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JOIN THE GLOBAL REVOLT



Millions of people have joined revolts across the globe. Pictured is a mass rally in Santiago Chile - more coverage page 3

Photo Carlos Figueroa (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Trudeau's Shakespearean demise: tragedy or comedy?

For 'tis the sport to have the engineer

Hoist with his own petard. And 't shall go hard,

But I will delve one yard below their mines,

And blow them at the moon. Oh, 'tis most sweet

(Hamlet, Act 3, scene 4)

Watching Justin Trudeau's slow but steady demise got me pondering: just what is a petard anyway. Because whatever the hell it is, Trudeau just got hoisted with one.

It's a stretch to qualify JT's fate as tragedy, but in true Shakespearean tradition he is the author of his own demise. We've got all the elements: backstabbing, women betraying and betrayed, disguises (repugnant), buffoonish characters for the pit dwellers (including his chief twitter defender, a sock puppet whose claim to fame was hosting a soft porn TV show), and lies lies lies.

The seeds of destruction were planted in victory. In 2015 Trudeau rose like a rocket (c.f. petard) to crush the Harper Tories and the milktoast Mulcair NDP. And he did so in part by promising to reform the electoral system and introduce some type of proportional representation.

Someone actually sat down and counted how many times he promised it: over 1,500 times during that campaign. He had a majority. He had a mandate.

And he didn't do it. Neither did he present a plausible excuse for not doing it. Now that his party held the power, winner-take-all election didn't seem like such a bad idea. So Trudeau rolled the dice, betting that the electorate would a) forget about it or b) get over it. In reality, although it never became a front burner issue in



Trudeau: hanging with Bay street buddies while the world burns

this campaign, it fundamentally damaged Trudeau's "branding" before the election even began.

Gone was the hope that even if what Trudeau was offering was far short of rebellion, he would at least rattle a few chains. The optimistic youth vote that had lifted him wasn't about to be fooled twice.

Oh say can you SNC

Back in 2015, it took a Falstaffian villain to remind Bay Street not to fret, that the Liberals were their friends. I speak, of course, of the Lord of Crossharbour, Conrad Black who wrote: "Trudeau seems to be regaining enough of the old Liberal dexterity of being just far enough to the left of the Conservatives as not to seem like tweedle-dee and tweedle-dum to voters of the centre-left, and adequately to the right of the NDP not to frighten the cautious Canadian bourgeoisie."

The old felon overestimated Trudeau's "dexterity". Just months before the election came the SNC Lavalin scandal and the resignations of Judy Wilson-Raybould and Jane

Philpott. Much of Trudeau's carefully molded image as a "feminist" was blown up (c.f. petard) in an instant.

And even for those not subscribing to JWR's tale of noble victimhood—I always figured her as a second-rate Machiavelli and barely competent cabinet member, but that's another story—there was no escaping the bad optics of Trudeau colluding with one of the worst gangs of white collar criminals on earth.

JT tried mightily to cast himself as the dutiful defender of jobs, jobs, jobs. But he came off, rightly, as just another corporate bagman. And another layer of his halo was in the dust.

Laying pipes, lying pipes

And then he went and bought a pipeline.

The champion of climate change action tried to convince us that the way to end dependency on fossil fuels was to burn as many of them as possible.

The canoe-paddler who spoke so eloquently about reconciliation with Indigenous people swept aside the concept of fully informed prior con-

sent, and said the "nation building" petro-project trumped human rights.

They tried to lay it on Stephen Harper, who signed some stanky contract with China. To which most people said, grow a pair, rip up the secret deal and we'll back you up.

The environmentalist vote was jumping to the NDP and Greens. Last time David Suzuki endorsed him; this time Suzuki says: "Justin Trudeau is a liar. For me that's the charge. He's an out-and-out liar."

And all of that took place in the months before the election campaign.

Campaign follies

For some reason Liberals thought that all the broken promises would be forgiven and the scandalous shit they had stepped in wouldn't stick to their shoes. Trudeau would win us all over with his chipper smile and nice rhetoric. We're the Liberals. We're Canada's natural ruling party. You know you'll end up settling for us.

After all who was JT up against? A split Tory party led by a creep who made Stephen Harper look mellow; a brown guy in a turban; a woman leading a motley crew that didn't know left from right; and a neo-Nazi wannabe. It should have been a walk in the park.

Then came the brownface photos. Then came the blackface photos. Then came the resurgence of the Bloc, puffing on the dog whistle and riding the disturbing but undeniable popularity of Bill 21 in Quebec. Then came the fact that the brown guy with the turban distinguished himself as the only honest, relatable human being in the pack.

To top it all off, Trudeau announced that his government would appeal the findings of a Human Rights Tribunal that found the government guilty of "willful and reckless" discrimination against Indigenous children. Generations of kids had been put at

risk through underfunding essential services, and up \$40 thousand in compensation was due to them and their families.

Nope, said Trudeau. Oh there was technical double-talk, but it boiled down to this. There's money for pipelines, corporate welfare, tax haven loopholes, war ships and the like, but no dough for Indigenous kids.

Trudeau the tragic prince stands alone, an empty, shallow man. Even his achievements—record job creation, that in reality is a huge rise in minimum wage positions—are hollow. He talks and talks about his climate change plan, or about reconciliation, but it is just a word salad making less and less sense. He utters the word "progressive" until it is devoid of meaning. His candid, boyish style has devolved into a weird, William Shatner-like delivery. He doesn't even look like he believes himself.

All he and his supporters have left, screamed shrilly through the campaign's dying days, is: "Hey, the Tories are worse." "Don't vote like you really want, for the guy with the turban, or the Ghost of Tory Past will get you."

Last time we had grand promises to make every vote matter. This time we were being extorted into terror voting for the lesser evil.

And so the stage lights go down on Trudeau. Whether he a) scrapes together enough coalition support to form a government, b) squeaks through with the narrowest of majorities, or c) loses outright to the most pathetic Tory campaign in living memory, Trudeau is damaged goods. At every step he acted like we were required to forgive him, overlook his hypocrisy, and simply admire his privileged princely smile.

Light the fuse on that petard, time to blow him up most sweet.

