

**Join the global
climate strike
September 25**

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**Smash racism!
support Black
Lives Matter**

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CAPITALISM IS THE CRISIS

Tear it all down



The statue of Canada's racist prime minister, John A Macdonald was toppled in Montreal.

photo: @nobordersmedia

Dying for Dollars: Capitalism is a death cult

“Capitalism tends to destroy its two sources of wealth: nature and human beings.”

It would be nice if this popular quote attributed to Karl Marx was accurate, but he never said it. What he actually said, in Volume 1 of Capital, was:

“Capitalist production, therefore, only develops the techniques and the degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth – the soil and the worker.”

Which means basically the same thing. Marx’s analysis of capitalism exposed its inner contradictions, its fatal flaws. Capitalism cannot produce without destroying. The more it produces the greater the destruction. No more profound proof of Marx’s hypothesis exists than the two defining features of our age:

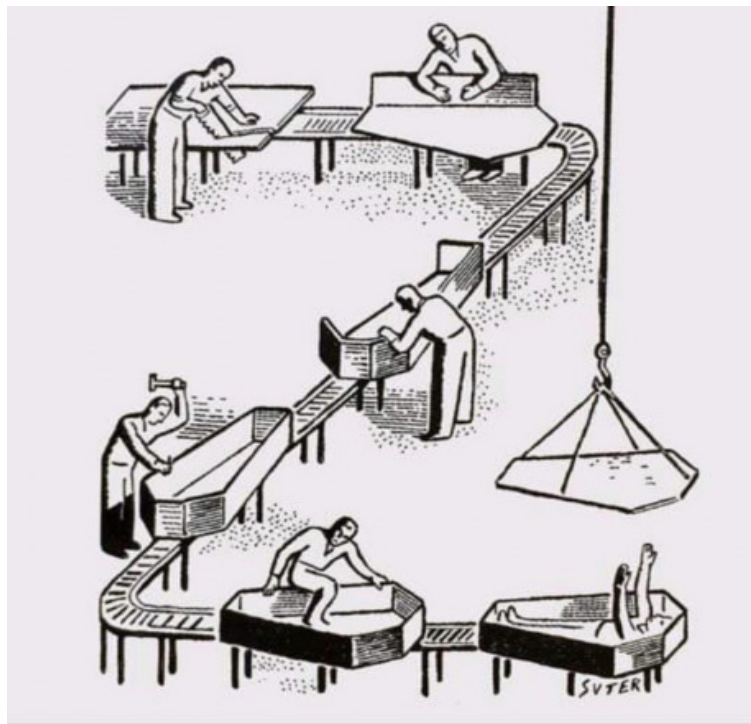
First, the obscene chasm of between a tiny handful of rulers whose wealth and power would make the pharaohs blush, and a great mass of workers ground down by poverty, misery and despair.

So far in 2020, as millions of workers around the world barely keep going through the pandemic related depression, Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk alone have added \$115 billion to their hoards. Yet in what claims to be the greatest and richest nation on earth, some 30 million US workers are unemployed, and an estimated 19 to 23 million people face eviction from their homes.

The effects of the crisis are worst among Black and POC communities. “My clients are overwhelmingly single black women with children,” said one South Carolina tenant advocate. “My client today was and my client yesterday was. And all of my

clients last week were single black females with children.”

One study reveals that 11% of US adults contemplated suicide in June.



The second proof of capitalism’s intrinsically destructive force is climate change.

Unprecedented storms, collapsing polar ice shelves, record forest fires and deadly heat waves have plagued the globe in 2020. They haven’t got the headlines and attention they deserve, crowded out by stories about COVID-19, economic collapse, and inspiring explosions of resistance to police violence and racism.

There is no question that climate change poses an existential threat to human society that makes the disruptions cause by the pandemic

pale in comparison. There is no question that climate change is caused by burning fossil fuels to power capitalism’s growth and

production. And there is no question that, according to capitalism’s logic, profiting from the continued use of fossil fuel is more important than the lives and health of human beings, and the very natural world that sustains us.

Where decent human beings say: “You can’t put a value on human life”; capitalism says: “Hold my crystal glass of 1945 Domaine de la Romanee-Conti Romanee-Conti (\$558,000 per bottle).”

Dying for Dollars

Everything that Marx said about

capitalism’s inability to avoid its own drive to destruction is brought into sharp focus by the COVID-19 emergency. Caught off guard, most governments complied with public health advice and shut down their economies, designed around bringing large numbers of people together for production and – in cases of some industries like transportation – consumption.

In countries like Canada the shutdown was somewhat successful. Numbers of COVID cases and mortality fell to “acceptable” levels. And as soon as that happened, business started to push for reopening. They had lost several months’ production, even if a portion of their lost profits was underwritten by government handouts. Enough was enough.

A prerequisite for getting industry up and producing was reopening schools.

Under capitalism, education is a contradictory thing. The system, especially when it was young and expanding, need a large educated cadre. But at the same time schools served an ideological function: to bind the next generation of workers to the status quo; to inculcate individualism and competition over cooperation and social learning; and to drum work discipline into kids.

As capitalism ages and expansion is no longer easy, the system must resort to intensifying the exploitation of things already under its control. So education, once viewed as a social benefit and “free” has become a cash cow. Private schools serve the elite, tuition for college and university skyrockets and student debt becomes a life-long burden and a bonanza for the banks. For working class families, public schools decline as education is relentlessly defunded.

The haste and dishonesty surrounding the push to reopen schools at any cost, in the midst of a pandemic that is only in abeyance, reveals the truth about education’s place in Canada in 2020: its primary function is to warehouse the children of workers while their parents labour in precarious jobs.

Children will get sick. Their mortality rate might be low initially but they will act as “superspreaders”, infecting family members, education workers and anyone else they contact. And once rare conditions are becoming common thanks to COVID. Children will die.

Our rulers don’t care: our health takes a back seat to their profits.

In Quebec, premier Francois Legault has announced that even if there is a second wave of infections daycares will remain open.

In Ontario, Doug Ford makes reassuring speeches but won’t supply any new money to allow for social distancing, more teachers and smaller class size, absolute prerequisites for a safe reopening. But there is \$25 million for new OPP cops and plans to build new prisons.

