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WANTED: BOLD CLIMATE ACTION



Canadians want a Green New Deal. In a recent poll, 61% support a plan which would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide good green jobs.

Approval for the plan goes even higher – to 66% – when coupled with a steep rise in taxing corporations and the rich to pay for it. Two-thirds of people want to see the wealthy pay up since they are the main drivers of climate change.

This new poll comes on the heels of another survey which found that half the Canadian population is less than \$200 away from insolvency. The number of people who are considered middle income is declining rapidly in Canada, as more become impoverished each year.

And in many parts of the world things are getting worse. In both the UK and the US, recent census data shows life expectancy is declining. In the US, there has been a spike in infant mortality – up by 20 percent this decade among the bottom 50 percent of the population by income.

During the early years of neoliberalism's rise, it was common to say that young people may be worse off economically than their parents. A

couple of decades later, and we are seeing that young people will not only have a harder life, it will also be much shorter and will be under the cloud of an increasingly unstable climate.

This is creating a new level of misery for many – but it is also the spark for a new resistance.

Now is the time

Despair is the fuel of the far right – and the right has made gains since the economic crisis in 2008. But where a bold political alternative to climate chaos, poverty and racism is on offer, millions flock to that banner.

The word socialism is now a standard topic of discussion on talk shows, around the dinner table and in the lunch room at work or school. The left needs to seize the opportunity and not allow the anger to go to the right.

The right is trying to channel that anger towards division and racism, to redirect it away from the rich who are responsible for the dire conditions people face.

This is what is driving the political polarization we are seeing in the world. The centre

parties have seen dwindling support as both the right and left have been growing.

In Canada, the political centre represented by Justin Trudeau is proving itself to be inept at solving these crises.

Trudeau is building pipelines rather than taking on climate change. He is putting billions into border security, cops and war – taking a page out of the far-right playbook. He calls for reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, then sends the military onto their land to force them to accept corporate Canada's demand for more resource extraction.

In recent months we have seen the right gain in provincial elections as well. This indicates not a broad sweep towards right-wing ideas, but a desire for something to get better.

Unfortunately, the NDP is nowhere in responding to this palpable desire for change. In Alberta, Rachel Notley became a cheerleader for more tar sands development, and was soundly defeated – ushering in another hard-right government.

If the federal NDP doesn't put forward a clear

and bold vision to tackle the urgent problems people face in terms of jobs, impoverishment and climate chaos, then we will see the same result in the federal election this fall.

Now is the time! The Extinction Rebellion movement, the student walkouts globally and the rise of politicians like Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in the US show that people will support radical demands.

A key first step: the NDP needs to support a Green New Deal, much like the one that propelled Quebec solidaire to significant gains in the election last October.

Specifically, they need to support and amplify the call to nationalize and retool General Motors in Oshawa to produce electric vehicles. Thousands of jobs and the future of that community are in the balance. This is a tangible example of what a just transition away from climate disaster could look like, providing concrete solutions to a growing crisis. And it is winnable.

In the meantime, we need to build resistance on the streets against the bigots, the bosses and their political lap dogs.

Kennedy's UCP abounds with bigots

by John Bell

Watching Jason Kennedy's UCP party is like watching a clown car empty out in front of a Klan rally. Just when you think there can't possibly be any more bigots in there, out pop a few more.

Caylan Ford was Kennedy's hand-picked star candidate for Calgary Mountain View riding; a young, attractive urbanite, Ford was meant to cut against the redneck, rural image of UCP candidates.

But in the aftermath of the Christchurch mosque massacre, social media posts from Ford's past emerged bearing more than a whiff of white-supremacy. In one Facebook exchange she complained that Muslims get an easy ride after "Islamist" terrorist attacks, whereas conservatives are unfairly targeted in the wake of attacks by white supremacists. Elsewhere she indicated support for so-called white genocide conspiracy theories, saying she was "saddened" by the replacement of whites from their "homelands".

She resigned as a candidate, but refused to apologize. Instead she charged she was the victim of a witch hunt that "represents a gross distortion of my views and it doesn't represent what I believe in. I'm not interested in attempting to explain or rationalize what's the context of an academic discussion."

Kennedy quickly appointed Jeremy Wong in the riding. Wong is an evangelical preacher with connections to an organization accused of offering "conversion therapy" for LGBTQ people. Journey Canada (formerly Living Waters) denies using the discredited practices designed to "cure" homosexuality. Instead it offers workshops where people "experience a reduction in the strength or power of same-sex attraction/orientation and increased hope, strength, desire, and ability to live in accordance with



Handmaids protest bigot Kennedy

their personal beliefs regarding sexual ethics." You say tomato, I say it sure sounds like conversion therapy to me. Oh, and there are those inconvenient misogynistic sermons about a woman's place being subservient to her man. Nice sexual ethics there Jeremy.

Next clown out of the car was Eva Kiryakos. Across town in Calgary South East this UCP candidate too quit. "Someone outside of our party has been threatening to smear me, and I have had enough of the bullies and the threats," she complained, clearly the victim here. She says she has been denied the freedom to declare her hatred of Muslims, her belief in "Christian Genocide in the Middle East" and "forced breeding" by Muslims. She also is on record stating that Gay/Straight Alliances are part of an NDP plot to turn kids gay.

Over in Edmonton South West, UCP flagbearer Tunde Obasan came under fire for crude, misogynist jokes posted on-line. Hey, I'm not a bigot

Obasan protested, just a joker with bad taste.

And let's not forget Grant Hunter, candidate in Taber-Warner riding. Back in 2010, Hunter wrote a letter to his hometown paper in Cardston extolling the large numbers of "highest standard individuals" in the small town. Then with a wink he continued: "Perhaps they just came from superior stock, but that though reeks of 'Arian' (SIC) undertones." Hunter attributed his reeky worldview to youthful stints in communities "where 'God and family first' principles are not practiced." You know, evil places like South Africa, Mexico and (gulp) Calgary.

Readers may recall that back in October, public shaming (thanks to alternative media outlet Ricochet) forced Kennedy to expel a group of anti-Semitic white nationalists who had been running a shop selling racist paraphernalia on-line. One, Adam Strashok, had been director of Kennedy's phone banking during the

latter's bid for UCP leadership. The budding brownshirt has deep roots in Conservative circles, networking at Manning Centre events, working for MP Bob Benzen (alongside now-contributor to racist Rebel Media, Kean Bexte), and moving motions at CPC convention.

