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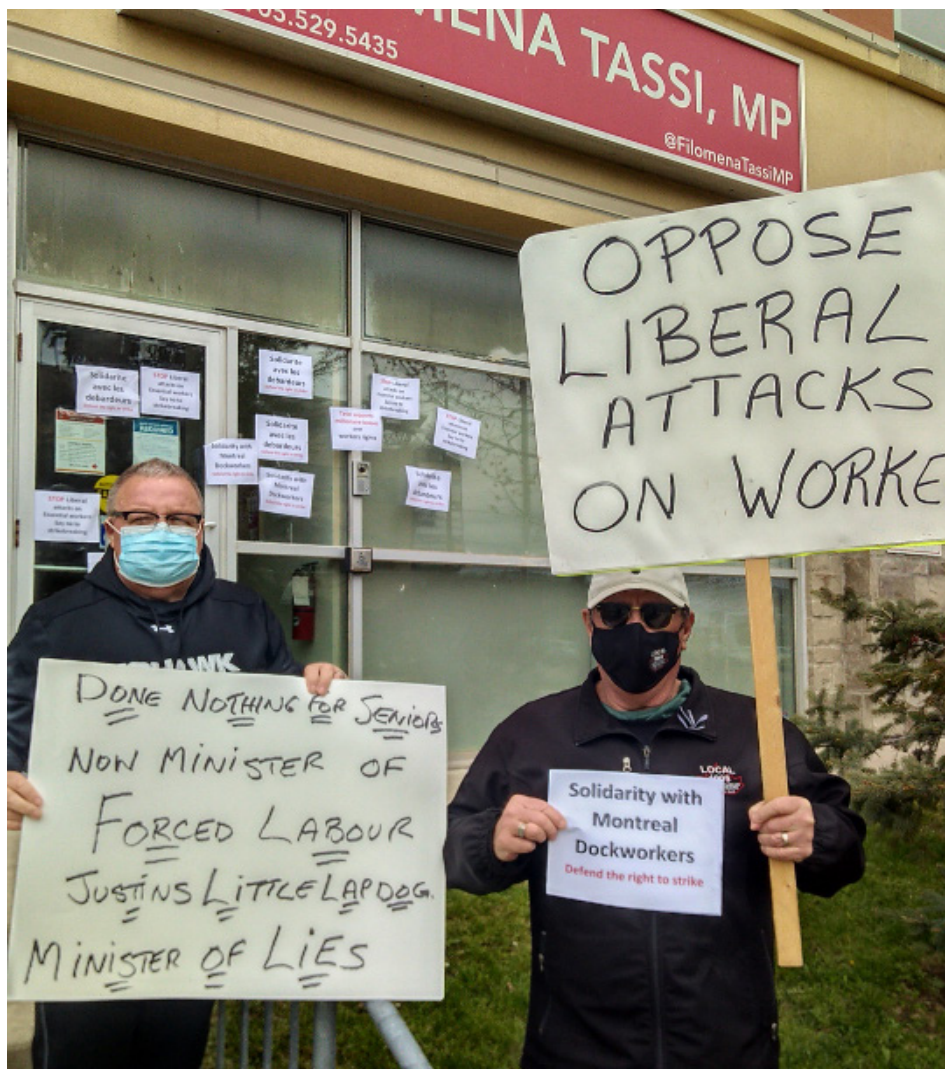


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Billions for the rich, workers get the shaft



Justin Trudeau was riding high for the first year of the pandemic. His approval ratings were much better than his provincial counterparts like Jason Kenney and Doug Ford. All he had to do was keep a low profile and he would be spared the anger by the people about his own failures.

But time wounds all heels - to paraphrase the old saying - and Trudeau is now the target of ire for many of the policies he enacted in the past 18 months.

Corporate slush fund

His Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) program has been proven to be nothing but a slush fund for his corporate buddies. More than \$110 billion dollars has been given

to highly profitable corporations to subsidize wages, even if the firms were still increasing profits. There is virtually no oversight and much of the money has been given to executives and payouts to shareholders.

The Globe and Mail described the fund as being "cloaked in secrecy" and found that the majority of the funding went to corporations that were not struggling at all.

Vaccines

After bailing out the rich, Trudeau decided that he was going to stick it to the poor around the world. He demanded that Canada be given 1.9 million doses from the COVAX facility which was designed to provide vaccines for the world's poorest countries. This is despite the fact that

Canada has enough vaccines on order to take care of our population.

He has also equivocated on the need to waive vaccine patents which would allow poorer countries to get cheaper access to the vaccines. In typical Liberal fashion he did not support the waiver but also said he would not block it. So at a moment when millions around the world are begging for life saving vaccine doses he decided to sit on the fence and do nothing. Although he did use the opportunity to send hundreds of millions of dollars to the pharmaceutical corporations for other COVID related products.

Workers Rights

Not content with filling up the Bay Street bank accounts and condemning people to die he then

turned his sights on workers. After workers at the Port of Montreal went on strike demanding changes to work schedules, Trudeau quickly passed back to work legislation essentially ending the right to collective bargaining with the stroke of a pen. "Prime Minister Trudeau has just sent a strong and clear message to all employers across the country: no need to negotiate in good faith with your workers, because if the going gets tough, we'll be there to support you," CUPE National President Mark Hancock said.

So Trudeau is showing his true colours. When the rich want more he is all ears. When working people fight back he shuts them down. The Liberals, despite their rhetoric to the contrary, are here to make the rich richer at the expense of the rest of us.

Reports lay almost 4000 LTC deaths at Ford's door

First came Ontario Auditor Bonnie Lysyk's report on the way the Ford government handled the arrival of COVID-19 in the Long Term Care sector. "The Ministry of Long-Term Care nor the long-term-care sector [were] sufficiently positioned, prepared or equipped to respond to the issues created by the pandemic in an effective and expedient way."

A second report, compiled by the Long Term Care Commission was equally damning. This report was commissioned by the Ford government under pressure from families of COVID victims, the press and public outrage, and following a report from the Canadian Forces who had been called in as emergency support. Ford dumped the report late on a Friday afternoon, giving his spin doctors a weekend to try and come up with some way to evade responsibility.

Both reports describe a for-profit LTC system designed to make money, but put residents in harm's way. Residents were housed 3 or 4 to a room, making distancing impossible. Residences had insufficient staffing levels. LTC workers were poorly paid, and driven into part-time jobs – this deprived them of benefits like sick leave, and forced them to work in more than one facility to try to earn a living. This system of exploitation turned staff into carriers of the virus.

Even before the pandemic, cleanliness and care were substandard or inconsistent. LTC workers were allotted only a few minutes to "care" for residents – people who need help with feeding, cleaning and moving about. Workers, often lacking the specialized training needed, complained that they didn't have enough time to really care for all the people they were responsible for. (Read this report by a LTC worker from 2019)

Most damning, Lysyk's report explicitly describes a lack of government inspection and oversight, going back to the previous Liberal regime, but exacerbated by the bud-

get-cutting Doug Ford government.

