

# SocialistWorker

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## ALL OF THEM MUST GO!



**FROM THE senate expenses scandal, to Rob Ford's alleged crack video, to the Obama administration's attacks on the press, government scandals are the tip of the iceberg of how the 1% operates—through wealth transfer, oppression and the state.**

### Wealth transfer

Harper is desperately trying to distance himself from the senate expenses scandal, which engulfed his Chief of Staff Nigel Wright—former managing director for the private equity giant Onex Corp. While Harper's right-hand man intervened with a personal check of \$90,172 to cover senator Mike Duffy's expenses, Harper claims he had no knowledge, and Duffy has—in his own words—"remained silent on orders from the Prime Minister's Office."

Apparently a six-figure salary is not enough for some senators, who further siphoned public funds by claiming expenses on everything from houses, to travel, to time spent in Ottawa when the senate was not even sitting. Mike Duffy, fellow corporate media personality Pamela Wallin (who has ties with Oilsands

Quest), Patrick Brazeau (the Tory senator of choice for attacking Idle No More, before he was arrested for sexual assault), and Liberal senator Mac Harb have all had to leave their party caucuses—but continue to get paid.

Wright and the senators—all unelected, handpicked for their ideological loyalty, and representing the revolving door between corporations and government—are symptomatic of how the 1% operates. Though Harper feigned anger about the expenses scandal, his recent budget represented the same ideologically-driven wealth transfer from ordinary people to the rich. The basis of the austerity agenda—from bank and corporate bailouts to attacks on jobs and services—is to transfer public funds into private hands. The very foundation of capitalist exploitation is transferring surplus value from workers to bosses to generate profit.

### Oppression

At the same time, Toronto's mayor Rob Ford is embroiled in yet another scandal, this time involving an alleged video of him smoking crack and spewing bigotry.

According to staffers at the *Toronto Star* who have seen the video, Ford calls Liberal leader Justin Trudeau a "fag" and the high school football team he coaches "just fucking minorities."

This would not be surprising given Ford's history of racist, homophobic and transphobic comments while sober, or of his austerity agenda and its cuts to jobs and services which disproportionately affect women, people with disabilities, racialized groups and other oppressed groups.

The 1% depends on oppression—to sharpen exploitation and to divide the 99%. While jails are largely reserved for poor, racialized and indigenous people, the only "scandal" appears to be when a millionaire mayor is caught smoking crack.

### The state

Meanwhile, the Obama administration is caught in a scandal involving attacks on freedom of the press. First the government seized phone records of 100 Associated Press journalists when the CIA's disruption of an alleged bombing in Yemen was leaked. Then the government labeled a Fox News re-

porter a "co-conspirator" in the US State Department leak of a North Korean missile launch—allowing the FBI to secretly search his email and threaten criminal charges.

Obama stated that "As commander-in-chief, I believe we must keep information secret that protects our operations," and it's good to see the corporate media challenge the extent the government goes to keep secrets. But this challenge needs to be expanded to all those whose freedom has been denied for resisting US "operations." What of the freedom of Bradley Manning, unjustly incarcerated for leaking Iraq War information to wikileaks? What of the freedoms of the hundred men on hunger strike in Guantanamo Bay? What of the freedoms of the millions of people resisting US imperialism around the world?

These scandals are just the tip of the iceberg. It's capitalism that is the scandal—a system of exploitation and oppression enforced by the state at home and abroad. A few representatives of the 1% have been exposed, but as they said during the uprisings in Argentina last decade, "¡Que se vayan todos!" All of them must go!

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# First Nations Human Rights complaint exposes Tory racism

by JOHN BELL

**STEPHEN HARPER’S Tory government has been deliberately withholding documents from a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal looking into accusations that it deliberately discriminated against First Nations children.**

While denying Canada’s history of colonialism, Harper has continued it—maintaining conditions of poverty, inadequate housing and lack of resources that lead to First Nations children living on-reserve being five times more likely to be placed in care than children living off-reserve. In 2000, a study by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society found the federal government provides 22 per cent less funding to First Nations children than other children. The study called for more funding and support services to keep children safely in their homes, but the government has refused.

In 2007, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations filed a human rights complaint against the federal government, stating that “the Federal government’s failure to provide equitable and culturally based services to First Nations on-reserve amounts to discrimination on the basis of race and ethnic origin.” It took until February 2013 for the Tribunal to begin their proceedings because of government delays and legal objections.

The foot-dragging forced Caring Society executive director Cindy Blackstock to file an Access to Information request. In April, she received some 4,000 documents, about a quarter of which were blacked out, or redacted. These files were received after many of the witnesses had already appeared before the Tribunal. Now the Tories say there are 50,000 more documents, but it needs a delay of many months to prepare and disclose them.

This fits a pattern of the Harper regime: deny, delay and damage control.

Small wonder that the Harper government has done all it can to keep James Anaya, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, out of the country. For more than a year Anaya’s requests for a formal visit were simply ignored.

Not content to violate the rights of First Nations children in need, Harper and his crew have revealed their contempt for the rule of law and the very concept of Human Rights. Another reason to support the “Sovereignty Summer” called by Idle No More and Defenders of the Land, including the Million First People’s March on June 21 in Ottawa.



## Tories insult First Nations residential school survivors yet again

by JOHN BELL

**IN 2008, the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established. Stephen Harper apologized to First Nations for the Canadian Government’s role in the forcible assimilation that destroyed generations of First Nations families. Harper’s apology meant nothing. The Auditor General’s Report, issued at the end of April, accused the Tories of stonewalling the Commission’s access to records and documents outlining the horrors of the residential schools.**

An estimated 150,000 children were taken from their families and placed in

church-run, government supported schools. Subjected to physical, psychological and sexual abuse, the children were to be stripped of their culture, language and identity. Many thousands—the actual number probably hidden in government documents and correspondence—died.

The shameful practice can only be described as cultural genocide.

Most media outlets focused on the \$3.1 billion in spending unaccounted for in the Tory “war on terror.” Almost none reported on AG Michael Ferguson’s exposure of Harper’s Residential School hypocrisy: “We are concerned that the lack of cooperation, delays and looming deadline stand in the way of creating the historical

record of Indian residential schools as it was originally intended.”

Attempts by the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development ministry to block and delay the release of documents forced the Commission to take the Harper government to court. In January of this year, Ontario Justice Stephen Goudge issued a clear ruling against the Tories: “The plain meaning of the language is straightforward. It is to provide all relevant documents to the TRC.”

The Tories complain that accessing and providing digital copies of the estimated one million documents is too expensive. Yet they were quick to find the money to try and defeat the TRC in a long legal battle.

Even after the court ruling the delays and deception continue. The Commission complains that the scanning quality of many of the documents that have been provided is so bad that they are useless. The government counters that the TRC mandate doesn’t say anything about the quality of provided records.

The Harper government is launching a review of Canadian history and how it is taught. Their desperate attempts to hide the historical truth of the residential schools reveal two things: their racist contempt for First Nations has not evolved one iota beyond that of those who founded the residential schools; and their cynical approach to history reveals their intent to lie to and manipulate all of us.

## Liberals join Tories in restricting civil liberties

by GURNISHAN SINGH

**IN THE wake of the Boston bombing and alleged Via Rail plot, Harper rushed Bill S-7 through Parliament—reviving attacks on civil liberties passed by the Liberals in the wake of 9/11.**

Boston was shaken on April 15 by a tragic bomb explosion in the city, taking the lives of a few and injuring many. A week later Canadian media were covering the story of an alleged terrorist plot to derail a Via Rail passenger train. While the media focused on this event, the Harper government took the opportunity to pass Bill S-7, “An Act to deter terrorism and to amend the State

Immunity Act,” through Parliament.

Harper’s timing is suspicious, and even mainstream media have noticed, as the government blatantly used people’s fears to justify the bill and its attacks on civil liberties. The bill had been awaiting a third reading for months, when it was suddenly rushed through in the wake of the Boston bombing and alleged Via Rail plot.

The government is presenting events as if there is a choice to be made between safety and liberty, but Bill S-7 puts unreasonable power in the hands of a few and removes basic civil liberties. It allows for “preventive detention” without charge,

and probationary conditions enforced by the threat of 12 months in jail. The bill can also force people to show up at a secret “investigative hearing” without any charges being laid if the authorities only suspect that he or she holds knowledge of terrorist activity—again with the threat of a year in jail if they refuse.

These two civil liberty restrictions were originally imposed by the Liberals in the wake of September 11, and the Liberals joined the Tories in re-imposing them. The government used fear to pass the bill, and like other civil liberty restrictions, such laws lead to increases in racial profiling and discriminatory

arrests. All this power handed to the authorities will be abused, as it has been in the past, and people will suffer.

According to the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, “The preventive arrest and investigative hearing laws, in effect from 2001 to 2007, were never once used for their intended purpose, and every major criminal terrorism-related incident in Canada since 2001 has been disrupted and prevented without the need for preventive detention or investigative hearings.” Instead of focusing on the root causes of terrorism, the bill’s passage was timed in order to support the Harper agenda of fear, incarceration, and reduced freedoms.

## June 17 day of action against cuts to refugee health

**LAST APRIL 25, without consulting refugee organizations or health providers, Immigration Minister Jason Kenney announced drastic cuts on June 30 to the Interim Federal Health Program.**

### Bogus arguments

Kenney claimed the cuts were fair, would save money and protect public health. None of this it true.

First, denying basic and medically necessary health care for people who have been forced to flee war, rape and torture is not fair, it’s inhumane.

Second, cutting primary care costs money. By denying preventive medicine and forcing people into ER visits/admissions, with costly complications. This is not about saving money but transferring costs to the provinces and punishing refugees.

Third, these cuts threaten public health in two ways. Denying basic tests and treatment for tuberculosis is a public health risk, and these cuts are part of broader cuts to Medicare. It’s well known that the Conservatives want to privatize Medicare, and they’re starting with the most

vulnerable group in society, cutting their healthcare, blaming them for underfunding, and assuming there would be no resistance

### Resistance

But on May 11 last year, 90 physicians occupied Tory cabinet minister Joe Oliver’s office, along with actions in Winnipeg, Toronto and Ottawa—forming Canadian Doctors for Refugee Care (CDRC). On June 18 there was a national day of action in a dozen cities—with doctors, nurses, midwives and other providers.

Kenney reversed a small number of cuts, showing the impact of mobilizations but because it was partial and arbitrary it also produced confusion.

Since then CDRC has released a number of reports documenting the cruelty of the cuts, and along with the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers launched a constitutional challenge. June 17 will be the second national day of action, in a dozen cities coast to coast.

For more information, visit: [www.doctorsforrefugeecare.ca](http://www.doctorsforrefugeecare.ca)

# Tar Sands insider to chair the Alberta Energy Regulator

by BRADLEY HUGHES

**THIRTY SIX organizations have written to the Alberta Premier opposing her appointment of Gerry Protti as chair of the new Alberta Energy Regulator. The organizations include the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, the Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, the Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, Alberta Federation of Labour, Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, the Council of Canadians, Forest Ethics Advocacy and Greenpeace.**

The letter to the Premier demands that “Gerry Protti be asked to step down.” The letterwriters are concerned that proponents of Tar Sands development will be favoured in the new regulatory process. The new process also means that “fewer people will regulate and enforce Alberta’s environmental regulations.”

Gerry Protti’s long history of working and lobbying for Tar Sands businesses make him unsuitable to oversee the new board which will replace the Energy Conservation Resources Board and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development. Chief Allan Adam of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation told *The Edmonton Journal*, “We question his ability to chair the Alberta Energy Regulator with transparency and accountability.”

