

Socialist Worker

www.socialist.ca

\$2 | no. 565 | August 2014

FREEDOM FOR GAZA & GRASSY NARROWS



The last week of July saw one of a series of marches for Gaza and the annual River Run for Grassy Narrows.

Growing Indigenous resistance and solidarity is helping people see the connections between Israeli and Canadian colonialism.

From Gaza to Grassy Narrows

Israel has been colonizing Palestinian land for decades—driving people from their homes, building an Apartheid wall, laying siege to Gaza, and periodically launching military assaults.

For all this time Palestinians have resisted—from armed struggle to launching the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement—and have inspired solidarity movements around the world.

These movements are now connecting with their own indigenous resistance movements. A year after the Arab Spring began, Idle No More emerged—a continuation of centuries of struggle against Canadian colonialism.

Canada was founded on the genocide of Indigenous peoples through war, starvation and residential schools. Canadian corporations continue to steal Indigenous land and resources with the support of the Canadian state.

But there has been 500 years of Indigenous resistance, including the struggle at Grassy Narrows First Nation. Despite suffering the ongoing effects of mercury poisoning, the community has sustained the longest logging blockade in Canadian history, and is building a growing solidarity movement.

Stop Harper

Harper shows us the connections between colonialism in Canada and Israel. Having previously declared that Canada has “no history of colonialism,” Harper applies the same colonial whitewashing to Israel, which he praises as “the bloom that the desert has yielded”—erasing the catastrophe that this “bloom” has meant for Palestinians.

Harper cut humanitarian funding to Gaza—making Canada complicit in Israel’s siege—and then cut funding to Sisters in Spirit that documents missing and murdered Indigenous women.

At the same time Harper promotes the colonization of indigenous land from the Arab World to Canada—with a billion dollars a year for the oil industry’s ecocidal tar sands, and almost half a trillion dollars over 20 years to the military so Canadian corporations can profit from wars and occupations.

Warren White, Grand Chief Treaty 3, has compared the resources of militarism to the neglect towards a report on Grassy Narrows poisoning: “A genocide on people in Canada is very wrong. When they can’t eat the basic foods that they have lived on—the fish and wildlife—it is an infringement on treaty rights and way of life. I call on the federal government and Ontario government to acknowledge that there are serious problems in their own backyard. They react to all these wars across the seas with millions and millions of dollars, and they can’t even recognize a report again that’s sitting on the shelves of their government bureaucracies.”

Colonialism and capitalism

Capitalism has never been a “free market.” The violent theft of indigenous land is the foundation on which capitalism was built, as the revolutionary Karl Marx wrote in 1876, the year the Canadian state was founded:

“The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production... The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder, floated back to the mother-country and were there turned into capital.”

But corporations don’t generate profits on their own. The turning of resources into capital required a working class, created by driving peasants off the land and into cities to work as wage labourers. By exploiting workers—paying them less than the value they produce—capitalism extracts profits, which it reinvests into greater production, giving the system a relentless drive to expand.

The expansion of capital continues to rely on the state—from the courts that recently dismissed Grassy Narrows aboriginal and treaty rights, to the billions invested in tar sands and militarism. The colonization of indigenous land, the exploitation of workers, and the war and environmental destruction that result cannot be ended through Parliament, but can be challenged through struggle.

Solidarity in struggle

Because capitalism is rooted in exploitation, workers can collectively resist by withdrawing their labour power. While Palestinians are excluded from the Israeli economy, the Arab dictatorships on which Israel depends are vulnerable to mass strikes inspired by Palestinian resistance.

Solidarity with the Palestinian intifada was part of the wave of protests that erupted with the Egyptian revolution. It was mass strikes that drove dictators from Tunisia and Egypt, and the Arab working class is key to Palestinian liberation.

As Egyptian revolutionaries organizing an aid convoy to Gaza wrote, “We are again reminded that the road to a free Palestine starts with the removal of Arab dictatorships. In Egypt this means that every step forward in the continuation of the Egyptian revolution is a step forward towards the freedom of Palestine.”

In Canada we need to stop Harper’s military and diplomatic support for Israel, and restore funding to Gaza—as part of challenging colonialism abroad and at home.

Idle No More has challenged Harper’s agenda and connected it to centuries of colonialism and capitalism. There is growing solidarity for indigenous struggles within the labour movement—from justice for missing and murdered indigenous women, to climate justice and green jobs.

By supporting and connecting indigenous resistance and working class struggle we undermine the foundations of Harper’s agenda, and raise the possibility of a better world.

Climate justice

Page 2

Jesse McLaren reports on the struggle against Line 9 and in support of Grassy Narrows

Disability politics

Page 2

Melissa Graham warns about the cutbacks to accessibility and wages, and calls for solidarity between workers and disabled people

Anti-imperialism

Page 4

Mostafa Omar analyzes different Islamist movements, calling for unconditional but critical support for Hamas

Anti-racism

Page 5

Gurkirat Bathth exposes Harper’s latest anti-immigrant attack, Bill C-24

Reproductive justice

Page 8

Michelle Robidoux examines how the austerity agenda is reinforcing attacks on abortion

Public services

Page 10

Peter Votsch details the Tory attacks on PSAC and the need to defend public services

Labour movement

Page 11

Pam Frache recalls previous postal worker victories and why we need to join the fight to save Canada Post

Social Forum

Page 11

Carolyn Egan discusses labour’s role in the People’s Social Forum and the fight against Harper



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

Reproductive justice: equal access now

by MAUREEN ASLIN

On July 18 the Morgentaler clinic in Fredericton, New Brunswick closed after 20 years.

In contravention to the Canada Health Act, New Brunswick has refused to pay for women's treatment at the clinic under regulation 84-20, the Medical Payment Services Act.

This legislation was imposed after the 1988 Morgentaler Decision in a backlash to limit women's access to abortion. It limits payment for abortions to only those that are done in a hospital by an OBGYN, determined to be "medically necessary," and approved by two doctors.

Dr. Morgentaler had personally financed the Fredericton clinic as he fought the provincial restrictions in court. After his death the clinic could no longer afford to stay open.

In the region access to abortion is limited. There are no abortions in PEI as the hospital administration has repeatedly refused physicians ready to offer procedure access to work in the hospital and until 2011 it was not broadly known that the province would pay for women to have abortions at the hospital in Halifax NS. As a result of this and lengthy hospital wait times, the majority of women from PEI travelled to the Fredericton clinic.

Fundraising

Reproductive Justice New Brunswick responded to the impending clinic closure with a crowdfunding campaign to lease the building that was the Morgentaler clinic.

To date the grass roots campaign has raised \$128k, quickly exceeding the original \$100K goal (www.fundrazr.com/campaigns/aoCmf/tx/63fJr3).

With a new goal of \$200K they hope to open a women's health centre offering a broad range of health services available six days a week, and significantly expand operations from the one day per week that the Morgentaler clinic was open.

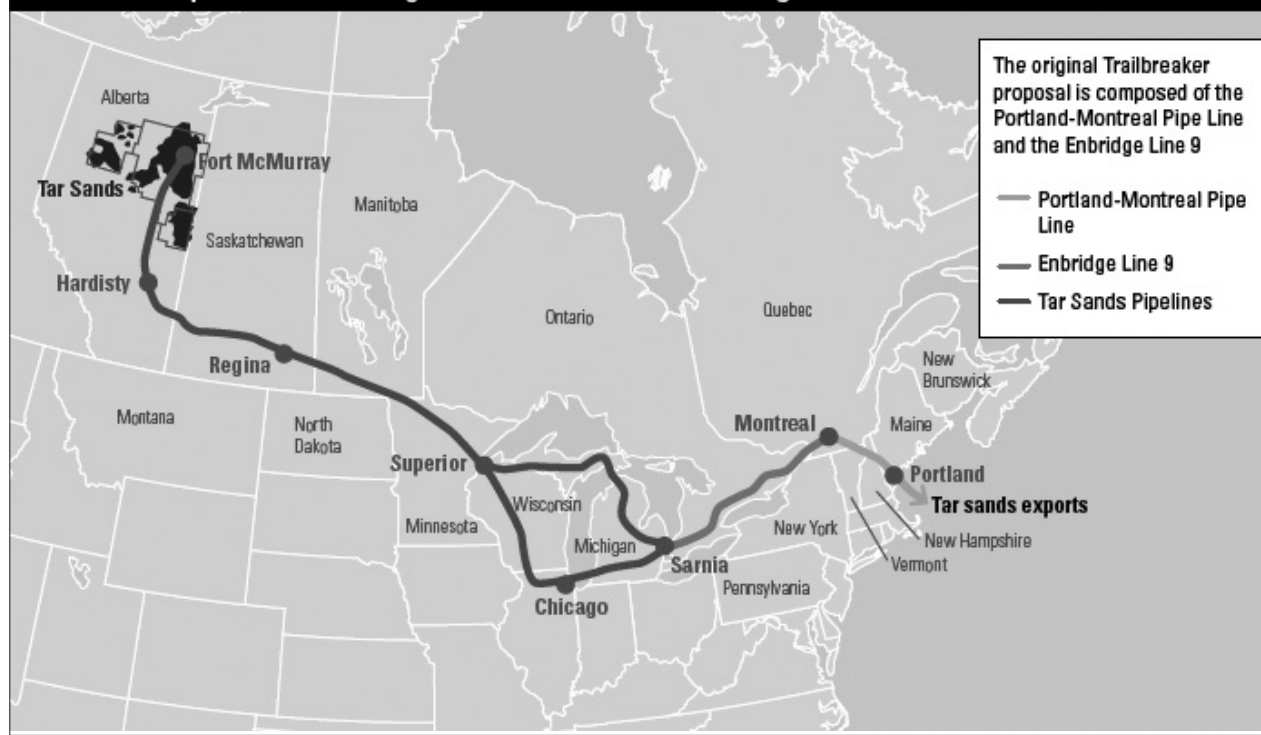
Day of action

September 20 will be a Canada-wide day of action to demand "Reproductive Justice: Equal Access Now!" This has been called to bring attention to the inequity of access across the country and particularly in New Brunswick prior to the provincial election on Monday Sept 22. So far the liberal candidate for premier, Brian Gallant, has only promised a "review" of the policy.

At the same time the day of action can connect access to abortion with broader reproductive justice struggles: justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women, restoring funding to refugee health, the fight for child care and pay equity, disability and LGBT struggles, etc.

In Toronto join the day of action at Lake Devo, Ryerson Univ, 1pm with march and "scramble for access."

The Plan to Pump Tar Sands Through Eastern Canada and New England



Opposition to Line 9 grows

by JESSE MCLAREN

July 25 was the four-year anniversary of the disastrous spill from Enbridge's Line 6B pipeline, which continues to contaminate the Kalamazoo River in Michigan despite a billion dollars in clean-up fees. Meanwhile, Enbridge plans on using the same type of 40-year old pipeline, Line 9, to pump tar sands east.

But there is growing opposition along the route of Line 9, and in the coastal US where the tar sands bitumen is headed.

In April Toronto City Council joined other municipalities in calling on the Ontario provincial government to conduct an Environmental Assessment (EA) of Line 9, and the following month 1,400 people marched from City Hall to Queen's Park to deliver the more than 10,000 petition signatures calling for an EA. So far the Ontario Liberal government has refused to intervene, which amounts to supporting Harper's tar sands expansion.

On July 14 people blockaded a Line 9 "integrity dig" in Toronto. According to Rising Tide Toronto,

"These digs, which are required before Enbridge can bring the reversed Line 9 into operation, involve digging up and repairing SOME of the over 12,000 anomalies in the pipeline. But we know that Enbridge has no integrity, and that Line 9 reversal is an unjust and dangerous project. Today we are taking a stand to say NO to Line 9 and tar sands development. Our collective future has been put at risk by the reckless greed of corporate profiteers. It is our responsibility to combat further destructive projects that push many people and the planet towards imminent danger. For us, right now, that includes saying NO to Tar Sands destruction."

Then on July 17 members of Six Nations and their allies shut down Line 9 work in North Dumfries, Ontario, on unceded Haudenosaunee territory. According to Missy Elliot, "Meaningful consultation isn't just providing information and going ahead without discussion – it's giving the opportunity to say no and having a willingness to accommodate... We've tried pursuing avenues with the NEB, the township and the

Grand River Conservation Authority. Our concerns were dismissed. What other choice do we have if we want to protect our land, water and children?" As Daniell Boissineau, Anishnabe of the Turtle Clan, explained: "This isn't just about line 9 – or Northern Gateway, Energy East or Keystone XL. This is about pipelines – all of them. This is about the tar sands and how destructive they are to expand, extract and transport."