Wexit: Tory losers circle the wagons

by John Bell

In the wake of a deliberately divisive election campaign, Tories show no signs of being good losers. Witness propaganda about "Western alienation", and threats of separatism and "Wexit".

In English Canada pundits are repeating this with a straight face, even equating it to Quebec nationalism.

The faux nationalism is epitomized by those "I Heart Canadian Oil & Gas" t-shirts sported by the "United We Roll" truckers who tried, and failed spectacularly, to disrupt Greta Thunberg's visit to Edmonton. If over 10,000 people demonstrating against climate change proves only one thing, it is that not even Alberta is the conservative monolith Jason Kenney and Andrew Scheer wish it was.

Scheer came out of the election huffing and puffing about "popular vote", standing amidst a sea of Tory seats in Alberta and Saskatchewan,

trying to pretend that he was the moral victor.

In the end, Trudeau's fear-mongering message about strategic voting to keep out the Tories won: pollsters say 34% of voters voted "strategically" (which in almost every case meant voted Liberal). Crucially 43% of young voters, ages 18-34, voted strategically.

Scheer threw a few logs on the feeble Wexit fire, but it was more about keeping his job as Tory leader than anything. Post-election polls show that almost 40% of Tory voters think he should be dumped as leader. Liberal leaders must be crossing their fingers that the homophobic, anti-choice, dual-citizen with a penchant for evading the truth stays on.

No joke

This does not mean that "Wexit" is just a joke. "Western alienation" was a standard talking point during the Alberta election, used by Jason Kenney's UCP. In the old game of



Surprise: Wexit is being led by the far right

follow the money, it is no surprise that most roads lead back to the oil and gas industry and their deep pockets. "Wexit" is brought to you

by the same folks that brought you "Ethical Oil".

This has less to do with separatism and more with getting pipelines to

the west coast built. Creating a bogey man gives Trudeau an argument to ram the TransMountain pipeline through, ignoring opposition from Indigenous people whose land will be violated, and anyone who is serious about stopping climate change.

Racism and Wexit

There is another, even darker strand woven through the "Wexit" message: racism and white supremacy.

Indigenous people are quick to remind us that the land does not belong to "Albertans" in the first place, being mostly unceded territory.

It should come as no surprise that leading figures in the "Wexit" movement are far-right activists from groups like the Christian Heritage Party, which is an Islamophobic hate group, and the Prairie Freedom Movement.

It is tempting to just make fun of the idea of Western Separation, but the dangerous threads that make it up are no joke.

No to Turkey's war against Kurds

by **Canan Sahin**

The consensus between the Trump government and the AKP-MHP alliance - between the ruling Justice and Development Party and fascist Nationalist Movement Party - that has been in effect since the defeated military coup attempt - paved the way for an anti-Kurdish military operation in Northern Syria.

During the 2013-2015 peace negotiation between the Turkish State and PKK, the leading Kurdish guerilla movement within Turkish State's borders, we saw a rapid decline in the military conflict and deaths in the region. The process also created a peaceful atmosphere in the Kurdish populated regions.

Since the summer of 2015, the return to war policies created immense suffering for the Kurdish people. Also, the resort to war has contributed to construction of thick walls between the populations in the region.

The Turkish state has shamelessly named its recent military operation as "The Fountain of Peace". The key to peace is not a military assault on the Kurds but the resolution of the Kurdish issue by recognizing their right to self-determination, which will allow the peoples in the region to build a peaceful future.

The current military operation has two major objectives. One is the destruction of the Kurdish autonomy as well as its political power in Northern Syria. The second objective is to create a so-called 'safe zone' into which the Syrian refugees will be sent back. In the context of the latter, by referring to the refugees as the source of social, cultural and



Kurdish fighters prepare for the Turkish assault

Photo - Kurdish Struggle (CC BY S.A 2.0)

economic crises, the Turkish state threatens the security of millions of Syrian refugees currently living in Turkey. Scapegoating migrants as the source of all economic and political problems is a phenomenon that we are familiar with in European and Northern American political context, too.

We, as socialists, always fight against anti-migrant ideology and policies, arguing that the major reason for economic crisis, increasing living expenses and unemployment is not migrants, but greedy capitalists and their political guardians. The solution to the problem cannot be sending the refugees back but banning the discharge of refugees in workplaces, taxing the businesses that benefit from the cheap refugee labor, lifting the strike bans that make it impossible for a joint struggle to emerge and introducing anti-austerity policies that can benefit

working classes as a whole. Sending refugees who fled from oppression, war and torture back to Syria is not only a violation of human rights but a strategy to divide the working classes deeply.

The AKP government is currently launching an oppressive public and media campaign that labels whoever opposes the war as "traitor". Unfortunately, those who were seen as the hope of the left against AKP in the major opposition CHP (Republican People's Party) are now lined up with the state's military agenda. The new Istanbul major and CHP leadership openly and immediately endorsed AKP's war policies. This is the proof of the weakness of coalition strategies against AKP, whose major principle has so far been building an empty anti-AKP front without real political content. The military operation and the consensus created around it shows

us that without building an internationalist democratic platform, it is not possible to create a persistent movement against war, authoritarianism and austerity in Turkey.

Socialists oppose war also because war means depriving the workers and the oppressed of their basic rights, including their right to live. Military operations always bring with themselves an upsurge in nationalist ideology. Whoever is not considered nationalist enough is attacked and antagonized by the state. Freedom of expression, organization and protest is severely attacked in the periods of war. A war beyond the borders also means a war at home against whatever remnants of democracy exist.

The dominant state discourse since 2015 in Turkey has been built around an artificial imperative that put the "survival of the state" in the centre. This strengthened

militarist centralization of the state. A military operation in Syria will give this rhetoric a new content. In a geopolitical conflict, where both the big powers like USA and regional powers like Turkey have a stake, a war can also unleash a large-scale destructive process. In this context, Trump's racist and aggressive public discourse evident in his tweets is not an insult on Turkish nationalism as ruling party and major opposition claim, but an attempt to demonstrate who holds the power to set the terms in the region against the rival forces.