Rather than seeing Protti’s oil industry insider status as a liability, Alberta Energy Minister Ken Hughes told *The Calgary Herald* that Protti’s past employment as a founding president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers helped qualify him for the post.

Protti has also been Executive Director of the Independent Petroleum Association of Canada, and a senior member of the The Energy Policy Institute of Canada (EPIC). EPIC is a think tank funded by energy corporations. He is a past president of EnCana Corporation and former chair of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. The corporations exploiting the Tar Sands can be assured that their interests will be looked after.

His salary will be \$165,000 a year, which will put him well in the top five per cent of income earners in Alberta.

You can read the letter on Greenpeace’s website: <http://bit.ly/12XgMkD>

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# Israeli attacks on Syria create confusion

by PAUL STEVENSON

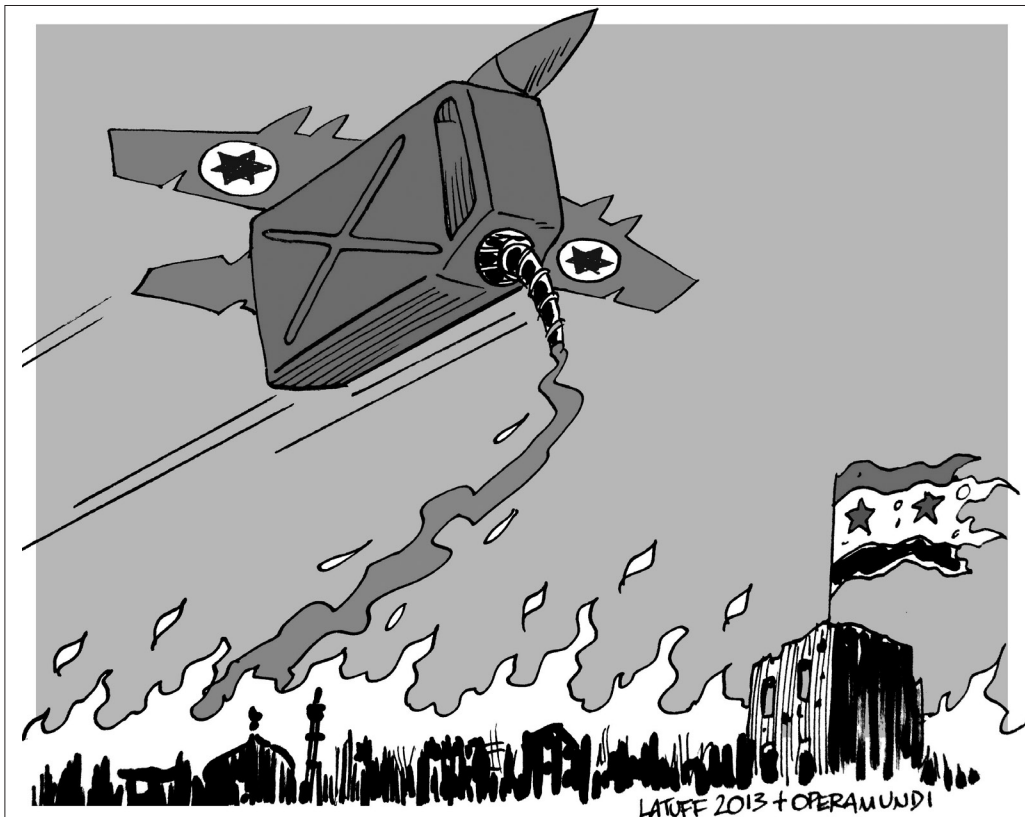
**THE RECENT Western-backed Israeli air strikes in Damascus and southern Syria are the latest example of a NATO ally attempting to undermine the genuine revolution in Syria and reverse the Arab Spring.**

The Syrian revolution began more than two years ago as an uprising against the repressive and neo-liberal policies of Bashar Al Assad. The economic situation was deteriorating for average Syrians for a number of reasons, including declining oil sales and increased desertification. The Syrian revolution was part of the Arab Spring, inspired by Tunisia and Egypt. Assad responded to the uprising with brutality, killing tens of thousands of people, and causing defections in the army and resistance through local coordinating committees.

## West’s role

The West has wanted to replace Assad with a more compliant regime, and to use the situation to weaken opponents—particularly Hezbollah in Lebanon and the state of Iran, both of which are allies of Assad. Like its interventions in Libya and Yemen, the West has tried to hijack the revolution in Syria. There have been threats of “no-fly zones” (i.e. bombing) or “peace plans” that undermine the revolutionary goals and transfer power to Western-backed elites. But the West’s main tactic so far has been indirect military intervention.

The Western-backed repressive Gulf States began to arm sections of the opposition and even brought in some of their own fighters to try and advance the armed struggle. NATO countries began to arm sections of the resistance and to try and create new Syrian National Council that could speak on behalf of the opposition even though it had little credibility with revolutionaries on the ground.



Now the West has escalated its military intervention, unleashing Israel and contemplating direct military intervention. After allegations of chemical weapons use by Syria, Canada’s foreign affairs minister John Baird was ambiguous about whether Canada would join a war, and there was an emergency debate in the House of Commons.

It is a great tragedy that the Syrian revolution has been turned into this proxy war between these various forces, each with their own aims. NATO wants to use the war as a means of weakening Iran in advance of a potential attack and to counter Russia, which supports Assad for its own regional interests. The Gulf States want to weaken the Shia dominated arc—from Hezbollah to Iran—to increase their own power in the region. Israel sees a golden opportunity to rid itself of Hezbollah and to continue with its plans to re-occupy southern Lebanon.

The Syrian revolutionaries are stuck in the middle. They immediately condemned the Israeli attack, knowing that Israel doesn’t have the interests of Syrians at heart—only using the war to advance their own interests.

## Israel’s attacks

For the broader anti-war movement in the West

the Israeli attack created confusion. For those who believe that the Syrian revolution was all a conspiracy against Iran and Hezbollah in the first place, the Israeli attacks would seem to justify that position. For those who support the revolution, interventions by Israel, NATO and the Gulf States are seen as a huge setback for the revolutionary process as they could undermine the credibility of the opposition, which can now be written off as an Israeli plot.

We shouldn’t be confused. Regardless of which position people may hold (and those positions are changing from day to day) the position of the anti-war movement remains the same: oppose intervention from any outside forces.

## Solidarity

As socialists, we know that no revolutionary process will be a simple conflict. There are dozens of competing groups and states that are vying to control the outcome of the struggle. This is also true of the revolutions in Egypt and throughout the Arab world. Our job is to support the revolutions, and the best way is to mobilize broad opposition to Western intervention—regardless of disagreements on the nature of the Assad regime—so the Syrian people can decide their own future.

# Iraq provides tragic lessons for Syria about ‘humanitarian intervention’

by YUSUR AL BAHRANI

**WHILE MANY are still debating the possibility of “humanitarian intervention” in Syria, innocent Iraqis are still paying the price of a similar Western intervention a decade later. Hundreds of Iraqis have been killed and wounded in May as a result of continuing suicide attacks, bombings and clashes.**

These are a direct result of US intervention, whose neoliberal and imperial occupation relied on divide and rule: arming sectarian death squads, imposing a Parliament divided along sectarian

lines, and even contemplating splitting up the country (whose borders were created by British intervention a century ago).

While the bulk of US troops (but not private contractors or military bases) pulled out a year and a half ago, the imperial architecture set up the previous decade remains. As a result there are both indiscriminate bombings and targeted killings, which continue to undermine real democracy that Iraqis have been aspiring to for decades.

The death toll in May was at least 450. The United Nations says more than 700 were killed in April,

the highest monthly toll in almost five years. There are fears that sectarian conflict in Syria could ripple across Iraq as well, and spread across the region. Clashes between militants and government forces have also been increasing in the western Anbar province in Iraq. The militant groups have been growing stronger in Anbar, which is very close to the Iraqi-Syrian border. There have been cross-cooperation with militants in Syria, mainly from Jabhat Al-Nusra or Nusra Front. People in Anbar are trapped in the middle of violence, which is escalating

everyday.

The current situation in Iraq clearly demonstrates the meaning of Western “humanitarian intervention,” which killed a million people and left ongoing violence. History is repeating itself in Syria, with the West arming sections of the opposition, unleashing Israel and contemplating direct military intervention. The real humanitarian intervention comes from the Syrian revolution itself, which unites people instead of dividing them along sectarian lines, and the best way we can help is by opposing Western intervention.

# Peaceful protestors confront the Western-backed Saudi regime

by YUSUR AL BAHRANI

**SINCE THE beginning of the Arab Spring in 2011, men and women in the eastern province of Qatif and other regions in Saudi Arabia have been protesting for real democracy and an end to systematic oppression. Protests are happening more frequently, which make it impossible for the Saudi monarchy to silence people. One of the most active groups that has been calling for protests and advocating for democracy is Qatifiyat. Qatifiyat (the Women of Qatif) is a group of women activists who are struggling**

**for freedom and an end to oppression. Women have always been in the frontline of the revolutionary struggles in Saudi Arabia. On May 10, men and women in Qatif protested despite the government’s continuous crackdown on activists. Protestors demanded the release of all political prisoners who have been detained since before 2011, after 2011 and the “forgotten detainees” who have been in Saudi prisons for decades. The demonstration was under the slogan “the case hasn’t ended.” By the “case,” protestors meant the cases of**

**all political prisoners and all those who are oppressed by the pro-Western Saudi regime. Protestors chanted: “We are not rioters, we are demanding the release of prisoners”, “Oh Qatif, oppression will not intimidate revolutionaries” and “Oppressors are stealing freedom and bread.” Their chants are reminiscent of the chants of Egyptian protestors in Tahrir Square: “Bread, freedom, and social justice.” Protestors were holding banners with political prisoners’ photos including the photo of Sheikh Nimr Al-Nimr who is at imminent risk of**

**crucifixion under secret trial. The regime has also recently launched a new series of arrests on pro-democracy activists. Despite the government’s oppression and brutality, all protestors have remained peaceful; women protestors were holding flowers. While protestors, activists and people in Saudi Arabia fight for their rights, it is important to expose the hypocrisy of the Western governments that continue to back the Saudi monarchy. It is also crucial to break the code of silence and build awareness.**

# Libya: unrest continues

by ANTON CU UNJIENG

**ON APRIL 28, rebels in Tripoli, the capital of Libya, surrounded the ministries of foreign affairs and justice. They demanded that the General National Congress immediately pass the “political isolation law”—a law barring anyone who held a senior position in the Gaddafi regime from government. An overwhelming majority, an indication of the vulnerability of the current regime, soon passed this law.**

Critics of this measure have pointed out that in the 42 years of Gaddafi’s rule, various senior officials defected, some even playing a part in the revolution. The rebels do not consider this adequate grounds to trust them, a sentiment clearly shared by a fair number of Tripoli residents. According to Al Jazeera, when the law was passed, “hundreds... filled Tripoli’s main square” in celebration.

The rebels, unwilling to take the GNC at their word, did not immediately leave the ministries and instead expanded their demands to include Prime Minister Ali Zeidan’s resignation, the freezing of a recently released state budget and the right to form a committee to take charge of the Foreign Ministry. Zeidan is himself a former diplomat under Gaddafi who defected and was exiled in the 1980s.

