

# SHUT DOWN CANADA

## This country was built on genocide



by: **Brian Champ**

**O**n May 28th, Chief Rosanne Casimir of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation announced the discovery of unmarked graves of 215 Indigenous children on the site of the former Kamloops Residential School using ground penetrating radar technology.

Residential “schools” were really concentration camps for Indigenous children, funded by the government and operated by churches to ensure that “when they graduate from our institutions, the children have lost everything Native except their blood.” This particular school was

operated from 1890 to 1969 by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate order of the Catholic church.

The existence of children buried at this site was “a knowing” in the community, but the confirmation of this horror has profoundly affected Indigenous communities all across the continent who are reeling with grief for the lost children and anger at the colonial violence that continues to this day.

The Trudeau government has spent almost \$100 million actively fighting Indigenous people in the courts, including survivors of St. Anne’s residential school. They are actively denying responsibility for the consequences of residential

schools, saying the loss of language and culture was an ‘unavoidable implication’ of ‘children being educated in English or taught the Christian doctrine, according to CBC. They have only completed eight of the TRC’s 94 calls to action, and only one of the six calls to action about missing children and documenting and protecting burial sites. The Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation gave up waiting for action and commissioned the discovery work themselves.

Meanwhile, the government is spending billions on pushing oil and gas pipelines through unceded Indigenous lands. Trudeau’s hypocrisy is increasingly exposed.

The revelations of this mass grave have

retraumatized survivors across Turtle Island. Indigenous gatherings are being held to provide mutual support and comfort and to mourn and heal through traditional ceremonies. Many survivors of the schools have only now been able to share publicly their stories of violence and abuse.

Many memorials have sprung up across the country, with supporters leaving pairs of children’s shoes and teddy bears to remember the Indigenous children: at the “eternal flame” monument on the parliament grounds in Ottawa and on the steps of churches and legislatures across the country.

*continues on page 3*



# More bad news for Alberta healthcare

**T**his week in Hell – oops I mean Alberta, but you can see where I’d be confused – Premier Jason Kenney announced the appointment of University of Calgary Professor Jack Mintz to the Alberta Health Services board of directors.

Mintz’s appointment was greeted with gushing enthusiasm by Alberta’s Health Minister Tyler Shandro: “We are very fortunate to have someone of Jack’s calibre on the governing body of AHS as the organization builds on its strengths while implementing strategies to become even more efficient.” Readers should recall that Shandro and his wife are owners of private health service providing businesses, which in JasonKenneyLand does not qualify as a conflict of interest.

AHS board chair David Weyant (QC) is equally enthused: “This is a time of complex challenges for health systems, not just in Alberta but around the world. Jack’s experience, including in health-care innovation, will enhance the broad set of skills and experiences already on our board and will provide invaluable guidance to AHS as the organization addresses our health-care challenges.” Why is Weyant, a lawyer, boss of a healthcare service? Kenney chose him for his “extensive financial, legal and business expertise.”

What, you were expecting someone with healthcare experience to lead your public health services provider?

In case you haven’t been reading the fine print, and don’t recognize that name, let me not Mintz words. Let me tell you why Albertans should be very, very afraid.

The official announcement of his appointment cites many of his accomplishments, his work with the board of Imperial Oil, the MacDonald-Laurier Institute, the C.D. Howe Institute, and the Canada West Foundation. Yes, Jack is hip deep in the tar sands, an academic supporter of the oil and gas industry. So it is no surprise that

Kenney had previously appointed him chair of the Alberta Premier’s Economic Recovery Council.

One of Mintz’s side hustles that is not cited is his work with the far-right “think tank”, the Fraser Institute. His entire academic career has been devoted to defending corporate tax cuts, reducing “red tape”, and advocating for “smaller government”. He is all for privatiza-

tion of services and using legislation for driving down salaries and working conditions for public sector workers.



## Putting the gas in gaslighting

As such Mintz is a frequent op-ed contributor to the National Post, where he serves as a voice that tells

him the accolade “bipartisan”, because, after all, both Conservatives and Liberals share his corporate allegiance. But in his heart of hearts Mintz is all Tory.

Along with his soul mates, Jason Kenney and Stephen Harper, Mintz is a devoted disciple of neoliberalism and all that it entails—tax cuts for the rich, privatizing social services, weakening workers’ organizations and unions, and austerity as a solution to economic crisis. No less a weasel than Pierre Poilivere has anointed him a “brilliant economist”. As an academic he couches his right-wing arguments in dispassionate language. His connections to corporate Canada have earned

corporations what they want to hear, and politicians what they are to do. Typical of such efforts is his 2018 essay against “diversity”

In the best tradition of expert gaslighters, Mintz begins by distancing himself from crude racists like Maxime Bernier. He then acknowledges the economic advantages of immigration “in principle”, the better to discard them later.

Then he gets to the meat of his argument: immigration weakens patriotism and national identification. He proves this by citing the phenomenon of “ethnic fragmentation”. The villain here is multiculturalism and “diversity”, weakening the

Euro-centric tradition of Canada’s past. “Ethnic fragmentation” is a term invented by right-wing social scientists like Mintz so they can make subtly racist arguments without the uncomfortably racist language.

He even produces a chart that proves that Canada is the most ethnically fragmented major economy.

Mintz argues: “What is critical

“diversity”, then “diversity” must be to blame.

## Privatizing healthcare

Every decision, every appointment, every budgetary announcement Jason Kenney has made about health care has been designed to weaken public services and open the door for privatization. That all this is happening in the midst of a public health emergency is all the more damning.

He has cut funding for public services, resulting in thousands of lost jobs, many of them in health care. He has slashed funding for seniors’ pharmacare. He has green-lit two-tiered care in the form of private surgical clinics.

Kenney unilaterally ripped up Alberta’s contract with doctors, reducing payment, to force them into the privatized system. The result has been chaos, radicalizing a normally docile profession and prompting and exodus of medical talent to other provinces.

He threatened to “streamline” health services in smaller, often widely spaced communities. This meant loss of select services or outright closures of public clinics and hospitals. The resulting uproar among Kenney’s rural, small town base, did force him to slow down his assault on services, but not discard the goal.

All these decisions would have been made on the advice and with the blessing of Jack Mintz. He has long been one of Canada’s most powerful, and dangerous, unelected power brokers. Kenney’s latest appointment of Mintz is evidence that, as the pandemic emergency wanes, the UCP will redouble its attack on public healthcare.

Forewarned is forearmed. Will Alberta healthcare workers finally say enough is enough, and take collective action to save public services? Their devotion to their vocations has been proved through their tireless service during the pandemic. Public support is high, and diversity is no obstacle to solidarity. Now is the time to face Kenney and Mintz and say “No more!”

