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FROM TURKEY, to Brazil, to Egypt, people are rising up against austerity—no matter which government is imposing it—and demanding a better world.

From spark to revolt

At the end of May, a small protest in Turkey to defend trees and stop gentrification in Gezi Park mushroomed into a mass movement against government repression. While the immediate issue was the park, the protests galvanized broader struggles. Opposition to police brutality intertwined with Kurdish solidarity, and when the government tried to stop all demonstrations, including Pride, tens of thousands marched.

Shortly after Turkey, protests exploded across Brazil in June—triggered by public transit fare hikes, in the context of the government using the World Cup to displace poor people while giving millions to corporations. The protests also tapped into longstanding anger about inequality and inadequate public services.

One of the frustrations is that governments across the political spectrum are

imposing the same austerity: in Turkey it comes from the right-wing Islamist AKP, while in Brazil it is delivered from the left-wing secular Workers' Party (PT). The trigger for the protests is clearly not Islamism, as Western media claim, but capitalism. The PT in Brazil have joined other social democratic governments around the world—such as the British Labour Party, South African ANC, and PASOK in Greece—in cutting jobs and services, backed up by police violence.

From revolt to revolution

But there is growing confidence to resist. June saw not only mass movements emerge in Turkey and Greece, but also general strikes in Costa Rica on June 25 and Portugal on June 27, and rolling strikes by US fast food workers demanding a \$15/hr wage and the right to unionization.

Meanwhile the Egyptian revolution—whose outbreak in January 2011 sparked the ongoing mood of global revolt—entered a new stage on July 3, when millions of Egyptians took to the

streets and ousted the new president Morsi. This is a huge development from just one year ago, when Egyptians voted for the Muslim Brotherhood (MB)—the largest opposition group—out of hope it would provide an alternative to neoliberalism and imperialism.

As Egyptian socialist Sameh Naguib wrote last year, “It was natural that a large section of the masses would elect Islamists after the revolution. The masses do not leap to an integrated revolutionary consciousness all of a sudden. But the election of the Brotherhood and the more hard-line Salafists is not the end of the story. It is a transitional phase...It requires an intense and patient struggle to win the majority to our revolutionary project and to the necessity of a second Egyptian revolution.”

New horizons

While the MB's base includes millions of poor and working class people, its leadership is committed to the capitalist state. So Morsi supported Israeli apartheid, IMF loans and resulting austerity measures,

and the Egyptian military and police who continue to attack resistance. But ongoing strikes and protests drove a wedge into the MB, isolated Morsi and forced the military to remove him for fear of a general strike.

As Sameh Naguib wrote after the fall of Morsi, “It opens the horizons to new forms of popular power which dwarf the temporary democracy of the ballot boxes, which results in nothing but the sustaining of bourgeois rule with its different wings... The Egyptian masses have managed to overthrow two presidents in thirty months. This mighty power is not reflected only in million-strong protests, but also in the subsequent waves of labour strikes and popular demonstrations. For political confidence will transform into confidence in the social and economic struggle, and vice versa.”

We need to take the inspiration from the ongoing Egyptian revolution and build social and economic movements of resistance, alongside a similar intense and patient struggle to win the majority to the necessity of revolutionary transformation not only in Egypt but the world over.

**The fight for
LGBT liberation**

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Metro Vancouver opposes coal port

by ANNA ROIK

ON JUNE 14, Metro Vancouver held a version of a public hearing where members of the local community were invited to speak on the proposed thermal coal terminal at Fraser Surrey Docks. The proposed new coal terminal could ship upwards of 4 million metric tonnes of coal yearly to Asia. In the end, Metro Vancouver voted 21 to 4 to oppose coal shipments at Fraser Surrey Docks and within the Fraser River estuary, the existing Roberts Bank coal port aside.

In its rejection Metro Vancouver cited information it wished to see from Fraser Surrey Docks and Port Metro Vancouver, namely a health impact assessment. Supporters of the expansion were those who stood to earn money, or represented the potential 50 workers who would fill the jobs at the terminal. Opponents of the expansion cited both local issues such as fugitive coal dust and increased rail traffic, and global issues of climate change. Many said that the Lower Mainland should draw a line in the sand and take a stand against the use of fossil fuels.

With reports out of China this week that the government has ordered firms in many of the heaviest polluting industries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions by 30 per cent by 2017, it is possible that thermal coal exports out of North America may drop sooner than expected. Two coal-fired power plants in China’s southern provinces have already been shelved, and when new projects are announced they have been met by large groups protesting against pollution. Instead, we need green jobs to avert climate catastrophe.

Kinder Morgan: more pipelines, more resistance

by ANNA ROIK

KINDER MORGAN wants to capitalize on the BC Liberal election victory by forcing through a pipeline expansion, but it can be stopped.

During the BC election the proposed Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion became an important issue when the NDP announced they were opposed to the plan. There have been few details on the proposed pipeline, which will expand the Trans Mountain pipeline to double in size and triple in capacity. The existing pipeline travels through residential neighbourhoods in Burnaby, Coquitlam and Surrey.

A few weeks after the election victory for the pipeline supporting Liberals, Kinder Morgan filed a project description with the National Energy Board (NEB). In an interview in the Globe and Mail, Kinder Morgan Canada president Ian Anderson described the election outcome as “pro-economy, jobs and investment in B.C.”

Kinder Morgan plans to invest about \$5.4 billion to twin the pipeline as it attempts to cash in on the increased demand for the bitumen-rich Alberta tar sands oil on the world market. The expansion would include constructing 973km of new 36-inch pipeline segments, reactivating two buried but maintained segments, 11 pump stations

and 21 storage tanks over the four terminals, and more.

Where the new pipeline segments will go remains a question, as Kinder Morgan has filed only a project description with the NEB. Later in 2013 it will file a facilities application that will contain details about the route.

Since the pipeline was built in the 1950s, much of the area nearest to the pipeline in BC’s Lower Mainland has been built up with residences and businesses. Kinder Morgan has said that it plans to follow existing rights-of-way, which has led to fear that property may be expropriated.

There are also environmental concerns related to the extraction, transport and use of tar sands oil. In 2012, Vancouver and Burnaby announced opposition to the proposed expansion, as did the provincial NDP in the 2013 election. No one wants to see the region turning into an oil exporting port with the inherent risk of spills.

Several environmental and citizens groups, such as Burnaby Residents Opposing Kinder Morgan Expansion (BROKE), are actively opposing the expansion, as is the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, on whose traditional land the pipeline will cross and end. The Tsleil-Waututh are known as “People of the Inlet”, and have said that they have never ceded the land or abdicated responsibility for it.

In April this year, Tsleil-Waututh Chief Maureen Thomas signed the International Treaty to Protect the Sacred from tar sands projects. The treaty was created by the Yankton Sioux and Pawnee Nations, who are working to block development of the Keystone XL pipeline between Alberta and US Gulf Coast refineries. Locally, the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union along with the cities of Vancouver, Burnaby and West Vancouver support this treaty.

As the Kinder Morgan pipeline is an expansion project, it is not confirmed whether it would be a designated project under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA). Recognizing the potential opposition to the project, Kinder Morgan is requesting that the Trans Mountain pipeline be subject to environmental review under both the NEB and CEAA. Theoretically the proposal must also meet the BC Liberals “five conditions” for oil pipeline approval, as stated in their 2013 election platform.

The mass movement against the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline has forced the Liberals to sound as if they will stop it from being built. We need to keep building and expanding that movement to make sure neither pipeline project goes ahead, but we also need to fight for the creation of a green economy based on

green jobs that will sustain our world for the future, not destroy it.

Update

In June there were two leaks from the existing Trans Mountain pipeline. Early in June, a “small oil spill” of 12 barrels of crude oil—approximately 861 litres—was noted by maintenance workers checking sections of the Trans Mountain pipeline near Merritt, BC. The pipeline was immediately shut down so repairs could be completed and the soil cleaned up.

While this was the smallest oil spill of the 79 recorded spills along the Trans Mountain pipeline in its 60-year lifespan, a Kinder Morgan spokesman admitted that the public is becoming more skeptical and less forgiving about spills. This especially in light of its own Trans Mountain pipeline twinning proposal as well as Enbridge’s Northern Gateway pipeline, which could move Alberta’s tar sands oil across remote areas of northern BC to Kitimat.

In the last few days of June another spill—this time just outside of Hope—released between 20 and 25 barrels of oil, or up to 4,000 litres.

Despite the relatively low volume compared to what it could have been, these spills once again demonstrate that no oil company can guarantee 100 per cent spill-proof pipelines.

New Brunswick Mi’kmaq and allies resist fracking

by JOHN BELL

PLANS TO develop shale gas wells using hydraulic fracturing (fracking) technology in New Brunswick are being strongly opposed by Mi’kmaq people and allied groups like the Council of Canadians.

Fracking involves injecting a high-pressure mixture of water and toxic chemicals into a gas or oil-bearing shale rock bed. The layers of rock are fractured and the fossil fuels are pumped out. Fracking is also an environmental nightmare. In extreme cases it activates seismic faultlines and causes earthquakes. To date the tremors have not caused significant damage but some areas have experienced so many small quakes that the concern is for the cumulative effect on housing and infrastructure. More worrying, fracking has been

proved to poison local water tables. Both the fracking fluid and the released fossil fuels are toxic. Fracking also releases invisible greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Ordinary people from areas where fracking has been extensively employed—like Colorado, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Texas—are organizing and traveling to other jurisdictions to raise alarms and organize against the spread of the technology. It was delegations from rural Pennsylvania who rallied opposition in New York State, resulting in a moratorium on fracking there.

Recently, at a public meeting in Maury County, Tennessee, residents raised concerns that fracking had poisoned the water table. Local children were coming down with a wide variety of unexplained illnesses. In response, a representative of the Tennessee Department of Environment

and Conservation told them, “We take water quality very seriously. Very, very seriously...But you need to make sure that when you make water quality complaints you have a basis, because federally, if there’s no water quality issues, that can be considered under Homeland Security an act of terrorism.”

First Nations defending the land

In New Brunswick, fracking opponents have been treated like terrorists. Mi’kmaq people from the community of Elsipogtog rallied to prevent SWN Resources Canada from exploring their territory for potential fracking sites.

At the end of May, Noel Augustine, a leader of the local council, sent the following message to SWN headquarters: “The Migmag Grand Council of the Signigtog District, District 6 hereby gives

public notice to all potential developers, the Government of Canada, and the province of New Brunswick, that pursuant to our Indigenous and Inherent rights as the righfull and lawfull owners of all Signigtog District Lands and resources, that no shale gas exploration and/or development or gas line shall proceed within our district without the expressed written consent and full participation of the Migmag Grand Council and the migmag people of the Signigtog District.”

Augustine has received no response.

When corporate equipment arrived a peaceful blockade and sacred fire site was established. The province sent in massive numbers of RCMP to clear the highway and arrest peaceful protestors. The community has responded by inviting all supporters to join its stand to defend the land and water.

Walking to heal the fossil fuel sickness

by JOHN BELL

BEGINNING JULY 5, First Nations and Métis people will welcome anyone who wants to witness the environmental damage done by the Tar Sands to join them on the fourth annual Healing Walk.

Indigenous communities have led opposition to tar sands extraction and development, from the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation fighting tar sands production in Alberta, the Aamjiwnaang First Nation opposing local refineries in Ontario, and the Coastal First Nations opposing pipelines through BC. This has galvanized a movement that now spreads along the pipeline routes—from last year’s sit-in against the Northern Gateway pipeline through BC, this year’s mass demonstration against the Keystone XL pipeline in the US, and growing opposition against Line 9 through Ontario and Quebec.

Recently Alberta has been the scene of extreme flooding and major pipeline spills, calling attention to global warming and violence against the environment. The Healing Walk is organized by Keepers of the Athabasca. Organizer Jesse Cardinal told the *Guardian* newspaper, “The land is sick here. The people are sick from polluted air, water and food.” In an online petition, organizers are calling on federal Minister of Natural Resources Joe Oliver and Alberta Premier Alison Redford to join them: “Minister Joe Oliver has claimed that tailing ponds at the tar sands are being cleaned up to the point where ‘you’d be able to drink from them’ so we want to invite the Minister to join us for the Healing Walk. We would like him, and Alberta Premier Redford, to walk 16 km in our shoes and see the devastated land, breathe the dirty air, and see the toxic tailings ponds. We believe that if enough people ask him, he will have to come.”