Presiding over the whole sad circus is ringmaster Kennedy. If there is one consistent thread through his career, it is a mean festering string of homophobic attacks on human rights. The UCP platform promise to roll back protection of Gay/Straight Alliance clubs in schools is typical Kennedy. It will literally increase violence and bullying against LGBTQ students. Remember, this is the man who smiled maliciously as he announced that gay partners of people dying of HIV had no right to visit them.

Kennedy has enough spite for everybody, as evidenced by his plan to rob Alberta workers of their overtime pay. Workers forced to work overtime (which is most food service, low wage, and seasonal trades workers) have been able to get time and a half in the form of future time off. Kennedy will end that; economists estimate the result would equal robbing vulnerable workers an average of \$55 per week.

This is on top of slashing the minimum wage for young workers, ending holiday pay, and cutting the minimum wage across the board.

Heaped on this is an ongoing RCMP investigation into voter fraud and dirty tricks in Jason Kennedy's campaign to be UCP leader.

These UCP clowns are of the Stephen King variety, very scary. Sadly, thanks in part to their slavish devotion to tarsands and pipelines, Rachel Notley lead the NDP to defeat. Even with all the scandals, corruption and naked neo-liberal attacks on workers' rights and wages, the UCP was still able to win.

The prospect of Jason Kennedy joining forces with Ontario's Dime Bag Doug Ford, is anything but funny.

Justice for Janitors wins big in Toronto

by Ritch Whyman

In the last week of March thousands of workers in the janitorial industry made a historic breakthrough by winning a pension plan in their recent round of collective bargaining.

For the last decade members of SEIU (Service Employees International Union) Local 2's Justice for Janitors movement have been fighting against an industry rife with abuse and sub-contracting schemes. Over the past 10 years



nearly 4,000 workers have joined the union in Toronto and thousands in other cities such as Ottawa and Vancouver have joined as well. They have been able to win health, dental and vision care benefits, above inflation wage increases, and personal emergency days.

This past year the fight was focused on beating back the employers and their clients, including many of the wealthiest property management firms and owners in the world and winning retirement security. Also on the agenda was recouping the wages lost when the Ford government cancelled the \$15 minimum wage hike.

Toronto cleaners voted in favour of an agreement that won them wage increases above the industrial norm that will see cleaners wages go above the \$15.00/hr mark and by the end of the agreement get cleaners close to and above \$16.45/hr depending on the job classifications.

Most importantly they broke new ground by winning a pension plan slated to start in the 3rd year of the contract. With only 10% of private sector workers covered by defined benefit pension plans this victory opens the door for other workers to reverse the trend of employers, banks and governments eroding pensions.

This breakthrough further opens the door for several thousand cleaners in other unions to demand and win pensions in Toronto. It also puts cleaning companies in Ottawa on notice that close to 3,000 unionised cleaners there will also be demanding pensions. By 2022 over 10,000 contracted out cleaners in Ontario could be enrolled in pension plans.

By standing strong and pushing back, Toronto cleaners have shown that it is still possible to beat back the bosses attacks and win retirement security for all workers.

Major shift in PEI politics

by Brian Champ

It was an historic election night in Prince Edward Island April 23. PEI polls reflected growing climate concern and in the last few months support for the Green Party had surged. Some polls showed them leading with over 40%. These expectations were overblown, but the result nevertheless uncovered a seismic shift in PEI politics.

Despite the fact that the Tories managed to win the most seats, they did not win enough for a majority. The previously ruling Liberals only won 6, falling to third place. In a first for any province, the Green Party won 8 seats and will form the official opposition to the PCs.

There was no blue wave. The Tory share of the popular vote fell by almost 1% compared to the 2015 election. The Liberal vote collapsed by over 11% and the NDP share dropped by around 7%. The Green Party seemed to capture vir-

tually all of these disaffected voters. Their share of the popular vote rose by over 19%.

This is the first time that the Green Party has garnered enough seats to form the official opposition in any province or territory or federally.

Climate crisis

This shift is part of global phenomenon and PEI is no exception. When the IPCC released their latest report last October, warning that 45% CO2 emissions reductions from 2010 levels would be needed by 2030 to avert a high probability of runaway temperature increases if temperatures rise more than 1.5°C, the provincial Liberal government said that they wouldn't change their climate change plan. The PEI plan was criticized because they said they could meet their targets without a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade scheme, which the federal Liberals require provinces to include in their plan under the "Pan-Canadian

Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change". Although the Liberal climate plan is a sham, and carbon taxes and cap-and-trade schemes are ways to avoid dealing with the climate crisis, for wide layers of people these measures seem to be a realistic solution, when the only other option on the table is the same old rhetoric and no action.

The PEI Greens were able to present themselves as the party that takes climate change and the environment seriously. Unfortunately, they are no different than the other parties in Canada in their refusal to commit to action that will reduce greenhouse gases far enough or fast enough.

We need massive development of alternatives to the status quo of fossil fuel energy production throughout the economy so that these dirty energy sources can be phased out. Workers who work in the "dirty" industries must have a way to transition to good green jobs, which

will be plentiful because there is so much to do. And is only fair that the 1%, who have benefited from the exploitation of labour and the despoliation of the environment, should pay for a just transition and also for social programs to reduce economic disparity.

Green New Deal

We need something closer to the Green New Deal (GND) that was put forward by the Sunrise Movement in the US, and championed by DSA Member of Congress, Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. It proposes a framework for directing and funding these changes based on taxing rich individuals and corporations to pay for the transition away from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources and at the same time funding social programs to reduce the inequalities that ravage our societies.

• For full text: socialist.ca/node/3847

Socialist Revolutionary Workers Party launches in South Africa

by **Allen Goatley, Keep Left (South Africa)**

The Socialist Revolutionary Workers Party (SRWP) has been formally launched in South Africa.

Over 1,000 delegates from its many branches assembled in Johannesburg heeding the call to build “a party that is not a militant version of the ANC”. The party says, “We stand for revolution—we are for socialism”.

The SRWP declared that it is a “Marxist-Leninist vanguard party”. It adds, “We openly declare for all the world to know that we as socialists are committed to building an organisation of a revolutionary working class that will seize power for the project of building socialism, in which no human will be exploited by another.”

The launch of the party was spearheaded by the National Union of Metal Workers (Numsa). Numsa broke from its traditional home, the ANC-led Tripartite Alliance which involves the Communist Party and the Cosatu union federation, after the Marikana massacre of 2012.