The only way to prevent a large-scale destruction is to oppose the military operation of one's own state. It is only by unmasking the Turkish state's sub-imperialist policies can a movement fight against imperialism of the USA at the same time.

Some voices in the anti-war platform call for peaceful negotiations between the Turkish state and the Assad regime, a regime responsible for about 500.000 deaths in Syria. Thinking that the way to peace is the recognition of the Assad regime as legitimate is beyond comprehension. Recognizing the right to self-determination of the peoples of Syria is what we need to defend. Recognizing a brutal regime as the legitimate point of negotiation is what we need to fight. Those who conflate the two cannot build an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist solidarity movement that can link the emancipation of the working classes and Kurdish people living in both Turkish and Syrian borders.

Therefore, it is important to raise an anti-war voice in Turkey that recognizes Kurdish people's self-determination as well as refugees' right to stay in Turkey.

From Haiti to Iraq to Chile to Catalonia World in Revolt

The number of serious revolts erupting across the globe is growing. Many protests sparked by a specific issue quickly turn into more general challenges to the system.

In Lebanon, huge protests began last week against a plan to make people pay taxes on WhatsApp calls. Within days demonstrators were chanting, "Revolution, revolution."

In Chile, a plan to raise Metro fares saw big demonstrations and the burning down of stations. It follows years of growing inequality. Protester Constanza Gonzalez said, "People are angry and this had been coming for a long time."

In Hong Kong, protests that have grown into a pro-democracy movement are into their 20th week.

Other protests recently erupted in Catalonia, Ecuador, Haiti, Iraq and Egypt. In every one there is a sense that people have reached the limit of what they will put up with.

The revolts come a decade after an economic crash that ushered in savage austerity. Wages have been cut, services slashed, pensions ransacked and jobs lost.

We are often told that this system is



Millions have taken to the streets for democracy and against this rotten system

the most efficient and fair way to run society. But the crash hit the legitimacy of capitalism.

Even the system's defenders admitted it had failed. And the austerity they claimed would fix things has failed too.

Obscene

It hasn't stopped economic crisis—it has just let the rich get richer while we suffer. The obscene inequality between rich and poor has become more obvious to more people. And they don't

trust politicians who have repeatedly failed them.

Britain hasn't seen anything like the same scale of revolt. But recent Extinction Rebellion actions and protests against Boris Johnson's prorogu-

ing of parliament give a glimpse of people's discontent.

In some places, the right has capitalised on this. Right wingers pretend they are resisting an out of touch elite—even those who are part of that elite, such as Donald Trump. But when it seems that no one else cares, they can win support.

We should celebrate the revolts—and do more.

Protest movements face repression from the police, the courts and sometimes armies. Too often, reformist leaders steer movements in directions that stop any real change. There is a battle of ideas, and too often the far right and fascists are gaining.

The global revolt shows the potential of ordinary people to organise and resist.

Protesters who say the problem is the system are right. Capitalism means war, inequality, racism, corruption and climate chaos.

To get rid of it we need movements that won't compromise with the right, revolutionary organisation and a socialist revolution.

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Federal Election 2019

*The federal election is over. Now comes the fight for real change.
It's back to politics on the streets.*

WHAT WE THINK

The 2019 federal election will leave a sour taste in the mouths of most party faithful - regardless of the party. The Liberals lost their majority and the enthusiasm for Justin Trudeau waned. The Conservatives, looking to topple the Liberals came up short. The NDP lost seats in Quebec and failed to regain seats lost in urban areas and the Greens didn't get the breakthrough that the polling suggested. The only party that made significant gains was the Bloc Quebecois who are responsible for taking seats from most of the other major parties.

Each party had it's own set of complications. The sunny ways of the Trudeau Liberals had already taken a beating as it became apparent that they were nothing more than run of the mill corporate shills. The purchase of the Kinder Morgan pipeline alienated them from the environmental movement. Their back-door dealings with SNC Lavelin and the attempt to shield corporate corruption exposed that they were not as progressive as many thought. Trudeau's blackface antics made him look like a racist silver spoon fratboy.

In the end people voted for him to remain in a minority government only because they were afraid of a Conservative win and the Liberals pushed that strategic vote argument for most of the election.

Conservative racism

But it wasn't just the Liberal attacks that did in Andrew Scheer's Conservatives. They were constantly dogged by the statements of racist, sexist, anti-choice candidates. Scheer hasn't the ability to hold those people in check the way Stephen Harper did and it showed. It also reminded us that this current iteration of the conservatives is still a coalition of the eastern Mike Harris Tories and the socially conservative Reform base. It will remain a divided and fractious party. There are already sections of the party who were disappointed that Sheer wouldn't open up the abortion debate or the question of same sex marriage and they are looking for a new strategy to push on the Conservatives.

And of course, the brutal cuts imposed by Conservative premiers like Doug Ford in Ontario did a huge amount of damage.

They were also seen as wildly out of touch on key issues such as climate change. They will however try to rebuild, and for them, in this polarizing moment will probably mean more overt racism and a scapegoating of immigrants a refugees. Maxime Bernier, the

didn't take it seriously from the start. And their equivocation on environmental issues - LNG in BC and a refusal to outright condemn fracking - made it hard to distinguish them from LPC. And that meant, in places like rural New Brunswick the protest vote went Green (10% or more across the Maritimes).

As the campaign wore on Jagmeet Singh shifted to the left. His

Those voices were silent as the election dragged on but it was a tough position to start from.

Strategic vote

Likewise, the shameful position of some leaders in the union movement to call for a strategic vote for the Liberals cost the NDP. In ridings like Windsor-Tecumseh - a riding with a strong union base and where the NDP held power for more than a

and nothing for Indigenous people. In this situation, propping up the Liberals can only move the NDP to the right. (See Article title, on page 8)

What next?

The key remains building the movements on the streets to shift the political terrain. The logic of elections is that once they are over we are all supposed to go home and wait for the next vote in 5 years. As the climate strikers have pointed out - we don't have that much time. People are sick of austerity, poverty and racism as well.