## PSWs Rally for Decent Work

by: **Peter Votsch** - CUPE Local 7797

**A**bout 50 Personal Support Workers (PSWs), members of CUPE Local 7797 converged on the office of NDP MPP Suze Morrison in the Toronto Centre riding on May 27, calling for better wages and conditions, ongoing benefits, and more full-time work.

They are homecare workers, employed by The Neighbourhood Group (TNG), in its “In-Home Services” department. They provide assistance with activities of daily living, cooking and some housework for seniors and those living with a disability throughout Toronto. Their care is apportioned through provincial agencies such as the Local Health Initiatives Network

(LHIN – formerly Community Care Access Centre - CCAC). Families, often low-income, must fight the LHINs for every hour of care they can get for their loved ones.

Homecare workers work in small apartments, where there is often very little ventilation, and protection from Covid. Local 7797 has had to demand that the employer provide adequate access to PPE for its members, and emphasized the right to refuse work in unsafe conditions, reporting this immediately to the employer. The vast majority of PSWs are racialized workers, most often women. For most, who are not full-time, they must wait by the phone for the call to go to work. They receive

higher rates for direct care, but not for the travel they must do between their



many clients, leaving them with poverty wages, and built in precarity.

According to Charmaine Keegan, a long-time PSW at TNG, and Membership Officer on the Local 7797 Executive: “Workers are not re-

spected. This is a precarious job. We need full-time hours for homecare PSWs”. Regarding the conditions workers face, she says “We face people with mental health issues, we face racism (from clients). There is a lack of interest workers’ health and safety”.

PSWs in homecare have received pandemic pay, but this will come to an end in June. The average wage rate is \$17.30/hour (in the unionized sector!), compared to \$22.69 in the Long Term Care sector. Local 7797 is demanding that the pandemic pay is made permanent, to bring baseline pay to \$25/hour for these frontline ‘heroes’ in homecare.

Xolisiwe (Connie) Ndlovu, President of Local 7797, and a PSW herself, sums up the workers’ demands: “Permanent Pandemic Pay and Decent Work, full-time work with benefits, full paid sick time, and equal pay for travel time and hands-on care”.

Many have accused the Ford government of “eldercide” during the Covid pandemic, regarding their treatment of seniors in Long Term Care. This is also true of homecare. The seniors that members of Local 7797 care for are themselves former workers, no longer productive in the eyes of the employing class, condemned to what have become death traps. A similar fate awaits those who care for them – unless we fight!



from page 1

The heavily graffitied and now toppled statue of Egerton Ryerson, one of the architects of the residential school system, on the grounds of the university in Toronto that bears his name became a popular place of protest and healing.

There have also been protests and memorials on the steps of many Catholic churches across the country.

In Charlottetown, the city council on June 1st voted unanimously to remove the statue of John A. Macdonald, the first prime minister of Canada who suppressed Métis and Plains Cree resistance to the expansion of the settler colonial state.

Every Indigenous family and community has had children taken by the residential schools, first begun by the Catholic Church in the 1840s, but funded by Canada after confederation. They were part of an attempt by the Canadian government to destroy Indigenous societies and culture which were obstacles to the settler-colonial state's "nation-building" project. Children were forcibly taken from families, beaten for speaking their Indigenous languages, and suffered malnutrition, physical violence, forced labour and horrific sexual abuse. The last school closed in 1996.

Though the revelation of this mass unmarked grave is only the tip of the iceberg. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, established in 2008 to record the history and impacts of residential schools, documented the deaths of over 6,000 students. Murray Sinclair, former chair of the TRC, said the number of children who died in these schools could be as high as 25,000 or more.

In 2015, the TRC published a six-volume report, including a 266-page volume called Missing Children and Unmarked Burials. As New Democrat MP Mumilaaq Qaqqaq stated, "This is not a discovery but

confirmation, Indigenous people have been talking about bodies buried at these schools for decades."

For many settlers, however, it can be shocking and surprising. The revelations shatter their mythologies of Canada as a "peacemaker"; as a tolerant, equal society; as a champion of human rights; as a friend of the underdog.

Socialists must be clear – Canada has always been a genocidal settler colonial state and continues to be so to this day.

The TRC described these institutions as perpetrating a "cultural genocide". But as Cree lawyer Eleanore Sunchild – who has represented many survivors of the schools – said after the story came out, "To me, mass graves indicate genocide. It's much more than cultural genocide. It's actually genocide. Indian children were killed. Indian children went missing. All of that truth will be revealed." Those who designed and ran the schools, the RCMP who stole Indigenous children from their mothers and communities and the Canadian and provincial governments who pursued these and other related policies are guilty of genocide.

In fact, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) argued in a report from June 2019 that Canada was guilty of genocide, not just in the past but in the present.

The forcible taking of children and their deaths in staggering numbers is widely being acknowledged as genocide. But the same logic is at work in the policies of the Trudeau government today. As Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada stated, "the government pattern of behaviour towards First Nations, Métis and Inuit children has not come very far from the attitude that allowed for residential schools to go in the first place".

Indigenous children are still being removed from their families in disproportionate numbers. According to 2016 census data, although Indigenous children made up only 7.7 percent of the total population, they represented more than 52 percent of children in foster care that year.



Justin Trudeau came to power in 2015 vowing that his Reconciliation mission was "to repair this most important relationship" with Indigenous peoples. But he has failed to solve the long-term water crises on 63 reserves, ignored the calls of the Grassy Narrows First Nation for justice and compensation for the mercury poisoning of their land and waters, and bought a pipeline (TMX) that is being built through unceded Secwepemc territory. The RCMP invasion of Wet'suwet'en territory, where they chainsawed through a sign that read "Reconciliation", created an indelible image of the reality of Canada. Signs made by writing "Reconciliation is Dead" on upside down Canadian flags were everywhere during the

#ShutDownCanada movement that closed rail lines, roads and ports in February of 2020.

During the pandemic, there have been renewed struggles for Indigenous sovereignty: ongoing Secwepemc struggles against the TMX pipeline; the Birch Narrows Dene First Nation in northern Saskatchewan blocking a road used for uranium mining; Attawapiskat, Fort Albany and Neskantaga First Nations declaring a moratorium on mining development in the Ring of Fire area in northern Ontario; a council of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy agreeing that no more development would be allowed on their land (sparked by the 1492 Landback Lane assertion of Haudenosaunee sovereignty in the face of a luxury home development on their land.); and the struggles of the Nuluujaat Land Guardians, a group of Inuit hunters who blocked a bridge and an airstrip at Baffinland's Mary's River Mine and were supported through an open letter written by mine workers.

The depth of feeling generated by the horrific revelation will only motivate more struggles to defend Indigenous sovereignty over their land. We can expect to see increased militancy in the coming months. The shared experience of the horrors of residential schools by Indigenous people across Turtle Island strengthens the connections between different struggles.