This saw 34 striking miners killed by an elite police unit.

When Numsa broke from backing the ANC, it was expelled from Cosatu for its outspoken criticism of the then state president Jacob Zuma and corruption.

Previously strong supporters of the South African Communist Party,



We stand for revolution—we are for socialism

Photo: Rafael Stedile

Numsa vowed at the time to build a new workers’ party.

For three days last week, delegates debated the founding documents of the new party. Members warned against building a party leadership separated from its base.

The party promised South Africa “nothing but class struggle” and has entered national elections set for 8 May with the slogan of “Equality, work and land”.

Late into the game of elections, the party has a lot of work ahead

of it to gain votes. It hopes to win some MPs but says “participation in parliament is not a destination but rather a tactic to expose the limitations of bourgeois democracy and to communicate with the masses”.

Keep Left calls for a vote for the SRWP. But the real test for the party will be after the elections.

It will have to show its relevance in the day to day struggles of workers and the poor. It will need to act as a lever to increase people’s confidence in their own ability

through mass action to defeat the daily divisive attacks that capital launches against them.

We have at present a rising tide of xenophobia in the country spurred on by the statements of some government officials and right wing parties that “foreigners” are taking up too many beds in hospitals, are taking jobs away from locals and are responsible for a rising crime wave in the country.

The SRWP will need to wade in heavily against this and use its

influence in the trade union movement to mobilise workers against xenophobia.

At present the party is dominated by Numsa members. It needs to open the gates.

Many excellent community and trade union activists are justifiably suspicious of party formations. To overcome this the SRWP will need to show respect for democracy, differences and minority views.

South Africa urgently needs a party of struggle and socialism.

ALGERIA, MOROCCO, SUDAN

Teachers on the frontline of the struggle for change

As a new wave of popular protests and uprisings sweeps through North Africa and Sudan, teachers are playing a key role in the battle for social justice and democratic rights. In Algeria, Morocco and Sudan, tens of thousands of teachers have been involved in strike action and protests demanding better conditions for teaching and learning, as well as supporting the rise of the mass movements calling for democratic change. Many have faced severe repression, both in the workplace and beyond.

Algeria

School teachers’ unions were at the forefront of the strike waves which shook the country in the run-up to the eruption of the mass movement that toppled long-standing president Abdelaziz Bouteflika on 2 April. In 2016 teachers on temporary contracts organised a 250km protest from Béjaïa to Algiers to highlight their precarious working conditions and the chronic under-funding of state schools. Ordinary people in the towns and villages en route turned out to provide



Algerian teachers spark uprising

Image: Saïf Bouandassi

food, water, blankets and medical assistance to the teachers as they passed. Nationwide teachers’ strikes in early 2018 were met with fierce repression and reports of hundreds of strikers being dismissed. Yet the independent teachers’ unions were back out on strike again in early 2019, demanding better pay and conditions and in defence of the right to organise and strike. As huge protests erupted over the announcement that Bouteflika would seek a fifth term in office – despite not having been seen in public for years – teachers and their students played a

leading role in the emerging popular movement. Six independent unions called on their members to walk out on strike on 13 March to join the mass movement calling for Bouteflika to go, declaring “It is necessary to respect the sovereignty of the people, and their will for change”. The fall of Bouteflika on 2 April and attempts by his cronies to shuffle the top roles in Algerian politics among themselves has not stopped the teachers’ unions, who were prominent among the trade unions calling for a general strike on

10 April.

Morocco

In Morocco, 55,000 teachers employed on casualised contracts through “regional educational and training academies” took to the streets of the capital Rabat on 23 March. The contract teachers have organised themselves through coordinating committees composed of elected representatives. They are demanding integration into the national education system alongside their colleagues, in order to ensure professional stability and social and health insurance cover. Contract teachers are also protesting against neoliberal policies undermining free secondary and higher education and the privatisation of public schools. Their campaign takes place against the backdrop of a draft law currently being debated by Parliament which provides for family contributions to the cost of education. The Moroccan authorities have struck back with repression – breaking up the teachers’ sit-in in Rabat with water cannon and charges by the police. In response, education unions announced three days of strike action.

Sudan

Teachers have also played a key role in the uprising against dictator Omar el Bashir which began last December, following a government decision to triple bread prices. As in Algeria, teachers’ strikes over issues such as non-payment of salaries preceded the emergence of a nation-wide uprising, with walkouts affecting schools in Khartoum in February 2018 and Darfur and El Gezira provinces in November 2018. Since December 2018 mass protests have spread across the country, despite the authorities’ efforts to crush them. The movement is coordinated by the Sudanese Professionals Association, which includes teachers and has involved large numbers of strikes. Repression has been fierce, with at least fifty protesters killed by the security forces according to human rights organisations. Others have died in custody, such as teacher Ahmed al-Kheir from Kassala province in Eastern Sudan who was tortured to death after being arrested.

• For info on solidarity actions with teachers: menasolidaritynetwork.com

Build the fight against the right

Recent elections have resulted in conservative majority governments in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec. All these governments are implementing big cuts and are fanning the flames of bigotry. But the resistance is growing.

A blustery wind from Alberta

by Pam Johnson

On election night in Alberta, Jason Kenney began his slick victory speech declaring Alberta 'open for business!' Again and again he promoted oil development and pipelines as the road to prosperity. He railed against Trudeau's carbon tax and called for an alliance of right-wing premiers to cooperate and fight 'foreign-funded' climate campaigns in order to keep the oil flowing.

All of this flies in the face of climate science, the global climate protest movement and rising calls for a Green New Deal, plus the prediction of every oil industry report warning of waning supply. At the same time federal scientists have just released a report saying that Canada is warming at twice the global average.

Kenney doubled down on fossil fuel development with the same populist message that masquerades as concern for 'the people' that brought Trump and Ford to power. Kenney channelled Trump's ultra-nationalism, with an Alberta first focus, but in a sleeker, more polite style. With only the faintest two-sentence nod to the climate, he spoke about need for Canada to compete or lose out to 'foreign' countries like the US, Russia and the OPEC 'dictators.' The true benefac-

tors of this scheme, of course, are the oil companies, not workers.

But his last ditch call to get the oil out of the soil seems like madness even to industry experts. One recent Globe and Mail editorial titled, 'Let's get honest about the real outlook for the Alberta oil sands and Trans Mountain', cited no benefit to producing expensive tar sands oil with the current glut of cheaper oil. The same article concluded that it is likely the Trans Mountain pipeline will end up as a 'stranded' asset that Canadians will pay for for generations.

