxwell I.S.
Info: 647-393-3096

University of Toronto I.S.

Clubs Day
Wed, Sep 5, 10am-2pm
Hart House Circle

Street Festival
Tue, Sep 11, 10am-3pm
St. George Street, from College to Harbord

Info: international.socialists@utoronto.ca

York University I.S.

Clubs Day
Wed, Sep 12, 10am-4pm
Campus Walk

Weekly meetings
Wednesdays, 4pm
Student Centre 446
yorkusocialists@gmail.com

OTTAWA

Ottawa University I.S.

Clubs Day
Thu-Fri, Sep 6-7, 10am-4pm
Ottawa University Student Centre
Info: gosocialists@yahoo.ca

Ottawa/Gatineau I.S. meetings

Mondays at University of Ottawa
Info: gosocialists@yahoo.ca

VANCOUVER

'I am a revolutionary'

Sat, Sep 22, 1pm
Langara College, 100 West 49th Ave, room A218
A one-day conference on radical activism; for full schedule and to register: www.iamrev.wordpress.com

Vancouver I.S. meetings

Wednesdays at 2:30pm
Info: vancouver.socialists@gmail.com

HALIFAX

Info: halifax.socialists@gmail.com

peace & justice events

TORONTO

Book Launches

Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety
Thu, Sep 6, 7-9pm
Edward Day Gallery, 952 Queen St W, #200

"Too Asian?" Racism, Privilege, and Post-Secondary Education
Thu, Sep 27, 6:30-9pm
Toronto Women's Bookstore
73 Harbord Street

You can find the I.S. in:

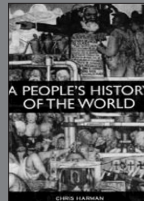
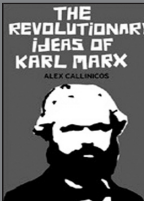
Toronto, Ottawa, Gatineau, Vancouver, Victoria, Montreal, London, St. Catharines, Mississauga, Scarborough, Halifax, Belleville & Kingston

e: reports@socialist.ca
t: 416.972.6391
w: www.socialist.ca

For more event listings, visit www.socialist.ca.

OPEN SATURDAYS, 12-3pm

427 Bloor Street West, suite 202, Toronto | 416.972.6391



RESPONSE TO VIOLENCEby **EVAN JOHNSTON**

RESIDENTS OF Danzig Street and the surrounding Morningside community in Scarborough gathered on the evening of July 18 for a solidarity march to take back the streets. Approximately 100 people met at the Danzig basketball court, coming together to show their support for their community's shooting victims and their families, as well as to affirm that they won't be scared in their own neighbourhood.

The march began at the scene of July 16's shooting, and passed by the home of one of the individuals killed that night, 14-year-old Shyanne Charles. There was a huge showing of support for the march, with drivers honking and waving as they passed. One young girl held up a sign as she marched that read, "shoot for your dreams, not at each other."

Along the way, many in the march expressed anger and disappointment at politicians, a sentiment that was picked up again at the culminating rally. One resident was particularly angry at Toronto Mayor Rob Ford's response thus far, noting that he has not only failed to reach out to the families of the victims, but has offered nothing tangible to the community.

After marching up Morningside Avenue, across Lawrence Avenue, and down Kingston Road, the crowd gathered together to chant, pray, and reflect on their shared pain. The children in attendance were led in a chant of "no more violence, no more war," and were asked to make a pledge never to turn to violence. The rest of the community also made a pledge to fight this together, and with fists raised in the air in a showing of solidarity, we were reminded that there is strength in unity. "This is a community of love," said one community activist.

One of the organizers of the march told the crowd that this gathering wasn't a spotlight for politicians, nor was it a time to thank the police—"the police are not our friends," she said, even if they pretend to be in times of crisis. Instead, she invited members of the community to come to the microphone to share their experiences and the emotions they were feeling. People spoke about how they felt on the night of the shootings, who they knew that was wounded and their determination to work together to make the community safer.

In the end, the mood of the community was one of love and strength; love for each other, and the strength to endure the hard task ahead of rebuilding the trust—and feeling of safety—that was shaken by the Danzig shooting.

If the politicians at Toronto City Hall and Queen's Park are unwilling to do what it takes to bring the economic opportunities and social infrastructure that's being demanded in Morningside, then by the looks of the march, politicians of all stripes will have a formidable opponent in the years to come.



Toronto rally in solidarity with South African miners

THOUSANDS PROTEST MCGUINITY'S ATTACK ON EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOL and college teachers are the first public sector workers to receive the brunt of budget cuts to jobs and services in Ontario. The mass turnout in opposition on August 28 shows the growing anger against the austerity agenda.