Showing support and solidarity for Indigenous people reeling from this news is important, including renewing the commitment to support Indigenous struggles for sovereignty. We need to be firm with people who argue this genocide is past history and insist that this is a struggle against ongoing genocide.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs said of the Trudeau government, "I think they're going to really be shocked at the backlash that will come after this

horrific revelation of the atrocities of the genocidal residential school system."

During the TRC process, a number of organizations implicated in the residential school horror, including the Anglican and United churches and the Canadian government made formal apologies for their roles in this disgusting treatment of Indigenous people. But the Catholic church has issued empty statements of sympathy for the victims. They have refused to accept responsibility for this history. Therefore, one of the demands is for a formal apology from the Catholic church. While this absolutely minimal demand should be supported, it should not distract us from the focus on the governments, police forces and courts that continue these genocidal policies to the current day.

We must demand that the government at a minimum keep their promises and provide: 1) clean water for first nations, 63 of which are on long-term boil water advisories; 2) forensic analysis of all residential school sites for mass graves of Indigenous children; 3) stop opposing residential school survivors in court; and 4) implement all 94 TRC calls to action.

Many Indigenous people will no longer wait for promised reforms to be fulfilled – they are demanding and taking #LandBack. Systems of genocide cannot be reformed, but must be overthrown, and this means confronting the profit motive that demands that Indigenous people be removed from the path of megaproject development.

Furthermore, building the links between Indigenous struggles for sovereignty over their traditional territories and the struggle of workers against the system – such as those that we saw at DeltaPort last year and Mary River mine this year – provides hope that capitalism's genocidal and rapacious logic can be stopped.

# Islamophobia and the Canadian state

by: **Sid Lacombe**

**T**he Islamophobic hate attack on a Muslim family in London is a result of decades of demonization of Muslims by politicians and the media in this country.

That demonization has led to a never ending series of racist attacks on Muslims from the Quebec City mosque shooting to the murder of Mohamed-Aslim Zafis to the ongoing attacks against Muslim places of worship like the downtown Masjid in Toronto.

Liberal pundits will decry the, "failure to act" on Islamophobia and politicians of all stripes will send condolences by tweet to try and absolve themselves of blame.

The reality is that this is not a failure to act - at every turn our politicians have stoked hatred against Muslims as a means to score cheap political points and to justify war abroad and suspension of civil liberties at home.

Conservative premier Doug Ford sent his thoughts and prayers to the victims. But he is to blame. When he champions the work of Islamophobic hate preacher Charles McVety, he is stoking this hatred.

Ford has been working to have McVety's Canadian Christian

college become an accredited university. McVety has used the college to rally the far right and Islamophobes even inviting people such as Dutch politician Geert Wilders to speak at the college. McVety once said that, "Islam is not just a religion, it's a political and cultural system as well and we know that Christians, Jews and Hindus don't have the same mandate for a hostile takeover." Doug Ford still publicly calls him a friend.

What is Ford nation supposed to think?

His dog whistles have only become louder during the pandemic. In an attempt to rally his flagging base, Ford has begun a new campaign to close the borders of Canada. The videos for the campaign tell Ontarians that there is a foreign threat to our health and safety. He ends the video saying that, "now is the time to act" to protect our children. This is a call for hate crimes.

The federal Conservatives are the blame as well. From the "barbaric cultural practices" hotline championed by Conservative candidates to the former leader, Stephen Harper calling Islamism the greatest threat to peace in the world, they have this blood on their hands.

And the Conservatives are not alone in whipping up this hatred. General Rick Hillier, who just recently finished a high profile stint as the coordinator of Ontario's vaccine rollout was initially a Liberal appointee. He famously told Canadians that our role in Afghanistan was to, "kill detestable murderers and scumbags".

maintained draconian laws that still curtail the freedoms of people like Mohamed Harkat and Hassan Diab who have committed no crimes other than being Muslim.

The demonization of Muslims has deep roots in Canada. It has been used to justify war in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Mali and is still the foundation



**Doug Ford poses with racist Faith Goldy and her proud boy supporters**

Both parties are also responsible for manufacturing phoney terror cases to maintain bloated budgets for the security industries. Liberals and Conservatives alike have

of our ruling classes support for Israeli aggression and apartheid. As politicians of all stripes line up to denounce Palestinians and to support Israel, the far right

recognizes this as a call to action against Muslims. Violent attacks on pro-Palestine activists was the result.

Our political leaders are not simply unable to stem the tide of hatred - they are actively encouraging it.

Islamophobia is used to justify imperial ambitions and the looting of resources abroad. Racism against Indigenous people is needed to justify resource extraction at home. Anti-black racism is used to justify bloated police budgets and anti-Asian racism is used to deflect attention from the failures of our political leaders during the pandemic.

In each case the goal is to use racism to cement the rule of the rich over our society. Corporate interest in exploitation of workers and pillage of the land needs racism to keep us divided.

This should not surprise us. The discovery of 215 graves of Indigenous children in Kamloops shows that this is a country that was born of racism and murder.

Racism is baked into the DNA of capitalism. We mourn the victims in London and Kamloops and Gaza and remember that they are all part of a larger picture of a system that values profits over human life.



# Socialism from below

*As the horrors of the capitalist system are laid bare, more and more people are looking for an alternative. But what does that alternative look like and how do we make it happen? Chantal Sundaram looks at different conceptions of socialism outlined in Hal Draper's classic, "The Two Souls of Socialism".*

## What is "socialism"?

**T**oday the word "socialism" has a new lease on life. From AOC and the revival of the term "democratic socialism" in the US to the recent election in Chile of self-declared socialists and communists to a constituent assembly to rewrite a constitution that was previously the work of neoliberal dictator Pinochet, the word is undeniably popular today.

The word "socialism" has in most eras filled people with hope. But during the Cold War there was a moment when it filled many with dread. The "models" on offer were the Soviet Union, and at best, Cuba. These were states that started with popular uprisings but then took a very different turn.

And later, in the neo-liberal era of the 90s, many left parties, including the NDP (at least in Ontario), banished the word "socialism" from their constitution or party program, for reasons that had nothing to do with Stalinism. It was the pressure of elections: even the notion of modest state control of the market was an embarrassment for those running to the middle.

But at the very same time there was an attempt to transform those stale traditional left electoral parties, or leave them entirely to form parties to the left: in Brazil, in Greece, in Germany, in Spain, in the UK, and more recently the push by Jeremy Corbyn inside the UK Labour Party, the DSA in the US, the Leap and Courage around the NDP, and Quebec solidaire. These are parties or challenges

within parties that demonstrate the need for movements from below to be reflected in elections. In some cases they reflect an attempt to transform traditional electoral choices fundamentally in connection with movements from below. But then they come against bourgeois state, be it parliamentary or other.

