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**1968: Year of revolt  
50th anniversary**

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## JUSTICE FOR COLTEN BOUSHIE & TINA FONTAINE



**B**y now we are all familiar with the double tragedy surrounding 22-year old Colten Boushie, a member of the Red Pheasant First Nation on the prairies: his murder in 2016, and the acquittal by an all-white jury that caused anger across the country among Indigenous people and many settlers alike.

The process used for this case was problematic from the beginning. Police failed to properly collect all the evidence. Most people's antennae went up when an all-white jury was chosen. Using "peremptory challenge"

es" lawyers refused potential jurors without giving any reason. Due to the obvious potential for bias, this practice has been eliminated in the UK and the US.

Following the jury decision, the Boushie family flew to Ottawa to seek justice from Trudeau and various cabinet ministers. True to form, Trudeau's reaction was to simply say, "as a country we must and can do better."

No sooner had this government non-response come out than the jury decision around the murder of 15-year

old Tina Fontaine (Sagkeeng First Nation) was released, another acquittal. Her murder in 2014, where she was wrapped in bedding and discarded in a Winnipeg river, was the final straw that led to the establishment of the Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls. As a child in "protective" care, she was horribly failed by the state, including child services and the police.

Reaction from indigenous activists to the jury decisions has been swift, with dozens of Boushie family and Fontaine family solidarity rallies con-

ducted in many cities.

The government says it will "look into" changes to the legal system and promised a new legal framework for ensuring Indigenous rights, as was supposed to have happened with Section 35 of the Constitution. But nowhere are treaties or the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples mentioned. That's because the Liberals have no intention of respecting Indigenous sovereignty if it means any possibility of interfering with resource company profits. As Mi'kmaq lawyer and activist Pam

Palmer said "The question that he (Trudeau) never talks about in any of speeches or announcements is lands, resources and power. Those are big ticket items that are the crux of reconciliation."

All of us need to stand behind Indigenous activists in their demands for a genuine justice system based on Indigenous traditions. This can only happen when enough people support true Indigenous sovereignty, which would allow Indigenous control over resources in their territories, and adherence to indigenous laws.



# Parkdale rent strike

by Kevin Taghabon

“I live with two kids. It’s so cold,” Aziza said as bitter winds cut sharply through the crowd outside the Landlord and Tenant board in Toronto. “We have a window, it’s a single window...I have to put pillows, blankets [in the window]. We live in very freezing [temperatures]. How do I live? How am I happy? First thing is my health, and my kids’ health.”

Aziza was joined by fellow tenants of 1251 King West alongside dozens of activists and community members in support of the recently launched rent strike against Nuspor Investments. Nuspor, which owns the building at 1251 King, is pursuing above guideline rent increases (AGIs) at their building. Parkdale is one of the final neighbourhoods in Toronto where working-class and immigrant families can afford to live. In a neighbourhood where many people are raising families, working multiple precarious jobs, or living as retirees on fixed incomes, this steep rise in rents can effectively evict people from the home they’ve made in Parkdale. This also makes it impossible for many others to save money for days of rest or emergencies.

Despite the numbing cold and anticipated hostility from the Landlord and Tenant Board and Nuspor, spirits were high at the demonstration before the hearing. “Our microphone might be gone because it’s too cold right now, but we are not!”, said Ashley, one of the organizers with Parkdale Organize. “A lot has happened in the last year in Parkdale. The teachers at Queen Victoria [Public School] have planned four rallies in support of tenants who are being pushed out of our neighbourhood. We have seen two strikes at the Ontario Food Terminal held down by people who live in Parkdale. We have now seen a dozen buildings go on rent strike.” Not to be painted as victims, she also



Parkdale residents strike against Nuspor

pointed out that the story playing out is not simply one of predatory landlords. “We are here today to tell Nuspor [that] they don’t get to push our neighbours out of their homes, and that we will not stop until these above guideline rent increases are done in Parkdale!”

Over 650 AGI applications in Toronto have been made to the Landlord and Tenant Board since 2015. The systems set up in Ontario to deal with the exact issue of affordable housing incentivizes landlords to spend money where it is not needed. If a landlord spends money upgrading a building, they can legally transfer the costs onto people in their units through AGIs, a loophole which landlords habitually

abuse. Nuspor has consequently spent nearly \$300,000 making aesthetic improvements to the lobby at 1251 King, including thousands of dollars worth of framed artwork. Meanwhile, residents report that the landlord has ignored demands to meet basic living standards.

“I need inside beauty, not outside beauty, my unit. First: health,” said Aziza, referring to her unheeded requests to make her apartment warm enough to safely shelter her children in. This is a transparent effort to push out current residents and appeal to wealthier would-be renters. Aziza described the wasteful cosmetic renovations as “makeup”.

The struggle in Parkdale can be seen as the spearhead of a broader

movement against gentrification and mendacious capitalists seeking to lure in the rich and rid cities of working-class people. “We know that within neighbourhoods around Toronto there is the nucleus of the struggle we are seeing in Parkdale right now,” said Ashley addressing the crowd. “It is often said that Toronto is a city of neighbourhoods. What we need to see now is every neighbourhood in this city getting organized like they are in Parkdale...take control of their lives, organize against predatory landlords, and say, ‘we have had enough! We are going to defend our place in this city before we don’t have a place in Toronto at all anymore!’”

● For the full article visit [socialist.ca](http://socialist.ca)

## Do Premiers Horgan and Notley really disagree?

By Bradley Hughes

During the month of February it appeared as if BC’s NDP Premier Horgan was living up to his campaign promise to do everything possible to stop the Kinder Morgan tar sands pipeline expansion and it appeared as if Alberta’s NDP Premier Notley was standing up for the thousands of workers who have lost their jobs in the downturn in Alberta’s oil and gas industry.

On January 30 BC Environment Minister George Heyman announced that BC will restrict any increase in Tar Sands diluted bitumen shipments until it conducts more spill response studies.

On February 6, Premier Notley announced that as part of “our ongoing campaign to protect our jobs here in this province from the unprovoked and unconstitutional attack on the Trans Mountain pipeline” the Alberta government would boycott BC wines.

This move did nothing to protect jobs.

The peak of employment in oil

and gas extraction and mining in Alberta was in November 2013 when 182,500 were employed. At the end of last year, that number had dropped to 147,100 - a 20 per cent decline.

Fighting over pipelines will not bring all of those jobs back.

As has happened in other industries, after every downturn companies turn to more automation to try to restore profits and in doing so replace more and more workers with machines. For example, Suncor announced in January that it will eliminate 500 jobs in the Tar Sands by switching to driverless trucks. It will only require 100 workers to replace 500 workers, a reduction of 80 percent.

Because the trucks are operated remotely the small number of new jobs don’t even need to be in Alberta. A government funded just transition to skilled well-paid unionized jobs is what would put people back to work.