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty's budget includes provisions to legislate contracts and outlaw strikes if workers do not accept the government's conditions. Even before teachers have entered in to the bargaining process, McGuinty called the legislature into emergency session on August 27, tabling a bill to force teachers to accept a wage freeze, reduction of sick days, and unpaid days—a chilling attack on workers' rights.

Ontario Elementary (ETFO) and Secondary (OSSTF) unions, representing the majority of teachers, have condemned this action. ETFO is continuing with strike vote plans and has called for a day of action this fall. OSSTF has called off a planned strike vote but is leaving

the door open for future action.

College teachers, members of Ontario Public Service Employees' Union (OPSEU), are facing similar strong-arm tactics. The colleges have refused every union demand since bargaining began in June. Instead, they are proposing a new work category that would drastically undercut existing rights and conditions. Union negotiators refused to accept this and the colleges' response was to file for a "no-board" report, which sets the stage for a lockout or an imposed contract for college teachers.

Thousands of teachers and supporters rallied on August 28 against the cuts and the heavy hand of McGuinty. Queen's Park was filled to capacity, with placards and flags, and anger at McGuinty. This is a good indication that, despite the fear and intimidation, there is growing anger at the austerity agenda. They key will be organizing this amongst rank-and-file workers, to push for future protests and strikes.

PROTEST AGAINST SAUDI OPPRESSIONby **YUSUR AL BAHRANI**

PROTESTERS GATHERED outside the US Consulate in Toronto on July 21, demanding an end to oppression in Saudi Arabia and condemning the US government's role in backing the Al-Saud monarchy.

Demonstrators echoed the demands of protesters in the eastern province of Qatif and other Saudi cities: an end to oppression, release of all prisoners of conscience, and an end to the Western support of the Saudi government.

The Saudi government propagandists attempt to view the pro-democracy movement in Saudi Arabia as a sectarian one. However, protesters made it clear that this is not the case. Many were carrying banners saying: "Sunni and Shia are brothers" and "Divide

and conquer will not work." Speakers included activists from different religious and political backgrounds, echoing the same message of activists on the ground; that is, unity and solidarity. They not only protested against the brutality of the Saudi regime but all dictatorships backed by the West, and the US in particular.

More than a week ago, Saudi security forces arrested progressive anti-regime cleric Nimr Al-Nimr after an attempt to assassinate him. He is on hunger strike now, and there are reports that he has been ill-treated and shackled to a bed. According to recent reports, there are more than 30,000 prisoners of conscience in Saudi prisons. Protesters in Qatif, Al-Nimr's homeland, protest daily and the number has increased to thousands, despite the systematic oppression.

TRAINING CAMP SHARES LESSONS OF STUDENT STRIKEby **PETER HOGARTH**

THE UNIVERSITY of Toronto played host to an incredible conference the weekend of July 27-29. The Ontario Student Strike Training Camp, organized by the Graduate Students' Union, brought together activists from Montreal and all over Ontario—and even from the Maritimes—to learn how the students of Quebec organized a massive general strike against tuition fee increases.

Noticeably absent from the facilitators' perspective was the assertion that province-wide organizations such as the CFS can simply "push the strike button" and call strike votes for all of Ontario, something that is not realistic or even possible. Instead, the weekend held very serious discussion and debate about practical ways to build the student movement outside Quebec and mobilize students to transform their campuses.

A few clear themes emerged throughout the weekend that are worth repeating and generalizing.

Workshop facilitators emphasized the need to find issues that mobilize students. This means starting from a broad basis of unity, while putting forth an argument that can start a debate that will mobilize students. Emphasizing realistic goals rather than revolutionary slogans may seem too "reformist" at first, but students' ideas can be transformed in the struggle of fighting for those goals, leading to more radical positions and actions.

Actions should always be thought of in the context of drawing more people into the movement. For instance, how can we use a petition or leaflet to get more people involved, start more conversations and expand the number of people working on this project? Can we use direct actions such as

occupations and demonstrations to raise the profile of the movement and the confidence of students, involving broader layers of the campus?

Furthermore, presenters emphasized the need to include other sectors of society in the struggle. If the movement only speaks for students, its appeal will end there. We need to be connecting the student movement to workers facing austerity, people who cannot afford post-secondary education, racially marginalized people and beyond.

Presenters emphasized the need to organize at the departmental level, rather than campus-wide. Doing this ensures greater participation and more direct democracy. Start with departments that are most open to arguments against increasing fees, and avoid organizing huge general assemblies that can be more easily overwhelmed by organized forces hostile to a progressive student movement. By organizing these friendly departments first, stronger departments can go on strike and empower other departments to join as well.

