



Free Egyptian political prisoners

page 3

Majority of Canadians support Socialism

page 7



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Climate solution REVOLUTION



Indigenous youth and Greta Thunberg lead the massive climate march in Montreal

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Blackface reaction reveals Canada's racist core

We cannot allow the Trudeau blackface scandal to be wept back under the rug and forgotten as the election campaign continues.

That does not mean allowing Andrew Scheer or Max Bernier to capitalize on it. The sight of these two bottom feeders struggling to claim the moral high ground is beyond infuriating.

Nor should we allow the media to return to their default position of ignoring institutional racism. Long before the blackface incident, a photo circulated on social media that encapsulated the problem perfectly. I refer to the selfie of the press corps traveling on Trudeau's campaign plane. Every face was white.

The CBC responded to the release of the first Trudeau photo by assembling a panel of "experts"—all white. CTV upped the ante by including Conrad Black on its all white panel.

As a further exhibit of casual, systemic racism I offer a CTV story from September 19, entitled "Some voters question whether Canada is ready for a PM with a turban". The story was about NDP leader Jagmeet Singh's appearance at a ploughing match. The story was salted with quotes from NDPers who won't support Singh, an observant Sikh who wears a turban.

Typical was Marcel Betty: "He could explain something why he has to wear that here because we are not familiar to have a guy like that with a position like that. If he would take it off, and be normal like us, I would vote right away because I am a (New Democrat) myself."

Rather than belittle Betty, we should thank him for frankly exposing the mindset that runs to the core



of the colonial state of Canada, a racism that casually defines "normal" as white and calls a symbol of religious observance a "hat".

As for CTV, let me fix up that headline for you: "Singh campaign reveals depth of institutional racism." You're welcome.

As a public service, I am going to forego my usual opinionating, and allow a few people most effected by Trudeau's scandal to have their say.

To begin, many people of colour are standing behind Trudeau, for a variety of reasons. Some say that a few instances of bad judgement should not invalidate what they see as a positive record on multiculturalism and diversity.

One woman on facebook recounted a conversation with her daughter:

"She: 'but it is racist to wear a blackface'

Me: 'That's absolutely NOT the racism I'm concerned about. I am more concerned about these different racism

1. where over 86% of visa applications from sub-Saharan Africans are rejected in Canada
2. where school principals call the

police on black kids systematically thus throwing them in the criminal justice system, but for other kids they just call the parents and talk it over

3. where landlords refuse to rent to black people especially Black single mothers in ridiculous numbers

4. where International aids to African countries are cut and the money is diverted to wars

5. where Universities reject or restrict black kids' applications in medicine, aerospace, other stem.

6. where most governments only have 1 black cabinet member even when they have more elected representatives to choose from

7. where Crown prosecutors demand trials systematically for Black kids instead of mediation, knowing that they can't afford lawyers

8. where the hiring processes are rigged to decrease the number of Black people who access a higher level of positions

9. where only one Black organization gets funded per cycle no matter how many apply."

There's wisdom there.

A Mohawk activist I follow on twitter had this to say: "If you think

JTs costumes are racist, you should see his policies."

Another Indigenous voice: "The question now is: Are Canadians willing to vote for a guy who wears Black and Brown face before they will vote for a guy that actually has one? Let that sink in."

How has Jagmeet Singh responded to all this? His first statement to the media was brilliant, the authentic voice of someone who deals with systemic racism every day:

"Seeing this image today, the kids who see this image, the people who see this image, are going to think of all the times in their life they were made fun of, that they were hurt, that they were hit, that they were assaulted, that they were made to feel less because of who they are. And I want to talk to those people right now.

"You might feel like giving up on Canada. You might feel like giving up on yourself. I want you to know that you have value, you have worth and you are loved."

Instead of spite, a call for solidarity, for Canadians to take care of each other.

Singh has repeatedly refused the media's offers to either attack Trudeau or "forgive" him. At every turn he has called for a deeper conversation about the systematic racism faced by so many Canadians, and for real programs that move to address wrongs hidden behind our multicultural rhetoric.

We can all learn something from this.

I'll begin, I never knew that O Canada was written by Calixa Lavallée, a minstrel show performer who regularly appeared in blackface. That is somehow symptomatic of the shameful state we're in.

We can make Green Jobs a reality – Retooling GM Oshawa

by Kim McAuley

Workers at GM Oshawa undertook a study to see what would be required to retool their plant to create green jobs.

As summarized in a feasibility study released by Green Jobs Oshawa on September 19, 2019, rather than accepting the closure of the GM Oshawa plant, we can see what could be achieved in creating green jobs and combating climate change. As the study outlines "the Government of Canada can provide leadership in acquiring the facility and financing its retooling to build battery electric vehicles (BEVs). There is a strong business case for this alternative... based on an analysis that considers the economic, social and environmental benefits".



If the plan were implemented, it would decrease CO2 emissions by 400,000 metric tonnes by year five, and create 13,000 jobs in Ontario (rather than losing over 15,000 jobs, manufacturing capacity and \$4 billion per year loss to Ontario's GDP).

Public investment is estimated at \$1.4 to \$1.9 billion to acquire and retool the plant to manufacture and sell an estimated 150,000 BEV's in the first five years, for total sales of \$5.8 billion, with estimated government procurement of one quarter of the BEV's produced in the first four years – approximately 23,000 vehicles.

In Germany, the Post Office began manufacturing battery electric vans in 2016 to replace its 70,000 vehicle fleet. This can be done.

We need to elect a leadership that will demand GM Pay back the \$3 billion in government bailouts it has yet to return to us. GM made almost \$11 billion before taxes on global sales of \$147 billion in 2018. We cannot accept the abandonment of that debt (or others like it as in the case of US Steel in Hamilton) and we should be in the streets day and night until companies like this pay that money back. With only meagre political will in site, if not us, who?