The Healing Walk will attract activists like Naomi Klein, Brigitte DePape, Winona LaDuke and Bill McKibben of 350.org but there will be no protests, signs or speeches. As the walkers pass the destroyed landscapes of the region, there will be drumming, songs and prayers to heal the land, water and people. Clayton Thomas-Muller, organizer for Idle No More’s Sovereignty Summer, said of past healing walks, “Something happened when we all decided to take a break from the battle with big oil, national and provincial governments, and the banks that finance them. When we decided to instead focus all of our intentions, our power and our love on healing our most sacred Mother and those that depend on her health through prayer, ceremony, and the physical act of walking together, we led with our hearts.”

For more information and updates on the Healing Walk, visit: <http://www.healingwalk.org/>

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The revolution continues in Egypt

by YUSUR AL BAHRANI

WHILE COMMENTATORS in the West are debating whether the Egyptian military’s removal of Morsi is a military coup or not, Egyptians are celebrating the historic protests that forced the military to act.

Anti-imperialism

The military is trying to contain the revolution, using an attack on the Muslim Brotherhood as pre-text, while the Muslim Brotherhood leadership has organized rallies trying to regain power—despite their failure to offer any alternative to Mubarak and his imperial masters. Following the clashes and the violence on the first Friday after ousting Mohamed Morsi, the founder of the Tamarod (Rebel) movement, Mahmoud Badr, said, “The United States want to impose the Muslim Brotherhood on the Egyptians.” Badr added that the Muslim Brotherhood previously promised to disarm the Palestinian resistance.

It seems that the masses that ousted Morsi can no longer tolerate any Western governments’ interventions, even in the form of statements. Hazem Barakat, prominent Egyptian activist, journalist, and participant in the ongoing revolution that has oust-



ed Mubarak and Morsi, commented, “The masses in Egypt prove that they prefer to be hungry than to be directed by the United States.”

Permanent revolution

Morsi is no longer the president and the government is not under Muslim Brotherhood control anymore but the demands remain the same: “bread, freedom and social justice.” Millions of people who took to the streets on June 30 proved that it is not necessary to wait for elections in order to overthrow a government that has met none of the basic demands of the people. This builds on the movement that ousted Mubarak in 2011 and fought against the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) a year ago.

Muhammad Hardan, deputy president of the Independent Union of Workers in the Cairo Water Company, makes this very clear in his statement to the MENA Solidarity Network, by saying, “If the next president refuses to meet our demands, we will rebel again. There is no other solution. Those who have tasted freedom will not be slaves again. The revolution will continue until its demands are met, no matter who sits in the presidential palace. We will never abandon the revolution and we will never give in.”

Unity and solidarity

Despite the pro-Morsi protesters’ attacks today, Egyptians proved that democracy is achievable if all unite.

Shortly after the attacks, a charity campaign was launched. So far the campaign has succeeded to collect millions of Egyptian Pounds to make sure that food and all basic needs are available for everyone in Egypt. This will ensure that no politician can use the needs of people to win votes.

Instead of dismissing the overthrow of Morsi as a military coup, activists around the world must be in solidarity with Egyptians by making sure that none of the Western governments intervene. In addition we need to learn from Egyptian revolutionaries who refuse to leave the streets until all demands are met, and who combine protests and strikes in a permanent revolution to fight austerity, capitalism and oppression.

Canada’s intervention in Iran

by NIAZ SALIMI

MINISTER OF Foreign Affairs John Baird announced further additions to the sanctions against Iran under the Special Economic Measures Act (SEMA).

Almost three years ago, Stephen Harper announced that Canada was imposing sanctions on Iran under SEMA, in addition to existing sanctions passed by the United Nations. In between the two dates, the Harper government intensified these sanctions at least four times—tightening the noose around ordinary Iranians’ neck while publicly claiming that these measures are targeted and are actually in support of Iranians and their struggle for democracy.

The new policy

The government website “Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada” claims that the latest amendments impose a complete ban on imports from Iran and exports to Iran, subject to certain exemptions; add 82 new entities and 30 new individuals to the list of designated persons subject to a dealings pro-

hibition; add an exemption aimed at increasing the availability of consumer communication technologies that contribute to internet freedom. This policy raises important questions for many Iranians on how this action helps to stop the nuclear program in Iran—the supposed original aim of the imposed sanctions.

The Harper government’s agenda continues to unfold and expand, leaving many members of the Iranian community highly alarmed and strongly disappointed. Claims of support for Iranians’ struggles do not resonate and the increased sanctions have devastated Iranians inside and outside Iran. The first to be affected by these falsely labeled “targeted measures” are working class and low-income families, students and pensioners in Iran, in addition to community-based small businesses in Canada.

Canada’s intervention

But the real intention of the Conservative government is far from its public presentation. Canada’s decision to use such tools comes after the government co-hosted a two-day online event at the Munk

School of Global Affairs on May 10 and 11, aimed at reaching activists inside the regime to provide a much-needed boost of morale ahead of the elections. This event was kept secret not only from the community but also from most participants, who were not provided with any information except the dates. The event was opened by John Baird and closed by Peter MacKay, posing as surprise guest. The conference was broadcast live to Iran and at some point the participants asked Iranians to boycott the upcoming presidential election and refuse to vote.

Since that date, John Baird has been actively involved with Iran’s internal affairs by issuing guidance and making promises on behalf of Harper’s government. On June 13, one day before the election, in a press release John Baird called Iran’s election a “sham”, alleging the Iranian regime had rigged the results by banning women candidates, silencing democratic voices and censoring the press. What he does not mention is that while this was going on over the past 33 years, the Canadian government had no problem working closely and sign-

ing huge contracts with the same regime. Just one example of their deceit is that during the mass protests of the 2009 election, the Canadian embassy in Tehran closed its doors on asylum seekers who were being chased by the regime’s agents.

At the same time, during the first week of June, the Canadian Parliament opened its doors and arms to Reza Pahlavi, the son of Iran’s last king, ousted by the 1979 revolution, and welcomed him as the leader of Iran’s opposition. They also arranged an official yet unannounced visit of the only Iranian Community Centre, guarded by RCMP, for Mr. Pahlavi.

Western sanctions

Western sanctions have collapsed the Iranian currency, now set at 35,000 Rials to the Dollar, nearly triple the rate of last year, so the cost of education in Canada has been tripled for Iranian families while the converted pension of Iranian seniors lost its value by the same ratio. It is clear that the Western agenda is not in support of people in Iran but is seeking a war, by sanctions, against them.

US drones target civilians

by AHMED ELBASSIOUNY

WITH THE continuous and intense “war on terrorism”, drone strikes have killed civilians and caused grave violations.

The United States has been relying on drone strikes in Yemen, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The number of drone strikes has significantly increased ever since president Obama was elected in 2009, peaking in 2010. The numbers increased from one to two per year to around 150 strikes in 2010, as the US tried to recover from the quagmire in Iraq by switching to more “efficient” warfare.

Hidden attacks

The discovery of secret drone pro-

grams make it appear like the White House does not really believe in the legality of drones. It was not until this year that the drone base in Saudi Arabia was discovered, which for two years was used to carry out secret drone strikes in Yemen. Despite claims of an “efficient” way of “fighting terrorism”, drones killed many civilians.

Drones in Pakistan

Pakistan is another country that has been suffering drone strikes. According to some sources, over 100 drone strikes were reported in Pakistan in 2010 alone. Even though 2010 seems to be the peak of drone attacks for the decade, drone strikes are still being reported today. Since 2004, 3,129 people were killed in Pakistan due

to drones alone. Less than two per cent of those deaths were high profile targets while the rest were civilians, including children.

To the new Pakistani government, drone strikes are a big barrier to any developmental plans. Dr. Shireen Mazari, Pakistan Tahreek-i-Insaaf’s leader, thinks drone strikes are a great threat to the country’s integrity and stability. However, Mazari suggests “talking it out” with the US administration rather than using a “threatening” approach. Sartaj Aziz, the Pakistani Prime Minister’s advisor, said that the subject has to be brought up with the US administration, and described the drone strikes as a threat to peace between the two countries and disrespectful of international laws.

War of terrorism

Drone proponents claim the drones were “successful” at targeting Wali-ur-Rehman, the Taliban’s second-in-command. But drones do not fight terrorism, they are terrorism—leaving behind many injured and dead civilians. Drones have been a nightmare for Pakistanis, causing panic and instability in the area, which is a source of backlash.

After the mass movement against the Iraq War, including opposition from ordinary soldiers, drones are an attempt to maintain US imperial control while minimizing opposition or even knowledge from ordinary Americans. But people are increasingly speaking out, including drone operator Brandon Bryant, who suffers from PTSD for his role in drone killings.

No to intervention in Syria

by PAUL STEVENSON

AT THE G8 meetings in Northern Ireland, the questions around Syria dominated the discussion but the major powers didn’t come up with any sort of compromise. Instead, they all announced that they would be funneling more arms to both sides in the conflict, thus ensuring a much longer and more deadly war.

There have also been discussions of a “no-fly zone” over Syria, to be implemented by NATO forces. As we saw with Libya, a “no-fly zone” quickly turned into a full-scale campaign of air-strikes, which killed 30,000 people and left the country in ruins, while hijacking the political leadership of the revolution.

The Syrians who rose up against the government of Bashar Al-Assad are now stuck between the proxy forces of NATO on the one hand and Russia on the other. Each of those sides is now in a fight to remake the Middle East and to gain control of crucial resources. The Syrian people have not been consulted on their fate, which is now, increasingly, being decided in Washington and Moscow.

Fears of regional war

The fears of a larger regional war are also expanding. In both Lebanon and Iraq specifically, the sectarian divisions being fomented by the Syrian war are causing a dramatic increase in violence.

In Lebanon, where the civil war remains a scar that has not been healed, certain forces are using the Syrian conflict to renew hostilities. In the south, Hizbollah, which had gained tremendous popularity throughout the Arab world after they dispatched Israel from Lebanese territory during the invasion in 2006, are gambling that support for Assad will allow them to maintain a flow of support from Iran through Syria. However, the Sunni sectarian groups are looking at this as a great opportunity to get rid of Hizbollah, which has been a major competitor for power in Lebanon.

In Iraq, where sectarian divisions were propagated by the brutal US invasion and occupation, the Syrian conflict has pushed some groups to renew their attacks. The level of killing is now near to the levels in 2006—the deadliest year of the US occupation. More than 2000 people have been killed since April.

Self-determination

It remains crucial that the anti-war movements around the world oppose any foreign interference in the conflict. We only need to look at Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya: NATO military intervention does nothing to help the people (despite the often-used justification of “responsibility to protect”) and instead leaves a wake of death and destruction.

The Syrian people and peoples throughout the Middle East need to decide their own fate without interference.

Austerity and the fight against LGBT oppression

“**OPERATION ZEUS in August last year marked the start of an ugly reminder of a European past that we thought we had long buried. Nearly 60 years after the end of the Second European War, migrants were round up from the streets of Greece and shoved unceremoniously into internment camps. In May, women working in the sex industry were pulled from the streets, forcibly tested for HIV, publicly humiliated and imprisoned. In March, they rounded up drug users from the streets of Athens and put them too into camps. Last month in Thessaloniki they came for transgendered people.**”

This quote is from an article entitled “...and then they came for the trans* people”, written by Mhairi McAlpine. It is a lesson for all of us about why we need solidarity among the oppressed to combat the austerity agenda and its attacks on all of us.

Austerity and oppression

In Greece we’ve seen both effects of the austerity agenda: workers and the poor rising to fight back against attempts to savage their jobs, services and lives; and the ugly backlash, represented by the rise of the fascist Golden Dawn. Golden Dawn is attempting to turn people’s anger and despair at the economic devastation of their lives against groups such as immigrants, women, people of colour and the LGBT community.

Pride this year needs to be a celebration of our solidarity against attempts to divide us one from the other. Just like the civil rights and women’s liberation movements of the 1960s, the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was born as a movement which saw itself as a part of the revolutionary currents internationally, and actually christened itself in solidarity with the Vietnamese Liberation Front of the time.

Groups like Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA) in Toronto have done a commendable job of linking the fight for LGBT liberation with support of the Palestinian cause, in spite of active opposition from politicians such as Toronto Mayor Rob Ford. This kind of solidarity is especially critical in the current context. The recent murder of a gay activist in France and huge marches against same-sex marriage there are linked to the increasing boldness of the Front National (FN)—France’s Nazi party.

The lesson to learn from France is how the FN was able to build its message of hate by using Islamophobia as a tool to divide and conquer. Unfortunately the left in France did not build a united anti-war movement which could bring together the country’s significant Muslim population with popular organizations, unions, LGBT organizations, etc. This has laid the basis for the FN to expand their targets to other sectors, such as the gay community.