One lesson that bears repeating is that a strike is a tactic for achieving a goal. If we focus on the strike as the end-goal, we risk alienating students not ready to strike right away. The legitimacy of a strike comes from the prior mobilization that has involved as many people as possible in the General Assemblies and the voting. Imposing radical demands from the top down without adequate mobilization will not make for a strong strike; voting on a strike or imposing a strike will not be effective if it cannot be carried by the rank-and-file students. Strikes don't appear out of thin air, but they are not impossible. They involve engaging with fellow students and expanding the participation in campus politics.

STICKING WITH THE UNION

Carolyn Egan

Anger rising, resistance to austerity growing

ALMOST 20,000 elementary school teachers from across Ontario covered the lawns at Queen's Park in a massive demonstration against the McGuinty government's attempt to legislate a new concession contract. People were commenting that they hadn't seen such a large protest at the provincial legislature since the G20.

Interestingly, the teachers unions were strong supporters of the Liberal Party in the recent provincial election. Clearly political support for the party one day does not make anyone immune from the effects of the austerity agenda the next. An important lesson learned.

As I walked from the Steelworkers Hall to join the rally, I passed a small group of women heading in the same direction. One of them shouted out, "Thanks for your solidarity!" and then addressing her fellow teachers said, "Wasn't I just talking about how the Steelworkers came out to support us against the Harris government? Well they're doing it again. We're not alone!"

Steel wasn't the only union there. The Canadian Autoworkers, Service Employees International Union, United Food and Commercial Workers, CUPE, CUPW were all present showing support for the women and men who teach and care for their children. OPSEU, which is facing hard bargaining and threats of layoffs and privatization, did not appear to mobilize for the demonstration in any numbers. Individual activists were there, of course, showing their support for the teachers.

The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario has been having stewards meetings during the summer and received a 93 per cent strike vote for a political day of action. It was clear from the numbers who had rallied that the union has a very engaged membership at this moment. Hopefully they will put pressure on the leadership to push back hard against the concessions.

There is an anger that is building among people from different sectors of the economy and seemingly a willingness to fight back,

if today's demonstration is any indicator. It is critical that the teachers unions do all that they can to connect with students and parents.

Austerity

The attack on the teachers is part of an ongoing campaign to ratchet down wages, cut services and contract out. The Ontario Common Front, a coalition of community and labour organizations, just released a damning report that documented the growing gap between rich and poor. Wages have stagnated or dropped. The province has the lowest number of hospital beds per capita and the highest university fees across the country.

Part-time and precarious work is increasing while the wealthy are enjoying lavish incomes. Corporate taxes keep going down and the crisis is being taken out on the backs of working people and the poor. This time it's the teachers turn with their collective bargaining rights being taken away and concessions being imposed.

Anger

The anger the teachers feel was palpable at the Queen's Park rally. They feel betrayed and insulted by the legislation and as one columnist said, this is a warning to all workers of what is to come. The Ontario Conservatives are pushing a plan to impose "right to work" legislation as we have seen in so many US states.

At the recent Bruce Springsteen concert many of the songs reflected the working class anger that is showing itself across North America from the Wisconsin mass protest, to the Occupy movement, to strikes and lockouts, as we have seen at Rio Tinto. "First they destroyed our factories and then they took our homes... On bankers hill the party is going strong, but down below we're shackled and drawn."

But there is also the hope of a better day in lyrics such as "There's a new day coming...I can see the light... Send the robber barons straight to hell."

This anger has to be channeled into a sustained fightback, as we are seeing around the world. Let's hope the teachers can give a lead here in Ontario.

Join the International Socialists

Mail: **P.O. Box 339, Station E, Toronto, ON M6H 4E3**
E-mail: **iscanada@on.aibn.ca** / Tel: **416.972.6391**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Province: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

'The end of the strike is not the end of the struggle'

by CHANTAL SUNDARAM
& JESSICA SQUIRES

STUDENT UNION general assemblies across Quebec voted in August to end the strike, bringing to at least a temporary halt the longest, deepest and most significant student strike—and one of the most important social movement events—in Quebec and Canadian history.

The reasons for the strike's ending, despite the appearance that the movement did not win anything, were several. First, Bill 78 (now Law 12), Charest's bludgeon law to force an end to the strike, was in the end a major factor, because student unions would effectively be committing suicide if they continued to strike. Second, the votes took place during an election campaign—timing that was not coincidental on Charest's part—meaning, if the strike continued, it would have been against a non-existent government.

The best course of action when one has to engage in a tactical retreat is to show very visibly that it is a choice, and not a sign of weakness. The colleges that voted in mid-August did just that, by voting for an all-out strike for one day, and that day was August 22.