Line 9 is sold as "made in Canada" alternative to the Northern Gateway or Keystone XL export of tar sands bitumen—and the NDP leadership erroneously supports domestic refining and sending tar sands east. But regardless of where bitumen is refined, or whether or not it is used domestically or exported, tar sands expansion threatens indigenous communities and the climate, and wastes resources urgently needed for green jobs. Line 9 proponents also ignore that its ultimate destination is export from the US.

Under Enbridge's previous "Trailbreaker" project, the reversal of Line 9 would be tied to the rever-

sal of the Portland-Maine Pipeline—combining to take tar sands from Sarnia to Montreal, and then to Portland, Maine for export. This plan includes building a new pump station next to an elementary school in Portland.

But after a year of organizing by Protect South Portland, the city council recently passed a "Clear Skies Ordinance" to block tar sands shipments. As a city councilor warned, bracing for a legal challenge from the pipeline company or the Canadian government "This ordinance is the will of the people. Do not spend millions of dollars and force the city of South Portland to do the same."

Next steps in the fight against Line 9 include asking Toronto city council to ban the pipeline and rail transportation of tar sands bitumen and bakken oil (which exploded in Lac Mégantic) and continuing pressure on the Ontario government. There are also two important convergences for climate justice activists: the People's Social Forum Aug 21-24 in Ottawa, and the People's Climate March September 21 in New York.

Free Grassy Narrows

by JESSE MCLAREN

On July 29 hundreds filled an auditorium at Ryerson University to hear about the fight for justice at Grassy Narrows and to build for tomorrow's River Run.

As Grassy Narrows Clan Mother Judy Da Silva summarized, "We've been poisoned since the 1950s, it didn't come out until the 1970s, and now it's 2014. Our people are being destroyed, our way of life is being destroyed." According to Steve Fobister, an elder and former chief who is affected by mercury poisoning and started a hunger strike, "I'm suffering and young people are suffering while politicians continue to play political and legal games."

Decades ago a paper mill dumped 10 tonnes of mercury into the river that feeds Asubpeeschoseewagong First Nation (Grassy Narrows), a community of

1600. The government has never apologized, compensated, or cleaned-up the contamination, and instead suppressed a 2010 report on the impacts of mercury poisoning.

As Warren White, Grand Chief Treaty 3, said at a press conference the previous day "A genocide on people in Canada is very wrong. When they can't eat the basic foods that they have lived on—the fish and wildlife—it is an infringement on treaty rights and way of life. I call on the federal government and Ontario government to acknowledge that there are serious problems in their own backyard. They react to all these wars across the seas with millions and millions of dollars, and they can't even recognize a report again that's sitting on the shelves of their government bureaucracies."

As writer and activist Leanne Simpson explained,

"We have more than enough research. The problem is not lack of knowledge but willful ignorance by settler government."

Stephen Lewis recounted debates in the Ontario legislature in the 1970s against the mercury poisoning, and the ongoing lack of investigations and consultations. He described the ongoing lack of justice as "an extension of a pattern of behavior that is criminal."

In addition to mercury poisoning the community is facing clear cutting, which their chief Roger Fobister described as "making parking lots out of our aboriginal homeland." Recently the Supreme Court of Canada sided with the Ontario government's plans to continue clear-cutting, in violation of aboriginal land and treaty rights.

Since 2002 Grassy Narrows have resisted some of the largest log-

ging companies and the government that supports them. As Leanne Simpson highlighted, "People of Grassy Narrows are not victims. They have undertaken research; participated in consultations; protested with allies; organized and maintained the longest logging blockade in Canadian history; fought to defend their rights in courts; organized workshops and teach-ins; continued to sing, dance, hunt, fish and trap; and now one of their cherished elders is on hunger strike."

Despite the Supreme Court decision the resistance continues. As a Grassy Narrows community member explained, "We didn't lose anything. This isn't the end of the road. It's everybody's responsibility, not just us. We all have to stand up together."

For more information visit freegrassy.net.

Transit politics: workers and disabled people unite

by MELISSA GRAHAM

It's almost election time in Toronto again, and much like the last time around, disabled people are finding themselves in the midst of a tug of war for funding and votes.

This time the key issue is transportation, and the ruling class has learned that it can no longer shut out disabled people entirely through the use of force, closing committees, and selling off public housing. Instead there's a new tactic in play: divide and conquer through the use and denial of public funds.

Cutting accessibility

First they came for the public transit system.

It was days after the Ontario election, and just before the last meeting of the City of Toronto's Disability Issues Committee prior to the municipal election; the perfect time for the Toronto Transit Commission to announce that it did not have enough funds to meet its accessibility requirements.

The TTC suddenly realized it had a \$240 million capital shortfall, just in time for the vote on the provincial budget.

It wasn't hard for disabled people and Ontario's MPPs to see right through that.

Cutting wages

When plan A failed, they came for the workers; specifically accessible taxi workers.

These workers are contracted out to Wheeltrans, Toronto's door-to-door alternative to the TTC. Through negotiations between Wheeltrans and the accessible taxi brokerages in Toronto, the latest contract has dropped drivers' guaranteed pay from \$2.86 to \$2.50 per kilometre.

As Wheel-trans driver Ahmed Idris Ali explained, "We can't afford it. If you calculate it out, we're working for seven dollars per hour—that's less than minimum wage." As iTaxi Workers Association president Sajid Mughal said, "Tell me how it makes sense to lower wages when gas prices, insurance and maintenance have all gone up."

More than 80 per cent of the drivers are on strike until they get their old fees back.

Unite

The City of Toronto is looking to use disabled people for political games ahead of an election. We cannot let this happen. If disabled peoples stand with workers instead of against them, something positive might actually come out of this election.

Socialist Worker

e-mail: reports@socialist.ca
web: www.socialist.ca
lphone: 416.972.6391

All correspondence to:
Socialist Worker
P.O. Box 339, Station E
Toronto, ON M6H 4E3

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



Mass protests turn tide against Israeli terror

The world is increasingly turning it's back on the government of Israel. The latest round of attacks on the people of Gaza has been barbaric, with thousands dead and injured and almost half of the population displaced.

Israel hoped counter-revolution in Egypt would leave Hamas isolated and easy to destroy. But the IDF have faced stiff resistance and responded with further collective punishment—creating a humanitarian disaster by bombing water and electricity plants as well as hospitals, and shelling multiple UN schools that were supposed to be safe havens.

But mobilizations throughout the world are turning the tide against Israel.

Protests

In the West Bank, protest have been huge. For the Israelis, who were worried about the possibility of a unity government between Fatah and Hamas things couldn't get worse. In Nablus tens of thousands chanted, "We are not Fatah or Hamas, We are one people."

Despite an anti-protest law, Egyptians have organized an aid convoy and protested Israel.

In the UK, 100,000 marched

against the assault. UK cabinet minister Baroness Sayeeda Warsi has quit the government in protest over the Conservative government's support of the killing. In a recent poll, 68 per cent of UK residents opposed Israel's actions.

Countries across Latin America have cut ties to Israel. Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Peru, Chile and El Salvador have all withdrawn their ambassadors.

Recent polling in the US has found a majority of people under 30 now oppose Israeli actions. The group Jewish Voices for Peace say that they have been overwhelmed with the response. Their membership list has spiked by 50,000 people and they are having trouble keeping up with the number of people wanting to set up new chapters throughout the country.

US and Canadian complicity

But there are still major players who continue to support Israel. While the US has condemned the attacks on schools, it has also, sent another \$225 million to support the Iron dome defence system and is sending more bullets, rockets and artillery to the IDF.

The government of Canada is shamefully supportive of Israel.

Even as the US and UN were calling for investigations into possible war crimes, Stephen Harper was insisting that Israel has the right to kill civilians to "defend itself."

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird claimed that "Hamas will be solely to blame for any further loss of life," comments that Human Rights Watch blasted as a "green light for more unlawful Israeli attacks that kill civilians."

The opposition parties have all lined up with Harper. Members of the Liberal Party joined a Conservative led delegation to Israel and organized a rally in favour of the assault.

There have been some NDP MP's who have called for an end to the operation but the party leadership has been spineless in it's position and continues to avoid any condemnation of the attacks—leading longstanding NDP members to write open letters and even occupy the office of foreign affairs critic Paul Dewar.

Western governments use Israel as a regional watchdog to keep the Middle East under the thumb of imperialism. The mobilizations and the shifts in public opinion strike at the very heart of the entire Western imperial architecture. US imperial strategist Zbigniew Brzezinski

criticized Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu saying, "I think he is making a very serious mistake. I think he is isolating Israel. He's endangering its longer-range future."

Resistance and solidarity

We need to keep the pressure on. These unprecedented demonstrations are having a huge impact. It will take much more to end our government's support for Israel but by shifting opinion we are altering the terms of debate on this issue. This is creating more space for campaigns such as the call for BDS and is exposing the hypocrisy of our political leaders.

But the veil is falling and more people than ever are marching against this war. What we are seeing is an incredible disconnect between regular people, appalled by the massacre, and political leaders who are unwilling to oppose against the killing.

The heroic resistance of the Palestinian people and the mass movements can, together, seriously weaken the imperial powers and bring us one step closer to a world without war.

All out for the Pan-Canadian days of action on August 9 and 10!

Stop Harper's complicity with Israel

Harper is one of the most pro-Israel leaders in the world, and we have a responsibility to stop him.

Harper has a long record of supporting Israel. Harper made Canada the first country in the world to cut humanitarian aid to Palestine after the democratic election of Hamas in 2006, defended Israeli war crimes in Lebanon as a "measured response", was silently complicit in the war on Gaza in 2009, welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu during the deadly attack on the Turkish flotilla in 2010, and has been a cheerleader in Israel's latest assault.

While the rest of the world was supporting the Egyptian revolution almost as soon as protesters took to the streets early in 2011, Harper was the last one to continue supporting Mubarak—whose dictatorship has been central in supporting Israeli apartheid.

Increasingly the Tories have targeted Palestine solidarity groups in

Canada—cutting funding from the Canadian Arab Federation, KAIROS, UNRWA, Rights & Democracy, banning of British MP George Galloway and Dr. Moustafa Barghouthi from entering Canada, and defunding Palestine House.

When a shipment of Canadian food and medical supplies to Gaza—on the international flotilla, the Tahrir—was attacked by Israeli officials, the Harper government snubbed its own citizens by failing to intervene.

While Harper has jumped on the bandwagon to pressure Iran by economic sanctions, the demands for boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israeli apartheid are vilified as anti-Semitic.

Liberal and Tory MPs created the so-called Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism to smear Palestine solidarity work, and both federal and provincial Tories have attacked Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) as anti-Semitic.

Why Harper supports Israel

But Harper doesn't support Israel because he cares about anti-Semitism, is chasing votes or is being pressured by a small lobby group.

Canada has a shameful history turning away boats of Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust, and Harper has paid lip-service to fighting anti-Semitism as a cover to continue Canada's anti-migrant legacy.

There are three times as many Muslims in Canada than Jews, and annual bilateral trade with Israel is less than a single day of trade with the US—so Harper is not pandering to votes or trade.

The evangelical Christian population in Canada is far greater than the Jewish population, and Christian Zionists are a far more important part of the Conservative party base that Harper is trying to mobilize. But this doesn't explain why the leaders of all mainstream parties, including Liberals and the NDP, support Israel.

Ukraine and Canadian imperialism

Without any evidence, Western leaders quickly blamed Russia for the downing of the Malaysian airliner over Eastern Ukraine.

Since the collapse of the eastern block Stalinist regimes, NATO countries have tried to militarily isolate and surround Russia. Far from bringing us a peace dividend, competition between states has intensified since the end of the Cold War.

Russia and it's main allies in the other BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China) are a target because they want to develop without reliance on the US and Western countries. The recent decision to develop a new BRIC sponsored development bank is a direct challenge to the US, which has maintained its hold on the global economy through the Bretton Woods institutions: the WTO, IMF and World Bank.

The BRIC countries want to pursue capitalist globalization, just on their own terms. This has unsettled the US and the EU, which have enjoyed unparalleled power over the global economic institutions, so they are using the crash of the MH-17 jet liner to impose more sanctions on Russia.

Canadian oil

There are specific reasons why Canada is calling for more sanctions: to replace Russia as the oil and gas supplier of Europe.

When Russia and China announced a \$400 billion gas deal earlier this year it sent shockwaves through the Canadian Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) producers. *The Financial Post* lamented that the deal could "upset British Columbia's dream of launching a liquefied natural gas export industry." The Toronto Dominion Bank released a report suggesting that the deal could limit Canada's role as a supplier of the Asian gas market.