The roots of LGBT oppression

It’s important to recognize why the LGBT community represents a threat to the powers-that-be and why they are being targeted, along with immigrants, people of colour, women, etc.

The oppression faced by LGBT people is closely linked to the question of women’s oppression and the institution of the family under capitalism. Rigid gender roles and women’s oppression are both consequences of the division of society into classes that Frederick Engels identified in The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.

As society divided into a class of people who essentially benefited from the exploitation of other classes, the division of labour which had previously existed in hunter-gatherer societies, but which had not translated into women’s oppression, came to have new meaning.

It became increasingly important for the men who came to dominate that they could trace their lineage and therefore ensure the inheritance of their wealth through the structure of the family. This was what Engels referred to as “the world historic defeat of the female sex” and it also had consequences for anyone who wanted to live outside the “norms” of the heterosexual family.

In studying pre-class societies, like many aboriginal societies, we can see examples of individuals who did not conform to gender roles: the third sex. This was once referred to as berdache, and is now commonly known as two-spirited people.

The reconstitution of the traditional family throughout the nineteenth century in many industrial nations meant an increasingly rigid family form, which excluded those who didn’t conform, such as lesbians and gays or independent women who chose not to marry.

The reason the nuclear family is so important for modern day capitalism is that it allows capitalism to depend on essentially unpaid labour to nurture and support the next generation of wealth-creators (workers) for capital. Part of the ideological support for the nuclear family includes the necessity to regulate the behaviour of individual members of the family, hence the attacks on LGBT people who challenge those norms.

Solidarity against oppression

In the context of austerity, where governments around the world are attacking many of the social services and supports for working class families and individuals, it becomes even more useful for our rulers to use the ideas of racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia to divide us from each other and to shore up the so-called traditional family.

Many of the gains we’ve won we have won together, uniting with other oppressed groups and fighting for many reforms, such as same sex benefits, through trade unions and other working class organizations. That’s the lesson we need to take to heart during this year’s Pride celebrations.

INTERNATIONAL



Brazil: this is about public transport fares but it’s about much more too

by SEAN PURDY

MASSIVE PROTESTS have exploded in numerous Brazilian cities over public transit fare hikes, preparations for the World Cup, political corruption and general frustration with the poor quality of public services.

On June 17, there were huge demonstrations in 12 capital cities, including more than 100,000 people each in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. In the capital city, Brasília, thousands of protestors invaded the national Congress buildings. There were sizable contingents of trade unionists (teachers, metal and chemical workers) and social movement activists with their own banners on all the demonstrations.

Despite massive police repression, the movement continues to grow, forcing municipal governments to the negotiating table over transit fare hikes and—in eleven cities, including nine state capitals—promises by governments to actually lower bus fares. In São Paulo, the mayor has conceded that fare reductions are now on the table.

Majority support

Polls have shown majority support for the protests among the population and there have been demonstrations in solidarity from Brazilians abroad and their supporters in Berlin, New York, San Diego, Montreal, Washington and Dublin, with dozens of other cities in North America, Europe and Asia planning similar demonstrations. Messages of solidarity from protestors in Taksim Square in Turkey have been sent and

were reciprocated in the Brazilian protests with dozens of Turkish flags and placards with solidarity messages.

The Free Fare movement in São Paulo—especially its high school and university students, but also trade unionists and activists from a broad section of social movements—organized the first protest soon after bus and subway fares were increased by 6 per cent on June 2.

The municipal government, headed by Fernando Haddad of the Workers’ Party (PT), claims that the increases are below inflation, but many analysts have shown that over the last twenty years the cost of public transit has increased well above inflation, making São Paulo the most expensive city for public transit in Latin America. Dozens of other Brazilian cities launched or re-launched similar Free Fare movements in the wake of the São Paulo protests. These movements dovetailed with mobilizations against the World Cup and other local issues.

After massive police repression of the demonstration in São Paulo on June 13, the movement spread even further across Brazil.

Growing dissatisfaction

The protests come at a time of growing dissatisfaction with the neoliberal politics of the two main parties in Brazil, the Brazilian Social Democratic Party and the PT. Activists have shown that the politics of the two supposedly rival parties are exactly the same: making Brazil safe for business while neglecting the massive social disparities and inequality in the country. Politicians from both parties have con-

demned the Free Fare movement protests, as has the PT federal government. But many grassroots activists from the PT have participated in the protests along with militants from PSOL.

At the same time as the protests against fare increases arose, activists across the country protested the preparations for next year’s World Cup in Brazil. Billions have been spent upgrading stadiums and thousands have been displaced from their homes in an effort which has boosted the profits of large companies and produced few benefits for the population.

Turkish parallels

As in Turkey, Brazil has recently experienced economic prosperity. Just like Turkey, however, economic inequality is staggering. The rich have benefitted proportionately more from the Brazilian “economic miracle” but expectations have also increased among the population. Healthcare, education, public transport and other public services are still in shambles and people are beginning to mobilize in large numbers. And also as in Turkey, a relatively local and small-scale movement sparked off large nation-wide protests.

More demonstrations are planned and militants are debating the next steps, including arguments for the necessity of strike actions in support of the Free Fare movement and against police brutality.

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Who hasn’t signed the Arms Trade Treaty?

by ALIA KARIM

ON JUNE 3, 67 countries signed the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to regulate the multi-billion-dollar global arms trade. Countries from every region in the world signed the treaty, including France, the United Kingdom, and Germany—three of the world’s major arms exporters. However, the United States and Canada were not among those who signed.

The ATT will control the transfer of conventional arms and components and regulate arms brokers, yet it will not control the domestic use of weapons in any country. It also prohibits states from transferring conventional weapons to countries when they know those weapons would be used to commit or facilitate genocide, crimes

against humanity or war crimes.

US Secretary of State John Kerry announced that the United States, the world’s largest arms dealer, would sign soon. This would be critical, but others have suggested that the treaty’s ultimate strength rests on support by all major arms exporters and importers. Key arms exporters (including Russia, China and Israel) and major importers (including India, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Egypt) abstained and have given no indication yet that they will sign it.

Many of these weapons have caused grave human rights violations. For instance, in Egypt, arms have been used to attack peaceful protestors. Similarly, the Saudi government has used Western arms (including from Canada) to crack-down on peaceful protestors in Saudi

Arabia and Bahrain.

Canada is not saying whether it will join the more than 60 other countries in signing the ATT. The federal government has not decided whether it agrees with the UN’s arms trade treaty, despite having voted to move it ahead in the first place. Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird stated, “We believe that any treaty regarding the sale of munitions that helps move the international community closer to world-leading standards is a good thing. We participated actively in these discussions. I think we have an obligation to listen before we act, and that is why we will be consulting with Canadians before the government takes any decision.” The Canadian government’s hesitancy may indicate emphasis on an increasingly militarized political agenda.

The Marois government, identity secularism and ‘Quebec values’

by **BENOIT RENAUD**

BERNARD DRAINVILLE, the Minister of Democratic Institutions in the Parti québécois (PQ) government, announced May 22 that the Charte de la laïcité, or Charter of Secularism, promised by his party in last year’s general election, would become a Charte des valeurs québécoises, or Charter of Quebec values, and be tabled as a government bill this fall. What does this shift in the government’s rhetoric mean, and how should the left react?

This new manoeuvre, aimed at expanding the identity front in the hope of gaining (electoral) ground, is complex and risky. We should take advantage of it to make some headway in favour of pluralism and human rights, and put an end once and for all to the proposed Charte de la laïcité, a project that is at best unnecessary and potentially a threat to our freedoms; and we should reaffirm as “Quebec values” a respect for difference, intercultural convergence, and solidarity in opposition to discrimination and oppression.

As the report of the Bouchard-Taylor Commission clearly demonstrated, there is no crisis in Quebec in the relations between different communities of belief, except in the heads of the xenophobes, the speeches of the right-wing demagogues who fuel this xenophobia in order to make political capital, and the dishonest coverage of some sensationalistic media. When incidents are blown up in the media, it is because some people make bad decisions based on ignorance, prejudice, xenophobia or by overlooking certain rights. We saw this recently in the decision of the Quebec Soccer Federation to exclude young Sikhs wearing turbans. There was no problem until a few individuals decided to create one out of nothing.

The solution to these minor problems is not to create a new law with an assimilationist and anti-religious definition of secularism (contrary to the spirit and the history of this idea, which originated on the left) and over and above the rights of individuals and minorities. Rather, the task is to commit ourselves to firm defense of the rights of religious minorities in the face of discrimination and exclusion, and in a spirit of integration. And to improve the training of those administering public services in order to prevent the kinds of incidents that our sensationalistic media and national demagogues enjoy so much. A policy on secularism and accommodation, under the existing laws, notably the Québec Charter of Rights and Freedoms, would be entirely sufficient.

Is secularism an overriding value?

What does the PQ mean by “Quebec values”? Are these values invented in Quebec before being disseminated elsewhere? Are they values found only in Quebec? Are they values that have always been shared by the people of Quebec, from New France to our day? We need to be clear. The debate has to address the values that Quebec decides to adopt collectively and democratically as a society, for now and for the future.

What are these values? Can we identify some that are more fun-



damental and more essential than others? To what extent can we accept that not everyone in Quebec shares the same values?

This could be an interesting debate, although hard to translate into laws and regulations. But in fact the government’s purpose is not to contribute to the debate but rather to develop a new strategy to counter the decline in their popular support, a logical consequence of their neoliberal governance. Like other Western governments on the ropes in the recent past (for example, Sarkozy’s in France), the Marois regime hopes to rally support around xenophobic panic disguised as a fight for secularism and/or national identity.

This new positioning is both a retreat and an offensive. A retreat, in that it dilutes the issue of secularism as understood by the ethnic nationalists and the anticlerical militants (two distinct groups that sometimes overlap). Their demand for a charter of secularism seeks to set aside the policy of intercultural integration adopted by Quebec in the years when Gérard Godin was in the government and replacing it with a new policy of assimilation asking minorities to make themselves invisible. This assimilative policy logically leads to justifying discrimination and marginalization for persons who refuse to dissolve into the model determined by the majority.

The strategic retreat toward “values” in general is both a concession to those who reject secularism out of attachment for Quebec’s Catholic heritage (like the mayor of Saguenay) and a logical consequence of the identitarian slippage in the very concept of secularism, which is increasingly instrumentalized for the purpose of marginalizing minorities. This is contrary to the meaning of secularism in its historic sense.

But raising the question of “Quebec values” in general opens the door to recognition of more important values than secularism. Secularism should be understood

as a means of achieving equality, freedom and solidarity: equality among the members of society independently of their spiritual and philosophical beliefs; freedom for everyone to believe or not to believe, and to build their own vision of the world; and solidarity with minorities in the realms of philosophy (e.g. atheists) or religion (Jews, Muslims, etc.) in the face of persecution or mere contempt on the part of the majority. Thus, if we were to re-examine the secular project in light of more fundamental values, we could fight its identitarian slippage and reinforce an intercultural and evolutionary vision of the Quebec nation.

The PQ leaders are promoting a charter of values as a means of shoring up their nationalist credentials, which have been undermined by their inability to revive the struggle for Quebec sovereignty and their servility to the petroleum and mining multinationals, and more generally to the interests of transnational capital as manifested in their support to the Canadian free trade deal now being negotiated with Europe. Since the fight against the powerful is no longer on their agenda, why not embark on an operation that will further oppress people who are already marginalized? They didn’t hesitate to do that to the social assistance recipients, so why not go after the “ethnics” as well?

One of the problems with this approach is that its premise—that immigrants, particularly those of the Muslim religion, have values that differ appreciably from those of the French-Canadian majority—is an outright myth. In fact, the values professed by the adherents of various minority religions are surprisingly similar to those of the average Catholic. Not to mention the people who come to Quebec precisely in order to escape Conservative and authoritarian regimes, or the members of minority groups that have long been established in our communities. Mixing the issue of religious affiliation

and secularism with the issue of values is therefore at best breaking down an open door and at worst an operation that will fuel prejudice against minorities.

Prohibiting religious signs is not secularism

I know from my experience in Québec solidaire as well as elsewhere that the heart of the debate, its most important practical application, will once again concern the wearing of signs of religious (or cultural) adherence by workers in the public services. And that’s just for starters.