Support the campaign. Sign the petition at: www.greenjobsoshawa.ca/

Election debate: mainstreaming hate

by John Bell

The decision by the official Leaders Debate Commission to invite Maxime Bernier to televised debates is a disgrace, helping to legitimize far-right racism in Canada.

After narrowly losing leadership of the Conservatives to Andrew Scheer, he led a split to create the even more racist People's Party of Canada.

Centrists argue that, although they dislike the anti-immigrant rhetoric that is stock in trade for Bernier's People's Party, the decision is a victory for "free speech".

Some even celebrate the move, arguing that a stronger showing for the PPC will take away votes from Andrew Scheer's Conservatives.

What it will do is give anti-immigrant racism, religious intolerance, homophobia and misogyny a boost and normalize hate-speech by giving it a national platform.

Tory bigots

So far a parade of right-wing bigots have been exposed. Far-

right and white supremacist candidates abound in both the PPC and Tory ranks.

It starts with vintage video clips of parliamentary speeches by Scheer, comparing same-sex marriage to a dog's anatomy. Scheer



says he has changed but when explicitly given the opportunity to do so by reporters, he refused to apologize and changed the subject.

Scheer is backing candidates like Rachel Willson, running in York Centre, a life-long anti-abortion activist who pushes for laws restricting abortion, and for a public monument to "the unborn". Scheer has said he will not reopen

the abortion debate; then with a wink to the likes of Willson and her supporters he says his MPs will be able to introduce legislation according to their conscience.

Not all the racists left with Bernier. Take Mississauga Tory candidate Ghada Melek. Her history of islamophobic statements is so foul that she was disqualified for running for Doug Ford in the provincial election. Too racist for Ford, but okay with Scheer.

Then there is Justina McCaffery, Scheer's candidate in Kanata. She is being haunted by videos of her with BFF Faith Goldy, neo-Nazi and failed Toronto mayoralty candidate. Rather than answer a CBC reporter's questions, McCaffery jumped in a car and literally peeled out of a parking lot.

So many Tory candidates have left slimy trails, like slugs, that Scheer had to issue them a blank get-out-of-jail card. Who among us hasn't been a Nazi, a liar or a dirty trickster at some point? All his gang has to do is issue an apology, and all is forgiven and forgotten.

Stop incarceration for profit

by **Maurice Methot** in Providence, Rhode Island

On August 14th, a protest at the Wyatt Detention Center in Central Falls, Rhode Island made national news in the US when a black pickup truck operated by a Wyatt/ICE officer drove directly into a crowd of protestors. A moment later, another ICE officer dispersed the stunned crowd with pepper spray.

The driver of the truck remains uncharged and the incident is still “under investigation.”

Another protest was planned for Wednesday September 11 to oppose a public meeting called by the executive board of the Wyatt. On the agenda was a discussion in anticipation of a vote on a new contract with the shareholders and creditors of the facility.

If approved, the “semi-public” prison facility, originally chartered to provide a degree of economic relief for the City of Central Falls, would be divested of any economic responsibility toward the city and would instead operate as a wholly profit-based enterprise responsible only to its shareholders and to its creditor - the UNB bank.

Under the terms of the new contract, the city of Central Falls would relinquish all jurisdiction and oversight and agree to an arrangement which would require that the detention center maintain a population of no less than 630+ incarcerated people for “at least two consecutive inspection periods”, or else ownership would revert entirely to a private, out-of-state company



Protesting the Wyatt Detention Centre

which profits from incarceration.

A number of states, including California, have already banned for-profit private prisons. How long it will take for Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo to wake up to the inhumanity of the Wyatt Detention Center is anyone’s guess.

However, at the last moment, the Wyatt Center board meeting was abruptly called off and rescheduled for the following Friday evening. It seemed obvious that this last-minute rescheduling was intended as a cynical affront to the Jewish organization Never Again Action which has led the opposition against the creeping fascism of incarceration-for-profit and the unlawful detention of immigrants and asylum-seekers by ICE at the Wyatt Detention Center.

Since the Jewish Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday evening, the rescheduling was a blatant (but failed) attempt to curtail attendance to the rescheduled board meeting. Well over 200 protestors gathered in protest, and in celebration of Shabbat at the prison itself.

The first half of the board meeting was an opportunity for protestors to deliver articulate and passionate statements outlining the immorality of incarceration-for-profit, urging board members to reject the terms of the new contract. Speaker after speaker called for board members to resign from the board, and to “join us” in protest.

“We want Governor Raimondo and other officials to commit immediately to passing legislation that is

going to keep private prisons out of Rhode Island,” said Amy Anthony, a spokeswoman for the Jewish activist group Never Again Action Rhode Island.

Forty-five minutes later the board called for a brief recess, during which time the protestors passed bread and wine and celebrated Shabbat right there in the gymnasium of the Wyatt Detention Center, where the public meeting was held. From that point on protestors sang and clapped in opposition to the proceedings - a rejection of the authority and validity of the proceedings.

After some time, the board realized the futility of continuing the meeting and adjourned, with another board meeting scheduled for the following Monday, with an agenda to vote on

the new contract.

As protestors slowly dispersed under the watchful eyes of numerous Central Falls and RI State Police, we vowed to return to the Monday meeting to continue to gather in protest of the creeping fascism inherent in any profiteering based on the illegal incarceration of innocent people who are simply seeking safety in the so-called “land of the free.”

Monday

On Monday September 16, the board reconvened, and so did the protest. After a short opening statement, the board announced that they would be going into closed session, and would not be voting on the contract without further consultation with their lawyers.

Protestors turned our backs to the board as they made their statement, and left small pieces of torn black cloth on the floor as we exited as a symbol of the irreparable damage already inflicted by the monstrosity-in-chief’s ongoing malevolence.

