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TRUDEAU AND KENNEY CLIMATE CRIMINALS



Justin Trudeau's election gamble has not paid off. He called an election hoping that he could secure a majority but was left with roughly the same number of seats as before the writ was dropped.

Things did not work out any better for the other parties.

The Conservatives grew slightly but remain fraught with divisions. The Conservative coalition built by the likes of Stephen Harper has never reconciled the far right fringe and the need for more moderate policy and tone required to get elected in urban ridings.

The NDP, once again, ran a soft campaign that failed to distinguish them from the Liberals on many policy planks. They

talked about taxing the rich but moderated the position by saying that they would only tax the "ultra-rich". They lacked the kind of ambitious plan that would have channeled the anger that many working people feel at the crisis of capitalism that we are facing.

Unfortunately, the real winner in the election - despite not gaining a seat was the far-right People's Party (PPC). They increased their share of the vote significantly with almost a million people voting for their vile and racist policies. This is the real legacy of the election and one that we will be dealing with for years to come.

They were the party that was able to tap into the anger and discontent of the inept COVID

responses from our political leaders. The anti-vaxx/anti-mask movement coalesced around the PPC and gave them an organizing boost.

And throughout the election there was little for the left to rally around. Those concerned about the climate had little choice. Indigenous issues came up rarely and were confined to discussion about water on reserves with no discussion of the continued pillaging of Indigenous land by fossil fuel corporations and mining.

Cost of living - a key issue for most voters according to the polls will continue to be an issue as the big business friendly Liberals will keep promising much and delivering little.

In this issue of the *Socialist Worker* we look

at the issues that should have been part of the debate but were absent from the campaign. From the climate to military spending to the rise of racism, we have covered the issues with analysis and calls to action to join in the movements on the ground to stop the multiple crises of capitalism.

Elections provide very few opportunities for real change. All the parties have to agree to the parameters set up by capitalism and have little chance of making a difference in favour of working people. It is the movements which provide the avenue for changing the political terrain. Join us and build a socialist movement that can end this rotten system and build a new world where people and the planet come first.

Where were First Nations voices in the election? Drowned out by Trudeau, ignored by O’Toole

by: **Kim McAuley**

In June, Mumilaq Qaqqaq – Inuit MP (NDP) quit parliament and delivered a searing speech about the house of Trudeau: “During my time in this chamber, I have heard so many pretty words like reconciliation, diversity and inclusion. I have been called courageous, brave, and strong by people outside of my party. But let me be honest — brutally honest — nice words, with no action, hurt when they are uttered by those with power.” (Qaqqaq was supportive of and supported by her NDP colleagues.)

The day before the election, as reported by APTN, Trudeau went to a pub in Winnipeg to bolster support for himself and Liberal incumbent in Saint Boniface-Saint Vital - Dan Vandal, who is Métis - and met with leaders from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and Southern Chiefs Association and Manitoba Métis Federation. “When we took office there were 105 long-term boil water advisories. We have now lifted 118 of them across the country and we have a concrete plan and funding and a project team to end all of them.” It was hollow and pathetic and none of the Indigenous leaders spoke to APTN News about the election or the event.

TRC recommendations ignored

It was an insulting end note to a campaign devoid of consultation with other First Nations leaders;

a government that implemented (fully) less than 15 of the 94 Calls to Action outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; and a faint echo of his speech to the Assembly of First Nations, Special Chiefs Assembly, less than two months after his election win in 2015. At that time he stated: “It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with First Nations Peoples. One that understands that the constitutionally guaranteed rights of First Nations in Canada are not an inconvenience but rather a sacred obligation. One that is based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership. One that is guided by the spirit and intent of the original treaty relationship; one that respects inherent rights, treaties and jurisdictions; and one that respects the decisions of our courts. I know that renewing our relationship is an ambitious goal, but I am equally certain that it is one we can, and will, achieve if we work together. This is a responsibility I take seriously, and I have instructed my government to do the same. In the mandate letters given to govern-



ment ministers, my expectations were clear. I told them that no relationship is more important to me and to Canada than the one with First Nations, the Metis Nation, and Inuit Peoples. Today, I give you my word that we will renew and respect that relationship. We will work with you to rebuild trust. We will tell the truth. When we make mistakes – as all governments do – we will

acknowledge our mistakes and learn from them. And we will work together with First Nations as full partners, inspired by the values of mutual respect, sharing and caring.”

