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\$2 | no. 582 | April 2016

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

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Number of noise complaints the City of Toronto received and used as justification for cutting Afrofest, which drew 120,000 people last year

\$50 million

Additional funding the Liberals are giving the tar sands under the guise of promoting energy efficiency

\$3 billion

Amount the Liberal budget commits to public transit over three years

\$3.5 billion

Amount the BC Liberals want to spend on a megabridge that will increase carbon emissions and make way for fossil fuel tankers

\$21.6 billion

Amount the Million Climate Jobs campaign calls for investing in public transit in order to significantly reduce carbon emissions and create jobs

In their own words

“Clean growth”

-Term the Liberals use to cover both green jobs and “increased efficiency” for the oil and gas industry

“Promises by government to uphold and respect treaty rights ring hollow when construction is given the green light before three on-going First Nations court cases against the dam are even finished.”

-David Suzuki speaking against the Site C dam

“I’m wholeheartedly with the wounded and the families of victims. I’m shaken by these terrorist acts which nothing can justify, but unfortunately I am not surprised. Our foreign policy in Libya, Mali, Syria and Iraq, and its effects here—state racism and Islamophobia—cannot be ignored if we want to understand this chaos and escape from it.”

-Nordine Saidi of the Brussels Panthers, in response to the recent bombing



Black Lives Matter

by JUSTIN EASTERBROOK

On March 21, Toronto police turned the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on its head, violently attacking a demonstration of Black Lives Matter-Toronto for challenging police killing and city cuts.

On March 13 Toronto police shot and killed 21-year old Alex Wettlaufer (a friend of Sammy Yatim who police also killed), while he was on the phone with his mother. Police claimed he was carrying a gun, but as his mother explained, “Alex does not carry a gun, he’s never had a weapon... He was crying saying that he’s being surrounded. They kept telling him to put the weapon down, and he kept hollering telling them he didn’t have a weapon.”

Then on March 18 the “Special Investigations Unit” announced the officers who killed Andrew Loku last year would not face criminal charges. Loku, a migrant from Sudan with mental health issues, was working to support his family back home when police shot him in his apartment. The whitewashing of his murder is another ex-

ample of the intersection of racism and sanism. “Officers engage people with mental health illnesses all the time, but when the person has mental health issues and black skin, they end up dead more than anyone else,” explained Anthony Morgan, lawyer with the African Canadian Legal Clinic.

From killing to cuts

While police continue to kill Black people, the city of Toronto has cut Afrofest. Launched in 1990, Afrofest is the largest free African musical festival in North America, with over 120,000 visitors last year. In March the City of Toronto announced it would cut the two-day summer festival in half, supposedly based on noise complaints. But there were only eight documented noise complaints last year, and the noise level is no different than other events using the same sound equipment at the same location.

As Peter Toh, president of the Afrofest organizer Music Africa explained, “If you have five festivals doing the same thing, and out of the five festivals, only one gets into trouble, what do you think that is? Is it from that point that I consider it

discriminatory... Removing a whole day amounts to tactically destroying the festival.”

Rally and tent city

On March 20 Black Lives Matter-Toronto organized a demonstration to protest the city of Toronto’s decision to cut Afrofest from two days to one, the killing of Black people, and the decision not to charge two officers with the killing of Andrew Loku.

The protest camped out over night, and the next day moved the tent city to Police Headquarters. Arriving just before sundown I could hear people chanting “No justice, no peace, no racist police.” There were signs and art posted on the walls and on the ground. The atmosphere was friendly and lively, including children and elders, and people greeted each other in between chants. The organizers played a game where everyone was asked to vote for their favourite comedy, hip-hop artist, etc.

Police violence

As police demanded the removal of the tents and fire, organizers declared “You are killing us every single day... This is about defending our lives, this is a peaceful

protest.” The whole crowd started to chant, “indict, convict, send those killer cops to jail, the whole damn system is guilty as hell!”

Police broke through our human barrier by tearing people apart from each other and shoving people to the ground, and people chanted “The whole world is watching!”

When the police had finished stealing the tents and put out the fire we were able to get them to back up from the area. We stood with our hands up in the air, until they eventually left. After all was said and done, everyone came in real close and celebrated; the atmosphere was still tense, the voices were cracked and blown out, but overall everyone felt victorious.

“This is a positive and peaceful action that we’re hosting,” explained organizer Yusra Ali, but police “raided us as if we were criminals... the police are interacting with the Black community as they always do.” But the protest continues, with support from Indigenous and Muslim groups who also face disproportionate police violence, and solidarity from student and labour groups.

Mohamed Harkat: let him stay

by CHANTAL SUNDARAM

UN Convention refugee Mohamed Harkat, one of the Secret Trial Five arrested under Canada’s unjust Security Certificate process, continues to face deportation to Algeria.

But with the support of his family, friends, and a nation-wide campaign, Harkat is asking Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale to use special ministerial discretion to stop the deportation. Harkat is preparing a formal submission in early May requesting that Goodale decide it would not be “contrary to the national interest” to let him stay in Canada.

In the lead-up to this new effort to stop what could be a deportation to torture or worse, a wave of letters, both testimonials from those who know Harkat personally and statements from major organizations from across Canada, flooded into Minister Goodale’s office at the end of February.

The letters support the

formal submission and back-up the assertion that Harkat does not pose any kind of security threat to Canada.

Trudeau’s brother: “sunny ways”

One such letter was signed by Justin Trudeau’s younger brother, Alexandre (“Sacha”) Trudeau. He stated he made an exception to his policy of not lobbying the Liberal government as a relative because his involvement with Security Certificates predates Justin’s entry into politics.

For years Sacha Trudeau supported another of the Secret Trial Five, Syrian Refugee Hassan Almrei, even serving as a surety for him, and his appearance in court generated front page coverage and major media attention to the Security Certificate issue for the first time.

He even made a 2006 documentary that chronicles these efforts, and the injustice of Security Certificates in general (“Secure Freedom”).

Now, his letter, like those of hundreds of others, urges the minister to use his discretion to exempt Harkat from deportation as he poses no danger whatsoever to the public or to public safety in Canada: “Make this decision of yours another shining example of your government’s commitment to sunny ways.”

Not over yet

However, just at this same moment, the Canada Border Services Agency presented Harkat with a confidential report claiming he poses a security risk to Canada. Harkat’s lawyer Barbara Jackman asserts that the report does not rely on any current evidence. Harkat and his lawyer are preparing a response to the report, also to be submitted in early May.

Just as outrageously, the Canada Border Services report also concluded that Harkat should be deported to Algeria despite facing “some” risk of torture there—in contravention of Canada’s supposed commit-

ment not to deport to torture.

Amnesty International Canada has warned that returning Harkat to Algeria would indeed put him at risk of torture since many terror suspects are held in “incommunicado detention” where they are routinely denied access to family, lawyers and doctors.

Whether this disgraceful record on civil liberties, entrenched under Harper, can cede to “sunnier ways” will depend on Harkat’s supporters. Luckily, there is no shortage of them. Green Party leader Elizabeth May, former UN ambassador Stephen Lewis, torture victim Maher Arar, and Omar Khadr lawyer Dennis Edney number among them, as do the many who have taken time to write highly personal and heartfelt letters about why Moe should stay in Canada.

In the words of Moe’s lawyer, Barbara Jackman: “those are the people who are best able to judge the kind of character he is.”

Life, death and dignity

by MELISSA GRAHAM

The right to choose when and how we die, on its surface, may seem like something the government has no business deciding. Perhaps that’s why the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the law prohibiting physician-assisted death in 2015.

Effective June 6, physician-assisted death will be a funded part of Medicare across Canada. The federal government has until that date to decide just what should be funded, and under what circumstances.

The choice to live or die may seem liberating to some, but that choice is also somewhat of an illusion—layered with the familiar trappings of capitalism and oppression. In a country where poverty, gender roles, austerity and discrimination are a daily aspect of people’s lives, a state-approved right to die may sound more like a suggestion than an option.

As the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD) state in the opening paragraph in their Submission to Special Joint Committee on Physician Assisted Dying, “the Supreme Court of Canada in Carter emphasized that there needs to be a balanced system that both enables access by patients to physician-assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia (PAD/VE), and protects persons who are vulnerable and may be induced to commit suicide.” The CCD Submission also stated risk factors for suicide included socio-economic factors, race, ethnicity, and culture, or onset of physical disability.

As *Toronto Star* reporter Thomas Walkom wrote in a recent article, “All of this might make eminent sense in a world where everyone (including every teenager) was rational, where physicians were all-seeing, where family members always had one another’s interests at heart and where the old, sick and disabled were not viewed as social burdens.”

Quebec has consulted with the public since the Carter case began and has since come out with Bill 52. While it is quite narrow in scope, the federal government is greatly expanding the criteria for physician-assisted death including mental health conditions, developmental disabilities, blindness and deafness.

As the federal government and mainstream movements continue to waffle on the subject of oppression, it is up to us to continue to highlight oppression and discrimination to the forefront. The right to die can never be equitable without the right to live with dignity.

Socialist Worker

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

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



Justice for Berta Cáceres

by BRADLEY HUGHES

Berta Cáceres a founding member of National Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH), and Nelson Garcia another COPINH activist, were both murdered within two weeks of each other in early March.

Writing in Counterpunch, Beverly Bell describes Cáceres: “Berta was assassinated by Honduran government-backed death squads on March 3. Like many who knew and worked with her, I was aware that this fighter for indigenous peoples’ power; for control over their own territories; for women’s and LGBTQ rights; for authentic democracy; for the well-being of Pachamama; for an end to tyranny by transnational capital; and for an end to US empire, was not destined to die of old age. She spoke too

much truth to too much power.” Her family issued a statement exposing the motivation of the assassins: “We must not allow the truth about the crime that ended her life to be distorted. We know with complete certainty that the motivation for her vile assassination was her struggle against the exploitation of nature’s common wealth and in defence of the Lenca people. Her murder is an attempt to put an end to the struggle of the Lenca people against all forms of exploitation and expulsion. It is an attempt to halt the construction of a new world.” Cáceres lived the life of a revolutionary, most recently she was involved in defending the land of the Lenca people against the construction of the Agua Zarca Dam along the Gualcarque River. Nelson Garcia was murdered on March 14. Earlier that day he and

his village were kicked off their land and their crops and buildings destroyed by Honduran security forces. Their community had been set up two years earlier in the path of the destruction planned for the Agua Zarca dam.

Canadian complicity Cáceres’ family describes a situation that is familiar here in Canada as well: “It is the business groups in bed with the national government, the municipal government and the State’s repressive institutions which are behind the extractive projects being developed in the region. The financiers of these extractivist projects of death are the same ones responsible for the death of our Berta, and so many others struggling against the exploitation of their territories. Because it is this money that allows for the impos-

ition of economic interests over the ancestral rights of the peoples.” Canada has supported the Honduran Government since the military coup in 2009, and since then more than 100 activists have been killed, disproportionately from Indigenous communities. In 2013 the Canadian government was involved in Honduras’ new law that promoted mining, with royalties funding state security agencies. In 2014 the Canada-Honduras Free Trade Agreement came into effect, further putting the interests of Canadian mining companies ahead of the interests of the people of Honduras. Trudeau has been silent on this latent killing of an Indigenous woman, while pushing the Trans-Pacific Partnership that puts corporate profits ahead of human rights.

Canada, Turkey and the EU refugee deal

The European Union and the government of Turkey have concluded a deal that will see refugees sent back to Turkey from Europe in exchange for cash, a reduction in visa restrictions for Turks and refugee swaps. The deal is being hailed in Brussels as a step to stem the tide of refugees and to end drownings in the Aegean sea.