Let’s say, first, that there is no legal tradition that protects us from knowing another’s religion. That’s an invention of French anticlerical and/or Islamophobic philosophers. Simply being informed of another person’s religion is in no way an infringement of my own freedom to believe or not to believe, or an attack against the secular nature of public institutions. And the idea that we can only know the religion of others if they are wearing some visible indication of it makes no sense.

If we recognized this right, how far would we have to go to enforce it? To get an idea, we need only think of the recent French moves to ban the headscarf for mothers accompanying kids on school outings, or for women working in the private sector, etc.

What if a man of Jamaican origin has dreadlocks, like Bob Marley? I might conclude that he adheres to the Rasta religion. So if he applied for a job as a teacher, I could require that he cut his hair. By doing so, I would prevent him from displaying his identification with his slave and African ancestors and their struggles. Would that decision be progressive?

Also, our thinking should be based on an analysis of the context. There is no systemic discrimination against atheists or Christians in our society. But there is indeed against the Arabs, the Muslims, the

Africans, etc. Banning personal religious insignia in general may seem fair at first, but in reality it means targeting minority religions, and the effect is to fuel prejudice.

Furthermore, a law banning the wearing of religious signs would probably be overthrown by the courts on the basis of the Quebec or Canadian charters of human rights. And some writers who favour such a ban recognize the problem. That’s where the bad idea of a Charte de la laïcité comes from. It’s a way to put so-called secular principles (actually anti-religious principles, which is quite different) above human rights in order to immunize them from potential court decisions. The last thing to do in this situation would be to pressure the PQ to return the discussion toward a Charte de la laïcité. On the contrary, we should take advantage of the semantic fuzziness introduced by the invocation of “values” to reverse this trend and argue for a simple policy based on existing rights.

If the PQ wants to return to this question this fall, it will be in the context of its inability to renew the strategy of the independentist movement and the decline in support for the government because of its neoliberal policies. What, then, is the political content of their project concerning “Quebec values”? It is an identitarian retreat to the NOUS of a Jacques Parizeau, the NOUS of the “secularized,” the NOUS who don’t wear bizarre or sexist clothing, etc. aimed at THEM and their customs, their habits, their beliefs. If Québec solidaire (and the left in general) do not come out in strong opposition to this populist right-wing slippage worthy of a Mario Dumont, we will collectively be accomplices of a tendency to caricature minorities that will be used to justify any and all discrimination. This would be unworthy of an internationalist left opposed to all forms of oppression.

This is republished from *Rabble*, translated from *Le Blogueur solidaire*.

The Politics of LGBT Liberation



The fight for trans liberation

by ALEX ADAMS

THE FIGHT for trans liberation is in an exciting period right now; we have passed beyond the initial stages of the movement into witnessing its first gains.

Some recent victories have taken place, such as the passage of amendments to human rights legislation in Ontario and Nova Scotia, which join the Northwest Territories to include gender identity as protected grounds from discrimination. A similar bill to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the hate crimes provision of the Criminal Code has passed in Parliament and is currently awaiting Senate approval, although it's currently being hung up by the Conservatives not wanting to call a vote on it. After a lengthy campaign, funding was restored in Ontario in 2008 for sex reassignment surgery, although access to trans health care remains a significant equality issue. And a transgender first-grader in Colorado was awarded legal sanction to use the restroom facilities at school which correspond with her gender identity.

At the same time as these victories there are still many struggles that are ongoing, and continuing discrimination in many areas. As socialists, we see the fight for liberation from oppression being informed by analysis of the roots of that oppression and the capitalist system that maintains it.

Roots of trans oppression

As Marxists, we can see trans oppression arising from the same roots as women's oppression, and in a way similar to gay and lesbian oppression. The origin of women's oppression in the rise of class society was first outlined by the revolutionary Frederick Engels. The core of Engels' argument was that the development of private property led to the creation of a society divided into classes—those who owned and controlled the wealth and those who didn't—and the creation of a state machine to protect this property, and a family to ensure that this property was passed on to "legitimate" heirs. This represented the development of women's oppression, the monogamous family and, with it, the "world historic defeat of the female sex".

Engels, following the early anthropological studies of Lewis Henry Morgan, maintained that in

early societies there was no private property, no division into classes, and no domination of men over women. Despite some critique, the core of Engels' account of early hunter-gatherer societies has stood up to subsequent analysis.

The evolution of class societies took place over thousands of years, as agriculture developed and spread. This led to changes in social organization and in the reproductive needs of societies.

In hunter-gatherer societies there was a need to space the birth of children because of the practical considerations of carrying children, gathering food on a daily basis and moving frequently. As agricultural societies gradually developed there was a need for more hands for work, with each child representing an extra pair of hands. Villages and cities developed, and with these came higher death rates, more susceptibility to disease, increased warfare and other features of developing class societies. All of these factors contributed to the need for an increased birth rate, which gradually caused a shift in the dynamics of society—including the structure of the family.

Over time, the ability to accumulate wealth led to the development of social classes and the result of these shifts was the domination of women by men and greater social control over all members of society.

Since the emergence of early class societies, the nature of class society has changed over time but the oppression of women has continued. The specific character of the family has changed over time and varied between societies and the oppression of women has taken on different forms. The specific form of women's oppression also varies within societies, between members of the exploiting class and the exploited class.

Nuclear family

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the form of the working class family changed. The private nuclear family emerged, in which a male head of household works and his wife looks after the family and the home. This form of the family arose because workers at the time saw the alternative as substantially worse. Some of the pressures that had arisen would have continued: women working up to 18 hours a day, breast feeding or suffering miscarriages at their machines, chil-

dren working from as young as four years of age and sustaining terrible injuries. The needs of the capitalist class had also changed—namely, a more stable workforce in which the next generation of workers would be raised, cared for, socialized, and educated at minimal cost to the ruling class.

The essence of this form of the private, heterosexual nuclear family has remained today, although the role of women has continued to shift.

Many contradictory forces are at play on the family as a social construct. Government and the state must shore up the family—a simple example being tax breaks and other incentives for married people. At the same time, pressures on working people act to break it down. In the face of this, a powerful set of ideologies is required to maintain the family, such as specific and narrow definitions of roles for men and women, and limitations on sexuality. Anyone who strays from these norms, including GLBQ people and trans people, must be systematically oppressed in order to maintain the prevailing definition of the family.

Maintaining gender norms

People whose appearance or behaviour do not conform to gender norms for their society have existed throughout history and across different cultures. For example, there is evidence that gender variant people have been able to live comfortably within indigenous societies in North America since prior to colonization by Europeans. This strongly suggests that the form of social organization under which they lived was less rigid about gender distinctions, while rigid ideas about gender roles had developed in Europe.

Gender variance was not classified formally as an aberration until after the development of the nuclear family, around the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. The earliest writings of doctors and social scientists in this context discussed behavior that fell outside notions of normal masculinity and femininity as well as same-sex sexual behaviour as aberrant and pathological without distinguishing these as distinct entities.

The distinct category of "transsexual" arose in the 1950s, as the first trans people began to undergo hormonal and surgical procedures

with the aid of medical doctors to ease their pain and discomfort. The classification of "gender dysphoria" as a psychiatric illness began at this time, and is still retained today as a prerequisite for access to hormones and surgery in many places. The criteria for such diagnosis tend to reinforce the same narrow gender stereotypes that exist in broader society.

Biological determinism

The medicalization of trans people continues into the present, in the form of biological determinist theories about the "causes" of transsexuality. For example, the theory has been put forward that the brains of transsexuals develop in the womb in the opposite way to the individual's physical sex. Small studies using questionable methods are presented as support for these theories.

It makes sense from a socialist perspective that biology could play a role in formation of gender identity. However, biological determinist approaches, which crudely reduce all social causes to biology, must be exposed as a reactionary misuse of science. Similar explanations abound in our society, seeking to explain away everything from disease to gender differences to social problems. These serve to deny individual and collective agency to deal with societal problems through our own actions. As socialists, we view humans and their behaviors as a result of a complex and dialectical relationship between biology and the surrounding physical and social environment, rather than as passive vessels of genetic inheritance. The other implication of this viewpoint is that, as a result, we are actually able to deal with social problems, including oppression, through our own self-activity.

Wider picture of oppression under capitalism

Capitalism from its beginnings has relied on exploitation and oppression to maintain the dominance of a small minority over the large majority of people. Exploitation and oppression take on various forms and degrees, and vary both over time and between different societies.

In the case of trans oppression, like GLBQ oppression, it is true that more intense oppression is occurring in other parts of the world than here but with trans people be-

ing generally more invisible elsewhere it is difficult to know what the current situation is like in distant locations. That being said, wherever there is exploitation and oppression struggles against that oppression are also bound to arise.

The fight for trans liberation

The oppression of trans people, as I have laid out, has material roots in the capitalist system and the private family. In fact, all other forms of oppression are also rooted in the capitalist system. The two key ideas to inform the struggles that follow from this, are that: the only way for complete liberation from that oppression is to replace capitalism entirely; and, the fight against all forms of oppression and exploitation are part of that same fight.

At the same time, we cannot passively wait for "the revolution" to occur in some abstract future. We must actively build a fight for reforms in order to address aspects of trans oppression—a fight which is ongoing. We can celebrate that there have been victories—such as the Ontario human rights code amendments, the reinstatement of funding for surgeries, increased visibility and acceptance, etc.—as well as recognize that there is a need for further reforms. These seemingly small victories can make real differences for people in the here and now, while giving them the confidence to carry forward the struggle and also inspiring others to join the struggle or fight on other fronts.

At the same time, many broader struggles have a huge and direct impact on trans people, such as the fight for public health care, the fight against border and immigration controls, the fight against poverty, the fight for publicly funded social services, and so on. In an environment of a continuing push for austerity, as capitalism lurches from crisis to crisis, there are huge forces that act to push back even small gains and, in this context, our struggles must be strengthened and deepened. This makes it ever more important to form alliances with other liberation struggles, although forming these alliances is neither easy nor automatic. As divisions arise it is important to keep these larger goals in mind, and as socialists we seek to help intervene in bridging differences to ensure that the struggle moves forward.

'I'm here! I'm queer! Now I'm over here!'

by EVAN JOHNSTON

IT HAS become all too common for mainstream commentators to argue that if only more high-profile figures were to come out of the closet then the problems that LGBT people face would be solved. If more CEOs, politicians, and athletes—ones that homophobic people particularly respect—were to identify as queer, what choice would straight folks have but to come to terms with LGBT people in general?

What underlies this emerging consensus is the belief that the oppression of LGBT people is caused solely by the irrational prejudices of the working class, which can be solved by "opening their eyes" with safe, acceptable examples of queerness. The flip side of this approach is to agree that LGBT oppression can be solved by "opening eyes", but in place of "acceptable" queerness (what some theorists call "homonormativity") the goal instead is to confront straight people with the most radical and subversive examples of queerness that will, according to this view, shake them out of their prejudicial stupor.

In either approach, the oppression of LGBT people is seen as an incidental feature of contemporary capitalist society, a personal prejudice that just happens to have lingered past its historical expiration date, and one, consequently, that can be decisively fought with personal lifestyle choices and queers in high places. What gets lost in this perspective is the way that capitalism depends on the privatized, heterosexual family for the reproduction of its next generation of workers, and is thus, in its regular functioning, the essential precondition for the reproduction of heterosexist norms and ideas.

In the newest season of Arrested Development, Tony Wonder (Ben Stiller), who has long been a rival magician to G.O.B. (Will Arnett), decides to "go gay" in order to revitalize his career and take advantage of previously untapped markets. As he reveals to G.O.B., he's been "making a

fortune with that gay magician act." In a hilarious homage to the well-known slogan popularized by Queer Nation—"We're here! We're queer! Get used to it!"—the slogan for Tony Wonder's new act is "I'm here! I'm queer! Now I'm over here!"

And despite having just ruined a perfectly good plot line, isn't that precisely where such individualist solutions leave us? If our belief is that coming out of the closet is the political act itself, then we're left with no sense of where to go once we're out, and we tend to become implicated in an extremely problematic discourse of "outing" celebrities who we think will be good to have in our movement. Like Tony Wonder, we are destined to move from side to side without any resolution.

An athlete like Jason Collins, the 34-year-old NBA veteran who came out in late April, is undoubtedly a courageous individual, and by doing what he did he makes coming out a bit easier for everyone. But that's precisely how best to think about people like Collins coming out: just like winning any reform that makes life a bit better, high profile individuals coming out provides greater breathing room for others but does not end the basis of their oppression. When the Jason Collins' or the Brittney Griners of the world declare that they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans*, they build the confidence of those individuals—particularly LGBT youth—that need to be organizing, but that still too often live in conditions of fear, violence, and self-hatred. However, these same people need to be organizing on a class basis and across racial, gender and other lines in order to overcome the oppressions created, maintained and the divisions constructed by the ruling class.