"Problematic enforcement practice" occurred beginning in the fall of 2018, just months after Ford was elected and Merrilee Fullerton was appointed LTC Minister. Before that date, at least some unannounced, proactive site inspections were carried out. Following that inspections only happened as a result of complaints, at the Ministry's discretion, and often conducted on the phone.

The reports confirm what experts have been saying: the record of care before and after the pandemic hit was much better in non-profit facilities. It was primarily for-profit operations, like Extendicare, Sienna Senior Living and Chartwell, that had the worst death counts when the pandemic hit. And when Tory officials say they are increasing capacity, they mean they are opening more of the market to private corporations.

That is why public health experts, families of LTC victims, seniors' groups and others called for all homes to be treated as public health facilities, demands Ford has steadfastly ignored. In fact the biggest Tory LTC reform came in the omnibus Supporting Ontario's Recovery Act, rammed through the legislature in October 2020. This made it much harder for the families of LTC COVID victims to sue or hold LTC corporations accountable.

Fullerton full of shit

The Ford government seems to have put more effort into controlling the news of the disaster than trying to prevent the spread. They are doing all they can to deflect blame and attention, blaming the federal government, blaming foreigners, blaming the previous Liberal provincial government and blaming the ONDP which has not held office since 1995.

It is fair to place a large part of the blame on the McGuinty and Wynne Liberal governments. Both reports acknowledge this timeline.

But the blame game took a bizarre turn when LTC Minister

Merrilee Fullerton rose in the legislature to attack NDP leader Andrea Horwath. She said Horwath was to blame for the disaster because she and the NDP had never cared about LTC, and never even uttered the words. "Look in Hansard," she roared.

Bad idea. Even a quick look in the parliamentary records shows that Horwath and NDP MPPs have raised the issue of underfunding and understaffing in LTC facilities dozens of times. The NDP has even partnered with the Ontario Federation of Labour in a campaign to stop privatization of LTC homes.



When challenged for her pretzel logic and outright lies, Fullerton let her privilege show: "I will not be spoken to that way," she huffed.

She kept up the front when questioned by reporters. She blamed everyone in sight while refusing to take any responsibility personally or for her government.

"We were overdue for a pandemic," she said. She told reporters what a caring person she is, took only 3 questions, turned on her heels and left.

It is clear that desperate Tories, like full-of-shit Fullerton, will do anything to deflect from the facts: their handling of the pandemic and their desperation to keep big business open has been disastrous, even murderous. Look for a barrage of disinformation about closing borders and blaming Trudeau for not addressing issues that are provincial jurisdiction.

Support Six-Nations land defenders

by: Kim McAuley

First Nations continue to work to prevent further environmental damage caused by the greed of developers and government officials on issues of land use and development. These are key fights in the effort to stop climate change and to further environmental and social justice. This is a time to stand up, cheer, and get behind the Haudenosaunee in support.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes Indigenous Peoples' right to free, prior, and informed consent in regard to any development on their land. The Declaration was fully adopted by Canada in 2016. But Trudeau leaves a disgraceful trail of broken promises for clean water, reconciliation, and safeguarding natural resources and territories. His rotten lack of action bleeds all the way down to municipal governments who continue to pay lip service to land acknowledgements at the beginning of City Council meetings and then make decisions in those same meetings that willfully ignore commitments to First Nations. Much of their chance at re-election rests with the decisions they make in favour of developers.

But the winds of change are blowing. The City of Hamilton's elected officials would do well to decide to stop pandering to developers and start honouring agreements they signed in the early years of the 2000's that resulted in joint stewardship with the Haudenosaunee to protect the Red Hill Valley and also decide to start consulting honestly with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council (HCCC), through its Development Council (HDC), and seek its consent before selling land, redeveloping or repurposing it.

In late April, 2021 the HCCC announced a moratorium on land development in the Haldimand Tract, after the City betrayed its stewardship pact by approving a plan that will direct stormwater from the east-end redevelopment of Roxborough into the Red Hill Creek, without consultation with or consent from the HCCC. The current Roxborough Park community housing is being razed for a \$400 million housing project, of which only 100 units will be city housing, on a 13 acre area of land, now slated for 'intensification' in what councilor Sam Merulla has called a "poster candidate" for City building. There are 6,000 people on

a waiting list for affordable housing in Hamilton. This development is actually a poster candidate for a kick in the face to First Nations, the working class and the environment and it lays bare the corrupted values of Hamilton City Council.

Indigenous land defenders have engaged in nine months of direct action to stop two housing developments at 1492 Landback Lane in Six Nations territory in the Haldimand Tract - a mere half hour drive from downtown Hamilton. Ninety-five percent of lands originally ceded to Six Nations have been lost to flooding or turned into private property and absorbed by over 24 municipalities - unceded. The Haudenosaunee are clearly going to continue to make that big picture clear and socialists need to stand with them in every way possible.



On April 27 the HDC announced that the City of Hamilton would need to consult with them for consent before selling any land, if it wants to demonstrate that it's serious about protecting Haudenosaunee treaty rights, referring to waterfront properties including Piers 5 to 8, which have been up for sale for months and which remain unsold.

The government spent \$90,000 a day - a total of \$16.3 million - between July, 2020 and January, 2021 to police Landback. That money was wasted to protect the interests of developers, which in turn protects the interests of politicians. It would have cost a fraction of that to engage in a consultation process about the development, which could have honoured treaty agreements and fostered relationships in the interest of the greater good of everyone.

For those activating and working in environmental, labour, affordable housing, anti-poverty, human rights movements, and anyone who cares about how unaffordable it's become to house ourselves, it's important to stand behind and beside First Nations and support them in the fights they are waging across the country.

Ford's sick days: 2 Little 2 Late

by: John Bell

Under intense pressure from health care professionals, scientists, labour, faith groups and just about everybody else in the province that isn't a Tory donor, Doug Ford's government just tossed us a crumb: 3 days paid (sort of) sick days to deal with COVID or get immunized.

Ford himself wasn't in the legislature when the – I was going to say half-measure, but even that is too generous – quarter-measure was introduced. He was still incommunicado at home following exposure to

a COVID-positive aide, enjoying his 9th paid sick day.

Why Ford remains hiding in his mom's basement is a mystery. If he is COVID-positive he owes it to Ontarians to tell them so. But 9 days is more than enough to be tested multiple times. Maybe he is just chilling in the same bunker former Tory boss Andrew Scheer hid him in during the last federal election campaign, crying his eyes out.

The pandemic has been stressful for all of us.

The Ford sick days plan is very thin soup – it barely qualifies as

gruel. The Tories offer 3 paid sick days, only for workers suffering from COVID, and government will reimburse the employer up to \$200.

Can I get a WTF!?