The deal may look good for Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan and German chancellor Angela Merkel but it will have horrible effects on the refugees themselves. For Merkel, it means she can convince Germans that she is attempting to halt the flow of refugees and for Erdogan it allows

him to claim he has revived the Turkish process for joining the EU. For the refugees it will mean a return to the horror of dangerous cross-sea voyages and even longer overland treks. If the route to the EU from Turkey dries up, they will be forced into even more precarious trips across the Mediterranean to Italy and Spain or through northern Europe to try and find a new life. There is also a section of the agreement that states that Turkey will take back all “irregular migrants” without much clarity about who those migrants may be. There is deep concern that this could result in huge numbers of deportations. According to Human Rights Watch Director Kenneth Roth, the deal results in “collective

expulsions, which are prohibited under the European Convention on Human Rights.” There are a series of major problems with implementing the deal, principally having the resources to stop all the boats that have been coming to the EU from Turkey. That job has been farmed out to NATO and Canada is sending the HMSC Frederickton to join the fight as one of three NATO warships under German command. The government of Canada has said that the job is to stop the “people smugglers” on the doorstep of the EU but they and the NATO command have been terribly vague about what that really means. According to NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg

the job of the flotilla is to help, “Greece, Turkey and the European Union with stemming the flow of migrants and refugees and coping with a very demanding situation ... a human tragedy.” But for Stoltenberg the tragedy is not that refugees are being forced to flee war and misery, the real tragedy is that those refugees are coming to Europe. Stopping these smugglers will of course also stop the refugees themselves who are fleeing the chaos that the west is sowing in their countries. So, Canada is now officially an enforcer at the gates of fortress Europe.

Belgium bombings: activists speak out

Bombings in the Belgian capital Brussels had left a reported 31 people dead. Reports say two explosions at Brussels’ Zaventem airport caused by a suicide bombing killed 11 people and injured a further 81. A further explosion at a metro station in Brussels city centre followed shortly after. The metro operator confirmed that 20 people had been killed and 55 injured.

Activist Farida Aarrass from Brussels told *Socialist Worker*, “We are all shocked by this horror and sad for the victims who did nothing to deserve that. But we still think that this happened because our leaders never do what they should. Violence only leads to more

violence.” Belgian police were reported to be carrying out raids in Brussels’ suburbs. Farida added, “We now risk even harsher repression—supposedly to avoid further dangers. “But we already have soldiers and police on every street corner. We’re living in very tough times. Islamophobic acts will only increase, and it was already going so badly.” It was not clear who carried out the attacks as *Socialist Worker* went to press. But many were speculating that it was ISIS or another terrorist group. The bombings follow the arrest of Salah Abdeslam by Belgian police on Friday of last week. He is

believed to have been involved in last November’s Paris attacks. Police shot and arrested Abdeslam along with one other in a shoot-out in Belgium’s Molenbeek district. **‘These deaths could have been avoided’** Nordine Saidi of the Brussels Panthers group spoke to *Socialist Worker*. “I’m wholeheartedly with the wounded and the families of victims. I’m shaken by these terrorist acts which nothing can justify, but unfortunately I am not surprised. Our foreign policy in Libya, Mali, Syria and Iraq, and its effects here—state racism and Islamophobia—cannot be ignored

if we want to understand this chaos and escape from it. “I am enraged by the inhumanity towards deaths that take place ‘elsewhere’. These are deaths in which we are complicit and responsible. Without that double standard, perhaps we could have avoided these deaths at home. “Some will try and use this tragedy to justify repressive policies against Muslims, refugees, and all those who resist in working class areas. We are in permanent danger, we are under permanent suspicion, we are permanent targets and we are presumed guilty.”

This is shared from Socialist Worker (UK)

Rallies against war and racism

by BRIAN CHAMP

On Saturday March 19th, approximately 100 people joined a picket on the sidewalk outside Liberal MP Christia Freeland’s office near Spadina and Bloor in downtown Toronto, calling for Canada to stop participating in the war in Iraq and Syria—whether on a “training” mission or dropping bombs.

This action was part of an international day of action against war and racism that saw large demonstrations throughout Europe demanding the admittance of more refugees fleeing war. There were significant demos in Poland, Spain, Australia, The Netherlands, South Korea, Scotland and Germany and 20,000 rallied in London and to open the borders to refugees. The call for the day of action came from anti-fascists in Greece where tens of thousands marched against racism.

There were anti-war pickets across Canada and Quebec, including Vancouver, Edmonton, Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal. In Toronto the Rally call was Stop the War: Bring the Troops Home Now & Stop Islamophobia. The picket was lively, with ongoing chants of “Out of Syria, Out of Iraq, Justin Trudeau, Bring the Troops Back”, “Healthcare not Warfare” and “Drop Fees, Not Bombs,” in between the interventions by a number of speakers who addressed the crowd and passers-by.

Sid Lacombe from the Toronto Coalition to Stop the War argued that the Trudeau government has decided to stop bombing in favour of “training missions,” Canadian troops have been involved in many firefights while on training missions—and one soldier, Andrew Dorion was killed last December while on a training mission. He added that it was right for people across Canada and Quebec to oppose the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The current mess in the region has resulted from the disastrous attack and occupation, so participating in more war in the region will only make things worse. Carolyn Egan, representing the Toronto and York Region Labour Council brought a message of determination to combat Islamophobia and all other forms of racism because it is a tool that the bosses use to divide workers from one another.

Faiz Ahmed from the Canadian Federation of Students declared that they were for funding public education and against dropping bombs and critiqued the Liberals for continuing with the \$15 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia who have used their armed forces to suppress the remnants of the Arab Spring. Sid wrapped up the event by urging all those in attendance to continue to press the Liberal government to cease the court case pending against war resisters and make a provision to allow them to stay (visit www.resisters.ca).

Fight for the future

This year, 2016, is the 40th anniversary of the publication of *Woman on the Edge of Time*, a futuristic novel written by American feminist and socialist, Marge Piercy. It’s fitting that the book should be republished this year with a new introduction by Piercy, who has just turned 80 this March, because it is the utopia we need in these most dystopian of times.

The protagonist in *Woman on the Edge of Time* is a 37 year old Chicana woman living in Manhattan, Consuelo/Connie Ramos. When we meet her at the beginning of the novel she’s at one of the very low points in her life. She is living on welfare and barely eking out an existence. She carries with her the shame of having had her young daughter taken from her by social services because of a period of deep depression she went through when her Black lover Claud, a blind man eking out a living as a petty criminal, died in prison.

Racism, sexism, mad oppression

In addition to dealing with questions of racism and women’s oppression, and how much these twin evils weigh most on those living in poverty, *Woman on the Edge of Time* is also an exploration of the way mental institutions were (and continue to be) a dumping ground for the poor, the rebels, those who don’t fit in. Piercy went inside mental institutions at the time in preparation for writing her novel:

Connie, who was previously held against her will at Bellevue during her depression, finds herself there again when she tries to defend her pregnant niece Dolly who has been beaten up by her boyfriend and pimp, Geraldo.

No one listens to her story of having been beaten by Geraldo while attempting to defend her niece. They take his word for it that she attacked him, and since Connie’s already been institutionalized once before, she has several strikes against her—mad, Mexican-American, a woman and poor.

Piercy’s book is a masterful look at the way those on the bottom of society are treated by those with power, whether it be judges, social workers, doctors. But it’s also a hopeful novel because of the utopian aspect.

The possibility of a different future

Connie experiences visits from a person whose name is Luciente, who eventually tells her they are a person from the future: “I’m from a village in Massachusetts—Mattapoisett. Only I live there in 2137.”

Connie thinks at first these visits must be some kind of strange wish fulfillment since Luciente seems to be a good-looking young Latino/indigenous male. The first time Connie time-travels to Mattapoisett she discovers that Luciente is indeed female but doesn’t present as females often do in Connie’s time: weak, deferential, “feminine.”

This is one of the differences Connie slowly discovers on subsequent visits to Mattapoisett—that gender roles have undergone a sea change and that there are no longer traits that are seen as being essentially male or female.

She is at first dismayed to discover that life in Mattapoisett reminds her of her own heritage—people living in poverty off the land in Texas, after they moved north from Mexico. But throughout the course of the novel Connie comes to understand the people of Mattapoisett and their way of life. It’s not a refusal of technology—their society is in many ways much more technologically advanced than the present she is living in—but it’s about the use of technology in order to benefit people and the planet, rather than the profits of a few which risk destroying all life.

Connie is also initially shocked at the way children are born and cared for. They are born not of woman but develop in a brooder where genetic material is stored. Each child has three “coms” or comothers (who maybe be male or female) to end traditional gender roles. But by the end of the novel Connie has come to the understanding that her daughter Angelina would have a much better chance of surviving and growing up strong and happy in this strange new world.

Part of the poignancy of the novel is the contrast between the harsh reality Connie lives in and the possibilities she glimpses in her visits to Mattapoisett. However, it’s also clear that this future is not a forgone conclusion. The existence or non-existence of Mattapoisett depends on the decisions that Connie and others make in her time.

This is brought home to Connie when she accidentally finds herself in another possible future where gender roles have become more rigid, where women are essentially slaves, and where the vast majority of people (unless they are the privileged wealthy) live never seeing the outside world, which has become horribly polluted and uninhabitable.

Connie comes to understand that in spite of the wonderful things she has seen in the new society they cannot be taken for granted. Luciente and her fellow citizens regularly volunteer for defence missions because the rulers in the old society have not given up in their attempts to crush revolution.

If we think about Piercy’s novel today it may seem like it is just that—a utopia, which can never exist in the real world. As Piercy admits in her introduction things have gotten so much worse in the real world since the book was first published: climate chaos, inequality, oppression.

But the hope lies, as ever, in people’s ability to organize collectively to overturn a system that makes no human sense. If you’ve never read Piercy’s novel there’s no better time than now to be galvanized and moved into action by the politics of hope.

INTERNATIONAL



Is Trump a fascist?

by GABRIEL NEWMAN-HOGAN

Is Donald Trump a fascist? This is a question I’ve heard quite frequently lately.

As he continues to cruise towards the Republican nomination, many who once dismissed his campaign as a joke or rubbed their hands together in glee at the apparent collapse of the GOP are now feeling distinctly nervous.

Now that he stands a chance of winning the presidency it has become important to analyze the threat he represents to people in America and abroad.

The desire to quantify the threat posed by Trump is at the heart of the debate over whether he is a fascist. Is Trump a new threat to the American working class, or is he just another reactionary puppet obeying the whims of capital?

Right-wing rhetoric

As Trump’s campaign moves from strength to strength, many American political commentators have started to sound the alarm. After establishment conservatives like John McCain and Mitt Romney, Trump looks pretty different. Many onlookers both abroad and in America have begun comparing Trump’s rhetoric to that of Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler. Trump has been called a fascist by everyone from comedian Louis CK to Eva Schloss, step-sister of Anne Frank.

This comparison is not surprising. Trump’s appeal to a mythical past in which America was Great and took shit from no-one sounds an awful lot like Mussolini’s appeal to the greatness of the Roman Empire. It is true that much of Donald Trump’s rhetoric resembles that of historical fascists, but is that resemblance more just than superficial?