We need all of the confidence that we can get but more than anything we need that confidence channelled into a real, fighting movement for LGBT liberation. Without that, we're stuck with Tony Wonder politics—waiting desperately for the next person who will come out and surprise us all.



A victory for marriage equality is a victory for all

by DARREN EDGAR

ON JUNE 26, the United States Supreme Court ruled the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) to be unconstitutional. It is now illegal for the federal government to deny federal benefits of marriage to married same-sex couples, if their marriage is recognized or performed in a state that allows it.

This decision will have immediate benefits for same-sex couples who have been married and are living in any of the 11 states (California, Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont and Washington) which allow equal marriage, as well as the District of Columbia and several indigenous reservations.

In addition to the state-level benefits these couples already are eligible for, they are now eligible for all the same federal benefits as any other married couple. Health care, social security, immigration equality, estate and tax benefits, access to housing on base and health care for those in the military—these are just some of the material benefits now available to these same-sex couples.

And it is these material benefits which will actually improve the lives of these couples and their families that are the reason marriage equality activists have been fighting this battle for so long, and why the response to this victory from LGBT people and their allies has been so effusive. It is also why the obvious next step is to take this fight to the states that currently deny same-sex couples from marrying—so that all LGBT people in the US can enjoy these basic rights. This decision has opened the door for triumph in this battle, but it will still require a grassroots campaign on a state-by-state level to kick the door wide open.

And that kind of grassroots campaign is exactly how we came to find ourselves celebrating this legal victory. All the LGBT people and their allies who have put in the effort over the years—talking to their friends, family, neighbours and coworkers about the issue of marriage equality; creating petitions and collecting signatures, even visiting the bars and bathhouses to do so; organizing public forums, rallies, marches and demonstrations to demand marriage equality—it is because of their dedication that we can celebrate this victory today. Inspired by

and alongside them, we too must take on the mantle of marriage equality in a determined way in order to advance the cause even further.

Importance

Yet still there are those who would argue that it's wealthy gay white male couples who will benefit most from marriage equality and therefore we should not be putting time, energy or resources into this struggle when there are other "more pressing" concerns such as racism and sexism to confront. Beside, who wants to get married, anyway? Perhaps unconsciously, this wrong-headed argument actually hints at a number of key points.

First, it is not a man's "maleness" which produces sexism, just as it is not a person's "whiteness" which produces racism. Every form of oppression—whether it be racism, sexism, ableism, homo- or transphobia, etc.—is a product of the class divisions in society, and it is actually the capitalist state that perpetuates these oppressions in order to serve the interests of the ruling class at the expense of the working class.

And it is the critical role of the privatized heterosexual family to reproduce the next generation of workers for the capitalist system at minimal expense to the ruling class that explains why the "traditional family" is held up as sacred and immutable by every institution of that capitalist system.

Second, these forms of oppression cannot be fought by individuals in isolation, or only by groups of people whom are affected directly by each of these oppressions; rather, struggles against these forms of oppression must be conducted simultaneously by the masses of the working class, across the dividing lines of race, gender, ability or sexuality.

It is exactly this kind of solidarity in action that makes a group like Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA) so important: by challenging the myths of Israel as a haven for LGBT people and of Muslim people as inherently homophobic, QuAIA is able to point out the underlying racism of this Islamophobic practice and how complicit the Canadian state is in perpetuating it in order to deflect attention from Israel's colonial project just like it seeks to sweep Canada's own history of colonialism under the rug. Just imagine how much more effective these kind of struggles against oppression would be if the whole working class was fighting

them.

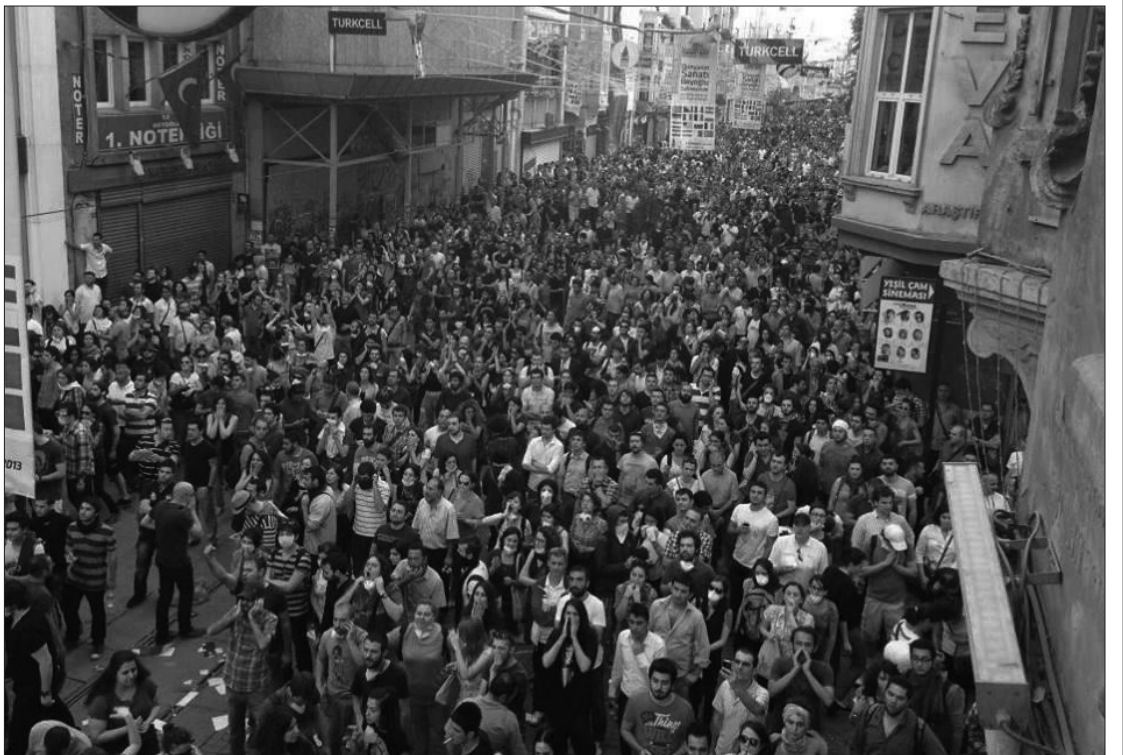
Third, reforms like marriage equality can make people's lives better in the here and now but these reforms in themselves will not end oppression and they can be revoked at any time should the tide of political will change. This is why we need to keep up the fight to defend the gains we've won and to continue pushing for more: so that our lives can be better now under capitalism. But ultimately these forms of oppression will only be overcome by uprooting entirely the capitalist system which maintains these oppressions as part and parcel of its functioning.

The Voting Rights Act made it illegal to deny black people the right to vote but the US Supreme Court recently overturned it. And here in Canada, the hard-fought victory for abortion rights has come under numerous and continuing attacks by the Harper government. The right to vote and the right to choose have made people's lives better but attacks on these rights prove we cannot take anything for granted and that these rights must be defended.

Fourth, a fight on one front doesn't preclude a fight on another—this is not a zero-sum battle—and victories in one struggle can inspire others to take up the same fight, to become more determined and fight harder in their own struggles or to begin a new battle altogether; after all, confidence is contagious and people's consciousness changes quickest during the course of struggle.

The fight for reproductive choice doesn't preclude the fight for equal pay or for universal daycare, just as the fight for equal marriage doesn't preclude the fight for gay-straight alliances in schools or for trans people to be recognized in human rights legislation. Indeed, this victory for marriage equality can inspire these other struggles and, in turn, be inspired by them. Just as the Arab Spring bolstered resistance to austerity in Greece, it inspired the Indignados in Spain, the Wisconsin uprising, the Occupy movement, the successful Quebec student and Chicago teacher strikes—and, as we are seeing now, the revolts in Turkey and Brazil are, in turn, reinvigorating the continuing Egyptian Revolution.

This is why the recent victory for marriage equality was worth fighting for and deserves to be celebrated: we have no idea yet what other future victories it could inspire next.



Solidarity with the Turkish rebellion

Socialist Worker caught up with *Ezgi Dogru*, an activist with *Canada Student Collective in Solidarity with Protesters in Turkey*, on June 11 to discuss the revolt that began in Gezi Park.

What caused the movement to erupt so quickly and forcefully in the last two weeks?

It seems to be important to give a brief account of Gezi Park, which became the symbol of the movement that has spread all over the country. Gezi Park is located in Taksim, downtown Istanbul, which has been one of the most gentrified neighbourhoods of Istanbul. People in this neighbourhood have been forced to leave their houses. Due to the force of government projects, a big part of this neighbourhood had to sell their houses to corporations, as has happened in many other poor neighbourhoods of Istanbul. All gentrification projects have been implemented through dispossessing people. Many Roma, Kurdish and Turkish people have been forced to leave their neighbourhoods. This has caused many serious problems for those people and created discontent among other people in Turkey as well. This attitude of the government, AKP—which has been in power for 11 years in Turkey—has a profound effect on many aspects of people’s lives. For example, the government started to intervene in alcohol consumption and has restricted women’s rights by banning abortion.

There are many projects being implemented to build hotels and condos in that neighbourhood of Istanbul. The Occupy Gezi movement started with an activist group’s campaign with the same intentions against this gentrification process. One part of this gentrification project is to build a shopping mall in the only park in that neighbourhood by tearing down the park and, with it, all its trees. Gezi Park is the only park in the district, which has 246,000 inhabitants and hits a million people on the weekends with its visitors. This activist group tried to get attention to stop this unlawful gentrification. They have contacted the deputies of Istanbul to get support and attention to this unlawful project. On the morning of the demolition there were few people

to stop this project and the police forces used pepper gas against the people. Sirri Sureyya Onder, a deputy of the Kurdish Party, went to act in solidarity with this initiative and stood on the earth digger. Soon after, he called for solidarity from everyone in Istanbul to stop that project (via social media). In a few hours, hundreds came to guard the trees in the park. As this group has been announcing, this project was unlawful. So, the demolition couldn’t go on that day. People kept arriving all day and the government used a disproportionate amount of force on these people.

Since the protest of people against such an unlawful demolition of the park was so right, people came together just to say “enough”—enough to the use of disproportionate police force, to tear gassing people who peacefully demand their rights, demand their spaces to breathe. As people came together, as their numbers increased day and day, we started to hear other demands.

What has the level of repression been like?

Turkish police attacked protestors violently with tear gas and water canons. They directly targeted protestors’ bodies and faces. In fact, this police brutality is the source of the spread of the demonstrations over Turkey. Despite the peaceful nature of the demonstrations, the Turkish police intensified the extensive violence through gas canisters into houses, shopping malls and mosques. As far as we know, three people were murdered: Abdullah Comert (22 years old), Mehmet Ayvalitas (20), Ethem Sarisusluk (26). 48 people are seriously injured. 10 people became blind because police fired tear gas directly at the eyes of protestors. In total, 4,117 people were injured.

What are the demands of the protestors?

Summarizing the demands of protestors may be impossible, considering the heterogeneity of people resisting. Yet, “chapuller”,

a neologism originating during the protests [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapulling>], shows that people come together to resist force, demand justice and seek their rights. We do not want to underline our own reading of the resistance here, as it would be too early to do so. We want to use this space to state again the demands put forward by Taksim Resistance, which point out the terms of the struggle [they can be found here: <http://taksimdayanisma.org/?lang=en>].

The reaction is an expression of “the wish for peace, and resistance to the war politics being played in our country and in the region; the sensitivities of Alevi citizens; the rightful demands of the victims of urban transformation projects; the voices raised against the conservative male politics that control women’s bodies; the resistance to the coercion against universities, the judicial branch and artists; the demands of all workers, starting with the employees of Turkish Airlines, against the appropriation of their rights; the struggle against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity; and the demands for the clearing of the way for citizen’s right of access to education and healthcare.”

What do these protests mean for the current regime? Is the AKP in trouble? What are people’s criticisms of the AKP?

It is quite obvious that the AKP government doesn’t take the responsibility for issues raised through the demonstrations. The government tries to marginalize protestors and label them as terrorists, looters and marauders. In fact, the demonstrators are “the people” who come from different economic, social and political backgrounds. The AKP is in great trouble right now since people from all over Turkey shout the following chant: “Resign Erdogan, Resign AKP”. People clearly say that they will not take the conservative, neoliberal and violent oppression of the Turkish government anymore.