No one recovers from COVID in 3 days. Even those who test positive but do not succumb to the virus are required to isolate for 12-14 days. And compensation goes to the bosses, not the suffering workers who would still face losing pay for missing work while ill.

The purpose of a real sick leave plan should be to bolster public health. This one is designed to cover



Ford's ass. It is an insult to all the expert medical advice Ford has been getting for months. It is a flagrant PR move, allowing them to do the absolute least they could in the face of the pandemic crisis. It is designed to allow beleaguered Tory candidates to stand up in the next election and lie: "But we brought in paid sick days."

But even this mockery of a plan has yet to be enacted. The Tories are just stalling, hoping to immunize their way out of a crisis and save money. Meanwhile, ICUs remain over-burdened and more people will die unnecessarily.

Israeli Apartheid in action

Attacks are increasing and global human rights groups are denouncing war crimes by the state

by: **Sid Lacombe**

The brutal attacks on worshippers at the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem are just the latest injustice meted out by the the apartheid regime in Israel. Israeli police stormed the mosque while people were in prayer. The fact that it was done during Ramadan is an added insult.

Tensions in Jerusalem have been building since the forced eviction of hundreds of Palestinians from their homes by Israeli settlers in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood. The forced relocations are considered illegal under international law, yet they go ahead with the support of the main imperial powers.

Human Rights Watch report

At the same time, human rights groups are coming to terms with the fact that Israel is an apartheid state. The latest condemnation comes from Human Rights Watch (HRW) - which has equivocated on the issue for years. In their report, *A Threshold Crossed, Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution* HRW describes the situation clearly:

“Israeli authorities methodically privilege Jewish Israelis and discriminate against Palestinians. Laws, policies, and statements by leading Israeli officials make plain that the objective of maintaining Jewish Israeli control over demographics, political power, and land has long guided government policy. In pursuit of this goal, authorities have dispossessed,

confined, forcibly separated, and subjugated Palestinians by virtue of their identity to varying degrees of intensity. In certain areas, as described in this report, these deprivations are so severe that they amount to the crimes

of the apartheid system that has been put in place.

In an attempt to cover their abuses, the Israelis and their supporters have developed new and far ranging rules that attack anyone who criticizes the state as anti-

interests of the US led imperial order so it is, therefore, used by western governments as a cudgel to beat any who oppose the Israeli state policies.

This has come under increasing scrutiny but with the ruling class on board with the IHRA definition



against humanity of apartheid and persecution.”

The Israeli state is responsible for ongoing and daily attacks on the Palestinian people and they are no longer able to hide their abuses as they did in the past. The bombing campaigns against Gaza in the past decade received a good deal of the attention but it is the daily grind of checkpoints, arbitrary arrests and home demolition that is the backdrop

of the apartheid system that has been put in place. In an attempt to cover their abuses, the Israelis and their supporters have developed new and far ranging rules that attack anyone who criticizes the state as anti-semitic. The IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) definition of anti-semitism includes any critique of the state of Israel. The definition describes critiques of Israel as an attack on Jewish collectivity and is therefore anti-semitic.

This provides a cover for the state to engage in any form of oppression against the Palestinians with impunity. This serves the

interests of the US led imperial order so it is, therefore, used by western governments as a cudgel to beat any who oppose the Israeli state policies.

All this is coming at a time when increasing numbers of people are seeing the atrocities for what they are - apartheid.

During the bombing of Gaza in 2014, millions took to the streets denouncing the slaughter. In the US, Jewish Voice for Peace gained 50,000 new members during the attack and showed the US and Israeli

ruling class that there is a new generation of Jewish people who are opposed to the policies of the apartheid state.

Another recent report from B’Tselem, the largest and most respected Israeli human rights group labeled the policies as apartheid.

The executive director of B’Tselem, Hagai El-Ad stated, “One government rules everyone and everything between the river and the sea, following the same organising principle everywhere under its control, working to advance and perpetuate the supremacy of one group of people – Jews – over another – Palestinians. This is apartheid.

There is not a single square inch in the territory Israel controls where a Palestinian and a Jew are equal. The only first-class people here are Jewish citizens such as myself, and we enjoy this status both inside the 1967 lines and beyond them, in the West Bank.”

Tasks for the left in Canada

It is crucial for the left to use this moment to go on the offensive on the questions of Palestinian rights. In Canada, the recent resolutions passed at the NDP convention calling for a boycott of products from settlements and a ban on military sales to Israel is a good start. We need to fight to end Canadian complicity in Israeli war crimes. It is the support of the imperial powers that allows Israel to act with impunity. Our own government is partly responsible for this bloodshed.

War in Eastern Europe?

by: **Socialist Tendency, Russian Federation**

The armed conflict in southeastern Ukraine risks once again entering a “hot” phase. Ukrainian, European and opposition Russian media have accused the Russian government of tightening the deployment of its armed forces on the border with Ukraine, with intent to invade.

Pro-government Russian media accuse Ukraine and NATO of preparing to break the truce with the unrecognized Donetsk and Luhansk republics.

The United States European Command (EUCOM) has brought the army to maximum alert due to the movement of Russian troops.

Ukraine: between two imperialisms

Russia benefits from the continuation of the war in southeastern Ukraine because the protracted conflict does not allow Ukraine to become an official member of NATO and join the EU. If Ukraine joins these alliances, it will be a big slap in the face to Russia in its own backyard, which could serve as a precedent for other states dependent on it and trigger a chain reaction.

The United States and NATO are trying to pressure the Kremlin to finally bring Ukraine into their sphere of interest. American imperialism

is by far the most powerful in the world: over the past 7 years it has replaced most Russian capital from Ukraine with its own. The ruling class of Ukraine receives economic aid and political support, Kiev gets subsidies from the West including the IMF, the Ukrainian army gets help from its European “colleagues” – all of which puts Ukraine in a dependent position.

But it would be a big mistake to assume that Russian capital has no influence in Ukraine today, or that it only has it in the occupied territories of the south and south-east.

Russian imperialism affects Ukraine in terms of its debts, loans, investments, low wages of migrant labour, military and international treaties, as well as cultural and language rights. Russian imperialism does its best to prevent the independent development of Ukraine.

Ukraine is torn apart by two imperialisms - “East” and “West.”

International conflict

The Russian left is dominated by the idea that Ukraine is as guilty of the armed conflict in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions as Russia. Most of the left in Russia assume that Ukraine is one of the “strong” sides with the LPR and DPR (the Ukraine breakaway republics in Donetsk and Luhansk) the “weak” side. But this ignores that the conflict is historically between op-

pressed and oppressor nations.

Seven years after the outbreak of war, the Russian Federation is providing military support to separatist formations under its control, and there is direct evidence that Russia was involved in fighting in southeastern Ukraine. Russia also isn’t hiding the presence of its troops in Crimea in the lead-up to the “referendum” on independence.

The victory of Russian imperialism today could lead to vast

the Russian ruling class, as well as further Russian influence on an international scale.

