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STOP THE CORPORATE AND STATE TERRORISTS

WHILE THE media has been abuzz over the Boston Marathon bombings and the capture of two alleged terrorists here in Canada, governments and corporations continue to terrorize the exploited and oppressed across the world.

In the wake of the Boston bombings, while media continue to speculate on motives and religious affiliations, a fertilizer plant exploded in West Texas, killing up to 15 people, injuring 180 and wrecking the buildings in a five-block radius. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's last safety inspection of the facility was in 1985. Texas Governor Rick Perry has done his best to keep regulations on business to a minimum and industrial accidents like these are the result.

Just weeks later on the other side of the world, the eight-story Rana Plaza collapsed. The Plaza contained several garment factories producing merchandise for Britain's Primark and Canada's Walmart. According

to one estimate, about 1,000 people are still missing. It is the deadliest disaster to hit Bangladesh's garment industry, where fire ripped through a factory producing goods for Walmart last month.

Workplace deaths

In Saskatchewan, where investment in resource extraction is booming, workplace deaths have seen a dramatic spike from previous years. In 2012, the province recorded 60 workplace deaths. This is the highest total in three decades.

Every year a thousand people in Canada die in the workplace, and the austerity agenda threatens to increase this corporate terror through cutbacks.

It's tragic to think that there's such a frenzy over an alleged terror plot to derail a train in Ontario when last year a passenger train crashed in Burlington, killing three and injuring 45—a case that appears to be caused by corporate negligence. A former engineer

said CN Rail refused his advice to upgrade the track safety, citing lack of resources, but CN Rail has found the resources to sue Aamjiwnaang First Nation activist Ron Plain for his role in a rail blockade to defend his community from further environmental degradation. This is corporate terror. This is the same logic of profit before people that has caused explosions in Texas and collapses in Bangladesh.

Capitalism

While it produces massive riches for the 1%, capitalism deprives the 99% of the most basic necessities of life such as housing, causing deaths in the street.

As Friederich Engels wrote in 1845, "When one individual inflicts bodily injury upon another such that death results, we call the deed manslaughter; when the assailant knew in advance that the injury would be fatal, we call his deed murder. But when society places hundreds of proletarians in such a

position that they inevitably meet a too early and an unnatural death, one which is quite as much a death by violence as that by the sword or bullet; when it deprives thousands of the necessities of life, places them under conditions in which they cannot live—forces them, through the strong arm of the law, to remain in such conditions until that death ensues which is the inevitable consequence—knows that these thousands of victims must perish, and yet permits these conditions to remain, its deed is murder just as surely as the deed of the single individual."

While the US and its allies continue to drop bombs around the world, the frenzy over an alleged terror plot obscures the daily deluge of terror upon which capitalism is based, and serves to divide the 99%. That's why, in order to fight corporations and the states that support them and to protect the environment they destroy, we need to unite workers across borders, support indigenous sovereignty, and challenge racism and Islamophobia.

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Solidarity with the Algonquins of Barrière Lake

by JESSICA SQUIRES

FOR CENTURIES, the Algonquins of Barrière Lake (ABL) have been fighting to protect their land, language and culture. They live on a stretch of land three hours north of Ottawa.

In 1991 the community signed a Trilateral Agreement with the governments of Quebec and Canada to share responsibility for decisions about land use in the area, their traditional territory, and to ensure that the cultural and spiritual use of the land would be honoured in however the land was used.

Colonial ‘democracy’

The governments of Quebec and Canada, rather than honouring the agreement, have erected roadblock after roadblock to prevent the community from exercising its rights. In the late 2000s they attempted to force the community to accept imposed elections and a form of representative government derived from section 74 of the Indian Act. In short, they imposed a foreign form of government, ignoring the long-standing traditions of direct democracy practiced by the ABL.

The story has been one of repeated attempts to force the ABL to comply with the worst impositions of the Indian Act and with unfair federal government “negotiation” agendas. The motivation for these actions is very clear: the area is rich in resources. The governments of Quebec and Canada have no interest in protecting indigenous land rights and traditions. They seek only to bolster the economic activity of corporations.

Resistance

The community successfully halted copper exploration on their land in 2011, but the Quebec government has not issued a moratorium nor taken any kind of action to honour the Trilateral Agreement. Now, a new company, Copper One, seeks to re-initiate mining exploration on the territory. Other companies with claims in the Trilateral Agreement area include Cenit, Mundiregina, Forest Gate Energy, Mines Virginia and the Quebec government-owned corporation SOQUEM.

The forests on the land are also in danger if the Trilateral Agreement is not upheld. Last summer, the ABL camped near a logging site and protested for three weeks to prevent forestry company Resolute from unilaterally using their land for wood extraction. There was solidarity from striking Quebec students, who declared that “support for Indigenous rights is central to our broader struggle for the common good.”

Because of this pressure, an oral agreement was eventually made to halt the development to allow the community to undertake harmonization measures—a process to ensure that forestry companies who want to operate on Barrière Lake’s land must not compromise the way that the Algonquins use the land. Under this process, logging is not allowed to take place near hunting cabins, in moose and bear habitat, in



BC Liberal carbon-offset scam

by ANNA ROIK

IN 2007 the Liberal government of British Columbia announced it would become carbon neutral by 2010 – for every tonne of greenhouse gases produced, it would purchase a carbon offset that would reduce or sequester a tonne of greenhouse gases. Like many carbon offset schemes, this one has been revealed as a scam.

At the end of March, the BC Auditor General’s office issued a scathing report on the Pacific Carbon Trust (PCT), a Crown corporation created in 2008. The PCT was created by the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act. The act directed the public sector – government ministries, school districts, universities, health authorities – to minimize emissions of greenhouse gases. The government did not provide the resources necessary to allow these institutions to eliminate their carbon emissions. Instead, these public sector organizations are required to purchase BC-based carbon offsets through the PCT. In 2010 the public sector diverted \$18.2 million to the PCT. The Auditor General’s report shows that this money, that could have been spent on programs and services, instead went into private pockets, with no net benefit for the environment.

The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act allows only certain types of carbon offsets. A project designed to offset carbon production must demonstrate that it faces “financial, technological or other obstacles which are overcome, or partially overcome, by the incentive of being recognized as an emission offset.” A project that would have happened whether offsets were purchased or not is not eligible for consideration. Instead they are called “free-riders.”

Another important restriction is the estimate of the quantity of greenhouse gas that could be reduced by the carbon offset-funded project. Although the baseline is hypothetical, an overestimate would allow for an artificially high number of carbon offsets, part of which are not real greenhouse gas reductions.

Based on these offset purchases, the Liberal government claimed it had achieved carbon neutrality in July 2011. This was a first for a North American government. The Auditor General’s report reveals this was a lie.

sacred areas and medicinal sites, and other areas.

Some community members did not trust the oral agreement with Resolute to halt logging, and do not agree with the 1991 Trilateral Agreement. After the oral agreement was made, some of them decided to blockade the logging road, continuing the protest. Subsequently, Resolute obtained an injunction against the entire community. The outcome of that event, which culminated

Climate scams

The Auditor General’s report focused on two projects that accounted for 70 per cent of the carbon offsets purchased by the PCT and its overseer, the Climate Action Secretariat (CAS). For 2010, the public sector spent \$18.2 million to offset 814,419 tonnes of greenhouse gas.

The audit of these two offset projects – Darkwoods Forest Carbon and Encana Underbalanced Drilling – found that the carbon neutrality claim is inaccurate, and that the offset sales were not necessary for either project to be implemented.

The Darkwoods Forest Carbon project in southeastern BC is an ecologically significant animal habitat purchased by the Nature Conservancy of Canada to manage the land for conservation. The project plan claimed the land was “under immediate threat of liquidation logging”, and that they would achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions by avoiding their release when the trees were cut down. The Nature Conservancy claimed the money from carbon offsets would allow them to overcome financial obstacles and carry out the conservation project.

The Encana Underbalanced Drilling project plan stated it would result in greenhouse gas emission reductions from reducing gas flaring as a result of the drilling of gas wells. Encana wanted to use on-site recovery and capture to then stream the gas directly into a pipeline, and claimed that the carbon offset money would let them overcome technological obstacles and begin the project.

For both projects, the Auditor General’s office concluded that the carbon offsets purchased were not credible. For the Darkwoods project, the carbon offset money was not a critical factor in the purchase of the land. The land was purchased in 2008, a carbon offset feasibility study completed in January 2009, and the PCT approached by the Nature Conservancy about offsets in late 2009. The Encana drilling project was started in 2009 and had already drilled and completed several wells prior to meeting with the PCT in August 2009. So, the projects would have gone ahead without carbon offset money.

The Auditor General also reported that both projects over estimated the greenhouse gas emissions that would be reduced.

The Darkwoods project’s claims of an “immediate threat of liquidation logging” was not credible because those logging practices are not allowed under provincial forestry practices. Encana’s project would result in reduction of greenhouse gas emissions but there was an added wrinkle: the company was able to make money off of the gas capture project without funding from the PCT. The profits were estimated at \$7 million – much greater than the cost of the technology.

System change, not climate change

In order to avoid catastrophic climate change we need to immediately reduce the amount of greenhouse gases we emit. Carbon offset programs do nothing to lower emissions because the whole point is to trade an emission from one operation for a reduction somewhere else. The total emitted stays the same. In addition, since most offsets reduce calculated future emissions to replace current real emissions the industry has been plagued with the sorts of scams that the PCT is responsible for.

Greenhouse gas reduction and action on climate change cannot be turned into a market transaction. As the Auditor General report states, “in offset markets, both the buyer and seller benefit from maximizing the number of offsets a project generates.” It is in the interest of sellers financially to overestimate the amount of carbon produced to increase profitability, and for buyers to focus on the quantity of offsets available, rather than their credibility.

The Liberal government’s carbon offset scheme and those elsewhere are designed to give the illusion that something concrete is being done to address climate change.

The only way to deal with climate change is severe regulation of all carbon emissions and extensive development of renewable energy. The capitalist market that created these problems needs to be replaced by a system that puts the environment and the people living in it ahead of corporate profits.

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Barrière Lake are on the front lines of Idle No More and its demands for a nation-to-nation relationship based on real respect for their land, culture, language and identity.

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Quebec: la lutte continue

by JESSICA SQUIRES

THIS SPRING marks the one-year anniversary of the Printemps Érablé, the Quebec Spring, in which student protests, beginning the previous fall and escalating in an unlimited general strike of students, became a social movement that brought down the Charest Liberal government.

On April 21 of this year, Earth Day, tens of thousands gathered in Montreal, showing that the spirit of resistance to neoliberalism is alive and well one year later. The numbers in 2012 approached half a million, but the lower turnout this year only indicates that the movement is retrenching and rallying for another round of resistance to attacks—this time from the PQ government of Pauline Marois, built on a list of broken promises and disappointments.

Most recently, Marois has refused to speak out against the Montreal bylaw P6, which bans protests and the wearing of masks at demonstrations. This attack on civil liberties was born in the student protests, and thus has shared parentage with the reviled bludgeon law Bill 78 (Law 12), which Marois revoked as her first act in office—a concession to the student movement that enabled her election by bringing down Charest, albeit on a very weak mandate.

Students have kept up their pressure on Marois, denouncing her “permanent fee increases” in the form of indexation and her loyalty to neoliberal economic measures in the form of deep cuts to post-secondary education and other social programs. ASSÉ has called for an end to the cuts and for radical democratisation of the cégeps and universities. On April 22 ASSÉ organized a visually creative and satirical demonstration against P6 in Montreal featuring crime scene tape and warning signage.

Finally, resistance to the federal government’s deep cuts to EI benefits and eligibility have roused pan-Canadian resistance. In Quebec demonstrations have occurred regularly for weeks. This year, instead of its annual May Day demonstration, the main national labour unions CSN, CSQ and FTQ, as well as the so-called “Red Hand” coalition in Montreal and the entire Quebec left, are focussing their efforts on a major rally and march against the EI cuts to take place on April 27.