In response, a rival coalition was formed including some federalists from Cyrenaica and some former rebels from several towns, including Benghazi, where the Libyan Revolution began. This coalition expressed support of the government and threatened to dislodge the rebels. The Federalists have been demanding greater autonomy for the oil-rich East, which they see as having been squeezed of its resources and underrepresented in government.

The rebels ended their siege on May 12, leaving a bouquet of flowers. It is not clear whether this was a result of the threats from the rival coalition or because a deal was struck with the government. Zeidan has not resigned.

Two years since the death of Gaddafi, these developments show the contradictions of Libya’s unfinished revolution—which emerged as part of the Arab Spring against repressive neoliberal regimes in the region. NATO’s “humanitarian intervention” provided a military cover for polical counter-revolution to install forces friendly to Western oil companies, and to divide the revolutionaries on their attitude to foreign intervention. As a result the various factions that fought against the old regime split apart fairly quickly, not only along class lines, but also along lines of race, region, and sect. The recent developments show both the ongoing desire for revolutionary change, but also the fragmentation that “humanitarian intervention” produced.

“Unrest” has not ended: the siege at the ministries came on the heels of the bombing of the French Embassy (possibly in response to their imperialist war on nearby Mali); police stations have been bombed; both Britain and the United States have pulled staff from their posts, and—perhaps more importantly—so has British Petroleum.

The UN voted just last January to keep Libya subject to Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This is what sanctioned the “intervention” (i.e. bombing) by NATO in 2011. We must oppose any further Western interventions in the region.



## Why do we need revolutionary organization?

**CAPITALISM PRODUCES exploitation, oppression, environmental destruction and war. How can we connect resistance to these specific expressions in the here and now to challenging the system that produces them?**

Marx argued that revolution was necessary to overthrow capitalism, both because capitalists themselves would never voluntarily hand over their wealth and power, and because through the process of revolution ordinary people make themselves anew, and shed the backward ideas (what Marx referred to as the “muck of ages”), that divide us from each other. The need for a revolutionary organization flows from this understanding.

### Reform or revolution

Reformist parties—such as the NDP in Canada, or the Labour Party in Britain—argue that it’s possible to gradually reform capitalism and turn it into a more humane system and, maybe even eventually, into a socialist society. Even a cursory look at history shows that this is a utopian dream that has been repeatedly dashed on the hard rocks of capitalism and corporate control.

Innumerable social democratic governments around the world have discovered that being elected to parliament does not mean being elected to power. Power, under capitalism, remains securely in the corporate boardrooms—where the real decisions that affect all our lives are made.

Parliament has no power to abolish exploitation, oppression or imperialism and most reformist governments end up adapting to capitalism—like Britain’s Labour party joining the Iraq War, Greece’s PASOK government imposing brutal austerity, or South Africa’s ANC presiding over the Marikana massacre. We can see how the federal NDP leadership is accommodating to capitalism to appease Bay Street in the lead up to the 2015 election: denying Quebec’s right to self-determination, ignoring Idle No More, supporting war in Mali and promising to develop the Tar Sands. Governments who try to reform capitalism from above face capitalist coups—like in Iran 1953, Chile 1973, and the coup attempt in Venezuela in 2002.

### Struggle from below

Every great reform—from winning the vote and civil rights, defeating the abortion law, stopping Canada from joining the Iraq War, stopping the tuition hike in Quebec, preventing the 2002 coup in Venezuela—was won from below, through mass struggle that can be a training ground for revolutionary theory and practice. In Egypt, a decade of struggles for reforms paved the way for the revolutionary process that began in 2011.

As the Polish-born German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg wrote in *Reform or Revolution*: “Can we counter-pose the social revolution, the transformation of the existing order, our final goal, to social reforms? Certainly not. The daily struggle for reforms, for the amelioration of the condition of the workers within the framework of the existing social order, and for democratic institutions, offers an indissoluble tie. The struggle for reforms is its means; the social revolution, its aim.”

In this daily struggle, no movement is homogeneous. There is always an ongoing debate about which way forward, informed by different ideas and different politics that can lead to different outcomes. There are always pressures for movements to break the indissoluble tie between reform and revolution—either renouncing revolution with isolated reforms delivered by small numbers in Parliament, or renouncing reforms with abstract slogans by small numbers in the streets. Neither of these approaches challenges the 1% or allows the 99% to change their ideas through self-activity.

### Revolutionary organization

The solution is for those who are already revolutionaries to join together in an organization—not so they can make change themselves but so they can better build and unite movements in which they are rooted, to fight for every possible reform and through the process to win people to revolution. Revolutionary organization is not counter-posed to self-emancipation, but complementary—learning, generalizing and intervening to build the movements.

Leon Trotsky, one of the leaders of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, came to this understanding late in the revolutionary process, but it was an extremely valuable lesson: “Lenin’s position came through to me with full force. What had seemed to me to be ‘splitterism’, ‘disruption’, etc., now appeared as a salutary and incomparably farsighted struggle for the revolutionary independence of the proletarian party.”

The existence of a mass revolutionary organization was critical to the Russian Revolution of 1917, and this method of organizing began to spread around the world. But other revolutionary organizations were begun too late and were too small to spread the revolution; the Russian Revolution was isolated and crushed, and the state capitalist regime under Stalin created a caricature of a revolutionary organization in its own image—as a force that stands above the people, and tells the masses what to do.

But nothing could be further from the truth. The Bolsheviks, and Lenin himself, strove to create a party of the working class, where all members would be leaders in their workplaces, in their communities, in their barracks. It was a party that, even from its very beginnings as a grouping of modest study circles, listened to and learned from the class. As the party expanded and drew in more workers it became rooted in the struggles taking place in Russia—against the autocratic landlords and bosses, against oppression and against war.

The aim of revolutionary organization is to bring together all those who want to fight on every front—against exploitation, oppression, environmental destruction and war—both in the here and now and in the future, so that we can be more effective. This involves learning from the history of workers’ struggles internationally, learning from current-day struggles and forging unity in action. If you agree with these ideas, join the International Socialists.

## INTERNATIONAL



## Hunger strike challenges Guantanamo prison

**AMIDST PROTESTS and hunger strikes demanding its immediate closure, the Pentagon is asking the US Congress for more than \$450 million for maintaining and upgrading the Guantanamo Bay prison.**

The prison, opened in 2002 by the Bush administration, remains a symbol of the US’ imperialist and Islamophobic “war on terror” that has left millions dead, untold others wounded and displaced, and hundreds unjustly detained. Amnesty International has called Guantanamo the “gulag of our times.”

On May 17, activists wearing orange jumpsuits and black hoods—similar to those prisoners are forced to wear at Guantanamo Bay—gathered outside the White House to call for the immediate closure of the controversial prison, and to present a petition to US

President Barack Obama that contained over 370,000 signatures. The protest coincided with the hundredth day of the most recent hunger strike by prisoners.

Since the start of 2013, more than 100 of the 166 prisoners currently being held at the detention centre have gone on hunger strike. While none have died, 30 have been restrained and force-fed, with feeding tubes pushed through their nose and into their stomach. The United Nations has compared the practice to torture.

Obama has promised since 2007 that he would close Guantanamo Bay. A key plank of his 2008 election platform, his anti-Guantanamo stance signaled his attempt to distinguish himself from the policies of the previous Bush administration. However, the prison remains open and Obama has deflected blame by pointing to obstruction by the US

Congress. Obama called for its closure again in April, citing its negative effect on the US image internally.

The most recent hunger strike began in February, but it isn’t the first time the prisoners have had to resort to such a tactic. The first hunger strike of 50 prisoners began in 2005, and ended on July 28, 2005 once prison authorities agreed to bring the camp into compliance with the Geneva Conventions. Omar Khadr, the Canadian citizen who has been in captivity since the age of 15, was among the hunger strikers.

The Harper government has been complicit by refusing to push for his repatriation and continuing his unjust punishment upon his return, for its own “Guantanamo north” of secret trials and “security certificates” and by supporting the wars that have generated Guantanamo prisoners.

## Marriage equality comes under attack

by **DARREN EDGAR**

**AS FRANCE recently passed its marriage equality law, homophobic protestors took to the streets.**

On May 18, French President François Hollande signed into law a bill that grants same-sex couples the right to marry and jointly adopt children. But over the past few months, while the bill was making its way through the legislative process, a number of massive right-wing demonstrations have been organized in protest.

In Paris, on January 13, three large marches converged for a rally against equal marriage—with a crowd estimated at half a million people or more. Since then there have been other similar but smaller demonstrations, with the most recent on May 26. There have also been counter-demonstrations in support of marriage equality but these have tended to generate significantly less support in the streets, with the largest demonstration gathering around a quarter of a million people on January 27.

The reason for this is not that twice as many French people are against equal marriage as are in favour of it—in fact, according to polls, a majority support it—but rather that various right wing groups are unifying around this issue in an attempt to galvanize their bases.

This coalition has been comprised of various organizations claiming to “defend traditional marriage” or to “protect children” as well as various religious groups. Also, political parties such as Nicolas Sarkozy’s conservative Union pour un mouvement populaire (UMP) have shown no qualms about marching and rallying with Marine Le Pen’s hard-right Front National (FN) and other openly fascist groups. This has resulted in violence erupting at these demonstrations as well as increasing attacks in neighbourhoods and establishments popular among LGBT people.

This rallying together and sustained attack by the broader right so far has not been effectively countered by a similar unifying of the broader left.

This is not surprising considering how Hollande’s Socialist Party (SP) government has continued the policies of the right—from increasing the ability of employers to fire workers, to scapegoating Roma people and undocumented migrant workers, to criminalizing Muslim women who wear niqab and hijab in public. The SP has already jettisoned its election promise to allow foreign nationals to vote in upcoming local elections.

Social democratic parties can’t deliver progress with isolated laws from above, while fueling austerity and bigotry on the ground. Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s Front de gauche (FG), a radical left coalition, has been preoccupied by infighting but did organize a major demonstration in early May—providing a left-wing response to the government.

In light of the growing threat of reaction by the Front National and its fascist thugs in the streets, the left needs to build united working class resistance to bigotry and austerity.



# BC election: what went wrong?

**Bradley Hughes** takes on the argument that the NDP lost the election after taking too strong a stand against pipeline expansions. Instead, he argues the NDP could have won if only they had been bolder and posed a credible alternative to the Liberal austerity agenda.

For more than two years the BC NDP had been decisively ahead in opinion polls and their campaign had more than the usual numbers of volunteers in campaign offices across BC. The May issue of *Socialist Worker* carried the hopeful headline “Say good bye to the BC Liberals.” *The Province* newspaper, despite supporting the Liberals, had to redesign their post-election front page at the last minute from one with a headline which declared, “Welcome to DIXie land” (in reference to NDP leader Adrian Dix). So it came as a shock to both the left and the right across the province, when the Liberals won 44 per cent of the vote and 50 seats, while the NDP won only 39 per cent of the vote and 33 seats. This is a decline in seats and percentage vote for the NDP.

It was not a landslide for the Liberals. Voter turnout was 49 per cent, less than the 50 per cent turnout last election, and all parties received less votes: the Liberals lost 28,000 votes, the NDP 48,000 and the Green Party 4,000 votes. As a fraction of eligible voters, the Liberals were only able to persuade 22 per cent to vote for them. There is no way this should be seen as a majority mandate for pipelines, LNG, and more attacks on unions and social programs.

To win, the NDP only had to persuade a little more than 22 percent, less than one person in four. Despite more resources from individual trade unions, the BC Federation of Labour and volunteers, the NDP failed—and with hindsight we can see why.