An even worse result is the increase of interethnic strike in Ukraine itself, which could lead to mass clashes between Russian and Ukrainian speakers.

But a victory by the Ukrainian ruling class would only consolidate its reactionary position and foster a new wave of Ukrainian nationalism. It could also lead to further consol-



territorial losses on the part of Ukraine in future. Though unlikely, the worst-case scenario is the threat of losing statehood.

Both outcomes will lead to reactionary consequences: the strengthening and aggression of

the Russian ruling class, as well as further Russian influence on an international scale.

Tasks of the left

We as Russian socialists are not representatives of the Ukrainian left, but we will attempt to put forward

what needs to be done.

The main role of left movements inside imperialist states is to oppose imperialism at home, where the main enemy always is. But both imperialisms, from “East” and “West,” are both reactionary, regardless of which has more or less power at any given time.

The Ukrainian left faces a dual challenge. First, the need to fight imperialist forces that are tearing the country apart from both “East” and the “West”; and its own government, which is strengthening the hold of both in Ukraine. Secondly, the need to the oppose military expansion - which can lead not only to the growth of international conflict but also to the growth of chauvinist and fascist forces, cultural oppression, and possibly to the loss of Ukrainian sovereignty.

Only by the overthrow of the current government in Kiev and its replacement with a democratic workers government can Ukraine be freed from imperialist influence and protect the people from armed aggression from all sides.

The Ukrainian, Russian, and Western bourgeoisie cannot resolve this conflict without tragic consequences. With capitalists in charge the outcome will be more and bloodier conflict. Only the power of the united working class, across ethnic lines and against imperialism, can lead a way out.

State and Revolution

Vladimir Lenin, a leader of the Bolshevik party in Russia that led the revolution of 1917, wrote State and Revolution as a popular pamphlet to bring a Marxist conception of the modern nation state to the masses. Bradley Hughes and Parry Mudhar outline many of the essential elements of the work and use the analysis to describe revolutionary movements throughout history.

In the summer of 1917 in the midst of the Russian Revolution, Bolshevik leader, Vladimir Lenin, wrote an amazing book called *The State and Revolution*. His goal was to win socialists to the goal of liberation and “to explain to the masses what they will have to do in the very near future to liberate themselves from the yoke of capitalism.” Lenin had just come back to Russia after fleeing the country after an arrest warrant was issued by provisional government. Its very clear that Lenin was not intending his book to be read by conservatives and liberals (even non-Marxist socialists). Its to-the-point and refrains from nothing.

First of all, there are many groups that call themselves and are thought of as socialist, from left-leaning parties in Scandinavian countries to social democrats such as Bernie and Alexandria Ocasio Cortes.

For Lenin, the important question was do you believe you can reform capitalism for the benefit of the 99.9% by parliamentary means, while leaving the wealth of business owners intact. And while leaving institutions like the courts, the police, the education system and the army in place?

Or do you believe that only the working class through its own action can build a new society? And that that new society must replace all the old institutions with new ones made up of and controlled by working people?

The book explains the Marxist understanding that working within the system can never result in liberation. Only the seizure of power by the working class, by creating new mass political participation of the working class, can save us.

Capitalism is a dictatorship of the 1%, the bourgeoisie who rule our workplaces and to whom all mainstream political parties bow. Their control is not direct, it operates

through all the institutions of a modern nation state, the police, the courts, the army, the labour board and so on.

Bourgeoisie vs Workers

A clear example of how far their control lies is right in front of our currently: during the first wave of COVID-19 grocery store workers were required to work during a global pandemic without danger pay or any increase of compensation despite wide uproar and even while they were lauded as “heroes.”

Yet grocery store workers were never consulted about how to make their workplaces safe. And the brief wage increase they were granted was removed even as the pandemic worsened.

Under capitalism production is produced for the means of making profit but that profit isn’t used for the benefit of the those who produce, merely to generate more wealth in a never ending cycle. The opposite of this is socialism, the vehicle to communism. This requires the creation of a state so that decision can be made and implemented will for the benefit of society, not profit.

To quote Lenin, who in turn quoted Engles, “The proletariat seizes from state power and turns the means of production into state property to begin with. But thereby it abolishes itself as the proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, and abolishes also the state as state ...The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production.”

Defunding the police

The movement is growing to defund the police. People are realizing from their shared experiences that the police are a tool of the ruling class to

maintain racism and keep workers in line. For Lenin, abolishing the police was a immediate need for a successful revolution and a transition to a free society.

Who is sent in by the bosses when organized and wildcat strikes are held? History has shown us why the police exist time and time again.

In the Memphis Sanitation Strike in 1968, Black men stuck to protest poor working conditions, racism, discrimination, low wages and mental abuse from the city of Memphis. The strike took place because the families of two black sanitation workers, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, were not compensated by the city after the men were crushed to death by a trash compactor.

On March 29, 1968, thousands marched through Memphis in support of the strikers. Many held signs that read: “I Am A Man.” The police attacked the crowd and murdered sixteen-year-old Larry Payne.

This is a critical point that draws a line between socialist and liberal organizations. We are not fighting for a better police force. We are fighting to abolish the police.

We support reforms that benefit people such as fighting for better government programs, rent control or better working conditions. But it is not enough. We are fighting to smash the state, to abolish rent and debt, and to replace the bosses with workers control over our workplaces and the entire economy.

We do not believe that capitalism will simply step down in the face of pressure from the masses. Working people must organize themselves to overthrow the 1%.

One of the most militant and organized revolutionary groups in American history were the Black Panthers who were feeding American children through organized food drives and donations. For this they were denounced as “violent” while the US was murdering millions and dropping Agent Orange in Vietnam. The response of the US was to infiltrate, murder and imprison the Panthers. Before that Malcolm X was killed by the hand of the US government. As was revealed by the cop who helped in his assassination. Martin Luther King, Jr’s family proved in court that the FBI was behind his assassination. Allende in Chile and Morales in Bolivia were attacked by their own ruling class aided by the US.

The state of Capital with NOT allow itself of be dismembered for the sake of society. Workers will need to organize to take them on themselves.

To illustrate some of the ideas in *State and Revolution*, we now look at some key moments in revolutionary history.

La Commune – Paris 1871

One hundred and fifty years ago the government of France was about to surrender the city of Paris to Prussian troops. The people of Paris rose up in revolution to defend their city from Prussia and from their own national government. From March 18 to May 28, 1871, the city was in the hands of the workers. In that brief time, they didn’t simply elect a more sympathetic government to run Paris and defend the city, they destroyed all the old intuitions of government and created something new.

Immediately they abolished the police and the standing army. In its place all adult men were enrolled in the National Guard. This wasn’t just swapping one uniform for another. This replaced bodies of specialized armed men who were there to defend the capitalist state with neighbours and friends who were there in solidarity with their community.