There are still some deals being made for transport of BC gas abroad such as the one signed by BC Premier Christy Clark with Malaysian gas giant Petronas, but insiders worry that the markets may dry up if Russia signs more deals in the area.

For Canadian gas producers it is, therefore, essential to find more overseas markets. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict has opened the door to even better terms for Canadian Gas producers in Europe.

Pieridae Energy Ltd, Nova Scotia based gas producer is attempting to build an \$8.5 billion LNG plant to ship gas to the EU. They have already signed a deal to transport LNG from Nova Scotia. As Nova Scotia Energy Minister Andrew Younger says, "With the developments in Ukraine, that project has taken on more importance".

Pieridae admits that there are still hurdles which may slow the project, not least of which is the resistance from Indigenous land defenders in Nova Scotia and across Canada who are fighting to stop the project. One of the main sources of that LNG is supposed to come from fracking operations in Elsipogtog, New Brunswick.

Solidarity with First Nations is essential not only to stop the destruction of their traditional lands but also to challenge Canadian foreign policy pushing a new inter-imperial conflict.

Their media and ours

“The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas.”

This is a quote from a book called *The German Ideology* that Karl Marx wrote in 1845. Although it was written over 150 years ago it encapsulates a reality that is still very much with us today.

Corporate media

It is often said that it's the victors who write history. Likewise the “news” is reported to us through the filters of those who own and control the corporate media.

So, for example, taking a “balanced” approach to the current bombing of Gaza means reporting as if the situation were actually a war with two roughly equal sides, rather than a complete slaughter of Palestinians by the state of Israel, armed to the teeth by their US backers.

This ideological role of reinforcing the status quo is one of the most important functions of the media in capitalist society. In the same way that we are encouraged to see the state as a neutral body, the mantra of mainstream journalists is their pretense to “objectivity.” Strangely enough this “objectivity” most often seems to end up on the side of police, bosses and those in control.

Some left activists claim that ordinary people are lobotomized and simply accept without question the media's take on events. This view can lead to passivity and despair about the possibility of ever changing the status quo or fighting injustice.

However, people are not simply sitting at home glued to their TVs and Fox News as their only source of information. People's experience of reality can come up against the view of that reality peddled by the media.

So, for example, workers who go on strike are confronted by the fact that we don't live in a society with a neutral state or media.

Alternative media

The role of alternative and progressive media is also extremely important. Even though left wing and progressive media have nowhere near the reach or influence of huge media corporations they are vital to the ability of the movements to project their struggles to a larger audience.

In the era of the Internet alternative media can also be sites, not just for disseminating information, but for organizing fightbacks—as in Egypt or Iran, for example, where many young activists use all tools available (including electronic ones) to build their movements against repressive states.

Here in Canada alternative media such as *rabble.ca* and *RicochetMedia.ca*—an ambitious bilingual online publication born of the experience of the Maple Spring in Quebec—are critical to all of those engaged in the fight for social justice, whether it be the fight against the Tar Sands here at home or building solidarity with Palestinians under attack in Gaza.

Alternative media brings together the views of individual columnists or activists who represent a range of debates within movements, and that is its strength. But it can also be a weakness, for the same site can feature articles arguing opposite conclusions, which can make it difficult for readers to translate ideas into action.

Socialist media

Socialist media is a complementary component of alternative media. It challenges the ruling class ideas represented in corporate media, reflects movements as does alternative media, and also intervenes to shape them—connected to socialist organization.

Writing for socialist media is not reserved for professional writers or activists but open to all—in order to better reflect the many struggles in which people are involved. At the same time, the production of socialist media is a collective task, organized through an editorial board that edits articles to promote clarity of ideas and to synthesize theory and practice.

Distributing socialist media builds movements, spreads socialist politics, tests ideas by engaging with people and gauging their reactions, and builds socialist organization. As Lenin wrote more than a century ago, “A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organizer... The mere technical task of regularly supplying the newspaper with copy and of promoting regular distribution will necessitate a network of local agents of the united party.”

We can apply this to the web, as Egyptian revolutionary Hossam El-Hamalawy has written: “The presence of revolutionary correspondents on the ground in every province, tasked with supplying the site round the clock with reports, means that there are activists on the ground, assigned round the clock to throw themselves into events that are happening.”

With “one foot in cyberspace and one foot on the ground,” 21st century socialists use print and online media to build movements and socialist organization.



Towards a revolutionary perspective on Hamas

by MOSTAFA OMAR EGYPTIAN REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISTS

This article seeks to clarify how we as revolutionaries who believe in building a democratic society through the struggle and organization of the exploited and oppressed masses, should analyse and deal with Islamist movements (and likewise with “secular” movements) which are struggling, or claim to be struggling, against reactionary or imperialist regimes.

Here we will focus specifically on Hamas, which has led the resistance in Palestine since the 1990s, because the position of genuine revolutionary forces in Egypt and internationally towards them is ambiguous, and this weakens our struggle against the reactionary regimes and imperialism.

First of all, we must clarify that we are completely convinced that the movement of revolutionary change against the global capitalist system is not only an international class struggle against the exploiting classes, but also struggles and uprisings of the oppressed can destabilize and weaken the capitalist system, whether these are the struggles of oppressed minorities within states, such as the Christians in Egypt or Iraq, or Black people in the USA, or of peoples colonized by the imperialist powers, such as Palestine in the case of the Arab world.

From this perspective, we can see that the Palestinian struggle (with all its factions, and despite all the reservations that any revolutionary will have about the politics of those factions), against Zionism and Imperialism, which has sponsored Zionism since the beginning (and continues to do so today), plays a pivotal role in destabilizing the global imperialist system. Time and again, it opens up prospects for the rise of class struggle in the Arab world, as the Palestinian Intifada of 2000 opened a new era of struggle in Egypt which culminated in the eruption of the 25 January revolution.

A revolutionary perspective on Hamas

Our perspective does not ever claim that varied “Islamist” movements in different countries at different time periods are all alike. Rather we always attempt to understand Islamist movements in the historical context where they arose, and in terms of their social and class content, and their political goals. We always attempt to analyze whether these movements are resisting reactionary and imperialist regimes, even if in a vacillating or distorted fashion, and even if reactionary movements are hostile to the struggle and unity of the exploited and oppressed masses, and thus serve the interests of imperialism and the reactionary

regimes.

Our materialist understanding of these Islamist movements, their relationship with the masses on the one hand, and with the reactionary regimes and imperialism on the other, bases our analysis on their diversity. We also adjust our strategic and tactical positions towards them, following their development through all their twists and turns, from resistance to imperialism at one moment, to betrayal of the masses at another.

For example, we consider Islamist movements such as ISIS in Syria and Iraq as reactionary to the core, whose racism and crimes against Shia Muslims and Christians wipe out the idea that the unity of the oppressed is fundamental to resisting dictatorship and colonialism. We consider that such movements necessarily serve the interests of the dictatorial regimes and imperialism and we oppose them on principle.

We differentiate between utterly reactionary Islamist movements such as ISIS, and Islamist movements such as Hamas and Hezbollah. The latter two movements came into existence to resist imperialism and entered into many confrontations and struggles with Zionism and imperialism in defence of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the Lebanese people.

We consider Hamas, which originated in the midst of the first Palestinian Intifada at the end of the 1980s, and won wide popularity among Palestinians because of its rejection of the concessions and surrender which Fatah offered to the Zionist enemy and the United States, and through its military resistance to the brutal Israeli assault on Gaza, to be a resistance movement against Zionism and imperialism.

From this perspective we unconditionally support Hamas when it is engaged in military or non-military struggles against Israel, because it weakens the Zionist state and terrifies the Arab regimes and the United States, and therefore strengthens the potential for class struggle in the Arab states against this imperialist system.

Our unconditional support for Hamas is not uncritical, however, because we believe that the movement's strategies in the struggle to liberate Palestine – like the strategies adopted by Fatah and the Palestinian left before it – have failed and will fail in the future.

Hamas' strategy is to associate itself with some of the Arab regimes (even including Egypt until recently), as well as non-Arab regimes, which are reactionary and repress their people and conspire constantly to suppress

the Palestinian struggle. These regimes realise that Palestinian heroism and steadfastness is and always will be a catalyst for their peoples, who are natural supporters for the Palestinian cause and revolution against them. Hamas' strategy, which reproduces the strategy of Fatah and the Palestinian left since the 1960s, will not liberate Palestine. Instead of standing in solidarity with the struggles of the Arab masses who have an interest in getting rid of imperialism and Zionism, Hamas is pushing a strategy of alliance with regimes which cooperate willingly with imperialism and Zionism.

Secondly, despite the extraordinary heroism of Hamas' fighters, who stand courageously against every Israeli assault in impossible circumstances, igniting hope in the hearts of millions around the world at the very moment of the Arab Spring's defeat, Hamas' adopts an elitist approach to dealing with the Palestinian masses. This is the method which Fatah and the Palestinian left relied on previously in dealing with the Palestinian people, using them as tools whose role is limited to supporting the armed struggle and obedience to the revolutionary leadership rather than popular participation in the development of a strategy of resistance and participation in decision-making. This approach weakens the capacities of mass resistance in the long term in the face of an enemy whose weapons are becoming more lethal day by day.

For this reason, support of the revolutionary forces for Hamas and the Palestinian Resistance is critical as well as unconditional.

By the same logic, despite our support for Hezbollah in any confrontation with Israel, we condemn its hostile position towards the Arab Revolutions by standing with the butcher Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

Our support for the resistance in Palestine is unconditional because the Palestinian struggle against Zionism is a thorn in the side of imperialism, and because, like all colonised peoples, the Palestinians alone have the right to decide their destiny. That includes the right to choose their own leadership and adopt means of resistance which they see as appropriate to their circumstances. But our support is critical because the fate of revolutionary change in the Arab world and the fate of the Palestinian Resistance are organically connected to each other.

Long live the struggle of the Palestinian people – the light of the Arab Revolutions!

This is republished from <http://global.revsoc.me>

Bill C-24: Harper's latest attack on immigrants

Gurkirat Batth exposes the impacts that Bill C-24 has on those seeking citizenship, and how Harper is using this in an attempt to divide and conquer the 99%

According to Conservative MP and Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Chris Alexander, the recently passed Bill C-24 is designed to "protect and strengthen the great value of Canadian citizenship, and remind individuals that citizenship is not a right, it's a privilege".

But a deep look and further analysis of this bill show that it makes it harder to acquire Canadian citizenship and easier to lose it, while increasing discrimination.

Harder to acquire

Bill C-24 imposes some major changes in requirements and conditions that will make it harder for people—especially non-English speaking, elderly and poor—to acquire citizenship in Canada, and the process will take longer.

The first requirement is that all applicants must pass a language test unless they can prove their language ability. In addition, all applicants will have to pass a Canada knowledge test. This is a barrier for many, as it will make it difficult for applicants who are relatively new to Canada and are not fluent in English or French.

To add to this burden, those who have to write the language exam are expected to pay for the exam from their own pocket. Such testing is already conducted but is expected to be more rigorous if this bill is passed. In addition to that, these tests would be mandatory for anyone aged 18-64; while the current test is only mandatory for applicants aged 18-55.

Secondly, Bill C-24 has proposed changes to the fees and the timing of the application process. If passed, the application fees for citizenship would triple from what they are right now, and the fees would be four times greater than what they were in 2006. This again will be a great barrier for marginalized groups to acquire citizenship.

Currently it takes 4-6 years to get citizenship, which is attributed mostly to delays and inefficiency of the process. Under this new law, it will take 8-10 years to become a citizen from the time you become a Canadian resident.

Furthermore, this bill would increase the residency requirements for citizenship in Canada from three years to four. Any time that the applicant stayed in Canada as a student, foreign worker or a refugee would not be counted towards your residency requirement. This again would elongate the process of acquiring citizenship in Canada.

Lastly, under this new bill, applicants will not have the right to appeal the refusal of an application to a federal court. If rejected, the applicant will be entitled to a judicial review, but this process will be neither full nor proper like an appeal to the federal court.

Easier to Lose

The Tories argue that this bill will solidify citizenship in Canada, but in reality such a bill would weaken citizenship significantly. To start off, this bill would give federal officials the power to revoke the citizenship of all



naturalized citizen in Canada. If the federal officials believe that you never intended to live in Canada, they have the full right to revoke it.