In trying to decide whether Trump is a bonafide fascist, the first task is to decide what a fascist is. It is popular in liberal circles to define fascism purely based on its ideology and rhetoric. From this perspective, it is easy to conclude that Donald Trump is a real fascist. Trump, like Mussolini and Hitler, appeals to an idealized past, and promises a return to the former glory of the American Empire. Trump also leans heavily on nationalist rhetoric, though this is hardly unique for and American politician.

Striking, though, is the degree to which this nationalist rhetoric is a cover for dog whistle appeals to racism. In Trump’s usage, “American” is a synonym for white heterosexual conservative Christian. We’ve all heard Trump refer to Mexicans as rapists, suggest building border walls, and enthuse about the idea of registering Muslims.

But to define him as a fascist by matching his rhetoric to that of Hitler and Mussolini reveals a problem. If Trump is a fascist because he sells the

fiction of national revitalization and demonizes anyone outside of an artificially constructed in-group, then so is every other Republican candidate.

Trump’s racist rhetoric is not unique in American politics. Nor is his in-your-face nationalism. Fascism cannot be identified by examining the rhetoric and ideology of political figures, because Fascism has no consistent ideology.

Fascism

Most attempts to define fascism suffer from the Liberal idea that fascism is just an evil idea supported by violent people. But fascism is born not of idealism, but of ruthless pragmatism: fascism is capitalism in decay, a last ditch effort to preserve the privilege of the ruling class in the face of potential Proletarian revolution. When fascism has succeeded, it has done so by exploiting the despair of petty bourgeoisie in the face of economic crisis and redirecting it against the Proletariat at large.

The first role of Mussolini’s fascism was to crush the organs of worker power in Italy. Under his direction, fascist thugs spread out across the Italian countryside burning labour halls and beating pro-communist workers. Mussolini built street fighting organizations that burned socialist newspaper offices, intimidated striking labourers until they couldn’t field enough workers to mount a successful strike action, and beat and murdered socialists in the streets.

Trump’s rhetoric may be alarmingly similar to Mussolini’s, but the similarity is only skin deep. It is important that socialists remember just how dangerous real fascism is. Yes, Trump’s supporters have engaged in some violence against left protestors, and yes, Donald Trump has implicitly endorsed such violence, but that is a far cry from the organized, murderous street gangs whose truncheons and rifles have installed fascist governments. Trump’s rhetoric is dangerous, but not by itself.

As Leon Trotsky said in his 1932 essay *What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat*, “At the moment that the ‘normal’ police and military resources of the bourgeois dictatorship, together with their parliamentary screens, no longer suffice to hold society in a state of equilibrium—the turn of the fascist regime arrives.”

In order for fascism to succeed, the conditions for its success must already exist. Italy’s capitalists turned to Fascism only reluctantly. In order for Mussolini to succeed, the Italian economy had to be in total disarray, the left had to be ascendant, and the existing mechanisms of the state had to be insufficient for the task of restraining revolutionary change.

Lessons from Berlusconi

A better Italian comparison to Trump is not Benito Mussolini but Silvio Berlusconi—the bigoted billionaire who some dismissed as a joke, but who became Italy’s longest-serving prime minister. Like Trump, Berlusconi used his wealth to broadcast his image as a popular figure challenging the status quo, playing on disillusionment with the establishment and claiming to be a saviour to make the country great again. Like Trump, Berlusconi was a misogynist and a racist, including scapegoating the Roma population. While these bigoted billionaires encourage the rise of far-right groups, they have not fascist movements behind them.

If Trump were to be elected, he would govern just as his predecessors have: as a simple pawn of the capitalist class, through the traditional mechanisms available to an American President. This does not diminish concerns about Trump but provides a better framework to confront him.

If he wins the Republican nomination we are sure to face strong pressure from the Liberal left to support Hillary Clinton as the lesser of two evils. We must not fall into the trap of supporting one neoliberal against another, because we know that either Clinton or Trump would pursue a policy of total submission to capital. And support for Clinton could pave the way for Trump, as Berlusconi showed.

In the early 2000s there were huge mobilizations across Italy—including hundreds of thousands marching against the G8, millions marching against war a series of general strikes against Berlusconi. The left organization Rifondazione Comunista had tens of thousands of members and played a key role in the mobilizations, but then subordinated the movements to supporting the centre-left government of Romano Prodi against Berlusconi. When Prodi continued neoliberal policies and war, the left collapsed and Berlusconi was re-elected.

The best challenge to Trump has been the movements for Black Lives Matter, \$15 minimum wage, climate justice, Palestine solidarity and others, who came together to shut down Trump rallies—in actions that Clinton condemned as “violent” and “divisive.”

If Sanders endorses Clinton and the movements follow him into the Democratic Party, Trump could emerge as the only anti-establishment candidate and win from the right.

Regardless who is elected to lead the twin parties of American capitalism, movements need to continue mobilizing through the election and beyond, challenging both Trump and the capitalist system that breeds him.

50 years since the Black Panther Party

Peter Hogarth looks at the history of one of the largest revolutionary organizations in US history, their politics of Black liberation and their ongoing legacy

Fifty years ago, in West Oakland, two college classmates took action against the poverty, inequality and police brutality that they witnessed all around them. Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton, on October 15, 1966 created the Black Panther Party for Self Defense (BPP).

They were inspired by Malcolm X's writings on self defense and sought to create an organization that melded the militancy of the Nation of Islam with the broader goals of the Civil Rights Movement.

Origins and growth

The party started off modestly—Newton, Seale and a few recruits went out on patrols, armed with shotguns, trying to stop police from harassing black people in their neighbourhoods.

In the volatile atmosphere of 1960s America, where racism, riots and resistance were rampant, the BPP grew quickly. The BPP gathered new members and sympathizers based on their community organizing ameliorate the conditions suffered by those struggling around them and their political visions that saw Black self-organization and socialism as the antidotes to the oppression and exploitation of the Black community.

The party really began to take off when Newton was arrested for killing a police officer and the party launched an incredibly bold and popular campaign to free him. Their work continued to grow during this period as the Oakland BPP opened community food banks, health care clinics, and campaigned hard on their 10 point program which emphasized housing, health care, and an end to war, exploitation and police violence.

Politics

While the BPP was a staunchly black nationalist organization, it differed from other such organizations in its internationalist and anti-capitalist approach to black liberation. Contrary to the notions of black capitalism, a return to Africa or cultural identity-based strategies, the difference between the BPP and other organizations at the time is explained best by this quote from leading BPP member, Bobby Hutton:

“We’re nationalists, because we see ourselves as a nation within a nation. But we’re revolutionary nationalists. We don’t see ourselves as a national unit for racist reasons but as a necessity for us to progress as human beings and live on the face of this earth. We don’t fight racism with racism. We fight racism with solidarity. We don’t fight exploitative capitalism with black capitalism. We fight capitalism with revolutionary socialism.”

This revolutionary approach was heavily influenced by Marxism and the writings of Lenin and Mao. The founding members of the BPP saw the material basis for oppression and recognized the need for solidarity in the fight against the white supremacist capitalist machine that left their communities without decent housing, education, jobs or medical care and occupied by



vicious police.

Memorably, Huey P. Newton stood up to homophobia and sexism within the Civil Rights Movement in a speech in 1970: “Whatever your personal opinions and your insecurities about homosexuality and the various liberation movements among homosexuals and women (and I speak of the homosexuals and women as oppressed groups), we should try to unite with them in a revolutionary fashion.... When we have revolutionary conferences, rallies, and demonstrations, there should be full participation of the gay liberation movement and the women’s liberation movement.”

The BPP was leading the argument in activist circles that radicals of all races, religions, sexual orientations and genders had to come together to fight oppression and exploitation. Through their newspaper, The Black Panther, they organized thousands of people into political activity. A paper sale would be the most exciting thing some of the neighbourhoods they sold in had ever seen, and became a way for the party to grow beyond the confines of West Oakland. The Black Panther had a readership of 250,000 at its peak and the BPP could claim 10,000 members in 1969.

Decline

However, in many ways the BPP would come to be undermined by their own success. As they grew quickly in the revolutionary atmosphere of the 1960s, branches began to pop up all over the country that did not have the same vision as the Oakland founders.

Many chapters committed crimes and allowed sexism to continue within their organizations, things that were anathema

to the foundation of the BPP. The BPP organized based on neighbourhoods and campaigns and, while many of their members and sympathizers were working class, the party’s activity never drew on the strength of the organized working class or their workplaces. The corrective influence of the working class was absent in the BPP’s activity and, thus, failed to influence the path of the party towards strikes and industrial activity. Charismatic and confident leaders could right the party in times of trouble, but a lack of organizational memory and democratic tradition meant that it was hard for the rank-and-file of the party to argue against those charismatic leaders and correct them when they made wrong turns.

In addition, the fast paced recruitment and pace of activity allowed the scores of FBI spies and provocateurs (backed by millions in government-funding) to infiltrate and undermine the work of the BPP. The determined campaign of the US government to undermine, sabotage and drown in blood the BPP led to its collapse. In the first few months of 1971 the party began to come apart. A wing devoted to armed uprising against the police and the state immediately was expelled from the party and the remainder backed off from the politics of armed self-defence, and revolutionary politics instead turning to elections. By 1972 the party’s membership and influence were dwindling and the leadership put all of their resources into the 1973 election for Mayor of Oakland which they lost in a run off election. The party continued to have some influence in electoral politics in California, but never regained the position of leadership it once had.

Legacy

The BPP faced an incredible challenge, trying to grow into an organization that could lead a movement against capitalism, imperialism and racism, against a state set on destroying them. Fifty years later, their 10-point program stands as a set of ideas and concrete demands that would eliminate racism and challenge the capitalist system to its very core. The echoes of this program and the Panthers’ legacy can be heard in the demands of Occupy Wall Street, the chants of Black Lives Matter protestors and the aspirations of Bernie Sanders supporters across America.

1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.
2. We want full employment for our people.
3. We want an end to the robbery by the capitalists of our black and oppressed communities.
4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.
5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present day society.
6. We want all Black men to be exempt from military service.
7. We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of Black people.
8. We want freedom for all Black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails.
9. We want all Black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their Black Communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States.
10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace.

THE REAL HISTORY OF REAL CHANGE

Trudeau has promised to bring “real change,” but a look at history shows that real change comes not from above through government rhetoric but from below through mass movements



Union rights

by Paul Denison

The requirement that all employees in a unionized workplace benefitting from the presence of a union must pay dues was set out in a legal ruling called the Rand Formula. Although ostensibly a legal decision, like all concessions extracted from employers, it was not granted out of the good will of the employing class, but was a right that previous generations fought long and hard for.

The modern Canadian labour movement came of age during the great depression of the 1930's and the war years of the 40's. During that time union membership increased dramatically and the modern system of union rights was won through a series of militant strikes, culminating in the Rand decision on January 29, 1946.

In April 1937, inspired by the famous “sit down” strike in Flint Michigan, 4000 workers struck at the GM plant in Oshawa. Their demands where for an 8 hour day, seniority rights, better wages, a grievance system and recognition for their union, the UAW.

The strike enjoyed almost unanimous community support; on the evening of April 12, 5000 people gathered at a public union meeting, farmers donated milk and food, shopkeepers extended credit to the strikers. Ontario premier Mitch Hepburn started to organize a special police force to put down the strike. They were popularly known as the “Sons of Mitch's” and he accused the strikers of being “not good Canadians”. In response 500 strikers who were veterans of World War I marched in the street. After 15 days the company capitulated and the UAW was recognized in Canada for the first time, this represented the birth of industrial unionism in Canada.