Rents and debts were abolished and pawn shops were closed. Factories whose owners had fled the revolution were re-opened under workers control. An education system separate from the church was started.

The elected Commune was radically different than our modern legislatures. The delegates were instantly recallable by their constituency and they were paid the average wage of a working person. This meant they would need to respond to the needs of the people who elected them, and would be in the economic situation as them. Compare this to our modern legislatures where elected officials have ignored the need for paid sick days for a year now. In BC, a MLA is paid \$111,000 a year which is nearly twice the average wage in BC. Our elected officials are well removed from the everyday problems of the people they claim to represent,

The secret of their success

The successes of the Commune weren't due to clever ideas, or good rules for elected officials. They came about because of the everyday participation of Parisian workers in running their own lives. Although women were not given the vote or enrolled in the National Guard they were involved in yhr day to day running of their society.

Had the Commune lasted longer than 10 weeks, they would have corrected this mistake. One of the largest organizations during the Commune was the Union of Women for the Defence of Paris. It's committees met daily in all parts of the city. Its members would be key in the attempt to defend the city from the national government.

In addition to the limitless possibilities once working people are in control of their society, the history of the Commune shows the viciousness of our ruling class. The national French government had been shelling the city of Paris for the entire six weeks that it was under workers control. On May 21, French troops began retaking the city. Over the next week they fought street by street. Thousands were killed in the fighting and over 20,000 Communards were summarily executed. Afterwards 38,000 were imprisoned and 7,000 deported to the French colonies. Despite this, the memory fo the the Commune lives on.

Vive La Commune!

Elise Reclus, summed up the meaning of the Commune, "The Commune set up for the future a new society in which there are no masters by birth title or wealth, and no slaves by origin, caste or salary. Everywhere the word "Commune" was understood in its largest sense as referring to a new humanity, made up of free and equal companions, oblivious to the existence of old boundaries, helping each other in peace from one end of the world to the other." Quoted in Genderquake: socialist women and the Paris Commune isj.org.uk/genderquake-paris-commune/



Russia 1917 - when the revolution was won

Russia 1905 and 1917

In 1905 Russian troops fired on a peaceful demonstration outside the Tsar's Winter Palace. This sparked a general strike. To coordinate the strike Russian workers created workers councils or soviets. This was the first time workers anywhere built their own democratic councils within their workplace. The strike ended in small concessions from the Tsarist government accompanied by years of repression against workers' organizations.

Fall of the Tsar

These councils were revived in February of 1917. On International Women's day, women in the capital city organized a strike protesting the lack of food during the war. The

women spread the strike across the capital leading to a general strike. Within days, the 300 year-old regime had fallen.

The model of workers councils spread through workplaces and beyond into the army and the countryside. At the same time an unelected Provisional Government took power.

Although the official government of the Empire was the provisional government, workplaces were being run by their own councils, orders to soldiers were discussed by soldiers' councils and peasant councils were redistributing the land of the Aristocrats.

Dual Power

Between February and October of 1917, the provisional government continued the war, refused to convene a constituent assembly, forbid peasants from taking over the land and workers from running their own workplaces.

The food shortages and chaos in the economy got worse and worse. The Bolsheviks worked to convince the majority of workers, soldiers and peasants that a government that compromised with the business owners and land owners could never represent the people.

Land Peace and Bread!

They succeeded. In the elections to the second congress of soviets, the majority of delegates were from the Bolsheviks, anarchists and another socialist party called the Left Socialist Revolutionaries. All were committed to ending the war, recognizing the peasants' re-distribution of land, and making the democratic councils in the workplaces, countryside and army the new form of government.

The scheduled meeting of the new congress, October 25, was set as the date for the insurrection. With the majority of the army, workers and peasants on the side of the revolution it was nearly bloodless.

The reprisals from the world's capitalist nations was immediate and relentless. Thirteen nations,

including Canada, from both sides in the first world war invaded. They also imposed blockades and sent arms and money to the supporters of the Tsar.

Despite shortages and destruction caused by the civil, amazing things were accomplished by the new worker's republic.

Workers Power

The first order of business was ending the war, confirming peasant control over their land and placing all production in the hands of the workers. Women were active at all levels of the revolutionary parties that made up the majority in the soviets, and so of course had a prominent role in the new state. This was long before other European nations had any elected women, never mind in leadership roles.

The workers soviets put in place free abortion on demand, divorce on demand, paid maternity leave, free government-funded childcare, the decriminalization of homosexuality and prostitution. The first few years of the revolutionary government saw the beginning of communal nurseries, dining rooms and socialized laundries.

The Russian Empire was referred to as "the prison house of nations," by revolutionaries. These nations were able to use the new government as a force for national liberation. Local governments were set up in the local language. Religious artifacts that had been stole by the Empire were returned to Mosques.



Egypt 2011 - Millions fill the squares against Mubarak

Schools and universities were founded in the local languages. And the new republic guaranteed freedom of religion, winning millions of Muslims to support the regime.

The secret to these accomplishments was the same as in the Commune, the active participation of working people in determining all aspects of their lives. Because of this, delegates to the workers councils were immediately recallable and only made average wages.

Canada and its allies did not win the civil war, the workers republic remained in place. But, within a few years the revolution was overturned. The destruction of the civil war, the resulting famine, and the flight of workers from the cities back to the countryside destroyed the workers ability to run the state they had set up.

The other socialist parties and anarchists turned against workers' rule. In response to these many crises, the Bolsheviks ruled alone. A new ruling class grew up within the bureaucracy and turned the repression from the enemies of workers power to the defenders of workers. This was the Stalinist counter revolution that ruled in the interests of the bureaucracy until 1989.

For a few years workers in Russia ruled their own lives and their inspiration lead to short lived revolutions across Europe.

Egypt 2011

The revolution in Egypt that overthrew the 30-year dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak arose out of a decade of demonstrations and strikes. In January of 2011, a rally was called for the 25th to protest police brutality

and their murder of Khaled Mohamed Saeedby. Inspired by the revolution in Tunsia, the demonstration quickly became a movement calling for the end of the dictatorship. Over the next 18 days, millions joined the protests in Tahrir square in Cairo.

The square became a festival of the oppressed. Egyptian revolutionary Gigi Ibrahim, reported to Socialist Worker (UK), "During the revolution women played a role equal to men—in fact, we played a pivotal role . . . Women were part of all the day-to-day organization in Tahrir. We marched and fought the police, we faced tear gas and bullets." Ibrahim compared life in the square to the sexism and harassment

found everyday in Cario, "From the beginning of the revolution, and throughout the 18 days I spent in Tahrir Square, I did not face sexual harassment once."

In the day to day organization of the protests, strangers slept in tents next to each other, and people of all religions organized together and supported one another. While Muslims conducted prayers, Christians guarded the square and vie versa. Everyone was involved in the collective decisions on how to run the protest camp.