In Alberta, just days before school reopening, Jason Kenney’s government send news to teachers that social distancing will not happen and masks will not be required. The collapse of the fossil fuel industry and the massive tax cuts and bailouts thrown to the tar sands will translate directly to sick kids and dead teachers.

But it isn’t all bad. Estate planning business LegalWills is offering Ontario teachers free wills before they return to class. Think of the savings!

And if that isn’t living proof that capitalism thrives on death, I don’t know what is.

Surprise, the Conservatives elected a tool

by Sid Lacombe

Erin O’Toole is the new leader of the federal Conservative party after a contentious and extremely lengthy vote counting process. The MP from Durham beat former Harper cabinet minister Peter McKay, openly racist MP Derek Sloan and Leslyn Lewis.

O’Toole began his acceptance speech by introducing himself to the country since very few people have ever heard of him. His attempt to build a Trump like base with his “Take back Canada” slogan may have endeared him to the right in the Cons but he is still has a lot of work to do to gain any kind of wider audience, despite some high profile endorsements from Jason Kenney and Stephen Harper.

For those who don’t know O’Toole’s platform, here are some highlights:

He believes that Justin Trudeau

is a tool of the Chinese communist party and that his Covid response was delayed because of that collusion. In fact, he mentions “communist China” so much in his platform you would think he was reading from an old cold war playbook.

He thinks that climate change will be addressed by rapid expansion of the tar sands and openly called for a military response to end the “Shut down Canada” movement in solidarity with the Wet’suwet’en people. He would eliminate “red tape” in the approval of more pipelines.

On the foreign policy and defence front O’Toole wants to increase military support, including doing joint training, with the governments of Ukraine and Israel specifically. He calls for a united Israel with Jerusalem as it’s capital. He is calling for increases in military



spending to “own the north” against any perceived territorial expansion of Russia. He has also called for the overthrow of the government in Venezuela.

And on immigration his main focus is on stopping “irregular” border entries with new military checkpoints at border crossings and he wants to save the discredited safe

third country agreement with the US.

He has specifically said that his is pro-choice but he has left the door open to restrictions on abortion and has stated that MPs should be able to table private members bills on the subject.

And he has a serious hate-on for what he deems the left saying that they are responsible for shutting down free speech and for being in control of the political agenda in Canada. Presumably, that is who he

thinks Canada should be taken back from.

In what has become a standard in Conservative leadership elections at both the federal and provincial levels, O’Toole appealed to the right wing social conservatives to get elected. Most of his support on the third ballot came from the

collapsing campaigns of Sloan and Lewis. It was enough for him to beat McKay and take the lead.

And almost immediately party spokespeople began trying to assure Canadians that his hard conservative positions would be put onto the back burner and he would, in fact, not campaign in the federal election on many his own platform planks.

In short, he is a walking embodiment of the new conservatives. They appeal to the hard right making their deals with the worst of them while campaigning for leadership and then making a public appeal to the rest of the country saying that they are not actually as right wing as their own words would suggest.

Either way, he has a mountain to climb before he can contest an election and people will be able to see through the whitewash that will try and make him palatable candidate, just as they did with Scheer the last time around.

Standoff in Port of Montreal Strike

by **John Bell with files from Deborah Murray**

After 2 weeks on the picket line, around 1,100 members of Syndicat des débardeurs du port de Montréal (CUPE 375) called a truce in their fight with the Maritime Employers Association.

“La trêve de 7 mois au Port de Montréal, va juste servir l’association des boss à se réorganiser pour la prochaine menace,” one worker wrote on a strike chat site. The danger is the bosses will be readier after the 7-month truce.

The Montreal longshore workers handle \$75 Billion worth of merchandise each year. Montreal is the second busiest port in Canada, crucial to lumber and steel exports to Europe.

These workers have been without a contract for almost 2 years. Wages

are a contentious issue, but scheduling improvements are the top demand. Workers are expected to be on call 19 out of every 21 day cycle. They point out that makes any balance between family and work life impossible.

Typically, the shipping bosses appealed to their political friends for help. Both Doug Ford’s Ontario



Tories and Francois Legault’s CAQ were eager to help. But already balancing the risks of minority government and smarting from scandals,

the federal Liberal government resisted the call to introduce back-to-work legislation.

The strike was the second stoppage in a month. It was intended to last 96 hours but the longshore workers stayed on the line. They were furious that Termont Montreal Inc., one of the biggest shipping companies was caught using “managers” as scabs.

“This is a major affront to us. That’s the first time in forty years I’ve witnessed such a lack of respect shown to the longshore workers. We will come up with a response commensurate with this provocation,” warned CUPE representative Michel Murray.

But it will take more than tough talk to beat back an employer bent on driving down living standards. Anger and solidarity are needed, and the workers too have those 7 months to organize resistance.

Bill 195 and 32 Tory attacks on labour rights

by **Peter Votsch**

Conservative governments in Ontario and Alberta have used the cover of the Covid 19 pandemic to launch major attacks on the rights of workers, particularly those organized in trade unions.

Bill 195 - Ontario

Doug Ford’s Tories have moved from the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA), declared at the beginning of the pandemic in March, to Bill 195, passed this summer by the Tory majority in the legislature at Queen’s Park.

Bill 195 simultaneously ends the EMCPA, while in effect, through legislation, making it permanent. The EMCPA allowed the Tories to give employers’ the power to override legally negotiated and signed Collective Agreements in ways that could have a devastating impact on workers’ lives, and those of their families.

Under EMCPA, employers have the right to change negotiated shifts, workdays, vacations, and leaves. They could change job descriptions, impose layoffs without notice, bring in outside contractors in direct violation of an existing agreement, and of course, promote without regards to seniority (keep in mind the Tories’ and right wing media’s attacks on teachers’ seniority provisions last February and March).

While this may have its greatest effect on the public sector (“heroes”), such as healthcare, transportation, education, social services and long term care, it can certainly be deployed in any sector, such as construction, where the Tories deem it to be appropriate. Coupled with Bill 124, which limits pay raises in the public sector to 1 %, it is likely to have a dampening effect, or worse, on upcoming bargaining rounds. It even has the potential to override leave provisions under the Employment Standards Act (ESA), such as Emergency Leaves, leaving open the question of further overrides of the ESA, possibly even parts of the Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHS Act).