Despite this victory, over the next few years union growth slowed and even declined in Canada, but started to rise again a few years later in the midst of World War II. By 1945 the war was ending and Canadian workers were impatient for the same labour rights in the US.

On Sept 12, 1945, auto workers struck in Windsor, Ontario. The strike went on for 99 days and the workers faced fierce opposition from the employer and the Canadian state. On November 4, a joint force of RCMP and OPP were to be sent in to violently break the picket line. In response the auto workers parked 2000 cars to reinforce the picket line. On Nov 5, City council demanded that the barricade be removed or they would call in the armed forces and the federal government started to ready an armoured tank unit to break up the barricade. The union called for solidarity and Chrysler Local 195 walked out in sympathy. Thousands of workers from other workplaces came to the picket line and there was solidarity across the country.

The strike was settled on Dec 10, however in the arbitration proceedings of Jan 29, 1946, Justice Ivan Rand established the “Rand formula” which stated that anyone who benefits by a union in a given workplace must pay dues. This enabled unions to become more secure, stable, institutions and equally importantly it freed up stewards from the duty of dues collection and allowed them time to assist members.



Medicare

by Jesse McLaren

Access to healthcare used to be reserved for the rich, but this began to change in the radicalization after WWI.

As Maude Barlow wrote in *Profit is Not the Cure*, “Women had fought for and won the vote. Western farm radicalism was growing. Grain growers were forming co-operatives and establishing collective, prepaid hospital services. Trade union membership was growing exponentially, from 20,000 in 1890 to almost 400,000 by 1920. Medical protection for its members and their families was a top priority of the labour movement. The first medical insurance programs were won by mining and logging unions. During the war, increased pressure was placed on the federal government to provide health care and compensation in case of injury for the men on the front lines of the battlefield and the factory.”

During WWII, resources that hadn't been available for the unemployed during the Depression were suddenly available for mass destruction, and after the war there were renewed demands for healthcare. The CCF was elected in 1944 with the promise of universal healthcare, and brought hospital insurance in 1947. In 1960 the CCF campaigned to broaden insurance to all health services, and won a strong mandate despite opposition from the Liberals, the insurance corporations who backed them, and the medical establishment.

When universal health coverage began on July 1, 1962, the majority of the provinces doctors went on strike against it, with support from corporate media. Right-wing Keep Our Doctors Committees tried to create a backlash, with a hysteric campaign based on red baiting and xenophobia. In response unions and the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union set up clinics and travelling health units, staffed by the minority of progressive physicians and some the CCF brought in from out of province (including the US and UK). Citizens in Defense of Medicare and Citizens for a Free Press was established to counter the anti-Medicare campaign.

A rally against Medicare that was supposed to rally tens of thousands only drew a few thousand, and doctors were persuaded to stop their strike when the government allowed them to opt out of Medicare and to extra-bill. Even though the CCF was defeated in the next election in 1964, the momentum of the mobilization forced the Liberals to maintain public healthcare.

In 1966 the Medical Care Insurance Act (Medicare) was passed in the House of Commons--requiring universal, comprehensive, accessible, portable and non-profit healthcare--and the federal government agreed to cover half the costs. By 1971 all provinces had plans meeting the criteria, but there was already push back. The Liberals under Trudeau began their long retreat from the 50:50 cost sharing in 1977, while doctors began to increasingly extra-bill for procedures. In 1984 the federal government brought the Canada Health Act to ban extra-billing and user fees, which survived another failed doctors strike in Ontario in 1986.

In the 1990s the federal Liberals made deep cuts to social services, which hit a low of 10 per cent in 1998. The Liberals partially and temporarily restored funding with the Canada Health Accord from 2004 to 2014, which Harper ended, and the latest Liberal budget has made no major increases in healthcare spending.



Indigenous rights

by Valerie Lannon

It's ironic that Trudeau claims to support a nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples, when his father tried to impose the 1969 “White Paper” to extinguish all distinct status for First Nations people. This led to the Red Power movement, a wave of Indigenous resistance similar to today's Idle No More.

In January 1970, 200 Indians and Metis occupied the Alberta “New Start” Centre in Lac La Biche because the government cancelled its research programs. The summer of 1973 saw the occupation of the office of the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, and the occupation of the Minister of Indian Affairs office in Kenora. The summer of 1973 also saw the Cache Creek, BC highway blockade to protest poor housing conditions on reserve. On October 16, 1973, hundreds of Mohawks fought police and smashed windows of band council offices on the Caughnawaga reserve.

The year 1974 was seen by some as the turning point in the Red Power movement in Canada. One of the key events was the occupation of Anicinabe (municipal) Park in Kenora, Ontario, in July 1974. Louis Cameron from the nearby White Dog reserve organized a conference in the park that outlined demands e.g. an end to police harassment in Kenora, better medical and dental services, removal of a particularly repressive judge, creation of a police college for First Nations peoples and cultural training for white police, creation of a local human rights committee, and appointment of First Nations justices of the peace. This occupation was the first time in this period that First Nations people used arms to increase pressure to ensure their rights. The occupation lasted 39 days, involving a stand-off police.

In September 1974 Louis Cameron, a leader with the Ojibway Warriors Society and of the Anicinabe occupation, organized a Native People's Caravan that drew 900 people to Parliament Hill. Indigenous people were unarmed, but police had bayonets and tear gas, and charged on the native people, as punishment for the Anicinabe occupation.

There was also opposition to government energy plans. The James Bay Cree and Inuit communities resisted the James Bay Energy Corporation diverting major rivers to create hydro power. The Dene people resisted the MacKenzie Valley pipeline in the Northwest Territories highlighting their land claim of 400,000 square miles in the area. The NWT Indian and Metis Federation stated it would use “any means necessary” (à la Malcolm X) to defend the claim. In 1975 the Dene people called for independence and self-determination within the country of Canada, which produced considerable support from the Canadian population. As described in one sympathetic newspaper – “Native activists have also sought support from organized workers and northern whites who are concerned about the land and the environment.”

There was a high level of activity coinciding with self-determination movements in Africa and Asia and liberation movements in North America, greater regional and national coordination, greater independence from government funding, and recognition of native bureaucracy as part of the bigger problem. Among the victories were: forcing the government to withdraw its 1969 White Paper (in 1973), cultural renewal (which also affected non-indigenous people), funding for social programs, increased access to education and increased content (e.g. native studies programs), increased confidence to resist with greater frequency and militancy of actions.



Abortion rights

by Carolyn Egan

A major victory was won when the Supreme Court of Canada overturned the federal abortion law in January of 1988. The campaign was situated in the broader context of reproductive freedom.

The Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) was formed in 1982. A lesson was learned from our sisters in Quebec and we modelled our campaign after theirs. The strategy was the combination of a doctor willing to challenge the law and a broad and representative movement willing to fight for the necessary changes.

The immediate objectives were to overturn the federal law and to legalize freestanding clinics providing medically insured abortions. We were fully aware of the limits of the notion of “choice.” OCAC stated that for all women to have real choices in our society they require safe and effective birth control services in their own languages and their own communities, decent jobs, paid parental leave, childcare, the right to live freely and openly regardless of their sexuality, employment equity, an end to forced or coerced sterilization, and, of course, full access to free abortion.

We tried to make this concrete by challenging the coerced sterilization that Aboriginal women, women with disabilities and Black women were facing. We held joint forums on the issues with women speaking about the injustices that they were experiencing. We fought for childcare as a woman's right and campaigned against extra billing by doctors.

OCAC worked with Dr. Henry Morgentaler and in 1983 he opened a clinic challenging the federal criminal code. The clinic became a symbol of women's resistance to an unjust law.

OCAC took a mass action approach. We did not leave the campaign to the lawyers or to the lobbying of politicians. We believed that tens of thousands of women and men would come into the streets across the country to fight for women's reproductive freedom. Groups took up the cause in every province and the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL) fought side by side with us. In linking struggles, OCAC was able to build a wide campaign through demonstrations, marches and rallies—in which thousands participated. Through our organizing, we were able to broaden the participation of trade unionists, students, AIDS activists, people of colour and immigrant women's organizations in the campaign. We understood that, without the active participation and the support of thousands, no change would occur. The goal was to build a visible, mass movement that fought together for women's reproductive freedom.

It did not take long before the Conservative government in Ottawa began the process of introducing new legislation recriminalizing abortion. Anti-choice forces began another assault. “Operation Rescue,” as they called it, started in Toronto in the fall of 1988 and attempted to blockade the entrance to the Morgentaler Clinic. They physically and verbally harassed women seeking abortions.

OCAC organized defence of the clinics, rejecting the argument that it should be left to the police to protect the facilities. We would link arms, chanting, “Racist, sexist, anti-gay: born-again bigots, go away” and “Campaign Life: your name's a lie. You don't care if women die!” The broad support created the political pressure to defeat the legislation in the Senate in 1991, after it narrowly passed in the House of Commons.



Peace

by James Clark

The Liberals like to pretend they chose not to go to war in Iraq in 2003. But as history shows, they wanted to go to war but were stopped by mass protests.

The coordination of the Canadian anti-war movement began in June of 2002 when about 70 people met during the G8 protests in Alberta to discuss building a pan-Canadian response to the looming threat of war in Iraq. Their first coordinated action took place in a dozen cities on Hiroshima Day in August, and led to the creation of new local anti-war coalitions—the foundation on which the movement would grow. Over the following weeks, the local coalitions continued to coordinate actions, attracting bigger numbers as global opposition to the war began to build. In the process, the CPA was re-invigorated by the new radicalization, and by 2004 had become the umbrella organization for subsequent pan-Canadian anti-war mobilizations. At the end of 2002, the more immediate success of coordination on a national level raised its possibility internationally.

In November 2002 the European Social Forum called for an international day of action against war on February 15, which was taken up and expanded at the Cairo Conference in December and the World Social Forum in January. On February 15, 2003, up to 30 million people in over 800 cities on every continent marched against the looming war. There were 80 events across Canada and Quebec, the largest being 250,000 marching in Montreal, and these protests accelerated a crisis that was brewing inside the federal Liberal caucus, as party members and the wider public flooded Liberal MPs' offices with phone calls, letters and petitions against the war. The crisis only became public when backbench Liberal MP Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga-Erindale, 1993-2006) announced at an anti-war rally that “50 MPs will cross the floor” if the government decides to back the war.

On March 15, 2003, another 250,000 people marched in Montreal, a repeat of its magnificent February demonstration, followed by an election in Quebec. Anti-war sentiment was so widespread in Quebec that during the campaign all party leaders wore white ribbons for peace and repeatedly declared their opposition to the war. The Quebec Liberals were poised to defeat the Parti Québécois, but their victory would have been threatened had the federal Liberals supported the war. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien was more worried about the wrath of Quebec voters for backing the war than fallout from Washington for sitting it out.

Chrétien tried to push for war through a “Canadian compromise,” asking the US for another month to secure UN support for the war so that Canada could join, but this failed.

On March 17—just days before the first bombs fell on Baghdad—Chrétien announced to the House of Commons that Canada would not join the war. While the war went ahead, killing a million and planting the seeds for ISIS, the mass mobilizations stopped many governments including Canada from joining, built solidarity with the Arab world, and built networks that continue to challenge war today.



Accessible education

by Benoit Renaud

The year 2012 saw the longest, strongest and broadest mobilization in the history of the Quebec student movement. Combining the spirit of the international mobilizations against austerity and imperialism – from the Arab Spring to Occupy – with a long tradition of student militancy and direct democracy, this movement captured the imagination of millions, brought together in its wake sections of other social movements, unified opposition to a nine year old regime and ultimately brought down the liberal government. And also...the students won.