At the end of February, BC Premier Horgan backed down, and Premier Notley ended the BC wine ban.

Instead of the meek proposal to study the effects of bitumen spills, the BC NDP government is going to

the courts. They will ask the courts whether or not BC has the right to impose regulations on shipping diluted bitumen through the province.

### Alberta’s and BC’s premiers are united in ignoring Indigenous rights, climate change, and jobs.

Of course, this question was likely to end up in the courts anyhow, but part of the fight against pipelines is making the delays and regulatory hurdles so onerous that it is not longer profitable for the companies to build the pipelines. Much more delay and uncertainty could have been created by sticking to the original plan to commission a study, and then refusing to allow the pipeline expansion, and then fighting in the courts.

## BC Budget 2018

by Michael Fenn

After more than a decade and a half of draconian austerity and tax cuts to the rich and corporations, the BC NDP has come forth with a “peoples” budget.

It promises more than \$1 billion over three years for new licensed child care spaces and increases supports for low income parents.

There’s \$1.6 billion over three years for affordable rental housing and other housing funding for students and seniors.

The NDP budget “pleased” many left wing leaders and organizations.

BC Federation of Labour president Irene Lanzinger said she was pleased the government is addressing the two major affordability issues for working families with its housing and child care measures.

And despite bitter betrayal over Site C, some BC first nations were somewhat consoled with what was in the budget. Ed John, Grand Chief, First Nations Summit welcomed the \$800 million increase in funding over three years to the Ministry of Children and Families but said, “While these financial resources are imperative ...we will not see the desired changes without strong and sustained leadership and action by Canada, B.C. and indigenous parents and communities to get this work done.”

#### The Critics

Not all were pleased, however.

Trish Garner of B.C. Poverty Reduction Coalition said, “There are no increases to welfare and disability rates, leaving approximately 180,000 British Columbians struggling to survive.”

Andy Yan, the director of SFU’s City Program said, “This will not make Vancouver affordable. But this is a nightmare we’re coming out of. It’s going to take more than one budget.”

And of course the Liberals and representatives of BC financial and business elites were none too pleased. Predictably they combined disingenuous concern for the public good with crocodile tears over how it was financed, followed by threats of economic doom and retaliation if this trend was not reversed.

#### Neoliberal Progress?

Praise from some progressive circles coupled with visceral scorn from “the 1%” is usually a good sign. Yet there is something seriously wrong with calling this budget “progressive”. Unfortunately, it is an indication just how low expectations are during the Neoliberal era.

The numbers may seem significant, especially relative to the last 35 years of austerity, but all the NDP managed to do was collect a few scraps around the table of BC’s super wealthy, by the most paltry increase (one or two percent) in tax’s; while making it seem they had accomplished a major victory for “the people”.

And while this budget does improve people’s lives, it by no means solves the pressing problems that a degenerative social system is imposing on them. Yet mass movements around climate change, minimum wage and housing are hope that the trend of deferral to authority and the status quo is potentially at an end.



# Resistance returns to Iran

by **Soraya Sh**

In the last days of 2017, the western media showed pictures of protests in Iran. Hundreds took to the streets of Iran's second largest city of Mashhad protesting high prices and shouting slogans against the government.

## Western influence?

Everyone was wondering, who these protesters were and what their demands were, was it a genuine uprising or was it orchestrated by western powers, in particular the US and its allies in the region. These questions were totally justified, as only a few days earlier an Israeli delegation met US senior officials in the White House to discuss an "Iran Strategy".

As soon as the protests began, Seyed Mohammad Hosseini, a self-proclaimed leader of a US-based group called "Restart", took credit for the protests. He asked his followers to vandalize and burn banks, mosques and government offices. Trump, Netanyahu and King Salman sent support messages to the Iranian people.

Confusion reigned among exiled Iranians and opposition groups who thought that these protests must be another colored revolution influenced by the west. Meanwhile the son of the last monarch and his followers as well as the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) organization, both groups backed by the US and its regional allies (Israel and Saudi), supported the protests.

## Impact of Sanctions and Austerity

President Rouhani's budget announcement for 2018 was probably the spark that lit the fire of the pent-up anger of impoverished workers and other layers of people. 40% of the Iranian population is below the poverty line.



Judiciary building ablaze in Kashar, Iran on January 2.

Photo credit: Amsafavi

Despite all the variety seen in the slogans, the main reasons for these protests have been the poor economic situation, unemployment, inadequate minimum wage, non-payment of salaries, inflation, rising prices for food and other necessities, corruption and inefficiency. Rouhani's proposed reductions in gasoline subsidies, which would significantly raise the price of gas, could have been another trigger.

Sanctions have drastically reduced the availability of medical services and imported drugs particularly the much-needed medications for cancer treatments. Many people see the sanctions as the Iranian government's fault because of its poor relationship with the west.

By 2017, the purchasing power

of workers had fallen sharply, work safety and confidence in the future worsened. The autocracy of employers, both private and public, supported by the judiciary, security and law enforcement, became wider and more rigorous. Any worker who objected to inadequate working conditions faced security and police encounters. Despite the promises of job creation, the number of unemployed people reached 6 million, the absolute majority of whom did not receive unemployment benefits.

Gender-based, religious, national, and ethnic discrimination is rampant in the workplace. The use of child and pensioner labour, with much lower wages than the approved minimum, as well as the unequal wages paid to

women workers and the use of double oppression, add to the severity of the situation.

## Recent Struggles

Aside from scattered violence and vandalism caused by "Restart" followers, these protests were in fact built on the demonstrations from previous months, i.e. the ongoing protests of teachers, bus drivers, factory workers, retirees and victims of bankrupt credit institutions. Women have been fighting with oppression and inequality for decades. Compared to the 2009 Green protests, the geographic scope of these demonstrations was greater, but the number of attending people was smaller.

Protests are not new in Iran. In

1992, there were large uprisings in Mashhad when President Rafsanjani turned towards a more neoliberal market and inflation rose to 40%. Under Ahmadinejad there were protests in 1995 in Islamshahr and Tehran against raising gas prices. In 2016, more than 1,300 strikes and labor protests were recorded that are unique in contemporary Iranian history. In the first quarter of 2017, about 5-6 labor demonstrations and strikes were held every day.

Two new protest groups have added to the street power of marginalized people: first, the protests of moneylenders robbed by non-regulated, bankrupt financial institutions; and the second was the movement that took place in small towns against the government's water and climate plans.

Dam construction projects, the drying of rivers and wetlands, the destruction of underground water resources in the country, and the spreading sandstorm phenomenon in the cities caused by rural deforestation, have shown the potential for multiple uprisings in the cities. This is especially true since the government refuses to address these environmental issues, indeed is the cause of them.