Bill 195 can be renewed indefinitely

by cabinet, and will no doubt be around at least until the next election, when the Tory majority is up for election, and likely beyond, whomever is elected, as capitalist governments are not in the habit of abandoning useful tools that are handed to them, when it comes to our rights. That is, if we allow them to do so.

CUPE Ontario has initiated the “Restore Our Rights” campaign, along with Unifor and SEIU, and the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL). It will include a series of rallies and pickets in towns throughout Ontario, especially where there are sitting Tory MPPs. By October 28, plans are afoot to escalate the campaign, if these actions do not bring results. To emphasize the seriousness of this campaign, CUPE Ontario affiliated locals are asked to book off members of their executives, to take part in these actions. They are also asked to organize lunchtime gatherings in front



of the workplace to build momentum, and educate workers and the public.

The imposition of EMPCA in March brought about pickets at hospitals and long term care homes throughout the Spring of 2020, and work refusals by TTC workers in Toronto, and also work refusals in the construction sector. These actions are an important start, and will have to be built on to be successful against this frontal attack on our rights at work.

Bill 32 - Alberta

Not to be outdone, Jason Kenney’s Tories in Alberta have brought in Bill 32, similarly an attack on workers’ rights.

Bill 32 brings in provisions and amendments to the Labour Relations Act that will, in effect, eliminate overtime pay (time-and-a-half) for all workers by allowing employers to average out work hours over an extend-

ed period. This can have a devastating effect on the workforce, forcing many to work unlimited overtime without appropriate compensation. Hungarian ‘strongman’ Viktor Orban brought in a similar law, called by Hungarians the “slave labour law”, provoking country wide demonstrations. Maybe Kenney is channeling is ‘internal Orban’.

But Bill 32 goes much further, and tips its hat dangerously towards US “Right to Work” anti-union laws. It will take away democratic control by union members of their dues, forcing them to allow individual members to opt out of what are deemed political or advocacy issues. These have traditionally been decided by workers elected from the shop floor to union conventions, where such decisions are made democratically. Kenney wishes to curtail union activism by making this difficult, if not impossible.

The Bill will also limit the right to picket (communicate with, or stall traffic) and secondary picketing. Under this provision, the pickets that went up at the Cargill plant when a sizeable section of the workforce was infected by Covid 19 due to working in close quarters, would be illegal.

Further provisions would give the Kenney regime what they couldn’t get federally under Harper: mandatory financial reporting of unions’ assets, allowing employers to be able to gauge if a union local is able to sustain a strike or not, a huge advantage in bargaining. If a settlement cannot be bargained, and both parties agree to an arbitrated settlement, Kenney’s Tories, like Harper’s Tories, are limiting the rights of arbitrators in brokering an agreement. All this under the surreal, populist rubric of “leveling the playing field”.

Finally, the legal age of work will now be 13 in Alberta – enough said.

Workers have a big fight on their hands, in both Ontario and Alberta, as the bosses there attempt to make us pay for the Covid crisis, which has already devastated so many lives and livelihoods. There is sure to be sparks of a pushback, which will emerge here and there. The labour movement and its supporters will have to be there in force when that happens.

Labour must stand with Black Lives Matter

From the athletes strikes to union support for defunding police, we need to build a working class movement against racism

by **Carolyn Egan**

The Black Lives Matter movement is not going away and has broad support across North America.

The unprovoked police shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wisconsin has provoked widespread protest with multiracial demonstrations in communities large and small demanding fundamental change. Over 50,000 marched in Washington, DC and there are people in the streets across the US and Canada expressing their rage against the systemic racism and violence being perpetrated against the Black community. The anger has passed the boiling point and repression is not stopping it.

Wildcat strikes spread through professional sports as athletes refused to play. It started with the Milwaukee Bucks and then other National Basketball Association (NBA) teams followed, downing the tools of their trade. As Le Bron James tweeted, “F___k this man!!!! We demand change. Sick of it.” Others like Solomon Hill, a forward with the Miami Heat, said, “Crazy telling athletes to remove politics or it’s not our job. Politics is basic. It surrounds everything we do as Americans.” Colin



NBA players strike shows the way

Kaepernick took a knee against police brutality four years ago and paid a huge price in terms of his career in the National Football League (NFL), and the movement on the ground continued to grow. It was the movement that gave confidence to these athletes to step forward and make it clear that words are not enough, and that they had to take action. 75% of NBA players are Black and the majority of sports fans support them.

It didn’t stop there. The Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) whose members have been unsung leaders in the fight for justice joined, as did players in major league baseball, the NFL, soccer and the primarily white National Hockey League (NHL). They refused to play, in solidarity with those fighting anti- Black racism and against the continued police brutality which happens every day on the streets of our communities. Canadian NHL player Nazeem Kadri said, “Eventually words get stale and you need action.”

These actions have to continue as we do all we can to build a strong and militant movement

against racism. In Toronto, three different demonstrations took place on the weekend decrying the ongoing racist violence and reclaiming our streets and our communities. Thousands marched from Christie Pits through the downtown demanding the defunding of police and that money be put to needed services. Another protest took place in Downsview Park in North York and a third reclaiming Dentonia Park in the east end.

The community surrounding this park came together in a coalition including the South Asian Women’s Rights Organization, the Danforth Jewish Circle, Bangladesh Community Services, Toronto East Anti-Hate Mobilization, Beachers for Black Lives and the United Steelworkers. They responded to a racist attack on a Black man and his white partner (both Steelworkers) walking their dog, demanding action from the police who eventually laid charges. They sponsored an event in the park, “United Against Hate”

building solidarity amongst communities and against systemic racism. It was well attended with many from the diverse neighbourhood around the park taking part.

The call to defund the police has been taken up by the Canadian Labour

Congress, the

Ontario Federation of Labour and many unions. This is very important and the labour movement must be front and centre in the ongoing organizing, winning the working class as a whole to the fight against racism everywhere it manifests itself. We are seeing the rise of far-right militia movements taking up arms and bullying anti-racist activists, resulting in the murders in Kenosha and the 600-strong car and truck cavalcade that traveled to Portland trying to incite violence.

Racism is embedded in the capitalist system and until we build a movement from below strong enough to take on the system as a whole, we will be constantly fighting against the attempts of the ruling class to use racism and other oppressions to divide us, using the police to kill and brutalize in their interest. We have to fight back against the excesses of capitalism and join with others to campaign for necessary reforms. At the same time, we have to build an anti-racist working class movement with the goal of over-turning capitalism and replacing it with a socialist society that will finally put an end to the oppression and exploitation we face every day of our lives.