In December of 2011, Hossam el-Hamalawy, a member of the Egyptian Revolutionary Socialists, spoke to this paper about the importance of spreading the revolution to workplaces, "You have to take this movement from the square to the workplaces and the university campuses. We did not topple Mubarak in Tahrir. Yes, Tahrir was a heroic battle, a heroic sit-in, and a heroic occupation, which will definitely go down in history as one of the most fantastic struggles that happened this century, but at the same time, the regime could have held out; Mubarak could have stayed in power for a much longer time if it wasn't for the labour strikes that broke out."

In the same article he explained the dead end of elections, "My argument was that even if you elect one hundred percent Revolutionary Socialists in parliament - forget about the Salafis or the Ikhwan - still you will not be able to achieve the goals of the revolution. If you bring a prophet or a saint to be the prime minister today in Egypt, he will still remain a puppet in the hands of SCAF [Supreme Command of the Armed Forces]. If you elect a

president today, while the situation is still as it is, he will also be a puppet in the hands of SCAF. SCAF are opting for a model which is like the old Turkish model where you get the people enjoying elections, electing civilian politicians in suits and having civilian cabinets, but with specific red lines that cannot be crossed and once they are crossed you will get a phone call from the army - or you will get a coup."

Unfortunately for the Egyptian revolution, he was right. The Muslim Brotherhood won the elections after Mubarak's fall. Dedicated to maintaining a capitalist economy they did nothing for the workers of Egypt and mass demonstrations and

strikes quickly resumed. In the wake of these demonstrations the army led by General el-Sisi seized power. They did this by exploiting the divisions between those with a secular vision of progress and the supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood, who saw a role for religion in guiding the state. The general allied himself with secular liberals and even parts of the left by calling this a war on "religious fascism." Of course, after the executions and imprisonment of Brotherhood activists, the regime began repressing the left. Today Egypt's prisons hold 60,000 political prisoners.

The Egyptian revolution did not go nearly as far as in Paris or Russia, but again it was workers power that made change. And it was the ability of ordinary people to organize themselves that overthrew the dictator and allowed people to overcome the sexism and religious sectarianism that had divided them. But, once the workers relied on the bosses system of elections, without smashing the old state and its army, they were doomed. The missing piece in this revolution was a wide-spread workers party that could argue for workers to take power themselves.

Uprisings and revolutions will continue to happen. As we saw with the Movement for Black Lives and the mass protests right now in Palestine and Columbia. But unless there is a mass party equipped with the history of workers victories and defeats, those movements will be steered back into voting for some version of a compromise with our ruling classes. With that restoration of their power, the ruling class will then turn on us. Building a mass revolutionary party is the most urgent task of our lives. Join us!

Trudeau's climate fraud

The billions he spent to prop up the tar sands and increase pipeline capacity dwarf green initiatives in the federal budget

by: **Brian Champ**

Under the terms of the Paris Agreement, which the Trudeau Liberals signed to much fanfare in 2015, Canada was originally committed to reducing carbon emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. So the more recent announcements that Trudeau has declared that Canada is on course to be 40-45% below 2005 levels by 2030, with the goal of attaining “net-zero” carbon emissions by 2050 are good news, right?

Extinction Rebellion's second demand calls for net zero by 2025, arguing that the UN targets are based on geopolitical jockeying rather than climate science. Millions of young climate strikers and allies know that these goals are too vague and too far in the future: emissions need to be dropping now to have any hope of averting catastrophic effects. Severe drought, inability to grow crops, extreme weather and flooding events, increasing frequency, intensity and scale of wildfires and many other effects of this crisis are already being felt, particularly in more vulnerable populations in the global South, but also here in Canada where the impact falls heavily on Indigenous people.

The reality is that Canada's official carbon emissions by 2019 had returned to near the same high level as 2005, after dipping due to the 2008-09 economic downturn and again slightly after the Liberals were elected. This official accounting, however, does not hold oil producer countries responsible for the emissions from fossil fuel consumption after export.

This disjuncture between the kind of plan we need, and what is on offer from the federal government is apparent in the 2021 Liberal budget in the section entitled “A Healthy Environment for a Healthy Economy” where the \$8.75 billion climate plan funding is laid out. To put this in context, the federal government spent \$18 billion on 2020 Covid relief to oil and gas companies and have sunk at least \$16 billion on buying and developing the TMX pipeline since 2018. Rather than a clear vision and plan to shift the economy away from carbon intensive energy production, transportation and communities, the budget continues to subsidize the fossil fuel industry.

For this reason, the Liberal climate budget can only be described as a fraud meant to create the appearance of taking action while providing cover for the continued dominance of oil and gas as the energizer of the economy, and as a key raw material for the chemical, plastics and fertilizer industries.

When Justin Trudeau's Liberal government first came to power in 2015, it was a relief to many who were thankful that the new regime would be a “climate change champion”. Distancing himself from Harper, who had pulled Canada out of the UN climate meetings, Trudeau triumphantly declared that Canada had signed the Paris Agreement and thus would

help keep rising average global temperatures to under 1.5 degrees above the pre-industrial average.

Many were hopeful that Trudeau could be a real change from the climate denial of the Harper era. Veterans of climate politics were more wary, having witnessed the ineffectiveness of the Chretien Liberals during the Kyoto era. Similar, some were drawn in by Trudeau's promises of a “renewed relationship” with Indigenous peoples. Indigenous land defenders prepared for the next struggle against ongoing Canadian colonialism.

These suspicions were proved in 2016, when Trudeau approved the Transmountain pipeline,



owned by Kinder Morgan at the time, then bought it with public money in 2018. Not to worry, Trudeau assured us, this is all part of the climate plan: using profits from the flow of oil to reduce carbon emissions. Symoblic of this, in 2019 he approved the continued development of the Transmountain Extension (TMX) pipeline a day after declaring a climate emergency under pressure from the climate movement.

In truth, the Liberals are as big proponents of oil and gas and the tar sands as the Tories. They are attempting to both keep the oil, gas and pipeline profits flowing and claim to be leading on climate change. This is a contradiction that must be exposed.

The carbon “tax” is the centre of the Liberal plan meant to shift industry and consumer behaviour away from carbon intensive energy sources. Higher carbon energy consumers contribute more through this tax, which is redistributed amongst average and low carbon energy consumers. While this redistributive aspect is a positive feature of this program, by treating the climate crisis as a market failure it hides the true scale of the problem, where fossil fuels are entrenched in industrial and agricultural production, transportation systems and infrastructure and urban design. Much of the mainstream political debate is framed

around the carbon tax which obscures the types of programs we really need.

The rapidity of the required transformation calls for a determined plan to end new fossil fuel development immediately and to build zero carbon energy capacity to help phase out all fossil fuel production in around a decade. Reducing energy consumption will need to be sought along with the transition to zero carbon emission energy production and distribution. A just transition to low carbon work would be needed for workers in these industries, as well as respect for Indigenous sovereignty and leadership across Turtle Island as a key part of ecological and societal renewal. Subsidies to oil companies must be ended and

new subsidies for community led low carbon energy generation and distribution need to be created. Oil company profits could be taxed heavily to fund the transition. Once emissions are on a clear downward trajectory, programs to create and expand carbon sinks can help accelerate the trend.