This bill has double standards, as it does not apply to Canadian born citizens. So, if a naturalized citizen goes to another country for business, academic or personal reasons, they would be at risk of losing their citizenship in Canada.

Secondly, this bill would give full power to government officials to revoke citizenship of any dual citizen if the citizen has been convicted of a crime in another country. They will not take into account if the country in which the citizen was convicted in is undemocratic, lacks a judicial system or the citizen had an unfair trial—like Mohamed Fahmy, who is imprisoned by Egypt's military dictatorship.

In addition, if convicted of a serious crime in Canada, an official can revoke citizenship even if you have already served your time for that crime in Canada.

Lastly, under current laws, to revoke your citizenship the government has to make an application to the federal court judge and you are then scheduled for an oral hearing to defend your rights to citizenship.

But under that new bill, officials of Citizenship and Immigration Canada will have the power to revoke your citizenship and you may have no chance to speak to the official to defend your right to citizenship.

What does it all mean?

This is a clear attack on immigrants by Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative government. This bill is discriminatory in the sense that it will create barriers for the poor and minorities to acquire citizenship in Canada.

Increasing fees, stricter requirements, longer wait times and tougher language and knowledge exams are tools that can be used to deter residents from pursuing citizenship in Canada.

On the other hand, this bill

would give increased powers to immigration officials that would allow them to revoke citizenship of citizens. Canada has always been a haven to those who have fought for justice in their homeland and have been deemed criminals. This bill would ignore the conditions and the state of the countries and would allow the immigration official to revoke citizenship on improper convictions.

In addition, dual citizens and naturalized citizens are at risk of losing their citizenship if the official believes that you never intended to stay in Canada, yet this does not apply to Canadian Citizens. This is a clear case of inequality where there is a bias towards Canadian-born citizens, whereas citizenship should reduce inequality by treating all of the citizens with the same laws and regulations.

This is part of the austerity agenda, strengthening the powers of the state and using racism to divide and conquer—all to benefit the 1%.

Canadian corporations already exploit 300,000 migrant workers through the Temporary Foreign Workers Program, and there are another 500,000 undocumented people living precariously. Bill C-24 undermines the rights of the 863,000 dual nationals. As the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers state, there is nothing progressive about "cruelly depriving some citizens of their most basic rights, or in drawing distinctions that represent new Canadians as objects of suspicion and mistrust."

In making it more difficult for immigrants to access citizenship on which voting depends, C-24 follow Bill C-23 in further eroding the most basic democratic rights.

Strengthening the Canadian state, it's arbitrary borders and its abilities to dictate people's rights based on citizenship status, also undermines indigenous sovereignty.

Working in Solidarity

Since the bill was proposed in February, and even after it was passed in June, there has been a great amount of backlash against it, with rallies across the country.

The Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers (CARL) and the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association have worked in solidarity and gathered more than 42,000 signatures on the online petition opposing this act. They have announced they will challenge the bill in court.

Numerous immigration experts, law professors as well as Amnesty International have spoken out against this bill. The Canadian Bar Association compared this new proposed law to the medieval punishment of banishment. The constitutional Rights Center have filed a notice of application in the federal court of Canada arguing that Parliament has reached beyond its jurisdictions with this controversial law.

The work of these organizations must continue, and without solidarity and public support it will be difficult to defeat this bill.

It only requires a few Tories to draft and pass a bill like C-24, but it requires much more than lawyers to revoke it.

The abortion law was smashed by a mass movement, and when the Tories passed a law to re-criminalize it failed to pass in the Senate because of overwhelming opposition in the streets. The Quebec law against freedom of assembly, passed in an attempt to derail the student strike, was ignored in practice by hundreds of thousands who took to the streets, and then the student movement got rid of the Liberal government and their law. Two years of mobilizing won a federal court decision against Harper's attacks on refugee health, and further mobilizing will be needed to restore funding.

Bill C-24 has passed in Parliament but, will be challenged in court, and can be defeated if this is accompanied by ongoing mobilizations.

Increasing fees, stricter requirements, longer wait times and tougher language and knowledge exams are tools that can be used to deter residents from pursuing citizenship in Canada.

Why we need revolutionary organization

Reform and revolution

Capitalism breeds exploitation and economic crisis, multiple forms of oppression, war and environmental destruction. It can only be overturned through revolution, but this doesn't mean we should dismiss reforms under capitalism.

Some "socialist" groups abstractly preach revolution but dismiss every reform—not recognizing that it's through the process of fighting for reforms that people can become revolutionaries. Social democratic parties dismiss revolution and focus on achieving reforms through the institutions of capitalism—not recognizing how these institutions undermine reforms and are a barrier to widespread and permanent change.

Socialists support reforms because they improve the lives of people in the here and now, and because through the process of fighting for reforms people can gain experience and confidence to demand much more—highlighting the limits of the system and the need for revolution.

As the revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg wrote, "Can we counterpose the social revolution, the transformation of the existing order, our final goal, to social reforms? Certainly not. The daily struggle for reforms, for the amelioration of the condition of the workers within the framework of the existing social order, and for democratic institutions, offers an indissoluble tie. The struggle for reforms is its means; the social revolution, its aim."

Socialists engage in elections to give voice to social movements, and push for elected officials to act as a megaphone for the movements. But electing different leaders to capitalist institutions will not on its own create an alternative. Obama extended Bush's wars abroad and at home, and the NDP leadership supports the tar sands and the military. Provincially the NDP has attacked indigenous resistance in BC, jobs and services in Ontario, and paramedics and students in Nova Scotia. Disillusionment with left-wing parties in office paves the way for right-wing governments—including the Liberals in BC, Mike Harris in Ontario, and Rob Ford in Toronto.

This is not a flaw in leadership or party platform but a

reflection that social democracy, capitalism's main political institution, can never get rid of capitalism. Parliament offers no control over capitalism's repressive apparatus (the police, military and courts), no control over the economic power of corporations, and—by leaving the majority as passive onlookers—minimizes the opportunities for people to make change.

The state appears neutral, but it is actually an institution of class rule. The police claim to "protect the peace" but the state uses them as attack dogs against blockades, protests and strikes. The courts claim to "administer justice" but they serve the 1%, maintaining a society of exploitation and oppression. The military claim to provide "defense" but it attacks and occupies other countries for the benefit of Canadian corporations.

As Friedrich Engels wrote: "In order that these antagonisms and classes with conflicting economic interests might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power seemingly standing above society that would alleviate the conflict, and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state."

But these antagonisms that the state seeks to mediate periodically explode in revolutions, where ordinary people reinvent society, and in the process themselves. As Leon Trotsky wrote: "The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in historical events. In ordinary times the state, be it monarchical or democratic, elevates itself above the nation, and history is made by specialists in that line of business—kings, ministers, bureaucrats, parliamentarians, journalists. But at those crucial moments when the old order becomes no longer endurable to the masses, they break over the barriers excluding them from the political arena, sweep aside their traditional representatives, and create by their own interference the initial groundwork for a new regime...The history of a revolution is for us first of all a history of the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny."

The 20th century saw revolutions or rebellions in Russia 1905/1917, Germany/Austria 1918-19, Spain 1936, East Germany 1953, Hungary 1956, Cuba 1959, France 1968, Chile 1973, Portugal 1974, Iran 1979, Poland 1980, East Europe 1989, South Africa 1994, Indonesia 1998, and Serbia 2000. The start of the 21st century has seen rebellions in Latin America, revolutions across the Arab world, general strikes from India to South Africa, a worldwide Occupy movement, and an indigenous movement Idle No More.



Russia 1917



Egypt 2011

Revolutionary socialist organization

Lenin founded the Bolshevik party in 1903 as a way of organizing a socialist minority within the working class to overcome uneven consciousness and promote the self-emancipation of the working class. There are a number of features that follow.

Revolutionary minority

The first is that socialist organization is based on the revolutionary minority who are active in opposing war, environmental destruction, exploitation, and oppression in all its forms. Having an organization that tries to represent the majority under capitalism (ie opportunism) would include people for and against the war, for and against racism. This would be both unprincipled and paralyzing.

As Lenin wrote in *What is to be Done*, organized socialists need to be "the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic experience of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat."

Mass activity

The second feature is that the point of having an organization of the revolutionary minority is not to make change on behalf of the majority (ultra-leftism) but to better coordinate to win over others in practice. So the corollary of having an independent minority organization of revolutionaries is to fight for every possible reform alongside the majority. This means participating building rank-and-file resistance regardless of the politics of the trade union bureaucracy; using elections as opportunities to build movements, without having illusions that Parliament can deliver socialism; and trying to build mass campaigns around simple demands that draw the widest layer of people into action, while connecting the broader issues.

This method, the united front, was developed by the Communist International in the early 1920s to help minority revolutionary organizations win over the majority through their own experience. As Trotsky wrote in *On the United Front*: "We participate in a united front but do not for a single moment become dissolved in it. We function in the united front as an independent detachment. It is precisely in the course of struggle that broad masses must learn from experience that we fight better than the others, that we see more clearly than the others, that we are more audacious and resolute."

Theory and practice

Thirdly, socialist organization intervenes by combining revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice. Socialists put

their theory to the test by using it to guide concrete actions to build and shape struggles. Socialist theory cannot be developed in a vacuum and requires some real-life application if it is to be correctly developed and tested. On the other hand, engaging in struggle without theory is directionless, ignoring the experience of the past and succumbing to ideological pressures of the present. Marxism is the dialectical unity of theory and practice, a living tradition that develops theory based on experience, and applies it to activity, constantly testing it in action.

This includes carrying lessons from past struggles. Ruling class ideas bury victories, make defeats seem inevitable, and reinforcing false notions that reforms only come from the top of society and that revolution is impossible. A revolutionary organization needs to be the memory of the working class—keeping alive the experiences of past victories, understanding past defeats, and incorporating past and present experiences into an understanding of the world that can guide our action. In short, revolutionary theory is comprised of the distilled lessons of workers' past struggles. This includes the high points of workers struggles—the Paris Commune of 1871 that inspired Marx, the Russian and German revolutions that produced Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky and Kollontai—as well as struggles since then (be they victories or defeats).

Working class

Fourthly, socialist organization tries to connect every struggle to the working class, not because workers are better than other sections of the population but because the working class is strategically located in capitalism. When workers withdraw their labour capitalists cannot make profits. As Rosa Luxemburg wrote: "Socialism will not and cannot be created by decrees; nor can it be established by any government, however socialist. Socialism must be created by the masses, by every proletarian. Where the chains of capitalism are forged, there they must be broken. Only that is socialism, and only thus can socialism be created."

This is not about reducing all issues to the workplace but rather about combining the political with the economic. Usually working class activity is divided into economic demands at the workplace, and political demands outside, typically expressed through voting. But mass strikes can fuse the two in a dialectical interaction, as Rosa Luxemburg described in *The Mass Strike*: "The economic struggle is the transmitter from one political centre to another; the political struggle is the periodic fertilisation of the soil for the economic struggle. Cause and effect here continually change places; and thus the economic and the political factor in the period of the mass strike...merely form the two interlacing sides of the proletarian class struggle. And their unity is precisely the mass strike."

Newspaper and website

Fifth, an organization of socialists active in a variety of movements, generalizing their lessons, requires a revolution-

ary paper and website. As Lenin wrote in *Where to Begin?*:

"A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organizer... With the aid of the newspaper, and through it, a permanent organization will naturally take shape that will engage, not only in local activities, but in regular general work, and will train its members to follow political events carefully, appraise their significance and their effect on the various strata of the population, and develop effective means for the revolutionary party to influence those events. The mere technical task of regularly supplying the newspaper with copy and of promoting regular distribution will necessitate a network of local agents of the united party."

We can also apply this method to the web, as Egyptian revolutionary Hossam El-Hamalawy wrote in *What is to be done: the website as organizer*: "The presence of revolutionary correspondents on the ground in every province, tasked with supplying the site round the clock with reports, means that there are activists on the ground, assigned round the clock to throw themselves into events that are happening, and under constant pressure to expand the network of revolutionary correspondents in their provinces, which means gains for the membership of the movement."

Democratic centralism

Finally, the structure of a revolutionary socialist organization is different than social democratic parties. Lenin wrote that in the revolutionary party there is no rank and file—everyone is a leader. Unlike the reformist parties, where the leadership regards the members as sheep to be passively led, the revolutionary party seeks to help everyone become leaders, inside and outside the organization.