In October, 2019, Leilani Farha - the UN’s special rapporteur on adequate housing - released a scathing report outlining that Canada

is failing to provide Indigenous communities with proper housing and noting that nearly 5,500 homes on Manitoba First Nations reserves either require major renovations or need to be replaced entirely.

Instead, the government spent \$90,000 a day - a total of \$16.3 million - between July, 2020 and January, 2021 to police Landback – protecting 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.

By calling the election (which cost over \$600 million) Trudeau shut down the

national discourse about Canada’s genocide and the over 4,000 indigenous children found in mass graves on grounds of residential “schools” – rather, prisons of assimilation and eradication.

At the end of August, the Native Women’s Association of Canada demanded to know why a non-in-

digenous male was appointed - by Liberal Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous Affairs - as the head of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Secretariat.

On September 16, Brock Pitawanakwat of the Yellowhead Institute reported that “AFN National Chief RoseAnne Archibald expressed her disappointment that none of the federal parties reached out to her prior to the election for input on their parties’ policies. The AFN served notice to the federal parties of its five priorities with its election document, “The Healing Path Forward: 2021 Federal Election Priorities for First Nations and Canada.”

On the day of the election, Six Nations kicked the elections Canada Poll off their land – please read the article on Turtle Island News – it’s key to understanding some of the issues inherent here.

Many other Indigenous women spoke publicly about the problems with the election, the government lack of consultation or collaboration with First Nations and the need for systemic change, including Pam Palmater, Cindy Blackstock, Courtney Skye, Riley Yesno, Susan Aglukark, Rhonda Martin, former Liberal Minister of Justice and Attorney General Jody Wilson-Raybould and people from Idle No More. All valuable reading for us as allies and settlers, and for those elected who want to make true reconciliation a reality.

Vaccine mandate is no panacea: Workers must fight for safe workplaces

by: **Pam Johnson**

With Covid cases on the rise and schools already closing due to outbreaks, it is clear that vaccine mandates will not be enough to stop the 4th wave of the pandemic.

The governments and employers imposing vaccine mandates are the very same ones that have refused, through the entire eighteen months of the pandemic, to take the necessary measures to make workplaces and public institutions safe.

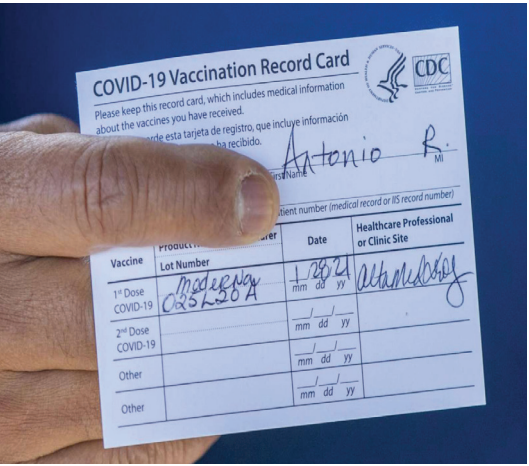
It is these same governments and employers that have hailed workers as heroes but refused to provide proper ventilation, adequate social distancing, clear masking policies, workplace testing, contract tracing, decent pay and paid sick days. Employers have used the cover of the pandemic to ignore collective agreements and circumvent health and safety committees.

In Ontario, TTC workers who exercised their right to refuse unsafe work early in the pandemic were told by the Ministry of Labour that COVID exposure would not be considered grounds for refusal. In Alberta, Jason Kenney attacked nurses’ wages as they struggled to keep the healthcare system going. Postal workers in Mississauga staged a walkout at a sorting plant after a worker died of COVID due to unsafe conditions.