In response to a 75 per cent tuition hike from the Liberals, the three main student groups (FECQ, FEUQ and ASSE) organized a demonstration in November 2011 and then the strike began in February 2012. By the end of that month, 65,000 college and university students were on strike, and the movement kept expanding. The government had to figure out a strategy to deal with the situation.

First the government tried to ignore the movement, probably hoping it would die out after a few weeks. But on March 22, 200,000 marched in Montréal, with 300,000 on strike.

Second, they tried making minor concessions, which were rejected. On April 22, for Earth Day, the environmental movement combined its efforts with the students, bringing between 300,000 and 400,000 people in the streets, the largest demonstration ever seen in Quebec or Canada.

Third they tried to divide the movement by raising the issue of “violence” in response to the civil disobedience actions and trying to negotiate with only the less radical sections of the movement (FEUQ and FECQ), but they refused.

Fourth, they tried to repress the movement using the courts and an increase in police violence. The Education Minister openly encouraged universities and individual student to go to court and get injunctions to break the strike. That strategy failed because of the strength of student union democracy, with some of the students opposed to the strike rallying to defend the collective decisions made at general meetings.

Fifth, they tried to make the student strikes illegal with Law 78, which also criminalized any demonstration larger than 50 people. This outrageous and unprecedented legislation generated an outcry from all civil liberties groups and mass organizations, including the main unions. Instead of shutting down the movement, it broadened it to include anyone who wanted the nine year old Liberal government to go away. Dozens of spontaneous demonstrations took place, generally in the early evening, in many small towns and neighborhoods, borrowing from the South American tradition of banging pots and pans (casserolados). On May 22, at least 200,000 people marched in the largest civil disobedience action in Canadian history.

Sixth, they went to the polls. The combined effects of the election and the special law convinced just enough students to suspend or end the strike to bring about the end of the strike movement. But the election threw out Liberal Premier Jean Charest and pushed the new PQ government to cancel the tuition increase and suspend Law 78. In other words, the student movement won on all counts after having in effect brought down a government. A new generation has discovered that protesting can work and have taken a liking to engaging with their society as active participants.

NDP: Join the leap!

In the lead up to the party’s convention, April 8-10 in Edmonton, more than a dozen riding associations have sent resolutions to endorse the manifesto that calls for climate justice, respect for First Nations and a mass expansion of green jobs. After a disastrous election result, the NDP has the opportunity of leaping back by endorsing the Leap Manifesto.

The Leap Manifesto emerged from a two day cliamte justice discussion from Indigenous, environmental and labour activists from across the country last May. It built on the momentum of the March for Jobs, Justice and the Climate in July and was released in September in the midst of the federal election—endorsed by high profile individuals and organizations across the country.

The Leap Manifesto expresses the hope of the rising climate justice movement, along with concrete demands for how to achieve it: implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; welcoming refugees; supporting a just transition for workers in carbon-intensive industries; expanding green jobs in retrofitting, high-speed rail and public transit, as well as low-carbon jobs in childcare, caregiving and teaching; ending neoliberal trade deals and fossil fuel subsidies; increasing corporate taxes and cutting military spending.

The NDP began the election campaign in the lead, reflecting movement demands to stop Bill C-51 and support a \$15 minimum wage and \$15 childcare. Had the NDP supported the ideas in the leap manifesto they could have become a megaphone for the movement and the Liberals and Tories as the parties of Big Oil.

NDP election: from “win-win” to lose-lose

But the NDP leadership kept its distance from the leap manifesto. Finance critic Nathan Cullen dismissed it, saying “we’re not going to be guided by a manifesto delivered in the midst of a campaign by high- or low-profile people. It’s just not the way to build a sustainable government.”

NDP leader Tom Mulcair was ambiguous. While he claimed to “love the debates of ideas,” he chastized climate justice activists for urging him to embrace climate justice at campaign rallies, and used the leadership debate to promise he would expand the tar sands. For years he’s supported the Energy East pipeline, claiming it would be a “win-win,” but the NDP support for the tar sands has been lose-lose, failing to support the movement and failing to make electoral gains.

It didn’t have to be this way. During the campaign Toronto-centre NDP candidate Linda McQuaig was asked about what her previous writings on the tar sands including a call for a moratorium. As she wrote recently, looking back, “After a split second in which I saw my political life pass in front of me, I decided to side with the planet, saying, ‘a lot of the oilsands oil may have to stay in the ground if we’re going to meet our climate change targets.’”

The Tories and Liberals pounced on her for making this scientifically factual and environmentally urgent statement, and the corporate press claimed the NDP could never make electoral gains through such “controversial” statements. But as McQuaig recalled, “The NDP reached the height of its public support last spring when it ignored this conventional wisdom, risking controversy and complexity by standing up against legislation that initially seemed popular—the Conservatives’ ‘anti-terror’ legislation, Bill C-51.”

Embracing the ideas in the leap manifesto could have exposed the oily policies shared by the Liberals and Tories and made the NDP the clear alternative to Harper. But supporting a “balanced budget” instead of climate justice allowed the Liberals to monopolize the surge in anti-Harper sentiment.

With no party supporting the concrete demands of the Leap Manifesto, the Liberals have been allowed to claim the mantle of climate action through sheer rhetoric. At the Paris climate conference Trudeau claimed a “historic” agreement was reached, without any plan for how to reduce emissions. In the latest budget Trudeau also claimed to be supporting a “low-carbon economy,” while continuing to give subsidies to oil and gas corporations and continuing to support tar sands expansion.

While Mulcair continues to blame Quebec Islamophobia for the NDP loss, the real blame for the collapse in support is his support for pipelines and “balanced budgets,” as a recent letter by Quebec NDP members had clear: “We did not recognize ourselves in the platform we had to defend. The NDP is not a party like any other. We seek office to make positive changes for Canadians, not for the sake of power itself.”

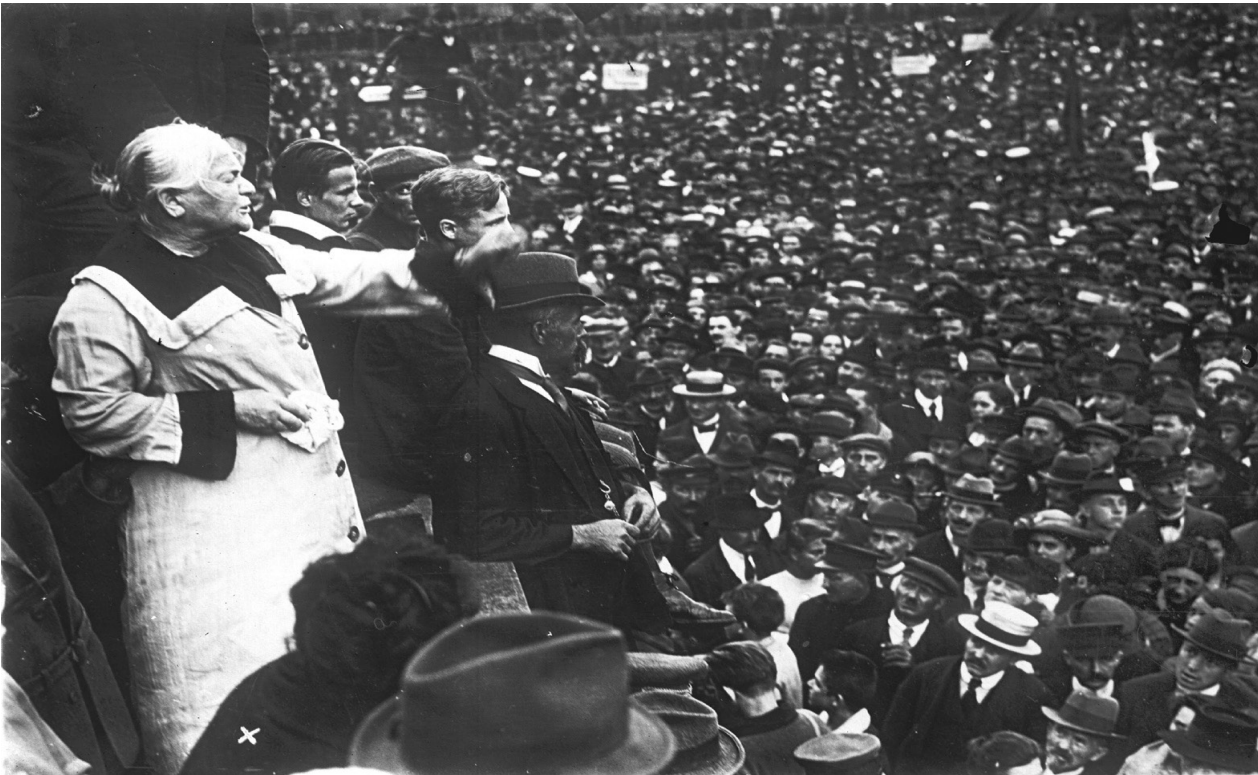
Leap back with the Leap Manifesto

The NDP can leap back by returning to the movements, including supporting the Leap Manifesto, both in policy and in action.

NDP MP Craig Scott argues the former should take longer. As he says in reference to his riding’s motion, “Ours says ‘let’s take the Leap Manifesto as a really productive starting point and work it through in serious policy discussions with the grassroots for the next two years so it comes back for the 2018 convention more fully worked through with more party ownership, as in more ownership from the members.’”

But the NDP doesn’t have to take years to support climate action. They should immediately demand the Liberals end oil subsidies, support Indigenous communities like the Chippewas of the Thames defending their territories from pipelines, and support the Canadian Labour Congress campaign for a million climate jobs.

THEORY



Clara Zetkin and women’s liberation

by NORWAN KARYAR

Clara Zetkin was a prominent feminist revolutionary leader, closely linked to the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) in the 19th and 20th century. She argued that women’s oppression took its roots in capitalism and that socialism was a necessary condition for women’s genuine and complete emancipation.

In 1892 Zetkin became the editor of a SPD newspaper for socialist women called Gleichheit, which she pursued for a quarter of a century until 1917. She was a central figure in advocating the SPD’s left wing and radical policies and defended women’s full participation in the socialist party.

Fighting for women’s rights

Since the industrialization and urbanization of Europe, women were able to take up jobs in factories and places outside of their traditional work in the home. Working women mothers were now facing a new obstacle: the burden of double responsibility of working both inside and outside the home in conditions that were exploitative and which further undercut their personal freedom and rights. Working women were obligated to perform all the domestic house work and take care of the children, in addition to being employed in the industry which was ruthlessly unfair, sexist, and dehumanizing.

Many proletarian women all over Germany were mobilizing in the fight for better working women’s employment/living conditions, fairer wages, and the right to participate in unions and various political organizations. This was happening at the same time as many German states refused women’s participation in legal and political activities and organizations, and the Anti-Socialist Law aimed at opposing and dismantling the SPD through banning many of its revolutionary policies and outlawing its trade unions.

Until 1908, many German/Prussian states upheld repressive laws that excluded and banned women entirely from participation in political meetings and organizations. It felt threatened that women’s involvement in legal and political issues would jeopardize the very social foundations of its hierarchical structure. The authoritative Prussian state of the time feared that if women stopped regarding their husbands’ and fathers’ superiority as preordained by God then, in a similar light, this would stir a rebellion among the lower classes since workers would begin to question the idea of the upper classes as their god-ordained human superiors.