## Too soft and too moderate

Dix emphasized again and again that this would be a positive campaign and refused to stoop to negative advertising. But the NDP took too broad a view of negative advertising. They did not campaign against the Liberal record of wage controls and wage freezes, on their dereliction of funding for transit, on the legislated increase in numbers of students in each classroom, in the decrease of hospital beds per capita, on the hospital closures, on the doubling of tuition fees, or the public sector layoffs. This left the field open to the Liberals to also ignore their own record and run on a platform of jobs and a strong economy.

The NDP did not campaign against the Liberal record because they did not seek to reverse it. The same neoliberalism that drives the brutality of the Liberal regime also prevents the NDP from offering any significant alternative. As a social democratic party working within the framework of capitalism in crisis, the NDP had no intention of opening more hospitals, or hiring enough teachers and nurses (their pledge to hire 1000 more teachers worked out to one new teacher for every 500 students), or lowering tuition fees, etc. Instead the NDP campaigned on “change for the better, one practical step at a time.”

This is not the first time the NDP has clutched defeat from the jaws of victory by lowering horizons. Shortly after the Liberals were first elected in 2001 there were mass rallies against the cuts, resulting in the Liberals being hated. In 2004



BC NDP leader Adrian Dix and supporters

a hospital workers’ strike against draconian legislation produced a near general strike across the province, which catapulted the NDP to lead in the polls. But the trade union leadership didn’t support the strike and then-NDP-leader Carole James said she would not scrap the hated legislation; by 2005 the NDP fell in the polls and lost the election.

This election—with the exception of their opposition to the Enbridge and Kinder-Morgan pipelines—the NDP platform consisted of timid tinkering around the edges of twelve years of Liberal devastation of wages, transit, social programs, and education. The Liberal tax cuts now cost the province \$3.5 billion a year. The promised NDP increases in taxes on corporations and the rich would have only amounted to \$988 million after four years; measured in tax cuts, the NDP was 70 per cent identical to the Liberals.

As *Socialist Worker* stated in April, “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... However, it only deals with a small portion of the damage done by the Liberals... 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.” In addition, taxing corporations and the rich were never front and centre of the public campaign by the NDP. It’s now clear that the platform tweaks were not enough to mobilize voters crushed by a dozen years of Liberal rule.

## Climate jobs

Ironically, the NDP defeat has been

attributed to their supposed radicalism against pipelines. Halfway through the campaign the NDP announced that in addition to their long-standing opposition to the Enbridge pipeline they would also be against the proposed twinning of the Kinder-Morgan pipeline. In an interview the day after the election with Global News, Tom Sigurdson, the executive director of the BC & Yukon Territory Building Construction Trades Council, said that the announcement on Kinder-Morgan was “a turning point for a lot of our members... When he out-and-out said that it was not going to happen, that disappointed so many of our members.” Thomas Mulcair, leader of the federal NDP, who supports Tar Sands development, had a similar analysis in an interview in the *Toronto Star*, where he said that the opposition to the Kinder-Morgan pipeline was too strongly worded.

The seemingly sudden opposition to the Kinder-Morgan pipeline may have played into the Liberal campaign of jobs and economy, but it didn’t have to. The problem was not that the NDP went too far opposing pipelines, but not far enough to propose the alternative of climate jobs. With much stronger corporate taxes, they could create jobs by funding renewable energy, retrofitting buildings, and creating rapid transit that would employ the same construction and resource workers who felt threatened by opposition to resource extraction.

## The ballot box and the streets

This would have required following the lessons of Québec solidaire and connecting the ballot box to the streets, with a strong platform that reflects and reinforces movements. In two ridings where the NDP can-

didates had links to movements outside the usual NDP supporters they were able to increase the NDP vote and oust the Liberal incumbents, including Liberal Premier Christy Clark.

David Eby, who defeated Clark, has worked for the Pivot legal society, which campaigns for legal rights for the poor, sex workers and others, and the BC Civil Liberties Association. George Heyman, who beat Liberal incumbent Margaret MacDiarmid, was elected leader of the BC Government and Service Employees’ Union and more recently executive director of the Sierra Club BC. In both cases, they appealed to activists and implicitly stood for more than the NDP was offering. But these were exceptions in the campaign.

## What’s next?

The Liberals will be confident to continue austerity and disregard climate chaos, but with only support from 22 per cent of eligible voters they are vulnerable to opposition. It won’t come from the constant voices inside and outside the NDP calling on the party to move even further to the right.

Compare the disarray in the NDP to the enormous strength of the anti-pipeline campaigns. The campaign—with indigenous, environmental and labour groups—not only pushed the BC NDP to speak out against pipelines, but even Premier Clark has tried to look as though she might not allow the Enbridge pipeline to go ahead. This is the model we should use for preventing more attacks on housing, schools, universities and hospitals, a movement like that could even roll back the damage from previous Liberal governments—while raising horizons about a radically better world.

**The problem was not that the NDP went too far opposing pipelines, but not far enough to propose the alternative of climate jobs.**



# Revolution in our time

*The Arab Spring, the Occupy movement and Idle No More have inspired many people to question the existing order of society and to wonder if there is a better way. But what are the practical possibilities for revolution here in Canada? **Socialist Worker** looks at the history of revolutionary moments around the world.*



Workers' council in Chile

by **PETER HOGARTH & JESSE MCLAREN**

**“RESOLVED THAT this body places itself on record as being in full accord with the aims and purposes of the Russian and German socialist revolutions, and be it further resolved that this body gives the executive full power to call a general strike should the allied powers persist in their attempt to overthrow the soviet administration in Russia or Germany or in any other country in which a soviet form of government is or may be established.”**

This resolution was passed by the Alberta Federation of Labour in January 1919. The imperial rivalry that produced the scramble for colonies eventually pitted imperial powers against each other in a world war, which social democratic parties all supported. But there was growing resistance that revolutionary organizations helped coordinate.

The Russian revolution was a “festival of the oppressed”—legalizing homosexuality, winning abortion and divorce on demand and communal crèches, and granting freedom for religious and national minorities. Workers took over factories, peasants took over the land, and soldiers ended the war.

As British PM Lloyd George frantically wrote, “The whole of Europe is filled with the spirit of revolution. There is a deep sense not only of discontent but of anger and revolt...The whole existing order in its political, social and economic aspects is questioned by the masses of the population from one end of Europe to the other.” This was not confined to Europe: there was an Egyptian revolution, an uprising in

Afghanistan and Libya, and general strikes in Canada.

In August 1918, a one-day general strike erupted in Vancouver (the first in Canadian history) against the murder of socialist and anti-war activist Ginger Goodwin, and in December there was a mutiny of Quebec soldiers in Victoria refusing to fight against Russia. In May 1919, the people of Winnipeg organized a general strike lasting six weeks, during which they began to run the city themselves.

The wave of radicalism was violently rolled back, in Canada and around the world, and brutal counter-revolution was victorious in Russia and Germany. But it shows that Canada is not immune from the revolutionary waves that capitalism inevitably produces.

## A century of revolution

Revolution is so characteristic a feature of the modern capitalist world that the twentieth century can be described as a century of revolution.

In Europe, where capitalism began, there were revolutions in Russia in 1905 and 1917, the Irish rebellion of 1916-21, German and Austrian revolutions in 1918-19, and the Spanish revolutions of 1931 and 1936. Uprisings freed Paris, the cities of Northern Italy and Athens from Nazi occupation in 1944, there was a Hungarian revolution in 1956, massive uprisings in France and Prague in 1968, a revolution in Portugal in 1974, an uprising in Poland in 1980 and in Serbia in 2000.

China saw massive revolutionary activity in 1925-27, Pakistan in 1968, Chile in 1973 and Iran in 1979. Strikes and protests overthrew South African apartheid in 1994 and an Indonesian dictator in 1998. There have been uprisings across

Latin America for the past decade, and in the past two years revolutions across the Arab world.

None of these were declared by revolutionaries, though the size and influence of revolutionary organization helped determine the outcome. These revolutions all emerged from movements on the ground—beginning with a small, partial challenge to the system, developing through a broadening of involvement and a deepening of radicalization, and fusing political and ideological resistance with the economic power of workers to shut down production and create the possibility for a world based on people rather than profit.

## Life under capitalism

Revolutions are endemic to capitalism and break out when years of accumulated contradictions reach a crisis point. The Russian revolutionary socialist Vladimir Lenin wrote that a revolution is characterized by two things: “One is that life becomes increasingly intolerable for the mass of the population.” By that he didn’t mean that people couldn’t survive, that everyone was thrown into famine or complete deprivation. What he meant was that the small things that keep people going in the past under capitalist society begin to disappear for them.

There is this idea that everyone is happy under capitalism, but just take a ride on a busy bus route at 7am or drive on a busy commuter highway at rush hour, and see how many people are smiling. For many people, life under capitalism means a round of working 8 or 9 hours a day, 5 or 6 days a week, for an average wage that is the lowest it has been in over 30 years, with little or no health benefits or pension, at a workplace where you’re told what

to do by someone else. You then go home in the evening, possibly have an argument with your partner about who’s going to feed and put the kids to bed, watch some horrible show on television that you probably fall asleep to, and then the alarm goes off in the morning and you do it all over again.

Saying people are happy with capitalism ignores the daily experience of exploitation and oppression, sharpened by the economic crisis. Massive layoffs in manufacturing in Ontario have taken away the opportunity from thousands of clocking in and being a wage slave for 8-10 hours a day and keeping themselves living in the way they were used to in the past. The anti-choice movement is calling for the defunding of abortion, governments are cutting services for people with disabilities and scapegoating migrant workers. The fact that voter turnouts are at record lows is not because people are happy or apathetic, but because they don’t see social democracy as a vehicle to improve their lives.

## Capitalist crises

The second condition Lenin identified for a revolutionary situation to occur was that “the ruling class also cannot continue in the same way.” We are in the midst of the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression, and the Cyprus government’s move to raid people’s bank accounts shows the extent to which the 1% will go to maintain their profits. Canada has not had that level of economic crisis at this point, but its integration with the global economy ties Canada to its fate.

Economic crisis has also produced an ideological crisis. After a generation of attacking the “excesses” of government services and extol-

ling the virtues of the free market, governments had to rush to bail out banks and corporations with public funds, and then justify why jobs and services would not be bailed out but cut instead. The inability of social democratic governments to offer any alternatives has heightened political polarization, with the growth of radical left and far right parties.

Economic crisis is also sharpening imperial rivalries, which attack oppressed nations and pit imperial powers against each other: the war in Georgia pitted the US against Russia, the periodic crises in North Korea and resource wars in Africa pit the US against China, NATO powers split over Iraq and argued over Libya. The massive demonstrations against the Iraq War—mobilizing at its peak 30 million people around the world (including hundreds of thousands across Canada, stopping our government’s direct participation) shows how imperialism can spark resistance.

Meanwhile, capitalism’s war on the environment and indigenous land is provoking growing resistance—including to Canada’s Tar Sands development and pipelines. As CO2 emissions pass a historic threshold, we can anticipate further “natural disasters” which the 1% will attempt to profit from, and which ordinary people will resist.