In every province, long-term care homes refused to provide decent working conditions for staff and safe conditions for workers and residents even in the face of mounting deaths. In every province, reopening has led to rising COVID numbers as

workers report that workplace safety conditions have not been adequately addressed.

Vaccines have clearly proved effective and safe but, as health organizations like the WHO and many scientists have pointed out, if vaccines are not globally available, then, the virus will continue to mutate. And until a vaccine is approved for children under 12, a whole section of the population will remain unvaccinated, despite vaccine mandates.



A real fight for safe workplaces

The labour movement is divided on vaccine mandates with some unions, like UNIFOR, calling for mandates and others, like ATU, against them. But regardless of a union’s position on vaccine mandates, they will not be a substitute for actually making workplaces safe. Mandates put the onus back on individuals and will be a convenient excuse by employers and governments to blame workers for outbreaks.

In Ontario, there is a vaccine passport and encouragement for em-

ployers to create mandates, but, there is no cap on class size. Teachers are reporting overcrowded classrooms with as many as 40 under-12 students, this will not stop an outbreak. In Alberta, Premier Jason Kenney has been forced to declare a health emergency and weak vaccine certificate, calling it “a crisis of the unvaccinated”. Clearly, he will be blaming individuals after his complete failure to address the pandemic resulting in a nearly collapsed healthcare system.

Similarly, employers will now be able to hide behind mandates and even fire employees, while they still refusing to take necessary safety measures. Doomed-to-fail vaccine mandates will also fuel the antivax sentiment where anti-worker bigots, like Maxime Bernier and his PPC party, are finding support.

Throughout the pandemic, workers have resisted and pushed back on employers and governments (link to Ritch’s article) through walk-outs and strikes. These pockets of resistance show workers willingness to fight back, but there needs to be a

strategy to connect these struggles. Regardless of the position on mandates, what the labour movement has not done is use its collective power to push back on employer and government refusals to make workplaces safe. Health and safety measures that have been fought for historically are some of the strongest tools for workers to use and those need to be defended now. Collective action and the weight of organized labour can push against the fear and divisions among workers that the pandemic and mandates have created.

The fight for reproductive justice in Texas



by: **Carolyn Egan**

A post which asked “When are they going to start airlifting women and girls out of Texas” highlighted the horror facing anyone, women or trans, seeking an abortion in that state. A Republican controlled legislature enacted Bill 8 which makes almost all abortions illegal after the sixth week of pregnancy. Just to highlight the intensity of the hatred, contempt and control the law represents, there are no exceptions even for rape or incest.

It came into effect on September 1st after the US Supreme Court, packed with reactionary Trump appointees, rejected challenges by reproductive justice advocates. It allows for private citizens to sue anyone who aids in the provision of an abortion. Other Republican controlled states are expected to enact similar legislation which will restrict the most basic right to control our own bodies.

Historically reproductive rights have been won through the efforts of broad based movements

I remember when I was very young, the Hyde Amendment was passed in Washington DC which denied Medicaid funding to low income women who were seeking an abortion. The first to die was Rosie Jimenez, a 27 year old Texan from the Rio Grande valley. She was a single mother who sought an illegal abortion in Mexico because a doctor in the US denied her the procedure. It was no longer covered by Medicaid and he wouldn’t provide it. She was left to die, and this will be the fate of others. It will have a profound effect on low income and racialized women who cannot afford to go out of state. Historically reproductive rights

have been won through the efforts of broad based movements, as we have seen recently in Argentina, Mexico and a few years ago in Ireland. These rights were never given freely but were fought for. Huge demonstrations celebrated the victories.

We have seen mass organizing in countries like Poland against restrictive laws which have brought tens of thousands into the streets. These movements include trade unions, organizations from racialized communities, LGBTQ activists and others who understand the need for solidarity coming together in united fronts to beat back the forces of reaction.