The dilemma facing the Iranian people is that while they oppose the state's power, they fear that their protests may be co-opted by the West, as seen with Trump's and Netanyahu's support of the protests. Similarly, the Iranian diaspora, in its efforts to show solidarity with the protests, fear co-optation by western governments and right-wing Conservatives.

Ultimately, it will be the organized Iranian working class, acting in its own interests that will bring about democracy and economic fairness in the country. All our efforts should go towards supporting their struggles, and standing up to western interference.

# Syrian tragedy risks bigger imperialist clash

by **Alex Callinicos**

Syria is undoubtedly the most dangerous place in the world at the moment.

This is partly because of the endless killing in the multifaceted war that continues there. But it's also because the rivalries among regional and global powers that drive the fighting could spill over into something much bigger.

In this tragic land, powerful military systems keep bumping against each other. At the end of the week before last, Israel attacked an Iranian drone base across the border in Syria. One Israeli plane was shot down by Syrian air defences, provoking further Israeli attacks on Syrian and Iranian targets.

Then last week the Russian foreign ministry confirmed that five Russians were killed and more injured by US air and missile strikes. Reports say hundreds of Russian and Syrian forces were killed or injured in the clash.

President Vladimir Putin decisively intervened in the Syrian civil war in September 2015 to save the regime of Bashar al-Assad, and Russian forces are still active in Syria.

But many of the Russians killed recently are private mercenaries. Apparently they include fighters who helped to carve out Russian-backed enclaves in southeastern Ukraine in 2014.

Russia and Iran are the two biggest winners of the wars in Syria and Iraq. Iran props up both Assad and the predominantly Shia Muslim government in Iraq. The Russian intervention has complicated the situation in Syria. The Iranian regime is trying to cash in on the Syrian alliance with various deals, but the regime is holding out to attract Russian and Chinese investment.

The main losers in Syria are of course the people themselves and the revolutionaries of 2011. Isis too has lost its strongholds in Syria, though some version of its jihadi politics will undoubtedly survive.

The other loser is the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He strongly backed the 2011 revolution and hoped to see Islamists like him take over in Syria. Not only has he totally failed to achieve this objective, but he faces a powerful armed Kurdish presence in northeastern Syria



YPG Fighter in Syria.

Photo: Kurdishcause

## Seized

Assad pulled out of these areas, which were seized by the Kurdish nationalist People's Protection Units (YPG). They are allied to the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), which has been fighting the Turkish state for the past generation.

Erdogan reacted by scrapping peace negotiations with the PKK and mounted a renewed offensive against the Kurdish areas in Turkey.

But he hasn't been able to stop the YPG-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) playing a

leading role in defeating Isis. This is partly because of the ideological commitment and military capabilities of the YPG, but they have also enjoyed massive support from the US.

The US has found the Kurdish-led forces its most reliable ally in fighting Isis in Syria.

Now that Isis has gone, the other players in the Syrian game are trying to move in on the Kurdish-controlled areas. The US strikes that killed Russians were directed against an Assad regime offensive

against the Kurdish-controlled towns of Khusham and Salihya.

In late January Turkish forces entered Syria to attack, in conjunction with its proxies, another Kurdish enclave around Afrin. Once again this risks military clashes among big powers. The US has announced it is keeping some 2,000 troops in northeastern Syria to support the SDF.

At the end of last week Rex Tillerson, the US secretary of state, flew into Turkey to meet Erdogan and other leading officials. Afterwards he announced the two governments were going to "lock arms" in northern Syria. What does this mean? Both Turkey and the US say they're against Isis, but there are stories of ex-ISIS fighters participating in the Turkish assault on Afrin.

The real sticking point remains the YPG. Erdogan wants them and their US backers out of the ancient north Syrian town of Manbij. Tillerson just promised to "work on" this.

And now there are reports that the YPG has reached an agreement for the Syrian army to enter the Afrin region to help repel the Turkish offensive. The dangerous power struggle over Syria's bloody corpse will continue.



# 50 YEARS SINCE ‘68

**Faline Bobier** looks back on the lessons from the uprisings in the US and France in 1968

This year is the fiftieth anniversary since the events of 1968. Many of the young people who are active in today’s movements: Occupy; #Black Lives Matter; #MeToo, the Fight for 15 and fairness – obviously were not born until long after the events of that tumultuous time, but it’s worth revisiting some of those events for what we can learn from them for the struggles happening now and still to come.

In the prologue to his book *The Fire Last Time: 1968 and After* British Marxist Chris Harman writes: “Every so often there is a year which casts a spell on a generation. Afterwards simply to mention it brings innumerable images to the minds of many people who lived through it – 1968 was such a year.”

1968 was a year which broke the chains on the minds of many people, leading them to believe that society could be completely changed, that everything was possible.

This article will focus on what happened in a couple of countries (the US and France), since it’s impossible to cover everything that happened globally in that year.

Underlying factors due to the long post-war economic boom were laying the basis for a new period of struggle. These changes included things like the massive shift from rural to urban living across the world, which meant a) that people would be brought together in urban workplaces and b) that the only way to achieve a better life would be through common struggle. The mid-sixties also saw the beginnings of the return of crisis to the world system.

Coupled with this was the huge expansion in universities and colleges starting in the 1950s, which meant that post-secondary education was no longer just the privileged sphere of the elites. Children of middle- and working-class families were able to aspire to higher education. As well there had been a huge migration of black people from the southern US to northern cities attempting to escape Jim Crow laws and segregation.

## Students

At its beginning the student movement was not necessarily “revolutionary” or “political” in an ideological sense. However, as the crisis in Vietnam deepened, with more US soldiers being killed, with the imposition of the draft which meant that young people would be forced to kill and die for a war they didn’t believe in, the movement began to look for political ideas to take their struggle forward.

The founding of SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) saw chapters springing up on university and college campuses across the country. The politics they found were often a assortment of Maoism, so-called Marxism-Leninism, Stalinism but they were an attempt to ground the movement politically.

At the same time as the anti-war movement was radicalizing, there was a similar radicalization in the civil rights movement. Many activists had followed the example of civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King who preached non-violence against the racism and thuggery of the police and white racists, but with more radical leaders like Malcolm X and a growing frustration with the ongoing racist brutality, the Black Panther party was formed and began to grow. By the summer of 1968 thousands of Black people in dozens of cities were members, and their paper claimed to sell more than 100,000 copies.

After more than a century of attacks by white racists who always insisted on their ‘constitutional right to carry guns’, here was an organization which proclaimed openly its readiness to fight back.



Students and Workers take to the streets of Paris in May 1968

There was another important Black organization in this period, which began to develop in Detroit in 1968 – DRUM – the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement. It specifically stressed the centrality of the working class.

DRUM led to a proliferation of similar groups and the groups came together to form the League of Revolutionary Workers, which became powerful in some plants, coming close to winning elections in two United Auto Workers locals and worrying the union’s national leadership—since half the country’s auto workers were employed in the Detroit area.