Because the Leninist organization is designed to learn from struggles and intervene in debates to build movements, it operates through the principles of democratic centralism—which can be summarized as freedom of discussion, and unity in action. So after thorough debate, everyone implements the decision made. Democracy and centralism are often seen as mutually exclusive, but for an organization of action they are both necessary. Centralism without democracy is not only unjust but also ineffective, as it prevents the organization from learning and relating to all the struggles in which its members are involved. But democracy without centralism is equally ineffective, since it prevents decisions from being collectively implemented and—crucially—assessed.

This structure is flexible and determined by circumstance. When the Bolsheviks were founded, the severe repression in Russia required a small secret network. But when political freedoms opened up, so did the party, to better relate to the majority of people.

This is an excerpt from "The International Socialists: who we are, what we do, why we do it, and why you should join," published from Resistance Press. To order a copy or join the organization contact reports@socialist.ca

Capitalism and contradictory consciousness

School glorifies the history of kings and generals, while the corporate media uncritically repeat politicians and CEOs.

As Marx wrote: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it."

Ruling class ideas normalize exploitation and oppression, justify colonialism and imperialism, ignore environmental destruction, defend state repression, and present a fragmented reality that ordinary people are incapable of understanding or changing.

Marxism is a study of the world based on dialectics: that everything is interconnected and dynamic, driven by internal contradictions. As Engels wrote: "The whole world, natural, historical, intellectual, is represented as a process—i.e., as in constant motion, change, transformation, development; and the attempt is made to trace out the internal connection that makes a continuous whole of all this movement and development."

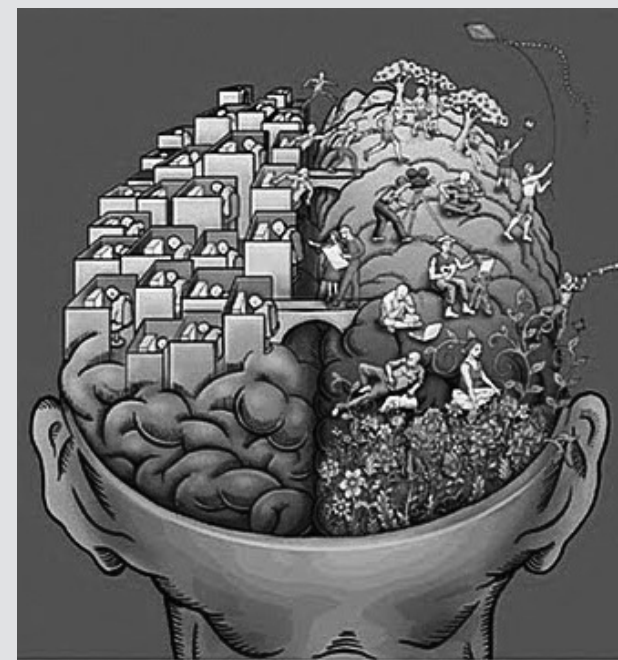
We can analyze peoples' ideas dialectically, as an unstable

contradiction of ruling class ideas and their own lived experiences of struggle. As the Italian revolutionary Antonio Gramsci wrote: "One might almost say that he has two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with all his fellow workers in the practical transformation of the real world; and one, superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed."

Because of this contradiction, people's ideas can change through struggle, as people's experience clash with the ruling ideas with which they have been raised. Every great movement or revolution—from the Russian revolution of 1917 to the Egyptian revolution of 2011—began with small numbers making modest demands, and escalated to masses of people using radical methods to make a widespread challenge to society.

We change the world and through the process change ourselves. That's why socialism can only be achieved through a mass revolution.

As Marx wrote: "Revolution is necessary not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fit to found society again."



Reformism, ultra-leftism, and revolutionary socialism

So if you are in the minority of people against war, environmental destruction, exploitation, and oppression in all its forms, how do you relate to the majority?

Trotsky made an analogy about society by describing five workers: one is a reactionary who clings to backward ideas and will always scab and defend the boss, one will always support progressive causes and strikes, and the three others can be won to either side; the key question is how the progressive relates to the three in the middle.

The first option is opportunism or reformism, which is to passively adapt to majority opinion, no matter how backward

it is. This is the strategy of social democratic parties (like the NDP), which try to appeal to the majority of people, whatever their ideas.

The other option is ultra-leftism or sectarianism, where progressives turn their backs on the majority, trying to make "radical change" with a small group of people. But as Lenin wrote in *Left Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder*: "The whole task of the Communist is to be able to convince the backward elements, to work among them, and not to fence themselves off from them by artificial and childish 'left' slogans."

Opportunism and ultra-leftism are elitist, seeing change

coming from an enlightened minority. Both of these strategies are pessimistic, seeing people's ideas as incapable of changing—and by keeping most people as passive onlookers, both these strategies are ineffective.

There is an alternative, outlined by the Palestinian/British socialist Tony Cliff in his analogy of a picket line where you hear a racist comment from a worker. The opportunist response is to ignore the comment, the sectarian response is to leave the strike, but the revolutionary socialist supports the picket line while arguing against the racist comment—to help workers change the world and change themselves.

Mulcair and the NDP's rightward drift

In 2011 the Orange Wave brought the federal NDP to Official Opposition in the hopes of an alternative. But a few years later Thomas Mulcair is supporting pipelines and Israel, the Ontario NDP campaigned to the right, and the New Brunswick NDP is running a long-time Tory candidate. What happened?

As the only mass party associated with the labour and social movements, the NDP has been an important ally in struggle. Jack Layton's best moments were when the NDP acted as a megaphone for movements outside Parliament: speaking out against war in Iraq and Afghanistan and filibustering an attack on postal workers. The 2011 federal election catapulted the NDP into Official Opposition based on anger at the Tories, disillusionment with the Liberals and Bloc Quebecois, and inspiration from the Arab Spring.

But the NDP leadership drew the opposite conclusion: that the election was not about the leftward shift happening outside Parliament, but rather vindication of their rightward shift inside Parliament—supporting the Liberals' massive increase in military spending in 2005, contemplating a coalition with the Liberals in 2008 based on dropping opposition to the war and tax cuts, and a centrist platform in 2011. So the NDP elected ex-Liberal Thomas Mulcair, who refused to support the Quebec student strike, called on Chief Theresa Spence to end her hunger strike, and supports Israel.

As Mulcair announced at the NDP convention last year: "In Nova Scotia, Manitoba—and coming soon in BC—New Democratic governments are setting the standard for good public administration." But the NDP's Blairism is coming home to roost.

Results

In Nova Scotia the NDP gave corporate bailouts, pushed privatization, scrapped the tuition freeze, cut education funding, and revoked paramedics' right to strike. This cost the NDP the election, and drove people to the corporate Liberals again. In Manitoba the NDP would lose to the Tories if an election were held today. In BC despite the unpopularity of the Liberals and the huge opposition to tar sands pipelines, the NDP did not provide an alternative.

In New Brunswick where the NDP doesn't have any seats, it sees its chances not in supporting the rising climate justice movement but in recruiting Tories: NDP leader Dominic Cardy called on the Premier to "defend the rule of law" against the Elsipogotog blockade, and longtime Tory MLA Bev Harrison is now running for the party.

In Ontario there was labour organizing against Tim Hudak, rallies in support of a \$14 minimum wage and a march against Line 9. But instead of defending unions, a higher minimum wage and climate justice, NDP leader Andrea Horwath supported small business, promised budget cuts and didn't rule out a coalition with the Tories. This provided the perfect cover for the Liberals to campaign to the left, bury their record of austerity, sell their austerity budget as progressive, and win the anti-Hudak vote. The NDP rightward shift led people to shift their own votes to the right, through so-called "strategic voting"—which defeated left wing MPP Jonah Schein in a riding where the Tories had no chance of winning.

There's a danger of the Ontario elections repeating themselves at the federal level—with the Liberals rebuilding themselves on illusions they offer an alternative to Harper, reinforced by the NDP's rightward shift. This is great news for the Liberals, the natural party of the centre, who are eager to rebuild themselves on illusions that they offer an alternative to Harper. Recent polls show the Liberals leading the Tories, with the NDP falling back to third place.

The NDP is following other social democratic parties around the world—including the British Labour Party who invaded Iraq, the Greek PASOK party who imposed austerity, or the South African ANC who shot miners—and cannot be "reclaimed". We should still work with NDP activists to push their leadership to speak out on issues, but ultimately social movements need left alternatives.

Left alternatives

Quebec solidaire emerged out of years of social movements and electoral alternatives: in the lead up to the 2001 FTAA protest independent candidate Paul Cliche won 24 per cent in Montreal's Mercier riding, sparking the formation of UFP. The next few years saw mass movements against wars on Iraq and Lebanon, a huge May Day march by unions and the student strike of 2005. In this context, Option Citoyenne emerged to the left of the PQ, and merged with UFP to form QS in 2006. QS has supported worker and student strikes, climate justice and Palestine solidarity.

Podemos in Spain came fourth in the European elections with a million votes. This is a product of the 2010 general strike and a wave of protests beginning on May 15, 2011—known as 15M—that have spilled over into movements against hospital privatization, evictions, and attacks on abortion.

Syriza emerged in Greece in response to anger at the social democratic PASOK imposing austerity, coupled with a series of general strikes and anti-fascist mobilizations. But Syriza has reassured investors it supports the European Union and the market, and has made moves to undermine left parties within it.

The economic crisis will continue, and disappointment with the NDP will continue. We need to build movements as large as possible, so they can push the NDP or test the waters for electoral alternatives. And as we build movements that can give rise to alternatives we also need to build socialist organization that can help build and sustain them both.

ANALYSIS



Why are abortion rights under attack?

by MICHELLE ROBIDOUX

For over 25 years, Canada has had no legal restriction on abortion. This was the result of a hard-fought battle to repeal the unjust abortion law.

Since 1988, when the Supreme Court struck down the abortion law, support for women's right to choose has grown steadily. A 2010 Environics poll showed that 74 percent strongly or somewhat agree with the statement "Every woman who wants to have an abortion should be able to have one", up from 66 percent in 2000. Yet abortion rights are under attack here and around the world. What is behind these attacks? Why are gains that were made — sometimes decades ago — now under systematic attack?

Economic crisis and women's oppression

The effects of the financial crisis that erupted in 2008 are still being felt around the world. In many countries, unemployment has skyrocketed and incomes have declined.

The world's wealthy and the governments that do their bidding are pushing austerity measures to make workers and the poor bear the cost of this crisis.

In the workplace, workers are facing speedups, cutbacks and more pressure to perform unpaid work. Outside the workplace, many of the gains working people won in the past—healthcare, pensions, childcare, education, human rights legislation, the right to organize unions—are under threat and being rolled back. There is a wholesale drive to privatization and marketization of public services.

Parallel to this push to austerity is an ideological drive aimed at convincing us that if we fall on hard times, it is our own fault. Crucially, the idea that the family—and specifically, women in the family—should pick up the slack is reinforced at every turn. Whether it is care for the elderly, or childcare, or tending to a sick family member, the notion that women are the designated nurturers who must juggle jobs and work in the home is back with a vengeance.

The cost of "social reproduction"—the shopping, cooking, cleaning required to keep workers ready to work, as well as the care for the elderly, the sick and young children — is carried by the family. Whether subtle or crude, the message is hammered home that it is principally women's role to provide this care. It is promoted in advertising, news reports, on TV and in Hollywood.

Along with reinforcing the view that women are by design society's "nurturers," these ideas seek to impose the compulsory heterosexual nuclear family as the only possible model of relationships in society. Any alternatives to this model undermine the image of women as "natural caregivers".

Anything outside the narrow confines of heterosexual marriage and procreation is perceived by the right as a threat to the institution of the family.

Contradiction

The lived experience of millions of women and men continually clashes with this ideology. The majority of Canadians do not live in these "traditional" arrangements. Fewer than half of Canadian families have a married couple at their centre. Common law couples, single parent families and other domestic arrangements now account for a majority of Canadian families. Women today have relatively more control over their sexuality and their lives than in previous generations. And more women work outside the home in paid employment than ever before.

The more ideas about women's role in the family are out of sync with reality, the more relentlessly the right attempts to promote them. Right-wing "think tanks" have mushroomed in Canada over the past decade in an attempt to push anti-abortion, anti-gay and anti-union positions into the mainstream.