Instead the 2021 federal budget provides a lifeline for the oil and gas industry. While there is more money being spent on zero-emissions energy production and distribution, public transit and energy retrofits, the budget represents another lost opportunity to make a sharp break with the fossil fuel industry and foster the rapid development of zero carbon emissions solutions that already exist. The Liberals have cleverly created categories like “Clean technology”, “Clean fuels” and “Clean energy” which they champion as the way forward. These are all fudges, splitting money invested between real solutions and ones that throw a lifeline to the continuation of the fossil fuel industry. For example, clean technology includes things we actually need, such as zero-emissions energy production, but it also includes technology that increases fossil fuel efficiency and oil industry pipedreams like carbon capture and storage that they hope to use as cover to continue profiting off carbon pollution.

Some of the numbers include:

Out of \$678 million allocated for “Growing our Net-zero Economy” from 2020/21 through 2025/26, 250 million is earmarked for “Propelling Clean Tech Projects” (include Carbon sequestration and storage funded by big oil) while only 142 million is allocated to Accelerating investment in Clean Energy Technologies (electric energy storage, wind, solar, tidal, biofuel, hydrogen) and only 46 million in Growing Zero-emission Technology Manufacturing (solar, wind, hydrogen/biofuels)

Out of \$1.94 billion allocated for “Investing in our Clean Industry Future”, \$1.55 billion is earmarked for “Supporting the Production and Use of Clean Fuels” (including biofuels and hydrogen), and a further 220 million on “Advancing Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage Technologies”.

\$779 million has been earmarked to fund \$4.4 Billion in interest free loans for energy retrofits, resuming a necessary program. But the continued lifelines to the fossil fuel industry undermine these investments - more explicit funding of zero carbon emissions housing is needed.

\$4.1 Billion is earmarked for “Protecting Nature” as the costs of environmental destruction is rising. Many of these programs protect the environment to protect industries rather than the web of life in which humans are enmeshed and which must be sustained for a livable future.

The terms “Clean Technology”, “Clean Fuels” and “Clean Energy” are used skillfully by the oil and gas industry and the Liberal party to hide continued investment in fossil fuels under the climate plan. But we also need to be mindful that “Net Zero” is a problematic term as well, distracting us from what should be the main goal of rapidly lowering carbon emissions. Until the downward trend of emissions is established and under way it should remain the main focus of the climate movement.

It's only the pressure of the climate movement that has forced the Liberals to pay heed to this dire crisis. As we work to expose the Liberal climate fraud, the collective struggles of Indigenous land defenders, climate justice activists and the working class working together are the hope for a livable future.

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: socialist.ca/ourstand

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Greek healthcare workers show the way to fight

Kostas Katarachias, a doctor at Athens' largest cancer hospital Agios Savvas, is also president of his union. His firing for challenging the hospital's disastrous management of the pandemic sparked a large fightback. He recently spoke about the struggle of Greek healthcare workers on a panel titled "Pandemic, protest and policing".

It is very inspiring for our struggle to participate in your online meeting about the pandemic and the fight during a very difficult period, which however simultaneously carries so many opportunities for the working class.

To begin with, the current pandemic wave is anything but finished, while the weapon of the vaccines will not be effective enough to restrict the virus to endemic waves. The reason is that the vaccines are not available for the biggest parts of the world population and that vaccine nationalism, combined with competition for profits, are effectively destroying this breakthrough.

Greek government and COVID

In Greece, the conservative government of New Democracy with PM Mitsotakis for more than one year has been an absolute disaster with regards to managing the pandemic. For more than two months now, we have faced the worst escalation in the numbers of new infections and of patients who need hospitalization in ICU. The daily deaths per million are among the world's highest rates and we have had more than 10,000 deaths from the beginning of the pandemic.

For more than 14 months the government did nothing to avoid this catastrophe. No mass recruitment of healthcare staff, no important increase of hospital funding and ICU beds.

The vacancies in staff were more than 40,000. Nothing was spent for the protection of high-risk groups, such as seniors in nursing homes, the working class in big industries and crowded workplaces; and of course, no budget increase was ever designated for public transport.

All this period, they eagerly increased funding for the capitalists, airline companies, the mass media, private clinics, the tourist industry. At the same time, however, poverty and unemployment surged. Funds for the public healthcare system were declining, with this dangerous government's only measure being a useless lockdown, one of the longest and harshest worldwide; a lockdown imposed only on the working class and the poor, with curfews and restrictions of their leisure. Moreover, the government used the lockdown and the fear of the pandemic to repress civil rights, give power to the police, ban demonstrations in an effort to isolate the left and the movement. And they failed!

The resistance did not stop during the pandemic and the lockdown. On 7 April 2020, the workers in the hospitals organized assemblies in every hospital on the initiative of unions controlled by the anticapitalist Left like Agios Savvas, where I have been president for more than 8 years. So, the message to all the Left was that we can have struggles, and the escalation of strikes in hospitals is the only way to save lives – demanding mass recruitment, permanent jobs for hitherto short-term staff (like me), tests and personal protective equipment (PPE) for safety in the workplace. Every week, every month all this year the strikes

of the hospitals were the meeting point of all the working class expressing their hatred for this government.

The strike movement spread to the tourist industry workers, the art workers and teachers during last summer and autumn. On October 7th the huge anti-fascist demo outside the court led to the conviction of Golden Dawn as a criminal organization showing to all the Left that we can win, even under seemingly difficult circumstances. After this victory, the antiracist movement emerged stronger against the government's racist policies, with long-lasting campaigns for open borders and open cities for the refugees, healthcare for all and vaccines for the immigrants and

provocation to the anticapitalist left and all the left people. After the initiative of revolutionaries (SEK) and the anticapitalist left to ignore this ban, there was a big united front of the left to defend the right to demonstrate. Despite clashes with the riot police the demos eventually took place in the centre of Athens and all the major cities of Greece.

That was a crucial turning point where the government began being all the more isolated. Then we had the Greek #MeToo scandal, with officials of the conservative party, artistic directors in theatres and sports tycoons involved in sexual harassments and rapes of young women and men. The rage

square of a suburb of Athens and the video of this police brutality incident went viral, thus transforming the rage to a big explosion of demonstrations in this suburb. In response, the government couldn't afford but to withdraw police forces from the neighborhood—another victory for us.

The Government knew that in the core of all this resistance was the anticapitalist left and the unions controlled or influenced by SEK and our initiatives, like the coordination of hospital unions created by Agios Savvas for years. For example, in autumn we organized demonstrations and strikes at my hospital – the biggest cancer treatment hospital in Greece – for two months in a row against the unit's disastrous management, which resulted in the uncontrollable spread of coronavirus infections among staff and patients. There was big publicity about this and it was clearly revealed how little the government cared for healthcare workers and the patients themselves. That was a big blow to them.