Is the delay in vote a stalling strategy? A diversionary tactic? It’s hard to know, but I did speak to one of the board members later in the evening who voiced some real concerns about the legal terms of the contract.

I had the distinct impression that the pressure of the protests is having its effect – and the concerns of the board members are more about protecting their own butts from any litigation down the line.

In the meantime, innocent people languish in a gulag in our own backyard, unwilling pawns in a cynical political game.

Down with the Egyptian dictatorship

Freedom for all political prisoners

The dictator al-Sisi has turned the country into a large prison in less than a week. Throughout Egypt, there are no more safe places to hide from the attacks of the jailers, who have kidnapped anyone they could lay their hands on in the squares, streets, houses, universities, and even on social media.

The regime is well aware of what it did to the lives of the Egyptians; the impoverishment, persecution, marginalization and killing of all hope for the future. It knew that the anger repressed the people’s hearts could be triggered by any call, whatever its source, ready to become the storm that would overthrow it. Today, the regime is acting in a panic because the hatred of it that has grown among the masses is now tangible and visible. It is acting out of fear of the consequences.

Once again, the regimes proves that it has nothing to offer but more than prisons, repression and prosecution for anyone who poses a threat. In a few days, it has achieved an unprecedented rate of arrests, as the number of detainees is now nearly 1,500, and counting. They were grabbed from

the squares, houses, and streets of the governorates of Egypt against the backdrop of demonstrations that the regime did not even recognize and sent out its propaganda outlets to deny. The more the number of prisoners grows, the more the dictator realizes the amount of anger among the people, the more he pursues and arrests.

This hellish cycle of repression has exposed the illusions of reform and openness that the supporters of the authorities tried to promote a few weeks ago, showing that al-Sisi’s regime is nothing but the warden of a huge prison for all Egyptians.

The incredible rate of arrests, which have affected everyone without exception, only proves that hatred of this regime is increasing day by day, and what the regime is doing only will lead to more hatred. In less than a week, around 1500 families have come to have a prisoner in the regime’s jails. Tahrir Square was humiliated and violated at the hands of al-Sisi’s police forces, increasing the ranks of the regime’s haters and opponents every day.

The panic that the regime is deal-



ing today with the calls for demonstration call comes only from the regime’s realization of the extent of the anger that has accumulated among the masses as a result of the policies of impoverishment, marginalization and oppression. It is not just Friday that the regime fears, but the anger that has grown too strong to go away. If it does not explode tomorrow, it will explode later.

As the regime prepares to face this anger with more prison cells, the opposition forces have only to prepare for this anger with more organization and hard work among the masses. The opposition forces, all the oppressed and the persecuted, must join forces and organize their ranks to work with the masses as a united front capable of shaping their aspirations and hopes into clear demands.

Elements of these demands have already been stated by different parties, forces and platforms. Our duty today is to organize the anger into a movement capable of shaping a new reality.

Revolutionary Socialists
25 September 2019

Climate strike the way

500,000 march in Montreal: Quebec and Climate Justice

by Chantal Sundaram

Last March, Montréal had the largest turnout in the world on the international day of protest that became the precursor to the week of strike and action this September. So, Greta Thunberg chose to be in Montréal on September 27.

The turnout was again one of the largest: half a million, in a city with a population of less than 2 million – and large numbers in thirty other locations across Quebec.

Even before the movement launched by Greta Thunberg, the group “La Planète s’invite au Parlement” was mobilizing a climate voice around the Quebec election in the summer of 2018. It became “La Planète s’invite à l’Université” to bring out students and their supporters last March, and now has formed “La Planète s’invite au travail” for unions and workplaces.

Researchers at the Université de Montréal estimate that Quebecois rank above the Canadian average in believing the Earth is getting warmer and that this is happening due to human activity. The biggest gap in the survey was whether people thought climate change would harm them personally: 60% in Quebec but only 47% in English

Canada

So why is Quebec so much in advance of English Canada on climate? And how is this compatible with its “secularism” law – actually legalized Islamophobia – which makes it look like politics are moving to the right? It seems to put Quebec in step with the racism that is being used by the anti-climate, pro-oil yellow-vesters in Canada’s West who use anti-immigrant racism as a means to boost a pro-pipeline stance. The yellow vests in France almost went in this racist direction but rejected it.

Why is the climate crisis so clear in Quebec, but the politics of division are not?

A history of independence from Canada’s bad decisions

Quebec had the largest opposition to Canada’s participation in both world wars, including riots against conscription of poor and working class people, and the largest opposition to the Iraq war in 2003 (it was Quebec’s massive resistance in the streets that kept Canada out). Opposing any pipeline through the territory of Quebec

is not out of step from that history of opting out of bad Canadian decisions.

Quebec also has a history of energy independence. A symbol of the Quiet Revolution is Hydro-Quebec: its formation caused capital flight and outcry at the thought of an energy resource not only publicly nationalized but by a “province” seeking to separate from Canada. Since then, Hydro-Quebec has not lived up to being “power for the people”: it was a force used against the Algonquin of the Baie St James, and it has not prevented devastating hikes to hydro rates for ordinary people.

Even worse, in 2012 the Parti Québécois resurrected the Quiet Revolution slogan “Maitres chez nous” (“Masters in our own home”) to make a case for why Quebec should exploit and refine its own oil – including on pristine Anticosti Island. But the Quebecois did not fall for it: the PQ lasted only half a mandate, after coming to power to oust the hated Liberal government that had hiked tuition fees and triggered the Maple Spring, and their argument that Quebec should profit from its own oil crumbled with them. Unfortunately, what did not crumble was their attempt to refashion Quebec identity in a narrow, racist way with their Charter of Values.

The state should nationalize energy in the public interest – not just hydro, but wind and solar – but the question of who controls the state and in whose real interest, determines the impact.

The fight against austerity
Another legacy of the Quiet

Revolution still within recent memory is that people had to fight for education in their own language, not as an automatic right but through struggle. The result was new universities targeting first-generation attendees and a 20-year tuition freeze.