These think-tanks work hand-in-hand with Conservative politicians to push changes in state policies. In a speech marking the 5th anniversary of the Institute of Marriage and the Family Canada (IMFC), Minister of Social Development and anti-choice activist Jason Kenney congratulated the IMFC:

"Every week, every month, this Institute — through the op-eds that it writes, the research papers that it publishes, the conferences that it holds and the ideas it presents — brings an absolutely critical perspective to a range of policy issues that we need to hear frankly more loudly and more consistently in Ottawa. So it's our hope that the Institute will continue to grow in its reach, in its influence, in its activity [...] the family is the basic unit of society, it is the first of the little platoons of civil society of which Edmund Burke spoke. It is the bulwark of human liberty. It is an institution which preexists the state. [...] We must never forget that the family is the best social program, it's the best daycare program, it's the best school, because it operates on the principle of self-giving love, something that no government, no state or bureaucracy can emulate."

This is part of the landscape in which women's reproductive rights are increasingly contested. Public opinion is strongly pro-choice, and most members of the ruling class are probably far-sighted enough to see that it is in their economic interest for working class women to have control over their fertility if they want to maintain a stable, relatively cheap female workforce.

But the capitalist system as a whole also relies heavily on the existence of the nuclear family for the reasons outlined above. Encouraging anti-choice forces strengthens the ideology of the family and women's traditional role within it. If they want to compel individual women to take responsibility for the needs of every family member, and thereby save themselves the cost

of providing childcare, old age homes, social services and healthcare, the ruling class has to bolster these ideas. Meanwhile, working class women will still have no choice but to work outside the home.

Fighting oppression, fighting austerity

Control of women's reproduction has been key throughout the history of the capitalist system. The intensification of state control of reproduction is part of the broader battle over who will bear the cost of social reproduction—society as a whole, or the private family. It presupposes the extension and intensification of sexist ideas, of a discourse which infantilizes women—discrediting our capacity to make decisions in our lives.

In the intersection of economic crisis and cuts to social services, we see a system pushing working-class women to shoulder the unpaid execution of the tasks of care, maintenance and reproduction of workers — both day-to-day, and generationally. Women's unpaid labour in the home is hidden behind the ideological screen of women's "natural inferiority", in order to lengthen the unpaid work day and maximize the benefits of women's labour to the system as a whole. In a time of crisis this deflects the very real conflict between classes towards a conflict between men and women, with dire consequences and implications for the ability of workers to mount a united fight.

The crisis is producing a toxic stew of sexism, racism, anti-gay bigotry, islamophobia and xenophobia because our rulers know that their legitimacy is questioned by millions. Movements like Occupy Wall Street and Idle No More, as well as the revolutions throughout the Arab world terrify those who want to keep the capitalist system afloat. They have no solutions to the economic crisis and the system is failing to meet people's needs. So they resort to scapegoating, and divide and conquer tactics. In Canada, this has meant an all-out assault on Indigenous people who are resisting unfettered expansion of tar sands, fracking and mining on their lands. It has meant a refusal to call an inquiry into the hundreds of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. It has meant defunding of organizations critical of the government's policies on women, human rights, labour rights, the environment, Palestine, etc.

Understanding what is driving the attacks on these hard-fought gains, and the promotion of virulent sexism, is essential if we are to mount an effective fight back and to push the fight for reproductive justice forward.

This is an excerpt from the new pamphlet "Abortion and the struggle for reproductive justice," published by Resistance Press. To order a copy contact reports@socialist.ca

OBVIOUS CHILD

AN A24 RELEASE BOOKS NEXT ENTERTAINMENT BY THE SUNDANCE PICTURES PRESENTS A FILM BY GILLIAN ROBESPIERRE
 WRITING: JENNY SLATE STARRING: JENNY SLATE, JANE FAY, LARRY HOFFMAN, GARET LEVIAN, RICHARD KIND
 FULLY CAST BY DAVID CROSS PRODUCED BY JESSICA KELLY & SUZANNE SMITH SCREENPLAY BY TREVIN CATLIN
 COSTUME DESIGNER: JESSICA K. WHITE EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: CHRIS BOURDREUX, JILL CHRISTINE, PITCHBUSH
 PRODUCED BY: JEFFREY QUINN PRODUCED BY: SIOBHAN LEHRER EDITOR: JIMMY CAREY
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: MICHAEL SACKLER, JULIA GOLDBERG, SOPHIE VICKERS
 DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: JENNY SLATE EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: DAVID KAPLAN AND GILLIAN ROBESPIERRE
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: SARAH HARRIS, ANDREW HARRIS, AND GILLIAN ROBESPIERRE
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: KAREN MAINE & ELIZABETH HOLLN
 WRITER: GILLIAN ROBESPIERRE



JUNE 2014



MOVIE

Obvious Child

Half of pregnancies are unplanned, and 40 per cent of these end in abortion. In the U.S. more than a million women have abortions each year, but this is not reflected in mainstream film.

As writer/director Gillian Robespierre explained, “We did write this script in response to a slew of movies that came out about unplanned pregnancy that always resulted in childbirth. It was frustrating, and instead of waiting for that movie to be made we decided to make it ourselves. I didn’t want to show the same film where the woman is struggling with the decision—I’ve seen that film before—and it’s not that this didn’t happen with this character, but we didn’t want to show the same story.”

In 2009 she teamed up with comedian Jenny Slate to make a short film that went viral online. They then got funding to make a feature-length film

that premiered at Sundance and was released in theaters last month. *Obvious Child* (the title of a Paul Simon song used in the film) is a romantic comedy about a stand-up comic who breaks up with her partner, loses her job, then has an unplanned pregnancy—and chooses abortion.

The film follows the conventional story arc of a romantic comedy, is very irreverent and playful when it comes to the main character, but is very normalizing when portraying abortion. The filmmakers consulted Planned Parenthood to provide an accurate portrayal of a clinic experience—from counseling, to the procedure and recovery room. It shows the ongoing fear of stigma and importance of support. Refreshingly, the film doesn’t give a second of screen time to the anti-choice, though it does reference financial barriers and government restrictions.

It speaks volumes of mainstream film that this is one of the few to pass the Bechdel test—two female characters with names, who talk to each, about something other than a man—and rarer still that it be a positive portrayal of one of the million American women each year who chooses abortion. As Slate explained, “In the United States, women’s rights are very much under attack, and it’s enraging to some people to see a woman just make that decision. It’s good to me that the film is ground-breaking in a way, and in another way I look forward to a day when this is just part of a story....I get sent a lot of scripts that I read, and a lot of them have astounding and frankly irritating things that the women are doing—like women being traditionally catty to each other, often written by men. That to me is more shocking than a woman choosing what to do with her body.”

BOOK

One Kind Word: Women Share Their Abortion Stories

While Robespierre and Slate were producing their short and feature-length films on abortion, Martha Solomon and Kathryn Palmateer -- founders of arts4choice -- were gathering stories and portraits of women across Canada who have had abortions.

Seven years of work culminated in the launch last month of *One Kind Word: Women Share Their Abortion Stories*. The title is from the personal story of Lori, a clinic counselor who reflected on her own abortion in 1972: “the support I would have appreciated: one kind word from anyone.”

In Canada there is no abortion law, but there are still multiple barriers to reproductive justice. As Solomon and Palmateer write in the introduction: “The inequities of abortion access mirror the greater inequities in our society. Colonialism and racism can severely affect women’s abortion access and experiences. Low-income women face greater barriers than do affluent women, and access is even more tenuous for homeless, refugee and undocumented women. In many parts of the country, there are simply no providers available; in others, such as Prince Edward Island, provincial health authorities have refused to honour women’s basic reproductive health care needs and do not fund abortion services. Women from P.E.I. who require an abortion must travel to another province and fund the costs of their abortion and travel expenses themselves. In New Brunswick, a woman must have the approval of two doctors before obtaining a provincially funded abortion. Sadly, the Fredericton Morgentaler clinic, the only other op-

tion for women seeking abortions in the maritimes, is scheduled to close in July 2014 after years of fighting the New Brunswick government, further limiting the already paltry options for east coast women. In no other area of health care would such an egregious disrespect for people’s basic health care needs be tolerated. Indeed, the problems with access in Canada point to a deep-seated misogyny within our country and our health care system.”

This extends into medical schools, which have insufficient discussion of abortion except for students who actively pursue abortion training.

Women sharing their abortion stories was part of the last great wave of reproductive justice struggles, and part of the new movement.

As Solomon and Palmateer summarize, “In this book you will meet thirty-two Canadian women who have had abortions. They are courageous and brave; they are inspiring; they are our mothers, sisters, friends, lovers, neighbors, teachers, politicians, doctors, and grandmothers....Our participants come from a range of class backgrounds, ethnicities, abilities, and language groups. You will read stories from Latina women, French Canadians, and First Nations women, as well as women from Asian, Indo-Caribbean, and African Canadian communities. Our participants are young and old (and in-between), financially stable and just making ends meet, mothers and childless, in relationships and single, heterosexual and lesbian.”

These stories cover the history of abortion in Canada -- from Linda who had a “terrifying experience” in 1968

when abortion was illegal, to Joyce whose experience with a Therapeutic Abortion Committee in 1988 shaped her life as a pro-choice activist, to Mika who had a clinic abortion four months before she participated in the book. The stories cover a variety of experiences in unplanned pregnancies, barriers to abortion, emotional reactions to the procedure, and level of support from family or friends. Regardless of their personal reactions to abortion -- from grieving to ambivalence to empowerment -- the women have a shared experience of facing barriers to choice and feeling the need to speak out. As Kaleigh says, about both her disability and her experience with abortion: “In having open conversations we actively annihilate shame.”

The format of written stories (30 in English, one in Spanish and one in French) combined with photos makes an instant human connection to the women and the importance of reproductive choice.

As Solomon and Palmateer conclude: “It is time for women themselves to articulate what kind of abortion care this country requires. We need to ask ourselves: what is it about our experiences that we need to keep, and what do we need to change? We can only do that when we are open and vocal about our experiences, both positive and negative. In this way, we can expand our vision of what comprehensive, feminist, on-demand abortion care can and should look like in this country, and we can also work towards building a stronger, more inclusive, and more authentic conversation about reproductive justice in Canada.”

LEFT JAB

John Bell

A private war

Canadian historian and noted chicken-hawk Jack Granatstein has decried the lack of government support—measured as always in dollars—for celebrating the centenary of World War I.

I speculated in a previous column on Stephen Harper’s apparent and uncharacteristic lack of enthusiasm for rewriting the history of WWI. Compared to counterparts in Britain and Australia, Harper has been virtually silent on the 100th anniversary of the start of that war.

But not to fear, private enterprise is volunteering to go over the top. It all makes perfect sense: a government wed to the principle of privatizing all public services is happy to let corporate Canada spread the gospel of militarism, while it concentrates on getting reelected.

A “memorial” event at the University of Toronto’s Varsity Stadium, timed to mark the war’s start, is sponsored by RBC Wealth Management, U of T’s Munk School of Global Affairs (endowed by the chair of Barrick Gold), Canada Company (a “charitable, non-partisan organization that serves to build the bridge between business and community leaders and the Canadian Military”), and the City of Toronto. Through it all, while there will be the obligatory tut tutting about the horrible carnage, the message will be clear: Canada’s nationhood was validated through the glory of warfare.

Propaganda 2.0

The good folks at PostMedia—the same that bring you the *National Post*—have taken the rewriting of the history of WWI off Harper’s hands. They have launched a web site entitled “The Great War: 1914-1918” to house a series of articles and essays on the causes, conduct and after effects of the war. If listening to “prominent” Canadians reciting that vile, pro-war piece of doggerel, *In Flanders Fields*, is your idea of fun, this is the place for you. (Trevor Linden, David Suzuki, Dan Mangan: give your heads a shake.) There is even a piece devoted to cocktails popular during the war years.

The virtual gramophone section presents a narrow selection of patriotic songs from the home front. While interesting on their own, songs like “A Conscientious Objector” need to be put in full historical context to be more than novelties. The song was written to shame and ridicule opponents of war, just like the movement of mostly well-heeled women to able bodied men not in uniform. Pacifist religious groups were some of Canada’s earliest settlers, and various essays tell how their right to vote was summarily stripped from them by the Tory government of Robert Borden, or how the state choreographed anti-immigrant racism. But the information is scattered like buckshot, making it almost impossible to connect the dots.

The entries on this site range from the informative to the downright intellectually dishonest. My worry—and Stephen Harper’s hope—is that this mishmash of often revisionist bullshit will become the basis of “history” for a new generation of students. Dog forbid that anyone

should take seriously Terence Corcoran’s absurd essay “The War that Killed Growth” featured in the “after the War” section. Readers may recognize the name; Corcoran is PostMedia’s leading business writer, a true believer in unfettered “free market” capitalism.