The movements of 1968 in the US were not able to break through and establish long-standing organization, but when looking at the balance sheet it’s important to realize what they did accomplish. The US anti-war movement helped cripple US imperialism, coupled with the courageous struggle of the Vietnamese people themselves.

The anti-war movement also inspired the struggles of other sections of the oppressed – Blacks, women,

their workplaces at the height of the conflict.

On the night of May 10-11, 1968 in Paris what started out as a large demonstration of university and high school students against police brutality ended up with the students barricading themselves in a police-free zone, using whatever was at hand – overturned cars, material from nearby building sites, paving stones, etc.

A battle ensued between protesters and police that lasted several hours. But even when the police managed to regain control they hadn’t won in the court of public opinion. As the scale of the repression and the fighting became clear, the leaders of France’s major trade union federations called for a one day general strike for the following Monday, May 13.

The strike was to be the biggest France had ever known, and within two days workers right across France were occupying their factories. What began as a student protest had, on the ‘night of the barricades’, thrown France into a huge social confrontation, with the government virtually paralyzed for three weeks

One of the weaknesses in the US was the division between the working class and the movements. This was not the case in France where what started out as a student protest spread to the workers’ movement. Eventually 10 million workers were occupying



LGBT individuals – who founded their own movements for liberation.

## France

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## 1968 & the Japanese student movements

by **Michael YC Tseng**

From late 50s to 1970, the Japanese student movement echoed the intensity of its international counterparts: occupying university campuses, protesting against the Vietnam War and the military alliance with the US, and debating philosophy, theory, strategy and tactics. In an attempt to prevent the prime minister’s visit to South Vietnam, students battled the riot police for 10 hours outside of Haneda international Airport. And the barricades initiated at Nihon University spread to over 300 University and high school campuses across the country.

### Occupation & the student movement

As is true with any other movements, historical background, political environment and civil liberties available determined the forms of the Japanese student movement. After WWII civil liberties expanded in Japan, including rescinding a repressive police bill, but all under the watchful eye of the US and allied forces that occupied from 1945 to 1952.

Student associations formed all across the country, consolidating in 1948 as the All-Japan Federation of Student Self-Government Organizations, or the Zengakuren. Concerned with the issues of imperialism and the nation-state, the students’ top goal was stopping the renewal of the Joint Security Treaty with the US (ANPO). The US occupation forces had restored nationalists, war criminals and pre-war imperial conglomerates that had been purged earlier in order to increase competition with the communist block.

Its attempt to purge communist faculty was met with heavy resistance from the students with large-scale protests, and the momentum prevented the government from passing legislation to allow the police into Universities. The Japan



Police move in on a student occupation in Tokyo

Communist Party (JCP) had worked closely with student organizations, and formed student cooperatives to provide food and supplies. But there was also a growing New Left criticism of the JCP’s Stalinist politics.

### Intensification

Rapid economic growth and urbanization alienated individuals from their communities. From 1945 to 1970 the population living in the cities leaped from 28 to 72 per cent. Half the population was between 15 and 34 year of age, and students were crammed by the academic industrial complexes in small living quarters, possessing a great deal of free time and anger.

Within such an extreme political climate, Zengakuren’s tactics eventually elevated into what was described as “bodily tactics,” physical confrontations with the authority with sheer numbers of bodies. A Zeangakuren group led a rally of about 10,000 into the compound of the National Diet (Japan’s legislature), and the clash between student radicals and the police led to the death of Kimba Michiko and many injuries on June 15, 1960.

### 1968: Nihon University

In the years 1965-68, students intensified their bodily tactics,

and increased criticism of the JCP and trade union leaders, whose nationalistic economic tendency was seen by the New Left as a key element of the failure of ANPO movements.

At the largest private university in the country, Nihon University, a scandal emerged about the embezzlement of 2 billion yen of student fees, 35,000 students barricaded the university in 1968 demanding transparency. The administrator was forced to attend negotiations inside the barricades. Frustrated with the “mass-produced” lessons created by the academic industrial complex, the students behind the barricades ran independently-run classes and invited guest speakers. Many activists recounted this six months of barricade as the happiest experience of their lives.

From the ANPO struggles to battles of ‘68, the student movement therefore confronted the meaning of Japan’s post-war capitalist democracy. The radical student movements began to fade in the 1970s as Japan continued its economic boom and its complicity in the American imperial project. But the drive to desperately search for a proletarian internationalism left an indelible legacy on all those that participated.

Communist party and the CGT (the biggest of France’s trade union federations) to wind down the strikes by arguing that they would deal with De Gaulle through electoral means was a disaster. De Gaulle would win handily in the elections because of the demoralizing defeat visited on workers by their own leadership. This didn’t mean it was easy for the trade union leadership to convince workers to call off their strikes and factory occupations. But in order to go against the official leadership it would have taken strong rank and file organization and revolutionary leadership. The revolutionary left in France was extremely weak when the strike started. It’s extremely difficult, if not impossible, to build that leadership in the heat of the moment.

The real message of 1968 is that there is an alternative and that people through their own self-activity can reconstruct society on a rational basis, that the oppressed can rise up and challenge a system based on injustice. As one of the slogans from May 68 had it: “Soyez réalistes; demandez l’impossible.”

The conference was organized to do exactly that. One of its tasks was to build for the demonstrations planned across Europe on March 17th to mark the Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This was called in 1966 to commemorate the Sharpeville massacre that took place in South Africa in 1960 when police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration. Rallies and marches

are taking place throughout Europe and it is important that trade unions be there in solidarity. Activists from many different unions, teachers, painters, fire fighters, members of Unite and Unison spoke about the work they were doing in their workplaces to mobilize their fellow workers for this important demonstration. There were passionate speeches from both the podium and the floor from leaders and rank and file members calling for unity and solidarity. There was a clear understanding of the importance of organized labour in the fight against racism in all its manifestations, and against the far right. This was very inspiring and many unions provide financial support and resources to Stand Up to Racism.

The workshops that took place allowed the trade unionists there to speak more specifically about the work they are doing on an on-going basis, sharing strategies and experiences. They dealt with topics such as the Football Lads Alliance which works as a transmission belt for angry white workers, mostly men, to the far right. It has soft supporters and hard supporters. There was an excellent speaker from the Fire Brigades who spoke of the type of talk that he has heard from them, about how life is getting harder and harder, jobs are scarce, kids have no opportunities etc., and of course who are they blaming. Refugees and immigrants. He talked about how to counter these arguments and the importance of putting alternatives forward to bring workers to a different vision of society without oppression and exploitation.