Resistance

But, what is really hounding Kenney and his fellow climate change deniers, is the rising global movement to stop climate change. Students around the world, inspired by Greta Thunberg, have gone on weekly climate strikes. The Extinction Rebellion protests in London have shut down major intersections for the past week. In Quebec, tens of thousands have protested on the streets in the past two years in a rising climate movement.

The movement in Quebec has also gained the support of Quebec Solidaire (QS), the anti-capitalist party that won ten seats in the Quebec Assembly. QS has vowed to

put addressing climate change at the top of its priority list. The sentiment in Quebec is so strong that the newly elected Premier of the right-wing

prosperity pitch was enough to convince voters who have been facing job loss and high cost of living. Rachel Notley's NDP



Students march against Kenney's bigotry. Denin Lawley/Unsplash, CC BY-SA

CAQ party. Francois Legault, could not join his right-wing counterparts in condemning the federal carbon tax for fear of losing support.

A recent poll also shows majority support in Canada for a Green New Deal. 61% support this project that would radically transform the economy and an even higher number support raising taxes on the wealthy to help pay for the transition.

Bigot

Kenney's dubious oil jobs and

government did not deliver despite being on the same oil prosperity page. She and Trudeau talked out of both sides or their mouths about building pipelines and climate stewardship. It is a muddled and confused message and voters didn't buy it.

What is most scary about Kenney's pitch is that it drives his anti-worker and social conservative agendas and gives comfort to bigots and the far-right who are a significant part of his base. Without

speaking directly to specifics in his victory speech, his use of the term 'foreign' to describe climate protesters and oil competitors is a dogwhistle and fodder for this base.

He campaigned on cutting the minimum wage and overtime pay for workers. He campaigned for school 'choice', code for eroding the public school system.

His anti-LGBTQ and anti-reproductive rights stances are well-documented going back to his days at a Catholic college in the US in the 1980s, when he initiated a campaign against allowing same sex partners visiting rights in hospitals during the height of the AIDS crisis.

He also campaigned on changing the law regarding gay-straight alliances in schools so that, in some cases, teachers could disclose to parents that their children were members. Protests were called across Alberta as soon as he announced this part of his platform.

Now Alberta students are planning a walk-out in their schools on May 3. This will be latest in a string of actions across Canada and Quebec for justice. Kenney should call on his right wing buddies in the premiers' offices in other provinces, as the walkouts and protests spread from province to province, he is going to need all the help he can get.

English Canada, racism and Quebec

The proposed ban on religious symbols put forward by the Coalition Avenir Quebec (CAQ) is a racist law. Make no mistake about it. Under the guise of supporting secularism, the law will further curtail the rights of the most vulnerable. Jews, Sikhs, Muslims and specifically Muslim women will suffer from this.

People throughout the Canadian state have, quite rightly, expressed their anger and outrage. Many in English Canada have called for some kind of action to stop the law from being brought into effect. This is an understandable reaction to injustice.

But pundits, politicians and some

continues to the present day.

Just witness Trudeau and his attacks on Indigenous people in the past few months. We saw his government order militarized police to attack Indigenous land defenders in Wet'suwet'en territory. We saw a Trudeau supporter physically attack an Indigenous activist at a rally in Toronto and we heard nothing from the Liberal leader. We saw his utter disregard for the people of the Grassy Narrows First Nation when he smugly dismissed their pleas to clean up mercury poisoning in their water supply.

And the Liberal decision to extend the Canadian military presence in

And we have Jason Kenney, the Premier of Alberta who will further embolden the far right there. In the lead up to the election, not a day went by that we did not hear about a UCP candidate who was forced to resign for racist, sexist or homophobic statements.

Kenney is happy to be the new premier of Alberta so he can work with his old buddy Doug Ford to further a right-wing agenda. Beyond the massive cuts that will be literally killing people in Ontario, we have a Premier who is at home sharing a picture with Faith Goldy, the white supremacist former mayoral candidate in Toronto. Going to a Ford event is like stepping over the border into a Trump rally, with the most vicious attacks on the poorest and most vulnerable being greeted with cheers from his bigoted fan base.

The list of examples of racism in English Canada could go on and on. There is the regular PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West) rallies in Ontario, the Halifax police carding members of the black community at 10 times the rate of white people and the growth of neo-fascist groups across the country. In a recent Globe and Mail article they studied the online chats of hundreds of racist right wingers and found that the vast majority of them came from Ontario.

But the point is that we have to look at the bigger pan-Canadian picture and indeed the global terrain where the far right are mobilizing in numbers we haven't seen in decades.

Activists in English Canada who are asking if we should be picketing Quebec trade offices in places like Toronto and Vancouver should instead take the time to push back against the racists locally.

That is not just because it would be more effective, but also because there is a history in this country of Francophones being treated as second class citizens, which complicates any attempts by anglo Canadians to influence politics in Quebec. Sending English Canadians to Quebec or to protest Quebec's racist law will backfire.

And working people in Quebec have already held a number of mass rallies against the racist law. Tens of thousands have come out in protest. They even have a political party in Quebec Solidaire that has voted to fight the proposed law.

What we need is for all anti-racists across the Canadian state to shut down hate and show solidarity wherever we are.

Conservatives

The Liberals aren't alone in boosting racism. There is a revolving door between the far right groups and the campaign team of Conservative leader Andrew Scheer. This is a man who had to be shamed into publicly denouncing an Islamophobic mass murderer because he didn't want to alienate his racist base.

The Trump-style campaign rallies of Maxime Bernier and the new [White] People's Party he founded have created a new home for racists on the federal level.



Quebec has seen mass rallies against the racist Bill 21.

activists in English Canada have revealed a bias of their own in response to the law. There is a trend of anti-Quebec sentiment that infiltrates the reaction.

For many politicians it is a convenient excuse. By targeting the CAQ law they can deflect any responsibility for the racism that exists under their noses in Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver or anywhere else in the country.

For English Canadian media it allows for yet another round of Quebec bashing – a time honoured tradition.

If we want to talk about racism in Canada we need to recognize that it is a phenomena that exists in all parts of the Canadian state. Quebec should not be singled out for having a racism problem.