The NDP can hasten the demise of the Liberals by throwing themselves into the climate strike movement and pressing for a green new deal. They can offer support to the GM workers in Oshawa who are trying to save their plant and build green vehicles. Singh was the only one to visit Grassy Narrows and take seriously the mercury poisoning that the community is suffering from. The NDP should keep pushing on safe water for Indigenous communities and put forward legislation that covers the UN Deceleration on Indigenous Rights. They should introduce legislation on their national pharmacare program.

But most importantly, the NDP should be building movements outside of parliaments throwing open their constituency offices.

The climate strike on November 29, the continued fight against Doug Ford's cuts in Ontario and the ongoing fight against the rising far right will be intense in the next few months. The NDP can situate itself within these movements and take the UpriSingh to the next level. Or they can prop up the Liberals and get decimated in the next election.

The NDP brass will likely take all of the wrong lessons from this campaign. They usually do. They will argue that the tack to the left hurt the party's electability. This is nonsense and needs to be opposed. The issue was they were too late to the radical party.

It is up to the movements, therefore, to push for the NDP to keep left and to build the kind of fight that will shift all of the political terrain in a radical direction.

Propping up the Liberals

The Liberals are a corrupt party of oil companies and Bay street bosses. They enjoy the same majority in the House of Commons that Harper's Tories did during the last minority government. The informal Liberal-Tory coalition that agrees on more war, more tax cuts, more pipelines



Singh tacked left too late. The NDP now needs to help build the movements Photo - Michael yc Tseng

leader of the even more overtly racist People's party lost miserably but the Scheer conservatives still want to woo those sections of the party that joined the PPC back into the conservative fold.

NDP

The NDP started this campaign in a big hole. There was talk of them losing official party status. That didn't happen and they were able to win 24 seats - enough to hold the balance of power. It was nowhere near the kind of collapse that was predicted.

But there were problems from the start. Much of which came about because of poor positions the party held before the campaign. For example, the NDP lost the opportunity to connect with the power of Sept 27th because they

identification with the campaigns of Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortes and his clarity on certain progressive platform points such as universal pharmacare and plans to clean up contaminated water on Indigenous reserves won him wide praise. In the last couple of weeks of the campaign it seemed that an unapologetically left platform could break through.

But it was a little too late. The UpriSingh was a genuine phenomena but it didn't show itself until the last week of the campaign. Singh also had to deal with the racism of both electors and of his own party members during the campaign. There was a point early in the campaign where high profile party members such as Thomas Mulcair and Rachel Notley publicly mused about not voting for Singh.

Why the Bloc Quebecois?

by Chantal Sundaram

The wild card that determined the outcome of the election is the resurgence of the Bloc Quebecois.

In Quebec, there is a shared class anger with the rest of Canada about austerity, jobs, and the climate. But there are also reasons why people in Quebec view some of the same issues differently.

Quebec is a nation within Canada with a right to self-determination. How that plays that out in elections has changed over time.

mandate.

In 2019, there are many reasons why people in Quebec are disenfranchised with all federal parties. Not all reasons are progressive, notably the controversy over Law 21 on religious symbols. But a central reason is opposition to the Liberal Kinder Morgan/Trans-Mountain pipeline purchase, and the ongoing threat of pushing to run a trans-Canada pipeline through Quebec, which would be supported by both Liberals and Tories.

In this context, the Bloc became a place to park your vote simply to

the ruling provincial government of the CAQ, both on the question of religious symbols and immigration.

The CAQ itself did not win a majority of the popular vote in the provincial election of 2018. Its popularity, like the Bloc's, has less to do with independence or sovereignty than steering legitimate sentiments for self-determination towards a racist identitarian nationalism.

The CAQ grew on the same basis as the Bloc: on a promise not to reopen the sovereignty debate but to stand up to Ottawa on issues of language and culture – and on so-called “secularism.”

Bill 21

In federal election campaigns of the past, the Bloc's nationalist critique of federalism has taken a progressive turn, notably on the federal government's theft of Employment Insurance payments from workers. They have picked up on the pipeline issue (hard not to realize this is key) but also one of their issues of choice to face off against Ottawa telling Quebec what to do has been Law 21.

Law 21 puts self-determination to the test. As journalist Chantal Hebert noted, Quebecers felt during the campaign that all federal parties were ganging up on Quebec over it.

In fact, Jagmeet Singh was the one leader who understood and said clearly throughout the campaign that this law must be defeated within Quebec, not from outside – and not merely as a legal battle but by a battle to win the hearts and minds of the Quebecois.

People on the left in English Canada have to take this to heart themselves: this is a debate that cannot be settled by a decision imposed by the Canadian state. Even those within Quebec who are working against Law 21 know it is a grassroots political battle, not just a legal or electoral one, and not something that can be imposed from the outside.

And ultimately, the vote for the Bloc is a condemnation of the lack of choice offered to the people of Quebec. The left party Quebec solidaire decided to take no position in the federal election.

Indigenous people and workers fight climate chaos

by Carolyn Egan

Last night I attended a memorial for Chief Simon Fobister of Grassy Narrows at the Steelworkers hall in Toronto. He recently passed away and had spent his life fighting to clean up the Wabigoon River which was poisoned by mercury dumped by industry with absolutely no regards for the people who had lived there from time immemorial. This mercury poisoning contributed to his early death at the age of 63, and those of so many of his people. His son and other members of the community spoke about how they would be continuing the fight.

This concrete example of the environmental degradation by corporations, and the determination of a small northern community to defend its people speaks to the high stakes in the struggle for climate justice. Indigenous people have been leading the fight against the pipelines in defense their lands and water, and have inspired millions across the country.

Fight for people and the planet

The recent global climate strike brought hundreds of thousands into the streets with over 500,000 in Montreal alone. The climate was a key issue in the recent federal election and it is imperative that this struggle continues to build momentum. Another global day of action is coming up on November 29th and trade unionists must mobilize to bring the strength of working class into the fight. Workers interests are with those of Indigenous peoples, not

their employers who are trying to divide us one from another. Corporations do not care about the interests of the workers who create the wealth for the 1% through their labour. Just look at the closure of GM Oshawa, the layoffs at Ford Oakville and so many other workplaces across the country all in the name of increased profits. Why doesn't the oil industry reemploy laid off of tar sands workers to cap all the abandoned wells across Alberta... because it doesn't generate profits!