**Building Unity**

The conference was extremely useful, showing concrete ways to build the unity necessary in the working class to fight this racist cancer and stop it in its tracks. It has to be taken on directly and not allowed to fester without a mass response. The demonstration of 4,000 that took place a number of months ago in Vancouver shows what is possible. The Toronto and York Region Labour Council, the Urban Alliance on Race Relations and the National Council of Canadian Muslims are planning an event entitled Stop the Hate at Toronto City Hall on March 21st which will bring people together in the fight against the far right. These are the type of events we must continue to organize as we put real alternatives forward so that workers see that another world is actually possible.



Hundreds join the Stand Up to Racism Trade Union Conference

## Stand Up to Racism

by **Carolyn Egan**

I had the opportunity to take part in a conference in London put on by Stand Up to Racism, an anti-racist coalition with local groups throughout the United Kingdom. It was geared specifically to trade unionists and its focus was to build opposition to the growth of racism and the far right. There is no doubt with the neo-liberal attacks on working people, the increasing gap between rich and poor, and the political volatility the world over, we are witnessing the growth of right wing organizations.

They are making inroads at all levels of society including within working class communities. We have seen in parts of eastern Germany with significant levels of unemployment, laid off under-employed workers voting for the right, breaking traditional electoral patterns. The Social Democratic Party and Die Linke have both lost support to the far right, and for the first time since World War Two there are neo-nazis sitting in the Bundestadt. In Austria the far right is in a coalition government, and in France Marine LePen of the National Front was in a run off for the presidency of the country. 60,000 nazis marched in Poland. This is extremely worrying and is the reason why trade unions in the UK are taking it very seriously.

There is a tremendous amount of scapegoating taking place, blaming immigrants and refugees for worsening living conditions. The neo-liberal agenda embraced by governments globally has at its heart cutting health care, education and social services making life harder and harder for the working class and the poor while profits soar for the wealthy. There are at the same time attacks on unions, weakening their ability to fight back and defend the most basic rights of their members. Racialized people, women, the LGBTQ community are the target of many of these attacks. It is up to labour unions to fight back, defending not only its own members but all of those who are under siege.

**March 17 Day of Action**

The conference was organized to do exactly that. One of its tasks was to build for the demonstrations planned across Europe on March 17th to mark the Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This was called in 1966 to commemorate the Sharpeville massacre that took place in South Africa in 1960 when police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration. Rallies and marches

are taking place throughout Europe and it is important that trade unions be there in solidarity. Activists from many different unions, teachers, painters, fire fighters, members of Unite and Unison spoke about the work they were doing in their workplaces to mobilize their fellow workers for this important demonstration. There were passionate speeches from both the podium and the floor from leaders and rank and file members calling for unity and solidarity. There was a clear understanding of the importance of organized labour in the fight against racism in all its manifestations, and against the far right. This was very inspiring and many unions provide financial support and resources to Stand Up to Racism.

The workshops that took place allowed the trade unionists there to speak more specifically about the work they are doing on an on-going basis, sharing strategies and experiences. They dealt with topics such as the Football Lads Alliance which works as a transmission belt for angry white workers, mostly men, to the far right. It has soft supporters and hard supporters. There was an excellent speaker from the Fire Brigades who spoke of the type of talk that he has heard from them, about how life is getting harder and harder, jobs are scarce, kids have no opportunities etc., and of course who are they blaming. Refugees and immigrants. He talked about how to counter these arguments and the importance of putting alternatives forward to bring workers to a different vision of society without oppression and exploitation.

**Building Unity**

The conference was extremely useful, showing concrete ways to build the unity necessary in the working class to fight this racist cancer and stop it in its tracks. It has to be taken on directly and not allowed to fester without a mass response. The demonstration of 4,000 that took place a number of months ago in Vancouver shows what is possible. The Toronto and York Region Labour Council, the Urban Alliance on Race Relations and the National Council of Canadian Muslims are planning an event entitled Stop the Hate at Toronto City Hall on March 21st which will bring people together in the fight against the far right. These are the type of events we must continue to organize as we put real alternatives forward so that workers see that another world is actually possible.



Where we stand

The dead-end of capitalism

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

A system that is killing the planet

Capitalist profits depend on extracting the world’s blood and bone. The devastating impact of capital’s assault on the planet affect the world’s most vulnerable populations and threaten the long-term meaningful existence of humanity. Capitalism cannot regulate the catastrophic effects of climate change. We stand for climate justice, including the concept of “just transition” for affected workers.

Socialism and workers’ power

Any alternative to capitalism must involve replacing the system from the bottom up through radical collective action. Central to that struggle is the workplace, where capitalism reaps its profits off our backs. Capitalist monopolies control the earth’s resources, but workers everywhere actually create the wealth. A new socialist society can only be constructed when workers collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution to satisfy human needs, not corporate profits—to respect the environment, not pollute and destroy it.

Oppression

Within capitalist society different groups suffer from specific forms of oppression. Attacks on oppressed groups are used to divide workers and weaken solidarity. We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support the right of people of colour and other oppressed groups to organize in their own defence. We are for real, social, economic and political equality for women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination and homophobia against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people. We oppose environmental racism. We oppose discrimination on the basis of religion, ability and age.

Canada, Quebec, Indigenous Peoples

Canada is not a “colony” of the United States, but an imperialist country in its own right that participates in the exploitation of much of the world. The Canadian state was founded through the repression of Indigenous peoples and the people of Quebec. We support the struggles for self-determination of Quebec and Indigenous peoples up to and including the right to independence. In particular, we recognize Indigenous peoples’ original and primary right to decide their fate and that of their lands, heritage, and traditions. Socialists in Quebec, and in all oppressed nations, work to give the struggle against national oppression an internationalist and working class content.

Internationalism

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We oppose everything that turns workers from one country against those from other countries. We support all genuine national liberation movements. The 1917 revolution in Russia was an inspiration for the oppressed everywhere. But it was defeated when workers’ revolutions elsewhere were defeated. A Stalinist counter-revolution, which killed millions, created a new form of capitalist exploitation based on state ownership and control. In Eastern Europe, China and other countries, a similar system was later established by Stalinist, not socialist, parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

Elections and democracy

Elections can be an opportunity to give voice to the struggle for social change. But under capitalism, they can’t change the system. The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary protect the ruling class against the workers. These structures cannot be simply taken over and used by the working class. The working class needs real democracy, and that requires an entirely different kind of state—a workers’ state based upon councils of workers’ delegates.

Reform and revolution

Every day, there are battles between exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed, to reform the system—to improve living conditions. These struggles are crucial in the fight for a new world. To further these struggles, we work within the trade unions and orient to building a rank and file movement that strengthens workers’ unity and solidarity. But the fight for reforms will not, in itself, bring about fundamental social change. The present system cannot be fixed or reformed as the NDP and many trade union leaders say. Nor can the system regulate itself to prevent environmental destruction and climate injustice. It has to be overthrown. That will require the mass action of workers themselves.