Foundations of racism

Indeed, this country was built on racism and the genocide of Indigenous peoples and this



Photo: Janet Rodriguez

Not business as usual in Ontario

by Carolyn Egan

The Ford government in Ontario won a majority in the provincial legislature with 40% of those casting a ballot voting for the Progressive Conservative Party. 60% rejected its poorly defined platform and feared what was to come, having seen Doug Ford's work as a city councillor in Toronto. His mean-spirited approach to municipal politics in league with his now deceased brother, mayor Rob Ford, show a contempt for publicly-funded services and an alliance with developers and the wealthy. He later lost a race to become mayor of the city and he's a man who bears a grudge.

He has now brought his neo-liberal agenda to the province as a whole and in less than a year has tried to change the face of Ontario.

One of his first steps was to roll back the victory of a \$15 minimum wage which was to come into effect on January 1, 2019. This callous disregard for those who work at poverty wages, primarily women of colour, and who struggled along with so many others to fight for a better economic future for themselves and their families typifies his contempt for working class people and the poor. This was just the start.

The Ford government is slashing hospital budgets, taking away access to post-secondary education for low income students, laying off teachers and increasing class sizes, decimating public health, cutting library services and on and on it goes. It is an onslaught against programs that have taken generations to win, and he and his well-heeled cronies at Queen's Park laugh as they vote to destroy what so many depend on to maintain a semblance of a decent life.

They are not invulnerable. We have seen the government take a step back when farmers and Indigenous people fought back against allowing development in the green belt that surrounds Toronto. They did the same when the families of those with autism demonstrated at the legislature

against their attempt to cut programming. This has given hope to those millions who feel we can organize against these vicious attacks by an uncaring government hell bent on doing away with the social safety net, attacking labour safeguards, and ignoring the threat of climate change.

There is a tremendous anger at the base of society as more and more of the cuts roll out. A city councillor in Toronto called for a walk out on May Day. Another stated clearly that people will die if the attacks on public health are allowed to continue, speaking of the poisoned water in Walkerton and the SARS crisis, both in living memory.

The labour movement cannot go on with business as usual. People from communities across the province are crying out for a broad and sustained movement of resistance.

The stewards assemblies were important steps, the 40,000 teachers on the lawns of the provincial legislature, the hundred thousand students who walked out of their classrooms, the health care demonstration, are pointing the way forward. Union leaders, local and provincial, have to put their ears to the ground and hear the clamoring for a real fight back that people are demanding.

We have the example of the Days of Action in the Harris years of the 1990s when general strikes shut down city after city only to have labour leaders get cold feet and stop the mobilizations before a province wide strike. This led to demoralization and the re-election of Harris. It didn't have to be that way.

The mood in Ontario has changed since the election. More and more are disillusioned with this government. The trade unions, working with diverse allies from every community, have to do the work of mobilizing the sentiment that is there.

"Organize, Educate, Resist" was the slogan against Harris and it speaks to exactly what has to be done to day. Ford can be beaten.

Founding a new military order

by **Tom Leonard**

This past April 4th marked the 70th anniversary of the founding of NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, through the signing of the Washington Treaty in 1949. A Google search reveals a smattering of articles noting the anniversary, but remarkably little media coverage given the significance of NATO to the geo-strategy of the U.S. and its allies, including Canada, over the last several decades. The scant media attention is doubly surprising as U.S. President Donald Trump has openly questioned the continued relevance of NATO and suggested that the U.S. may withdraw from it.

So, what is NATO, and why does it matter?

NATO in its Own Words - 1949

NATO is a military and political alliance initiated by twelve founding states, including

common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.”

The Treaty commits all NATO members to collective defence, and its Article 5 explicitly states that an attack against one or more member(s) in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all, obliging all members to take such action as they deem necessary “to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.”

The initial focus of the alliance was the USSR, aimed to “deter Soviet aggression while simultaneously preventing the revival of European militarism and laying the groundwork for political integration.” In the words of the first NATO Secretary General Lord Ismay, the purpose of the alliance at its founding was “to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.”

Geoffrey Roberts’ words, “it would be incompatible with its [NATO’s] democratic and defensive aims.”

On May 6, 1955 a rearming West Germany was formally incorporated into the NATO alliance. The USSR responded on May 14 that year with the formation of the Warsaw Pact, a military and political alliance between it and seven of its satellite states in Eastern and Central Europe, including Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and East Germany. For the following forty-five years, Europe would be dominated by this Cold War division.

Words vs. Reality

Two contradictions between NATO ideals and reality were present right from its birth. The professed commitment to democracy was belied by the fact that the original signatories included Portugal, at that time ruled by the quasi-fascist police state of Antonio Salazar.

US\$900 billion on military expenditures in 2016 (roughly US\$600 billion of which was spent by the United States), more than half of the approximately US\$1.7 trillion spent globally on the military that year.

Even in its founding year 1949, the twelve NATO members collectively spent an estimated US\$116 billion (in year 2000 US\$) on military expenditures, compared with the estimated US\$84 billion spent by their principal opponent the USSR. From these figures, it is clear that NATO has enjoyed military superiority over its rivals since its inception.

When one adds to this the approximately US\$218 billion spent collectively on the military by close NATO allies Saudi Arabia, India, Japan and South Korea in 2016, the military dominance of the alliance becomes even clearer. NATO members and these four countries accounted for two-thirds of global military spending in 2016, compared with the US\$66 billion spent by Russia (approximately 4% of the global total). To put Russia’s military spending into perspective, NATO member the U.K., hardly a great power any longer and completely incapable of launching a war on its own, spent more than US\$60 billion on its military that year, which is 90% of the Russian figure. The U.K. is one of 29 NATO members and not the largest military spender in the alliance, by an order of magnitude.

There is simply no comparison between the military capacity of NATO and the military capacity of Russia. China comes closer, but the US\$228 billion spent by China (approximately 13% of global military spending) is still dwarfed by the amounts spent collectively by NATO members. Even if the massive spending of the United States is removed from the equation, NATO members still collectively spent substantially more than China did on its military in 2016, and approximately four times what Russia did.

What, then, is the objective of this overwhelming superiority? It is clearly not defensive, as there is no power on Earth that is even close to being a peer competitor. In the next installment, we’ll see how NATO’s imperial aims evolved following the end of the Cold War.