STRIKE FOR THE CLIMATE

*On September 25, climate activists around the world will join in another climate strike. As the climate crisis worsens, the stakes could not be higher. **Brian Champ** goes over the plan for the strikes and points to the politics that can get rid of this destructive system once and for all.*

The global climate justice movement will be back on the streets on September 25th, a year after the huge climate strike protests that saw over 7 million participate worldwide, over a million across Canada, with 500,000 in Montreal, more than 50,000 in Toronto with hundreds of events in smaller cities, towns and hamlets.

It will be 10 months since climate strikers took to the streets on November 29th, the last strike in Toronto, which saw upwards of 10,000 take part.

In April, planned actions for climate justice were forced online to help contain the spread of Covid and while it was important that these actions continued under difficult circumstances, their impact was not as great.

While these circumstances restricted Fridays for Future Toronto (FFFTO) possibilities for action, activists in the organization continued to build and worked on developing the organization at the school level.

Under the FFFTO umbrella, which organizes the larger climate strikes, there are now specific organizing groups for students at the secondary and post-secondary level that have their own pace of activity and campaigns. For high school students, there is Green Teens Toronto (@greenteensto on IG and FB) which has chapters across the world. For university students there are groups at U of T (@fridaysforfutureuoft on IG), York (@fridaysforfutureyu on IG) and Ryerson (@fridaysforfutureyerson on IG) which have already begun organizing for what is sure to be a hot autumn. All of these groups have built or participated in social media campaigns for climate justice action, support for Indigenous sovereignty, the movement for Black Lives and for defunding

the police.

But a key part of the developing climate justice movement is the push for a Just and Green Recovery for All. It is a realization that we are in a moment where our society can move forward by taking care of people and the environment through green job development, investment in renewable energy and away from fossil fuels, or go back to a “normal” that was already a crisis with more tar sands and pipelines. In June, 150+ organizations across the country endorsed the Just Recovery principles that are crucial to ensuring that working people and communities will not be left behind. Endorsers include many labour, environmental and social justice groups from across the country.

In June the International Energy Agency released a report that said that the world has only six months in which to change the course of the climate crisis and prevent a post-lockdown rebound in greenhouse gas emissions that would overwhelm efforts to stave off climate catastrophe.

The agency’s executive director Fatih Birol said “This year is the last time we have, if we are not to see a carbon rebound.” To raise awareness of the short time remaining to act, in August Green Teens Toronto joined in a nationwide campaign called Eyes

Open Canada with banner drops in various places demanding that governments invest in a green and just recovery.

16-year-old Toronto student Cooper Price said their “main concern is that coming out of this pandemic is that governments will completely forget about the environment and just try to put forward policies that quickly rebuild an unsustainable economy. So while this could have

that.”

For the Global Day of Climate Action on September 25th, FFFTO is planning a sit-in starting at Wellesley St. and Queen’s Park Circle to demand a Green and Just Recovery for All. This type of action is one that organizers feel more comfortable with during Covid as it provides a better ability for participants to maintain the 2m distance. Masks will be available for those

without one, hand sanitizing stations will be provided and event organizers will remind people of the need to stay safe. The inspiration for the sit-in came from the one on Juneteenth organized by Not Another Black Life that started at Toronto police HQ and spread down Bay St. to City Hall.

FFFTO invites climate and social justice activists to join in

action using their six intersectional organizing pillars as a guide:

Indigenous self-Determination.

This encompasses the rights of the first peoples of Turtle Island and around the world to live in the traditional ways as they have for tens of thousands of years as stewards of the land, the source of food, shelter, clothing – everything – as well as spirituality. Canadian colonialism has attempted to destroy Indigenous peoples in order to allow free access for settler development of agriculture, mines and pipelines. These same industries

are key contributors to the climate crisis. Furthermore, Indigenous ways of thinking about social and environmental sustainability are crucial ideas for a livable future.

Just Transition.

The transition we require is from carbon intensive, extractive economies to low carbon, regenerative economies. This transition is a just one when it guarantees “meaningful opportunities for all workers including decent, low-carbon and waste-free work, inclusionary spaces for all traditions and cultures, access to programs to ease the transition away from unsustainable industry, ecological resilience practices in the workplace, and equitable redistribution of resources.”. This implies increased democracy in decision making for the economy, as corporate profits will have to be challenge to meet these goals, “that provide sustainable, dignified and productive livelihoods for all workers.”

Defending Land, Water and Life.

Inspired by Indigenous leadership, FFFTO commits to “honour this ongoing stewardship and call for collective efforts to maintain and protect ecosystems. We acknowledge how exorbitant emissions, an economy that heavily relies on extractivist practices, and hyper-consumerist culture have led to the deterioration of the life that supports us. Our current food systems are harming people, animals, and ecosystems. As we acknowledge our interdependence with the ecosystems that sustain us, we call for a recentring of food justice, reimagining of today’s harmful food systems and an active effort by institutions to cultivate a respectful culture of relating to non-human beings.”

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been a really really big opportunity for complete reset in how governments tackle climate change, our fear is that they’ve kind of done the opposite.”

Another Toronto student, 17-year-old Eden Brown, decried that fact that the Ontario government had not signed on to the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). She said we “want a recovery that puts the environment, and workers, and marginalized communities first, because those are often communities that are affected the most by the climate crisis, and we don’t think the Ford government is doing

GLOBAL DAY OF CLIMATE ACTION

25.9.

SAVE THE DATE



Livable Futures for All.

Recognizing the threats to human rights and the conditions of poverty and violence that are exacerbated by the environmental crisis, it consists of demands for government investment into “universal public services and infrastructure to build resilience in all communities and for all people. We urge governments to ensure that global temperatures stay below 1.5 °C of warming and ensure climate action is immediate and transparent.”

Youth Empowerment.

“This generation is in the last possible position to mitigate the most devastating impacts of the climate crisis. We recognize that youth will bear the long-term burden of the crisis and recognize that immediate and profound actions are needed for what has already taken place. Our organization is youth-led and political. We aim to empower youth to advocate for their futures and the collective future of the planet until all of our demands are met.”