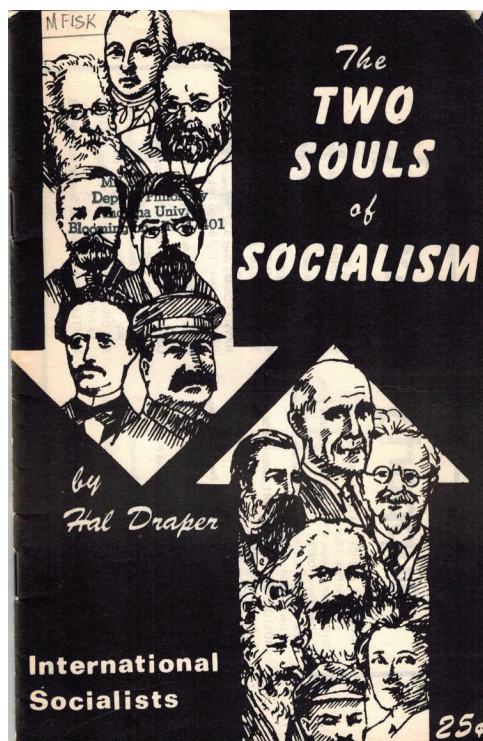
But to this day there is an attempt to rescue the word "socialism" from any kind of oppressive meaning and invest it with new relevance. And sometimes it was been without the word itself: the occupy movement made the idea of "them" and "us" stick powerfully in the popular imagination with the notion of the 1%.

The struggle to define what "socialism" means in the sense of not just what we are fighting against but what we are fighting for, emerges naturally in most movements for social change. But sometimes it takes a bit of reflection on exactly what kind of social change we want to fully define the word.

### **The two souls of socialism**

In 1960, the American socialist activist Hal Draper wrote an article called "The Two Souls of Socialism" about the very different claims to the word "socialism." Hal Draper was influential in the Berkeley free speech movement but also in a revolutionary socialist

organization active in the 60s that was trying to make sense for young people active in resistance movements of the limited choices on offer in the name of "socialism."



He divided those choices in two basic camps: "socialism from above" and "socialism from below," and argued they were divergent and ultimately competing.

The distinction between "from above" and "from below" made sense at the time in terms of the

way that both Stalinist parties and left electoral parties laid claim to that word without its full substance. It still does, as many try to figure out their relationship to the NDP, the DSA in the US,

Quebec solidaire in Quebec, and to other left electoral parties.

Draper's pamphlet makes the case that no matter how different the two are, the Stalinist tradition and the electoral tradition of social democracy bear a central similarity: they deny the agency of the majority over the authority of the few. The main difference is history: Stalinism emerged from counter-revolution against a genuine attempt at socialism from below in Russia, and left electoral parties like the NDP took shape as a diversion of the workers' movement exclusively towards the goal of winning elections.

Both equate socialism with the state, regardless of who controls that state - all its mechanics beyond the few elected positions, and whose interests it serves. The Stalinist state required violence, the election

strategy requires redirection of energies and expectations towards elections rather than more radical social change. In the global south there were many places where Communist parties reinvented themselves as social democratic parties, seeking to gain access to the existing state structures.

Many excellent working-class and student militants committed and continue to commit themselves to labour parties and Communist parties around the world, because of a genuine commitment to movements from below. And within and around those parties, the notion of power from below continues to be produced through movements like BLM and Land Back, and movements for democracy and workers rights from Palestine to Columbia to Indian farm workers to Chile: the dynamics of democratic movements for social change keep the option of socialism from below alive.

As Draper wrote: "the recurrence of revolutionary upheavals and social disturbances, defined precisely by the intrusion onto the historical stage of previous inactive masses and characteristic of periods when basic social change is on the agenda, is just as "normal" in history as the intervening periods of conservatism."

Draper's work helps put into context the limited choices available to those who seek social change, and celebrates the movements from below that constantly recur and pose the fundamental question of where real change comes from:

"That struggle from below has never been stopped by the theories from above, and it has changed the world time and again."

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**“Since the beginning of society, there has been no end of theories “proving” that tyranny is inevitable and that freedom-in-democracy is impossible; there is no more convenient ideology for a ruling class and its intellectual flunkies. These are self-fulfilling predictions, since they remain true only as long as they are taken to be true. In the last analysis, the only way of proving them false is in the struggle itself. That struggle from below has never been stopped by the theories from above, and it has changed the world time and again. To choose any of the forms of Socialism-from-Above is to look back to the old world, to the “old crap.” To choose the road of Socialism-from-Below is to affirm the beginning of a new world.”**

**- The Two Souls of Socialism**

#### **How do we not just change but transform?**

Draper documents that many debates that occurred between socialists in the early twentieth century were about the end goal. A major debate within the socialist movement in Germany before WWI about whether or not the capitalist state could be reformed to serve the interests of workers devolved into a debate over whether or not workers' parties should support their own national state in an imperialist war. This was a turning point over the claim to the word “socialism,” at least in Europe.

The “socialism from above” side won that debate, and it was a fundamental denial of the real Marxist tradition of workers power from below, which had been held by many members of socialist parties until that time. The attempt of this “from above” strategy during the Weimar Republic gave way to the victory of fascism in Germany. It was the result of both this turning away from socialism from below and the terrible influence of Stalinism in causing many socialist fighters to look up to states they believed were socialist to intervene instead of looking to their own power to stop the rise of fascism.

But every historical moment also produces many who look to socialism from below with uncompromising faith in the self-activity of the working class. In Germany at this turning point, it was leaders like Rosa Luxemburg:

“The socialist system of society should only be, and can only be, an historical product, born out of the

school of its own experiences, born in the course of its realization, as a result of the developments of living history...it is clear that socialism by its very nature cannot be decreed or introduced...the negative, the tearing down, can be decreed; the building up, the positive, cannot. New Territory. A thousand problems. Only experience is capable of correcting and opening new ways.”

#### **How can Socialism from Below win?**

The question of socialism from below is not only about this turning point in Western history: it is global. It is about a goal, and being able to argue for it, but more fundamentally about how it can be won on a mass scale. Draper here echoes many fighters for the concept of socialism from below, from Marx, Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, but also Fred Hampton of the Black Panthers, and Indigenous Marxists like Howard Adams and many others:

How does a people or a class become fit to rule in their own name? Only by fighting to do so. Only by waging their struggle against oppression – oppression by those who tell them they are unfit to govern. Only by fighting for democratic power do they educate themselves and raise themselves up to the level of being able to wield that power. There has never been any other way for any class.

But the independence of those who have become fit to rule in their own name, collectively with each other, does depend on their

ability to speak in their own name. Especially when they speak as a class that can liberate human society. The Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky put it like this: “the workers' movement from below is the steam that powers the piston of a genuine workers' party with locomotive energy. A genuine workers' party that brings together those who are generating power from below prevents the steam from dissipating and losing its power, and also does not redirect that power towards chasing election for their own sake.