It shouldn't come as a surprise that I was targeted due to my union activism (organizing strikes that ridiculed the government) and the ministry of Health began a prosecution against me and my role as the union's president. I had been working as a doctor in this hospital for 5 years on short-term contracts, and they tried to get rid of me with clear intention to dissolve our union. There was a huge battle against them for more than 2 months which united all the left and all the unions nationwide with big strikes and demonstrations called by the public sector unions, and the solidarity was astonishing. The issue was even brought to Parliament and several conflicts about my case took place between right-wing MPs and all the left.

At the same time, there were demonstrations in solidarity in Italy and Germany. On March 30, my last day at work, we organized a big militant demonstration toward the ministry of Health where we clashed with riot police, who had the nerve to hit nurses and doctors. The rage after was huge.

Government defeated

Ultimately, the government was defeated, and I returned to the national healthcare system as permanent staff.

The victory was so big that thousands of people celebrated, acknowledging that we are fighting with our unions for the health of the many and that the unions must be defended.

During the year of pandemic, young workers and new segments of the working class massively organized in unions – with the actors being a telling example – or even created new unions. This tendency made unions stronger as they emerged as the only real alternative in everyday life against this government.

The hospital unions were pioneers in organizing the fightback in this crucial sector for the pandemic and Agios Savvas was the core of this movement.

On April 22, after championing the right to have the unions we want, we had a new successful strike across the healthcare sector. Now we are organizing a general strike for May 6th (the 1st of May overlapped with Easter) with confidence that their plans to attack our unions and the 8-hour-day will fail as well.

We can get rid of this government of disaster depending on the labour movement and the demands we have because it is up to us, the working class, to create a get away from barbarism.



asylum seekers. That's why March 20th was a great demonstration which echoed the world antiracist movement's demands.

Protest banned

On November 17th the government banned the commemoration demonstrations for the uprising against the 1974 coup in the polytechnic university. That was a big

against the government was escalating so the 8th of March, the strike for women's rights was another uprising with the unions spearheading this battle.

So, all this situation with the courageous initiatives of our revolutionary party radicalized people. When the riot police tried to restrict people inside their homes this March, they assaulted a youth at the local



Kostas Katarachias, president of the workers' union at Agios Savvas hospital.

Strike down Rexplas greed

by: Michelle Robidoux and Christine Beckermann

The David and Goliath battle by workers on strike at Rexplas in Toronto is building support across the labour movement.

Rexplas is a division of Richards Packaging, the #1 packaging distributor in Canada and #3 in North America. Sick of the company's disrespect and poverty wages, the small group of primarily South-Asian women – members of United Steelworkers local 8300 – overwhelmingly rejected an insulting final offer and walked out on April 25th.

Amarjeet Lalli has worked at Rexplas for 27 years. Some of her co-workers have worked there for 32 years. This profitable company pays its workers a measly \$14.25 an hour. “We deserve more money. They don't pay us enough. We are hard working here, for a long time. We worked under Covid too, every day coming for a 12-hour shift.”

“Every other company gave workers extra pay,” she said. “But they gave us nothing, that's why we are on strike.”

Rexplas manufactures plastic bottles and other containers for pharmaceuticals and other applications. While the pandemic led to a big boost in profits for Rexplas' parent company, Richards Packaging, they have refused to compensate workers – many

of whom live in Brampton, a Covid hotspot – for the hardships they've endured in this period.

Yet David Prupas, president of Richards Packaging, states on the company website,

and see for yourself?”

The only way to describe the company's actions is sheer greed. Richards Packaging CEO Gerry Glynn brought home \$471,000 in 2019. By contrast, the 36 workers at Rexplas

If the company actually recognized that the employees are the reason they are making record profits, they would not pay them poverty wages after literally decades of work. As Amarjeet Lalli states, “Since we made

the union, we try they give us something, but they don't give us anything. That's why now we are on strike. All the other unions are helping us.”

As another striker said, “They thought we were weak. That we would accept anything they offered us, but we are showing them that we are strong!” The strikers are well aware of the struggles that are growing around the world. Most of the workers are originally from India and have many relatives actively involved in the farmers' strike there. Their cars have “Support Indian Farmers” as well as “USW on Strike” placards displayed, proudly making the links.

“Back home, we are for farmers too, right?,” said Amarjeet. “My brother in India, they help farmers. Same thing here for us too. We can't survive like this – everything is expensive, the gas, grocery – how do we survive? That is why we are on strike.”

These workers are fighting for justice.

Strong solidarity will help them win.

Join the picket line at 500 Barmac Drive (near Finch and Weston), in Toronto.



“Our employees are the ones who have made Richards Packaging the best packaging distributor in North America. Visit us in person and see for yourself.” This is a joke. How about, “Visit us in person on the picket line

each made about \$30k. As USW district 6 tweeted, “How much would it cost to settle the strike at Rexplas? Less than \$22,000 a year. Stop targeting women of colour and newcomer communities for low wage jobs!”

Solidarity with Nestlé workers on strike

Workers at the Nestlé plant in west end Toronto have gone on strike for fairness and respect. The workers, who make Kit Kat, Aero, Coffee Crisp and Smarties are being asked to take a cut on pensions and health coverage during a pandemic. They are also fighting to make casual, temporary workers full time with all the benefits that entails.

When Nestlé came to the bargaining table with an insulting deal that reneges on previous promises - the 470 workers said no and voted overwhelmingly to strike.

Nestlé has been trying to hire new workers on a temporary basis, building a two-tiered wage setup that allows them to pit workers against each other. But it is not working. The full time workers are clear - there should be equal pay for equal work. A full time worker on the picket line told *Socialist Worker*, “We are striking because we have two tiers of workers at Nestlé and everyone should be treated fairly.”

He then went on to describe the clawbacks that Nestlé is demanding, “They want to cut our benefits, they also want to freeze our pensions for three



years. There's a lot of things they want to eliminate, like, they want to eliminate our overtime. We work hard for the company. For the last three years they have had record sales and we put out great numbers for production and this is how they want to treat the workers?”

Nestlé made more than \$16 billion in 2020 according to the company and saw no losses due to the pandemic. They have the money to pay these workers. Ulf Mark Schneider, the CEO of Nestlé brought in more than \$10 million in salary in 2020 but refuses to give a raise to the workers who actually make the profits for the corporation.

Eamonn Clarke, President of Unifor Local 252 said, “We've opened the door to precarious work and the company has taken advantage of it, using it to line their own pockets, make more profits and they don't want to share anything with the workers.”

If you want to support the workers please join the picket line at 72 Sterling ave. You can also contact the Canadian corporate offices at: <https://www.corporate.nestle.ca/en/info>