Uplifting and Amplifying Marginalized Communities

“Many powerful nations that have contributed disproportionately to the climate crisis were actively built on white supremacy and the oppression of marginalized groups of people. We are dedicated to uplift marginalized voices that have been oppressed by capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, genocide and slavery. We require new systems based on the principles of equity and solidarity to transform current and social inequities derived from race, gender, immigrant status, religious persecution, class and other forms of oppression.”

The week leading up to September 25 is Climate Justice Week. FFFTO is calling for groups, coalitions and movements that are active in movements for climate

action, social and economic justice to plan protests, meetings and artistic and musical events that connect these various struggles to the climate crisis and the need to confront the political and economic system that is the root cause of all these struggles. Any group that falls within the 6 intersecting organizing pillars of FFFTO is welcome to participate and have their event published on the Week for Climate Justice calendar.

Socialists welcome this intersectionality of demands as an important coming together of the movement for Black Lives, the Indigenous struggle for self-determination, the fight for migrant workers’ rights, rent strikes, climate and environmental actions and workers’ struggles for safe workplaces and a living wage. Solidarity across movements can spark action against the system on all fronts, and greater coordination can lead to bigger challenges to the system.

“System Change, not Climate Change” is a popular slogan in the climate movement, as many people understand that fundamental changes have to be made to the economic and political systems that rule our world. It provides a focus for activity that puts the pressure on the 1% who benefit the most from the way society is organized and emphasizes the system change needed for other movements as well.

For socialists, it’s important to name the system as capitalism. That means that it is a system ruled by a tiny minority that reap the profits from the exploitation of workers at the point of production. They benefit from racist, homophobic, transphobic and elitist ideas that serve to maintain divisions between workers and make collective action for real change more difficult. This drive for profit pushes the capitalist to ignore the environmental and social destruction that their system entails.

All movements that identify the system, and take collective action against it, can have a big impact on mitigating the worst aspects of the system. But capitalism is also in crisis, a reality that was exposed by the Covid pandemic, and those with their hands on the reins are trying to direct the return to “normal” along lines that can restore their profit rates by forcing down labour costs, cutting more public services, tearing up labour laws and hiring more and more police to protect their property.

This is why the struggles of workers, whether in unions or not, is so important for challenging the system. Workers who act collectively to shut down production can halt the flow of profits, leading to a direct challenge to the basis of the rule of the bosses. And in unionized workplaces where there is some protection for collective action and a militant history to draw on, there is more space to build action to challenge the boss.

As teachers, bus drivers, education assistants, janitorial staff and others go back to work this fall, with unsafe conditions being pushed by governments of all stripes this demand takes on a greater significance. It’s significant that the Toronto and York Region Labour Council endorsed the Just Recovery principles in June, and the theme of the virtual Labour Day parade this year is a Just Recovery for All.

Unions are merely defense mechanisms for workers in their workplaces, not organizations for the overthrow of capitalism and the impetus to fight back infects both unionized and non-unionized workers. The interaction of organized workers with activists in movements for climate justice, Black Lives Matter, in the fight to maintain public services, and more, is crucial to building a movement that can challenge the system as a whole.

Stop the TMX Pipeline



by Zain ul- Haq

On the 3rd of August, Doctor Tim Takaro, decided to commit an act of civil disobedience and occupy cotton wood trees that were scheduled to be killed for the purpose of expanding the Trans Mountain Pipeline. The professor remained up on what’s now being called the aerial camp for 10 days, after which he was replaced by Kurtis Baute, who remained there for another 7 days during a frightening heat wave. Inspired by this act of civil disobedience, multiple anonymous climbers expressed interest in emulating these actions and helping to stop construction. The last person to be up was Christine Thuring, who was up for almost 6 days, and the aerial camp is now occupied by an anonymous climber. All of these individuals are risking arrest by using their bodies in order to resist what can only be called the criminal destruction of organized human existence. The construction area has now been occupied by overnight campers and the climbers for a month with only two weeks remaining for Trans Mountain to do construction within the designated window. So far, the Holmes Creek camp has been an example of how less than 50 well-coordinated individuals can effectively delay a pipeline worth billions of dollars, and in this case, by doing something as simple as camping in the woods.

Attack against press freedom

Big brother has been keeping an eye on this, but is also timid about confrontation—with one exception: the state’s refusal to allow a Danish journalist from entering Canada in order to cover indigenous pipeline resistance. Professor Takaro recalls the story in this video explaining how Kristian Lindhart was detained for 3 hours upon arrival, then a few more hours the second day: “someone at border services at YVR, called Ottawa, and then they deported him when his friend was out of the room, getting him coffee.” Tim also said that “Canadian mainstream print media has not said one word that citizens have been blocking a 20 billion dollars government project....and I as a science reviewer of the approval process showed that the approval process was rigged...not news...So it’s essential that we have foreign journalists come and report the

story...The government deported this journalist under the false pretense that he didn’t have a very well worked-out quarantine plan. And how many journalists have they let in since Covid started... A lot.” This is just as old a story as it is new—the complacency of Canadian journalism is consistent with the failure of most journalists in doing their job of telling the truth about climate change.

CBC reports that the International Federation of Journalists has demanded that Kristian be guaranteed access into Canada and that the Canada border service agency declined to comment on the story. It should be self-evident that journalism is an essential service; it is of extreme importance that citizens in a democracy know what their government is up to, especially during a crisis, and especially if that government is in the process of constructing a pipeline that will contribute to the death of millions in the future, if climate change is not reversed.

Needless to say, the burden of proof always falls on those in power and not the other way around. We do not want to live in a society where journalists have to prove the importance of their job and answer questions posed by the state, when in fact it is the job of journalists to ask those questions and demand proof of legitimacy from the state and private concentrations of power; any deviation from the latter should be resisted and fought against.

While Trans Mountain and the state will likely apply for paper duplication and indulge in paper shuffling to clear the forest some other time, the scenes at Holmes Creek camp are quite different. People have been showing resilience during rain and heat waves that get worse and worse by the year, painstakingly pulling out discarded shopping carts and printers from the creek, and engaging in small acts of solidarity, ranging from rallies to bringing coffee for the occupants of the camp. The aerial camp and the support camp need to be seen as more than an effort to block construction at a site, but as a symbol for resistance to capitalism and state terror in all its forms, and most importantly as an effort to save civilization. It is a clear message that whenever destructive and undemocratic projects are going to be constructed, there will always be people, however few in number, who will stop at nothing to oppose it, while remaining non-violent.