This passed down to generations of Quebec students the power of striking, like workers in unions. It was put to the test and succeeded in a spectacular way in 2012. That same tradition of popular power has been carried by students into the climate struggle. During the high point of the Quebec student strike, in April 2012, 300,000 took to Montreal’s streets on Earth Day.

Since 2012 many grassroots mobilizations have led to local climate victories across Quebec, from opposition to exploitation of Anticosti to sustained opposition to shale gas fracking, to the huge victory in stopping the Energy East pipeline.

But like everywhere, there is an elite in Quebec that is pretending to be a friend to the environment. They are the inheritors of a top-down approach that looks to the Quebec state and not to students and working people. And they are also the ones who have stoked the fires of Islamophobia.

Making connections

It began with the Liberals’ Bouchard-Taylor Commission on reasonable accommodation, it got worse with the PQ Charter of Values, and it reached the worst with the CAQ’s Law 21 on secularism, targeting Muslim women who wear the hijab. A climate of racism has been

deliberately stoked by those who need diversions from their politics of austerity.

Quebec’s youth who don’t vote but do mobilize in the streets need to see the connection between this and the climate movement. In the same way the Maple Spring mobilized thousands to defy the restrictions on protest imposed by Law 78, and in the same way those tactics are shaping the climate struggle, they need to be used to defeat a law that could ultimately weaken that struggle.

“La Planète s’invite” provides an effective ongoing structure to the climate movement across Quebec, uniting universities, colleges, schools and workplaces into a network that can pull huge numbers into the streets. But it is strictly non-partisan, which has the effect of disconnecting the climate struggle from the other justice issues that are in fact linked to its success.

Quebec solidaire is the only party that both opposes Law 21, and any restriction on religious symbols, and supports a just transition to a decarbonized economy by 2050. It has pledged to disrupt the business of the National Assembly if the CAQ does not at the very least stop all oil exploitation on Quebec territory and take action to reduce emissions to IPCC levels by October 1, 2020.

But ultimately there is an argument that needs to be won: the only way to stop climate change is to stop the politics of divide and conquer that only serve those who are trapped in its fatal logic.



es show



Climate action: How we win

by **Brian Champ**

The global student climate strikes, along with Extinction Rebellion (XR) mass civil disobedience have had a huge impact.

The clear message from student leaders like Greta Thunberg is that governments and businesses need to pay more than lip service to this existential global crisis. And millions of school students around the world have joined the strikes, demonstrating the huge potential for mobilizing people around the climate crisis issue.

Similarly XR burst onto the scene in London last November, shutting down 5 bridges in the city. They engaged in many actions over the following months throughout the UK, and elsewhere, but XR really made the news by the actions in April where 5 thoroughfares were held in London for 10 days by inclusive mass civil disobedience, with over 1,000 arrests and many thousands participating in support actions.

This was only wound down after the British Parliament passed a climate emergency declaration. More similar actions will be required to hold governments accountable to such declarations.

For example, our Liberal-led Parliament passed a climate emergency resolution, and only days later Trudeau's government announced the approval of the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion, a disaster for indigenous people, their lands and

for the planet. This hypocrisy is a challenge, given that we need real action, not hot air accompanying disastrous policies.

The Canadian government has a cozy relationship with big oil and the tar sands is central to their economic plans. Given this, how can we get the real climate action that we need?

First of all it's important to state that the both the student strikers and XR have demanded drastic government intervention to curb carbon emissions and protect biodiversity. They have spoken truth to power, and have attracted wide layers of people to their ranks and as supporters.

Secondly, the tactics chosen are disruptive of "business as usual", while attempting to reach out to broader layers of people and communities. This is important because many people are worried about the climate issue, but unless the actions proposed meet the scale of the problem, they will be unlikely to respond.

Direct action and student climate strikes also are suggestive of further tactics for the struggle: workers' strike action.

And for the global climate strike on September 27, the student strikers called for worker's participation by striking for the climate or participating in some way during the day of action.

There should be no illusions that winning unions to strike for the climate is automatic, and there are key

debates in the labour movement and amongst workers more generally that have to be engaged in to win workers to strike for the climate.

One of the key planks of the climate action movement is the demand for climate justice for indigenous and other marginalized communities who face the brunt of the crisis, and for workers to be able to move to the many green jobs that we'll need to face this crisis.

First Nations are already at the forefront of blocking pipelines, and supporting Indigenous Sovereignty is important for the movement.

For organized workers to engage in action, they must be convinced that they are accounted for in the climate solutions. And this is a key question, since the working class is the majority of the population, whether organized in a union or not, and the system is built on the exploitation of their collective labour.

Where a student climate strike is a symbolic protest for action by government, a workers' strike can grind capitalist production to a halt, stopping it's productive and destructive forces for the duration. Strike action by unionized workers in conjunction with student climate strikes or XR direct action can only build more confidence in the movement to push for action and amongst workers to take on this destructive system.

The ecological crisis is built into the capitalist system, through boom and slump. It can only be stopped by revolutionary action by the mass of the population, the working class.



Steelworkers contingent at the Toronto climate strike

One million march for the climate

by **Carolyn Egan**

Over one million people came out to demonstrations on September 27th showing the broad commitment to climate justice across the country. The largest was in Montreal where the official count was 500,000 but there were also 1,000 rallying in the small town of Orillia, Ontario and hundreds on many Indigenous reserves. It was an extraordinary manifestation by people of all ages, but primarily the young who left their schools, colleges and universities, joining a global movement.

Local coalitions sprung up in towns and cities sparked by Fridays for the Future, Extinction Rebellion and other environmental groups. Most marches were led by Indigenous peoples who have been in the forefront of climate action in every province. The numbers were greater than expected and polling is showing that the climate is a key issue in the federal election.