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John Baird's imperialist tour

by PAUL STEVENSON

IN A recent trip to the Middle East, Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird showed once again that his government's hard talk on supporting human rights is laughable.

Human rights versus money

The Conservative government leads with the language of human rights but they are very selective in what rights they want to see applied and where. For example, after selling \$35 billion worth of military equipment to the Saudi Arabian government, some of which was used to brutally attack the revolutionary uprising in Bahrain, Baird has the gall to stand with King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and praise his great work in creating peace and stability in the region.

He went on the thank Al Khalifa for his commitment to calling for an end to human rights abuses in Iran and Lebanon. Not once did he mention the killing and torture of hundreds of Bahraini activists over the past two years. But to say that Conservative foreign policy is incoherent is missing the point. They have a clear agenda. The real reason for Baird's visit was to make some money and promote war.

Iraq

In his visit to Iraq, a country destroyed by a war that Harper wanted desperately to join, Baird made an announcement that Canada is opening a new diplomatic mission in Baghdad. What he was really gunning for is to open up a Canadian trade office in Ebril, closer to the vast oilfields in the north of the country.

Canada already has \$4.2 billion in trade with Iraq and is the eighth largest foreign investor in the oil rich region of "Iraqi Kurdistan." According to Foreign Affairs Canada, "Iraq's abundant natural resources and post-war reconstruction will continue to provide business opportunities for Canadian companies."

Jerusalem

The most controversial part of Baird's tour came when he met with Israeli Justice Minister Tzipi Livni in occupied East Jerusalem. By choosing that specific meeting place, which has been under Israeli occupation since 1967, Baird signaled his government's support for the illegal Israeli settlements. No other foreign diplomat has met the Israelis in occupied East Jerusalem in the 46 years since the occupation started.

When pressed about the controversy at the G8 foreign ministers meeting in London, Baird said that he only went there because he wanted a coffee. As Hanan Ashrawi, spokesperson for the PLO said, "Either he's ignorant of east Jerusalem being occupied territory, which is unforgivable in a foreign minister, or it's a deliberate attempt to change the international consensus."

Gulf States

At each stop in Baird's tour, which also included visits to the UAE, Qatar and Jordan, he was careful to use the time to pump up more support for a war with Iran, saying that Iran was "at the top or near the top of the agenda in just about every diplomatic meeting we have."

In Bahrain he re-iterated Canada's position that Iran must stop meddling in the affairs of countries in



the Middle East. He carefully chose to meet with the leaders of Gulf States that are the sworn enemy of the Iranian government. When King Al Khalifa told him that Iran is behind the protests in Bahrain Baird seemed to agree saying that many of the revolutionaries are not "peace loving protestors." He then went on to once again call for Iran to cease sponsorship of terror activities in the Gulf States.

Canadian policies

There was much hand wringing in

the press about the inconsistencies in Canadian government policies on display during this visit but we shouldn't be confused. It was the same old Tory playbook: selling war, attacking Palestinian rights and signing oil deals.

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Bahrain: protests for democracy defy the 'Formula of Blood'

by YUSUR AL BAHRANI

THOUSANDS OF outraged protesters could not stop the controversial Formula One Grand Prix in Bahrain. But they have exposed the brutality of the regime and attracted global attention.

The Bahraini government tried to use the race to paper over grave ongoing human rights abuses. Thousands took to the streets in a series of protests a week prior to the race and during it, under the slogan "democracy is our right".

Bahraini security forces killed one peaceful protester, Salah Abbas, during last year's Formula One race. Since then the government has increased its crackdown on peaceful protesters, activists and ordinary people. People in Bahrain call the race "Formula of Blood". Many protested peacefully. Formula One organisers have shamelessly ignored

the concerns of people in Bahrain.

Ali Salman, secretary general of the Al-Wefaq opposition party, agreed to meet Formula One's boss, Bernie Ecclestone but the meeting never took place. The opposition wanted to explain the rightful demands of the people in Bahrain that Formula One organisers ignored.

On April 20, protesters tried to march to the Pearl Roundabout, which is known as Martyrs' Roundabout. Dozens were arrested and injured. Government forces then raided homes hunting for activists. Alaa Shehabi is a Bahraini woman activist who posted on Twitter about her horrific experience during the day. She wrote, "Police have locked us up in a room. Women beaten up. Used CSS Spray (tear gas). Can hear screams upstairs. Shooting from upstairs."

Revolutionary youths bought Formula One tickets and burnt them during protests. Some youths burned

tires and filled the skies with black smoke that was captured by the cameras during the race. The government of Bahrain considers burning tires a terrorist act. Yet it is the one of the few means of peaceful resistance for angry young protesters. Minors have been detained, tried, and given harsh sentences under an anti-terrorism law that criminalises young protesters who burn tires or block roads.

Nabeel Rajab, the president of Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, said during last year's Formula One, "We would prefer it if they didn't take part. I am sure the drivers and teams respect human rights." He is now serving a two year sentence for peacefully exercising his right of freedom of expression.

Shockingly, Ecclestone said to journalists last Saturday, "I keep asking people, 'What human rights?' I don't know what they are... The rights are that people who live in

the country abide by the laws of the country, whatever they are." Bahrain's Crown Prince Salman Al-Khalifa refused to address the issue of systematic human rights abuses escalating during the race. He said, "This weekend is really about sport."

Now the "sport" weekend is over, but people in Bahrain continue their battle for democracy. Hundreds have been imprisoned, while major opposition figures have had their citizenships stripped. We can help ordinary people in Bahrain by exposing the hypocrisy of the Western governments that back the Al-Khalifa regime.

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Palestine: solidarity with Samer Issawi and political prisoners

by JOSH LALOR

ON APRIL 17, protests were held in several locations across the West Bank and Gaza to mark Palestinian Prisoners' Day, an annual event intended to bring international attention to violations of the human rights of Palestinian prisoners being held in Israeli jails. This year's protests were focused on the plight of Samer Issawi.

Issawi ended his hungerstrike after reaching an agreement with Israel that he will be released at the end of the year. In 2002, Issawi was sentenced to 30 years in prison. He was released as part of a prisoner swap for Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in October 2011. In July 2012, he was arrested for breaching the con-

ditions of his release. At the time, it was not specified what conditions he breached. In separate incidents, a number of the other prisoners included in the Shalit Prisoner Swap were detained as well, some without being charged.

On August 1, Issawi began a hunger strike to protest his illegal imprisonment and Israel's violation of the agreement. He survived on only water and occasional vitamin injections.

Under administrative detention, a military court can order suspects to be detained indefinitely, subject to renewal every six months by the court, without trial or charge. According to Human Rights Watch, Article 78 of the Fourth Geneva Convention permits Israel, as the occupying power

of Palestine, to legitimately detain any individual under administrative detention "for imperative reasons of security." However, Article 78 is only meant to be invoked in exceptional circumstances.

Israeli authorities tend to use administrative detention arbitrarily to imprison, without trial, Palestinians suspected of security offenses. The refusal to afford Palestinians due process is unjust and emblematic of Israel's occupation.

In an Op-Ed piece in *The Guardian* (3/3/13), Samer Issawi wrote: "Israel could not continue its oppression without the support of western governments. These governments...which have a historic responsibility for the tragedy of my people, should impose sanctions on

the Israeli regime until it ends the occupation, recognizes Palestinian rights, and frees all Palestinian political prisoners."

The Harper government is one of the most aggressively pro-Israel governments in the world. The plight of the Palestinians requires an international solution that begins by taking action in our own countries through boycotts and campaigns to end our own government's complicity.

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Western-backed Saudi Arabia threatens to crucify activist

by YUSUR AL BAHRANI

THE WESTERN-backed dictatorship in Saudi Arabia is persecuting the pro-democracy progressive faith leader Sheikh Nemr Baqir Al-Nemr, and the Saudi public prosecutor has asked for a sentence of death by crucifixion. Upon hearing the shocking news, revolutionaries in the Eastern province of Qatif—the site of previous protests—have decided to break the wall of silence and organize regular protests.

Imminent risk

According to the Saudi authorities, Al-Nemr is charged with instigating sectarianism, breaching national unity, betraying the country, defaming the rulers and clerics of the gulf countries and encouraging his supporters to break the law. But closely observing Al-Nemr speeches in the past couple of years since the Arab Spring began, it's clear all his demands have been social justice, equality and an end to oppression. In all pro-democracy protests in Qatif, Al-Nemr was in the frontline encouraging men and women to fight for their rights. He strongly opposed all the dictatorships in the Arab region, including the Western backed Saudi monarchy. In order to silence the voice of other activists and protestors, the Saudi authorities launched a systematic series of attacks on him, despite his prominence as a religious leader.

Western hypocrisy

While claiming to support democracy and freedom of expression in different places, none of the Western governments has condemned the crucifixion sentence which violates basic human rights and sets us back to the Middle Ages. Al-Nemr's case has not received any media attention. This is worrying human rights activists and people in Saudi Arabia as the number of prisoners of conscience is increasing at an alarming rate. If no serious action is taken to save Al-Nemr's life, any pro-democracy activist or leader could face the same destiny.

Being a large exporter of oil to the United States and a large importer of US arms, Saudi Arabia managed to divert the attention of the mainstream media away from this story. Hundreds have been killed, injured and arrested in the past two years during protests. In addition, Saudi Arabia has one of the highest execution rates. According to Amnesty International, Saudi Arabia is one of the biggest executioners in the world.

Solidarity

People in Saudi Arabia should not be alone in their struggle to end oppression. Real solidarity is needed to expose the West's role in supporting the oppressive monarchy of Al-Saud. We should spread the message of revolutionaries who want social justice and an end to the ongoing systematic oppression in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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Labour solidarity across borders

“**WORKERS OF the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!**” This is the ringing exhortation at the end of **The Communist Manifesto**. But some might ask, “**How can workers from the global South unite with their sisters and brothers in the global North?**” After all, isn’t it true that workers in the advanced capitalist countries—in North America and Europe—benefit from the low wages and sweatshop conditions of their counterparts in poorer countries?

We need to pick apart this argument, to see how valid it really is, because the answer to this question will determine strategy and tactics for the workers’ movement generally.

Imperialism

Contrary to the myth of the even and free flow and exchange of capital, capitalism develops unevenly. Economic competition concentrates and centralizes capital in powerful corporations, intertwined with geopolitical competition between states.

As the Russian revolutionary Lenin described a century ago, “Capitalism has grown into a world system of colonial oppression and financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the people of the world by a handful of ‘advanced’ countries. And this ‘booty’ is shared by two or three world-dominating pirates (America, England, Japan), armed to the teeth who embroil the whole world in their war over the division of their booty.”

The resources, and sometimes even the people of other countries, have been harnessed to make Western powers rich. But the wealth of the ruling classes in the ‘privileged’ nations is not shared out between all citizens. There is a privileged class in all countries, including in so-called Third World countries—the Mubaraks of Egypt, or Mugabes of Zimbabwe—that has an interest in maintaining the inequality inherent in the system. And there is a working class in all countries—in Bolivia, Spain, Portugal, China, South Africa, Britain, the US, Canada, etc.—that sees their labour and their lives appropriated by their own ruling class.

Capitalist reforms

The fact that capitalism developed first and most fully in Europe and then North America, has meant that in general the standard of living in those countries has been higher than for most of the working class in countries of Latin America or Africa—though there are also global south conditions imposed on indigenous people.

Part of the higher living standard is due to industrial capitalism’s own needs for a workforce with a certain degree of health and education to fuel economic and military competition. Part of this is also from working class struggle—like the Rand Formula for union dues, won from the 1945 strike wave that began in Windsor, or the fight for Medicare in the 1960s. Britain granted its National Health Service after soldiers returning from WWII went on strike for better conditions—prompting the British Prime Minister to declare, “We must give workers reforms, or they will give us revolution.” So workers in the Global north have raised their living standards not at the expense of workers in the Global south, but by challenging their own states and corporations.