But the piston is a tool: a party from below may adopt strategies around elections to maximize the power of the masses, but never to put itself above the movement from below. The goal is the self-activity of the masses of the working people themselves.”

There are two “souls” of socialism, two roads that lead in fundamentally different directions. One entrenches the idea that an elite will set us free through the state, and the other opens us up to the idea that our own power can set us free. There are millions around the globe who set out thinking this is the same road, with the same goal, for the best of reasons.

Ultimately, revolutionary organization against capitalism and its state structures is essential. But the mass instinct for some kind of socialism from below that recurs shows the possibility for that ultimate faith in socialism from below to become reality.



**Workers walking the line at Rexplas in Toronto**

## **Workers are fighting back!**

by: **Carolyn Egan**

**T**hirty five workers, members of United Steelworkers Local 8300 in Toronto, have been on strike since April 26th fighting against a greedy employer who they refer to as a “pandemic profiteer”. The primarily immigrant women workers held up trucks for two and a half weeks before an injunction came down. Not one got through their line.

Richards Packaging is the parent company and has profited from the pandemic with a 21% increase in revenue directly related to Covid. That equates to \$68 million but it has offered its workers 0%-1%-1%-1% over 4 years. Many of these strikers have worked at the plant 25, 30 and 35 years, most making little over minimum wage.

They went to work every day through the pandemic risking their health, and are getting next to nothing in return. The work is hard and they do twelve hour shifts. There was Covid in the work place and these workers, deemed

essential, were never given any recognition for their hard work that produced these profits. Yet the company rewarded executives with big bonuses that increased by 150% in 2020.

This speaks to the contempt that so many corporations are showing to their workers during Covid and it will only increase as we see case counts beginning to go down and vaccinations are on the rise. What is happening at Rexplas puts a magnifying glass on the injustice and inequality that has always existed in our society and has increased during the pandemic. The most vulnerable workers, low wage, racialized women are continuing to bear the brunt of employers attacks.

We are seeing everywhere management going on the offensive in smaller workplaces such as Rexplas or the Wine Rack where members of Service

Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 2 have gone out on strike over the basic union concept of seniority in shift assignments. The same union struck and won a first contract with Tropicana Community Services a few months ago.

But it is also happening in large multinationals. On June 1st 2,600 Steelworkers walked off the job in Sudbury, Ontario where Valle Canada is trying to force major concessions on benefits and pensions. The workers rejected a tentative agreement by 70% with 87% of the members voting. The last time this local struck was on July 13, 2009 and the members stayed on the line until July 8, 2010. It is said to be one of the longest strikes in Canadian history.

On May 12 almost 100% of the 2,500 Quebec Steelworkers working for ArcelorMittal on the north shore of the St. Lawrence, rejected the company's final offer

and went on strike over pensions, wages and a string of broken commitments. The company is making huge profits and is the

largest steel company in the world. It is refusing to negotiate a collective agreement that reflects the just demands of the strikers. Other workers have been joining the picket lines bringing solidarity and encouragement. Support rallies have been held in Longueuil near Montreal at the company's offices.

These striking workers in Quebec and Ontario are showing the way forward against the employers' offensives. Corporations are trying to make workers pay for the crises that we have been living through. Working people in all our diversity have suffered enough. It is time to make the corporations pay. We have to provide solidarity to these strikers and follow their lead in mounting a strong fight back against attacks. We are seeing what employers have in store for us and we have to stop them in their tracks.





# Capitalist laws and the climate movement

by: **Brian Champ**

**R**ecently, climate justice activists have been enthused by some major developments where mainstream institutions connected to centres of power have sought to curtail the operations of the oil and gas sector to meet climate goals. The International Energy Agency (IEA) released a report in May that argued for a halt to new oil and gas production and, in January, Dutch courts ruled for damages against Royal Dutch Shell for their operations in the Niger delta and in May a court ruling mandated that they abide by the carbon emissions reduction commitments from the Paris Accord. These are milestones that are surely indicative of the reach of the climate movement and the severity of the crisis and further put the fossil fuel industry on notice. Unfortunately, the courts and institutions like the IEA cannot deliver the transformation we need – the power for this can only come from the convergence of the grassroots movements for Indigenous sovereignty, climate justice and workers fighting for a livable future.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) was founded in 1974 as a reaction to the oil crisis precipitated by the 1973 OPEC oil embargo. Canada was a founding member. The main requirement for membership was having a 90-day surplus supply in order to keep the oil flowing when other member nations experienced supply issues. Their collective emergency response system mechanism has been activated 3 times as a “stabilizing influence on markets and the global economy”.

The close connection between US energy policy, US foreign policy and the IEA can be seen in its beginnings, and for most of its existence it has been a conservative organization, but more recently they have had to respond to the burgeoning climate movement, however contradictorily.

In 2011, the world energy outlook hailed a coming “golden age of gas” even as the reports urged energy transition to renewables in order to decouple growth from carbon emissions.

In contrast, their special report released on May 18th of this year entitled “Net Zero by 2050” hit the world media like a bombshell because of its call to end all new investments in oil and gas “from now”, calling for a “rapid shift away from fossil fuels” and “huge declines in the use of coal, oil and gas” to reach net zero. Practical steps recommended include “halting sales of new internal combustion engine passenger cars by 2035, and phasing out all unabated coal and oil power plants by 2040.”

Furthermore, their analysis identifies that “the path to net-zero emissions is narrow and staying on it requires the massive deployment of all available clean energy technologies” by 2030. They call for clean energy investment to more than triple to \$4 Billion (US) by then. For such a conservative organization consisting of oil producing countries to write this report demonstrates the growing severity of the climate crisis as new thresholds are crossed almost routinely and the reach of the global climate justice movement that is creating pressure for action.

But it would be a mistake to see this as an indication that leaders will act responsibly and implement effective programs to meet the immense challenges. One of the key focuses of the IEA is a vision of decoupling economic growth from emissions which their reports from 2014 and 2015 see as a real phenomenon, but emissions that had fallen slightly in that time period have risen again showing that this decoupling goal is far from straightforward.

## Capitalism: addicted to oil

But the transition will not happen quickly enough if it is left to market forces and incentives to shift investment from carbon intensive to zero emissions energy. Fossil fuel companies will not willingly give up their infrastructure investments as long as there is a market for their products, and already invested public infrastructure acts as subsidies to these corporations. As long as profits can be made, investment will flow in and the oil will keep flowing.

In addition, their recommendation of



Shell has left a trail of destruction in Nigeria

photo: Ucheke, CC BY-SA 4.0

phasing out “unabated” coal and oil power plants by 2040 displays the reluctance to truly embrace an energy transition, because this implies the continued burning of these fuels could continue with the application of carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) technology which are unproven at the scales that would be necessary. CCS solutions require “suitable geological formations” for the sequestered carbon to be contained, but this would necessarily involve further encroachments on Indigenous sovereignty to be guinea pigs in this experimental and unproven technology.