The mad movement, Marxism and mad activism today

July 8-14 is Mad Pride week in Toronto.

Mad activist Kevin Jackson reviews the history and politics of this liberation movement.

IN 1886, a woman named Elizabeth Ware Packard, a former mental hospital patient, founded the Anti-Insane Asylum Society. Packard began publishing a series of books and pamphlets challenging the subordination of women to their husbands, and the lack of response by government and psychiatrists to that subordination.

In 1977, anti-psychiatry and social justice activists like Don Weitz founded the first Toronto psych survivor awareness and support group, called Ontario Mental Patient’s Association (an offshoot of the Vancouver Mental Patient’s Association), which changed its name to On Our Own—the first enduring group by and for psychiatric survivors in Ontario.

Then came the Mad Pride movement in California, which informally began in 2003 when a group of six people declared a hunger strike against biological approaches to psychiatry and the widespread use of prescription drugs for mental health.

The mad movement, as it currently appears, has arisen out of such examples of resistance to oppression, born out of distrust of mainstream psychiatry and its self-serving over-exaggeration of psychiatric pathology and enforced conformity. The long tradition of resistance, intrinsic to the mad movement, continues to challenge power structures that oppress and suppress the body, mind, and spirit of people who think and act in a manner that’s different from the norm.

Electroshock ‘therapy’

Mad and anti-psychiatry activists alike are highly critical of this terribly dangerous form of treatment. In fact, we do not see it as a “treatment” but as a form of torture based on psychiatric pseudo-science.

Electroshock is widely used, and is not the safe or effective treatment that psychiatrists would have the public believe. Psychiatric assault victims have long stated the horrible side effects: confusion, memory loss, creativity loss—essentially, brain damage.

Psychiatric drugs and forced drugging

American mad activist Jim Gottstein, of PsychRights (a Law Project for Psychiatric Rights), sums up the mad and anti-psychiatry activist position on psychiatric drugs well. He writes, “[We are] devoted to the defense of people facing the horrors of forced psychiatric drugging and electroshock. We are further dedicated to exposing the truth about these drugs and the courts being misled into ordering people to be drugged and subjected to other brain and body damaging interventions against their will.”

One side effect of psychiatric drugs is the Parkinsonian effect: an emotional blunting and demotivational effect. This is not a side effect of psychiatric drugs but the actual intended mechanism by which they work. I believe that the use of neuroleptics is a practice more akin to chemical lobotomy than an ethical or safe treatment.

Being a mad person in the age of the asylum meant you were at risk of being harmed or even killed for your ideas. This is still true today. A mad person with dissenting actions and thoughts is labeled deviant—not from the norms of people in the community, but according to the values of capitalism. When it comes to chemical lobotomies, it’s all about social control—with all of the profits going to psychiatrists and big pharma. This circular model of forced consumerism and profiteering needs to be scrutinized and dismantled.

Commodity fetishism and false consciousness

Capitalist societies, through the use of the media, create a desire for items and behaviours that the person wouldn’t naturally possess. This can be extended within the mad discourse to identify how people have been told by the media, their families, physicians and psychiatrists that their behaviour and actions are contrary to that of the majority, and therefore that they are flawed and in need of mental health interventions.

In the face of such allegations, mad persons may feel depressed or just “wrong” because they are told that they don’t fit the mold of what a good capitalist should be; thus in order to fit in and be a good consumer, the person in psychic crisis often succumbs to dangerous psychiatric treatments.

When looked at from a perspective of instilled false consciousness, mad people, free thinkers, and revolutionaries will never fit in, as they are contrary to the goals of capitalism, which is to be a good consumer and not to challenge the status quo. Those who resist this are often forced to take psychiatric medications or risk police intervention.

Solidarity

Although the interests of the mad movement are fairly specific, I believe that mad people’s struggles will only marginally improve if we continue to act as tightly grouped activists within a constellation of mad discourses. However, mad activists such as Judi Chamberlin have for a long time advocated cross-disability coalitions and working relationships.

A contemporary example of this type of inclusive activism is the Toronto Disability Pride March, the first cross-disability solidarity march in recent history. Born out of the Occupy Movement, it is bringing together people who have experienced physical, mental, and social oppressions.

Disabled people pose much less of a threat to the authoritarian conservative Harper government if they exist in isolation. But if we organize as a cohesive group with each other’s interests as our collective goal, we may become a political powerhouse that will be able to effect positive and substantive change for all disabled people, as well as for other oppressed groups.

For more information on Mad Pride, visit: www.madprideto.com

Support the Socialist Worker Fighting Fund

On June 1, we launched our 2013 *Socialist Worker* Fighting Fund Drive with an ambitious goal of \$25,000. Since then, we have collected over \$11,000 in pledges and contributions toward *Socialist Worker* and Socialist.ca, but we are counting on you—our readers and supporters—to help us meet our goal. To make a donation: please mail cheques (payable to *Socialist Worker*) to SW Fighting Fund c/o PO Box 339, Station E, Toronto, Ontario, M6H 4E3; or donate online at www.socialist.ca/donate.

\$25,000



FILM

Magical caper film frothy fun

Now You See Me
Directed by Louis Leterrier
Reviewed by John Bell

LOOKING FOR a fun summer film, but tired of superheroes? Not interested in seeing Roland Emmerich blow up the White House yet again? Suffering from zombie overdose? Presto: let me pull *Now You See Me* out of my hat.

Four magic specialists—an illusionist (Jesse Eisenberg), an escape artist (Ilsa Fisher), a mentalist (Woody

Harrelson) and a pickpocket (Dave Franco)—are recruited by a mysterious figure to form a team. The “Four Horsemen” are soon magic superstars performing on Las Vegas’ biggest stage.

But they are out to do more than entertain. Larceny ensues. Or does it? Our team is on the run from one huge magical illusion to the next, pursued by the FBI (Mark Ruffalo), Interpol (Mélanie Laurent) and a cynical magic debunker (Morgan Freeman).

To say more risks spoiling the surprise.

The film moves at breakneck speed, the better to prevent you from stopping to consider the legion of plot holes and sheer impossibilities. But if you allow yourself to be swept along, this is the movie equivalent of a good “magic” act.

Now You See Me has been remarkably hot at the box office, despite a lack of pre-release hype. My guess is that part of that word-of-mouth success derives from the fact that our four tricksters target the 1% for fun and not for profit. Now that’s entertainment.

BOOK

How will we feed ourselves in 2050?

Consumed: Food for a Finite Planet

Written by Sarah Elton
Reviewed by Anna Roik

WHAT WILL the world be like in 2050? In a world of nine billion people, how will we deal with decreasing oil and natural gas reserves, increasing urbanization and the effects of climate change? Author Sarah Elton, in her book *Consumed: Food for a Finite Planet*, combines all of these to ask the question: how will the world feed itself in 2050?

Today’s industrial food system is affected by everything on this list. Elton argues that in order to best use the finite resources available to us, we need to find alternatives to the industrial food system. Alternatives that are sustainable, based in ethics and human rights, and that maintain ecological balance. She outlines a decade by decade set of targets to be met which she believes are the path that will lead us to food security.

Elton travels to India where she meets with organic farmer Chandrakala Bobade, who epitomizes the first decade’s target: ending industrial farming and making agricultural systems sustainable. Many of India’s farmers are in crisis. They are indebted to companies from which they purchase expensive inputs for their crops—fertilizers, seeds, etc.—yet the returns are too little to pay for the next round of inputs. Thousands of farmers commit suicide each week as their farms fail. Others, like Bobade, have decided to go organic and cut out the expensive fertilizers and seeds. They have increased yields, run successful farmers’ markets, and shown that organic farming can feed a

country the size of India.

Farmland itself is under pressure as governments and developers snap up forests, wetlands, and farms to build industrial parks and housing developments, or to plant cash crops for bio-fuels and the export market. Countries like India are buying up land in Burma, Kenya and Ethiopia to grow the food it needs as it paves over its own farmland. In a world suffering the effects of climate change, sustainable agriculture must have farmland near urban markets. Governments should be actively protecting farmland instead of opening it up to speculators.

Elton’s second decade target is to ensure food security through diversity in the seed supply. While in China, she visits a remote Hani village that farms local rice varieties in terraced paddies irrigated by a stream dammed with rocks, the soil worked by animals and birds. Each rice variety is adapted to the local microclimate and is resistant to local pests.

Farmers are replacing traditional rice varieties with high-yielding hybrid rice varieties. These new varieties are not well adapted, requiring fertilizers and pesticides that harm the fish and ducks that help keep the paddies healthy, as well as the wild foods once gathered.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, 75 per cent of crop diversity was lost in the twentieth century. India in the 1950s could boast thirty thousand wild varieties of rice; by 2015 is it likely that number will have dropped to 50 wild varieties. North America 50 years ago had multitudes of varieties of apples, but today most grocery stores carry only a few varieties year round. Food supply is closely tied to the diversity of the gene

pool in the seeds of wheat, rice, corn and other crops.

For Elton, it is in the best interest of human survival that seed banks continue to collect seeds, and that publicly supported research continues into development of crop varieties able to survive the conditions predicted in a globally warmed future world. While Elton does not come out fully against genetically modified seeds, she does say that patented seed technologies hinder gains and the free exchange of scientific research into new varieties is necessary.

The third target Elton outlines is more difficult to pin down, but hearkens back to a time when societies were less urbanized and “more connected” to nature. This is similar to the division between city and countryside that Marx describes as a metabolic rift. Elton writes of the food grown in a certain region as having a terroir—a unique taste created by the air, water and soil. It is these things that connect people to the land around them.

However, “cultures of food are eroding” as city dwellers do not experience this same close connection, instead learning the taste of the supermarkets with their pre-roasted chickens and boxes of salad mix. Price and convenience are more important in busy lives than taste and nutrition. Reconnecting with the terroir of locally purchased and “home-cooked” foods may be what is needed to raise a generation concerned about the farmland that sustains them and wanting to take part in the process.

To achieve this requires a food production revolution. The ideas in this book are a good starting point for the changes needed as we move towards 2050.

LEFT JAB

John Bell

Tory media manipulation backfires

IT IS not unusual that as deadline nears I wrack my brain for a story idea. I mean, aside from massive uprisings in Turkey, Brazil and Egypt, global warming-related natural disasters in India and Alberta, and whistle-blowers being accused of treason by governments that are illegally spying on the mass of their population, nothing much is happening.

So imagine my delight when I got a call from the Prime Minister’s Office in Ottawa.

The PMO calling

“Hello Mr. Jabber, I am calling to reach out to you, to offer you information for a story that your readers are simply clamouring for. We have in our possession—don’t ask how we came by them—receipts from various charities and organizations that paid Justin Trudeau to speak to them. Some of them are angry because they feel the PoWaWQ was inadequate for the money involved.”

To which I could only reply, “The which-what now, Mr. PMO?”

“The Pearls of Wit and Wisdom Quotient. The Stephen Harper government leads the nation—nay, the world—in PoWaWQ. We have produced a number of highly effective advertisements at great public expense extolling the fact, that have been running frequently during the Stanley Cup playoff broadcasts.”

“Sorry,” I replied. “I missed them. I never watch hockey—can’t stand that shit.”

I imagine the resulting silence at the other end of the phone is what they call “stony”. After a rock-strewn interval Mr. PMO continued: “Yes, Mr. Jabber, just making a note in your dossier in case we ever want a journalist to write an exposé on your lack of patriotism. To the business at hand. When you see our material we are sure you will agree that Justin Trudeau’s PoWaWQ weakness is proof the he is in ‘way over his head’ (copyright) and worthy of your blistering and, ahem, amusing front page story investigative journalism. For instance, are you aware that Justin Trudeau received \$35,000 in speaker’s fees from various trade unions, and subsequently voted against our Bill C-377, which we call the ‘union financial transparency bill’. As you know, the Stephen Harper government is all about greater democracy and transparency. This is proof positive that Justin Trudeau was in conflict of interest and guilty of a breach of ethics. I’m sure you agree, there is nothing that the Stephen Harper government holds more sacred than ethics.”