These reforms were won during the long boom of capitalism. However, since the return of the typical boom-slump cycle in the 1970s, much more characteristic of capitalism, we have seen a slow chipping away at the social safety net. And since 2008 and the return of serious crisis to the global system, that process has been accelerating at an alarming pace—undermining the 99% around the world.

Resistance and solidarity

But we have also seen the globalization of resistance, with mass strikes in the global south (like Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa and India) and the global north (like Greece, Portugal, Britain)—along with an Occupy movement that spread from the belly of the beast in the US around the world.

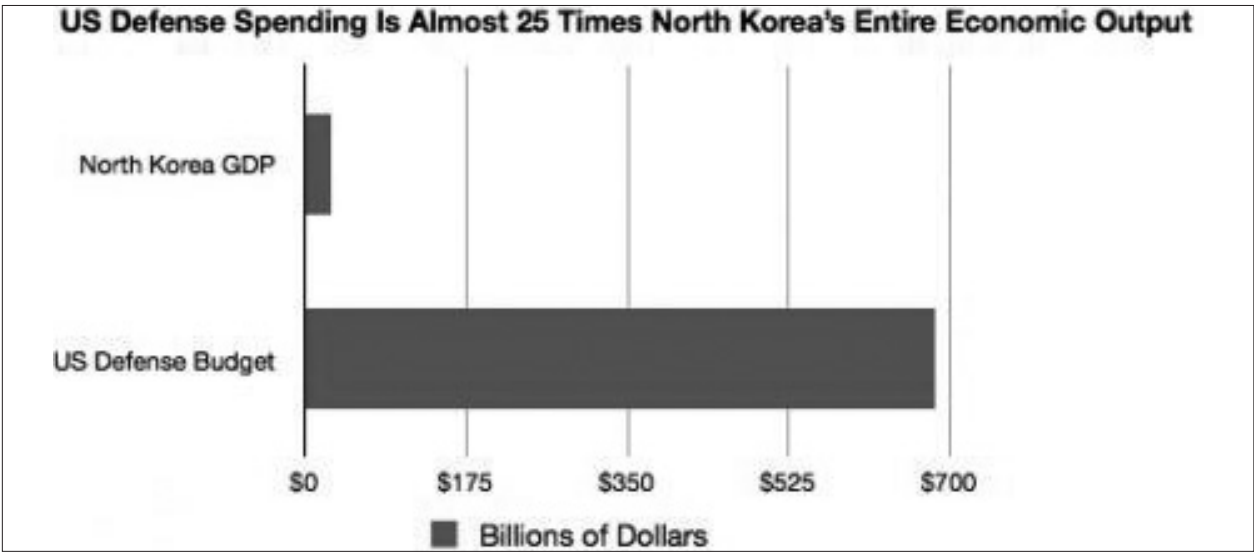
Solidarity among the global 99% is essential. When workers in Alma, Quebec , went on strike against Rio Tinto in their small northern community they inspired workers in other parts of Canada and in other parts of the world, who were also exploited by Rio Tinto. Rio Tinto wanted to substantially slash the starting wage for new hires and to create a two-tiered work force. The international solidarity for Alma workers was not just a selfless gesture of support on the part of workers in other countries, but an understanding that if Alma workers went down to defeat, other Rio Tinto workers in BC, in the US, in Australia, in Africa would suffer the same fate.

Bosses and governments will always try and convince us that we are suffering because of other working class people—because of immigrants ‘stealing’ our jobs, because of workers in Mexico who will work for lower wages, because of Chinese workers undercutting the market for Canadian or US-made goods—but the reality is that it’s a shell game, where they hold all the cards, as long as we play by their rules.

We need to break down the barriers that separate us from each other, building solidarity with indigenous people fighting colonial Canada, making links between workers in Quebec and English Canada, opposing ‘right to work’ legislation in the US and Canada which would see all of us in a race to the bottom, fighting the racism against migrant workers and supporting them getting status and unionization rather than threats of deportation and wages 15 per cent less than so-called ‘Canadian’ workers. We go up or we go down together—that, finally, is the message of Marx’s famous slogan.

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INTERNATIONAL



US imperialism, not North Korea, is the biggest threat

by BRIAN CHAMP

US THREATS against North Korea are whipping up racism, providing a cover for US imperialism, and making it more difficult for the people of North Korea to overthrow their dictator.

The recent tension on the Korean peninsula started after UN condemnation of North Korea for launching a rocket into space last December, followed by the threat of economic sanctions. While North Korea claimed that the satellite launch was for peaceful and scientific purposes, the US asserted that it was dangerous because the rocket technology required could be used to launch long-range missiles targeting the US.

North Korea is the only country in the world to be condemned for launching its own satellite. In defiance, North Korea conducted it’s 3rd nuclear test, following the harsh UN economic sanctions and the military posturing from South Korea and the US. As South Korea socialist Kim Young-ik wrote of the North Korean regime, “their actions and rhetoric are the result—not the cause—of tensions ramped up by the US.” The saber-rattling is a continuation of a pattern that has been repeated over the past 20-plus years.

Since the end of the Cold War between the US and USSR, the North Korean regime has wanted to normalize relations with the US and solidify it’s place in the world system that has evolved since that time. Both Kim III-Sung and Kim Jung-III entertained ideas of visiting the US and going fishing with the US presidents.

While the fishing trip never occurred, the Agreed Framework pact was signed in 1994 between the US and North Korea, whereby in return for US provision of food supplies and fuel oil for heating and electricity production, North Korea agreed to halt the development of their nuclear power program.

Imperialism

But in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, the US didn’t honor it’s side of

the agreement, and it collapsed in 2003, with North Korea resuming the development of nuclear power. This is the context of North Korea being named as a part of the “axis of evil” by the Bush administration.

Having a boogeyman in North Korea was then, and is now, convenient for US foreign policy--allowing it to assert its power in North East Asia in order to counter the regional influence of China. The alleged threat from a “rogue” North Korean regime justifies its military bases in South Korea and Japan as well as the annual military demonstrations that are staged alongside South Korean military units near the North Korean border. Hysteria about North Korean missiles is used to justify the US “missile defense” system that militarizes space and reinforces US military supremacy.

Hypocrisy

But the hypocrisy of the situation is breathtaking given that the US is the only country in the world that has ever used nuclear weapons in a conflict, when they bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the very end of the Second World War, and has conducted, by far, the most nuclear weapon tests of any country in the world and today refuses to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. More than two decades after the end of the Cold War, the US still has the largest arsenal of nuclear weapons in the world, with more than 10,000 warheads.

In addition the largest military budget on the peninsula is not that of the North but belongs to the South: where North Korea spent \$8.2 billion on the military, South Korea spent over three times as much (\$26.1 billion).

The North Korea regime is pursuing nuclear weapons as a deterrent to US military aggression, having seen in the Iraq war what happens when these weapons are fictitious. They are well aware that talking the language of “nuclear weapons” seems to be the only way to get the US to the negotia-

tion table. But this is a dangerous game as we can see by the increasing amount of anti-North Korean rhetoric that is being generated by much of the North American media.

But the fact is, by characterizing Kim Jung-Un as crazy and suicidal and bent on starting a nuclear conflict, much of this rhetoric is racist and indulges in fantasy to justify an increased US military presence in north east asia and increased domestic military expenditures in programs like National Missile Defense. The truth that both the US and North Korean regimes both know is that the North Korea is severely over-matched by US military power, but both regimes are using the rhetoric for their own international and internal agendas.

Solidarity

None of this is to say that there should be any illusions about the nature of the North Korean regime. It is an oppressive, state capitalist regime and has nothing to do with socialism. Nuclear weapons programs, no matter whether they are in the US or North Korea, have never protected working people, but the threat of their use can curtail critical movements from below. Since the relative stabilization of the division of the Korean peninsula between the North and South regimes after the Korean war, both have used the threat of military conflict with each other when facing resistance from below.

But US imperialism is the biggest threat in the world today, and we must defend countries like North Korea that are targeted by US imperialism. This does not mean we support the North Korean regime, but rather that it is only through struggle from below, crucially by workers, that the scourge of nuclear war can be relegated to the dustbin of history.

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Tragedy in Boston, Kabul and Neskantaga

by PETER HOGARTH

ON APRIL 15, a series of bombs exploded in an area where spectators were watching the final yards of the Boston Marathon. The blast killed three people, including an eight year-old boy from Dorchester, and injured more than 170 others.

There have been a lot of story lines that have emerged from this ugly event. The Islamophobic racial-profiling on full-display by police, media and other commentators; the dozens of people who rushed to the aid of the wounded; and the incredible work of nurses and doctors to tend to all those injuries.

Another that becomes quite obvious is the level of concern and solidarity expressed through social media, on the streets, in newspapers, sports and elsewhere. It is hard to miss all the sympathy being extended to the city of Boston and the people affected by this event.

It is easy for those of us who are ardent opponents of US imperialism to point out that there is an incredibly

disproportionate level of coverage and discussion about a bombing that in other parts of the world happen every day—and with a level of professional, cold-blooded brutality that they could only come from the well-funded arsenals of NATO armed forces. We know the scale of the devastation wrought by US imperialism and its allies would mean there would never be enough hours in the day to profile all of its victims.

If Obama was genuine about his statement that “any time bombs are used to target innocent civilians, it’s an act of terrorism,” then he would condemn US drone attacks in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen, and Israeli terror in Palestine. If Harper was genuine about his statement that “when you see this type of violent act...you condemn it categorically,” then he would condemn the violent occupation of Afghanistan, and the ongoing colonial violence in Canada. While the Neskantaga First Nation has declared a state of emergency over a suicide epidemic, driven by colonial oppression, Harper has instead been paying his respects to

Margaret Thatcher—who smashed the welfare state, launched a war in the Falklands and let Irish hunger strikers starve to death.

We need to stop these far greater expressions of state violence and terror, but that does not mean shrugging off ordinary people’s sympathy and caring for other human lives on display in Boston. There is nothing wrong with a newscaster taking time to give us a detailed look at the eight year-old life that was taken from the world on Monday. What we need is for every casualty of every bomb to be taken that seriously.

Let’s not scoff at the empathy on display for the victims in Boston. That is the kind of caring world we are fighting for. Let’s do everything in our power to extend those feelings of solidarity across every border, as we work for a future without capitalist borders.

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Women’s oppression kills

Rehtaeh Parsons’ suicide was caused by more than bullying. Evan Johnston examines how women’s oppression—a product of class divisions within society—is not only the underlying cause of this young woman’s tragic death but also why its violence is experienced by all women under capitalism.

On April 7, after months of abuse and harassment from her classmates, 17-year old Rehtaeh Parsons died in hospital following a suicide attempt which left her brain lethally damaged.

As many around the world now know, the harassment stemmed from a party she attended when she was 15, where she was gang-raped and photographed by four boys after blacking out.

The pictures began to circulate among her classmates and in her community, and instead of people seeing the photos as evidence of rape, they became evidence of her being a “slut.”

According to her mother, Rehtaeh was “never left alone. Her friends turned against her, people harassed her, boys she didn’t know started texting her and Facebooking, asking her to have sex with them since she had sex with their friends. It just never stopped.”

Rehtaeh’s family called on the RCMP to investigate, but after a year they concluded that it was merely a “he said, she said” case. Despite the photographic evidence and the reports of the rapists bragging about the rape to their classmates, RCMP investigators apparently failed to find enough evidence to lay any charges. In fact, Rehtaeh’s family was told that the photographs of the rape were “not a criminal issue” despite the fact that Rehtaeh was only 15 at the time.

From this pathetic display by the RCMP, it’s no wonder that rape continues to be one of the most under-reported crimes in Canada, with only eight per cent of sexual assaults actually reported to police.