In Quebec faculty unions supported the call for a climate strike, members left their campuses and joined their students going into the streets in the largest demonstrations the province has seen in decades. The Toronto Board of Education excused students for the day to attend the events. Elementary school teachers led their students on "walk arounds". Steelworker stewards and activists came out from most workplaces representing their members at the Toronto rally. Though there weren't shut downs, workers came out on lunch breaks and others took lieu time to attend events.

At the Toronto rally a young journeyman from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, who had just finished his apprenticeship, spoke to the tens of thousands who had gathered. He said, "Some politicians and businessmen try to tell working people that changing how we do things will cost jobs. They tell us that workers should oppose the environmental movement.

I am here to say that there is no contradiction between good jobs and a healthy environment. We want to choose to use our skills to build a better world... The union flags in this crowd today shows our commitment to building this movement for climate justice...and that every community should share equally in our prosperity. That's what this movement across the world is calling for, real action for climate justice, for economic justice and for social justice. Let's start working together on that project today!"

He got a huge applause from the mostly young crowd. He also spoke about the upcoming closure of GM Oshawa and how it must be retooled and put under public ownership to build electric vehicles starting with the Canada Post truck fleet which the Canadian Union of Postal Workers has been calling for. This is a key demand that should be a focus for activists in Ontario building on the links that have been forged between labour activists and the environmental movement in the organizing for September 27th. Others spoke on migrant justice, precarious workers and the need to integrate an anti-racist perspective in all that we do.

I saw homemade signs calling for "System Change Not Climate Change" and "Break the Rules of Capitalism-100% Possible". There is a tremendous opening in this movement for socialist ideas. People are seeing the horror of the environmental devastation all around us, the fires, the flooding, the hurricanes and it's not stopping. They see the companies grasping for more and more profits, running rough shod over Indigenous lands, local communities and the workers they employ, using racism to divide us. The numbers out on September 27th show that people have had enough and many are questioning the capitalist system itself. We must build this climate justice movement and as we do, build a movement for a socialist future, where exploitation and oppression are things of the past.

Against Xenophobia For Working People's Unity

Recently right wing forces in South Africa have taken advantage of high unemployment and economic hardship to stir up xenophobic attacks on foreign workers. The following is a joint statement of International Socialist Tendency organisations in Africa

1. International Socialists across the African continent categorically condemn the wave of xenophobic violence which rocked South Africa over the last week. These attacks against fellow poor working people and accompanied retaliatory action in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Zambia and other countries are unjustified and senseless.

Xenophobia and racism have grown over the last decade of a global economic crisis. Rightwing politicians and interests have tapped into the frustration and anger of millions of people who have been thrown into the abyss of hopelessness and frustration.

2. Nationalism, racism, ethnicism and all forms of anti-foreigner politics are aimed at dividing the working-class, our communities and the unemployed. The enemies of poor South African working masses are not poor people from other countries.

They are the rich local capitalists and their foreign imperialist partners.

They jointly run the big corporations, which make billions of Rands every year exploiting both local and foreign workers, while millions of poor people lack access to quality healthcare, education, land, decent housing and jobs or living wages when they have one.

Their conglomerates, in the mineral-energy complex, telecommunications and retail services (several of which are listed on the London Stock Exchange, for example) export profits to advanced capitalist countries, instead of reinvesting these in employment for the South African working-class.

Meanwhile, these same corporations have contributed significantly to the collapse of small-scale industry, particularly in the informal economy and the rural economy, in neighbouring countries to South Africa, with the might of large-scale production. This has become a major push factor for emigration of working-class people from these countries, where they join poor South African workers in townships and shanties, trying their best to eke a living.

In daily life a South-African poor person has much more in common with a poor person from another country than with the rich living in luxury mansions in Sandton.

3. The South African government must bear full responsibility for the present spate of xenophobic attacks that has left at least five people dead over the last one week. Earlier, after a series of "South Africa First Foreign Drivers Must Fall" strikes and protests organised by the All Truck Drivers Forum in July, Human Rights Watch called on the government to "take urgent measures to protect foreign national truck drivers from violence,

intimidation, and harassment in the country's cycle of xenophobic violence."

It equally drew attention to the fact that "more than 200 people – mostly foreign truck drivers – have been killed in South Africa since March 2018", as at the time, and as well showed that "the government has done

ist development. With particular reference to Africa, it reflects the failure of the post-colonial African nationalist capitalist class from Nasser, Nkrumah and Mandela to Mugabe, to break the bonds of neo-colonialism and capitalism. This class fears the revolting workers and peasants more than imperialism

bia in its tracks. We welcome the actions being taken by several working-class and youth organisations such as the "Say No To Xenophobia" demonstration by university students in Kano, Nigeria on 7 September, and the #ShutDownXenophobia march scheduled for 14 September in Johannesburg by the People's Coalition Against Xenophobia, which brings together trade union representatives, civil society organisations, community groups and individual activists.

Organised labour across the continent must bring its weight to bear in providing leadership for massive mobilisation against xenophobia and all forms of chauvinism. This must be tied to the struggle for decent jobs, land, social protection and quality social services for all.

We thus call on the trade union movement (including the national trade union centres, regional bodies of global union federations, trade unions and informal workers' organisations), socialist groups and civil society organisations to take collective action NOW!

8. This could entail organising a Continental Day of Action In Defence of Working People's Unity, as soon as possible. This however has to be an integral part of renewed class-based politics which builds the unity, solidarity and struggle of the working-class in fighting for decent work, living wages, respect and democratic control of society across the continent, as part of the global movement of the working-class, with the aim of overthrowing the capitalist system which is at the heart of the woes of working-class people across all lands.

Workers of all lands unite and fight! We have nothing to lose but our chains, and a world to gain!