“Well Mr. PMO, I am sorry I have to reject your kind offer of a pre-written, highly partisan and barely rational story just when I am fighting both a deadline and writer’s block. But here’s the thing... One, your own PoWaWQ is abysmal, your expensive yet strangely ineffective advertising notwithstanding. Since when does recycling Ayn Randist talking points and knee-jerk ‘we love our troops’ rhetoric qualify as either wit or wisdom. Two, Bill C-377 isn’t about greater accountability, it is about attacking workers’ democratic right to organize and fight back against your corporate friends. And if we want to talk about conflict of interest let’s talk about the cozy

financial relationship between your party and the fossil fuel industry. Three, on the topic of ethics, perhaps you are familiar with Bruce Carson, Maxime Bernier and Julie Couillard, Pierre Poutine, Robocalls, Peter Penashue, campaign expense law breakers, Kory Teneyck, F-35s, Patrick Brazeau, Rob Anders, Pamela Wallin, Mike Duffy, Nigel Wright, Saulie Zajdel... We could be here all night. And finally, if unions paid Justin Trudeau \$35,000 for speaking engagements, it is not Trudeau who should be investigated. Rather I wonder which union officials had their head so far up their ass as to spend a dime of their members’ money on that empty-header scion of privilege and corporate power.”

“Well I must say, Mr. Jabber, that I am most disappointed to find that you are obviously someone who spits on our veterans, would destroy the vital 16-cylinder engine of our economy, hates Canada and should be looking for a new country to live in. Your dossier is now complete and we plan to reach out to the media for exposure of your treasonable views. Look forward to reading about yourself in the *Barrie Advance*. Good day, sir.”

Pre-scripted stories

Alright readers, the above is a bit silly but not that far-fetched. In mid-June the *Barrie Advance* newspaper reported that it had been directly contacted by Harper’s headquarters with a file of material on Justin Trudeau’s speaking engagements. The PMO gave instructions to say that it had come from an “anonymous source”.

The paper rightly concluded that the PMO’s less-than-subtle attempt to manipulate the media was a bigger story than the Trudeau tempest in a teapot. As the *Advance* noted: “When asked in a telephone interview why Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s office was sending out unsolicited documentation, Meekes said the PMO routinely reaches out to the media.”

Only after the *Barrie Advance* broke the story did other newspapers come forward to say they too were solicited with the story. Would they have used the story if the *Advance* kept silent? We’ll never know.

Questioned about his office meddling with the media, Harper responded: “Look, my view is, in terms of my own comportment, my view is that what is not appropriate, I, you know, as someone who is paid by the public, I get good remuneration from the taxpayers of Canada, as a public servant, I don’t think it’s appropriate for me to then take money from charities.”

What an orator. Taking money from charities: bad. Taking money from corporations: good.

The whole affair tells us several things. The PMO is in the habit of “reaching out” with pre-scripted stories to manipulate the headlines. How many newspapers, with staffing cuts and layoffs, happily regurgitate the Tory line as news?

And Stephen Harper’s regime is so beset by scandals that they are becoming desperate to divert attention to something—anything. Even their pathetic attempt to change the channel exposes them as incompetents who can’t find the remote.

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 organizations of the working class and in the daily struggles of workers and the oppressed.

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



The battleground of history

by CHANTAL SUNDARAM

STEPHEN HARPER knows it: to promote Canada as a Warrior Nation on the world stage, from Afghanistan to Mali, you need history on your side.

From the \$30 million wasted on War of 1812 commemorations, to the untold millions to be wasted in four years of celebrating the senseless butchery of WWI through Canada’s “victory” at Vimy Ridge, with \$12 million spent along the way to pro-mote “Canadian history” to children by funding classroom visits by veter-ans and serving soldiers—Tory his-tory is military history. And to ensure this is the only version we get, the Tories are slashing funding of federal archives and historic sites.

1812 & WWI

The truth behind the glorious hype is that in both 1812 and WWI, a young Canada was cutting its imperialist baby teeth by backing the most vi-cious imperialist power in the world at the time: Great Britain. And the glory stories also disguise an ugly his-tory of colonial oppression at home.

In 1812, First Nations people were pitted against each other with a prom-ise of protection that never material-ized from either Britain or the US. Some nations felt they were faced with a more immediate threat from US settlers and chose Britain as a lesser evil in the short term. Britain’s final reward for this support was the treaty of Ghent, which in ending the war dropped the demand for a neutral First Nations territory. On the other hand US settlers who chose to cross the border into Ontario as United Empire Loyalists were awarded for their loyalty with land to till—stolen from First Nations.

While Harper casts 1812 as the foundation for Confederation in 1867, it actually laid the founda-tion for rebellion first: in Upper Canada (Ontario) and Lower Canada (Quebec) in 1837 and 1838. People who had sacrificed in the war were not prepared to put up with the same old oppression and exploitation. Francophones in the Lower Canada rebellion were, in fact, inspired by the radical republican ideas of the American Revolution.

And the history that will be edit-ed out from Harper’s celebration of WWI will be that of the hundreds of Quebecois who hid in the woods and were hunted down to be forced into the military, and of the thousands of ordinary people in Quebec who dem-onstrated against conscription and even burned down RCMP and mil-itary recruiting stations while sing-ing “O Canada”—which was not an anthem to the state then, but to the people. This rebellion was put down by an army battalion from Toronto, and the rebels were conscripted into an entirely francophone brigade. Since then, opposition to imperialist war has been higher in Quebec than anywhere else in Canada, including in the era of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Rewriting history

The Harper Tories have an interest in denying why the Quebecois and First Nations see history differently. Heritage Minister James Moore re-cently complained, “We have young Canadians who don’t know about Canada’s past, who don’t know from where we’ve come, who don’t know the possibilities we have in the fu-ture, and the privileges that they have in being able to call themselves Canadian.”

So they are spending \$12 million on promoting military history while



starving alternative sources of his-tory. They are remaking the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa in their own image, renaming it the “Canadian Museum of History”, which will celebrate the “great events” of war and the “great men” of politics. The current museum shows a history of Canada made by ordinary name-less people through their labour and struggle and rebellions, struggle that has often involved moments of unity across national and ethnic lines.

There is also a battle raging over history in schools. In May the Tories tried to introduce a study of how his-tory is taught from primary to post-secondary, using Parliament’s stand-ing committee on Canadian Heritage. They backed off after some protest and instead will focus their inquiry on questions of military history. The Heritage Committee has promised to “undertake a thorough and compre-hensive review of significant aspects in Canadian history...with an empha-sis on battles such as Vimy Ridge, the Second World War, including the Liberation of Holland, the Battle of Ortona, Battle of the Atlantic, the Korean conflict, peacekeeping mis-sions, constitutional development, the Afghanistan conflict, early 20th century Canada, postwar Canada, and the late 20th century.” The committee will seek out “witnesses’ testimony, including firsthand accounts of sig-nificant periods,” prompting McGill historian William Straw to ask, “Are we going to rewrite Canadian history by committee?”

During that same week Quebec Native Women presented a petition to the Quebec National Assembly, asking that the realities of aboriginal life be made a compulsory course of study in high school. It was sup-ported in the Assembly by the two elected representatives from Québec solidaire, which supports self-deter-mination for both Quebec and First Nations.

Who will win on the battleground of history itself?

We have to fight for a peoples’ history of Canada that acknowledges the re-ality of colonialism, imperialism and national oppression—and also the po-tential to resist it. That is the history of Métis leader Louis Riel, whose

hanging was protested most loudly in Quebec. That is the history that Idle No More has revived and is bring-ing to life again with Sovereignty Summer.

And while Quebec appears to have come a long way from the conquest on the Plains of Abraham, it wasn’t until the Quiet Revolution of the late 60s that to be francophone in Quebec no longer meant being a second-class citizen: without the right to French as your language of work and used as cheap labour.

This legacy explains why the post-secondary participation rate in Quebec is lower than in Ontario, despite having the lowest fees in the country. But the struggle against this legacy produced access to education in French, and the fact that this is such a recent and hard-won right is why it is so valued as a social good—and why the Quebec student movement has been strong enough to maintain a tuition freeze for the better part of forty years, up to the incredible Quebec Spring of last year.

There is much reason to hope that the people’s history will prevail. A recent online poll conducted by Nanos Research for the Institute for Research on Public Policy asked what types of historic events Canadians be-lieve the federal government should spend time and money marking, in-cluding the War of 1812.

Only about three out of every ten Canadians supported the govern-ment in actively encouraging the celebration of 1812 and only about 15 per cent of Canadians felt more patriotic as a result of the celebra-tions. The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee was not high on the list, nor was the fortieth anniversary of the 1972 Canada-Russia hockey series, and only 23 per cent said they support the government’s plans to mark the two hundredth birthday of Sir John A. Macdonald in 2015.

What were the historical events fa-voured by most people? The thirtieth anniversary of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (last year) and the hun-dredth anniversary of women’s suf-frage in 2019.

With time that list will come to in-clude Idle No More and the Quebec Spring. This will be the history that young Canadians will find truly worthy of celebration.

international socialist events

TORONTO

Summer Study Series: Socialism from below
Tuesday, July 9, 6pm
OISE, 252 Bloor Street West, room 8280

Alienation: why do we hate Mondays?
Tuesday, July 23, 6pm
OISE, 252 Bloor Street West, room 8280

From social movements to revolution: what’s radical?
Tuesday, August 13, 6pm
OISE, 252 Bloor Street West, room TBA

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

VANCOUVER

Socialist Book Club
The Ecological Rift:
Capitalism’s War on the Earth

For meeting times, location and more info:
www.socialist.ca
vancouver.socialists@gmail.com

peace & justice events

TORONTO

Mad Pride
July 8-14

For info:
www.madpridetoronto.com

A Celebration of the Life of Dr. Henry Morgentaler
Friday, July 19, 7pm
The Great Hall, Hart House, University of Toronto, 7 Hart House Circle

You can find the I.S. in:

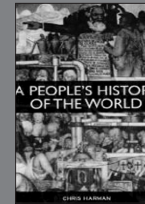
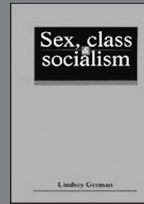
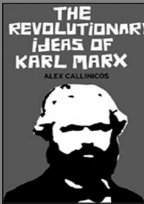
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SECOND REVOLUTION BRINGS DOWN EGYPT'S PRESIDENT

SAMEH NAGUIB of the Revolutionary Socialists in Egypt reports from Cairo, where mass celebrations greeted the removal of president Mohamed Morsi.

We have just removed the second president in only 30 months. It is a second revolution, a mass movement of millions. The scale of the mobilizations is unprecedented. On the ground people have gained huge confidence in their ability to change history.

This is a contradictory situation. It is formally a military coup. The army has effectively arrested the president and 77 leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood. They intervened to save themselves from a new revolution.

But at the same time it is a mass popular revolt. The people forced the army to act, and the army only did so because they were worried about their own future. This is the second time they have done so. They are running out of choices. If Morsi was a failure then the bourgeois alternatives, such as Mohamed El Baradei, are weak. This is not the end of democracy, nor a simple military coup.

Revolution is actually an



extremely democratic process. Simply voting every few years is a joke compared to this. The army is trying to cut this process off.

Major strikes were planned. Bus and train workers, cement workers and Suez canal workers were all due to walk out. The protests could have developed into a general strike—the vast majority of the protesters are

working class.

It's not over. Right now there is euphoria, and people are cheering soldiers. But those celebrating in the streets are not stupid. They know what the police and army have done in the past. Expectations of change are sky high. They are even higher than they were when we brought down Mubarak. But the possibility of any

new government being able to offer genuine reforms is very limited.

People feel empowered and entitled by the events of the last few days. They brought down the president after just one year because he did not deliver, and they will do it again.

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SCRAP THE CHANGES TO EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

by **PETER HOGARTH**

THE HARPER government is pushing drastic changes to employment insurance (EI) rules, but there is increasing resistance.

These rules will create three classes of unemployed and force people to accept lower paying jobs, while making it harder to collect benefits. The effects have been felt most drastically in places where seasonal work is the norm, but this is a problem for workers across the country.

New Rules

New EI job search rules require a claimant, after a fixed number of weeks on layoff, to apply for jobs outside of their normal occupation, paying 10-30 per cent less than the job they were laid off from and up to an hour away from their home.

Changes to the EI appeal system mean that gone are the days of a balanced tripartite Board of Referees. They are instead replaced by a Social Security Tribunal that consists of one government-appointed expert. The changes include fewer in-person hearings and periods for appeal cut from 60 to 30 days.

In addition to this, Harper's omnibus budget bill has shifted parts of the EI Act to EI Regulations, meaning the Minister can make more changes without debate in Parliament. The new job search requirements and the cancellation of EI maternity, parental and compassionate care benefits to Temporary Foreign Workers with lapsed SIN numbers are examples of the type of unilateral changes that can be made.