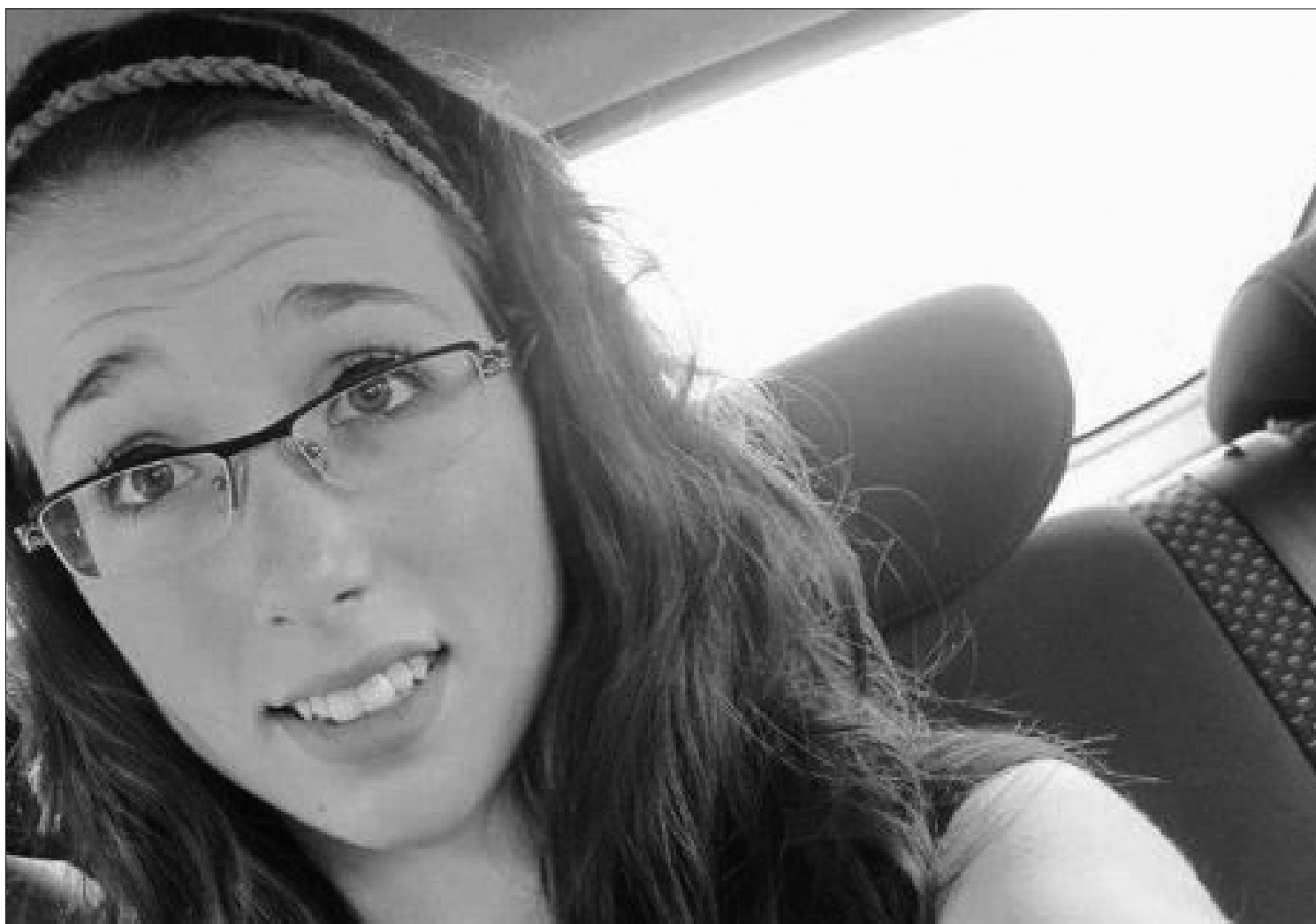
Blaming the victim

National Post columnist Christie Blatchford, a right-wing bigot with a history of anti-native racism and homophobia, has recently weighed in on the case by blaming Rehtaeh. In a textbook case of victim-blaming, Blatchford claims that “the girlfriend of Rehtaeh’s who was at the party told police Rehtaeh was being flirtatious,” and that there is “no evidence that Rehtaeh was so drunk that she couldn’t consent.”

Blatchford’s vitriol is matched only by her predictability. One of the oldest and most common ways of discrediting survivors of sexual violence is to suggest that they were somehow “asking for it,” which effectively shifts the focus away from the actions of the rapist and onto the behavior and appearance of the woman.

Indeed, Toronto Police officer Michael Sanguinetti’s 2011 comment to students at York University that “women should avoid dressing like sluts” if they don’t want to be sexually assaulted sparked a global movement of Slut Walks, which have been at the forefront of challenging the dominant discourse of rape culture.

Rape culture is an important concept that more and more people have begun to use in order to understand incidents of sexual violence, particularly in the aftermath of the Steubenville High School rape case which drew as much attention to the problematic reactions of the Stuebenville community toward rape as it did to the specifics of the case itself. Rape culture refers to the norms, attitudes, and



beliefs that systematically excuse, justify, or ignore incidents of rape, and that accrue empathy toward the perpetrators of sexual violence and suspicion toward the victims.

Additionally, rape culture functions so as to obscure the truths about sexual violence, replacing them instead with well-worn myths. For example, the crucial fact that over 80 per cent of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim is often obscured by the discourse of the stranger, which results in institutions and talking-heads attempting to police the bodies of women, telling them where they should and shouldn’t be, and for how long.

As Alana Prochuk of Vancouver’s Women Against Violence Against Women writes, “By making rapists out to be random wacko deviants, rape culture deflects attention from itself—that is, from our society’s insidious normalization of sexualized violence (through the cultural equation of masculinity and aggression, the objectification of women, the assumption that active consent is unnecessary, awkward and unsexy, and the gazillion other guises of rape culture).”

In a powerful blog entry that has since gone viral, Rehtaeh’s father, Glen Canning, blasted back at Blatchford and cut right through her blatant rape apologism, clarifying the issue of consent that rape culture frequently mystifies.

As Canning writes, “The two boys involved in taking and posing for the photograph stated Rehtaeh was throwing up when they had sex with her. That is not called consensual sex. That is called rape. They also stated they had to get her dressed when they were finished. She was passed out. That is the story they told to anyone at Rehtaeh’s school who would listen. That is their account of what happened. There are numerous people who heard that and shared that. No

evidence she was so drunk that she couldn’t consent? How drunk does someone have to be? Drunk enough to get sick or drunk enough to not remember?”

Beyond bullying

But as pundits and politicians of all stripes grapple with how to make sense of Rehtaeh’s case, they have increasingly relied on the framework of bullying—cyberbullying in particular. On April 20, people gathered in Halifax for an anti-cyberbullying concert in support of Rehtaeh and her family. Additionally, the Nova Scotia government has introduced the Cyber-Safety Act, and is setting up the first-ever cyberbullying investigative unit.

Just as in high schools, where “Stop Bullying” campaigns are most prominent, such an approach distorts what is at the core of the bullying: who the victims of bullying tend to be, the content of the bullying, and the larger social context within which particular bullying tactics take shape. In other words, the problem in most high schools isn’t bullying as such; rather, it’s homophobia, sexism, racism and ableism, which has more to do with our society’s reproduction of these oppressive systems than with a given set of bullying tactics.

This isn’t to say that “bullying” as such shouldn’t be fought against, and there are plenty of great programs being implemented to do exactly that in schools across Canada. However, if we want to ensure that what happened to Rehtaeh Parsons does not happen again, we all need to uproot the sexist ideas that are at the core of rape culture, and that are given expression by bullying—be it online or in person.

There’s a button I like to wear that reads, “Unlearn Sexism.” It’s simple and direct, yet expresses much more than it may appear. I like wearing it because of the reac-

tion it provokes, and the ensuing conversation that often begins with “Unlearn sexism? I don’t know what you’re talking about. When was I taught to be sexist?”

And that’s precisely the point. None of us ever take a class called “Sexism 101.” None of us get an official Government of Canada brochure on why violence and discrimination against women and trans people is acceptable practice in our schools, our communities, and our families. Sexist ideas and values are rarely made explicit in our high school curricula or during our job orientations, and it’s for this very reason that sexist ideas so often go unnoticed. But the tragic death of Rehtaeh Parsons reminds us of why it’s so urgent for us to call out these ideas for what they are, to fight them wherever they rear their ugly head, and to recognize that while these ideas may often be disguised in the form of “jokes,” they have severe consequences for women, men, and gender non-conforming people everywhere.

Calling attention to this might make me guilty of committing sociology in the eyes of Stephen Harper, but we owe it to Rehtaeh to do so. When Harper isn’t feigning concern for Rehtaeh and her family in front of the cameras, he’s cutting funding for Status of Women Canada, turning a blind eye to the hundreds of missing and murdered native women, blocking foreign aid for family planning services, and overseeing a government that has been repeatedly attacking a woman’s right to choose. It doesn’t take a sociologist to recognize such blatant acts of hypocrisy.

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The problem isn’t bullying as such; rather, it’s homophobia, sexism, racism and ableism, which has more to do with our society’s reproduction of these oppressive systems than with a given set of bullying tactics.



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CRYSTAL SINCLAIR, a leading activist in the Idle No More movement, will join **DIMITRA KYRILLOU**, a socialist from Greece, **MONIQUE MOISAN**, a community activist and member of Québec solidaire, and **CHANTAL SUNDARAM** on the Saturday evening panel, "Women, resistance and revolution".

Chair of Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University and member of Eel River Bar First Nation, **DR. PAM PALMATER** joins a special panel discussion on "Indigenous resistance, Idle No More and the fight against Harper".

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Author **JULIE DEVANEY** will be performing selected readings from her new book, *My Leaky Body*.

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SUSAN GAPKA, an activist recognized for her incredible work empowering transsexual and transgender communities, joins **ALEX ADAMS** to discuss "The fight for trans liberation".

Member of the Group for Research and Initiative on the Liberation of Africa (GRILA) **AMETH LO** and director of the Canadian Peace Alliance **SID LACOMBE** discuss "Libya, Mali and Canadian imperialism".

Greek socialist **DIMITRA KYRILLOU** will speak on "Fighting fascism: an eyewitness account from Greece".

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Don't let anger at RBC stoke anti-migrant racism

Jesse McLaren *writes about the recent layoffs at RBC and how we can fight for better jobs for all of the 99%.*

There's an uproar over the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) using the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) to replace workers at reduced wages. But the legitimate anger at a multi-billion dollar company driving down wages is getting mixed up with confused anger that falsely counterposes "foreign workers" with "Canadians"—threatening to undermine the labour solidarity needed to fight racism and austerity.

According to NDP leader Thomas Mulcair, "To allow temporary foreign workers, through this type of strategem, to be brought in to deprive Canadians of their livelihood is grotesque." The facebook group "Boycott the Royal Bank of Canada" has got over 6,500 "likes" in a few days, including comments calling to protect "our" jobs and to curb immigration and jobs for "foreign workers."

'Foreigners' vs 'Canadians'

What's really grotesque is that RBC (Canada's largest bank) posted records profits last year, and that in the midst of austerity they want to make even more profits off the backs of migrant workers. But the rhetoric of "foreign" vs "Canadian" actually distracts from the real issue, and instead silences indigenous people, stigmatizes migrants, and homogenizes everyone else—obscuring the real divisions between the 99% and the 1%.

The only true "non-foreigners" in Canada are indigenous people, who have suffered most the consequences of Canadian colonialism and austerity. According to Statistics Canada, the austerity agenda has had a sharper impact on aboriginal workers—who had a higher unemployment rate before the crisis and have experienced greater job losses since the crisis began.

As well as using colonialism to pursue profits, capitalism uses its arbitrary borders to deny status and increase the exploitation of migrant workers. Despite the propaganda of "border security," its goal is not to keep migrants out of the country but to drive down their wages inside the country. The problem with temporary foreign workers is not that they are "foreign", but that they are denied status and only allowed to stay temporarily—under brutal conditions. The TFWP forces 300,000 migrant workers to work with no basic rights like the ability to quit or switch employers (which carries the threat of deportation), for 15 per cent less wages and no permanent status in Canada. As a result, migrant workers are forced to work under conditions that can be lethal—from the four construction workers who died on Christmas Even in 2009 when their scaffolding collapsed, to the 10 farm workers who died when the van they were crammed into crashed last year.