Marx21US Statement on the Police Shooting in Kenosha and Right-Wing Vigilante Terror

Another police shooting has devastated the lives of an unarmed Black man and his family. This shooting took place in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Jacob Blake was shot in the back seven times while leaning into his car. The police claim they were worried he had a weapon. His three sons, ages 3, 5, and 8, were in the vehicle when he was gunned down.

Blake took a bullet to the arm and his kidneys, liver, and spinal cord were all damaged. The odds are against him ever walking again.

Just as in the cases of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, Blake was shot in a city and state controlled by Democrats. The supposedly progressive Democratic party has failed time and time again to keep Black and Brown people safe from the police. And so the people of Kenosha responded in the only way they felt they had left. They rioted, clashed with the police, and set a Department of Corrections building on fire. On the third night of unrest, a 17-year-old right-wing vigilante shot three protesters, killing two of them.

The morbid alliance of police and the far-right

This shooting, and the murder of protesters by right-wing vigilantes in its aftermath, underscore two things: the need for radical change and the need to build organizations of solidarity to fight against the racist capitalist system.

After three months of protests, often militant and confrontational, the police still feel, and are, powerful enough to terrorize and murder the people they murder with impunity. If anything, the movement in the wake of the George Floyd protests has only further entrenched police departments' intransigence, as evidenced by the NYC police union's endorsing Trump for president.

The far-right has also mobilized to push back against the Black Lives Matter protests. In Pennsylvania, Black Lives Matter protesters were shot at by a white man as they marched from Milwaukee to Washington D.C.. In Portland, right-wing protesters organized a "Back the Blue" protest where far-right protesters such as the Proud Boys showed up armed with automatic weapons and clashed for hours with anti-fascists. The list of such incidents goes on and on. There

is no reason to believe these violent vigilante attacks are going to stop anytime soon.

This right-wing violence has often been given the open or passive support of the police. In Kenosha on the night of the shooting, video captured the police telling armed

of oppressed groups in check. They are willing to turn cities into warzones, to send in the National Guard, Department of Homeland Security, and police with military equipment to stand face-to-face with protestors wishing only to live in a world without racism.

ers. They are the first and last line of defense of the rich against those who would hope to build a better world. The police must be abolished.

Police killings will continue until we address this reality and build a movement, from the ground up, that is powerful enough to go head-to-head with the capitalist system itself. Basketball players on strike across the country are taking a courageous stand that should be replicated across every workplace until the police are dismantled, and Black and Brown people can live safely. The organizations we build to defend against this right-wing backlash can be leveraged to attack the entire capitalist system, which not only depends upon the police but is willing to use the far-right to reinforce its order.

The experience of the past few months has demonstrated definitively that we can only depend on ourselves to fight against racism and build a world free of police. The far-right reaction is likely to only get worse as time goes on and the contradictions of capitalism deepen. The Republican National Convention this

week showed that Trump is stoking his hardened right wing base as we draw closer to the presidential election in November. Let's build the networks of solidarity that can push back against this monster, keep one another safe, and build a better world.



vigilantes that they appreciated them being there and offered them water from armored police vehicles. One of the men in the video is Kyle Rittenhouse, who hours later killed two protesters. In Portland, during the incident mentioned above, the police stood by and let the right-wing protesters attack the pro-BLM counter-demonstrators. The police department claimed they lacked the sufficient force to call in a riot and intervene, despite the fact that they have done so consistently with Black Lives Matter protests. In NYC, the police thanked a pro-police demonstration in south Brooklyn that violently attacked counter-demonstrators.

Our weapon is solidarity

If we play by the rules of the system, the deck is stacked against us. Rather than work to defund the police and build a society that doesn't treat Black and Brown people as second class citizens, the state, whether controlled by Democrats or Republicans, is willing to team up with the far-right to keep the aspirations

But we have a weapon, which, if deployed correctly, can make us strong enough to win. That weapon is solidarity. It is the only tool that is powerful enough to counter this reactionary alliance of the state and the far-right. We must build broad united fronts that are strong enough to fight back against this racist system and keep each other safe from its violence. This means building organizations like United Against Racism and Fascism in NYC, Free Them All in San Diego, and the Alliance to Defend Immigrants in LA. that can be used to draw in large numbers of people from all sorts of different backgrounds to fight as one against this right-wing backlash.

To stop this violence, we need a revolutionary approach

The police cannot be reformed. The shooting of Jacob Blake is just one more piece of evidence among countless others that the role of the police is not to keep us safe but to keep us in line. Their origins lie in the defense of slavery and the oppression of industrial work-

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 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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The human face of TBA: In Search of Professor Precarious

by Chantal Sunadaram

Gerry Potter worked as a contract professor for 27 years, at three different institutions, beloved by his students but stymied and exploited by a system that is happy to chew up talented and educated people and spit them out.

The film “Professor Precarious” starts with Gerry’s story of hitting the road, camera in tow, to document the story of so many other contract academics who have shared the same fate across the country.

What they share most, other than precarity, is that they are the invisible amongst those presumed privileged by the Ivory Tower. Even the increasingly visible corporatization of universities and colleges still hides the reliance on casual contract labour with no job security, let alone a living wage or pension.

I once helped in a union drive of contract faculty, and to find potential members to sign cards we tracked down all those listed as “TBA” (To Be Announced”) in the course listing. As the opening of the film states, the terms that refer to these jobs are multiple and mysterious to students and the public: sessional, adjunct, contract faculty, contingent, “part-time.”

This is what Professor Precarious is about. It is also about who is to blame.

Exploitation

The film does not shy away from the difficulties of building real solidarity between regular

and precarious faculty within academic staff unions. But it also lands squarely on who is really to blame, and how to take them on.