## From resistance to revolution

Canada is not in a period of broad economic resistance like the general strikes in Greece, or strike waves in revolutionary Egypt. But there have been inspiring fights like Alma, Quebec, and there is political and ideological resistance. The first mass sentiment in the wake of the Egyptian revolution was social democratic re-

form—through the Orange Wave for the NDP, even if the party is unable to stop imperialist wars, economic crises and climate chaos. At the same time, voter turnouts have been at historically low levels—coinciding with the Occupy movement and one of its slogans, “the system’s not broken, it was built this way.” Occupy radicalized people against the 1%, while Idle No More exposes the colonial foundations that need to be uprooted. The Quebec student strike demonstrated the mass democratic structures necessary to mobilize hundreds of thousands of students, a model of the rank-and-file networks necessary to coordinate mass workers’ strikes.

A revolution in Canada would need to hugely expand and unite all these elements—mass opposition to the 1% and solidarity amongst the 99%, democratic structures to fuse political with economic resistance, and a radical transformation of society and its relationship with nature. Like Egypt, this wouldn’t be a single event but an unfolding process driven by working class resistance, overcoming the separation between economics and politics. As Rosa Luxemburg analyzed in *The Mass Strike*, “the economic struggle is the transmitter from one political centre to another; the political struggle is the periodic fertilisation of the soil for the economic struggle.”

Revolution in Canada, against the Canadian 1%, is both necessary and possible, and even if it can’t be predicted it can be influenced. Revolutions emerge from movements on the ground and progress through struggle, shaped by ideas and organization. With a revolutionary perspective, we can help build movements as broad as possible, connecting anti-oppression and ecological movements to working class struggle, while building revolutionary organization.

## Class struggle in Egypt swells after the revolution

by **AHMED ELBASSIOUNY**

**IT HAS been two years since the eruption of the Egyptian Revolution in 2011 that shook the country and the world. The people demanded common things like social justice, democracy and freedom of speech. Two years later, it’s important to look back and see what has changed and what has been achieved so far.**

Social injustice moved people into Tahrir Square. They protested police brutality and corruption and the regime of Hosni Mubarak, which had presided over severe inequality. The gap between the rich and the poor was getting bigger every year, with the ruling class getting richer and richer while the lower class struggled for survival. Around 40 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line.

After the toppling of Mubarak and elections which brought the Muslim Brotherhood to power, the economy continues

to go downhill. The new government, relying on loans from the IMF, has put increasing the living standards of the majority of Egyptians at the bottom of its list of priorities. One would think that improving the livelihood of those who were struggling to make a living, and who started a revolution over it, would be valued more highly, but the government has chosen to inflate prices on basic products and services, in an attempt to “fix” the economy, instead of raising taxes and prices of luxury/leisurely products and services. Prices of food, cigarettes, soft drinks and gas are sky-rocketing.

The government’s insensitivity to the struggle of the diminishing middle class and the already suffering lower class has created more anger in the streets and disappointment in the way the revolution has turned out so far.

That anger has resulted in strikes and protests in different sectors. This is driving a wedge between the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood, which wants

to preserve the rule of the 1%, and the party’s base, which includes many poor and working class people and activists.

The strike of rail workers has been one of the biggest so far, starting around the beginning of April. The military, which controls large parts of the Egyptian economy, has offered the workers a wage raise of around 60 dollars a month. While the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, in an attempt to break the strike, has drafted the train drivers into jobs for the Armed forces, with a six-month jail term or a fine of 5000 Egyptian pounds for those who do not show up for duty. In the face of this attack, the strike has seen lots of support from political groups in Egypt and human rights organizations around the world.

Shockingly, a group of Egyptian doctors, who mainly belong to the Ultras White Coats group of physicians, have launched a campaign labeled “sell myself” to express their anger at the low pay and

the corruption inside the healthcare system. During the campaign, the doctors offered to wash cars, sold tissue papers or sold medical textbooks on the streets, as a way to express their disappointment in the system and to show that their medical jobs don’t earn them enough. A UWC spokesman said “doctors daily pay are even lower than beggars. Doctors’ status is deteriorating.”

There have been strikes and mobilizations at different factories all over the country. Al Mahalla, one of Egypt’s industrial cities, has seen lots of those strikes. In general, workers were asking for better wages, more incentives and better working environments. Some workers were also asking for the toppling of some members of the trade unions—those “mini-Mubaraks” who still exploit the workers.

At the same time, freedom of speech has not seen many improvements—or any at all. Bassem Youssef, an Egyptian comedian who hosts a television show similar to *The Daily Show with*

*Jon Stewart*, was interrogated for over five hours for making jokes about the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood on his television show, *Elbernameg*. Bassem was then charged a fine of 15,000 Egyptian pounds for insulting the president and Islam. The television satirist is still not cleared of the charges filed against him.

The new regime is only concerned about the benefits of the ruling class. The Muslim Brotherhood government is trying to manipulate Egyptians and enforce the idea that disagreeing with the regime means disagreeing with Islam.

The major demands of the revolution have not been met and more and more the people that made the revolution are realizing that the new regime is not any better than the toppled Mubarak regime. That is why the people are demanding mass demonstrations in Tahrir Square, as well as all over the country, and demanding the president resign. The revolution continues.





# Horwath’s NDP support Liberal austerity budget

**BY TYING the NDP to the Liberal’s austerity budget, Andrea Horwath has missed a chance to help build a movement to confront Tim Hudak, and undermined the NDP’s next electoral fight.**

The Ontario Liberals have imposed a brutal austerity regime—attacking workers and the poor and slashing public services. Ontario Tory leader Tim Hudak has threatened to turn the resulting anger into a right-wing response that would continue similar policies.

In 2011 Hudak was derailed by the mass protests against Toronto mayor Rob Ford, turning him into such a liability to Hudak that he was not allowed to openly endorse him. This was part of the Orange Wave that catapulted the federal NDP into opposition based on hope for an alternative to neoliberalism and austerity. But much of the NDP leadership federally and provincially drew the opposite conclusion, that their electoral victories are based on pushing the party to the centre.

So Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath refused to challenge Hudak on his racism to “foreign workers,” declared a “buy Ontario” campaign based on hostility to Quebec, avoided environmental issues, and spent much of her time providing reassurances that she would balance the budget—freezing tuition fees and transit fares at the inaccessible levels to which the Liberals had raised them.

The result: the 2012 election had the lowest voter turnout in Ontario history, with no change to the combined Tory-Liberal vote, and the NDP only gaining votes from the greens. Some new NDP MPPs had roots in progressive movements, like Jonah Schein, and outside the legislature opposition to austerity continued with the inspiring Occupy movement, student protests and occupations against tuition hikes, and 20,000 workers marching on Queen’s Park, demanding taxes on the rich, corporations and banks.

The Ontario NDP could have magnified the movements and turned an election into a referendum against austerity, exposing both the Liberals and Tories. But instead Horwath counterposed the ballot box and the streets and supported McGuinty’s budget with minor tweaks: a 2 per cent tax on the rich that goes straight to the banks for the deficit, and transferring money to child care, hospitals and social assistance from education and health care.

Then McGuinty declared war on the teachers with Bill 115, triggering an explosion of high school walkouts supporting the teachers. The Liberals lost their seat in Kitchener-Waterloo in a by-election seen as a referendum on Bill 115. But overall the NDP leadership did not campaign against Bill 115, allowing Tim Hudak to carve out an even more reactionary position against workers.

With falling support and mounting scandals, McGuinty prorogued Parliament until the Liberal convention—and cynically lifted Bill 115 just beforehand. But 30,000 people marched on the Liberal convention on January 26, with 125 buses from across the province—in the Rally for Rights and Democracy, organized by the Ontario Federation of Labour. Horwath didn’t even bother showing up.

Despite attacking people on social assistance and people with disabilities, the Liberals are trying to coalesce the anti-Tory vote around Kathleen Wynne. Horwath is providing a progressive cover to the Liberals by twice supporting their budget—again with tiny tweaks like a small reduction in auto insurance premiums, some funding for youth jobs and homeware, and a financial accountability officer. But what’s the point of keeping track of endless attacks on jobs and services if you’re not going to significantly challenge them?

Horwath is in a vicious cycle of supporting the Liberals to avoid an election, and by supporting them undermining the NDP’s chances in the next election. To challenge the Tories we need to expose the Liberals and build a rank-and-file movement to fight austerity—working with NDP activists to push their party leadership to magnify the movements outside the legislature instead of trying to contain them within it.

# OPINION



A memorial service for miners killed at Marikana in August 2012 (pic: South African government)

## New strike at Marikana follows shooting of union militant

*Rehad Desai, spokesperson of the Marikana Support Campaign, writes on the growing tension between unions in South African mines since last year’s massacre of striking miners.*

**MINERS AT Lonmin’s Marikana platinum mine in South Africa struck unofficially on Tuesday of this week over the shooting of a union rep. The walkout closed the entire mine.**

Steve Khululekile was gunned down as he watched a football match near Rustenburg last Saturday. Thousands gathered to mourn his death.

Steve was a regional organizer for the AMCU union in Lonmin’s mines in Marikana. His is the latest death in a wave of killings that began last year.

The AMCU union grew during a miners’ dispute last August. Police massacred 34 striking miners as they gathered in Marikana.

The strike saw growing tensions between the newer, more militant, AMCU and the NUM union.

Steve was the charismatic former NUM union chairperson. He opposed corruption in the union.

He also led action and was fired, which led to an unofficial strike in 2011. Workers

deserted the NUM for not supporting him and the AMCU became the majority union at Lonmin.

Numerous union officials lost their cushy jobs and generous perks. These former officials are very angry about having to go back into the mines on paltry wages.

This is a weakness for the NUM.

The Marikana Commission of Inquiry is investigating last year’s massacre.

### Testify

Some of those due to testify at the commission have been killed, including union officials in the AMCU and NUM unions.

Local NUM branch secretary Daluvuyo Bongo was shot dead before he gave his testimony to the commission.

Many workers believe that police, or union officials, are behind the killings.

Short bursts of gunfire from the police on the day of the Marikana massacre killed three of the four strike leaders. Some say they were targeted by security forces.

Some 270 striking miners were disgracefully charged with murder after the police massacre—and these charges have never been dropped.

Seven of the miners have killed themselves.

The latest, Lungani Mubatyani, who died last week, was due to appear before the commission.

Miners who went through the massacre have received no assistance from the company or the state for their trauma.

Lungani was recently fired by Lonmin. He was anxious and worried about debt.

Some workers believe that the bosses are conspiring with the African National Congress government and the NUM to hold back the militancy of the AMCU.

Others say that the platinum firms and AMCU are conspiring to break the hold of the NUM.

The interests of all miners must come before turf wars between union leaders.

Originally published in *Socialist Worker* (Britain)

## Elevator workers’ strike impacts more than daily routines

*Melissa Graham, disability rights activist and member of the International Socialists, argues for solidarity between striking workers and people with disabilities.*

**AS OF the time we go to press, there are no talks planned in the strike that’s seen 1,400 Ontario members of the International Union of Elevator Constructors striking during the month of May—with no end in sight.**

According to Ben McIntyre, business manager for the IUEC Local 50 in Toronto, the union’s deal with the National Elevator and Escalator Association expired at the beginning of May. With no new deal, the elevator workers went on strike. Like many workers, they’re fighting just to keep what they already have.

But a problem is brewing that may make things even more challenging for Ontario’s elevator workers. If the maintenance workers’ strike continues, the agency regulating elevator safety in Ontario says it may need to shut down elevators for safety reasons. The Technical Standards and Safety Authority says it requires regular safety checks and is concerned that elevator com-

panies won’t be able to keep up with required inspections.

But while you’re journeying up those flights of stairs, it’s worth remembering that these are the workers who keep those elevators running every day and without them your commute might be much more exhausting.

Having said that, many people depend on elevators as a part of daily life.