The TFWP is not a good system that's been mishandled by Harper or RBC, the current scandal is exactly what the program was designed for. Mulcair claims that "the temporary foreign worker program started as a way to provide labour in the fields where a lot of Canadians wouldn't work—like the



picking of fruits and vegetables," but "it's now more akin to a situation where the person serving you in a Tim Hortons is likely to be a temporary foreign worker." This implies it's fine to exploit migrant workers in the fields as long as you don't see them in the cities. But last year, four migrant workers at a Tim Horton's in BC filed a human rights complaint after experiencing racist abuse, a doubling of rent, and passport confiscation; two were fired and deported for complaining.

According to the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), in their 2011 Report on the Status of Migrant Workers in Canada, the TFWP has always been a "model of brutality." The UFCW is the largest private sector union in Canada and has the union membership with the highest percentage of migrant workers. According to Naveen Mehta, UFCW Canada's general counsel and director of human rights: "In some sectors, there may be shortages of Canadian workers able to fill positions but typically, unless they are working in a union environment, the workers brought in to do the work are grossly exploited and often treated like indentured servants. Any talk by Harper and his government to fix this has been just talk. The reality is they have engineered a program that leads to a low wage economy, where the rights of both domestic and foreign workers are trashed to bolster the corporate bottom line."

So "foreign workers" are not depriving "Canadians" of their

livelihood. Canadian corporations like RBC are using racism to exploit migrant workers, drive down wages of non-migrant workers, and then scapegoat migrants for it. The problem is not "foreign workers" or the "foreign companies" who provide them, it's the Canadian state's TFWP that allows Canadian corporations to deny migrant workers status and equal wages.

Capitalism, exploitation and oppression

Capitalism is based on exploitation, with bosses paying workers less than the wealth they've produced. Capitalists make more profits if they can increase the rate of exploitation—through the sexist denial of pay equity, the racist use of lower wages for migrant workers, the increasing use of part-time jobs that don't include benefits, cuts to wages and benefits, layoffs (disproportionately affecting oppressed groups) and increased pressure for remaining workers to increase productivity.

Because unions provide some protection against exploitation—through better wages and conditions—and because unions have been part of the fight for pay equity and rights for migrant workers, they are the subject of coordinated attack by the state, corporations and the media. The latest is the "right to work" campaign to smash unions. In times of economic crisis, the competitive pressure for the 1% to increase exploitation goes into overdrive.

latter is quite aware of this."

This classic capitalist scapegoating continues. During his run for Toronto mayor in 2010, Rob Ford claimed that "We can't even deal with the 2.5 million people in this city. It's more important that we take care of the people now before we start bringing in more." During his run for Ontario premier in 2011, Tim Hudak claimed Dalton McGuinty was pandering to "foreign workers." During the federal election of 2011, Harper ran ads labeling Tamil refugees as criminals and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney has gone on a rampage against so-called "bogus refugees," including vicious cuts to refugee healthcare. The scapegoating of migrants is even more dangerous in places facing deeper economic crises like Greece, where the fascist party Golden Dawn organizes violent attacks against migrants, and we have the horrid history of 1930s Germany to remind ourselves where this can lead.

Solidarity and resistance

In Greece, fighting the fascist attacks on migrants is central to strengthening the fight against austerity. Fortunately Hudak's racist election campaign backfired, and despite Ford's rants Toronto has declared itself a sanctuary city—a victory for migrant justice organizing. The magnificent Idle No More movement has helped undermine Canadian nationalism, clarify that Canada has an ongoing history of colonialism, and link indigenous and non-indigenous people in struggle.

We need to apply these lessons to build solidarity with migrant workers as part of the fight against austerity. Calls to ban "foreign workers" from "Canadian jobs" will do nothing to improve the livelihood of the 99%; by silencing indigenous sovereignty, increasing anti-migrant racism and undermining the solidarity necessary to build a united labour movement it will be made worse. We need to oppose RBC not because they're hiring "foreign workers" but because they're exploiting them—and using this exploitation to drive down wages and increase their profits. The only way to stop this is to guarantee status and equal pay for migrant workers, as part of the fight against racism and austerity.

As UFCW has said in a statement, "UFCW Canada and our allies continue to advocate for immediate permanent residency and a path to citizenship for all workers entering Canada. Unionization and permanent residency remain the only viable solutions that begin to address the crisis of the deplorable and mean hearted working and living conditions that migrant workers are subjected to."

Capitalism and austerity has no borders, and neither should solidarity and resistance. We need to support indigenous sovereignty and migrant justice, as part of a united global struggle of the 99% against the 1%. Workers of the word, unite.

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Mulcair, Trudeau and the fight against Harper

LIKE THE US Republicans and Democrats, the Tories and the Liberals are the twin parties of corporate Canada. The NDP has the potential of using its position in Parliament to magnify resistance movements but is squandering this opportunity in its quest for power.

Corporate coalition and the Orange Wave

Harper’s austerity is an extension of the Liberals, who under Chrétien and then Martin made deep cuts to social programs and massive cuts to corporate taxes. It was the Liberals who first imposed “anti-terror” legislation, and they have continued to support Harper’s attacks on civil liberties. The Liberals started the war in Afghanistan and supported Harper during every extension of the “mission,” overthrew democracy in Haiti and were only stopped from joining the Iraq War by a massive anti-war movement. The Liberals ignored the Kyoto protocol before Harper killed it, and have supported tar sands extraction and pipelines. According to Justin Trudeau, the Tar Sands “are an important driver of the economy and we have to respect it.”

Anger at Harper and austerity, disillusionment with the Liberals for failing to provide an alternative, and inspiration from the Arab Spring caused the Orange Wave of support for the NDP—hoping for a real alternative, which could be realized if the Official Opposition inside Parliament supported the resistance movements outside Parliament. We caught glimpses of this when Jack Layton called on people to join the anti-war protests in 2003, or when the NDP filibustered Harper’s attack on postal workers in 2011.

Mulcair: the NDP’s Blair

But NDP leader Thomas Mulcair has focused on following Layton’s call to “make Parliament work” by “working together” with the corporate parties. In practice this has meant subordinating the movements to the NDP’s quest for power: ignoring the Quebec student strike and supporting the Clarity Act that denies Quebec’s right to self-determination; refusing to meet with Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence and calling on her to end her hunger strike; ignoring Canada’s military budget and supporting Harper’s imperial intervention in Mali; repeating the myth that migrant workers are “depriving Canadians of their livelihood;” supporting tar sands extraction and eastward shipment of oil; purging the word socialism from the party’s constitution preamble; and the list goes on.

Mulcair calls this strategy “bringing the centre to us” but instead it brings the NDP to the right—driving a wedge between opposition inside and outside Parliament. 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. The corporate Democrats under Obama tacked to the left, absorbed the energy of the movements to win elections and then tried to smother them. This is what the Liberals want to do under Trudeau, who visited Chief Spence and who, during his acceptance speech, claimed to support Idle No More—though his respect for tar sands trumps his respect for the indigenous communities whose land is destroyed extracting it.

As a consequence of Mulcair tacking right and Trudeau tacking left, there’s the renewal of the argument for “anyone but the Conservatives,” or a “coalition” of parties against Harper. This ignores the fundamental difference between the corporate base of the Liberals and the labour base of the NDP, ignores decades of experience under Liberal rule, and paves the way for undermining the NDP and its connection to social movements.

Social democracy and capitalist crisis

Mulcair’s policies also give an indication of how he might rule if he does win the next election. Around the world—from Britain, to Greece, to South Africa—people have elected social democratic governments with high hopes, only to see them implement the same policies of neoliberalism and war. When the NDP proposed a coalition with the Liberals a few years ago, they dropped their opposition to corporate tax cuts and the war in Afghanistan. There’s also a history of provincial NDP government’s raising tuition in Nova Scotia, closing hospitals in Saskatchewan, imposing wage cuts in Ontario, and attacking indigenous communities in BC.

With the deepening capitalist crisis we need to use every opportunity to build resistance, including working with NDP activists to push the party leadership to be a megaphone for the movements. But the same capitalist crisis that is producing austerity is also undermining the ability of social democratic governments to offer an alternative, posing the need for a real alternative to capitalism.

BC NDP platform: really good, but not as good as it could be

THE BC NDP platform is a welcome shift to the left for the party. The NDP has put forward plans to reverse some of the massive tax cuts that the Liberals are responsible for. They will add a new income tax bracket for those earning over \$150,000, raise the corporate income tax to 12 per cent, reinstate part of the corporate capital tax and expand the carbon tax. They have also come out against two multi-billion dollar tar sands pipeline projects, the Enbridge pipeline and the Kinder-Morgan pipeline expansion.

More taxes and fund programs

The new tax revenues will be spent on a number of projects that will help address the twelve years of damage the Liberals have done. These will include: money for transit, green projects, and retrofits; re-introducing grants for post-secondary students; freezing the fares on BC Ferries, hiring new teachers, education assistants, librarians and counsellors in the public school system; linking income assistance rates to inflation; introducing a family bonus to help lift families with children out of poverty; improving funding for home support and community care.

This is a blow against the prevailing myths of austerity and lack of government funds. The NDP is showing that there is an appetite to raise

OPINION



Ray Bobb, a member of the Seabird Island Indian band and a former student of the residential schools program, has written this letter to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

IN 2008, Prime Minister Harper apologized to the native people of Canada for one hundred years of Indian residential schooling. Mr. Harper said that the Indian residential school system was the wrongful implementation of a policy of “forced assimilation.” The purpose here is for a former resident of one of these schools to expose Canada’s apology as a lie.

The government of Canada is now trying to complete the policy of forced assimilation in the ongoing comprehensive treaty process. Furthermore, since Canada is still pursuing a policy of forced assimilation, it seeks not to reconcile with Indians but to extinguish them as a people.

Colonialism

That Canadian Indians are a people is, of course, known to the government of Canada. Canadian Indians, as an internal colony, were created by the government of Canada and administered through the Department of Indian Affairs. This started in 1867 when the settlers took control of the remaining British colonies in North America. Under the terms of the British-North America Act, they became the Dominion of Canada.

British imperialism, and also French imperialism, reduced the populations of the tribal nations beyond the point whereby they could be sustained as independent entities, economically or politically. Some of the tribal nations, such as the Beothuk of Newfoundland, were completely wiped out. All this, by war, disease, starvation and murder. Treaties in the period of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 reflected a reality different from that of today. The peoples of then, then existing, tribal nations vastly outnumbered the Europeans. Britain found it necessary to ally with some tribal nations in order to defeat other tribal nations, the French (1760), the Americans (1812), and, to facilitate settlement.

The White Paper

The point at which the federal government signaled a change in the implementation of its policy of forced assimilation, and began re-directing its priorities and funding, was 1969. In 1969, the federal government proposed the White Paper Policy on Indians (WPP). The WPP proposed to unilaterally abolish the Indian Act and nullify any distinctions between Canadian Indians and the

Canadian people. Indian protest against the WPP grew. In 1971, the WPP was retracted.

In 1971, also, the Core Funding Program was initiated by the Trudeau government. The Core Funding Program was the source of applied-for funding by which means social reforms could be carried out in native communities. These reforms included the building of a captive, native leadership from the band, to the tribal, to the provincial, and to the national levels.

In 1973, the Comprehensive Land Claims Settlement Policy (CLC) was created by the federal government to circumscribe the treaty process. Under CLC policy, two non-negotiable requirements of all treaties are the removal of native communities from the jurisdiction of the Indian Act, and the incorporation of these communities into Canadian, municipal or territorial, jurisdictions.

Treaty Coercion

Not being able to achieve forced assimilation through WPP legislation, the federal government is seeking to achieve the same objectives, bilaterally, in the comprehensive treaty process. The coercion inherent in the treaty process is to be found in multi-billion dollar resources, in money and land, earmarked for treaty payment. In reality, these resources are the long awaited entitlements, of underprivileged native communities, that are being withheld in order to force natives into the treaty process.