International Socialist Organisation, Botswana
International Socialist Organisation, Ghana
Socialist Workers and Youth League, Nigeria
Keep Left, South Africa
International Socialist Organisation, Zimbabwe



little to address the attacks despite issuing a National Action Plan to combat xenophobia on March 25."

4. The reason for the government's practical inaction, despite verbal commitments to fight xenophobia, before now, is not far-fetched. Making sections of working-class people believe that their enemy is the "foreign worker" or poor peasant, deflects their anger against the systemic exploitation of all working people by capital and the full support of the South African government (like all other capitalist governments) for this system, which is directed against South African workers as much as workers from other lands.

Government officials have actively helped to water the seed of xenophobia over the years. It is also quite disheartening that even within the midst of this avoidable fratricidal violence, the South African Commissioner to Ghana, Lulu Xingwana, reduced the problem to a need for all capitalist governments on the continent to create jobs in their countries so that "we don't all flock to one country".

5. This is a misrepresentation of the problem, which further highlights the chauvinism of government officials in South Africa. As activists across the world challenging anti-migrants' sentiments in Europe, United States and Australia, have stressed time and again, migration is a fundamental human right. Indeed, historically, we are all migrants.

But even this merely begs the issue. At the heart of the current dynamics of migration within and across continents, as well as the lack of jobs (with more and more of available jobs being precarious) is the crisis of capital-

with whom it eventually compromises on a class basis as a junior partner.

Attempts to misrepresent the root cause of the problem, which is the nature of capitalist "development", is not limited to xenophobia or anti-foreigners' politics. In various countries on the continent, different sections of the class of rich people have tried to divert attention from the failure of the system they represent by politicising ethnic differences. In Burkina Faso, Ghana and Nigeria, for example, the Fulani have been demonised as harbingers of insecurity.

6. The decade-long global economic crisis, as well as the existential climate disaster that is upon us confirm that capitalism is a social-economic system which destroys the livelihoods and very lives of the vast majority of the human population and the Earth. There is a pressing need more than ever to overthrow this system and, in its place, build international socialism, rooted in working-class people's solidarity and self-conscious action to build a new borderless world. This requires concrete action by working-class organisations to ensure decent jobs, living wages, land, and social protection for all, as well as ending privatisation (which is the transfer of public wealth to private capitalists), and ensuring rural development and quality social services (free education and universal health care) are available to workers, poor farmers and the unemployed in our urban and rural communities;

7. Such solidarity and self-conscious class action of working people is required here and now as well, to stop the spread of xenopho-

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WHERE WE STAND socialist.ca/ourstand

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. Capitalism cannot regulate the catastrophic effects of climate change. We stand for climate justice, including the concept of "just transition" for affected workers.

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 transgender 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.

Read the full statement at: socialist.ca/ourstand

Territorial Acknowledgement

As settlers, we acknowledge our occupation of lands that are the Indigenous territories of Turtle Island. Furthermore, we support all struggles for Indigenous sovereignty in whatever forms they take by the hundreds of First Nations and Inuit communities that have resided here for many thousands of years, and by Métis communities that have developed in the last hundreds of years.

Join the Socialists

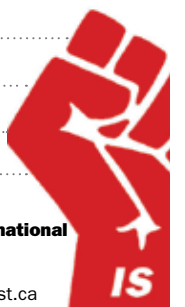
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Socialism is popular

A recent poll found that the majority of people in what is currently called Canada feel positive or very positive about socialism. The poll, by Forum Research, found that 58% hold a positive view of socialism. The poll also found that more women than men view socialism favourably, with 64% of women and only 53% of men responding positively. Those who identify as non-binary were also enthusiastic supporters with 61% responding favourably. The age group with the largest positive view is those between 35 and 44 at 65%, followed by the 18 to 34 crowd at 63%.

In all income brackets, including the highest one, \$100k to \$250k, the majority were in favour of socialism, but the support peaks with those in the \$40k to \$60k bracket at 64% and then declines for higher paid workers.

Not surprisingly, NDP supporters have the highest percentage of favourable views of socialism at 85%. Despite the Liberal record of endless wars, legislating workers back to work, building pipelines, and ignoring indigenous rights, 74% of their supporters view socialism favourably. Why they also support a party for the 1% speaks to the failure of the NDP to offer an enthusiastic socialist program. The next largest group are those who support the Green party, 68% of their supporters still like socialism, even though the party keeps saying that it isn't on the left.

We should have a distrust of polls, especially ones that ask about voters intentions, but none the less, there is a growing mood of support for socialism and distrust of the liberal middle. As we build for the climate strike on September 27, we need to convince more and more people that only socialism gives us any hope to end the climate crisis and that socialism means revolution and revolution means ordinary workers organizing themselves to fight for a better future. See you in the streets!

Doug Ford is not popular

With his budget, Doug Ford claimed he had inherited a deficit from the previous Liberal government of about \$15 billion.

That was the justification for the brutal cuts to public health and education we are now witnessing in Ontario.

Surprise, surprise. It turns out that Ford was lying.

An independent auditor has gone over the books and found that the deficit was less than half of what he claimed.

So is he going to return the money to support the services we need? You know better than that.

Education

Remember how he said no one was going to lose their job? We know that was a lie, just by looking at the chaos he created in our public schools.

So far, about 3,500 full time teachers are out of work. Classes are being cut. Kids coming to their final year are discovering that the required credits they need to graduate are not even being offered. Extracurricular programs, and art and music classes are gone.

Class sizes are bigger, and students with special needs get less support.

And the cuts have just begun. Ontario will lose another 10,000 teaching jobs will be gone over the next 5 years.

Education workers have started a work to rule opposing the cuts.

No wonder Andrew Scheer wants Ford to hide until after the election.

REVIEWS

Tashme authors confront racism past, present

by Chantal Sundaram

Actors and creators Julie Tamiko Manning and Matt Miwa, both half-Japanese-Canadian, third and fourth generation respectively, met while doing a play together and discovered their families shared a history: Tashme Internment Camp, one of several locations where Japanese-Canadians were interned during WW2.