NATO during the Cold War – no fighting in the War Room

Canada. Original signatories included the United States, the U.K., and France, as well as Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and Portugal. In the years since, the organization has grown to include 29 countries, including Turkey, Germany and Spain, most of the former Stalinist states of Eastern Europe such as Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, as well as the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The preamble to the Washington Treaty states that NATO members “desire to live in peace with all peoples and governments” and “are determined to safeguard the freedom,

A Game that Two Can Play – 1954

Given this, it is interesting that in 1954 the USSR actually proposed to join NATO. Following the death of Stalin in March 1953, the USSR spent more than two years in diplomatic efforts pursuing German reunification (Germany was at that time split between Stalinist East Germany and the U.S.-allied West Germany) and the creation of a pan-European system of collective security, a system which would include the United States and the USSR. The proposal that the USSR should join NATO was ultimately turned down by the western powers on grounds that, in historian

Portugal did not become democratic until Salazar’s Estada Novo was overthrown by a popular revolution in 1974, twenty-five years after NATO’s founding.

NATO member Greece, which joined the alliance in 1952, was ruled by a military junta from April 1967 through its overthrow in 1974, but NATO supported the junta throughout.

The commitment to peace is likewise questionable. Consider that NATO is the most powerful military organization on the planet, and has been since it was founded. NATO member countries collectively spent more

Territorial Acknowledgement

As settlers, we acknowledge our occupation of lands that are the Indigenous territories of Turtle Island. Furthermore, we support all struggles for Indigenous sovereignty in whatever forms they take by the hundreds of First Nations and Inuit communities that have resided here for many thousands of years, and by Métis communities that have developed in the last hundreds of years.

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WHERE WE STAND socialist.ca/ourstand

The capitalist system is based on violence, oppression and brutal exploitation. It creates hunger beside plenty, it threatens our sustenance through unsafe and unsustainable farming, and kills the earth itself with pollution and unsustainable extraction of oil, minerals, animals, trees, and water. Capitalism leads to imperialism and war. Saving ourselves and the planet depends on finding an alternative.

Capitalism cannot regulate the catastrophic effects of climate change. We stand for climate justice, including the

concept of “just transition” for affected workers.

Workers’ power
Any alternative to capitalism must involve replacing the system from the bottom up through radical collective action. Central to that struggle is the workplace, where capitalism reaps its profits off our backs.

Capitalist monopolies control the earth’s resources, but workers everywhere actually create the wealth. A new socialist society can only be constructed when workers collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its

production and distribution to satisfy human needs, not corporate profits—to respect the environment, not pollute and destroy it.

Oppression
Within capitalist society different groups suffer from specific forms of oppression. Attacks on oppressed groups are used to divide workers and weaken solidarity. We support the right of people of colour and other oppressed groups to organize in their own defence. We are for real,

social, economic and political equality for women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination and homophobia against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people.

We oppose environmental racism. We oppose discrimination on the basis of religion, ability and age.

Canada, Quebec, Indigenous Peoples
Canada is not a “colony” of the United States, but an imperialist country in its own right that participates in the exploitation of much of the world. The Canadian state was founded through the repression of Indigenous peoples and

the people of Quebec. We support the struggles for self-determination of Quebec and Indigenous peoples up to and including the right to independence. In particular, we recognize Indigenous peoples’ original and primary right to decide their fate and that of their lands, heritage, and traditions. Socialists in Quebec, and in all oppressed nations, work to give the struggle against national oppression an internationalist and working class content.

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The push to nationalize GM is electric

by Michelle Robidoux

“GM didn’t build Oshawa, Oshawa built GM. If they’re allowed after years of making incredible profits from workers in this community to just walk away, that is a problem.”

With these words, Tony Leah, chair of Unifor Local 222’s Political Action Committee introduced a panel discussion on nationalizing Oshawa’s GM plant.

The panel, attended by over 80 people, was a call to action to defend jobs while addressing the urgent question of climate change – proposing a Green New Deal for Oshawa that could re-tool the GM plant to produce electric vehicles.

Unifor has been bargaining to try to maintain some jobs in the Oshawa facility, slated to close at the end of this year. But whatever is achieved, it will number only hundreds not thousands of jobs, centered in the stamping plant. The loss of 5,000 direct jobs and another 25,000 indirect jobs, plus massive manufacturing capacity, will devastate the region.



GM is already taking inventory of the equipment they can sell off from the 10 million square feet of the Oshawa complex. “We can’t allow it,” Leah said. That is why the Retirees chapter of local 222 put forward this motion: *‘Therefore, be it resolved that unless GM guarantees to maintain the current number of jobs in Oshawa, it should be nationalized without compensation and placed under democratic workers’ and community control in order to save productive union jobs and benefit the city of Oshawa and region of Durham.’*

The motion was then passed by local 222’s membership meeting and the Durham Region Labour Council. “This caused excitement, because this is the kind of bold thinking that is needed,” Leah said. “We have to stop being forced backwards, we need to start fighting for improvements – for what we need.”

Mike Palacek, president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, said the federal government found \$12 million for Loblaws, a company headed up by the 2nd richest Canadian, to buy new fridges – but they are doing nothing to modernize the country’s infrastructure in the face of climate change.

Canada Post has the largest fleet of vehicles in the country, that need to be transitioned to electric power. “Fifteen thousand vehicles won’t keep the Oshawa plant open, but it is a first step. We need tens of thousands of electric buses. We need to break the power of corporations over our society, who have been stalling on climate change,” he concluded.

Activists are now going door-to-door with a petition to build support for the demand to nationalize the plant. We need to press for this demand to be taken up as part of the push for a Green New Deal. Every local union and NDP riding association should pass this motion. The issue could not be more concrete, or more urgent.

• Watch video of the panel here: <https://bit.ly/2J33xMa>

REVIEW

Fighting fascism with funny

by Kim McAuley

In these dark times, if you need a dose of inspiration with a laugh, sign up to Jim Carrey’s twitter account. Still the comedian we know and love, Carrey has also been drawing since he was a kid. For the past few years he’s been using the majority of his time and artistic talent to draw political cartoons, as well as paint and sculpt.

Many hadn’t heard about Carrey’s drawing and the political content until a high profile twitter fight with the granddaughter of Mussolini. Carrey sent a picture with the caption “If you’re wondering what fascism leads to, just ask Benito Mussolini and his mistress Claretta.” Under the caption was a painting Mussolini strung up by his ankles – an obvious reference to the day they were both killed by anti-fascist forces.

His political cartoons are colourful, one-panel statements, which he mostly uses to take on whoever he sees as the most vile politician of the moment.

His humanity is evident in his art, sharing the rage we’re collectively feeling about the political climate we’re living in today. His work is colourful in every way, subversive, raw, angry, progressive and often darkly funny. He mostly takes on Trump – ‘the Demon and his minions who are controlling us’ – and exposes their corruption and greed in ways that are both funny and painful at once.