I use an elevator roughly ten times a day. Until they develop an easily available wheelchair that can handle stairs, elevator workers will be an invisible army connecting me with the outside world. And personally I’d prefer that army to be well paid, well qualified, and in strong enough numbers to get the job done.

I’ve had calls from reporters expecting me to be angry about this situation, and I can understand why some people are upset and worried, but without this strike would any of us stop and think about the import-

ance of the work elevator workers do?

The Toronto Transit Commission is trying to make it easier for people with disabilities and other people who depend on elevators, while supporting the striking workers. They are adding buses and looking at their options for riders as the elevator workers’ strike continues. They are also putting Wheel-Trans buses in strategic locations to assist people that may get stranded because of broken down elevators. Wheel-Trans is the accessible public transit alternative for people with disabilities to use in Toronto when they can’t access the regular transit system.

Elevator workers are vital to the quality of life for many who live in Ontario, including people with disabilities. Let’s not let others make this a case of workers’ rights versus disability rights; let’s make it a time we support each other in solidarity, so that we can all have the quality of life we deserve.

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## REVIEWS



### FILM

# Sisters are doin’ it for themselves

**The Sapphires**  
Directed by Wayne Blair  
Reviewed by Faline Bobier

**THE SAPPHIRES tells the story (inspired by actual events) of four aboriginal women in 1960s Australia who form a singing group and go on to entertain the troops in Vietnam.**

Three of the four singers are sisters who live on a reserve in Australia’s out-back. There are many parallels between the shocking treatment of Australia’s aborigines and First Nations people here in Canada. The poverty and racism foisted on them and their families is the backdrop to this essentially cheerful and upbeat movie.

The three sisters—Gail (Deborah Mailman), Julie (Jessica Mauboy) and Cynthia (Miranda Tapselle)—go from the reserve to town to perform in a local talent contest, where they are greeted by racist jeers in spite of the fact that they definitely have the most talent of anyone there.

However, they catch the eye and ear of an Irish music producer and promoter (a bit down on his luck and not entirely sober), who is providing musical accompaniment for the “acts” at the talent show. The promoter, Dave Lovelace, is played by Chris O’Dowd. O’Dowd is the Irish actor who played the cop in the smart American comedy *Bridesmaids*. He excels at playing down-to-earth, sympathetic, non-sexist and funny—all great qualities if you’re looking for the

opposite of “macho” man.

And, in fact, *The Sapphires* does have some interesting parallels to *Bridesmaids*, even though the films take place in very different worlds, at first glance. They are essentially movies that portray women as they are, not as Hollywood movies would like them to be.

They’re also both about female solidarity against the odds.

Lovelace convinces the sisters that country and western (which is what they have mostly been performing) is not where it’s at and that they would make a great R&B/soul group that many (black American) soldiers in Vietnam could identify with.

Dave manages to get them a gig entertaining the troops in Vietnam and on the way they pick up a fourth “Sapphire”—their cousin Kay (Shari Sebbens), who was a victim of the Australian government’s forced adoption policy. Kay was forcibly taken from her parents and placed with a white family in Melbourne. She is “light-skinned” and therefore able to pass as “white,” unlike her three cousins.

This mirrors practices here in Canada, where thousands of First Nations children were taken forcibly from their parents and placed in residential schools or as foster children in white families, wrenching them away from their families and cultural identities, and leaving them open to sometimes horrific abuse.

This experience has made Kay painfully confused about her identity and is

one of the conflicts that arises between she and her cousins on their road trip in Southeast Asia.

The film makes some astute comparisons between the experiences of these women and the “brothers” they entertain once they get to Vietnam. There is footage of the famous interview with Mohammed Ali, who went to jail because he refused to fight in Vietnam, saying “No Viet Cong ever called me n.....”.

When Dave is trying to convince the sisters to look to Motown rather than Memphis for inspiration, he succinctly defines the two genres: country music is about pain and misery that can only be faced stoically as an inevitable part of life, whereas soul music looks at this same misery but insists on hope and resistance—if not explicitly, then in the raw joy of the music itself.

The same could be said of this movie, which does look at the racism and inequality that these women and their community suffer, but also shows them as strong women who lean on each other and their extended families to create a space for themselves.

At the end of the film we learn that one of the co-writers of the script for the movie, Tony Briggs, is also the son of one of the real “Sapphires.” We also learn that since the 60s all the members of the group have continued to fight racism against Australia’s aborigines, in their own way.

See this movie for good politics, great music and a lot of fun besides!

## LEFT JAB

John Bell

# Rewriting history: Harper’s days of future past

**NOT CONTENT to stifle the future, Stephen Harper has announced his intention to rewrite the past.**

It is well documented that the Harper Tories have limited scientific enquiry, muzzled researchers in the public service and yoked new scientific funding to crass, commercial outcomes.

Recently they used their majority on the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to launch “a thorough and comprehensive review of significant aspects in Canadian history including the following subjects and themes: A focus on Canadian history including but not limited to pre-confederation, early confederation, suffrage, World War I, with an emphasis on battles such as Vimy Ridge, World War II including the Liberation of Holland, the Battle of Ortona, Battle of the Atlantic, the Korean conflict, peacekeeping missions, constitutional development, the Afghanistan conflict, early 20th century Canada, post-war Canada, and the late 20th century.”

It seems that they are emboldened by their recent rewriting of the history of the War of 1812. The stated price tag for the 1812 anniversary—\$30 million—is certain to be as much of an underestimation as their fictitious budgets for fighter jets and war ships. And in return Canadians received a celebration of militarism, as a minor and often embarrassing imperialist sideshow was transformed into a paragon of patriotism and nation-building.

Another \$25 million has been allocated to transform the respected Canadian Museum of Civilization into the Canadian Museum of History. Insiders warn that political interference is already hampering their work. Some, like right-wing historian Jack Granatstein (who never met a war he didn’t like) argue that changes are a long overdue “correction” of a too liberal interpretation of Canadian history.

### Attacking research

In fact there has been a steady reduction of funding for libraries, archives and museums across the nation. In place of this independent research we will get high profile (and high-priced) “commemorations,” almost exclusively glorifying war.

Harper has always saved his most honest and direct declarations of his right-wing intent for foreign audiences. In 2012 he addressed the annual gathering of corporate CEOs (and the government policy makers who do their bidding) in Davos, Switzerland. It was there that Harper identified the war on science his government has conducted with increasing ruthlessness.

As reported in *The Globe and Mail*: “He said Canada’s investments in science and technology had produced poor results and were a ‘significant problem for our country.’ He said he intends to pursue free trade with the European Union and India and find new energy markets beyond the United States. Regulatory delays for mines and energy projects are also being targeted.”

I was frankly unaware that science was a “significant problem for our country.” I thought Canadian research into global warming and environmental degradation was known around the world. Oh...foolish me. That is the “problem.”

But hobbling science, in essence an examination of material

reality that points the way to future alternatives, is not sufficient. The other side of the coin must be a rewriting of the past.

### Rewriting the past

The Harper Tories—and their few academic front men like Granatstein—want to steer research and examination away from things like Gender Studies and examination of the past based on the perspective of victims of oppression and imperialism. Granatstein blames multiculturalism for much of the problem, pointing to the “the millions of immigrants who have poured into and continue to flood Canada” resulting in “very weak nationalism.”

Parroting Granatstein, Post Media hack Terry Glavin warns: “If it’s ‘a proud national story rooted in the great deeds of our ancestors’ you’re after, the very last place to go looking for it would be the history faculty of a Canadian university.”

So it becomes the job of history and its practitioners to build up nationalistic fervour. Canada’s “national story” must be proud and great. But what about acknowledging the genocidal destruction of Canada’s First Nations; the brutal conquest of the Métis nation; the early history of slavery and the racist response to the arrival of Black Loyalists after the American revolution; the oppression of women rooted deep in developing social institutions; the great examples of working class resistance like the On To Ottawa trek and the Winnipeg General Strike; the steadfast, grass-roots opposition to imperialist wars, from 1812, through World War I, to the great anti-war movement that kept us out of the Iraq invasion.

Harper et al are in a hurry to put an end to all this, as they gear up for their planned “celebration” of the hundredth anniversary of WWI. Anyone who has studied the realities of this, surely the vilest, most brutal and blatantly imperialistic of wars, has to wonder what there is to “celebrate.”

But we have to prepare ourselves for a bullshit barrage repeating that the root of our “great, proud national story” is participating in senseless slaughter and exerting our own imperialist interests in the world.

The opening salvo in the war to sanitize WWI has been fired. Stephen Harper used his parliamentary bully pulpit to attack NDP MP Alexandre Boulerice, who in 2007 had the nerve to blog that WWI was a “purely capitalist war on the back of workers and peasants.” Stephen Harper’s reaction to this entirely accurate description? “I find the comments outrageous, inflammatory, unacceptable.” Tories rose to denounce Boulerice, accusing him of “spitting on the graves” of brave Canadian soldiers and telling him that if he didn’t share their version of our “great, proud national story” he should seek another country.

Canada: love it or leave it. That is the level of historic understanding Harper wishes to promote—the history of bosses, generals and political opportunists.

He is right about one thing: history matters. That is why we need to fight to preserve our “people’s history,” history from below that remembers our victories, learns from our defeats and arms us for battle against Stephen Harper and the tiny capitalist elite he represents.

### BOOK

# A must-read resource for anti-war activists

**Empire’s Ally**  
Edited by Jerome Klassen and Greg Albo  
Reviewed by James Clark

**ANYONE TRYING to make sense of Canada’s mission in Afghanistan should welcome the publication of *Empire’s Ally: Canada and the War in Afghanistan*.**

Edited by Jerome Klassen and Greg Albo, *Empire’s Ally* is a major contribution to contemporary debates about Canada’s participation in a war that has completely transformed Canadian foreign policy and the role of Canada’s military. In years to come, this collection will surely become a foundational text for all subsequent criticism about Canadian economic interests abroad and their relationship to US imperialism.

As its editors explain in its preface, *Empire’s Ally* “addresses a critical gap in the social science literature on Canadian foreign policy and Canadian political economy—namely, the absence to date of a systematic study of Canada’s role in Afghanistan over the past decade.” But this text is not just another academic contribution; rather, it is a compelling intervention that connects scholarly debates to popular anti-war

sentiment and that equips both scholars and activists alike with a broader understanding of the social and political processes that lead to war in the first place.

Over the course of 14 chapters, *Empire’s Ally* makes two basic arguments: first, that the war can only be understood in relation to dramatic changes in the world economy and the nation-state system in the post-Cold War era—mainly the rise of the “Dollar-Wall Street regime” and the global expansion of US military power; and second, that the broader interests of US imperialism have shaped Canada’s role in Afghanistan, leading the Canadian state to entrench its “second-power” status in the NATO alliance, to deepen its relationship with Washington, and to transform Canadian foreign policy and defence to advance global neoliberal economics.

A total of 15 contributors—all of them with roots in the anti-war movement—provide original and engaged analysis about Canada’s mission in Afghanistan, and share an approach framed by critical international relations theory and Marxist political economy. Perhaps the greatest strength of their method is its refusal to isolate the mission in Afghanistan from Canada’s long-term economic interests at home

and abroad, and from the historical and political processes that have shaped Afghanistan over decades. In this respect, *Empire’s Ally* breaks the consensus of mainstream foreign policy and international relations experts who rely on either a positivist “realist” or a liberal idealist understanding of the war. As it gains a wider readership, this text could dramatically change (for the better) the terms of debate about Canada’s role in Afghanistan and its relationship to the US-led “war on terror.”