The result of this encounter was The Tashme Project: A Living Archive, the product of 70 hours of recorded interviews of 25 people who had been interned from the age of 16 and below, converted into a 75-minute play.

In talk-backs after the show the creators revealed how hard it was to get even the Nisei, or second generation, to talk about their experiences in the camp as children. The Issei, or first generation, were already gone, and the creators suspect they would have been even more reluctant to speak of their experience given that they bore a much heavier burden of understanding the injustice.

But once the Nisei got into the interviews, they had a lot to say. On the cutting room floor (editing of the script) some got three full stories, some one line, and all interspersed with the creators' interaction about the ethics of what they were doing: are we right to do these interviews and then leave, after stirring up all these memories? Are we right to bring up the issue of the \$21,000 allocated by the federal government in the 80s for each of the 13,000 survivors long after those who deserved reparations most were gone?

Initially, the creators had not intended to create a piece of "verbatim theatre", a theatre technique where actual words are used instead of written dialogue. But the richness of the



But in fact they keep it alive for others who really need not to forget about Canada's racist legacy. The week I saw this play was a bad week: the week of Trudeau's blackface and brownface disgrace. We don't need a legacy of apologies, we need justice.

In the play, a Nisei who was interned at Tashme at 10 years old gets a monologue about having to burn all her toys before being forced to leave

her home and says: "I remember that one of our neighbours was German, and I remember thinking, why doesn't he have to leave?"

The Tashme Project was a part of the Prismatic Arts Festival, founded exclusively for artists of colour and Indigenous artists, first based in Halifax and now beyond: check out their future lineup here

The Tashme Project closed out the Prismatic Festival ending with a performance of Ottawa's Oto-Wa Taiko drummers. In the drumming company was a Nisei who was interned for 4 years, partly in Tashme. His brother didn't survive, was drowned at 3 in the Tashme river and is mentioned in the play as one of a number of children who met that fate while interned.

The power of this play (and of the whole Prismatic festival) in giving direct voice to survivors of the racism of the Canadian state is yet another reminder that both racialized settlers of Canada and Indigenous people have an essential artistic and political voice that needs to be heard, and so much is still unheard.

The loudness of the apology cannot muffle the silenced voice of what actually happened.

But allies should hear this voice, and challenge the Canadian white-washing of history. What happened at Tashme and the other internment camps is unfortunately still with us.

Tarantino's homage to racism and sexism

by Toshi X. Tomori

My entry into the film is through the undignified portrayal of Bruce Lee. He is shown as a trash talking fake. Why? So that Quentin can build up the Brad Pitt's character's badass-ness.

Who is he? Cliff Booth, stunt double for a fading actor, Rick Dalton (Leonardo DiCaprio), which makes him a copy of the original version. Booth lives in a trailer. His income depends on the viability of his boss as a TV star. In short, Booth is the archetypal figure of the economically diminished straight white male figure that have been appearing in Hollywood films lately.

Despite Booth's age and his lowly status in the Hollywood hierarchy, he can still kick the butt of a martial arts legend, no less. What does the sequence, which is played for laughs, signify? It means that no matter how economically disadvantaged the white man has become, and this is where the film taps into the current mood of the country, he is still better than the Asian guy.

Tarantino must know how important Lee is and was for Asian-Americans (and Asian-Canadians), with the dearth of Asians in mainstream culture. Moreover, with the notable absence of any mention of the ongoing war of the film's period, isn't Lee also a stand-in for the Vietnamese? In this fantasy tale, the Americans get to beat the Asians.

Tarantino isn't done yet. If he can treat an iconic Asian figure in this manner, how does he

treat his female characters? As the climactic sequence shows, he literally bashes them over and over again. It is a degrading death for one such character as she is torched to death.

Astonishingly, Tarantino spares Sharon Tate and her baby. In a sense, Tarantino is offering an alternate fantastic version of Hollywood



history—which also explains the fairy tale-like evocation of the title. It is the white heterosexual family that triumphs and survives over the two other non-traditional familial formations: the murderous, polyamorous Manson Family; and Booth's and Dalton's bromance. The baby's survival signals the continuing reproduction of the white nuclear family and the production of movies.

Meanwhile, Tate (Margot Robbie) is a strangely vacant presence as portrayed in the film. She simply reacts to things. Tarantino shoots her to capture her beauty but not her essence, because

there is none. She is the material ghost of the real thing, a second banana, an alternate being.

What kind of woman then pass muster in Tarantino's eyes? A precocious prepubescent girl. As long as a female character does not have the threatening mark of sexuality, she can be smart and engaging and, most significantly, not subject to a violent death.

The movie is also a bromance between Booth and Dalton. "He is more than a brother and little less than a wife," says Dalton referring to his pal Booth. Booth's income and status are tied up to his boss' status as a celebrity and an actor.

The film is set at the very tip of the late 60s and early 70s where the studio system is at a complete downfall and the big bucks are now tied to TV. For washed up stars like Dalton, cheap European and international co-productions are an avenue to earn much needed cash.

The bloody finale represents Booth's virile masculinity at the expense of his actual economic situation. He has no place to go back to after his break but to his rusty old trailer.

Precisely because this is fantasy film, Tarantino is more interested in the aesthetics rather than the economics of the period. Notice how carefully and delightfully he recreates vintage TV shows, movies, and even comic books. The fills seem to make a similar appeal to the young male audience of the present in the time of the gig economy: you can be violently virile too despite your precarity—at the cost of the dignity of others.

Election 2019

Vote NDP, organize for the planet

The massive turnout across Canada for the Student Strike for the Planet has put two things in sharp perspective.

First, it has made climate change the central issue of this election.