The Anti-socialist Law affected working women the hardest since they experienced the injustices of being paid disproportionately lower wages compared to their working male counterparts. Zetkin worked hard to educate and organize working class women and successfully propelled many rallies and demonstrations in Germany that brought these issues at the forefront of SPD’s meetings and to the public consciousness.

As Zetkin wrote, “without the help from the men—even against the will of the men—the women rallied under the socialist banner. Under this banner they will struggle for their emancipation, for recognition of their rights as equal human beings. Just as the worker is subjugated by the capitalist, so woman is subjugated by man. And she will remain subjugated as long as she is not economically independent. The essence of the traditional bourgeois family is that the husband is supposed to be the provider and thus the boss of the family. The wife is his private servant in the family and his subordinate...The great struggle in which vast masses of people are challenging vast financial interests requires that men and women together dedicate all of their strength and power to this struggle. Only together with women—not by excluding them, and certainly not against them—can the working people win this struggle!”

Bourgeois feminism and revolutionary socialism

Both the bourgeois and working-class women shared common ground on some issues but they were incompatible and conflicting on many of their interests and goals. Bourgeois women prioritized the improvement of women’s education (cultural and moral endeavours) and the access of women to all occupational fields. They also focused on the issue of suffrage but it only included bourgeois women and men and ignored all the various struggles and difficulties that working class people—especially working mothers—were heavily burdened with.

Unlike working class women, bourgeois women had the opportunity to develop their individuality and cultivate their spiritual interests but they were still confined to patriarchal family laws that thwarted their independence and kept them completely under their husbands’ control. Bourgeois feminist ideology reflected bourgeois interests and at the same time it claimed to unite all women in a joint sisterhood. This was obviously meaningless, Zetkin argued, because the bourgeois feminists and working class women were divided amongst

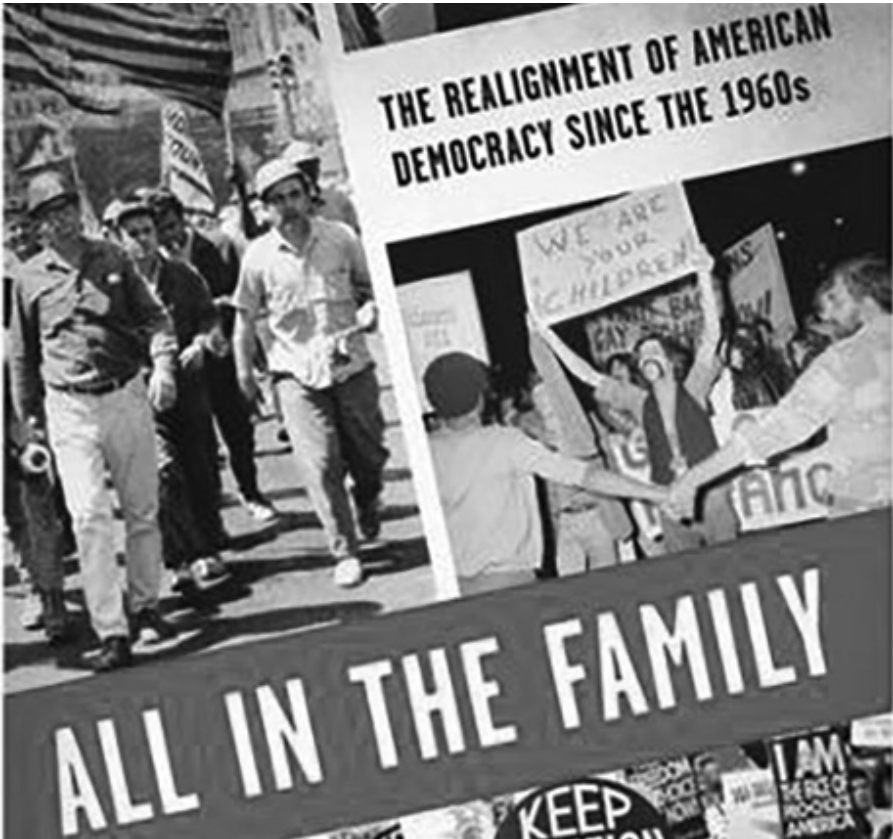
class lines and were fundamentally unbridgeable with regards to what they were striving for.

A conflict which Zetkin argued separated the bourgeois feminist and working class women’s movement from each other is the battle for legal protection and sexual equality for working mothers and their children. Bourgeois women opposed this specific legislation that provided special legal protection for working class women in an attempt to dismantle false prejudices and stereotypes that treated women in the work place differently based on maternity and their female nature. They argued that special legal protection was infantilizing and would further perpetuate inequality since it granted special rights to women and treated them differently from their male working peers. Zetkin refused this argument on the grounds that ignoring biological differences defeated the whole motive of equality. For example, working mothers were now overworking themselves to the point of exhaustion, which severely undermined their freedom and rights.

Clara Zetkin, alongside many other socialist women leaders, played a central role in guiding the women’s revolutionary movement. Socialist women focused on the interests of the working class women (i.e. improving working and living conditions in factories and in the employment industry and fighting for equal and fairer pay.)

Zetkin argued that working men and women needed to organize and recognize their shared struggle against the oppressive capitalist class and seize control over the means of production. Women make up the heart of working class movements and in order to successfully overthrow capitalism and set up the conditions of a truly democratic socialist society, we need working class women to organize themselves and fight back in solidarity with their working male counterparts. It is the working class women who make up the very heart of the socialist movements that can emancipate themselves and bring about real socialist change though their joint unification and through class struggle: “

As she wrote, “The proletariat will be able to attain its liberation only if it fights tighter without the difference of nationality and profession. In the same way, it can attain its liberation only if it stands tighter without the distinction of sex. The incorporation of the great masses of proletarian women in the liberation struggle of the proletariat is one of the prerequisites for the victory of the socialist idea and for the construction of a socialist society.”



BOOK

All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s
By Robert O. Self
Reviewed by Peter Hogarth

In *All in the Family*, Robert O. Self takes a look at the ways in which the struggles against racism, sexism and homophobia have shaped the American political landscape since the 1960s.

During the 1960s, the “white middle-class nuclear family headed by a patriotic and heterosexual male” was a national mythology that conveyed great power and became the site of political context.

Both the left and the right competed to control this mythical figure. Since the New Deal, Great Society Liberals like Lyndon Johnson made policy to try and empower this ideal nuclear family. Even many struggles for Black liberation sought to raise the Black man to the status of family breadwinner, and fears about the decay of the family, Black or otherwise, centred on the need to rehabilitate masculinity by strengthening male breadwinners through social programs, employment and military service. Breadwinner Liberalism was the dominant liberal thinking in the early sixties; it was an alternative to socialism on the left and free-market libertarianism on the right.

The fight for women and homosexual liberation challenged this orthodoxy on the left and shook the right,

leaving them struggling to find their political identity. Activists sought equality in the labour market, reproductive and sexual freedom for women, including abortion and an end to forced sterilization, and legal frameworks for rape and sexual harassment, and sexual rights and the end of heterosexual dominance.

The intersection of these struggles became a site of heated debate, as Black and Latina feminists and gay people, and working class women faced not just reactionary backlash, but also the white and often more privileged leaders of the movements.

Rise of the right

As the movements of the 60s and 70s won substantial gains for racial and sexual minorities and women, the right refashioned itself as the champions of the mythological nuclear family and the taxpayer.

What this came down to was a battle for the White working class. As early as the 60s, Republicans and Democrats alike were trying to find a way to reach “ethnic” Whites. Italian, Irish, Polish and other communities of well-paid blue collar workers and middle Americans, what Richard Nixon called the “silent majority” were seen as up-for-grabs as both Republicans and old-school Democrats thought the Democratic Party to have been “taken over” by Blacks, feminists, lesbians, draft deserters and other radicals while forsaking the bread and

butter economic issues of the New Deal. As the White working class saw their economic power decrease during the economic crisis of the 1980s, they were profiled as hating abortion and resenting welfare or affirmative action programs.

During the 1980s, what emerged was a Republican identity that combined Evangelical Christian demands with neoliberal demands for smaller government and fewer social services. They were buttressed by a newly emerged Christian movement that saw politics as their duty and sought to “defend family values” by taking back gains made by women, homosexuals and racial minorities.

All in the Family helps to explain the swamp that the politics of the Republican Party are mired in. It is also provides a fantastic history of feminism in America over the last 60 years, which provides valuable insight into the politics of the Democratic establishment and Hilary Clinton.

However the popularity of Bernie Sanders and, socialism more generally, reveal that the neoliberal free market orthodoxy shaped by decades of battles over the family doesn’t have the hold Self may have thought.

The movements for higher minimum wage, against police brutality and racial profiling, the struggles for immigrant rights and LGBT equality over the last decade have revealed the weak grasp of neoliberal, conservative politics and offer hope for the future.

the strike.

All of these historical points are covered in *Soviet Princeton*, and the patterns mentioned above can be applied to many, many different cases throughout the late 1800s and the 20th Century. What makes this volume so interesting is the sheer amount of lore that would otherwise be unknown: the role of the Ku Klux Klan in strike-breaking, the existence of repressive labour camps, the police suspicion of anyone foreign (including and especially white people from Eastern Europe and Italy).

These are all reasons why *Soviet Princeton* is required reading for the Canadian leftist who is curious as to what exactly was going on west of the Rockies during the worst of the Depression: the history also provides almost unclassified information which deals with the very specifics of what was occurring in Princeton, as well as providing an archetype of the mass strike in the early 20th Century.

But most important of all, at least from a historical point of view: it gives voices to the voiceless and forgotten men and women who fought, struggled, lived and died during this period.

LEFT JAB
John Bell

Guaranteed income’s dangerous outcome

The Ontario Liberal government of Kathleen Wynne is talking about a guaranteed basic income for all residents. It sounds great; in fact it sounds too good to be true.

Will this be a radical reform to alleviate, if not eliminate, poverty? Or is it a new way to funnel public money into corporate pockets? The problem is that guaranteed income could be either, depending on the economic context, and depending in whose interests the scheme is designed.

For example, the fossil fuel industry has been receiving a guaranteed annual income for decades. In 2014 the Bolsheviks at the International Monetary Fund estimated that the oil industry in Canada received about \$34 billion each year, in the form of direct subsidies, trade bonuses and tax breaks. (The same report pegged the fossil fuel industry around the world pocketed almost \$2 trillion in guaranteed annual income from governments.)

But I digress.

There are a number of very different models of guaranteed annual income (GAI) out there, and there are proponents on both the right and left. In Canada, most GAI proposals have come from the right and, importantly, at times when capitalism is experiencing crises.

Capitalist GAI

In the 1930s the theory of Social Credit was put forward in Alberta by Premier William “Bible Bill” Aberhart and, after his death, Ernest C. Manning (father of Preston Manning). The idea was to redefine citizens as consumers and give them a fixed amount of credit to buy goods and social services. In practice Social Credit governments in Alberta and BC did not institute GAI, but functioned as conservative governments with populist rhetoric.

Talk of GAI resurfaced in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as falling rates of profit, rising inflation and the so-called oil crisis threatened the economy. (This was also the period when Pierre Trudeau’s Liberals imposed wage controls).

In 1985 the MacDonald Commission on economic policy—begun by the Liberals but finally reporting to the Mulroney Conservatives—proposes a Universal Income Supplement. This was to have replaced virtually all social services, from welfare to health care.

The labour movement, though far from radical, was stronger then than now. The Canadian Labour Congress strongly opposed the proposal, arguing that any GAI plan had to come with a strengthening, rather than elimination, of social services and protections for workers.