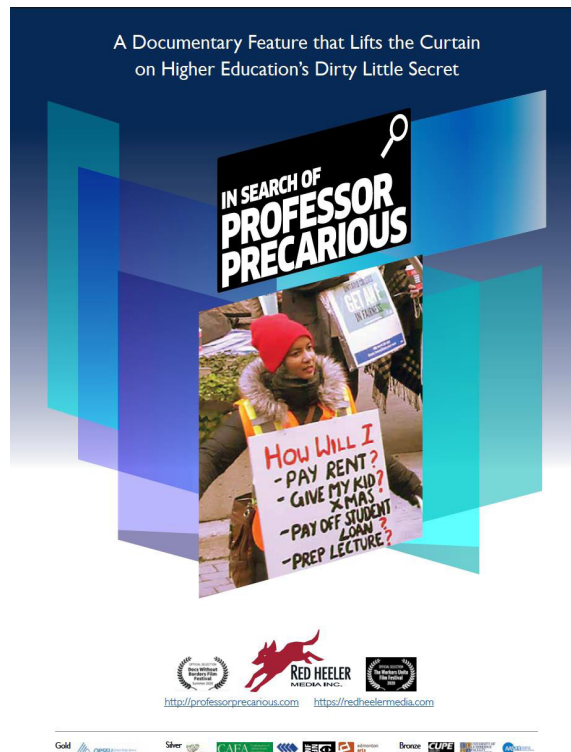
The film cites that the President of UAlberta earns 1.2 million a year while 45% of precarious academic staff earn \$20,000. The lack of job security even for that low income is witnessed most starkly by one long-serving academic who attested: “I have reapplied for my job 70 times.”

The beginning of the film focuses on the passion for teaching, why people do what they do despite being undervalued, from scientific fieldwork to theatre and dance. When they are

potential way out.

Collective action

The province-wide strike in Ontario colleges



lucky enough to be renewed, sometimes over and over for years, it is still one semester at a time, without any of the security that should come with the value extracted from their work – which generates tuition fees and government grants and ultimately benefits private employers with the quality education they provide.

This film tells several tragic stories of individual human consequences of this unjust system. But it also points to a

in 2017 put precarity front and centre, and received huge support from students and the public, and this film captures the experience. As Pam Johnson, contract faculty, organizer and picket captain, says in the film: “I’m so inspired by my colleagues who are standing up for better education and better working conditions for contract faculty.”

Sylvain Marois, a contract academic at Laval and union organizer, talks about how Quebec got some of the best collective agreements for contract faculty, both for pay and recognition of activity beyond teaching. They organized a “plan of battle” over time that includes coordinated bargaining with all employee groups in the PSE sector: “Alone you might go faster, but together you will go farther.”

Another story of success comes from Vancouver Community College, which bridged the pay gap between permanent and precarious employees with a union model of a pro-rata pay grid.

JP Hornick, one of the leaders of the Ontario college strike, and permanent faculty member, argues why casualization must be an issue for those lucky enough to have job security: “If this is allowed to continue unchecked... then we will all soon be precarious faculty.”

The film is a useful tool for organizing in the post-secondary sector, but also for anyone trying to understand and challenge the hidden casualization of post-secondary education.

The trailer can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/441439656>

International Socialist Tendency statement on the uprising in Belarus

A mass movement of strikes and protests has developed in Belarus, protesting the corrupt authoritarian rule of Aleksander Lukashenko. Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets. There are strikes in manufacturing plants, the energy sector, steel works, mining, petrochemicals, the media and other sectors. Lukashenko and his allies have responded with repression, unleashing state forces to attack protests and arresting strike leaders, which has further radicalised and broadened the movement.

We stand in solidarity with the struggle in Belarus. It is part of a new wave of protests—also encompassing Lebanon, Bolivia, Mali and Thailand—demanding political and social change. This follows a wave of revolts in 2019 that was interrupted by the Coronavirus pandemic, but which is now re-emerging, in many cases deepened by the impact of the pandemic and the associated economic collapse.

The movement in Belarus has been compared to the so-called “Colour Revolutions” in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, or the 2013-14 “Euromaidan” protests in Ukraine. However, this ignores the specific context of the Belarusian rebellion. Unlike in Russia and many former Soviet republics, when Stalinism fell Belarus did not experience full-scale privatisation and deregulation of its economy. The collapse in living standards, experienced by countries undergoing a violent transition from state capitalism to free market capitalism, was more muted. Moreover, Belarus did not witness the creation of a class of oligarchs, as occurred in Ukraine or in Russia. Instead, Lukashenko and his close allies were able to maintain a high degree of centralised power in the transition.

Initially, in exchange for political support for Russia, Belarus benefited from cheap Russian oil, which it refined and re-exported. Russia also

provided the major market for its agricultural products and manufactured output. In recent years, the decline of this economic support as relations with Russia soured, and the collapse of oil prices, have placed increased pressure on Lukashenko’s regime. The economy has stagnated and Lukashenko has turned towards privatisation and attacks on workers’ living standards. This includes his 2017 attempt to introduce a tax on unemployed workers and wage freezes over several years, amid rising prices of consumer goods.

In recent years Lukashenko has claimed that Belarusian enterprises are available for privatisation, provided the price is right. The regime has also sought to balance Russian influence by building ties with China, the EU and Britain. As late as March this year, the Belarusian military engaged in joint exercises with the British Royal Marines.

The worsening economic situation for the mass of Belarusians, together with the mishandling of the Covid-19 crisis, provide the context for the rigged elections, held on 9 August, in which Lukashenko claimed to win 80 percent of the vote and allotted 10 percent

to his rival, the opposition candidate, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya. This helps to explain why the movement takes the form not simply of huge street protests, but also of widespread strikes, largely in state-run enterprises where workers previously had access to only pro-regime trade unions.

Tsikhanouskaya and her allies have lagged behind the struggle, initially calling on protesters to abide by the law and avoid violent confrontations. The official liberal-nationalist opposition offers little by way of a solution to the hardship faced by ordinary Belarusians. Aside from the call for new elections, its alternative to Lukashenko’s rule is the further liberalisation of the economy. Imperialist powers are also seeking to shape the emerging movement in their interests. This includes Western powers such as the

US, the EU and Britain, which are now courting sections of the official liberal-nationalist opposition. It also includes Vladimir Putin’s Russian, which wants to use the movement to rebuild its influence in the region.

The real alternative to this is the growth and development of the independent movement of workers, posing both social and political demands from below. We are seeing in Belarus

today the immense power unleashed when workers organise collectively. Thus far, the strike movement has largely limited itself to calls for new elections, an end to repression and the release of political prisoners. However, a minority within the workers’ movement have expressed a demand that privatisations be ruled out, and that issues of unemployment and poverty be addressed. Deepening the social demands of the movement can help to wrest control from those committed to strengthening the hand of capitalist forces—both would-be Belarusian oligarchs and multinational corporations who see the country as ripe for privatisation.