Second, it is a refreshing reminder that democracy is not restricted to electoral channels. What happens when ordinary people organize on the streets is at least as important as what happens at the ballot box.

We are taught that our democratic input begins and ends with periodic elections. Figures like Greta Thunberg put the lie to such ideas.

We witnessed the odd spectacle of Justin Trudeau joining the Montreal climate demonstration that was protesting his own government's policies. He got the raucous reception he deserved, but he was over a barrel (pun intended). If he and his Liberal candidates had avoided rallies and protests, like the Tories did, they would have been pilloried. But most protesters know that the government's climate plan is woefully inadequate.

Trudeau's Liberals reject the central slogan of the climate movement—"system change not climate change". Rather than confront the roots of the crisis, they want to fiddle with a few of the details. Their championing of the Carbon Tax (as opposed to making fossil fuel corporations pay the cost of carbon destruction) shows they are wedded to the fallacy that capitalism can solve the problems capitalism creates.

The crowning absurdity was Trudeau using public money to buy the Trans-Mountain pipeline. Selling tar sands bitumen to make money to stop selling tar sands bitumen makes no sense to anyone but Bay Street businesses.

Trudeau's campaign, which has been marred by disturbing reminders of the casual, systemic racism endemic in the Canadian colonial state,



NDP members hit the streets in Vancouver

Photo Michael yc Tseng

is based in the idea that the economy is doing well. It's all smoke and mirrors.

More than 1 million Canadians have more than one job. In August, more than 80,000 jobs opened up—but most of those were low-wage part-time jobs. Meanwhile, 53% of Canadians live from paycheck to paycheck.

Trudeau has always talked big about reconciliation with Indigenous people. Four years later, he has ignored their concerns over pipeline projects on their unceded territory, he has failed to act to clean up the poisoned community of Grassy Narrows, and has refused to pay child welfare costs in Indigenous communities on par with settler kids.

As for the Tories, it is discouraging that they remain as popular as they are. Andrew Scheer's plan, such as it is, can be summed up in two

points: 1) tax cuts, which will overwhelmingly benefit the rich; 2) cut and privatize services, which will overwhelmingly punish the poorest and most vulnerable.

Many people are turning to Elizabeth May's Green Party for the first time, under the mistaken impression they are a "progressive" alternative. But May's "green" solution to tar sands and pipeline issues is to refine the fossil fuels in Alberta and keep pumping them out. In essence, they argue the same twisted logic of the Liberals — that Capitalism can be reformed and "greened".

That leaves Jagmeet Singh and the NDP. Yes, the NDP stops far short of offering the "system change" we need, but their platform is the best on offer (and better than previous NDP campaigns).

Where the Liberals offer incentives for individuals to buy homes, the NDP pledges \$5 billion to build affordable public housing. Where Liberals promise to "take steps" to create a national pharmacare program, the NDP would create one in the first year. The Liberals have nothing to say to low-paid workers, but the NDP would raise the minimum wage to \$15 immediately and promises to create 300,000 new jobs through green initiatives.

All that would be funded by a tax on the "super rich" which would raise \$70 billion over 10 years.

Unfortunately Singh comes up just short on the question of pipelines. He says provinces should have the right to veto pipeline projects in their jurisdiction. Meanwhile, he continues to back BC's LNG projects and pipelines.

But even without these promises, the NDP remains the only party that is not directly in the employ of the corporate class. That alone should be enough to earn them your vote.

But this time around there is another factor: Jagmeet Singh is Canada's first racialized party leader. Some NDP supporters argue that we "aren't ready" for a turban-wearing PM. Whether you support the NDP or not, that sort of "I'm not racist, but..." billshit has to be challenged at every turn.

Singh has revealed himself to be the most thoughtful, intelligent and empathetic of the candidates, deftly steering the "blackface" scandal from an attack on individual behaviour to a discussion about institutionalized racism.

Whoever you vote for on October 21 — our new leaders will be the brilliant young people who are fighting to save the planet. That is where the real democracy is, the fight for system change not climate change.

Support BC hotel workers

By Micheal yc Tseng

Hundreds of hospitality workers and their supporters huddled in front of the Hyatt Regency Hotel before spilling onto Burrard Street in a solidarity action that hopes to draw attention to the unsafe working conditions at Vancouver's opulent overnight and food accommodations.

Traffic was stopped for about 15 minutes.

The escalation in tactic is intended to nudge negotiation back on track. The bargaining table is currently empty as confirmed by both Hyatt and Unite Here 40, the labour union representing Hotel Georgia, Hyatt, Westin Bayshore and Pinnacle Harbourfront.

This deadlock is caused by the employers' refusal to address the on-going issues of job precarity, unsafe workload and working condition, and persistent instances of sexual harassment toward female staff.

In Hyatt's case, the company is offering a 14 per cent wage increase over the next four years, a package that is not comparable to what other major cities in the world offer to their hos-



pitality staff.

Crucially, the workers demand better working conditions, and consistent schedules. The lack

of winter month full-time work means no health benefits, a problem not even acknowledged by the company.

"We get full time hours during the peak season," one striker told CTV News. "But during the off season we get like one day or two days for full time. It's not consistent and we don't get to enjoy the benefits."

Several complaints have been lodged because the hotels more and better hours to wait staff who wear skimpy clothes in the hotel bars and clubs.

A union survey revealed that 73% of the workers at one of the hotels—the Hotel Georgia—had been made to feel unsafe by a hotel guest.

The work is hard and the rate of injuries is high. One 11 year veteran, Naden Abenes told the Vancouver Sun: "Everybody, like myself, we've been injured on the job. It's a high rate of injury and it's got to stop."

The workers have been without a contract since mid-2018, putting the lie to corporate propaganda that the workers are being unreasonable.

Sign the petition to support the workers at: <https://www.uniteherelocal40.org/campaigns/support-vancouver-hotel-workers/>