Workers at GM Oshawa, which is scheduled to close, are fighting hard demanding that the company be nationalized and retrofitted to build green vehicles. They commissioned a feasibility study that shows that it can easily be done with an initial investment of \$1.4 to \$1.9 billion. It could be showing a profit within five years. GM still owes \$3 billion from the earlier bailout. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers is demanding that the Canada Post truck fleet be electric and be built at the plant.

The Green New Deal can be central to bringing workers on board in this growing movement. Pressure must be put on every level of government to provide the infrastructure money to create employment which will put people to work in well paying, climate jobs.

Workers have to view the climate justice movement as fighting for their futures and recognize decent work will come from a strong campaign taking on the corporations and governments which are continuing the environmental degradation we see all around us.

People's Party: down but not out

Many people are celebrating the defeat of Maxime Bernier in his own riding of Beauce. He had held the seat since 2006.

The leader of the flagrantly racist People's Party of Canada got his ass kicked, losing to the Tory candidate by 6,000 votes.

Kudos to the Rhinoceros Party, who ran a second candidate named Maxime Bernier, sowing confusion and bringing some much-needed ridicule to the campaign.

As it became clear that he was in danger of losing, Bernier was forced to spend an inordinate amount of time in his own riding. That meant he was unable to travel the country to support and organize bigots attracted to his anti-immigrant message.

Bernier's biggest mistake must have been his strident denial of climate change, and the bullying attacks he launched at Greta Thunberg. Even in Quebec, this was an unforced error.

There is no doubt that the loss will be a blow to the PPC and the layer of bigots around it. But throughout the campaign Bernier was given far more attention and legitimacy than he deserved. Even in defeat, the media has made him a big headline.

Giving Bernier so much of a platform gave a leg up to the racist Rebel youtube channel, with Ezra Levant given space to rant in the Globe and Mail, and white supremacist Kean Bexte to pose as a real journalist.

Win or lose, the PPC had about 40,000 members before the election. It won 1.64% of the almost 18 million votes cast. The adds up to nearly 290,000, most of whom voted their racism. Those people aren't just going to pack it up and go away.

Let's enjoy Bernier's defeat and disappointment, but don't let down your guard against the forces he represents. For now, the PPC remains a dangerous organizing tool for the far right.

Debates: Cops are not our friends

by **Brian Champ**

There is an open debate on the orientation of extinction rebellion (XR) to the police. XRs non-violent direct action tactics are meant to disrupt the business as usual that is killing the planet. The risk of arrest is not a feature of all XR actions, but those refusing to stop blocking infrastructure have a higher risk of being arrested.

While it is important to maintain cordial relations with the police during such actions, it is unnecessary, indeed detrimental to the movement, to say that police are “just doing their job” and to thank them publicly for keeping us safe, as has been common at XR actions.

And there are also some in XR who advocate appealing to individual police because they’ll be affected by climate breakdown too. But will this build the movement? Isn’t our main audience the broad masses of people, ground down by austerity and who are alarmed by the state of the climate?

Any striking worker who’s been on a picket line will tell you that the police act on behalf of the boss, who benefits from the way the system is set up. Just a glance at policing statistics show the institutionally racist nature of the force.

Furthermore, the police are a paid defence force that operates on a command structure, so relating to them as individuals is misguided at best. By not showing we understand the his-

toric and current role of policing, especially of indigenous peoples, people of colour and other marginalized groups, but also of workers on picket lines, XR will be treated with suspicion, preventing the cross pollination of movements.



RCMP attack Indigenous people at Unist’ot’en blockade

Photo: Micheal Toledano

It’s a crucial question here, because Turtle Island is different than the UK, in that First Nations have led the climate movement; the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs continue to lead the fight against the Trans Mountain pipeline; the Unist’ot’en people have blocked new LNG pipelines through their terri-

tories. The fight against Line 9 in Ontario was led by the Chippewas of the Thames, who took it to the supreme court. In truth, Indigenous land defenders have resisted the ruination of their territories in one way or another since the

first Europeans arrived over 500 years ago.

A young person of colour who attended the Global Rebellion report back meeting spoke of praising the police as being a problem for him personally, making him hesitate getting involved.

This is because the RCMP, originally the

North-West Mounted Police, has always been a colonial occupation force, policing indigenous territories and bodies since just after confederation. In January, the RCMP broke up the Unist’ot’en LNG pipeline blockade, and in August police forces caused massive damage to sacred portions of their territories. Federal, provincial and local police forces continue to harass, detain and kill indigenous people and people from racialized communities at higher rates than the rest of the population.

The MMIW inquiry decried the failure of police to protect indigenous women in this country, making recommendations that will likely never be meaningfully implemented, given the role of the police.

Thankfully, there are many in XR who see this as an issue. Indeed, XR Toronto has a working group that is dedicated to these issues and is currently discussing adding a fourth demand similar to that existing for XR in the US: to prioritize the most vulnerable people, respect indigenous sovereignty and establish self-led reparations and remediation.

There is a huge rising worldwide movement of movements of people demanding climate action, but also for justice for racial and economic inequality. XR can be a big part of this, if barriers to other parts of the movement are removed. To start, XR activists must recognize that the police are not on their side, but act to defend the racist and destructive system we hope to transform.

Indigenous Peoples housing abhorrent: UN

by **Michele McAuley**

A UN report presented October 18 by Leilani Farha, the special rapporteur on housing, outlines that Indigenous peoples live in some of the most abhorrent housing conditions across the planet with many subjected to grossly inadequate housing, lacking basic necessities - potable water and toilets - as well as homelessness, life-threatening conditions, forced evictions and involuntary displacement.

It is a necessarily scathing report, and in 25 pages addresses past, present and ongoing ‘deeply rooted discrimination, criminalization, barriers and violations’ that Indigenous peoples endure, noting these violations are “embedded in, and a consequence of, colonization, forced assimilation, past and present dispossession of their lands and deeply rooted discrimination nurtured over centuries.” “Indigenous peoples were intentionally alienated from their own cultures and deprived of access to resources, both of which are necessary for their enjoyment of the right to housing.”