The revolutionary party

To achieve socialism the leading activists in the working class have to be organized into a revolutionary socialist party. The party must be a party of action, and it must be democratic. We are an organization of activists committed to helping in the construction of such a party through ongoing activity in the mass organizations of the working class and in the daily struggles of workers and the oppressed. If these ideas make sense to you, help us in this project, and join the International Socialists.

Interview: Hassan Diab speaks on racism and the security state

Hassan Diab is a former Carleton University professor of sociology. In 2011, Canada fulfilled France’s extradition request and sent Professor Diab to France. Justice Robert Maranger, who presided over Diab’s extradition hearings, agreed with previous rulings that the case against Diab was extremely weak. Diab would be sent over to face trial and imprisonment for a 1980 attack on a synagogue in Paris – a crime which he could not have committed. French judges investigating Diab’s case “cited evidence that indicated Mr. Diab was in Beirut during the Paris bombing.”

After a decade of fighting against both the French and Canadian states, Professor Diab was released and brought back to Canada in the early days of 2018.

Kevin Taghabon: You’re not really fading away and saying, ‘I won. I’m back home. It’s over.’ You’re putting this fight forward [against] Canada’s unjust extradition laws. Why do you want to keep championing this?

Professor Diab: You don’t want to see other people [going] through what I went through. This is one thing. It’s not a selfish thing, or like ‘oh, okay, let me put everything behind [me], I don’t care about other people.’ When I got in trouble I found tons of people who were willing to help. Why shouldn’t I do the same for other people? Potential victims of injustice here and there. It’s a duty for every person here, if not every citizen.

[This] seems to be part of a larger political conversation. Other cases like Maher Arar’s case, Omar Khadr’s case, the recent Colten Boushie ruling. All of these cases are tinged with injustice towards racialized people. Do you think that’s part of a larger political angling?

You said it yourself. All these people who have had trouble with the justice system here, they were not from the ‘mainstream society’. They were from



Free at last: Hassan Diab in Ottawa

minorities, in one way or another. So we can draw the conclusion that there must be something here. When it comes to minorities, these minorities are less equal than others, to use George Orwell’s view. Some people are more equal than others, and in this case there are some people who are less equal than others. It could be the case. We have to fight to iron [out] the differences.

Do you see any difference between the national security regime of the Liberals now and the [prior] Conservatives?

I wasn’t here when the Liberal government was elected. I was in jail, I heard about it, little things here, little things there. I know the previous government; they did everything to extradite me. Harper’s [Conservative] government.

There was large mass of people who were following your case. Why do you think it’s important for public sentiment to be on the side of people such as yourself when there is no legal recourse?

This is where the citizens should come forward, and activists more so than regular people, when they see this injustice, and when they see a weak case, or a ‘no case’ even. Otherwise,

again, we’ll be playing the game of ‘it’s not me, it’s somebody else’. If we don’t do this, unfortunately there are many people who will think this way. ‘Oh it’s not me, it will not happen to me.’ History taught us otherwise. Stories always start with someone else. We don’t support them. We do nothing until the flood arrives at our home, and then we start screaming ‘help, help’. This is something very essential, for people to be aware of what is going on. All injustices are connected in one way or another. When we say, ‘this is not my case, this is not my area, I don’t care about this,’ or you don’t get involved in that one, it’s a short kind of vision. Luckily, we live in a country where people are coming more forward now [sic] and doing their best. I see in this case, thousands of people, mostly who I don’t know, who came to help, to support, to send money, to do everything. I received tons of books in the cell in France. Tons of letters from people I’ve never heard of, I’ve never known, that just said, ‘you don’t know me, but I support you’. This makes you feel good, makes you continue the struggle, and makes you stand for the just and [what is] right.

For the full interview visit [socialist.ca](http://socialist.ca)

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## Alanis Obomsawin: filming Indigenous strengths

Reviewed by **Valerie Lannon**

Clad completely in red to show support for “missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, boys and disabled”, the legendary documentary filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin addressed a Toronto audience earlier this year. The 85-year old from the Abenaki First Nation has spent nearly the last 50 years commemorating Indigenous strengths and struggles through 50 documentaries for the National Film Board.

She may be best known for “Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance”, the outstanding film about the so-called “Oka” crisis of 1990, when the First Nation successfully resisted efforts by the town and developer to expand a golf course on the nation’s territory, facing brutal suppression by police and military forces.

But years before, in 1984, she made “Incident at Restigouche” after police raided a Mi’kmaq reserve in 1981 to restrict fishing by the Lisutgij First Nation. Using an interview format, she verbally pummels the Quebec Minister of Fisheries, Lucien Lessard (who had ordered the raids) when he tries to belittle First Nations’ achievements. The NFB at the time had warned her to only interview Indigenous people, “not whites”, but in the end agreed to distribute her film.

### Stories and technique

She was driven to tell these stories because of what she experienced in school in Trois-Rivières, where she was the only Indigenous person. She was outraged by the telling of history, “designed to teach kids how to hate Indigenous people. Children need to hear a different story.” But the turning point came in the early 1960s when her community needed to build its own swimming pool because the children were not welcome at the neighbourhood pool.

She always wanted to literally give voice to Indigenous peoples because they were silent in most films. She said, “Before I make a film when I go into a community I just listen to the people, without a crew at first. Then I record and once there is trust then I film...It is the people I film who are in charge. The people tell me what they want and I film them.”

She commended the NFB for teaching her the technical part of filmmaking and supporting her strongly independent approach.

### Many stories of resistance

As Obomsawin explains, “Strength comes from people who say no... If everyone stands together they can stop it. It has to do with recognizing the land and water and the world we all live in.”

Obomsawin said she is optimistic about the future, not because of politicians but because “in the last ten years, Canadians have shown they now want to know the history and they want justice, even though some still look down on us... It is good to tell our stories that we hid for so long because they were horrifying...Today this room is full but ten years ago there would have been only 10 or so people.”

Her latest film, “Our People will be healed” premiered at the 2017 Toronto International Film Festival, to critical acclaim. The film depicts Cree children in Norway House (in northern Manitoba) whose lives are enriched by a school that emphasizes their language, culture and traditions. A full list of her films can be found at [www.nfb.ca/directors/alanis-obomsawin](http://www.nfb.ca/directors/alanis-obomsawin)

## How precarious are we?

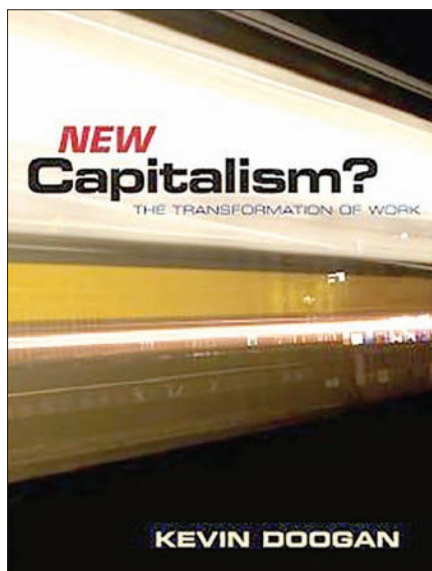
*New Capitalism? The Transformation of Work*, by Kevin Doogan  
Reviewed by **Peter Hogarth**

In a recent Rabble Podcast, former NDP MP Andrew Cash claimed that a third of the Canadian workforce is outside of the traditional employer/employee relationship. He is wrong and statements like this can lead to dangerous conclusions for those working for more equality and social justice.