This essay is no exception to his simplistic economic ideology. His argument is that the 100 years before WWI were a long, glorious economic boom. The war opened the door for Lenin and the evils of Bolshevism, which in turn begat the “welfare states” that hobbled the developed economies of the western nations for most of the following 100 years. It is only in the last few decades, with the prevailing neo-liberal economic ideas of “free trade”, “globalization”, and the weakening of both workers organization and social services, that capitalism has returned to its former glory. “The sources of that 19th-century boom were essentially the principles of capitalism: globalization, relatively free trade, private development, low taxes, limited government intervention, and sound monetary policies based on the gold standard,” writes Corcoran.

Déjà vu

Corcoran cannot be excused for repeating such nonsense simply because he fervently believes it. To begin, the century leading up to the war was never the happy, uninterrupted growth he claims. The period was one of boom and bust, of regularly recurring crisis, of overheated economic bubbles punctuated by recession and depression. Sound familiar?

Along with that, the 19th century was marked by wars, inter-imperial rivalries and workers revolt. From the British Chartist movement to the Paris Commune, the century was a laboratory of revolutionary theory and practice. It is telling that Corcoran bashes Lenin but never mentions Marx.

Further, Corcoran says his imagined economic boom was the result of “globalized European economies” enjoying their “silver age”. Not a word about how the millions of enslaved Africans suffered and died to produce that European boom. No mention of how the genocide of indigenous Americans was the precondition for the glorious rise of the USA and Canada. Not a whisper about the carving up of Asia, the Boxer Rebellion or Opium Wars.

In fact, in more than 2000 words, Corcoran does not mention “empire” or “imperialism” once. For him the war was caused by the character deficiencies of the European rulers, not from the militarist rivalries at the heart of the very imperialism he refuses to acknowledge. Pathetic.

In the coming months I’ll revisit “The Great War” site and expose some of the nonsense therein, but don’t wait for me. Read up, and if you are moved to anger as I am, feel free to write a commentary or rebuttal and send it along to us at *Socialist Worker*.

And be sure to check out the UK-based site “No Glory In War” (<http://noglory.org>) for outstanding material to counter the kind of misinformation that Harper’s corporate allies are churning out.

WHERE WE STAND

The dead-end of capitalism

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

A system that is killing the planet

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

Socialism and workers' power

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

Capitalist monopolies control the earth's resources, but workers everywhere actually create the wealth. A new socialist society can only be constructed when workers collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution to satisfy human needs, not corporate profits—to respect the environment, not pollute and destroy it.

Oppression

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

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

Canada, Quebec, Indigenous Peoples

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

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

Internationalism

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We oppose everything that turns workers from one country against those from other countries. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The 1917 revolution in Russia was an inspiration for the oppressed everywhere. But it was defeated when workers' revolutions elsewhere were defeated. A Stalinist counter-revolution, which killed millions, created a new form of capitalist exploitation based on state ownership and control. In Eastern Europe, China and other countries, a similar system was later established by Stalinist, not socialist, parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

Elections and democracy

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

Reform and revolution

Every day, there are battles between exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed, to reform the system—to improve living conditions. These struggles are crucial in the fight for a new world. To further these struggles, we work within the trade unions and orient to building a rank and file movement that strengthens workers' unity and solidarity.

But the fight for reforms will not, in itself, bring about fundamental social change. The present system cannot be fixed or reformed as the NDP and many trade union leaders say. Nor can the system regulate itself to prevent environmental destruction and climate injustice. It has to be overthrown. That will require the mass action of workers themselves.

The Revolutionary Party

To achieve socialism the leading activists in the working class have to be organized into a revolutionary socialist party. The party must be a party of action, and it must be democratic. We are an organization of activists committed to helping in the construction of such a party through ongoing activity in the mass organizations of the working class and in the daily struggles of workers and the oppressed.

If these ideas make sense to you, help us in this project and join the International Socialists.



Federal public service under attack

by PETER VOTSCH

As they approach the end of their current collective agreements, the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) faces a federal government bent on attacking those who provide public services, and bent on rolling back the gains of the past.

PSAC, which includes 17 component unions, all of which work for federal government agencies, will begin bargaining new collective agreements in early 2015, as their current agreements run out at the end of the year.

Before proposals have even been exchanged, Tony Clement, the Treasury Board President, has signalled that the Harper Tories will seek to remove the sick benefits of federal public servants. Clement announced early in July that public sector workers take significantly more sick days than private sector workers, and as such are "abusing" their sick leave. In its place, he has proposed a Short Term Disability (STD) program to replace the 1.5 bankable sick days currently earned each month by federal workers. In addition, he has already introduced a "wellness and productivity program," designed to force ill or injured workers back to work.

Sick Days

Clement's announcement was designed to re-ignite a poisonous debate claiming unionized federal public sector workers get generous benefits, such as vast sick banks, that private workers don't have. Corporate pundits then insist that public sector workers should earn no more in benefits (or pay) than those in the private sector, in this way masking their attacks on benefits earned by all unionized workers.

Clement and friends, having little use for factual detail, are trying to win public sympathy by comparing apples and oranges. Any comparison between use of sick days has to begin with a look at the dangers faced in the various jobs performed, and the age (older workers tend to be off more) and sex of the workforce involved (in predominantly female workplaces, for example, women, apart from taking pregnancy leave, are also most often burdened with the care of children and elderly family members, therefore taking more time off).

Conversely, many non-union private sector workers have little or no sick bank, and must use vacation days etc. when sick, or simply take leave, or even end their employment when faced with serious illness or injury—none of which is counted in overall survey of sick days taken.

When Statistics Canada did a comparison of public vs. private sick days used, taking such factors into account, they found no significant difference between the public and private sectors. It should come as no surprise that Statistics Canada itself has come under sustained assault by the federal Tories.

Tory STD

Clement is airing the STD he proposes to replace the current sick bank months before negotiations begin. PSAC had been participating in a joint committee to look at STD options in the federal public service, but have been forced to withdraw now that Clement has stated he will impose a plan on them.

For an insight into what the Tories may have in store for federal public servants, one needs to look no further than the recent STD plan imposed on postal workers by a federal arbitrator. In that case, postal workers are only re-imposed for 70 per cent of their income when they are sick, and it only kicks in after one week, with no retroactivity. For more serious medical issues, workers are forced to apply for Employment Insurance (EI) after 15 weeks (about 55 per cent income replacement). The STD is administered by a private insurer, providing a built-in profit based incentive to deny benefits. Worst of all, the STD is not part of the Collective Agreement, so the unfair provision of sick pay cannot be grieved.

Bill C-4

To make this bitter pill all the more easy to force on federal public servants, the Tories have included in the proposed omnibus Bill C-4—the "Budget Implementation Act"—serious attacks on bargaining rights and Health & Safety. They hope to have this passed by the new year, when negotiations with PSAC begin.

Bill C-4 will allow the federal government to unilaterally define what constitutes an "essential worker," who will not have the right to strike. Such workers will be also

be forced to report back to work when the employer wishes, and will be deemed to be "on-call" during their time off. If 80 per cent of a federal department's workers are deemed "essential," their settlement will be forced into the hands of arbitrators.

To make sure an arbitration board does not rule in favour of the Union, the Tories have re-defined the jurisdiction of arbitration boards to include the employer's "ability to pay" (memories of Ontario's Bill 115?). To add insult to injury, the chair of such arbitration boards will be political appointees, and will have unilateral power to reject any settlement proposed by other Board members.

Bill C-4 further proposes to limit the grievance procedure, give fewer rights to laid-off workers and limit human rights complaints. It includes a significant attack on worker's health & safety by redefining "danger" as "imminent risk" in federal "right to refuse" provisions, limiting a worker's right to refuse unsafe work.

PSAC has rightly pointed out that C-4 is an attempt to weaken the collective bargaining process before it begins, leaving the union on its heels when the Tories put their STD proposal on the table.

Resistance

There needs to be a major heads up by trade unionists everywhere. Provincial governments have launched attacks on bargaining rights and the Rand Formula (Saskatchewan's Bill 85, Ontario's Hudak Tories). The Harper government is trying to kick-start these attempts by attacking workers in the federal sector. Most workers in Canada are governed by provincial labour legislation, and we are in the sights of employers, private and public, everywhere.

PSAC must not fight alone. We need to think about solidarity now, especially around the planned destruction of hard earned sick benefits. One way is to join the "Save Canada Post" campaign of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, which is supported by a majority of Canadians. Saving our public postal service could be the tonic our movement desperately needs, and the black eye the Harper Tories so desperately deserve.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST EVENTS

End the attack on Gaza, stop Harper's complicity
Tuesday August 12, 6pm
OISE room 8201
252 Bloor St West
Toronto

European elections: rise of the left and right
Sunday August 17, 5:30pm
Steelworkers Hall
25 Cecil St
Toronto

How postal workers fought for decent jobs, paid maternity leave, and public services for all of us
Sunday August 17, 6pm
Story Planet
1165 Bloor St West
Toronto

How can we get rid of capitalism?
Friday August 22
workshop at the Peoples' Social Forum
Ottawa

Is socialism possible
Friday August 22
workshop at the Peoples' Social Forum
Ottawa

Being a revolutionary today
Wednesday August 27
Ottawa-Gatineau
contact gosocialists@gmail.com

OTHER SOCIAL JUSTICE EVENTS

Pan-Canadian Days of Action for Gaza
August 9-10
Across Canada
<http://canadianpeace.org/gaza-solidarity/>

Peoples Social Forum
August 21-24
Ottawa
peoplesocialforum.ca

Mass picket to defend Canada's postal service
Saturday September 20
1pm at 511 Lawrence ave
Toronto

"Reproductive justice: equal access now"
Saturday September 20
Across Canada

People's climate march
Sunday September 21
New York and globally
<http://peoplesclimate.org>

You can find the I.S. in:

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

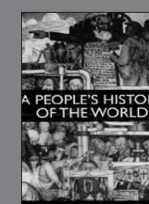
e: reports@socialist.ca
w: www.socialist.ca

phone: 416.972.6391

for more: www.socialist.ca

OPEN SATURDAYS, 12-3pm

427 Bloor Street West, suite 202, Toronto



RESISTANCE PRESS BOOK ROOM

REPORT ON BUSINESS

by JOHN BELL

In a July 17 memo address to all Microsoft employees, CEO Satya Nadella said the laying off of 18,000 employees would be done in “the most thoughtful and transparent way possible.”

“In addition, our business processes and support models will be more lean and efficient with greater trust between teams. The overall result of these changes will be more productive, impactful teams across Microsoft.”

And nothing builds trust within a corporation like a mass firing. This follows a new partnership with Nokia, aimed at making Microsoft a bigger player in the smart phone sweepstakes. “The (Nokia) first-party phone portfolio will align to Microsoft’s strategic direction. To win in the higher price tiers, we will focus on breakthrough innovation that expresses and enlivens Microsoft’s digital work and digital life experiences.”

Sadly, 18,000 former employees may not be able to afford those higher price tiers. Their life experiences, digital and otherwise, are about to be redefined.

Investors were enthusiastic about the mass layoff. According to *The Financial Times*, “Satya Nadella’s announcement that half the 25,000 jobs at Nokia were to go lifted Microsoft’s shares more than 6 per cent during the week to their highest point in 14 years.” But other economists say Nadella hasn’t gone far enough. According to Michael Cusumano, professor at MIT’s Sloan School of Management, “Microsoft has been bloated for 20 years, they have way more people in their product groups than they need. There’s still a long way to go even after these cuts.” Apparently Cusumano doesn’t think Nadella’s \$18 million salary is bloated and in need of cuts.

Nadella’s memo is a masterpiece of corporate sensitivity. Former employees will take solace in the fact that the destruction of their livelihoods is all in a good cause: “steps forward in evolving our organization and culture” to become “a productivity and platform company.” What could be more important than that?

GRASSY NARROWS

by VALERIE LANNON

Chanting “Kathleen Wynne, where’ve you been? All those broken promises”, about 500 Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists marched on July 31 in Toronto to support the Grassy Narrows First Nation.

This is an annual march to Queen’s Park to protest the over 40 years that have gone by with little to no action by the Ontario Government to clean the English River, compensate local First Nations and provide proper health services mercury poisoning.

Both Elders and youth joined Chief Roger Fobister Sr. in denouncing the neglect by the government.

SAVE CANADA POST: A STRUGGLE FOR ALL OF US



by PAM FRACHE

In 1965, a strike by inside and outside postal workers paved the way for public sector bargaining across Canada.

They defied their bosses and their own union leaders and in doing so, they forged a new fighting union that set standards for workers across Canada.