The plan was shelved, but unfortunately other recommendations of the MacDonald Commission—greater economic “flexibility”, free trade deals and the first attacks on social services—were acted on.

So here we are again; capitalism is in real crisis and position of workers is more precarious than any time since

the 1930s Depression years. Technological revolution, the Uberization of work, threatens workers in a number of economic sectors. And once again the loudest voices calling for GAI are on the right. GAI is all the rage among the Ayn Randists of the Silicon Valley, home of Uber and airbnb.

In a recent *Guardian* article, Evgeny Morozov described the disconcerting enthusiasm for GAI among high-tech billionaires:

“First, there is the traditional libertarian argument against the intrusiveness and inefficiency of the welfare state—a problem that basic income, once combined with the full-blown dismantling of public institutions, might solve. Second, the coming age of automation might result in even more people losing their jobs—and the prospect of a guaranteed and unconditional basic income might reduce the odds of another Luddite uprising.

“Basic income, therefore, is often seen as the Trojan horse that would allow tech companies to position themselves as progressive, even caring—the good cop to Wall Street’s bad cop—while eliminating the hurdles that stand in the way of further expansion.”

The price tag for this model of GAI would be complete elimination of our social services safety net, full privatization of education and health services, and elimination of government regulation of industry. And as a bonus, the plan would further weaken the labour movement.

What more could an uber-boss ask for?

The goal of such a scheme is not to end the obscene and growing disparity between the 1% and the rest of us, but to perpetuate it.

No doubt Wynne won’t go as far as the Princes of Silicon Valley would like, but this is a government hell-bent on selling off and privatizing public assets like Ontario Hydro.

And if the Liberals were concerned about easing poverty, they would raise the minimum wage to \$15. The current minimum wage of \$11.25 is set to go up to \$11.40 in October—far below the poverty line.

Read this clause from Wynne’s most recent budget document, regarding the planned GAI pilot project:

“The pilot would also test whether a basic income would provide a more efficient way of delivering income support, strengthen the attachment to the labour force, and achieve savings in other areas, such as health care and housing supports.”

Instead of social housing for the poor, a voucher to pay the landlord? Vouchers for health services, for day care, for schools? The Liberal track record doesn’t bode well.

Karl Marx wrote about a real GAI when he described a system that provided for all, “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”

I’d be all in favour of a GAI that began with the needs of working people. But what we’ll get will be based on the needs of bosses and corporations—guaranteed income with a bad outcome.

A history of class struggle in BC

BOOK

Soviet Princeton
Written by Jon Bartlett, Rika Ruebsaat
Reviewed by Glen Truax

No, not that Princeton. This is a story of the little town in British Columbia’s Interior Region, which suffered from such easily identifiable woes during the Depression that the town is almost a Platonic Ideal of Depression-era class conflict.

Soviet Princeton should be purchased by any left-wing human being currently living in Vancouver, considering the sheer lack of interest/resources to tackle the greater province’s history. Left-wing history in Canada in general is fairly limited, with a few key events (the Winnipeg General Strike, the March to Ottawa, the language revolution in Quebec) highlighted, while seemingly nothing else happens in this country.

The turmoil in Princeton has a depressing regularity to anyone familiar with the patterns that follow a strike in a company town. Princeton had one major industry (a mine), as well as a handful of commercial businesses that served the needs of the miners and the ranchers who lived in the sweeping fields that surrounded

Princeton.

As has always been the case, monopoly capitalism (in the form of one major employer in Princeton), recognizing just how desperate people were willing to work, lowered wages and turned a blind eye to severely dangerous conditions in the workplace. The workers went on strike, which was quickly followed by what could be termed as sympathy strikes in neighboring towns. Organization was handled by “Slim” Evans, a Communist and member of the Workers Unity League, the arm of the CPC which directly dealt with labour strife.

The middle class naturally turned to the police for strike-breaking power, and when the RCMP was deemed insufficient, they formed a Concerned Citizens Alliance, which was uniformly made up of thugs (the irony that this “Citizens Alliance” only constituted and represented a small minority of townspeople seems to have been lost).

Slim Evans was run out of town by vigilantes, and the mine was essentially shut down; it seemed like the strike conflict had managed to kill the town, but Princeton was kept alive by trade with the ranchers, who never cared one way or another about

WHERE WE STAND

The dead-end of capitalism

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

A system that is killing the planet

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

Socialism and workers' power

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

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

Oppression

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

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

Canada, Quebec, Indigenous Peoples

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

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

Internationalism

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

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

Elections and democracy

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

Reform and revolution

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

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

The Revolutionary Party

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

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



Activist calendar
movement events

FIGHT FOR
\$15 & FAIRNESS

Day of action for Fight for \$15
and Fairness
April 15
15andfairness.org

MAY 2016 - BREAK FREE FROM FOSSIL FUELS:

**JOIN A GLOBAL WAVE OF RESISTANCE TO
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Events around the world
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2016
**WORLD
SOCIAL
FORUM**

World Social Forum
Aug 9-14, Montreal
fsm2016.org

International Socialist events

ideas for real change
April 22-23 | Multifaith Centre, 569 Spadina Ave.

Friday April 22, 7 pm
**THE EASTER RISING
DUBLIN 1916**
100 years since the rising of Irish workers against British rule, what are the lessons for activists today?
with **Sid Ryan & Carolyn Egan**

and **Myeengun Henry • Sophie Harkat • David Fennario • Judy Rebick • André Frappier • Melissa Graham • Chantal Sundaram & more**

Talks on The Easter Rising: Dublin 1916 | Racism, the Security State & C-51 | How do we win 'real change'? | Colonialism, climate crisis & Indigenous resistance | Why is there endless war? | Does capitalism need oppression? | Unions organizing in a time of precarity | From Black Panther Party to Black Lives Matter | Canada's ruling class | What do we mean by socialism? | Refugees, racism and resistance | Why is capitalism in crisis? | The Spanish Civil War | Spirit of '46: Stelco strike | Disability, civil liberties & human rights

Conference: Students unwaged \$20 | Waged \$50 | Solidarity \$75-\$100
Organized by the International Socialists | marxismconference.ca

CLIMATE JUSTICE NOW!

MYEENGUN HENRY Chippewas of the Thames First Nation
JUDY REBICK Author and activist
JESSE McLAREN Climate activist, editor of socialist.ca

Saturday, April 23rd
7:00 p.m.
Multifaith Centre
569 Spadina Ave.

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Support Chippewas of the Thames First Nation!

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and how to fight it
A Resistance Press publication
by James Clark and Chantal Sundaram

**ECONOMIC
CRISIS,
WAR
&
RESISTANCE**
A Resistance Press publication
by Jesse McLaren

**Students
Austerity
&
Resistance**
A Resistance Press publication
by Peter Hegarty

CHRIS HARMAN
A
**PEOPLE'S
HISTORY
OF THE
WORLD**
From the Stone Age to the New Millennium
HOWARD ZINN

CLIMATE ASSEMBLY

by LISA DESCARY

On March 3, Prime Minister Trudeau met with provincial and territorial leaders at the Vancouver Convention Centre to begin to develop a national climate strategy.

In order to keep up public pressure on Trudeau, activists in the Vancouver Climate Convergence called for a People's Climate Assembly outside the Convention Centre, asking people to bring their signs stating what they would like to see included in a people's climate strategy. Despite the fairly short notice, about 200 people joined the event.

Speakers at the rally included Bob Chamberlin, Vice-president of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and signatory to the Lelu Island Declaration in support of protecting the Lax Kw'alaams territories on Lelu Island and Flora Banks. Rally participants also heard from Carleen Thomas, who spoke on behalf of the Tsleil-Waututh Sacred Trust Initiative opposing the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline project.

Labour speakers included Terry Engler, Vice President of the Vancouver and District Labour Council and President of the International Longshore Workers Union Local 400, who spoke about how capitalism was damaging both the environment and working people's standard of living. Monica Judd from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers told the crowd about their campaign to transform Canada Post into one of the hubs of a new green economy via their plan Delivering Community Power.

Rally participants also heard from Professor Laura Marks from the SFU climate justice group and Cate Hodgeson from UBC 350. Richmond City Councillor Harold Steves spoke about the problems with the Site C dam megaproject, and organic farmer Kimi Hendess spoke on behalf of Fraser Voices—a group opposing the \$3.5 billion Massey bridge megaproject. Rodrigo Samayoa from LeadNow's national climate petition campaign finished off the roster of speakers.

STOP SITE C DAM



by BRADLEY HUGHES

Despite appeals to Prime Minister Trudeau and to BC Premier Christy Clark to respect Indigenous rights and the needs of local farmers, construction on the Site C dam continues.

At the end of February the British Columbia Supreme Court issued an injunction to allow BC Hydro to remove protesters and to take down their camp at the Site C construction site.

The Treaty 8 Stewards of the Land have lived at the camp, preventing the logging of old growth forests that BC Hydro requires to build the dam. In a letter to the Prime Minister and BC's Premier they demanded that construction be halted until the courts decide on several challenges by First Nations and local landowners, that permits for construction be suspended by the Federal government until there has been a review of the infringement of Treaty 8 rights caused by the project, and "an independent review by the BC Utilities Commission of the Site C dam project, with full procedural safeguards, as recommended by the federal/provincial Joint Review Panel and many others."

By removing the Treaty 8 Stewards of the Land from their own land in favour of BC Hydro, the courts once again sided with Canada's continued refusal to deal with Indigenous nations on a nation to nation basis.

Earlier in the year, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip,

President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and environmentalist David Suzuki travelled to the protest camp to show their support. Grand Chief Phillip said, "It is infuriating and deeply frustrating that we continue to be confronted with this provocative and aggressive approach from BC Hydro and the Province of British Columbia when Treaty 8's court proceedings have not even been completed and the Site C project has not been properly reviewed by the BC Utilities Commission. It is absolutely unacceptable that BC Hydro is relentlessly clear-cutting forests right now to prepare for the flooding of the Peace River Valley, which will destroy archaeological sites and eradicate prime farmland. The proposed Site C project will irreparably harm and adversely impact the environment and the Treaty 8 First Nations and all residents whose lives are entwined with the health of the land and waters."

David Suzuki said, "Promises by government to uphold and respect treaty rights ring hollow when construction is given the green light before three on-going First Nations court cases against the dam are even finished. BC Hydro must stop its work immediately and allow the court cases to be decided."

The protest has now become a hunger strike outside the BC Hydro headwaters in Vancouver. Kristin Henry is starving herself to try to stop

construction on the dam. She last ate on March 13 and she has sworn not to eat until the Site C dam has been stopped. Her supporters have written to Prime Minister Trudeau, noting that, "During your campaign, you promised to build a 'renewed nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples,' and we're holding you to that promise." The letter calls "for an immediate halt to the construction of the Site C dam, until the Treaty 8 First Nations have been appropriately consulted, the current court cases by the West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations have concluded, and the BC Utilities Commission has completed an independent review of the project."

The continued construction and the recent court decision allowing BC Hydro to remove the Treaty 8 Stewards of the Land highlights how little respect our new Prime Minister has for the rights of Indigenous peoples. In a just world, Trudeau, Clark, and the CEOs of the LNG corporations who need this dam to provide electricity for their fracking nightmare, would be camped out in tents hoping the Treaty 8 Nations might meet with them and allow them to proceed with the dam.

Find out how to help the protest at hungerstrikesitec.weebly.com and visit the camp at the BC Hydro Building 333 Dunsmuir St. In Vancouver, B.C.