Increasing numbers of indigenous peoples are migrating to cities, where the most available option is living in precarious informal settlements where they’re at risk of early death. They face significant barriers to housing, including overt racism and economic vulnerability, have disproportionately high rates of homelessness and are extremely vulnerable to forced evictions, land-grabbing

and effects of climate change. When they defend their rights they are often the targets of extreme violence.

Indigenous women often become the targets of further violence because of their



Canada’s shame - UN condemns inaction

gender, Indigenous identity, socio-economic status and patriarchy.

In Canada, the report states: ‘close to half of all First Nations people live on reserves; more than 25 per cent in overcrowded conditions; more than 10,000 on-reserve homes in Canada don’t have indoor plumbing and 25 percent of reserves in Canada have substandard water or sewage systems. Housing shortages are so severe in the North that some people in Indigenous communities are forced to sleep in shifts, with 15 people living in a trailer-sized house. In a country with the most fresh water in the world, 75

percent of the reserves in Canada have contaminated water, with communities such as Attawapiskat declaring a state of emergency because of toxic chemical levels in the water.’ ‘In Canada, indigenous children make up 52.2 percent of children in foster care’.

Trudeau’s Liberals made big promises to Indigenous Peoples in the early years of their majority government and didn’t come through on most. During his victory speech on October 21, Trudeau mainly called for unity, trying to shore up his minority government, never once mentioned First Nations, yet told the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta that he had heard them. This is a stunning omission and sad admission because the Liberals did not win any seats in those provinces - the ridings that Indigenous Peoples held the swing vote in didn’t vote Liberal.

This report addresses crimes against Indigenous peoples in the context of climate change and capitalism: ‘Indigenous peoples rely heavily on the natural environment for their material and cultural existence... have contributed the least to the climate crisis yet are the ones most affected by it - finding themselves on the front lines facing every disaster, from the melting of the glaciers in the Arctic, to the deforestation of the Amazon, to the rising sea swallowing islands in Oceania. Indigenous perspectives on climate change are often excluded from the global mainstream narrative... the lack of value attributed to indigenous ideas and solutions for

adaptation and mitigation and the imposition of non-indigenous solutions on indigenous communities represent a new era of “climate change -driven colonialism”.

There are also legal implications for Trudeau. In presenting the report Farha said “The right to housing under international human rights law is something that is legally binding on governments in Canada. That’s really important because the UN’s DRIP isn’t a legal instrument in the way that the treaty for the right to housing is.” That statement puts pressure on the government to act, and we need to make this front and center on November 29, when we take to the streets again.

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.

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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:
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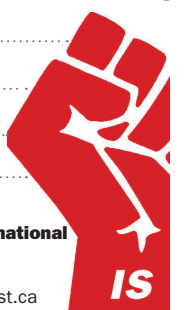
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Interview: Unite/Here striker

by **Quentin Rowe Codner** and **Michael
yc Tseng**

The chic yellow Hotel Belmont sign in Vancouver was joined by a homemade LED sign that flashed “Support Women and Respect Workers” as well as hundreds of workers and community members on Oct 24. In September, staff from Hotel Belmont filed human rights complaints against Pacific Reach Properties, which owns Hotel Georgia and Hotel Belmont. Socialist Worker caught up with Casey, a worker at the prestigious Rosewood Hotel Georgia:

Q: Tell us why you are here today.

Casey: I worked at Hotel Georgia, in the service industry there and we are all on strike. I am here today because... I will share this with you, but it is deeply personal. I was sexually assaulted at my workplace, and my manager did absolutely nothing, or even acknowledged the situation.

I know that this is a huge issue for housekeepers, and to be honest, many other women who work in this industry. So I am here at the picket line to support these women. I don't know if I am ever going to go back,



because I don't feel safe there. Even though the hotel managers are refusing to acknowledge these incidents, I want to support my fellow hospitality workers and women.

Hopefully, we can rectify these situations, you know? Who wants to work where they don't feel safe?

Q: Exactly, thank you for sharing. In terms of policy change or other asks, what would you like to see in these workplaces?

C: For most people, myself included, the most important thing is job safety when we are working. I know there are certain measures, such as a panic button, that they can implement, but they don't seem to be listening.

Besides women's safety, I want to see job security. The current situation is that you are hired as a full-time employee, and the management simply cut your hours during slow seasons. This creates a lot of problems for us, the workers, especially in a city like Vancouver.

The managers are often rotated in these workplaces, and the workers end up having to teach the managers how things work. This convoluted and as you can imagine, unsafe, work environment really need to change, I think.

Q: Lastly, how do you feel about today's action?

C: I think it went well and I think the message was heard. There are a lot of people here from the community, joining our union. This says a lot. People in the community who are willing to step up and help others. I see some teachers here with their gigantic union sign, and I will be there for them as well, you know, if they need it.

Help support the workers by donating at: bit.ly/VANsupport. Sign the petition: bit.ly/34d98XM

REVIEWS

Lack of ideas, not violence, pulls the Joker down

by **Faline Bobier**

Todd Phillip's new film *Joker* is about the birth of the iconic Batman villain whom we have seen in several iterations by this point.

Joker won top prize at the Venice Film Festival where it debuted. American activist and filmmaker Michael Moore obviously agrees with this estimation of the film:

“On Wednesday night I attended the New York Film Festival and witnessed a cinematic masterpiece [...] the story it tells and the issues it raises are so profound, so necessary, that if you look away from the genius of this work of art, you will miss the gift of the mirror it is offering us.”

Moore tries to argue that *Joker* is a political film, that it's about Trump's America and a tale of the dispossessed rising against the 1%. Would it were so, Michael Moore!

I think *Joker* is much more accurately represented in Shakespeare's reckoning: “A tale of sound and fury...signifying nothing.” I'm not arguing, as have some on the right, that the problem with *Joker* is that it's a dangerous film because it may incite ‘unstable’ people to commit acts of violence.