Dr Alan Braid, an obstetrician-gynecologist in San Antonio, recently performed an abortion as a direct challenge to the Texas law. In an OP ED in the Washington Post he said he saw three teenagers die when he first began his practice. “I can’t just sit back and allow things to return to 1972”. He had earlier urged a woman to travel the eight hours to Oklahoma which he would pay for, but she said, “Who’s going to take care of my kids. What about my job. I can’t afford to miss work.” He made his decision to take on the law.

When Dr Henry Morgentaler challenged the federal abortion law in Canada we organized a mass movement in this country which brought together a wide range of groups including the Canadian Labour Congress, the Black Action Defense Committee, Women Working with Immigrant Women, Aids Action Now!, the Disabled Women’s Network, the Immigrant Women’s Health Centre, the United Church and so many more. It organized the vast majority who supported abortion rights but also the right for women to have the children they choose to have with all the support services that are required, decent jobs, universal childcare, an end to coerced sterilization, employment equity, birth control services in our own languages and communities and so much more.

This is the kind of movement needed to fight for reproductive justice for all.

Alberta COVID crisis: made by Kenney

by: **John Bell**

Premier Jason Kenney is from the school of thought that denies society really exists. There are individuals, there is family, and beyond that there is only cutthroat competition among individuals corrupted by original sin.

What we call society is rule by a meritocratic elite using force to keep the inferior rabble in line and at work. The rich and powerful are because they deserve to be. The poor and oppressed are because they deserve to be. As bad as all this sounds, it is God’s will and any attempt to reform or ameliorate the harsh conditions is an affront to God.

Public services, healthcare, universal education, welfare – to Kenney these are like a splinter deep under his skin. They are “unnatural”, contrary to his twisted view of human nature. They are a constant annoyance and he has devoted his career to getting rid of them.

To understand how Kenney and his Alberta UCP government created Canada’s worst COVID 19 crisis is not that difficult. They turned their back on all science and public

health recommendations. But to understand why requires a step back and a look at the man’s mindset, as unpleasant as that is.

He decided that COVID wasn’t as serious as the “experts” said, because after all it mostly killed the weak and vulnerable. But it interfered with business and could not be ignored. He and his government did the minimum for public health and concentrated on supporting business, especially the oil and gas business.

COVID, like any other crisis, presents opportunities for government. Kenney’s UCP, like other provincial Tory regimes, granted themselves emergency powers and used them to attack teachers, rip up their contract with doctors and launch an attack on nurses’ pay and reputations. A campaign to portray nurses as greedy and overpaid, in the midst of a health crisis, was a bold move – in a twisted Jason Kenney sort of way.

He demanded a 5% wage cut and threatened to make it retroactive to before the pandemic. Nurses organized and fought back with small but significant rallies occurring on an almost daily basis. The nurses generated support for their valuable service to a society that doesn’t re-

ally exist, and received widespread solidarity from people which seems contrary to their selfish human nature.

This is sure to have confused and demoralized Jason Kenney. As the 4th wave threatened to get out of hand, Kenney said maybe a 3% cut is enough. Then, at the beginning of September, he scrapped the pay cut entirely. However, Alberta nurses still face a pay freeze as inflation eats into their living standards.



4th Wave

In July, in a hurry to get back to business, Kenney, his health minister Tyler Shandro, and CMO Deena Hinshaw decided not to let anything as mundane as a public health emergency get in the way of their beloved Calgary Stampede.

They declared themselves satisfied with Alberta’s rate of vaccination (65% of eligible Albertans were

fully vaccinated by the end of July, the lowest in Canada). COVID was firmly under control, if not over, and 2021 was officially designated “The Best Summer Ever”.

Predictably, about 2 weeks after the Stampede, Calgary saw its number of COVID cases surge ahead of the rest of the province. The virulent Delta variant was targeting younger, healthier victims, the unvaccinated and people who insisted on attending unsafe indoor gatherings. So Kenney and Hinshaw declared that COVID was now no worse than a cold, and ended virtually all public health measures. No masks, no contact tracing, no need for isolation if you got the virus.