We also have to challenge the idea of “growth economies” as in any way sustainable. The climate crisis does not exist in a vacuum, but is part of a planetary crisis that includes; a high species extinction rate; chemical pollution of land, water and skies; ocean acidification; freshwater consumption; nitrogen and phosphorus pollution; and more. Even if all energy production was converted to be zero carbon, a continually growing economy would continue to overwhelm the remaining planetary ecological limits.

But what about the Dutch appeals court decision in January that ordered Royal Dutch

Shell pay compensation for spills and another court decision in May holding the company accountable to Paris Agreement emissions targets? The compensation case had been brought forward by Nigerian farmers with the help of Friends of the Earth in 2008:

“Three of the four Nigerian plaintiffs and their fellow villagers must now be compensated for the damage caused and Shell must ensure that there is a leakage detection system in the pipelines in Nigeria. It is the first time that a court has held Dutch transnational corporation accountable for its duty of care abroad.”

This is to be applauded as it sets precedence on the liability of parent companies for their operations abroad, where the respective legal systems are compatible. The terms of the decision, however, do not challenge the continuing flow of oil and it remains to be seen if the penalties will be set high enough to make a difference to the farmers or deter companies from continued negligence. Shell will appeal on the basis that the spills were caused by

“sabotage” which the court ruled they had not proved beyond reasonable doubt.

In May another court ruled that Royal Dutch Shell and their suppliers must not only comply with the law, but also adhere to global climate commitments as well and therefore must accelerate their emissions reductions plans. This should be celebrated as undermining the legitimacy of the fossil fuel extraction industry, but this decision will surely be appealed and likely overturned by a higher court.

These court rulings and others do serve to further encircle corporations by providing legal penalties and mandating monitoring equipment that place their operations under greater scrutiny.

Unfortunately, legal systems were developed mainly to regulate private property which means it is an uneven playing field dominated by those with wealth and influence and any court rulings can only mitigate the property rights of corporations through regulations but cannot challenge these rights outright. Only collective action can do that.

Environmental destruction is built right into capitalism because when workers sell their labour power for a wage, they are alienated

not only from control over the product of their labour, whether it be an object or service, but also from control over the production process. These reins are in the hands of the capitalist. The boss cannot, however, exercise this control any way they like: the bitter struggle between bosses competing in the market acts as an alien power pushing them to maximize profits in order to accumulate more capital than their competitors. And they are forced to engage in an up and down level of conflict with their workers over wages and working conditions to extract as much surplus value during production as they can. In this way, alienation is a universal feature of capitalism, though it is experienced much differently by capitalists and workers.

## Alienation and nature

Marx argued there were additional “moments” of alienation: of workers from each other; of workers from the natural world; of humans from their “species-being” – the conscious and free application of labour to transform the natural world in order to meet our needs.

The primacy of the drive for profit overrides all other considerations, including deleterious labour conditions, violations of human rights and the destruction of the environment. Reinforcing oppressive ideas such as racism, sexism and anti-LGBTQ+ oppression serves to atomize resistance to worsening working conditions and lower wages.

For Marx, the labour process “is the universal condition for the metabolic interaction between [humans] and nature, the everlasting nature-imposed condition of human existence.” For Marx, this was the key to human nature. This human nature is exemplified by the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, who developed modes of social organization over thousands of years centred around sustaining human, plant and animal life on their lands.

He argued further that capitalist production “produces conditions that provoke an irreparable rift in the interdependent process of social metabolism, a metabolism prescribed by the natural laws of life itself.”

This “metabolic rift” lies behind the destruction of the environment and the ongoing genocide of Indigenous peoples. We need to heal this rift on a global scale before climate catastrophe advances too far. The purpose of the Unist’ot’en camp on Wet’suwet’en land in the path of the CGL pipeline is to “Heal the People, Heal the Land”. We need to connect these assertions of Indigenous sovereignty that aim to heal this rift with the collective power of workers to challenge the rule of capital at the point of production.

## 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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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

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**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.

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# Racism, colonialism and murder

Raoul Peck's *Exterminate all the Brutes* is a lesson in the brutal history of capitalism

by: **Faline Bobier**

This year's Oscars was the least-viewed Academy Awards telecast on record in the United States, with 10.4 million viewers. Not surprising – given the year we have just experienced. One of the last things on people's minds in this year of Covid is probably a pointless ceremony highlighting excess and awarding prizes to often irrelevant films, that are chosen by a group of still mostly white old men.

So, if you didn't watch the Oscars ceremony you didn't miss much. However, the content, if not the form, of this year's event was somewhat remarkable.

Many of the films nominated reflected the social turmoil we have been living through, by highlighting marginalized or deliberately ignored struggles and stories.

Daniel Kaluuya, the British actor who portrayed Chairman Fred Hampton of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party who was murdered by police and FBI agents in 1969 at the age of 21, won best supporting actor. Judas and the Black Messiah is a movie that highlights the history of the Panthers and shows clearly the role of the police and the state in exterminating the threat to white supremacy that the Panthers represented.

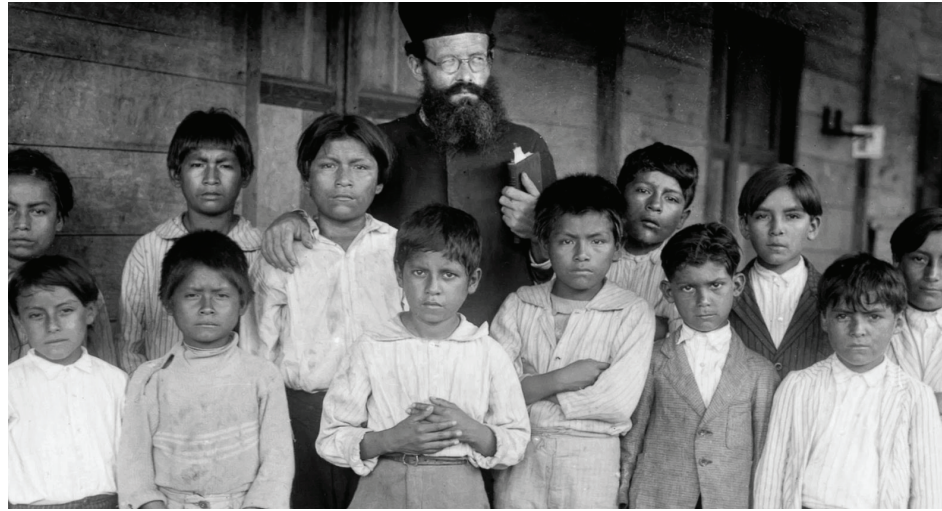
Similarly, the Oscars gave the nod to movies like One night in Miami, which highlights a historic (but fictional) meeting between Muhammad Ali, Malcolm X, Sam Cooke and football giant Jim Brown and directed by Black American actor and first-time director Regina King. Or Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, a 2020 American drama, based on the play of the same name by August Wilson, which focusses on Ma Rainey, an influential blues singer, and dramatizes a turbulent recording session in 1920s Chicago.