Whenever the right talks about ‘violence’ in film they do it selectively, while ignoring the real violence that happens every day and is often perpetrated by the state and the institutions of power. Moore rightfully skewers this moralistic world view: “We've been told it's violent and sick and morally corrupt — an incitement and celebration of murder. We've been told that police will be at every screening this weekend in case of ‘trouble.’ Our country is in deep despair, our constitution is in shreds, a rogue maniac from Queens has access to the nuclear codes — but for some reason, it's a movie we should be afraid of.”

No, the problem with *Joker* is not the violence in the film, nor with Joaquin Phoenix's performance, which is stellar. He creates in Arthur Fleck a wounded, emaciated and troubled character who moves through the mean streets of Gotham like a broken swan. The choreographed scenes with Phoenix are astonishingly poetic and almost ballet-like in their precision and grace.

The pity is that his performance is in the service of a movie which has no real ideas and which is in some instances profoundly reaction-

ary. Phillips seems to want to be all things to all people and in the end manages to say very little.

The film is set sometime in the late 70s-early 80s. New York City stands in for Gotham with its garbage-strewn streets and crumbling infrastructure. *Joker* wants to show its radical edge by excoriating Thomas Wayne, the millionaire who claims to want to ‘save’ the city by getting involved in politics but who is as vicious and cut-throat as they come.

We are supposed to believe that Arthur Fleck, who makes his living as a party clown for hire, comes to spearhead a movement of people who



are equally disenfranchised and want revenge.

On the subway Arthur is confronted by three young white men, clearly meant to represent the privilege of the wealthy (they are referred to as Wall Street types). He has had a particularly bad day, losing his job and one of his remaining anchors to real life.

The young men mock his uncontrollable laughter, which is a symptom of his mental illness. When they begin beating and kicking him, he snaps, taking out a gun he acquired mostly by accident and thereby creating headlines the next day.

A headline in the newspaper, “Kill the Rich”, would seem to link Arthur's act to the inequality in the larger society but in the context of the rest of director Todd Phillip's movie it's just another throw-away that he piles on, pretending to be saying something when he really isn't.

It's not surprising Phillips would comment that he stopped making comedies (The

Hangover franchise, for example) because it was too hard in such a ‘woke’ culture. This sounds like nothing more than the lament of someone who wants to be able to continue to make jokes at the expense of those people who have been the targets for so long: people of colour, women, anyone who is not part of the dominant culture.

There are strains of this small-mindedness in *Joker*. There are several minor characters who are played by people of colour. The kids who viciously attack Arthur near the beginning of the movie are Latino and Black.

Arthur also has interactions with a Black female social worker who is the one who okays his prescriptions to help him cope with his condition. The movie is obviously mostly concerned with Arthur's tragic circumstances but there is little sympathy for other victims of a society in disarray. The social worker is portrayed as someone who doesn't really listen to what Arthur is saying and has no empathy for what he's going through.

When cuts come down from Social Services the social worker has to let Arthur know this means that she will no longer be able to see him on a weekly basis and that there is no funding to pay for his meds. She is also losing her job and, as she says to Arthur, “They don't give a shit about you, Arthur. They don't give a shit about me either.”

This could be an opportunity for real solidarity, but Phillips isn't interested in showing us the larger picture. The scenes near the end of the film where Arthur becomes a hero to the clown mask-wearing thousands who see him as their symbol veer very close to the notion of the mindless mob.

Joker is a profoundly cynical piece of movie-making, since it both plays to the notion that people have reasons to rebel and displays their rebellion as nothing but the mindless adulation of a clown who has become a celebrity essentially through his act of violence.

This, in the context of US society where in real life millions of people have been protesting and striking against inequality and racism, not being led by hucksters like Trump et al, but trying to create those networks that can bring down the society of the 1%.

See *Joker* if you must but don't give it credit as any kind of revolutionary piece of film-making; it is anything but.

Parasite - Crazy Class-conscious Asians

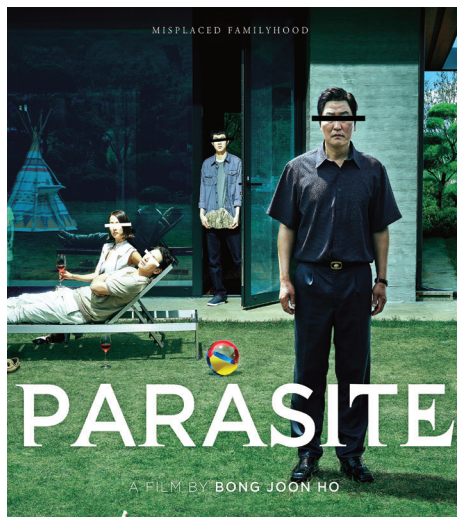
by **Toshi X. Tomori**

Who is this film for? Korean director Bong Joon-ho's *Parasite* opens with a movie screen-like window where the impoverished Kim family looks out into the street from their semi-submerged dwelling.

They are causally marked as insect-like, feeding off the edges of the formal and informal economies as they collectively assemble pizza boxes, while fumes of insecticide get blown into their home. Their dire financial situation is indicated by the odd, inconveniently placed toilet bowl in the opening scenes.

It's not the only home with a bizarre architectural feature: the wealthy Park family's grandly designed house also has a movie screen counterpart, a large and magnificent window that looks out unto a carefully manicured backyard, and they too have their own version of the weirdly placed room.

The reason I ask my opening question is because, while the movie seems to be about class resentment, it may actually be punching down on the less economically stable family. The bourgeois housewife, despite her laughable affectations, is characterized as well-intentioned and naïve. Meanwhile, the husband is shown as a suave, successful businessman. In both instances there is no indication of how parasitical the wealthy are—which contrasts to the parasitical assault



of the Kims against the affluent Parks.

The Kims are philistines; they can only appreciate art through googling. If the director is aiming for some type of statement about class, what he comes up with is quite devastating. Instead of class solidarity, the film shows that the lower classes will fight amongst themselves. They will compete and maim with another for

the limited resources available to them.

Why can't they band together and target the actual economic parasites of society? Why is this option not available in the film? Are we to view this film through the submerged window or the grand one?