All this on the eve of the return of in-person schooling.

COVID was still a problem, but it was no longer the government’s problem. And if you wanted a COVID test you could get one for a nominal fee.

In essence Kenney decided to do with COVID what he tries to do with everything – he tried to privatize it.

Public health officials and scientists were almost unanimous – the Alberta government was negligent in protecting people’s health. They predicted a runaway 4th wave

when school returned, and following that the collapse of Alberta’s over-worked, under-funded health system.

Now the predictable has happened. The hospital system is stretched to capacity and triage is being used to postpone many necessary procedures. After hiding from the public eye for almost a month and a half, Jason Kenney emerged to apologize (sort of) and declare a state of emergency. Vaccination certificates, previously shunned, will now be required. Gatherings of fully vaccinated people are limited to 10 and those of the unvaccinated are prohibited. All who can should work from home. Places of worship are limited to 1/3 capacity.

But schools are staying open, with mask requirements and cohorting.

The government of Alberta put politics and its sleazy ideology of greed and selfishness ahead of public health. As a result hundreds die unnecessarily. An average of 10 die daily from COVID. More die because their heart conditions, cancer, or other illness cannot be treated while COVID victims occupy all the hospital space.

These deaths are on Jason Kenney’s head.

Off-shore oil shows Liberals’ true climate plan

by: **Bradley Hughes**

In March of 2020 federal Liberal Natural Resources Minister Seamus O’Regan announce a \$320 million transfer to the Newfoundland and Labrador government of Liberal Premier Andrew Furey. The fund was to be used to create jobs and reduce carbon emissions in off-shore oil extraction.

Furey’s government’s call for proposals to access the fund had three eligibility requirements : support employment, generate environmental benefits or co-benefits*, and support existing oil and gas installations. The asterisk leads you to the definition of co-benefits. “Co-benefits can be any additional benefits that are generated through the implementation of the project. (e.g. safety, socio-economic, gender equity and diversity, etc.)” The Liberal

definition of reducing emissions is reduce emissions, or do anything else.

Last week we found out where most of that money was going when the provincial government announced that two thirds of it was going to Suncor Energy and

Cenovus Energy to restart oil production at the failed Terra Nova off-shore oil field. Located 350 km off the coast of Newfoundland this oil field was first exploited in 2002. Two years later it was closed for maintenance and it has never been profitable enough to re-open

over the intervening 17 years. But \$205 million in Federal cash advertised as a fund to reduce carbon emissions, plus \$300 million in reduced royalties are enough to coax this defunct oil field back to life. The oil companies expect to extract 11 billion litres of oil from the project over the next decade.

This is the true meaning of Liberal climate plans. Feel good announcements for the public as a cover for a pipeline of subsidies to ramp up oil production when nobody is looking.



NO WARMING NO WAR

The federal election provided few options for people who want to see an end to climate crisis and the drive to war. Brian Champ and Sid Lacombe outline the stakes and the next steps in building resistance to the capitalist drive towards planetary destruction.

Indigenous sovereignty and climate crisis

by: **Brian Champ**

This August the UN IPCC signaled a “Code Red for Humanity” in their August report based on further dire predictions by climate scientists around the world as carbon emissions keep rising. The hope expressed by the report’s authors is contingent on global leaders taking concerted action to reduce carbon emissions as soon as possible.

These hopes are misplaced, since this is just the latest in a series of calls to cut carbon emissions that have been made continually over the more than three decades since the first Climate Conference in Toronto in 1988. The various plans and targets aiming to achieve these cuts, such as the ones coming out of Kyoto and Copenhagen, may have slowed carbon emissions growth, but they have resolutely failed in their purported aim: real carbon emissions reductions.

These agreements lacked enforcement measures to ensure participating nations were held to account for their climate commitments. The Paris agreement that supposedly will keep us under the 1.5 degree threshold, similarly lacks teeth as global leaders prioritize economic growth over the climate crisis.