Another strength of this text is its orientation to anti-war struggle; indeed, *Empire’s Ally* is dedicated to peace activists in Afghanistan and Canada, and includes contributions from key anti-war organizers in Quebec and English Canada. Its editors make clear that their text represents the beginning of a much longer process of engagement and debate about Canada’s role in Afghanistan that will be enriched by emerging scholars and activists. Without a doubt, *Empire’s Ally* is a must-read resource for anti-war activists—not only in Canada, but also in all NATO countries—who seek the kind of analysis that goes beyond the limited criticism of the current mission, and that clearly establishes the link between global capitalism and the drive to war.



# 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 capital-ism 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 collect-ively 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 op-pressed, 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 move-ment 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 capital-ism 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 dif-ferent kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates.

**Internationalism**  
The struggle for socialism is part of a world-wide 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 social-ist parties. We support the struggle of work-ers 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-determin-ation 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 suf-fer from specific forms of oppression. Attacks on oppressed groups are used to divide work-ers 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 discrimina-tion 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 democrat-ic. We are an organization of activists commit-ted to helping in the construction of such a party through ongoing activity in the mass organiza-tions 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 Inter-national Socialists.



# A clean energy future is possible now

by **BRADLEY HUGHES**

**THE GOVERNMENT, the fossil fuel lobby and their media voices tell us that clean, renewable energy is utopian, that we lack the technology and expertise and that it would cost too much. None of this is true.**

Stubborn reliance on inefficient and planet-de-destroying power is a decision based solely on one thing: corporate petro-profits trump everything else. This is purely a polit-ical decision. Canada is twelfth in the world in terms of CO2 production per capita, and second in the world in terms of energy use per person. But it is possible to produce all the energy we need entire-ly from renewable sources. Here is a rough calculation of how we might do that.

## Energy use in Canada

There is good news and bad news in the quest to transform our energy sys-tems to a carbon-free sys-tem. The good news is that nearly 65 per cent of our electricity supply already comes from renewable hy-dro power. The bad news is that electricity only ac-counts for 25 per cent of our total energy use. Fossil fuels are still used for things like transporta-tion and heating. So over all, only 16 per cent of our energy currently comes from renewable sources.

No matter how we pro-duce our energy we need to reduce our destruc-tion of the planet in other ways as well. Currently the global average for per capita power consump-tion is 2000 watts\* (see note at end). It is possible to lower our energy use to this level without lowering our standard of living and it's possible to raise up the standard of living of those below this level without in-creasing their energy use.

Canada's current power use per capita is 7200 W. The Novatlantis Institute in Switzerland has shown how their country can low-er their consumption from 6500 W per person down to 2000 W per person. This can be done by improving transit and making work-places closer to living sites so trips are shorter.

Since the 1970s there have been houses in Canada that require no heat, relying instead on ef-ficient design, insulation and solar energy. We can build new homes along these lines and retrofit older ones to require less heat. We can produce more food locally and use less artificial fertilizers and pesticides that require large amounts of energy to produce.

In the 2000 W society, our population of 35 mil-lion would need a total of 2200 petajoules (PJ) of energy per year. In addition to our existing 1350 PJ per year of hydro power, we can produce the rest from clean renewable energy sources.

## Nuclear and biofuels are not the answer

The Trottier Energy Futures Project has recent-ly published *An Inventory of Low-Carbon Energy for Canada*, where the authors calculate the likely avail-able energy per year we could harvest from renew-able sources in Canada. Their inventory includes photo-voltaic solar pan-els, wind turbines, wave power, tidal power, geo-thermal plants, new and current hydro facilities, expanded nuclear power and energy from biomass. If we include the estimated energy from nuclear and biomass we can easily pro-duce as much energy as we are using now.

However, nuclear power is not safe to operate and

there is no safe way to store the wastes. On top of that it is possible to make weapons from the wastes for thousands of years after they are stored, so all nuclear power stations are also potential bomb mak-ing plants. Growing crops to create biofuels or using farm “waste” to do so will only increase the already too great burden on our planet from agriculture. So biofuels and nuclear power play no role in the follow-ing calculation.

In 2009 Greenpeace published *Energy Evolution: a Sustainable Canada Energy Outlook*, in which they include es-timates of the costs of the various renewable power sources. In both publica-tions the assumption is that there will be a grad-ual transition between now and 2030 and that the transition will be encour-aged by public policy, but largely implemented by profit-seeking businesses.

In order to get an esti-mate of the numbers of new power plants we need, I took the power estimates of each from the 2009 *Scientific American* article, “A Plan to Power 100 Percent of the Planet with Renewables,” by Mark Z. Jacobson and Mark A. Delucch.

Combining all of this gives an estimate of the quantity and cost of re-newable energy sources re-quired for 100 per cent re-newable energy in Canada. The total energy provided in this case is more than is necessary for a 2000 W so-ciety for Canada's current population of 35 million people. It is enough for either 35 million people who use 2300 W or 41 million people who use only 2000 W. This esti-mate leaves out the costs of improved transit, hous-ing and so on that would get us down to 2000 W per person.

## The money is there

The cost of building this infrastructure is around \$186 billion, neglecting the fact that as we build more solar panels and wind turbines, etc., the cost per unit will decrease. That is around ten per cent of Canada's GDP, not a small sum. Nonetheless we can still come up with the money.

The federal government, first under the Liberals and then continuing under the Tories, has spent billions on military hardware. In 2007, they bought 100 used tanks to continue the occupation of Afghanistan for a cost of \$1.3 billion. The five submarines that they bought from the British in 1998 are not all operational yet and so far have cost \$1 billion. The planned purchase of 60 new fighter planes is pro-jected to cost at least \$30 billion. The 28 new heli-copters are years overdue and billions over budget and will cost at least \$6.2 billion, and the ship build-ing program is budgeted at \$35 billion for 31 ships, of which \$25 billion has been spent so far. This totals \$73.5 billion, or almost half of what we would need to build a clean energy system. Under the *Canada First Defense Strategy*, the Canadian government intends to spend \$490 billion on the military over 20 years.

When the financial crisis hit in 2008, Harper assured us that Canadian banks were fine and un-like most other countries did not need to be bailed out. Like most things the Tories say this was an out-right lie. According to in-vestment group Wellington Financial, in late 2008 and early 2009 the Tory government bought \$125 billion worth of the most risky mortgagees from Canadian banks.

The combination of military hardware and bank bailouts surpasses the money need for clean energy infrastructure. Clearly, when the goal is war or the profits of the 1%, Tories and Liberals both have no trouble find-ing the money.

There are a few other places we could find the money: there are 67 Canadians who are “worth” more than \$1 bil-lion each. If we left them each with \$10 million—

# international socialist events

**TORONTO**  
**Marx's theory of women's oppression**  
Tuesday, June 11, 6pm

**How do we stop climate chaos?**  
Tuesday, June 25, 6pm

**Socialism from below**  
Tuesday, July 9, 6pm

**Alienation: why do we hate Mondays?**  
Tuesday, July 23, 6pm

**From social movements to revolution: what's radical?**  
Tuesday, August 13, 6pm

All meetings at OISE,  
252 Bloor Street West

For more info:  
www.socialist.ca  
reports@socialist.ca

**VANCOUVER**  
**Marxism & anarchism: what's the difference?**  
Thursday, June 20, 7pm  
Langara College, room A218  
100 W. 49th Ave, Vancouver

For more info:  
www.socialist.ca  
vancouver.socialists@gmail.com

# peace & justice events

**OTTAWA**  
**Million First People's March**  
Friday, June 21  
Parliament Hill

For more info:  
http://on.fb.me/14Htjes

you know, so they could keep a roof over their heads—we would have over \$130 billion. The big six banks in Canada had profits of \$30 billion, so a few years of their profits would help fund energy transition as well. Oil and gas revenues in Canada are \$100 billion a year according to a report by ACR Financial Corp. The same report estimates that between 2011 and 2015, \$275 billion will be in-vested in the production of oil and gas in Canada.

## Indigenous sovereignty, green jobs and ecological revolution

When we shut down this industry, all of that invest-ment will become worth-less and all of those rev-enues disappear. The 1% will not allow such a stag-gering loss without a fight.

This fight starts by sup-porting indigenous com-munities defending their land from Tar Sands de-velopment, pipelines and Harper's colonial and corporate agenda. We also need a plan for climate jobs that can win over workers in the industry to take on their own bosses and demand better pay and conditions building a clean energy infrastruc-ture. Ultimately we need an ecological revolution to stop capitalism's war on people and the planet, and to transform society and our relationship with nature.

\*A note on units: A joule (J) is a measure of energy. Raising an apple about a meter requires you to expend about one joule of energy. A watt (W) is a measure of power - the rate at which energy is expended - if you slowly lift the apple so it takes a second to lift it through a meter, the whole time you will be expending power at a rate of one watt. A petajoule (PJ) is 1,000,000,000,000,000 joules. That is enough energy to run 10,000 average Canadian cars for a year.



QS SAYS NO TO ELECTORAL PACTS

by JESSICA SQUIRES

**THREE GREAT things happened at April's Québec solidaire (QS) congrès.**

First, the membership clearly laid to rest, once and for all (at least until after the next election), that they were not interested in forming any kind of electoral pacts with other political parties. This decision was based on a clear assessment of the current political landscape, where even the most progressive of the political parties on the Quebec scene apart from Québec solidaire have shown themselves to be bankrupt of any real ideas to support the needs of Quebecers.

This includes Option nationale, with its veneer of social democratic ideas that led many to believe it was a natural partner for QS. Since the election, its focus on the national question in both an undemocratic way and in a way that excludes social questions has exposed it for what it is—a mere vehicle for its leader, Jean-Martin Aussant, to demonstrate his continued commitment to a neoliberal state.

Not even placing demanding conditions on such pacts was acceptable to delegates at the meeting. The idea that we could expose the hypocrisy of the PQ by requiring pacts to be founded on ideas like proportional representation and sound ecology, while abstractly interesting, was recognized as a failed approach from the last election and rejected by the majority as too electoralist and counterproductive, playing on the same field as the rest of the political parties. QS aims to do politics differently, and it can't do so by always playing the same game.

Second, Andrès Fontecilla was elected as extra-parliamentary co-spokesperson and party president. This role is the one until recently played by feminist and social justice activist Françoise David, who was elected to the National Assembly last fall. Since she is now in the National Assembly, she no longer plays the extra-parliamentary role that, for all intents and purposes, was created for her. After Khadir announced his intention to reduce his role as MNA by ceasing to play the parliamentary spokesperson role, that job fell to David. Thus, an election was called to find a new second spokesperson. Because QS adheres to gender parity, the new spokesperson had to be a man. So Fontecilla is seen as filling the very significant shoes left by Amir Khadir (when he wasn't throwing them at pictures of George Bush).

Fontecilla was seen as a viable, but long-shot, candidate by many, who expected the more polished and younger Alexandre Leduc to win. Both had successes in the last election, as candidates in their ridings. Leduc came in a fairly distant second behind the PQ in one of their stronghold ridings. Fontecilla came in a very close third behind the PQ's second, in a three-way race with the Liberals.

Fontecilla, originally from Chile, has a long record of support for anti-poverty campaigns, acting as the co-ordinator of several community groups in Montreal. A member of Union des forces progressistes (UFP, QS' predecessor) since its founding, he campaigned on the platform of strengthening the "party of the street" portion of QS' dual nature, arguing that QS has largely been reactive to social movements rather than playing a role in actually building them. He is also identified with a view of the struggle for Quebec independence that sees it as inseparable from fighting for a better society. Finally, his choice marks the second time QS has chosen a spokesperson born outside of Canada.