He is not alone, the language of precarious work is everywhere. Journalists, academics, politicians and activists on the left and the right seem to be constantly talking about the dangers of offshoring, the weakening position of the working class, the danger of technology taking human jobs, and the end of salaried employment. Kevin Doogan’s *New Capitalism? The Transformation of Work* attempts to investigate some of these ideas, which have gained such prominence over the last two or three decades.

Doogan’s book is a response to theories that have become common sense that suggest that a new global economy has emerged that has transformed our lives; that the mobility of capital, the pace of technological change, and the privatization of the welfare state has made the world of work fundamentally different and more precarious. Both left-wing labour leaders and right-wing economists can be heard declaring that companies are outsourcing, jobs are migrating to the global south and that a job for life is a thing of the past in this “new capitalism.” *New Capitalism?* digs deep into the actual numbers and uncovers some of the mysticism around these claims that Doogan insists are more myth than reality.

The book attempts to “rematerialize” some of the grand claims of these “new capitalism” ideas. First of all, Doogan challenges the foundation of the post-industrial outlook of new capitalism ideas as seeing the world of work only in terms of production, ignoring the world of service provision



and the important role it has in the economy. This blind spot means that new capitalism theorists miss out on the tremendous growth of employment in the service industry while being preoccupied with corporate restructuring in manufacturing and the very small world of free-lance journalism and contract faculty in which they reside.

This blinkered view of the labour market extends into the definition of what precarious work is. Proponents of the new capitalism thesis, predicting far-fetched conclusions such as the end of salaried employment and the complete atomization of work, seem to be looking for precarious work everywhere and their statistics and data fail as a result. Often new capitalism thinkers end up lumping together such different groups as part-time workers who have been at their job for more than five years, high-paid consultants working on short-term contracts, and seasonal agricultural labourers to present a distorted view of the labour market as increasingly precarious.

The OECD (Organization of Economic Co-op-

eration and Development) reports an average rate of temporary employment of some 12% in 2000 (compared to 10% in 1985). Job tenures of less than a year were reported by 58% of temporary workers, 1-2 years for 16.9%, 2-3 years for 4.3%, 3-5 years for 9.9% and more than 5 years for 11.6% of temporary workers. Based on this large OECD study, claims that standard employment relationships are disappearing appear to be completely overblown. Outsourcing

Similarly, the legends of outsourcing completely overshadow the actual facts of how many jobs are exported to low-wage labour markets in the global south.

Doogan notes, “During the period 1990 to 2003...world Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows accounted for a mere 8% of world domestic investment.” In fact, the US, where the idea of jobs being shipped overseas looms so large, has received more FDI than it has spent in other countries since the 1980s. And when it does invest in manufacturing overseas, 80% of it has been in high wage countries.

Even in the age of “unfettered corporate globalization,” capital remains remarkably immobile and bound up with the policies of its home country.

The book emphasizes that, contrary to popular new capitalism ideas, the nation state is not powerless in the policies of global corporations. Governments constantly intervene in the labour market on the side of capital in ways that create and extend precarity for workers. That is why it is so important for campaigns such as the Fight for \$15 and Fairness to put demands on the state and strengthen the collective power of workers inside and outside of unions.

*New Capitalism? The Transformation of Work* is an incredibly rich book, filled with facts that tear apart prevailing myths of work and re-centre the working class as a force that can truly transform the economy for the better.

● For the full review visit [socialist.ca](http://socialist.ca)

## The spirit of Attica

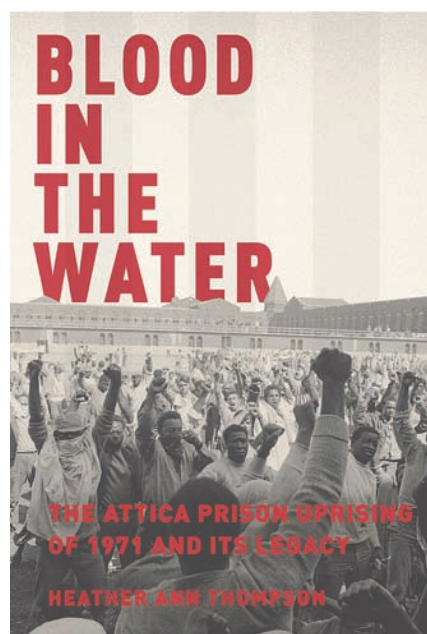
Reviewed by **Alex Kerner**

America in 1971 was a country in the midst of massive social uprisings. The Civil Rights and Black Nationalist movements, the Anti-War Movement, the Women’s Liberation Movement and all the organizations that were central to these were shaping public debates in all corners of society. The American prison system was no exception. As jails and prisons faced endemic overcrowding and poor conditions, inmates quickly flocked to radical political ideas wanting to bring the power of human liberation to the struggle for a more just incarceration system.

It was in this context that the largest prison uprising in American history occurred at the Attica Correctional Facility in New York, and where the story begins for Heather Ann Thompson’s definitive history of the uprising and its aftermath, *Blood in the Water*.

Weighing in at 752 pages, Thompson takes us on an incredible and tragic journey, starting with the brutally violent conditions prisoners were subjected to, where a small altercation with correctional guards sparked the prisoner takeover of the facility. What followed were four days of tense negotiations between prisoners and state officials, the former hoping to negotiate improved living conditions and political freedom (such as access to revolutionary literature).

Despite efforts from players on both sides, the office of New York governor and the governor himself refused to entertain one of the most important prisoner demands, full amnesty for those participating in the uprising. Nelson Rockefeller, a liberal Republican with national aspirations was desperate to bolster his conservative bona fides and did not want



to appear lax with the prisoners. Eventually, he grew impatient and gave the go ahead to take the facility back by force.

In some of the most difficult to read chapters, Thompson describes how ill prepared and trigger-happy state troopers went full force into the prison yard, shooting, maiming and killing not only prisoners but also their hostages. Ignoring cries of surrender, the state forces were intent on sending a message to those who had dared rise up against the prison authority. Over several hours, the state forces engaged in acts of torture and brutality, exacting particularly humiliating punishment on those perceived as ring-leaders.

