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CORPORATE CANADA WAGES WAR ON WORKERS

In the span of the past month, Corporate Canada and their political allies the Liberals and Tory parties have waged a war on working people in Canada. In just 30 days CEOs have announced the slashing of 6,500 union jobs, Trudeau has ripped the democratic right to strike from 64,000 postal workers, and Doug Ford has slashed the minimum wage and rolled back workers' rights in Ontario.

The announcement by General Motors saw thousands of GM workers walk off the job and shut production down before being instructed to return to work by the UNIFOR leadership. At the same time this was happening, members of CUPW were staging last ditch actions to protest Trudeau's back to work legislation against them.

These two days, and the previous rotating strikes by CUPW, showed the possibility of resisting the renewed employers' offensive, and

the willingness of workers to fight when given a lead in Canada and Quebec.

The announcement by General Motors to shutter



its Oshawa Assembly plant as part of its plan to shut production down at 5 plants cut thousands of jobs, 2,500 in Oshawa alone. This from a company that made \$2.8 billion in the past 3 months.

This news came on the heels of Bombardier announcing it was slashing productions and cutting 2500 jobs in Quebec, and another 500 in Ontario on top of thousands of redun-

dancies at other facilities globally.

If this wasn't enough, Maple Leaf announced it was closing 3 facilities and building a new

production facility in London at the cost of 300 total jobs, and possibly causing hundreds of workers to face relocation or job loss.

What ties together these job losses and the hundred thousand jobs lost in Alberta over the past year is the huge sums of taxpayer money that have been handed out to these companies, like the \$4.5 billion bailout of Kinder

Morgan, by Liberal and Tory governments provincially and federally. Billions have been handed out to hugely profitable companies and their filthy rich CEOs by governments of all stripes in the name of "saving jobs".

GM received over \$10.8 billion from the Harper Tories and never paid back over \$2.8 billion of it. If given directly to the 2,500 losing their jobs they each would have received over \$1 million each. Instead, Doug "open for business" Ford hasn't raised a finger to help the workers or offer them a bailout, and Trudeau has offered little but the meagre possibility of an increase in EI.

Bombardier received \$372.5 million from Trudeau and over \$1 billion from the Quebec government to keep or create jobs. In response, Bombardier CEOs gave themselves \$10 million in raises, and then announced this current wave of layoffs.

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Emergency response needed



Hamilton shuts down the Canada Post Plant



Unifor meeting to discuss the GM plant closure

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Maple Leaf announced its new poultry facility in London with Ontario Tory premier Doug Ford gleefully announcing the Government handing over \$34.5 million, or \$115,000 for each worker Maple Leaf CEOs are throwing to the curb. Not to be outdone, Trudeau handed over \$28 million to the hugely profitable company that made \$164 million last year alone.

The current union leadership seem unwilling to meet these attacks by mobilising and organising rank and file members. In Ontario, the OFL has responded to Ford's attacks with press releases and UNIFOR's leadership has asked members to call Doug Ford to stop GM from shutting down. Such initiatives are woefully

inadequate and will not stop the attacks on workers rights.

Previous attacks such as these have been stopped. Plant occupations at the GM plant and others in the 1990s stopped closures and cuts. Where they couldn't stop the closures, they exacted a steeper price from the companies for severance.

The GM plant in Oshawa has billions of dollars of equipment that can be used a leverage and open the door to demanding the government nationalise the facility to create green technologies. This is what Caterpillar workers in Mississauga did in the late 1980s. They occupied their plant to protest its closure and demand it be converted in a green vehicle facility.

Beyond such important actions, it is clear that the labour movement needs a new radical

strategy to combat the employer offensive. The current strategy by some of looking to Trudeau has been shown to be an absolute failure and we can't afford to just wait until the next election to get rid of Ford.

The strategy by some unions of calling for bailouts of corporations to "save jobs" is also clearly a failure, as the current wave of layoffs shows.

There is an appetite to fight these attacks. On the day after Trudeau ripped away the right of CUPW to strike, workers from other unions set up an illegal picket line in Vancouver and shut the Pacific sorting facility down. In Hamilton, activists from the IWW and other unions shut the city's east end sorting depot down in solidarity.

The labour movement needs to build on this type of solidarity and spread it across the country to make a shambles of Trudeau's anti-union legislation and force Canada Post to the table.

When workers in Ontario faced the prospect of the Tories forming a government under right-to-work supporting Tim Hudak, the OFL organised huge cross-union meetings to mobilise and co-ordinate a response on the shop floor and in communities to stop Hudak. In a short period, Hudak fell massively in the polls. We need local labour councils to be calling similar emergency stewards' forums to mobilise union members and begin to organise our workplaces and neighborhoods to take on both Trudeau and the Fords of the world.

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