Third, the newly minted réseau écosocialiste had a presence that allowed for recruiting several new members, and for the group to raise its profile for the first time at a national meeting. Because it is new, and has decided not to form a formal collective inside the party, its efforts were limited. But despite this, members managed to positively affect the two most important discussions of the weekend: the debate on electoral pacts, and the concrete delivery of its major success at the last conseil national, which was to win a commitment to a political campaign to raise the profile of the party as a real alternative to the existing parties. The réseau has now developed materials to promote itself in an accessible way, and is working on building regional structures.

The new QS campaign is a synthesized and focused version of QS' major political commitment: Plan vert, a radical vision to transform Quebec's economy and its social relations to realize fundamental changes to the benefit of the environment and the social good. The details of this campaign will emerge from a combination of building in the local associations and the regions to ensure relevance to local issues, and a national communication strategy.

**Next steps**

Aside from its immediate need to retain the more than 8000 new members it has acquired since last spring, prepare for the next election, and roll out its campaign, the next big challenge for QS will be to articulate the next section of its program, on women and the family. There will be many opportunities to discuss the importance of fighting oppression in all its forms in order to build the Quebec we need.

One debate that some may attempt to renew is that around the wearing of religious symbols, but given the lack of welcome for that discussion to be re-opened at the conseil national in December, those seeking to reopen the discussion will have little luck. Defending religious expression is a principled position to take.



SUPPORT QUAIA, PRIDE AND PALESTINE

by CANDACE GHENT

**THE ANNUAL attack on the Toronto Pride Parade has been reanimated once again.**

In the last few years, the Pride Toronto committee has experienced a backlash from certain councilors, particularly around the inclusion in the parade of Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA)—a grassroots organization in solidarity with queers in Palestine and worldwide Palestine solidarity movements. Despite the fact that discrimination on the grounds of political affiliation is prohibited in city policy, there are still some on council seeking to ignore and override these grounds.

Specifically, there was a motion to direct Pride funding (which is an Arts application) towards the Economic Development Committee. Councilor James Pasternak is one of the members sitting on the committee and he has suggested offering Pride an ironically titled "diversity bonus" in addition to their funding if they were to decide to ban QuAIA from the parade. Although Pride Toronto and its allies are not backing down at this time on the basis of free speech, if for some reason it did a dangerous precedent would be set, making it easier to silence any groups Toronto City Council deems to be "too political" in nature by threatening to cut their funding directly or, as in this case, by creating an incentive for communities to police their own members.

Despite the long-term but dynamic shifting of Pride from its historical roots as a political statement to a chance for corporations to advertise, target coveted demographics, sell products and services and make piles of

money, there are still groups such as QuAIA which use the parade as a platform to shed light on their continuing struggles for human rights. Any restriction from council regarding QuAIA poses a threat to many of the other groups that also are not corporately sponsored or conservatively endorsed by council. The city evidently has few qualms with filling its coffers with the millions of dollars generated by Pride tourism, while giving less than a quarter of a million in the last few years to ensure its continued existence. Aside from being simply unsustainable, this is blatantly discriminatory.

Ultimately, what is getting lost in the conversation at times is the very real occupation of Palestine by the Israeli state and how this is affecting not just LGBT people and their allies in Palestine but all people in the region and beyond. The muzzling of QuAIA is part of a much larger effort to pinkwash Israel, which includes Israel's newest campaign promoting LGBT tourism, hoping for sympathy in addition to lots of money from tourists in "queer accepting" countries. This of course highlights one of the many important reasons that QuAIA's right to march in the parade is so important: to expose the myth that Israel is a "safe haven" for LGBT people, to highlight its oppression of Palestinians, Muslims and Arabs, and to challenge Canadian complicity.

June 11 will be council's day to make a decision regarding QuAIA's participation in the parade and Pride's funding in general. We need to support QuAIA—as part of repoliticizing Pride, solidarity with the Palestinian freedom struggle, and challenging colonialism both abroad and at home.

refuses to have diplomatic relations with Cuba.

At a recent Canadian policy conference of the United Steelworkers a resolution was passed that the USW will continue to work with Workers Uniting to secure the prompt freedom of the Cuban 5. A Toronto local put forward the resolution and it found broad support among the delegates present. Adriana Pérez, the wife of one of the prisoners, had earlier addressed the conference and was brought to tears by the strong message of solidarity.

What has happened to these men is a travesty of justice. They have already served fourteen years in prison and they should be allowed to return to Cuba.

STICKING WITH THE UNION

Carolyn Egan

How do we build a fighting labour movement?

**THE WORKING class and the poor are continuing to take a battering from ruling class assaults. Many activists in the unions decry the lack of action by the leadership, some comparing the general strikes that we are seeing in Greece, India and other countries to concession contracts that workers are often being forced to accept in Canada.**

While the level of mass struggle is not the same, we cannot allow demoralization to take over. If you look at the broader context in North America, we have seen the Wisconsin fightback which inspired workers everywhere, the Occupy movement, the magnificent Quebec student strike and the victory of the Chicago teachers against a city government which was hell-bent on closing schools and punishing the union.

Though in many instances rank-and-file workers lack the confidence and the level of organization to fight back on their own, we have seen examples of workers refusing to accept the attacks and claw-backs: the 1,000 Steelworkers recently locked out at US Steel in Nanticoke, Ontario because they refused to accept a concessions deal, and the refuelers at Porter Airlines who are on a long strike over decent wages and health and safety protection are two examples.

We have to understand the situation in which we find ourselves and we have to continue to build the actions where workers are fighting back. We have to develop solidarity amongst workers in different sectors and make sure those who fight know that they are not alone. A win against the assaults can inspire others to take action as well. One never knows in a period like this when a broader fightback can take place.

In Ontario the Conservative Party has made it clear that if it wins the next election it will make a major move against the trade unions. It knows that the organized working

class has the power, if it uses it, to thwart its attempts to create a low-wage economy and decimate the social safety net. That's why labour is on its hit list.

The unions are well aware of the Tory's plans and trade union organizations such as the Toronto and York Region Labour Council have made a priority of organizing against the potential attacks. A meeting of over 700 activists went through the arguments that the Tories are intending to use, assessed the situation in their own workplaces and set out plans to have face-to-face meetings with every member. Follow-up meetings have taken place and individual unions are taking up the challenge. It's an uneven process but activists must take advantage of this opening.

Because the unions are fighting for their very survival, many have recognized that they have to take the necessary steps to reconnect with their members. This creates the potential of rebuilding our unions from the bottom up. It creates a situation that allows activists to talk on a day-to-day basis with their fellow workers about what a member-controlled union would look like. This process can give the rank-and-file the confidence to push their unions in the direction that best serves the members.

If we examine how the Chicago teachers' union mobilized over a number of years to build itself into a fighting force with the majority of members actively involved and bringing the community, parents and students on side, it was this type of process. Activists prioritized meeting the members one-on-one and setting up structures at every workplace to move the struggle forward.

We have the opportunity to do this in Ontario. Militants have to take advantage of this opening and actively connect with their fellow workers and build rank-and-file networks in their workplaces that will have the confidence to fight back and win.

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# SocialistWorker

## Idle No More's sovereignty summer kicks off June 21

by JOHN BELL

**A RECENT major policy paper produced by the right-wing think-tank the MacDonald-Laurier Institute presents a scary scenario: "the possibility of a disruptive confrontation between Canada's Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities."**

The report is by former military officer and chair of Queen's University's Defence Studies program Douglas Bland. Bland is also author of *Uprising*, a novel about this very kind of confrontation. His new paper is notable in that over 42 long pages the words racism and colonialism never appear. You have to wonder which work is more fictional.

Bland joins right-wing journalists like Christie Blatchford and Barbara Kay in portraying the fight for First Nations sovereignty as a frightening confrontation between "them" and "us." Kay, in her review of Bland's novel, wrote: "Militant natives have the capacity to foment domestic terrorism of a far more consequential order of magnitude than environmentalists or even Islamic jihadist." This is the fear mongering and fictionalizing that supports Stephen Harper's approach to First Nations issues: division, racism and cultural extinction.

But what do indigenous activists actually say?

A call-out has come from Idle No More and Defenders of the Land for a "Sovereignty Summer". Their press release states: "Idle No More's founders and its chapters across the country have issued a call to build mounting pressure, including through mass non-violent direct actions to be joined by non-natives, to challenge 'the Harper government and the corporate agenda.'"

"The Harper government's agen-



da is clear: to weaken all collective rights and environmental protections, in order to turn Canada into an extraction state that gives corporations unchecked power to destroy our communities and environment for profit."

They describe Sovereignty Summer as a "campaign of coordin-

ated non-violent direct actions to promote Aboriginal rights and environmental protection in alliance with non-native supporters."

There is no them versus us in this struggle for sovereignty and justice. This is about protecting the environment, confronting the crimes of colonialism and bringing

democratic decision making to our communities and workplaces.

On Friday, June 21 thousands of First Nations people and allies will gather on Parliament Hill for a day of peaceful protest and solidarity against Harper and the corporate agenda he serves. Local events will take place for those who cannot get

to Ottawa. Everyone should find ways to join in.

What advances the cause of First Nations will improve the lives of all of us. Thanks to Idle No More and Defenders of the Land for providing a lead in the struggle between the 99% and the 1%—the real us versus them.

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## Business as usual breaks new climate record

by PARRY SINGH MUDHAR

**ON MAY 9 the concentration of CO2 in the atmosphere reached just below 400 parts per million (ppm) for the first time in at least two million years, a sign of looming climate chaos unless we transform society and our relationship with nature.**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released information that its Mauna Loa observatory in Hawaii detected that local atmospheric CO2 levels reached 399.84 ppm. For the last two centuries the level of CO2 in the atmosphere has been rapidly increasing from accelerated burning of fossil fuels such as coal for electricity and oil for gasoline. Most researchers argue that 350ppm is a safe level of atmospheric CO2, but no one knows for sure the level beyond which we will see a catastrophic rise in ocean levels and even more significant weather pattern

changes.

The amount of CO2 in our atmosphere is increasing on an average of 2 ppm per year, and May is the time of year that the northern hemisphere reaches its natural peak of atmospheric CO2. This year the yearly average is expected to be around 396 ppm. Most researchers agree that the last time our planet saw this level of atmospheric CO2 was 2 to 3 million years ago, when sea levels were

around 25 metres higher than their current levels. In that case the rise in CO2 occurred over thousands or tens of thousands of years. This means we don't yet know the consequences of this much CO2 in the atmosphere.

We have witnessed an increasing number of devastating weather events, and their frequency will no doubt rise as weather patterns become more skewed. One factor that has been widely

neglected until recently is the increasing acidity in the world's oceans as they absorb massive amounts of CO2. Because of rising ocean temperatures and acidity, an increasing amount of marine life lies in a dangerous zone of endangerment or extinction if our CO2 levels continue to increase.

In our capitalist system, the environment and lives of the present and future generations are always second priority to the generation of wealth in the hands of the few. This irresponsibility stands in the way of spending the money needed to shift to cleaner ways of generating mass energy such as wind, solar, and geothermal. Canada with its dedication to exploiting the Tar Sands has been worse than most in this regard. Reaching the 400ppm threshold is a warning call of the urgency of stopping climate chaos through green jobs and ecological revolution.