The financial status of the grifting family is equally quizzical. With their combined incomes, as Mr. Kim remarks, they could move out of their cramped quarters. But they don't. The only sign of financial improvement is when they dine out at a regular restaurant. So where is the money going?

The financial and class aspects get blurry because the film is ultimately not interested with these issues. It has another allegory in mind: the North and South Korean divide.

As a character remarks, a key edifice was built as a place to hide not just from creditors but also from bombs. The film conflates these two themes, which is why the class aspect becomes less prominent and biting in the second half.

The doubling or repetition of a character's fate in the film's final act does not make sense, narratively and visually, if the underlying issues of the de- and re-unification of the Koreans are ignored. The closing sequence stages a deferred and potentially impossible reunion not just among kin but also of these two nations.

Hasten the demise of the Liberal Party

Over a million voters deserted the Liberals in this election, and for good reason.

Trudeau wore black face, but he's not a racist? He drove two women out of his cabinet, but he's a feminist? He taunted ingenious victims of mercury poisoning at a Liberal fundraiser, but he believes in reconciliation? He bought a pipeline, but he is a climate champion?

His personal record and the record of the Liberals in power lead to a dramatic decrease in their popular vote and in the overall turn out in this election. The Liberals dropped from 39.5% of the vote in the 2015 election down to 33.1% of the vote this time. This, unfortunately, is still a huge increase over the 2011 election when the Liberals finished in 3rd place with less than 19% of the vote. The voter turnout went from 68.3% in 2015 down to 66% in this election.

The Liberals are not on your side. They are a party of oil companies and bay street bosses. They have always put profit before people and have more in common with the Tories than they do with the NDP or the rest of the left. We should celebrate the decline in the number of workers who mistakenly look to the Liberals as a substantial alternative to the Tories. We should also be looking for ways to increase the numbers of workers who abandon the Liberals. Building wide spread climate strikes and demanding a Green New Deal that puts billions in to saving the planet and saving jobs will help.



Trudeau stands with big oil. He is not a climate leader

Can the NDP wring concession out of the Liberals?

The NDP should refuse any support for the Liberals. They should refuse a formal coalition, any sort of letter of understanding or supporting them vote by vote. If the NDP were to support the Liberals, it would inevitably push Jagmeet Singh and the party to the right. In a polarizing environment, that would be a recipe for irrelevancy.

As we have seen in the past, when the NDP props up the Liberals they are required to put some of their more progressive ideas on hold. These compromises are explicitly an argument

that workers should compromise with their bosses and not demand too much.

Supporting the Liberals means abandoning the specific reason why the NDP is different - it's organic connection to the working class through the union movement. It's very existence is an argument against class collaboration and the whole "we are in this together" mentality driven by the bosses. We are not all in this together. Bosses, landlords and the 1% do not have the same interests as the working class. Indeed they are usually diametrically opposed.

When Jack Layton mused about joining with

the Liberals to stop a Stephen Harper Majority in 2008, they agreed to drop two key election promises - opposition to corporate tax cuts and opposition to the war in Afghanistan just so they would be granted a seat at the cabinet table. They didn't ultimately do it but it showed how quickly a section of the party brass are willing to shift right to gain some power.

What next?

The NDP should force the Liberals to choose between the NDP and the Tories on vote after vote. As soon as they can, they should table legislation for the platform that they ran on: shutting down Trans-mountain pipeline, tax the rich, a Green New Deal, incorporating the UN Declaration on Indigenous Rights into law and so on. When the Liberals table legislation, the NDP should amend it to attack the 1% or support the rest of us. Each time showing workers that the parties of the bosses have more in common with each other than with anyone else.

You can help make this happen. The NDP is only ever as good as the most militant movements in the working class. Build the climate strike, build solidarity for Indigenous Sovereignty, and build the socialist movement in your workplace, school and community. There is no reason why we can't drive the Liberals into obscurity once again.

For full election analysis see **pages 4-5**

Build the global climate strike November 29

The next global day of action for the climate is scheduled for the 29th of November. As we saw during the days of action from September 20-29, there was a mass response with more than 7 million people marching throughout the world.

Politicians all over the world have been forced to at least play lip service to the demands of the marchers - even if they have not followed up on their promises.

Labour and the next strike

For this movement to grow and broaden it needs to connect up even more with organized workers in unions to push for substantive change. It is the strength of the union movement that can take this wonderful movement to the next level.

A recent study published by the Washington Post analyzed movements for democratic reforms and found that those with unionized workers at the heart were able to achieve more lasting results faster and with more longevity.

For socialists this is nothing new. We know that the point of production is the point at which the 1% gain their wealth. If the workers are able to collectively shut down production through strikes or occupations they can literally shut the whole system down.



It is the way for us to achieve a lasting revolutionary transformation of the world.

It is also crucial for us to make as many links as possible with workers who are being wooed by the right wing.

In Canada, workers employed in the tar sands are used as bargaining chips whenever we talk of stopping climate chaos. Many of those workers would be just as happy producing green technologies rather than working for big oil but they need the jobs. If the environmental move-

ment ignores those concerns we are cutting ourselves off at the knee.

If we make efforts to join with industrial workers in common cause - many of them are also concerned about climate change - then we can create a movement that will be unstoppable.

And the workers themselves have been trying to find solutions.

In Alberta, former tar sands workers started a group called Iron and Earth which is working to re-train people to work in the renewable sector

- making windmills and solar panels.

In Oshawa, GM workers have been working on a campaign to have the local GM plant nationalized and retooled to build green vehicles. This is just the kind of just transition we need.

And the workers know that the bosses that want them to support the oil industry are not their friends. Most of those same oil companies have no problem laying off workers and ruining their lives. Husky energy for example took tens of millions of dollars from the provincial and federal governments and then announced hundreds of layoffs.

It is through the collective action of all workers - be they industrial, public sector, unionized or not that we can create a movement that will not only force the hand of governments to tackle climate change - but also to plant the seeds of a new society where wealth and the riches of the earth are not squandered but are shared by the people.

We can create a world for people and the planet - not for profit.

Join the global climate strike on November 29. Between now and then, talk to your fellow workers, students and community members and get them to join you. Lets make this an historic day of action.