STICKING WITH THE UNION

Carolyn Egan

Students and workers united

French student have taken to the streets supporting the unions in their fight against the "socialist" prime minister Francois Hollande's retrograde changes to labour laws.

They barricaded themselves in their universities and were attacked by the police in Strausbourg, Lyon and Paris.

Europe

Two weeks ago 200,000 workers and students marched mid week in a show of defiance. A one day strike has now been called after the government made some small changes in negotiations with one union confederation but the powerful CGT is continuing to oppose the legislation. Ten years ago students defeated the government's youth employment law and this memory is still strong.

Marches also took place on March 19 on the day for the elimination of racism in the UK, Greece, Spain and other European countries. Unions joined students, anti-racist organizations and thousands of ordinary people in resisting the Islamophobia that is being flamed by fascist and right wing organizations.

The thirst for austerity and war by governments of every stripe is still very strong and we are seeing cuts to the social safety net and labour rights in almost every country.

At the same we are also seeing working people and the poor uniting to say no. In Ireland anti-austerity forces gained real strength in the recent elections and less than a year ago the referendum on same sex marriage won overwhelmingly with the support of students and unions. It was the youth vote which put it over the top.

In Britain the victory of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party shows the change in consciousness that is taking place and the defeat of Blairite politics.

United States

In the United States the mass demonstration that took place in Chicago at the Trump rally shows the determination of young people—Hispanic, Black and white—to take on the racist policies of the leading Republican contender. His politics of division met their match that Friday night in the inner city when

he attempted to hold a rally at a working class university. The student body mobilized to show Donald Trump that he and all that he represents was not welcome. This was their town, their school and they were not going to sit quietly by while he tried to convince the alienated and the angry that his right wing politics was the way forward.

Those students are the same people who work for minimum wage in precarious jobs and know that not much better is waiting for them when they graduate.

They know very well that women and men, much like their mothers and fathers, work in Trump hotels and the other workplaces where he tries to break unions and impose the lowest possible wages and the worst working conditions.

They are the young people fighting in the \$15 minimum wage campaigns, Black Lives Matter, for climate justice and the right to organize. They are the heart of the struggles that are trying to change the political terrain in the United States.

What happened in Chicago is being repeated on a smaller scale in cities across the country where he is trying to organize.

The Bernie Sanders campaign is picking up on this profound hope for an alternative to the lives that so many are presently living in the United States. Unfortunately there is no alternative outside the Democratic Party for people to become active in. It is these movements from below which will make the difference in the end.

Around the world we are seeing young people fighting alongside the organized working class. They want something more and are not satisfied with the world as it is—with oppression and exploitation, an increasing gap between rich and poor, war and brutality.

The possibility of socialism from below is on the agenda in a way we haven't seen in years. More and more working people of every race and gender are saying no to capitalism.

Socialists have to be a part of the movements for change and share the hope and possibility that a socialist vision holds for working people to control their workplaces and communities and create a better world for all.



Saskatchewan: on April 4, stop Brad Wall

By Catherine Gendron

While Harper is gone, his provincial equivalent continues to rule Saskatchewan.

Shortly after the Paris attacks, Premier Brad Wall sent Trudeau a fear-mongering open letter warning about Syrian refugees. Worried about losing Big Oil's interest in Saskatchewan since the drop in oil prices, the Wall has propagandized a false choice between jobs and the environment. When confronted with hunger strikes after his government made the choice to privatize food services at correctional centres with a company known for its dismal human rights records, he said, "if you don't like the food, don't go to jail." Faced with an increasing population with growing health care needs, Wall attacks our public health care system by allowing pay-for-profit MRI scans in

Saskatchewan, and opening the doors to a private plasma donor company paying people to donate blood.

So Brad Wall envisions a society where low-income people sell their blood in order to scrape by, and the rich can jump queues to get their health care. A society that regresses to forms of torture when imprisoned, and a society that allows oil companies to break treaty rights while destroying our environment so the 1% can continue to make billions.

Since forming government in 2007, Wall and the Saskatchewan Party has lowered corporate tax rates from 17 to 12 per cent. The tax cuts and low royalty rates, in conjunction with low oil prices, has resulted in tough times in Saskatchewan. Rather than adopting progressive tax strategies and royalty rates, Wall has raised tuition fees, privatized, and cut programs and services.

Since Wall has privatized hospital laundry services, health care workers have reported blood-stained laundry is being returned as "clean." Wall's government has allowed private MRI scans. Education has faced cuts and defunding—by \$2.4 billion, according to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. While Saskatchewan could massively expand solar and wind power, Wall is promoting the oldest and dirtiest fossil fuel: coal.

The Saskatchewan NDP have proposed a number of good policies, such as the elimination of provincial student loans, a Housing First strategy and has promised to stop privatization. But they refuse to call for higher taxes on high polluters, and only support a \$13.25 minimum wage by 2018.

In the April 4 provincial election people should vote NDP but movements are necessary to push politicians to make progressive change.

SocialistWorker

THE REAL BUDGET DEFICITS

by Valerie Lannon
and Jesse McLaren

While the Conservatives and corporate press is trying to create anxiety about the federal government's financial deficit, the much bigger problem is the deficit between Trudeau's rhetoric and reality on First Nations funding and climate action.

The anxiety about the financial deficit is politically manufactured.

Financial 'deficit'

As the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' Alternative Federal Budget makes clear, the Liberals could generate billions in revenue by reinstating corporate taxes to their 2006 levels, closing tax havens, implementing an inheritance tax for wealthy estates, and canceling subsidies for fossil fuel companies.

For those concerned about the financial deficit there's a simple solution: reverse Harper's cuts, and reduce the deficit by fulfilling the campaign promises of ending fossil fuel subsidies and taxing the rich. But the Liberals don't want to really change Harper's policies, so instead, they're allowing these policies to continue and using the resulting deficit to claim they are spending lavishly on First Nations and the environment.

Deficit on First Nations funding

Child services advocate Cindy Blackstock and the Assembly of First Nations recently won a federal Human Rights Tribunal. The Tribunal agreed that the federal government has discriminated against First Nations by under-funding child and family services by 22-30% compared to services available "off reserve".

Blackstock's reaction to the federal budget:



"Why I think the budget falls far short. The amount for child welfare this year is 71 million, that is 38 million less than what the Conservatives said was needed in 2012 (evidence showed the 109 fell far short of what was required). 54 per cent of the money allocated for child welfare will not come until the next election year or the year after the election. This year FN kids will receive 15 percent of the overall amount allocated for child welfare. Same back loading for education. In the line for 'addressing immediate funding needs and program costs' for education only 35 percent of funding comes before election year -65 percent for election year and year after. For transforming education, 68 percent comes election year or the year after. Forty percent of funds

for schools also pegged for election year and year after. Overall, FN kids will only receive 11 percent of education announcement this year. Overall 50 percent of funds for education/schools pegged for election year (2018/19) or later."

Activist scholar and blogger Pam Palmater has similar sentiments. Her writing the same day as the budget is entitled "Trudeau's promises of 'renewed relationship' with First Nations evaporated with Liberal budget."

As she explains, "First, it's important to note that Trudeau's budget plays a shell game on the actual funding commitment during his four-year (now three-and-a-half-year) mandate. As we all know, monies promised for future mandates are not monies at all. This budget promised

\$8.4 billion to First Nations, but is in fact, less than \$5.3 billion... in the next three budget years. The \$2.6 billion he promised First Nations for education is really only \$1.15 billion. He failed to deliver on his own election promise to First Nations."

Climate deficit

The same deficit between rhetoric and reality exists around the climate. Trudeau campaigned on ending fossil fuel subsidies, but instead will continue them, including a tax break for natural gas.

The budget section on "tax fairness" even justifies continuing the tax break as part of climate commitments, saying, "This treatment serves as an incentive to invest in new facilities that supply LNG to new markets. Consistent

with Canada's G20 commitment to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies over the medium term, the Government intends to maintain this tax preference as currently legislated and allow it to expire as scheduled."

Not only will incentives for fossil fuels continue, the new budget gives an addition \$50 million to oil and gas under the guise of promoting "clean growth economy": "Developing Canada's hydrocarbon resources in cleaner, more sustainable ways will be critical to enable the sector's continuing contributions to Canadian prosperity. Budget 2016 proposes to provide \$50 million over two years, starting in 2016-17, to Natural Resources Canada to invest in technologies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the oil and gas sector."

While Trudeau championed infrastructure, this only includes \$3 billion over three years for public transit, mainly to upgrade existing networks. As well, most of the focus on green technology is for hybrid and electric cars, not mass transit.

Real change

If the government wants to bring real change, not the rhetoric of change, it should adopt the proposals of the campaign for a million climate jobs. This includes calls for \$21.6 billion for public transit and \$10.4 billion for high-speed rail, which would create thousands of jobs and significantly reduce carbon emissions.

If Trudeau wanted real change in the relationship with First Nations he would put his money where his mouth is. The budget gives \$16.5 million to the National Energy Board, Natural Resources Canada and Transport Canada to "support public and Indigenous participation in enhanced consultations in projects undergoing reviews by the National Energy Board and to support Crown consultations with Indigenous people."

Why not give this money directly to Indigenous communities like the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, who are having to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to challenge in the Supreme Court the lack of consultation over allowing tar sands pipelines to cross their territories?

Clearly Trudeau has a deficit when it comes to climate justice, and it's up to the climate justice movement to close the gap between Trudeau's rhetoric and reality.

Donate the Chippewas of the Thames legal fund:
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Stop BC Liberals' mega-bridge

By Lisa Descary

Soon after returning from the Paris Climate talks, BC Premier Christy Clark announced that her government was planning a big infrastructure project.

But rather than investing in improved public transit or affordable housing, the BC Liberals were going to spend \$3.5 billion on a three kilometer long, ten-lane bridge between the Vancouver suburbs of Delta and Richmond. Clark claimed it would benefit the environment, since it would "decrease pollution and benefit commuters by decreasing idling."

The current Massey Tunnel was slated for upgrades that would have added lanes and a Rapid Transit bus to White

Rock—a plan that would have decreased tunnel congestion and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and cost less than 20 per cent of the cost of a mega bridge.

Tankers, traffic, tolls

But Christy Clark's big business friends in Port Metro Vancouver (PMV) wanted the tunnel removed. Freedom of Information requests found that since 2012, PMV had been lobbying for the tunnel's removal, so that dredging could be done to allow deep draft tankers access further upriver. These would include Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) mega-tankers and coal freighters.

This is a concern because despite the Clark government's claims, LNG is not a green energy alternative. Research has shown that

GHG emissions from fracking, liquefying and transporting LNG are so high that fracked natural gas rivals coal in its effects on climate change. This is one of the main reasons that environmentalists are opposing the Massey Bridge project.

Urban planners have long known that building extra lanes of bridges or highways merely encourages people to drive those routes, and produces more congestion, not less. Only the addition of rapid transit actually reduces congestion.

Even if the environmental impact of this bridge were addressed, it would still be problematic for working people. The Massey Bridge is designed to be a "public-private partnership" so the cost overruns will be borne by the public, while business makes guaranteed profits.

The government plans to make this a toll bridge, a regressive flat tax that disproportionately hurts lower income people. Tolls download costs onto workers who have little choice but to use the bridge to commute, given the dismal state of public transit. Improving transit by adding LRT or Rapid Bus service would help both workers and the environment.

Fraser Voices, a group of Richmond activists has been building a campaign against the bridge project. Only by building a movement that puts pressure on our governments can we ensure that they spend public money on real priorities - better transit and fully funded public services - rather than megaprojects that fuel climate change.