Treaty coercion is compounded by the fact that, in negotiations involving two opposing interests, the Canadian imperialist-settler-state, in effect, pays the representatives of the native internal colony. The native leadership that is funded by the federal government has legitimacy in that integration, of some sort, is one aspect of native self-determination. In so far, however, as sovereignty is concerned, this leadership can make no determination.

For the purpose of treaty-making, the federal government has extended false, national recognition to native communities or groups of native communities, i.e. First Nations. The resulting treaty process began with the James Bay Cree (1975). This treaty allowed for the development of a mega-project to produce hydro-electric power for Boston investors. From there, the native communities of northern Quebec reached agreement, followed by the native communities of the entire north, e.g. Nunavut. The treaty process, now, has

on board many native communities of the south, some of whom have already signed. In BC, this includes the Nishga’a (2000), the Maa-nulth of Vancouver Island and the Tsawwassen. The Tsawwassen agreement is allowing for Robert’s Bank, with mainly Jimmy Pattison’s investment, to become the largest coal export terminal in the world. The natives of almost one-half of Canada’s land area have signed comprehensive treaties. This provides much “certainty” for investors. In comprehensive treaties, legal recognition of native, pre-contact, heritage is extinguished along with their post-Confederation identity.

Strategies and tactics

If treaties are made between nations, what then are these agreements being made between Canada and native communities? They are, effectively, agreements forced upon parts of the native internal colony in order to secure their members’ compliance in the renunciation of Canadian Indian nationality, and the annexation of their land by Canada. Indian nationalists can see that the incorporation of native communities into a Canadian, municipal or territorial, jurisdiction is wrong. Some Indian nationalists, however, find themselves on side with the federal government in wanting to abolish the Indian Act.

Strategically, it is true, the Indian Act should be done away with. Tactically, however, the Indian Act should be defended because, at this time, the federal government is trying to deprive Indians of their identity in order to put Indians in an even weaker position than that existing in the colonial relationship. The defense of the Indian Act is a necessary tactical retreat from the massive federal government initiative that the comprehensive treaty process represents. What is important is that the identity and unity of the people be salvaged under the present political attack.

Native people are often spoke of as being socially dysfunctional. Statistics are used to bolster this negative image. In fact, the native refusal to accept the outlook of an imperialistic settler-society is the response of a people who, in spite of everything, still maintain their humanity. Many horrible, racist events occur against native people in Canada, especially against native women. Perpetrators at the bottom of society are afforded impunity from the top, where hateful policy is created.

taxes and fund government services.

However, it only deals with a small portion of the damage done by the Liberals. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives calculates that Liberal tax cuts have reduced provincial revenues by \$3.5 billion a year. The partial roll-back by the NDP is only expected to produce \$988 million a year after four years. This is less than 30 per cent of the loss.

Since they won’t go after that money, there will be no reduction of tuition fees which have more than doubled, income assistance will be left at poverty rates, we will continue to suffer a shortage of nurses and hospital beds in BC, and class sizes in the public schools will remain untouched. The NDP plan to provide up to 1,500 units of affordable housing a year will take 77 years to provide spaces for the 116,000 people that Social Housing Coalition BC estimates are currently in a housing crisis in BC.

The money they will spend on transit and other green programs is undercut by their commitment to “support sustainable LNG development and export as part of a diversified and prosperous economy.” BC will continue to feel the effects of climate change—from catastrophic forest fires to massive flooding of the Fraser river. The only way to avoid this is to transition in as few years as possible from fossil fuels to renewables. Digging up more gas and oil is the exact opposite of what we need to do.

Missed Opportunity

This is a huge missed opportunity for the NDP and for BC. The NDP

could win this election on a much more radical program than they have put forward. The world is moving to the left, and Canada and BC are no exception.

In 2012, polls by the Broadbent Institute, the Trudeau Foundation, and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives all demonstrated this left turn. According to them, the majority of British Columbians approved of the Occupy and the Quebec student strike movements, and are willing to pay more taxes in return for a broad range of government services.

Furthermore, 67 per cent of people in BC thought corporations pay less tax than they should, while a large majority felt the same about the richest 20 per cent of people. This was true no matter who they would vote for: 74 per cent of Liberal voters, 77 per cent of Conservative voters, 87 per cent of NDP voters, and 86 per cent of Green voters.

On top of this, the people of BC turned on the Liberals long ago. Polls put the NDP well ahead of the Liberals long before Adrian Dix won the NDP leadership.

The NDP may have squandered this opportunity, but the popular support for Occupy and Quebec’s students suggests that a large popular movement can be built here. A movement like the successful anti-pipeline movement can be built up to join with teachers for smaller class sizes, with nurses for more health services, and with construction workers to replace fossil fuel extraction with renewable energy plants.

Together we can force an NDP government to do the right thing. Let’s get started!

REVIEWS



FILM

Revolution puts the environmental movement on screen

Revolution

Directed by Rob Stewart
Reviewed by Jesse McLaren

THE MOVIE *Revolution* includes beautiful nature scenes, climate justice rallies, and interviews with activists. It shows the diversity of the natural world and the growing environmental movement to try to save our world, and ourselves.

Toronto-born filmmaker Rob Stewart's previous film, *Sharkwater*, helped raise awareness of the devastation caused by killing sharks for their fins. *Revolution* shows him promoting his previous film and getting stumped by a simple audience question: what's the point of saving sharks if entire oceans will be dead in the next generation?

Radicalization

From a single-issue campaign, Stewart is forced to confront the systemic nature of environmental destruction, and he begins to look for answers. His quest takes him all over the world to look at nature, science, and activism. The film has striking cinematography of species underwater and on land, to

show the beauty and diversity of nature, and the destruction of ocean acidification and deforestation. He interviews climate scientists, activists and members of impacted communities.

Crucially, there is a focus on Canada's Tar Sands—including footage of its devastation and interviews with activists from the Indigenous Environmental Network. Through his radicalization he joins protests for the first time—in Ottawa, Washington and Copenhagen—against polluting corporations and complicit governments.

It's great to see activism on the silver screen, including the call for revolution to save the planet and ourselves.

Debates

But it's unclear what he means by revolution. His movie shows the scale of environmental destruction, but neither the causes nor the solutions, and some of the views it reflects undermines its systemic critique.

Stewart targets the Canadian government, but also reinforces the view that China or "overpopulation" is the problem. He blames the tar sands and profit-driven corporations, but also says "we're all at fault." He dis-

cusses "overconsumption" without mentioning the biggest consumer of oil: the military. He criticizes massive bailouts for companies but doesn't mention that those resources should go towards green jobs (even though he interviewed Van Jones).

Throughout the film, there is an abstract emphasis on a generational rather than a class divide in society, and a substitute of "awareness" for politics. Many people are fully aware of the destruction of the planet; the question is how to unite the 99% against the profit-driven 1%. In forging this unity, we can transform society and our relationship with nature. Instead Revolution ends where it began, back on single-issue reforms within the framework of capitalism.

This film will encourage you to participate in the climate justice movement and the debates within it.

If you like this article, register now for Marxism 2013: Revolution In Our Time, a weekend-long conference of ideas to change the world. Sessions include "Indigenous resistance, Idle No More and the fight against Harper", "What would it take to shut down the tar sands," "Energy revolution and social revolution" and "Marx's ecology."

have not yet seen it, don't read further.

The film is set in a post-war apocalyptic landscape following an alien invasion that destroyed earth's moon, resulting in earthquakes and tsunamis that killed half the population and forced the rest to move off-planet—a symbolic reference to the devastating impact of climate change.

Cruise plays Jack Harper, a security drone technician—essentially a futuristic lineman, whose day job consists of tracking down damaged floating armed spy devices and repairing them. He and his team partner Victoria work together to repair the drones, whose goal is ostensibly to protect the massive extraction of water and other resources from the planet before the remnants of the human race remove themselves en masse to a moon of Saturn. Jack is indoctrinated not to go into the "radiation zone," and both are trained never to ask questions.

But Jack secretly wants to stay on earth, and has built a cabin in a forgotten and untouched green valley on a lake where he periodically hides from his duties, shooting hoops and fanta-

sizing about football.

As the film progresses it turns out that the aliens that regularly attack the water rigs and other extraction machines are actually human beings, and that Jack and his coworker are being used to enable an alien being, that is in fact a giant machine, to suck all possible resources out of the planet for unknown reasons (profit?). The metaphor for a multinational corporation even looks like a corporate logo hanging in the sky.

As the scales fall from Jack's eyes, other secrets are revealed, leading to a resolution that, somewhat disappointingly, relies on nostalgic ideas of ecology. And there remain several plot holes that are never revisited. More interestingly, this post-apocalyptic scenario collapses into the apocalyptic present ecological reality of our world in a way that resonates on at least a subconscious level.

For all its faults, as a metaphor for contradictory consciousness and radicalization through confrontation with facts, this solidly-acted and visually impressive movie does the job.

LEFT JAB

John Bell

Battle of York 'remembrance' a Tory farce

"THE BATTLE of York—a day for all Torontonians to remember." That's the headline of the *Our Toronto* newsletter recently found in my mailbox. As someone who has gone to some pains to learn about the War of 1812, if only to inoculate myself against Tory-inspired propaganda, I couldn't agree more. We should remember.

Too bad the planned commemoration of the occupation of York has little or nothing to do with the real events of April 1813.

On April 27, 1813, 14 US warships carrying 1,700 soldiers entered what is now Toronto Harbour. They were led by General Zebulon Pike, one of the few competent American commanding officers. The town was of little strategic importance, but after a string of embarrassing defeats in the summer and fall of 1812, Washington was hungry for any kind of a victory.

Advancing American riflemen dispersed a half-hearted resistance from a small group of Mississaugas (on whose unceded land the town was built) and quickly overpowered the front lines of General Roger Sheaffe's British regulars. Sheaffe did the only sensible thing, ordering a quick retreat and marching his forces eastward to the safety of Kingston.

Before leaving, Sheaffe ordered the destruction of the only two military assets in the town, burning a nearly-completed warship in the shipyards and blowing up the underground powder magazine. The explosion rattled windows thirty miles away, and sent tons of stone and wood debris into the air. A large stone struck General Pike a mortal blow; despite their victory, the explosion resulted in US casualties numbering about 320, almost twice as many as suffered by the British.

Town officials, led by arch-Tory Bishop John Strachan, rushed to sign a formal surrender promising to forbid the looting of private property, but the top-ranking US officer, General Henry Dearborn, hesitated for a day before signing it. In the intervening time, the town was thoroughly looted.

Dearborn ordered all military facilities burned, but his enthusiastic troops also burned the parliament buildings. US soldiers maintained they discovered a scalp hanging in the legislature, prompting their actions. This is no doubt a fiction, the offending hairpiece probably being a ceremonial powdered wig. However the story was carried back to Washington and spread far and wide, supposed proof that Britain was encouraging atrocities by First Nations fighters.

Those are the facts that every history of the event agrees on. But there was more to the "day all Torontonians should remember".

Many Canadian histories assert that the York militia was part of the defence. Donald R. Hickey, author of *Don't Give Up the Ship: Myths of the War of 1812* has this to say: "Some popular accounts have suggested that Canadian militia played a significant role in the defense of York and that 40 militiamen were killed in the explosion, but this is untrue. The militiamen were held back by their commanding

officer, and only 6 died in the engagement."

As in most War of 1812 battles, local militias were judged less than reliable. Most, like the majority of the colony's population were US-born, moving to Canada only to take advantage of free land and low taxes.

As for the looting of York, it is well recorded that many inhabitants of York, including those released from jail, enthusiastically joined in the plunder. When the US soldiers returned to their ships many local inhabitants helped them carry their booty.

Locals, including many militia members lined up to be formally "paroled". As was the custom of the time, a parolee could not become a combatant unless his side traded an equal parolee in exchange for him. This was an excellent way of avoiding being called up for military duty.