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom features amazing Black actors such as Viola Davis and Chadwick Boseman, the recently deceased actor who broke through as one of the first Black superheroes in Black Panther.

Or, another of the movies nominated, Spike Lee's film Da Five Bloods, which is streaming on Netflix and features great performances, including that of Delroy Lindo. Da Five Bloods deals with the return of four Black friends to Vietnam 50 years later, to reclaim their fallen comrade, also played by Chadwick Boseman. It's an exploration of how the past plays into the present and of the layers of racism uncovered by the conflict in Vietnam, both the racism faced by Black soldiers inside the country that sent them to kill and die in record numbers and the anti-Asian racism that was the backdrop to the killing machine these soldiers were a part of.

In the past year, which saw the eruption of BLM on the streets of the US and across the world, there have also been very public manifestations of violence and racism against Asian populations in North America and elsewhere. Fitting then, that Korean actor, Youn Yuh-jung, took the best supporting actress trophy for her role in Minari, the story of a Korean immigrant family struggling to survive and to stay together.

In this era of attacks on immigrants and the brutal separation of family members we saw under the Trump administration, it's a heroic feat for this family to survive and stay connected to each other. Minari was written and directed by Lee Isaac Chung and is a semi-autobiographical take on Chung's upbringing, featuring a family



of South Korean immigrants who try to make it in rural United States during the 1980s.

One of the big differences this year, of course, is that we haven't been able to see most (or any) of these movies on the big screen. But it feels like there has been an explosion of content, which still must be paid for by subscribing to various streaming services. It's ironic, for example, that Judas and the Black Messiah has only been available for purchase at \$25.00 a viewing.

That being said, if you are able to watch any of these films on streaming services, or if they become available on accessible sites, such as public library free viewing platforms, they represent an engagement with realities that have long been obscured, ignored, vilified or simply not seen.

Which brings me to the masterful four-part documentary by Haitian filmmaker Raoul Peck: Exterminate all the brutes, available on HBO. It may or may not be nominated for an Oscar next year but that's really beside the point. As Peck says in the documentary voice-over, which he does himself: "The existence of this film is a miracle." A miracle that he was able to make it at all because it is such a damning and overarching indictment of 500 years of colonialism and genocide.

It seems clear from Peck's previous films – notably I am not your Negro, the 2016 documentary about Black American writer James Baldwin and the 2017 feature film The Young Karl Marx, a historical drama about the meeting of Marx & Engels up to their publication of The Communist Manifesto – that Peck is passionately committed to the re-telling of history from the side of its victims and not at all interested in pedalling the lies of the victors.

I think this is one of the reasons he chose to do the narration for the film – he speaks at one point about more often trying to stand outside his films, to remain 'neutral', but that for this project it seemed necessary to declare himself a part of the history he is relating.

The legacy of imperialism in his own life lead his family to flee Haiti under the Western-backed Duvalier dictatorship to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from which the Belgians had finally left after independence. He refers in the documentary to coming from that 'shithole country', so-called by former US President Donald Trump.

The titles of the 4 parts of his Exterminate all the brutes give a good sense of the project: Part 1: The disturbing confidence of ignorance; Part 2: Who the F\*\*\* is Columbus?; Part 3: Killing at a distance and Part 4: The bright colors of

fascism.

The sheer scope of the work Peck has taken on is overwhelming and also irrefutable. He uses dramatization of actual historical events, snippets from Hollywood movies, documentary footage from his own life and from horrific episodes in the history of colonialism and imperialism to give us the damning picture of the legacy of so-called civilisation.

The title of the documentary comes originally from the book of Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad. It's the phrase Kurz uses when he decides that his original effort to 'civilize' the Africans is for naught and decides it's better to 'exterminate all the brutes'. It's obviously a more apt description of the colonizers themselves, as Peck so ably demonstrates.

As Peck repeats several times throughout, "It's not knowledge that is lacking. At all times it has been profitable to suppress such knowledge."

Peck gives us the short, succinct version of the history he will reveal across his four-part documentary: "Three words that summarize the whole history of humanity: civilisation, colonisation, extermination."

This willful ignorance is on display, particularly when it comes to the genocide of whole populations, as the Indigenous inhabitants of the Americas. At one point, we

see former President Barack Obama claiming, 'America was not a colonial power.' Peck wryly disagrees, "Well, it was actually."

Near the end of the documentary Peck narrates over pictures of Black Elk and other Indigenous people murdered at Wounded Knee: "Black Elk, Holy Man of the Oglala Lakota people, said after the Wounded Knee massacre, I didn't know then how much was ended. When I look back now from this high hill of my old age I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch. As plain as when I saw them with eyes still young. And I can see that something else died there in the bloody mud and was buried in the blizzard. A people's dream died there. It was a beautiful dream. The nation's circle is broken and scattered. There is no centre any longer and the sacred tree is dead. A people's dream died there."

According to Peck, "What we lack is the courage to understand what we know and to draw conclusions. We know now when race, colour and blood became institutionalized for the first time. Ultimately it was about gaining wealth and power through annihilation – the birth of white supremacy – the forced deportation of 10 million Africans, the genocide of Indigenous people in the US, the Holocaust."

In other words, it wasn't a question of Europeans deciding that Blacks or Indigenous people were inferior and then setting out to annihilate whole civilisations. It was about the birth of capitalism and the search for wealth that lead to the slave trade and to a whole elaborate justification for the creation of wealth for the minority at the expense of the vast majority.

"We came from a very specific history. Civilisation is basically embedded in capitalist society."

The colonisers created a new concept – the concept of discovery – planting a flag and saying we discovered this land – at the time of Columbus there were over 100 million people living in the continent he 'discovered'. What proceeded was the extermination of 90% of that population.

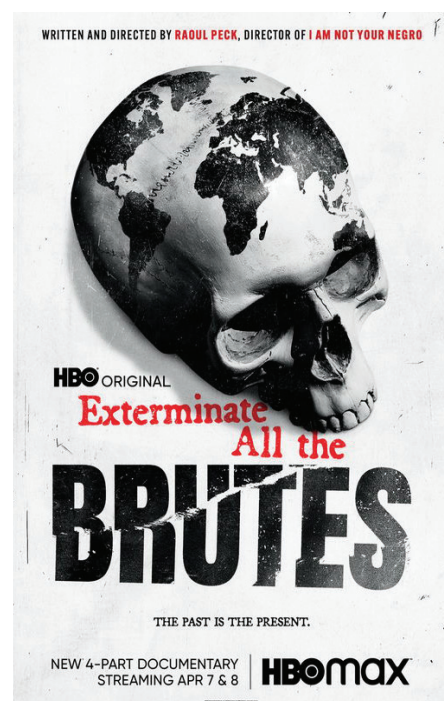
Again, according to Peck, "The past is not really past. The past has a future that we can't anticipate. We are accustomed to not seeing history as a continuity."