Canada Post victories

For example, in 1981, members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers walked the picket-line for 42 days to win paid maternity leave for women workers — a top up of up to 93% of their regular earnings above the benefits rate offered through the unemployment insurance system.

This victory helped pave the way for other groups of workers to win similar provisions and today, many union and non-union workplaces offer paid parental leave for women and men.

Postal workers were in the forefront of negotiating benefits for same-sex couples, creating a union-administered child care fund, and negotiating educational leaves for members. Although Canada’s Supreme Court only recognized no discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in 1995, postal workers had negotiated such a clause in its collective agreement as early as 1980.

Canada Post

Of course, postal workers have also been on the forefront fighting for high quality postal services, including door-to-door delivery upon which more than five million people and businesses rely.

Far from losing money, Canada Post has consistently generated a profit that has been used to fund the other public services we rely on.

Contrary to the federal government’s myth-making, email and social media have not eliminated the need for high quality postal services.

In fact, e-commerce has underscored the importance of affordable postal services for people and business. Typically, the most affordable delivery option for online purchases is via Canada Post. This reality helps explain why mail parcel volume has increased, not decreased in recent years. In fact, even Canada Post management admits that postal workers delivered a record number of parcels during last December’s holiday season (https://www.canadapost.ca/cpo/mc/aboutus/news/pr/2013/2013_parcel_pickup.jsf). And nearly three-quarters of a million of these parcels were delivered on Saturdays and Sundays highlighting the need for more mail delivery, not less.

Harper

Unfortunately, the Harper government is set to dismantle Canada Post. They have begun eliminating door-to-door delivery, increased user fees (the cost of stamps) and have cut back on the frequency of mail delivery. Why such recklessness?

There’s little doubt that the Harper government wants to privatize our public postal service, or portions of it. By reducing access to and increasing the cost of mail delivery, Harper hopes to undermine support for a publicly-run postal service. Selling Canada Post will redirect a revenue stream from the public purse to private pockets.

And even if only a portion is privatized, it will undoubtedly be the most profitable routes such as those in urban centres, leaving taxpayers footing the bill for the more expensive routes. In either

scenario, the Conservatives’ corporate friends make out like bandits. If they get away with it, eliminating door-to-door delivery will create a two-tier service: one for the rich and one for the rest of us since those with financial means will always be able to pay to have their mail delivered to their door.

Meanwhile, seniors, people with mobility issues, people who are ill or in recovery, parents or those with caregiving responsibilities and many others will lose out.

Save Canada Post

But there is mass opposition to these plans (see: <http://www.socialist.ca/node/2338>). In fact, opinion polls show that the majority — nearly two-thirds of Canadians — want to maintain door-to-door mail delivery.

We can win this fight if we organize and amplify this sentiment in every community across the country.

We can start by sending a message to our own Member of Parliament and by putting a “Save Door-to-Door” sign on our door (see: http://www.savecanadapost.ca/index.cfm/ci_id/15026/la_id/1.htm).

We can also start talking about his issue with our co-workers, neighbours and friends to raise awareness (see: 10 myths about Canada Post: <http://supportpostalworkers.wordpress.com>).

And if you’re in Toronto on August 17, join the Toronto West branch of the International Socialists for a film showing to learn about the important legacy of CUPW and about what we can all do to help win the fight to save Canada Post and for decent jobs for all of us. For more information or to RSVP for the event email: torontowest.is@gmail.com.

STICKING WITH THE UNION

Carolyn Egan

Labour and the Peoples’ Social Forum

The Peoples’ Social Forum is taking place in Ottawa August 21-24, and 10,000 are expected to attend.

The trade union movement in Quebec has put a lot of resources into the organizing: both the FTQ and CSN are sponsoring workshops, and have been working with indigenous groups to make it a success. A local committee is planning the programme and logistics and is open to anyone who wants to be involved.

Something of this nature has not happened in Canada for a number of years and the vision is to create a space where social movements, labour and indigenous communities can come together and forge a way forward.

The austerity agenda has been harsh in both Canada and Quebec. Services and public sector jobs have been cut along with closures and layoffs in the private sector. Over the last number of years we have seen Occupy, Idle No More and the Quebec student strike bringing hundreds of thousands into the streets demanding a better world.

This is an opportunity to meet, exchange ideas and hopefully reinvigorate a movement for change that will have reverberations both provincially and federally.

The federal government’s unconscionable ignoring of the plight of the missing and murdered indigenous women has sparked outrage around the world. The cuts to unemployment insurance have been devastating to those facing job losses and shutdowns. The attacks on the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, with the plans to do away with home delivery and the loss of up to 8,000 jobs is one more example of the Harper government’s intent to impose the neo-liberal agenda.

The event will start with a keynote address by Naomi Klein followed by a march through the city of Ottawa. The coming together of the two is meant to inspire people to action and the take their messages to the streets.

The idea that rallies and marches are things of the past has been put to rest

with the mass demonstrations and general strikes in Greece, India, Portugal and other countries around the world against the austerity agenda.

People are hurting in this country. Students coming out of high school and university cannot find work. Social services and health care have been cut to the bone. Public sector jobs have been privatised in the attempt to downsize governments. This attempt to make working people and the poor pay while the rich get richer has sparked the fight backs that I mentioned above.

Although they have not always been able to maintain, the anger from below is still there and when people are given a lead they will respond. Hopefully the events in Ottawa will once again allow students, workers, indigenous communities and the poor to be inspired, to learn and grow from each others experiences and be able to work together to build this new movement.

It is critical that trade unionists from Ontario respond to this call in the same way that their brothers and sisters in Quebec have done.

The Steelworkers Toronto Area Council is bringing a bus of workers to the event. Good Jobs For All, a Toronto coalition of unions, racialized communities and environmentalists is mobilizing as well. They are joining with Quebec activists in Ottawa to continue the work of creating a cross country campaign to fight against the cuts to Unemployment Insurance.

Building a diverse movement of indigenous communities, trade unions and social activists is critical to continuing the fight against the neo-liberal agenda.

We are many and they are few, and we must seize this opportunity to forge new alliances that will have the strength to push back hard against the attacks.

For more information visit peoplesocialforum.org



Join the International Socialists

Mail: P.O. Box 339, Station E, Toronto, ON M6H 4E3
Website: www.socialist.ca E-mail: reports@socialist.ca

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/Province: _____
Phone: _____
E-mail: _____

Socialist Worker

From the People's Social Forum to the People's Climate March

by MICHELLE WINTER

A month after the People's Social Forum (August 21-24 in Ottawa), the People's Climate March (Sunday, September 21 in New York City) will be the largest climate march in history.

Over 550 organizations from across North America are mobilizing to bring people to the march—including Indigenous, environmental and labour organizations.

World leaders of government, business, finance and civil society will also be heading to New York that week for Climate Summit 2014 on September 23.

UN Summit

The mandate of this UN Summit on Climate Change is to “galvanize and catalyze climate action,” asking (these leaders) “to bring bold announcements and actions to the Summit that will reduce emissions, strengthen climate resilience, and mobilize political will for a meaningful legal agreement in 2015.”

It's billed as a unique opportunity for leaders to champion an ambitious vision, anchored in action that will enable a meaningful global agreement in 2015:

“The Summit will be an important milestone to mobilize political commitment for the conclusion of a global agreement by 2015, as well as to spur enhanced action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build climate resilient communities.”

This is a distinctly different and more energetic tone than has been set for past summits. It indicates a certain awareness of intensifying pressure.

So let's go!



It's an historic summit on climate change and one that the folks at peoplesclimate.org are constructively, hopefully and peacefully building the march around.

Since the actions of heads of state to date have sent a clear message that “we, the people” aren't being heard (and therefore don't matter) we have to continue to raise our voices high and en masse.

People's Climate March

As the march organizers write: “With our future on the line, we will take a weekend and use it to bend the course of history... In New York City there will be an unprecedented climate mo-

bilisation—in size, beauty, and impact. Our demand is a world we know is within our reach: a world with an economy that works for people and the planet. In short, a world safe from the ravages of climate change.”

As noted on peoplesclimate.org “this moment will not be just about New York or the United States. Heads of state from around the world will be there, as will the attention of global media. We know that no single meeting or summit will ‘solve climate change’ and in many ways this moment will not even really be about the summit.

“We want this moment to be about us—the people

who are standing up in our communities, to organize, to build power, and to shift power to a just, safe, peaceful world. To do that, we need to act—together...”

“With our future on the line and the whole world watching, we'll... take to the streets to demand the world we know is within our reach: a world with an economy that works for people and the planet; a world safe from the ravages of climate change; a world with good jobs, clean air and water, and healthy communities.”

Given the urgency of the climate crisis, this particular change is past due, and we need to be there to call for it now.

Save the planet, sink Harper

Harper and the provincial Premiers' inhumane record on climate change demands a strong response and presence from north of the border.

The Council of Canadians, 350.org and the Canadian Labour Congress are supporting the march, organizing contingents and buses, and we need to be organizing similarly through our other unions and organizations. If you've always wanted to be an organizer, this is an excellent place to start and there's a ton of great information at peoplesclimate.org about how to organize a bus, so no one needs to reinvent the wheel.

After the march we need to continue organizing and spreading this movement throughout our neighbourhoods, schools, universities and colleges, and our workplaces.

Capitalism created and is worsening the climate crisis. Capitalism is founded on the colonization of indigenous land, endless extraction from nature's finite resources, and the exploitation of workers regardless of the consequences for people and the planet.

Through the climate justice movement we can see a glimpse of a better world—of indigenous sovereignty, environmental sustainability and green jobs. To get there we need to connect every fight for reform to a revolutionary transformation of society and of our relationship with nature. Only a world run by people, not profit, can heal our planet.

So on September 21 bring your noise makers, drums, banners and your beautiful voices. Oh, and don't forget your passport—the border creators are ever vigilant.

How to participate

Find a bus from Toronto or Ottawa to New York:

Toronto 350: www.bit.ly/350bus

Council of Canadians: www.bit.ly/CoCbus

Organizers transportation page: www.bit.ly/gettomarch

You can also find the People's Climate March on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/events/301805359975258/>

Can't make it to New York? Join or organize a march locally: www.bit.ly/localmarch

Never miss an issue.

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

Prices per year (CAD dollars):

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



Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

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

Save Canada Post

by RITCH WHYMAN

In the fall 96,000 houses will likely lose their door-to-door mail delivery, as Canada Post begins its process of slashing mail delivery and replacing it with “community mailboxes.” This will be followed in the spring with plans to cut tens of thousands of more houses from door to door delivery. These cuts will cost 6 - 8,000 jobs.

Across the country postal workers and allies have gone door to door, attended community events and held town halls to rally opposition to the dismantling of the postal service. Actions have been held from Halifax to Hamilton and from small towns in Quebec to rural Alberta.

The drive to “reform” the Post office is part of an attempt to push austerity by privatization. Before the Post Office announced the cuts, Harper commissioned a study about privatisation of

other postal services.

This is the second hidden study commissioned about Canada Post, the other was into the viability of using Canada Post as a banking service. This study showed that not only would that succeed, but that could help fund expanding delivery services.

Resistance

In July members of the Canadian Union Postal Workers went door to door in Medicine Hat and Flin Flon explaining the effect of Canada Posts cuts and collecting signatures to oppose the cuts and job losses. In Halifax postal workers held banners and handed out leaflets against the cuts at major intersection in the city, and in Charlottetown postal workers joined the local Fisheries Festival handing out information.

The list of organisations

and groups opposing the cuts continues to grow and expand.

The Canadian Association of Retired People vice-president Susan Eng exposed Canada Post and the Conservatives' priorities, comparing the cuts to delivery for seniors with the millions of free postage used by MPs: “For some people, this mail service is an essential service and if (Canada Post is) crying poor, then where are their priorities?” she said. “Is it to get the senior her pension cheque to her home, so that she doesn't have to beg a friend to get it for her, which erodes her independence? Or, (is it) to make sure that MPs get to send their propaganda to us?”

Seventy city and municipal councils have passed motions opposing the cuts, and opposition has even come from usually Conservative heart-

lands like Oakville where the council adopted a motion calling for no cuts to service.

Stop Harper

With growing opposition to the cuts to delivery service and polls showing that 64 per cent of people oppose privatising the Post Office, the campaign to stop the cuts is a critical part of the fight to stop Harper in 2015.

Actions by the Postal Workers union are scheduled to continue with local events across the country. These are a great start but it will take more than local actions by postal workers to win this fight. We need co-ordinated days of action against these attacks across the country.

A defeat for the Harper agenda of cuts and austerity at the post office would raise the confidence of every fighting back.

Visit www.cupw.ca