So if we were to celebrate this anniversary with any accuracy, we would run all the police and military out of town and go for a massive shoplifting spree on Queen Street.

Unfortunately, the Tory government in cooperation with the City of Toronto decided to go another way. They are turning a minor military and political debacle into a celebration of militarism. Under the guise of remembering history they are rewriting it.

The centrepiece of this militaristic farce will be a ceremony at the Ontario Legislature to award a new Regimental Colour to the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR). A "Colour" is a commemorative flag celebrating an engagement involving the Regiment.

The problem is that the Royal Canadian Regiment did not exist in 1813. It was created in 1883 as the Infantry School Corps, and renamed the RCR in 1893. Its connection to the Battle of York is entirely fictitious, but not without precedent. In 2012 the RCR received honours for the Battle of Detroit, another War of 1812 engagement that it had nothing to do with.

Not to let facts get in the way of a good old military love-in, the Tories are shipping in several thousand soldiers and sailors to troop through the centre of the city, marching bands in tow, their brand new and entirely bogus Regimental Colours fluttering in the breeze.

As befits the majesty of it all, RHR Prince Philip, the head royal bigot is being whisked in to preside over the whole farce.

The real history of the War of 1812, and the looting of York (for to call it a battle is itself a gross exaggeration) reminds us that ordinary people had little interest in the clash of empires. Mostly they wanted to be left alone to mind their farms, do their jobs and live their lives in peace.

It also reminds us of the lengths Stephen Harper's Tory propaganda machine will go to turn Canada's real history into a militaristic fantasy.

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May 2013 **Socialist Worker** 9

WHERE WE STAND

The dead-end of capitalism
The capitalist system is based on violence, oppression and brutal exploitation. It creates hunger beside plenty. It kills the earth itself with pollution and unsustainable extraction of natural resources. Capitalism leads to imperialism and war. Saving ourselves and the planet depends on finding an alternative.

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

Reform and revolution
Every day, there are battles between exploited and exploiter, oppressor and oppressed, to reform the system—to improve living conditions. These struggles are crucial in the fight for a new world. To further these struggles, we work within the trade unions and orient to building a rank and file movement that strengthens workers’ unity and solidarity.
But the fight for reforms will not, in itself, bring about fundamental social change. The present system cannot be fixed or reformed as NDP and many trade union leaders say. It has to be overthrown. That will require the mass action of workers themselves.

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

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

Canada, Quebec, Aboriginal Peoples
Canada is not a “colony” of the United States, but an imperialist country in its own right that participates in the exploitation of much of the world. The Canadian state was founded through the repression of the Aboriginal peoples and the people of Quebec.
We support the struggles for self-determination of Quebec and Aboriginal peoples up to and including the right to independence. Socialists in Quebec, and in all oppressed nations, work towards giving the struggle against national oppression an internationalist and working class content.

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

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



Homelessness in Toronto: a death sentence?

by KEVIN JACKSON

FOR DECADES, an army of social activists have proclaimed that there is an ongoing problem with poverty and homelessness in Toronto. These days the problem seems worse than ever.
Since 1985, there have been 700 homeless deaths on the streets of Toronto; forty-three of those deaths occurred in the last year alone, but that may be a very conservative estimate. According to Pastor Doug Johnson Hatlem, record-keeper of the Toronto Homeless Memorial Network, “there’s a lot that we don’t get on the list.” Many homeless individuals who die are not added to the list of deaths, because the identity of the deceased cannot be confirmed.

Cuts kill
According to *Toronto Star* reporter, Alyson Rowe, “Activists fear there will be even more homeless deaths in 2013 because of a 2.9 per cent cut to emergency shelter beds in the city budget.” These cuts will result in the loss of 100 shelter beds, along with related food and support services. Approved by Mayor Rob Ford, these losses will ensure that ever-increasing numbers of homeless individuals will be dying on the streets of Toronto in the winter of 2013-2014.
Cuts affecting the lives of the homeless in Toronto began long before Rob Ford became Mayor. More than 300 shelter beds were lost in 2006 (when David Miller was in power), with severe cuts to spending on shelters, affordable housing, and programs such as addictions and mental health support services.

Magical beds
Ford’s opinion on shelter spaces is clear: “we don’t need more spaces. We have over a hundred empty beds a night. We have to be efficient.” But

if there are more than enough shelter spaces, as Ford claims, then why are Toronto activists and shelter workers claiming to have a critical shortage of shelter beds?
The “beds” that Ford was referring to are nothing more than “magical beds,” says Hatlem. They are nothing more than imaginary spaces that “no one ever gets to sleep in,” spaces where a cot can fit in an emergency if squeezed between existing double decked beds. These emergency cot spaces, sometimes referred to as overflow beds, were never intended to be counted as “shelter beds” and do not exist.

Emergency shelter
In an attempt to prevent more need-less deaths of homeless Torontonians, the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) began to forcefully occupy sections of Metro City Hall, making it a temporary out of the cold shelter, and taking social justice for the homeless to the streets.
All of the discussion in the media about OCAP and Rob Ford arguing over shelter spaces missed a key fact: that Metro Hall is supposed to be opened as a homeless shelter in the event that shelters are overcrowded, which they have been since at least 2012. In 1999 the City of Toronto made a policy that would allow Metro Hall to be used as emergency shelter space. This policy states that the city’s shelters not be allowed to exceed a 90 per cent occupancy rate, and if it did, Metro Hall should be opened up as an emergency shelter.
Shelters in Toronto operate at 96 per cent capacity, and the overcrowding within shelters has led to extremely unsafe conditions that force many people to avoid them—preferring to risk death on the cold streets rather than to brave the violent, unsanitary conditions of some Toronto shelters.

Many people who use shelters risk physical abuse, assault as well as exposure to HIV, hepatitis, and bed bugs.
Many shelters do provide a safe environment for homeless individuals, but others do not. Seaton House, a downtown Toronto homeless shelter, is a dangerous place to be. This shelter is often referred to by the homeless community as “Satan House,” due to its highly unsafe and dangerous conditions.

‘Housing is not a privilege, it’s a right’
Seasoned activist Don Weitz notes that even the existence of shelter spaces for every homeless person in Toronto (and Canada) wouldn’t solve the underlying social problems exposed in bed shortages. Weitz, a fighter for social justice for 36 years, states that “Housing is not a privilege, it’s a right.”
According to Toronto’s 10-year housing initiative, “The best way to end homelessness is to provide permanent housing.” With Ford’s cut to the shelter support system, this goal seems further away than ever.
Weitz identifies that homelessness is a creation of neoliberal politics and policies at all levels of government. Weitz also says, “Poverty can be corrected, and even solved under a socialist government where the people are treated justly, as humans who deserve their dignity and human rights.”
Ford and Steven Harper have declared war against the poor. When a government puts tax cuts for the rich ahead of the needs of its most vulnerable citizens, people must fight back.

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international socialist events

TORONTO
The Politics of Food
A talk about the politics of food and eating, what we eat and why, and how capitalism puts profit ahead of human health and nutrition. This event is a fundraiser for the Marxism 2013 conference, and will help pay for registration costs for students across Toronto. A full, locally-sourced vegetarian meal is included and refreshments will be available.
Tickets are available at the door; PWYC between \$5-20
Sun, May 5, 4-8pm
Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil St. (southeast of College & Spadina; nearest TTC: Queen’s Park)
Organized by York University International Socialists
Info: yorkusocialists@gmail.com

Marxism 2013: Revolution In Our Time
Weekend-long conference of ideas to change the world
May 31 - June 2
Ryerson University
55 Gould St.
www.marxism2013.com
#riot2013
Info: reports@socialist.ca

YORK UNIVERSITY
Socialist discussions
On-going throughout the summer
York University, 441 Student Centre
Info: yorkusocialists@gmail.com

VANCOUVER
What will an NDP victory mean for the 99%?
After more than a decade of rule by the Liberals—a party of the 1%—it will be a tremendous victory to kick them out. However, the NDP platform of “small practical steps” means that most of the damage done by the Liberals will remain intact. Join us for a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the NDP and how we can build the movements that we will need to defend the public sector, wages and the environment.
Sat, May 11, 1pm
Langara College, room A218
100 W. 49th Ave.
Organized by Vancouver International Socialists
Info: vancouver.socialists@gmail.com

peace & justice events

TORONTO
Mayworks: Festival of Working People and the Arts
May 1 - 15
For info: http://mayworks.ca/

OTTAWA
Million First People’s March
Friday, June 21
Parliament Hill
For info: http://on.fb.me/14Htjes

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RESISTANCE PRESS BOOK ROOM

EARTH DAY: MONTREAL
by DEBORAH MURRAY

ON APRIL 22, there were 50,000 people in Montreal for Earth Day. Earth Day began in 1970 as radicalization against the the Vietnam War began raising awareness about environmental destruction. More recently, these celebrations have helped mobilize people against Harper’s war on the earth, and other environmental injustices.

Earth Day in Vancouver has helped build opposition to tar sands pipelines, and in Montreal against the “Plan nord” of exploiting natural resources on indigenous land. Last year, April 22 took place in the context of the historic Quebec student strike, and drew 300,000 people--linking the student strike, environmental justice movement, and locked out workers from Alma. With rank-and-file resistance and solidarity, the Alma workers resisted austerity and Quebec students won their strike--the latter toppling the government in the process, and increasing support for the left electoral alternative Quebec solidaire.

Since last year, Idle No More has emerged to radicalize the environmental movement and lead the fight against Harper. As the Quebec student union ASSE wrote in January, “Last year



the streets of Quebec vibrated to the rhythm of hundreds of thousands of marching feet, as our student strike against an increase in university tuition fees blossomed into the political awakening of a society. Today, malls and public squares and railways across Canada are vibrating to another rhythm, the drum beat of a surging and inspiring movement of Indigenous peoples, for cultural renewal, for land rights, for environmental protection, and for decolonization...Now is the time for overcoming old divides by building new alliances. For too long native and non-native peoples have been pitted against another, precisely because this elite feared nothing more than the discovery of our mutual interests.”

Earth Day in Montreal this year united Idle No More activists, students, workers, and members of Quebec solidaire. This can help build momentum for the solidarity spring and sovereignty summer.

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RESISTING HARPER’S ATTACKS ON CHOICE



by LAURA KAMINKER

ON A cold, wet April morning, pro-choice activists from Mississauga and Toronto turned out with signs and banners to stand up for women’s reproductive rights. Passing motorists greeted them with honks of support and raised fists of solidarity.

The protesters were picketing the office of MP Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga-East-Cooksville), one of three Conservative MPs who called on the RCMP to investigate all later-term abortions performed in Canada as possible homicides. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin) and Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright) also signed the letter to the RCMP.

This was the latest in an ongoing series of attempts to limit – or destroy – abortion rights in Canada. These threats have included a “fetal homicide bill” that would have opened the door to re-criminalizing abortion, Motion 312 calling for a parliamentary committee to study “when life begins,” and Motion 408 against sex-selection abortion.

Like all these attempts to curtail abortion rights, Lizon distorts reality. According to the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada, less than 0.4 per cent of all abortions in Canada are performed when the pregnancy is at 20 weeks or more. They are almost always in cases of severe fetal abnormality or fetal nonviability – that is, the fetus is dead or would not survive after birth – or when the woman’s life is endangered by the pregnancy. Women who face this possibility must have a safe and legal option for terminating their pregnancy. The MPs’ attempt to equate these necessary procedures with murder shows their utter lack of compassion and concern for women.

TAR SANDS LOBBY TRIES TO STOP DEMOCRACY
by JESSE MCLAREN

THERE IS massive opposition to tar sands pipelines that head west. Thousands have written to and participated in public hearings, over 100 First Nations, several cities and the BC NDP have all made their determination to stop the pipelines clear. In response the tar sands lobby is desperate to make sure that when it comes to the east-bound Line 9 project, there will be no spills, spills of democracy that is.