These changes are in addition to scrapping ex-

tra weeks and lower hours qualifications for high-unemployment areas and the already reduced financing to the EI system since 2008.

These changes fit with Harper and the Tories' vision for Canada, which is dependent on the mobility of cheap labour and people willing (or forced) to travel farther to work for less. To complement this new approach to EI, the government has announced that it will be cutting 2,100 more positions from Service Canada; these are the people who support and deliver EI services. That means increased wait times, unresolved files and reduced services for people who need them.

This all sounds quite bleak, but there has already been mass resistance to the changes to EI in Quebec and New Brunswick, including chasing Harper's special EI investigators right out of town.

Ontario

It was in this context that the Good Jobs for All Coalition held a public forum at Ryerson University in Toronto on the changes to EI. Good Jobs for All is an alliance of community, labour, social justice, youth and environmental organizations in the GTA. The forum brought together different speakers to highlight the effect the changes to EI will have on workers and to start a campaign in Ontario to reverse them and fight for more. As it is now, only 20 per cent of unemployed people in Toronto collect EI benefits. This is a steep decline from previous years and represents a long-term trend across Canada.

Kenny Hussein, from the United Steelworkers Job Action Centre, told the story

of how he was laid-off and forced to use up his savings before he could get EI benefits at 55 per cent of his previous salary. He described the trouble he had getting the required hours to qualify for EI after a year where he was forced into reduced hours and job sharing at work.

Armine Yalnizyan, Senior Economist with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, described some of the long-term patterns for EI in Canada. Noting that in 1990, 74 per cent of unemployed people qualified for EI, today it is 35 per cent.

Finally, Patrick Rondeau from the Conseil régional de la Fédération des travailleurs et des travailleuses in Quebec and Daniel Legere, CUPE rep and activist in the New Brunswick Scrap the Changes Resource Committee, shared their experiences of helping to organize resistance to the changes and mobilizing people to reverse them.

Rondeau remarked that "Harper couldn't fight unemployment, so he decided to fight the unemployed," before he went on to explain how the unemployed fought back. Rondeau detailed the banner drops, press conferences, neighbourhood canvassing and protesting that brought together 24 student groups, municipalities, unions and agricultural groups to fight the EI changes and mobilize 50,000 people in the streets of Montreal.

Legere told the story of resistance in New Brunswick that began with a protest started by one person who worked at a fish plant, but grew to include demonstrations of several thousands occupying bridges, collecting 60,000 postcards of protest delivered to Tory MPs, and

community committees that really changed the landscape in New Brunswick politics. Their fight stopped the home visits by EI investigators and forced Atlantic premiers to declare a common front in opposition to the changes.

Changes

The changes to EI will have devastating effects on workers and communities across Canada. The discussion at the forum heard from carpenters, retirees, educational assistants, electricians, migrant justice activists, plumbers and food service workers, all of whom are affected by the restricted access to EI and all of whom expressed the need for a fightback. The examples of Quebec and New Brunswick show the possibilities to mobilize people and take on the Harper EI agenda.

The Tory spin machine is working on overdrive to make these changes appealing. Diane Finley stated, "This is going to impact everyone because what we want to do is make sure that the McDonald's of the world aren't having to bring in temporary foreign workers to do jobs that Canadians who are on EI have the skills to do."

But the fight will have to demand extending access to EI to all and breaking down the divisions between Canadian workers and Temporary Foreign Workers. That means challenging the nationalism of Harper and fighting for good jobs and good wages for anyone working here.

As Daniel Legere noted, "If you work hard to influence public opinion, you can influence public policy."

For more info:
www.goodjobsforall.ca
www.facebook.com/Scrapthechange

STICKING WITH THE UNION

Carolyn Egan

Let's rebuild the labour movement from the bottom up

HUNDREDS OF thousands are demonstrating in Tahrir Square once more, and working people and the poor are taking to the streets in Brazil against the austerity agenda.

Fifty thousand demonstrated recently in Montreal against the cuts to employment insurance showing once again the militancy that Occupy, the Quebec student strike and Idle No More put on the political agenda in this country. Representatives of the groups organizing around EI in both New Brunswick and Quebec recently spoke in Toronto to a packed hall of labour and community activists hoping to kickstart a similar campaign in Ontario.

The threat of anti-worker legislation by Tim Hudak, leader of the Progressive Conservative opposition in Ontario, has forced many unions to take up a workers' rights agenda to inoculate their members against these attacks. The United Steelworkers, CUPE, OPSEU and others are rolling out campaigns to connect with their members. A top-down effort will not work. Every member must be involved in the conversation about the need for a strong working class response and why unions are so necessary to fight back against the austerity agenda.

Today it is critical that an understanding of a rank-and-file strategy be part of any fightback. Labour leaders are usually long from the tools and often feel it's easier to compromise and make a deal than to lead a militant fightback against concessions. They are a layer that exists between the workers and management. They make salaries that put them in a category above those they represent and often spend more time in negotiations and meetings with the boss than connecting with workers on the floor.

That doesn't mean we don't support a left-wing candidate who is calling for action over a more right-wing candidate but we can't depend on them. Workers have to organize among themselves to take the initiative to demand a militant fightback. Leaders will often run to the front to try to lead a struggle when

they feel the pressure from below.

We saw this happen in Greece where smaller local unions with an activist base first began the actions against austerity. Trade union leaders were hesitant to move against the social democratic Pasok government, which was then in power. Small walkouts spread from workplace to workplace as workers were gaining confidence. This preceded the large general strikes. Often it was a small group of militants in individual workplaces that were able to move their co-workers to take action—and the militancy spread.

Another example of grassroots organizing more close to home is the method used by the Chicago teachers. A number of activists set up a rank-and-file caucus fighting against cuts and it connected with students and local communities. As time went on their numbers grew and although it was not their original intent they challenged the leadership in local union elections and won. They then set up organizing committees in every school connecting with individual teachers and their communities.

This led to a very broad-based and militant strike activating the majority of teachers against the city of Chicago, with strong community support. The membership prepared for the actions and had strong links with those who the schools served. The local committees were at the heart of the workplace actions and were democratic and representative. The members really felt that they controlled their union—and they won.

The workers' rights campaign that has begun in Ontario gives rank-and-file activists the opportunity to connect face-to-face with their fellow workers about what their union could be, and how it can fight back against the attacks. It gives workers the possibility of renewing their local unions from the bottom up, with a more active and involved membership. This is what is needed to push back and win as they did in Chicago. Let's make sure we take advantage of this opening and use it to rebuild the labour movement in this province.

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SocialistWorker

Tar Sands flooding an unreported environmental disaster

by JOHN BELL

VIRTUALLY UNREPORTED among the Alberta flood stories is news that unprecedented flooding in the Tar Sands region of Fort McMurray threatens to unleash further environmental disaster.

The Tar Sands are a local environmental disaster. Cree and Dene inhabitants of Fort Chipewyan, downstream from the Tar Sands, have for years reported deformed and cancerous fish in the Athabaska river. They also suffer from extremely high rates of rare cancers, a claim denied by the oil industry and the Alberta government.

The Tar Sands are also a global environmental disaster, increasing global warming and the resulting extreme weather events. Now the epic floods in Alberta are compounding the environmental disaster of the Tar Sands. The town of Fort McMurray declared a state of emergency, with roads washed out and bridges closed. Between 100 and 180mm of rain hit the region.

Just days before the flooding occurred, an international scientific panel from the Rosenberg International Forum on Water Policy warned that the toxic “tailing ponds”—waste water lakes large enough to be visible from space—are a threat not just to the Athabaska River, but the entire Mackenzie River Basin. According to industry reports the ponds hold billions of litres of poisoned water from bitumen production. They cover 176 square kilometres in the Fort McMurray area. Some of the ponds are within 500 metres of the Athabaska River.



Toxic Tories

Oil industry and government sources have been quick to reassure investors that Tar Sands mining is “unaffected.” Apart from ordering a boil-water advisory for Fort McMurray and downstream communities, they are less forthcoming about the state of the local environment.

Even before the flooding it was proved that, contrary

to industry and government propaganda, the toxic ponds were leaking into groundwater and into the river system. But it took a Freedom of Information action to reveal the documents. A memo to Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver states: “The studies have, for the first time, detected potentially harmful, mining-related organic acid contaminants in groundwater

outside a long-established out-of-pit tailings pond. This finding is consistent with publicly available technical reports of seepage (both projected in theory, and detected in practice).”

Recall that it was Oliver, defending the Northern Gateway Pipeline project, who called environmentalists “radicals” out to “hijack our regulatory system to achieve their radical

ideological agenda.”

Subsequently, the Tories virtually erased the regulatory system with omnibus legislation striking down the need for environmental impact assessment in most industrial developments, removing virtually all freshwater lakes and rivers from ecological protection, and scrapping the requirement to consult First Nations for projects in their

territory.

Poisoned water

Early in June almost 10 million litres of toxic waste water spewed from a pipeline in northern Alberta, near the Northwest Territories border. About 42 hectares of boreal forest was rendered lifeless. “Every plant and tree died,” said a representative of the Dene Tha’ First Nation, whose land was poisoned. This is the largest spill in Alberta history, and the Tory government is facing charges it tried to cover up the disaster.

The water was waste from oil and gas wells owned by Apache Corporation. First reported to the public on June 12, the corporation and Alberta government admit the leak was detected on June 1. Dene Tha’ people claim the leak started much earlier and went undetected. The area of the spill is rich in wet lands, important habitats for birds and animals, and trap lines used by Dene people for their livelihood and food. These waterways also flow into the Mackenzie basin.

The Mackenzie eco-zone comprises about 20 per cent of Canada’s landmass, is home and breeding ground to an amazing diversity of animal and plant life, and contains a large number of First Nations and Inuit communities. Small wonder indigenous people, dependent on the waters for their living, have taken the lead in defending water quality against destructive mining developments. It’s in the shadow of the latest flooding that the Healing Walk is taking place.

For more, read “Walking to heal the fossil fuel sickness” on page 2.

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Occupations disrupt Line 9 and Keystone XL pipelines

by EVAN JOHNSTON

ON JUNE 20, around 60 activists occupied Enbridge’s North Westover Pump Station in the Beverly Swamp, located just north of Hamilton, Ontario. Dubbing their occupation “Swamp Line 9”, their aim was to prevent construction on Enbridge’s Line 9 pipeline and block the transport of toxic diluted bitumen from the Alberta Tar Sands through Ontario and Quebec.

The occupation came after months of campaigning against the pipeline in communities across Ontario. In Toronto, there have been public meetings and petition campaigns launched against Line 9. In other cities across southern Ontario that Line 9 passes through, such as Guelph, London, and Sarnia—some of whose police departments

have received cash donations from Enbridge—there has also been organized resistance.

The Swamp Line 9 organizers describe the public consultation process as “a rigged game, where the political party most indebted to the oil industry had taken spectacular measures to remove the usual environmental oversights from Line 9 and other pipeline projects. The Line 9 reversal is, from the perspective of the powerful, a foregone conclusion and they have insultingly offered only the most meaningless opportunities for public engagement.”

Early in the morning of June 26, Hamilton police moved in and arrested 20 people on and off the property after Enbridge served the activists with a court injunction.

The North Westover Pump Station is located on the traditional territory of the Chonnonton people, as

well as of the Mississagi Anishinabec and the Onondawaga Haudenosaunee. The Swamp Line 9 occupation was an action in solidarity with the Idle No More campaign, Sovereignty Summer. Members of the Six Nations of the Grand River criticized the lack of communication and consultation on the part of the organizers. The organizers, acknowledging their mistake, have issued a formal apology to those who “have felt excluded from, or tokenized by this action.”

Keystone XL

This year has seen dozens of protests against the Keystone XL pipeline across the US. The pipeline, if completed, will transport Tar Sands oil from Alberta to the coast of Texas. Construction at various sites across Oklahoma have been disrupted repeatedly since February by activists chaining

and cementing themselves to construction equipment.

In June, over a 1000 protestors marched across the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco to protest the pipeline. Kathryn Donahue, of the California Nurses Association, told *The Real News* the protest was “to ask President Obama to please honor his campaign promises to stop the Keystone pipeline.”

Also in June, 22 activists were arrested in Chicago while staging a sit-in at the offices of the State Department. One of the organizers, Elijah Zarlin, had travelled from California to take part in the occupation. He was previously in the city in 2008 when he worked in the Chicago office of Obama’s presidential campaign.

Across this continent the drive to exploit fossil fuels is running into resistance. These pipeline projects and the whole Tar Sands can and must be shut down.