What followed the bloody retaking was

more than three decades of legal battles, initially with the state going on the offensive, attempting to criminally prosecute prisoners. However, driven and whip-smart legal teams and prisoners managed to push back against the vast majority of the indictments.

Emboldened, the victims of the takeover launched class action suits against the state of New York that took years to resolve, sadly with many who suffered gruesomely having died by the time a settlement was reached. Eventually, the families of prison guards, who had been held hostage and who perished at the hand state troopers, eventually secured monetary compensation, after years of being lied to as to who was guilty of killing their kin.

Thompson’s *Blood in the Water* won both the 2017 Pulitzer Prize and the Bancroft Prize, some of the most prestigious awards in history writing and it certainly deserves all the accolades. Filled with enormous amounts of detail, personal accounts of prisoners, advocates, prison guards, and families of those killed in the uprising, *Blood in the Water* is both rich in content and captivating, a page turner as we are desperate to see if those who suffered so greatly received even a modicum of justice.

And while Thompson spares no detail in terms of the brutality of the uprising and its crushing by state forces, the story she tells asserts that those who stood up to the brutal conditions of the prison system were heroic in their efforts to fight for a better world, both inside and outside the walls of Attica. The spirit of Attica, those who fought and died there or those who continued to fight for decades after, is a spirit that should continue to inspire those eager to see the revolutionary change our world desperately needs.



## Making the Leap: Activists meet to spark bold change in Canada

by Kevin Taghabon

**R**adical ideas are the life raft of the modern left. A 2016 Harvard University survey published in the Washington Post found that a majority (51%) of American millennials do not support capitalism. In Alberta, the most politically conservative province in the country, the right-wing Manning Centre found that only 16% of millennials identify as conservative. Even in the countries most benefiting from global capitalism, the idea that the system is fundamentally broken is widespread. This provides fertile ground for left-wing movements seeking to channel this discontent into energetic organizing and radical change.

As Leap co-founder Avi Lewis has said, bold, transformational change is not a liability – it is the left's path to political power. Recognizing this, The Leap and Courage – two broad left coalitions – brought key organizers from the Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn campaigns to Ottawa to discuss their respective successes in the US and UK. Activists from Vancouver to St. John's packed the Canadian Museum of Nature to answer the question: "Why not here?"

### Learn locally, act nationally

"The most important resource is people," said Becky Bond, senior adviser and architect of Sanders' insurgent campaign for the Democratic leadership in 2016. One of the most important components was trusting volunteers to do real tasks independently, not just to hold signs outside public spaces. The



Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn campaign organizers at the Leap meeting in Ottawa.

point of Sanders' campaign was not to have a celebration of shared values among small groups of activists, but to face outward and speak to as many disengaged people as possible.

### Authentic left-wing content

This reality transplants across borders and oceans. Labour MP Marsha De Cordova spoke about her experience of running in Battersea, a constituency that was previously considered unwinnable. De Cordova,

a Black woman with a vision-related disability, was able to massively swing her riding towards a Labour majority using the exact tactics that Courage to Leap speakers advocate. De Cordova is now the Shadow Minister for Disabled People in Labour, a party which is widely seen as a government-in-waiting.

De Cordova spoke about the 2017 UK Labour Manifesto, which she and other Labour activists were quite surprised about in its boldness upon

release. The path to power is indeed paved by people, but these people need content.

When asked what the main attracting point was of the Sanders campaign, Bond said she met with the same refrain many times. "Bernie's been saying the same thing for 30 years." The same is true of Corbyn, as well as tireless radical politicians such as former Torontonians MPP Cheri DiNovo. At countless points in their careers, these politicians were pre-

sented with the same austerity politics nonsense and imperialist logic from the corporate elite. A renewed anti-establishment constituency sees these politicians as reliable, as they refused to sell out their values in the name of power and right-wing projects. Their opponents and most of their party colleagues meanwhile swallowed this snake oil for decades, and are now increasingly seen as untrustworthy. In short, real people smell real bullshit.

### Movements, not leaders

The power of political leaders should not be, and was not, overstated. Rather than turning the event into a cultish celebration of two left-wing politicians, all speakers hammered home that organizing is the key to winning. Sanders was an important, credible messenger, but the importance was the message, explained Bond. Americans were not hungry for a democratic socialist septuagenarian with a Brooklyn accent to lead them. They were hungry for his ideas.

The distrust of liberal institutions – from universities, to the justice system, the press, and even elections – was channeled into a rage against Wall Street instead of minorities and the working poor. "We cannot count on our institutions to save us," Bond said.

In the age of climate catastrophes and economic chaos, it is imperative that an authentic socialist alternative be offered to the empty rhetoric of the Liberals and the unvarnished bigotry of the Conservatives.

● This is an excerpt of a longer article that can be found at [socialist.ca](http://socialist.ca)

## Valentines Solidarity for Tims Workers

by Peter Hogarth

On February 13, a day before Valentine's Day, people from across Ontario showed their love for Tim Horton's workers and spread the word about the new laws for workers in the province.

The Valentine's event, set for the 13 to respect the annual Strawberry Ceremony for missing and murdered indigenous women, took place in more than 250 Tim Horton's locations in 30 cities.

Fighters for \$15 and Fairness and union members showed up to deliver Valentine's cards, chocolates and gifts to Tim Horton's workers with posters advertising the new laws governing workplaces in Ontario since the passing of Bill 148.

Since January, many Tim Horton's franchises have been exposed for cutting benefits and perks, taking away paid breaks and generally trying to punish workers for the increased



Showing Tim Hortons workers some love.

minimum wage and other labour law improvements. The \$15 and Fairness campaign and the Ontario Federation of Labour have been organizing actions to draw attention to Tim Horton's and its parent company Restaurant Brands International.

The goal is to shame them into reversing the cuts, show employers around the province that you can't bully your workers and get away with it, while simultaneously reaching out to workers at Tim Horton's and elsewhere; showing them solidarity and informing them of their rights.

The passing of Bill 148 and the business backlash demonstrate that the movement for \$15 and Fairness is not over. The passing of the Bill represented a huge victory for workers across the province who hit the streets, hounded MPPs, petitioned, protested, occupied and went on strike for \$15 and Fairness. We have to defend the gains of the bill and fight for more.

The actions in support of Tim Horton's workers are a part of that fight, pressing businesses looking to punish workers and putting pressure on the Liberals, NDP, Tories or anyone who would hope to govern the province after June, 2018.

While tarnishing the brand's reputation and consumer threats have shown the power and popularity of the decent work message, the real power to enforce these labour laws will come from inside these restaurants. Tim Horton's workers and others facing employer backlash are the source of their bosses' profits.

Collectively organized and standing together, they can face down their employers and demand much more. Spreading the word to people in workplaces across the province about what has been won, what is under attack and how we can defend and extend those gains is an important step towards building that power.