The legacy of Stalinism has for decades buried the revolutionary socialist tradition across the former Soviet republics. This is especially true in Belarus, where many of the vestiges of Stalinism were preserved. It is our hope that this movement will see the re-emergence of a genuine socialist tradition, based on the real movement of workers for their own emancipation. This cannot be limited to the introduction of parliamentary democracy, but must fight for democratic control from below of all aspects of society. The current movement creates a context in which that becomes a genuine possibility.

The International Socialist Tendency offers its full support for, and solidarity with, the political and economic struggles of the Belarusian masses. We oppose the crackdown on protests and strikes by Lukashenko’s forces and call for the release of all political prisoners. We oppose and will campaign against any intervention in the politics of Belarus by our own governments, something that can only stifle the possibility of a genuine socialist alternative emerging.

The International Socialist Tendency

No Unsafe Schools! No Layoffs

by Pam Johnson

The obscene push to reopen schools, even as Covid cases are rising, is putting students, education workers, their families and the community in danger.

Francophone schools in Quebec that opened on August 24 reported 81 students in isolation due to 3 positive cases in the first week. School openings in the US and other parts of the world have been a disaster and Chicago and NYC teachers have threatening to strike.

Yet, this is not stopping the reopen push. Instead of addressing flawed plans, provincial governments are moving the safety goalposts and attacking teachers' unions. BC's Minister of Health, Bonnie Henry, stated that despite recent outbreaks and clusters of cases, shutting down is not the answer. Jason Kenney's Alberta government announced that it would no longer be mandating schools to socially distance. In Ontario, Ford is attacking education unions instead of addressing their legitimate concerns.

Reckless Endangerment

When Covid hit in March schools were shut down. But where people remained in close contact: in long-term care homes, hospitals and work places like meat packing plants outbreaks and deaths occurred. The rush to reopen schools, which put students, teachers and staff into close contact, is replicating the conditions of previous outbreaks.

The flawed plan will also exacerbate the racism and class divide that already exists as stats are showing the disproportionate rate of Covid cases and deaths in black and brown communities. Many of these people also work low wage, essential service jobs and cannot stay home so will be forced to send their children to unsafe schools.

The issue of student mental and social health has been raised as a reason to push for reopening but as a Saskatchewan teacher said, 'If they cared about student mental health,

they wouldn't cut budgets every year, and fight against teachers tooth-and-nail when we fight to fund lower class sizes and more student supports. If they cared, they would give the funding to drastically reduce class sizes, and hire more cleaners, caretakers, etc, so we can do this safely.'

No Layoffs

Shamefully, in Ontario and other provinces layoffs of education workers and cuts are happening on the cusp of school opening. Workers have already been laid off in several Ontario colleges. Premier Kenney in Alberta

plans 20,000 layoffs in the education sector. Virtual learning threatens jobs as provincial governments push on-line learning to justify cuts and privatization of education.

But, a just and workable plan to return to in-person education during the pandemic will require MORE teachers, MORE staff as well as buildings and other resources.

Labour leadership needs to step up

A safe and just reopening is what the labour leadership of the education workers unions should be pushing and organizing for. Under extreme pressure, some labour leaders have

finally gone past statements and are raising health and safety challenges to governments. But, there has been no organizing on the ground to back this up.

Yet, it was only months ago that mass protests of teachers, parents and students had Ford government in Ontario on the ropes. Teachers' unions organized walk-outs, mass protests and coordinated their efforts to fight concessions in collective bargaining. Parents and the general public massively supported these actions. Ford's popularity was dropping like a stone as his priorities—defunding education—became clear.

Resistance is growing

Even though the pandemic has given Ford, and other provincial leaders a boost, it is clear that their priorities have not changed. It is time for the labour leadership to step back into the fight. It was the anger and frustration and the organizing of teachers and parents themselves that lit the fire under their union leaders and we need to spark this flame again.

Ontario Education Workers United (OEWU) a group of activists in Ontario education unions representing teachers and staff put a call out to activists days after Ford announced his flawed plan. Over 300 participated in and organized a social media campaign to challenge Ford plan. They are calling for education workers to start School Action Teams in every school to demand safe schools.

A Toronto parents network held a 'Covid classroom' protest, where they will set up a social distanced classroom with 30 desks at Queens Park. A demonstration organized by black parents in August at Queen's Park demanded that Ford address anti-black racism in education.

The rush to reopen school is not about education or student well-being. It is about getting people back to work at all costs to keep the capitalist system running and profits flowing. It is clear that governments and their corporate friends are willing to do this even if it means risking health and lives to make it happen.



Kenney admits “Safe Schools” are a fiction

Alberta's back-to-school plan is only days old and already in a shambles.

by John Bell

Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Alberta CMO, said that a “small number” of schools were reporting cases of COVID among staff and teachers, but refused to elaborate on what the number actually was. So much for transparency.

Her role is less to protect the public than to justify government policy, which is to reopen the ailing economy at all costs. She and United Conservative Premier Jason Kenney were working hard to normalize the idea that it was okay for kids to get sick or carry the virus on to other more vulnerable people.

“We’ve always said that there will be infections in the schools...” Kenney told the press. “We appreciate the additional federal funding,

but there is no world in which you could reduce class sizes in half and reopen the schools for the current school year ... It's simply fictitious. It

has nothing to do with reality.”

Like Doug Ford, his Ontario counterpart who admitted his school plan amounted to “praying to god”, Kenney as much as said he's making it up as he goes along: “We're all learning through this as we go.”

Of course there is no money for safe schools.

Since taking office Kenney has cut corporate taxes from 12% to 8%, and invested about \$4 billion in pipeline and tar sands projects in a vain attempt to kickstart an economy that was in the dumpster even before COVID. He has gutted public education and moved to privatize the healthcare system, alienating doctors and nurses. He says throwing money to the fossil fuel industry will create jobs but Alberta is on track to lose 25,000 jobs in 2020.

The man who is ideologically devoted to a fossil fuel future thinks keeping kids, families and teachers safe is unrealistically expensive. He simply doesn't care how many die as long as business can restart.