All the colleges, though ordered back in session by Law 12, were shut down that day, and 100,000 students, professors and supporters filled the streets—while the Canadian Federation of Students Ontario organized a solidarity rally. The Montreal march was in no way deflated, and not even driven by anger, but by confidence and jubilation. A whole ser-



ies of flags had been printed that read: "Historic movement, historic victory." The Quebec student strike is part of a process of global resistance.

World Spring

We are five years into the deepest economic crisis since the Great Depression. When the crisis first hit, many were pessimistic about the possibilities of resistance, or impatient that it didn't spontaneously explode. But like resistance

in the 1930s, resistance to the current crisis did develop over time.

Last year began with the Arab Spring, as millions challenged repressive Western-backed regimes and their austerity agenda. The Arab Spring inspired people around the world, including tens of thousands in Wisconsin who occupied their Capitol building against austerity.

The Wisconsin occupation ended with disappointment, as the fight was diverted

into a Democratic Party campaign that failed to oust Republican Scott Walker. However, the occupation inspired people across the US, helping plant the seeds of the Occupy movement.

The Occupy movement struck a chord around the world, speaking to people's growing awareness that the system benefits the 1%, while the other 99% have common interests to make a better world. The general strike in Oakland showed how this unity and confidence can

shape broader struggles like the labour movement. The occupations were evicted, but the sentiment has not gone away. Global resistance combined with local resistance to produce the Quebec student strike movement, the "printemps érable."

Printemps érable

The Quebec student strike shows what is possible when "we are the 99%" transforms from a slogan into a reality, as hundreds of thousands democratically

organized to resist tuition fee hikes. Through the process, students won several major victories.

First, the fact of continuing the strike and maintaining solidarity in the face of austerity and fear-mongering populism was already a huge achievement. Students put free post-secondary education on the agenda and showed it is possible to fight neoliberalism.

Second, they broadened their struggle to confront the broader austerity agenda—from environmental destruction, to corruption, to attacks on workers and social programs—giving others the confidence to fight back.

Third, they brought down the government. Charest provoked the students in an attempt to win an election on populist anger against the students. Instead, the students won the support of the population and fought back against Charest.

Fourth, this experience has transformed the Quebec political landscape. Quebeckers have re-learned from the students that it is possible to unite, resist, and challenge austerity. A whole generation has gone through a semester of resistance, learning how to build mass movements. Even before the September 4 election, students have called a rally for October 4 to continue the movement—regardless of who is elected.

Finally, the Quebec spring has influenced people across Canada, who have built solidarity with Quebec and gained inspiration for their own struggles. As one of the slogans from the August 22 demo in Montreal says, "The end of the strike is not the end of the struggle."

Never miss an issue.

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

Prices per year (CAD dollars):

Regular subscription: \$30
Institutions, First Class delivery and U.S.: \$50
Other international: \$60



Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

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

Stop the deportation of war resisters

by JESSE MCLAREN

THE HARPER government is trying to deport US Iraq war resister Kimberly Rivera and her family September 20. It is the start of a renewed campaign against war resisters that undermines international law and Canadian democracy.

With massive demonstrations against the looming Iraq War in 2003, the Canadian government refused to participate. Prime Minister Harper has even admitted the war was "absolutely an error."

During the Vietnam War, Canada welcomed US war resisters—both volunteers and conscripts—and resisters from the Iraq War have been coming to Canada since 2004.

US veteran Kimberly Rivera left the Iraq War after experiencing the terrifying impact of the war on children. She came to Canada in 2007,

becoming the first female US Iraq War resister, and lives in Toronto with her husband Mario and their four children (Christian, Rebecca, Katie and Gabriel).

US Iraq War resisters have the support of the majority of Canadians, two Parliamentary motions and international law.

Minister of Censorship and Deportation

But the Harper government has deported war resisters to US prison—including Robin Long (who was separated from his family) and Cliff Cornell, who both received harsh jail sentences for speaking out against the war. Threatened with a similar fate, resister Rodney Watson has been living in sanctuary since 2009.

Since 2008 there have been ten federal court or federal court of appeal decisions in

favour of war resisters. But Immigration Minister Jason Kenney, an early supporter of the Iraq War, has gone out of his way to try to deport war resisters, labeling them "bogus refugee claimants" and issuing Operational Bulletin 202 to flag them as "criminally inadmissible."

Now there is a renewed offensive against war resisters

beginning with the Riveras, who were given a deportation date of September 20 even before receiving the decision on their application to stay on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

Tell the Tories to stop the deportations and let war resisters stay.

For updates visit www.resisters.ca