Last year thousands of people demonstrated their opposition to the public review of Enbridge’s Northern Gateway pipeline. Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver was furious: “These groups threaten to hijack our regulatory system to achieve their radical ideological agenda. They seek to exploit any loophole they can find, stacking public hearings with bodies to ensure that delays kill good projects. They use funding from foreign special interest groups to undermine Canada’s national economic interest.”

The National Energy Board is making efforts to prevent similar democratic debate from spilling into the public hearings on Line 9. Those wanting to comment on the reversal project have to fill out a 10-page application project about their “detailed and specific interest” to even be considered worthy of submitting a letter. The application form includes the following: “Before you continue with this form, refer to the Board’s Guidance Document on Section 55.2 and Participation in a Facilities Hearing attached to the Hearing Order OH-002-2013 as Appendix VI, and again as Appendix III of Procedural Update No. 1 for OH-002-2013.”

Reproductive justice

Abortion rights are a cornerstone of women’s freedom. The ability to decide whether or not to carry a pregnancy to term is essential to women’s equality, autonomy, and dignity. Women and men across Quebec and Canada fought hard for the decriminalization of abortion. Access to abortion in Canada is still not universal: there is no abortion provider in the province of PEI, New Brunswick’s provincial health insurance does not cover abortion, and women in the North lack access to abortion services. Plus there are broader limits to choice like the denial of childcare, pay equity, and barriers created by racism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia.

The reproductive justice movement in Canada showed how this broader perspective can mobilize to strike down the abortion law.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper continues to claim he will not re-open the abortion debate, while MPs from his government continue to do exactly that. In the vote on Motion 312 to study “when life begins,” 10 cabinet ministers voted in favour—including the Minister for the Status of Women Rona Ambrose, and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney, one of the most powerful people in Parliament. But the motion was defeated, and anger against it derailed the next motion, Motion 408.

All attempts to limit abortion rights in Canada must be met with swift and loud protest, as part of the broader movement for reproductive justice.

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STICKING WITH THE UNION
Carolyn Egan

Workers besieged

ONE THOUSAND Steelworkers at US Steel Lake Erie Works in Ontario have been locked out once again by their employer. This is the second time this has happened since the multinational purchased Stelco in 2007. USW local 1005 in Hamilton also fought an eleven-month lockout against the same company that ended in 2011. It’s another example of the ruthlessness of corporations, which are interested only in the bottom line.

The company is demanding a concessions contract and the members rejected the final offer by 70 per cent, with 92 per cent of the membership coming out for the vote. They are digging in for a long battle. The company wants to cut the maximum vacation to five weeks (those presently entitled to more can retain them), co-payments on benefits and a restructuring of cost of living increases. The membership of USW local 8782 was prepared to accept a stand-pat agreement.

We are seeing an ongoing assault on workers’ living standards as employers try to create a low wage economy in this country. The recent scandal around the temporary foreign worker program showed how the Conservative government in Ottawa is trying to whip up racism and divide workers one from the other and in the end drive down the wages of all of us.

The Chinese Canadian National Council is working with the United Steelworkers and First Nations, calling on the Harper government to scrap the program and replace it with something that would give any temporary foreign worker full rights of employment. They are working together and fighting for migrant workers’ rights, including the right to unionize and full rights to Canadian citizenship.

Although there has not been a mass fightback in this country—something union leaders seem unwilling to initiate—we recently saw the 50,000-strong demonstration in Montreal against the cuts to employment insurance. Local actions throughout Quebec and New Brunswick over the past months sparked the call for the mass rally in Montreal. This has now brought Ontario unions and community organizations into the fight as well.

Though there may be mixed feelings about prison guards, the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees has seen mass walkouts of guards who are continuing to defy a ruling that declared their job action illegal. Two members were suspended for raising health and safety concerns and this precipitated wildcat strikes across the province. Other unions are providing solidarity and the government is seeking an injunction.

On the Day of Mourning, which commemorates workers who have been killed, injured or suffered illness due to workplace-related hazards and incidents, there was outrage about the horrific toll of injury and death in the Bangladesh tragedy. The secretary treasurer of the Ontario Federation of Labour spoke how this could be the start of a revolution. In Ontario there are over 1,000 deaths from workplace injuries and diseases. In Saskatchewan the number of workplace deaths has doubled in the last year.

In Ontario the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party is calling for legislation which would create “open shops” to allow members to opt out of paying union dues and allow employers to refuse to collect them through payroll deduction. This would allow for “free riders” and severely weaken the ability of a union to defend its members’ rights in the workplace.

Unions are the strongest organizations standing between the ruling class attempt to impose a devastating “austerity agenda” on the working class and the poor. They have become the target of governments and corporations and the attacks have been hard.

Unfortunately many members have become alienated from their unions because of a lack of action on their behalf and this has to change. The membership has to push hard on the leadership to stand up against these attacks and as more actions take place more activists will take up the call and stand together with their sisters and brothers against these assaults on our jobs and services.

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SocialistWorker

Say good-bye to the BC Liberals

by **ANTON CU UNJIENG, BRADLEY HUGHES, DEVIN NATHAN-TURNER & ANNA ROIK**

MOST PEOPLE in BC will celebrate when the incumbent Liberals lose the election on May 14. Their twelve-year reign has been a disaster for the majority in BC; only the rich few and their corporations have benefited.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has documented the range and cost of Liberal tax cuts. Since 2001, tax cuts have savaged provincial revenues and resulted in an income tax system where the rich now pay a smaller percentage of their income in taxes than the poor do. The richest one per cent have received a tax cut equivalent to 5.1 per cent of their income while the bottom half of households have a tax cut of around one per cent of their income. The tax cut for the richest one per cent of households is \$41,000 each. This yearly present from the Liberals is more money than the average annual income of the poorest 30 per cent of households.

Corporate income tax rates have been reduced from 16.5 per cent down to 10 per cent, and the corporation capital tax has been eliminated entirely.

In total, provincial tax revenue has decreased from 11.6 per cent of GDP when the Liberals were elected to 10 per cent of GDP by 2011/12. This is a loss of \$3.5 billion in tax revenue every year.

Health care

The only area of government program spending that hasn't decreased relative to GDP is health care, but it has barely improved. In 2001 health care spending by the province was 7.9 per cent of GDP, in 2011 it was eight per cent. All other program spending—including education, social services and housing—declined between 2001 and 2011. As a consequence, total spending by the province went from 22.7 per cent of GDP in 2001 down to 19.9 per cent of GDP in 2011.

The number of hospital beds per capita has decreased by 17 per cent between 2001 and 2011, largely due to the Liberals' decisions to close hospitals. These cuts have produced an epidemic of "hallway



Teachers' union rally against the BC Liberals (photo by Caelie Frampton, Flickr)

health care." Patients are regularly left in beds in hallways because the hospitals are forced to operate over capacity.

Out of ten provinces in 2001, the BC government was second in terms of per capita spending on health care. By 2011 BC dropped down to second last.

The president of the BC Nurses' Union, Debra McPherson, says, "BC currently has the fewest number of nurses for the size of population of any province or territory in the country."

Education

Under the Liberal government, teachers were stripped of their bargaining rights and \$336 million annually was cut from public education. The Liberal government refused to negotiate with the teachers on class sizes and composition.

Later, Bill 22 was introduced which not only prohibited teachers from bargaining those key issues, but also imposed a two-year wage freeze. Despite the BC Supreme Court ruling that the bargaining rights of teachers were to be reinstated, the key issues concerning our teachers have yet to be resolved.

In 2002, the Liberal government deregulated tuition fee increases. As a result, students are currently paying more than twice the amount they would have to pay if tuition fees only increased at the rate of inflation. On top of that, BC offers the lowest level of non-repayable student financial aid of any province. This leaves the average BC student with a burden of \$27,000 in debt.

Housing Crisis

At least 116,000 people are in a state of housing crisis. There are 11,000

visibly homeless, and 40,000 stay with family, in cars, or couch surf. In addition, 65,000 are at risk of homelessness because they spend more than 50 per cent of their income on rent.

The Liberal's policies are not only anti-poor, they are also racist. The Social Housing Coalition reports that "Aboriginal people constitute at least 30 per cent of the homeless population in the Greater Vancouver regional district, even though Aboriginal peoples make up only four per cent of the general population." Similarly, the gentrification of Vancouver's East Hastings area displaces mostly poor non-white communities.

Transit

The Liberals have prioritized roads over mass transit. They have spent billions to build the

widest bridge in Canada—the new ten-lane Port Mann Bridge into Vancouver. They are also pushing an expansion from four to six lanes on the Pattullo Bridge connecting New Westminster and Surrey. At the same time, the Liberals acknowledge that TransLink's current funding levels are inadequate to carry out the transit expansion needed in the Lower Mainland. Meanwhile TransLink announced in October of last year that it will scale back services.

Oil and LNG

The Liberals have not opposed the Enbridge and Kinder Morgan tar sands pipeline projects.

The Liberals are champions of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry. As Premier Christy Clark said, "It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity but we need to seize it. We have to make sure we can capture this moment." Their January budget estimated that the planned five new liquefied natural gas plants will garner revenues for the province of between \$130 billion and \$260 billion over 30 years. The Liberals claim LNG is clean energy despite the fact that the entire process, from extraction to transport, creates amounts of greenhouse gases rivaling those in the coal and oil industries. A commitment to LNG is a commitment to climate change.

After they're gone

The Liberals describe themselves as the "free enterprise coalition"—they are bought and paid for by the 1%. Their almost certain defeat by the NDP will be a joy to behold, but we need to build mass movements to force the new BC government to repair the damage the Liberals have done. The movement that has been built against the Tar Sands pipelines shows that this is possible. The state of our schools, hospitals and environment shows that it is necessary.

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Anti-choice motion defeated

by **JESSE MCLAREN**

SINCE HARPER'S first day as Prime Minister he has discriminated against women—from canceling the national child care program, denying pay equity, ignoring missing and murdered aboriginal women, and attacking abortion rights. The Tories have a long list of anti-choice policies, from a global "maternal health plan" that excludes abortion, to endless motions and bills. But their latest, Motion 408, was just defeated.

Harper is in a contradiction. He has a majority inside Parliament, and a bigoted base that wants to recriminalize abortion. But outside Parliament is a pro-choice majority, the legacy of a mass movement.

Not confident to directly attack abortion, Harper has been

forced to repeat his refrain "we won't reopen the abortion debate," while his MPs try to organize more support for their anti-choice policies, and the anti-choice movement tries to mobilize on the ground.

Last year there was an anti-choice caravan across the country, and then Motion 312—supported by ten cabinet ministers, including Jason Kenney and Minister of Status of Women Rona Ambrose. While the motion was defeated, it was used to launch another. Ambrose said she voted for Motion 312 to "raise concerns about discrimination by sex-selection abortion." This helped MP Mark Warawa launch Motion 408, calling on Parliament to "condemn discrimination against females occurring through sex-selective pregnancy termination."

Not based on any evidence that this is a problem in Canada, Motion 408 provided a cover for all the Tories' poli-

cies that discriminate against women, while whipping up racism against the South Asian community and advancing an anti-abortion argument.

But the anti-choice caravan was a flop, and was challenged by pro-choice and labour activists at every stop. Then there was outrage at Ambrose supporting Motion 312, and pushback against Motion 408.

Ambrose retreated, saying she would not support Motion 408: "The concern about Mr. Warawa's motion is that the opposition has positioned it as an issue about abortion so it becomes a very divisive issue." Instead of Motion 408 rallying a majority of Tories, Harper quashed it in committee—provoking a brief rift in the party before Warawa withdrew the motion.

The attacks on abortion have not gone away. In Ontario the anti-choice movement wants to defund abortion, reflecting and reinforcing the anti-

austerity agenda. Federally the Tories will keep pushing anti-choice policies, and the anti-choice movement will continue their false argument about sex-selection abortion.

But from hundreds meeting to commemorate the Morgentaler decision, thousands marching for International Women's Day—connecting abortion rights with indigenous sovereignty and the fight against violence against women—the campaign for abortion in PEI, the defeat of Motion 408 and a recent pro-choice picket, the reproductive justice movement is on the rise.

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