In a November 2018 interview with Jerry Saltz, a long-haul truck driver who became an art critic at 41 and received the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism in 2018, we get to hear a lot more about Carrey’s work, and politics. It’s a great hour on YouTube if you’re looking for a refreshing diversion (Jim

Carrey and Jerry Saltz on Art and Activism), coming out of the Vulture Festival.

As a dual Canadian and American citizen – he was born in Newmarket, Ontario, and went



to high school in Aldershot near Hamilton – he has a unique perspective. At about the half way mark of the interview, he comments that Canadian healthcare is good; he’s sick and tired

of hearing that that system doesn’t work; and that “healthcare is what great countries do when they fucking grow up”.

It’s also refreshing that someone who has made his millions hasn’t completely lost touch with reality, and uses his money, time and energy to create art that exposes how heavily our reality is impacted by corruption and greed enacted by those in power. He states in the interview that he has been cautioned by his managers about losing his audience over politics, but he’s not bothered by that. His attitude is very much ‘so be it’. He wants to speak truth to power, and invites those who don’t see things the same way to use the door.

Carrey is passionate about wanting to tell us to ‘watch out’ for certain people and ‘painting examples of the inequities of the world’ ‘from a place of fury, anger, pain, rage, but also love for what life is supposed to be’. He asks “how can you hate something without loving something else”. That statement is arresting from this socialist’s perspective – we know that we can do much better than we’re currently doing, are angered by the corruption we are fighting to end, and driven by love of the knowledge that we can create a better world.

Carrey’s work provides political comedic relief from the darkness of the Trumps and Fords of the world, but he is still trapped in the reformist’s dilemma of believing that elections are the way in which we can best make change in our society. While he doesn’t like being labeled a socialist, he notes he’s also been called a snowflake, saying that a million snowflakes

make a blizzard. It will be interesting to see if this creative spirit and political mind tires of poking an angry but fun finger at the corruption, or if he can make a further step to the left.

Remembering the Winnipeg General Strike

Remembering the Winnipeg General is a political vaudeville that tells the story of the momentous, yet oft forgotten Winnipeg General Strike. On May 15th, 1919, in solidarity with striking construction workers, two-thirds of Winnipeg’s population walked off the job. The strike lasted six weeks and is arguably North America’s largest labour action ever. It only ended after a riot in which two strikers were killed. On the eve of the strike’s anniversary, Socialist Worker spoke with the play’s author, Thomas McKechnie.

Why did you decide to write this play?

I’ve been a radical since I’ve had politics. At first they were the sort politics of... you listen to Rage Against the Machine and you get the general sense there are bastards out there. My politics have gained nuance since then but I was always a leftist. I found these posts (on facebook) about the Winnipeg general strike a few years ago. I was amazed, I had never come across this most amazing thing that we did. A leftist for a decade and no idea. I felt it had to be a symptom of a disorganized or organized “national forgetting”, that they buried it because it worked. So when I realized the 100th anniversary of the Winnipeg general strike was fast approaching, I thought it was high time we tried to remember it.

What do you think is most important about the Winnipeg general strike?

What’s important about it to me now, is that it’s terrifyingly relevant. The central concern of the strikers was that they needed wages to keep pace with inflation. After 30 or 40 years of wage stagnation, most people don’t have anything. The notion that my generation can afford houses if we stop eating avocado toast is sad joke. After that, it’s the scale that’s amazing to me. A whole city!

Shut down!

Second, immigrants were central – Ukrainian immigrants primarily. They were followed by the suspicion of Bolshevism because of the Russian Revolution. People had been fleeing Tsarist Ukraine for years, and many ended up in the Prairies. They were needed by capitalists, but were not part of the national project of Canada.

Some of the things associated with those events are close, some are far away. We’re not ready to shut down the second largest city, we don’t have



Thomas McKechnie

the organizational capacity right now – but we have the same needs as the Winnipeg general strikers.

On the issue of immigration, what parallels do you see with today?

One of the things I see, is a very interesting mixed consciousness in Winnipeg – some people were with ‘Canadian’ strikers against the bosses, but also against immigrants as ‘not real Canadians’. Immigration, the ‘other’, the outsider, can be utilized by our enemies to obscure our class relationships. That’s very true right now, because this is a more globalized world, climate change will accelerate the necessity of migration, we’re going to see people trying to use the immigrant “Other” to avoid solving what are class conflicts. Look at the US: some are pulling on legitimate class anger

about the way bosses have been f***ing workers for years, but are weaponizing it against Mexican migration. That is going to be used against us, and solidarity across borders and citizenship status is going to be vital to build an effective labour movement. We need to center the challenges faced by immigrants.

What do you want to do with this play?

Something I’m excited about is that we’ve invited a number of groups to table at the events, groups like the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, the IWW, the IS. Myself and other artists can use the play to stir up and agitate, in the traditional sense of the word, to show it is not just letters or petitions, but we can take control of the city if we want. These things are possible. Put this feeling of potential into the hands of radical organizations! You are fired up to do something? Here are people who want to do something!

Does the Winnipeg general strike tell us anything about how we might stop Ford?

To me, one of biggest stumbling blocks the left faces is how neoliberalism has closed our possibilities. The idea that workers could give enough of a shit about each other that we could do something... Sometimes you have to fight all of it at once. They’re coming for everything, so we have to fight everywhere. It’s happening everywhere, and we need to fight back everywhere.

• **Remembering the Winnipeg General**, an original play by Thomas McKechnie, performed by Heather Marie Annis and Ximena Huizi, directed by Erin Branderburg, with original music composed by Kristine Schmitt. June 26-July 6 at Owl’s Club, 847 Dovercourt at Bloor, Toronto. Details can be found at @zietpunktheatre1

This budget is murder

by John Bell

Recently a friend initiated a game, asking where and when in history people would rather have been born. Almost without exception people opted for living in the present, citing their reliance on technology. A few chose rewinding a few decades so they could live in capitalism's salad days, but that's it.

I chose a different tack: "Orkney Island in the Neolithic village of Skara Brae, circa 3,000 BCE. All the evidence tells of a communistic settlement, living surrounded by natural abundance, with enough security and leisure time to produce beautiful 'luxury' artifacts. I admit to a sentimental attachment to Orkney, but I wanted to make a point: for long stretches of human history our ancestors lived in harmony with nature and with each other.