The invaluable thing that Peck does in Exterminate all the brutes is to show us this history and how we are all connected to it and responsible for creating a different future.

In an interview on Democracy Now Peck talked about how he hoped his film could be of use: "I believe the process of learning the truth – every school, every university should watch the film and discuss it – you need to know your own history – it's not about accusation – it's about understanding your history – you can't understand why police are still killing Black kids, women today. We need to do our homework."

He chooses to end the film with an aerial view of Auschwitz II-Birkenau and the sound of crowds chanting, No justice! No peace! and 'Don't let our planet die!', as well as the climate activist Greta Thunberg, "We still haven't seen anything yet. This is only the beginning of the beginning."

Which can be taken two ways. We either continue in the same ignorance and refusal to see the injustice all around us or we decide to act collectively to end the racism and greed of the 'pornographic rich' Peck describes in his powerful documentary.





## More lies from the Ford government on education

by: Paula Greenberg

**T**he announcement by the Ford government about Ontario schools is incredibly frustrating and aggravating for educators, parents and students. Online learning will continue until the end of June and this is not what any of us want. We want to be back in the classroom but to be safe for our students, our community and ourselves. It is apparent that asking for smaller class sizes, proper ventilation and rapid COVID19 testing is too much of an ask for the Ford government. But by now, this last minute decision whether to open schools or not is too little too late considering there are only 18 days left of the school year.

The lies and double-speak that the Ford government has spun about education is why we are in this situation. Over the past year, Ford, Lecce and Dr. Williams refused to listen to the advice and recommendations given to them from various health and education experts. Calls for a safe return to school began as early as June 2020. Over the summer, the Ontario Government promised to have a plan



in early August. As educators waited with baited breath, the lacklustre plan was delivered only days before re-opening, with none of the key recommendations considered.

Individual school boards and health units were left scrambling to come up with plans to

reduce the spread and what to do if there was an outbreak. With no leadership, the education sector in Ontario was left to fend for itself.

As cases rose in October, Lecce assured the public that schools were not a source of spread and surely students were getting sick from the

community. As we know now, this was a lie and there was no conclusive data to back-up Lecce's claim. The asymptomatic testing that occurred was only for a small group of students and staff, was completely voluntary and gave an incomplete picture of COVID19 in schools. Over the past 10 months, educators and students dealt with constant yo-yo-ing of class and school closures. None of this was suitable for the mental health of students and staff. All of this spin doctoring was to save a buck and gut the education system by \$1 Billion. And here we are today.

To take anything from this experience, on-line learning doesn't work for the vast majority of students. We need a well funded learning environment that caters to the needs of the children. That also includes proper funding for children's mental health regardless of a pandemic. If you're angry, don't direct it at educators. We've lost so much and we're angry too. Advocate for a safe September and this time we will make our voices heard.

Paula Greenberg is an Educational Assistant in Hamilton, Ontario

## Fearless land defenders fight to protect old growth forest

by: Bradley Hughes

**F**or ten months the Rainforest Flying Squad has been camped out in the old growth forest near Fairy Creek in the traditional, ancestral and unceded lands of the Pacheedaht nation. They have been invited to these lands by Pacheedaht elder Bill Jones. These lands are located on the south-west of what is currently called Vancouver Island, in so-called British Columbia.

Old growth forests in BC have been so extensively logged that only 2.7% remains standing. This is an area of less than 400,000 hectares. So far, the BCNDP has deferred logging only in 1% of what remains. If they are not forced to do more, soon more than 99.9% of old growth forests will be gone. Some of those trees are over 800 years old. Their inaction has been even more galling because they published a report on old growth forest before the election and then ran on a platform that included a promise to implement all of the report's recommendations. One of those recommendations was a deferral on logging old growth forests.

This is where the bravery and ingenuity of hundreds of land defenders might save us. Camps and tree-sits are spread through dozens of spots in the forests around Fairy Creek. Land defenders have built barricades across roads, sometime building new ones as the RCMP struggle to remove others. They have cemented and chained themselves to various objects forcing the cops to spend hours extricating them to make an arrest. Solidarity rallies across the province at cabinet ministers' constituency offices have mobilized thousands more. The federal NDP struggles with whether

it is a party of protest or of power, but the BCNDP has no such struggle, they use their power to crush protests.

Like all communities the Pacheedaht do not have unanimity on all issues. While some members of the nation have been part of the blockades, the province has been hiding behind an agreement between the Pacheedaht

ay-aht nations. He said, "those consultations have to take place. If we were to arbitrarily put deferrals in place there, that would be a return to the colonialism that we have so graphically been brought back to as a result of issues in Kamloops this week. I'm not prepared to do that."

The need to consult with Indigenous nations



First Nation and the Teal-Jones logging company to avoid taking action. Last week, Premier Horgan tried to equate putting a hold on old growth logging with the deaths and burials in unmarked graves of Indigenous child prisoners in Canada's residential schools. He said deferrals on logging require consultations with the Pacheedaht, Ditidaht and the Huu-

wasn't an issue both times the NDP approved continuing the Site C dam construction, or when they sent the RCMP in to remove Indigenous land defenders from Wet'suwet'en nation. It looks like Indigenous rights only matter in BC when they can be used to defend corporate profits.

Fortunately Premier Horgan's attempt to

pit land defenders against Indigenous nations has failed. A few days after his comments, Ditidaht, Huu-ay-aht, and Pacheedaht formally gave notice to the Province of B.C. to defer old-growth logging for two years in the Fairy Creek and the Central Walbran areas while the Nations prepare their plans. This is in addition to the decision of Huu-ay-aht First Nations to defer logging of its treaty lands. "Our three Nations look forward to building a future based on respectful nation-to-nation relationships with other governments that are informed by Indigenous history, Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous rights, and Indigenous priorities," said Chief Councillor of the Pacheedaht First Nation Jeff Jones. "We ask that all peoples both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learn and move forward together and that by working together we can realize a future that is fair, just, and equitable."

Earlier this year, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, suggested how these conflicts could be resolved, "What governments and corporations need to do is to take a step back and view old growth forests not as commercialized products to be harvested and sold, but as the bedrock foundations of a healthy, biodiverse environment that First Nations have been stewards over since time immemorial. Old growth forests help sustain our livelihoods and possess incalculable cultural and spiritual value that is far from pecuniary"

The NDP government can be defeated on this issue. They all remember losing the fight over Clayoquot sound in the 1990s. The forests can be saved. Join the blockades, or join local actions, and/or to donate to the Rainforest Flying Squad: [laststandforforests.com](http://laststandforforests.com)