The tired old idea of "human nature" being brutal, violent and greedy is refuted by a mountain of scientific evidence of early societies.

Unfortunately, this false idea of "human nature" has been hammered into our consciousness. What is advertised as the heart of darkness of humanity is in reality a mirror image of our society—an historically specific capitalist nature, not an eternal human one. And as capitalism dodders into its decrepitude, it becomes meaner and more evidently cruel.

Cold blooded reptiles

Which brings me to Doug Ford and his Ontario government. Some say these Tories don't care whether we live or die. This is a mistake. If we are poor, weak, vulnerable or struggling they would rather see us dead. Ford's budget cuts allow no other conclusion. They are killers: cold blooded reptiles. Let's count the crimes.

Intimidation and uttering threats: Cuts to services for families dealing with autism provided early proof of their moral depravity. Not only did budget cuts deprive thousands of



These guys are bad news for working people

people of necessary therapy; remember Social Services Minister Lisa MacLeod threatened autism service agencies, saying they faced "four long years" unless they publicly cheered government cuts.

Theft: when DoFo rolled back the minimum wage increase and replaced it with a tax cut he stole an average of \$400 per year from every minimum wage worker in the province.

Misogyny: Ford cut all funding for the Ontario College of Midwives. Limiting reproductive choice in all forms is a Tory priority.

Child abuse: part of Ford's cut of a billion dollars over 10 years from Toronto's Social Services payments means hungry children (the loss of hundreds of school meals for kids in need); it means fewer inspections of day care facilities; it means an end to diabetes prevention programs; and it cuts into infectious disease control. Remember, the goal of Tory education is not to teach critical thinking or problem solv-

ing, but to toughen up our kids. It might, if they survive.

Animal cruelty: In 2018 there were four nesting pairs of piping plovers breeding behind a fenced area at Wasaga Beach on Georgian Bay; the endangered birds are down to fewer than 75 pairs on all the Great Lakes. South Bruce Peninsula Mayor Janice Jackson thinks they are wasting valuable beach property and says Doug Ford agrees with her. He proved her right by announcing reactionary changes to the Endangered Species Act, that will allow developers to pay a fine rather than obey "onerous" regulations meant to prevent extinction. This amounts to taking out a contract to murder a species.

Public endangerment: funds and regulations safeguarding our drinking water, restaurant and food inspection are gone, effective immediately. Corporations will take advantage of deregulation and cut corners and people will die. These

are the policies which led to poisoned water in Flint, Michigan; the lack of potable water long faced by Ontario's Indigenous communities will become more common. Toronto Councilor Joe Cressy summed it up: "People will die. People are going to die."

Manslaughter: Tory cuts and restructuring of ambulance and EMT services will also kill people. Ford is going to convert 52 municipal services into 10 regional hubs. This means first responders may no longer have the local knowledge to get to you fast, and get you to needed health services. And if and when they come, they are no longer required to take you to a hospital. They may deliver you to a walk-in clinic, or a private facility, or maybe just hand you a phone so you can call telehealth. And if you end up dead, well you're just doing your bit to end "hallway healthcare" like Doug Ford promised.

I could go on, but you get it. This is not government "for the people." It is the modus operandi of gangsters, who use violence to cement their rule. These are crimes committed by bullies who truly believe services should only be available for those who can afford them, and the rest should toughen up or die. These are the primitive thugs, not my stone age ancestors.

In spite of all the evidence, millions still support Ford for two reasons. First, the blood trail has not yet come to their door. More importantly, they see the crumbling edifice of capitalism and are terrified because they cannot even imagine another way to live, a better way of life that has room for people and plovers.

As we organize to fight Ford's cuts let's remember the secret of the popularity of a Ford, or a Kenney, or a Trump: they are terrorists who manipulate our economic fears to keep us at each other's throats. Until we can inspire people with the possibility of a society that really does protect the vulnerable and serve all equally—and we glimpse that future if we know our own past—the gangsters will continue to rule.

Students leading the way

by Mohammed Ali

On November 5, 2011, nearly 10,000 college and university students took to the streets across Ontario to demand that the provincial government lower tuition fees. Dalton McGuinty, the Premier at that time, had given schools the power to raise tuition fees by up to 5% annually and this was faced with stiff resistance, led by the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS).

The high level of mobilization was supported by a few key factors: Organizers were building off the success of the anti-war movement mobilization, that had trained a new layer of activists and created new battlegrounds on our campuses. Many campuses had strong Students Against War coalitions, as well as Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions coalitions in solidarity with Palestine. The coalitions would serve as a key space to bring new student activists into campus organizing within their student unions and Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs). Off-campus, Occupy Wall Street was capturing the imagination of students, and the broader public.

Finally, the CFS-Ontario was filled with experienced and dedicated student organizers across the province and worked well in both



Photo: Jessica Bell twitter

building a strong base at the campus level, as well as coordinating actions province-wide. Most campuses that were member locals of the CFS-Ontario were holding weekly coalition meetings to organize against the continued skyrocketing tuition fees. These coalitions were at their most effective when they included campus workers and faculty.

And taking a page from the Quebec student movement, these informal coalition meetings were independent and used a grassroots decision making model. The first year student who was attending their first coalition meeting had

an equal voice (and equal vote) as the student union president at the same meeting. This organizing model worked to produce some of the largest student rallies in Ontario's history.

Unfortunately it has been hard to keep up that level of mobilization. This is partly because student unions and OPIRG chapters on campus came under heavy attack by right wing elements dedicated to fracturing the membership of the CFS-Ontario by holding referendums to have their local campuses rescind their membership within the CFS. Referendums were also held to defund the ancillary fees that funded various

OPIRG campus chapters.

With student organizers focused on fighting off right wing attacks to campus institutions, there have been less resources available to mobilize students province-wide. But this all changed on January 17, 2019. The moment that Premier Doug Ford announced his cuts to the OSAP program, students jumped up and independently mobilized at a level not seen in this province for a decade.

Students have seen these new policies for what they truly are: a direct attack on access to education and on campus democracy.

And they are marching on Queen's Park and walking out of their classrooms by the thousands. As other organizations like the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty are stepping up their resistance, it looks like the fightback will be led by college and university students across Ontario. They are joined by teachers who are mobilizing against huge cuts to education on all levels – not just post-secondary.

The level of resistance on campus skyrocketed overnight to stand up to these austerity measures and the same can be replicated in every workplace and community in the province.

The resistance is here! And it's once again students leading the way!