In the current moment, political and business leaders seem willing to forge ahead with “business as usual”, attempting to use market forces to shift energy use through taxing carbon. Incentives and loans are available for the development of “clean” energy, fuel and technology, but these categories include carbon capture and storage and

improvements to fossil fuel energy efficiency that are lifelines to the industries that need to be phased out.

They are willing to do anything rather than confront the reality that the reductions in carbon emissions necessary for future survival means rapidly phasing out fossil fuels and transforming agriculture, industrial production, transportation and buildings to a zero carbon energy future.

But the national and private capitals that are invested in fossil fuels worldwide can’t shake their addiction to the profits from fossil fuel commodities that are central to the operations of economies around the world. Divesting from these lucrative markets will not be done willingly - indeed these investments continue to rise despite widespread calls for governments and banks to lead the shift to the zero carbon economy.

In April the International Energy Agency (IEA) Global Energy Review report estimated that global 2021 energy related carbon emissions would increase by 5% to 33 billion tonnes, largely a result of predicted “increasing demand” for coal, up 4.5% from 2019 levels and nearing the 2014 all-time peak.

While carbon emissions in

Canada struggled to stay level during the period since 2000, the temporary falls in carbon emissions in that period were largely related to contractions in the economy, such as the 2008 economic crisis and the pandemic crisis of 2020. World oil production had peaked at an all time high of around 95 billion barrels of oil/day in 2019, dropping to 88.4 bbo/day in 2020.

Despite triumphant claims from the Liberals in 2015 of decoupling economic growth from increasing carbon emissions, their refusal to stand against the fossil fuel industry and mandate the rapid transition to zero carbon energy production to has exposed their plan as a fraud.

No serious climate plan can have

House Warriors not only perpetuates the Indigenous genocide on which Canada is built, but it dooms the near future population of the planet to increasingly catastrophic conditions.

But it is not just the Liberals that are wedded to the pipeline. Of course the Tories love TMX - they never met a oil and gas pipeline they didn’t like. They would make laws that are more severe against those who’d obstruct the operation of “critical infrastructure” including pipelines. The PPC is even more oil and gas friendly and it’s no surprise that they love TMX.

What’s more disappointing is the attitude of the NDP to TMX. In the past the NDP position has been

their platform officially rejects all pipeline projects. But the divisions between the Green party establishment, that is informed by ideas of managing “Green capitalism”, and the influx of more radical climate activists who led a surge of eco-socialist politics in the recent leadership race has led to very public infighting that led to the defection of one candidate to the Liberals, the failure to field a full complement of candidates in this election and the refusal of the Quebec branch of the party, that has been won to an eco-socialist perspective, to endorse the Green party leader, Annamie Paul.

The real hope for lower carbon emissions lies in the commitment of people involved in grassroots struggles to fight for climate justice. The movement encompasses Indigenous land defenders and their allies stopping pipelines and oil and gas developments, to student climate strikers refusing to accept the Liberal’s sham climate plan and the growing numbers of workers who are engaging in climate action in the workplace.

The Indigenous Environment Network recently released a report entitled “Indigenous Resistance Against Carbon 2021” which concluded that Indigenous land defenders across Turtle Island have stopped or delayed carbon emissions equivalent to “at least one-quarter of annual U.S. and Canadian emissions”. Indigenous land defenders have been at the forefront of stopping a number of pipelines, including the Northern Gateway, Energy East and Keystone XL.

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The resolute direct action of the Wet’suwet’en people defending their land against being invaded by militarized RCMP to facilitate the building of the CGL pipeline over their unceded territory is part of this history. The #ShutDownCanada actions that were led by Indigenous people with unprecedented support from settlers lived up to their name as rails, ports and roads from west to east were shut down demanding that the RCMP and CGL leave Wet’suwet’en land, with key support and solidarity from organized workers. Unfortunately, despite investors pulling out of the LNG terminal at Kitimat, the pipeline construction continues to wreak havoc on Wet’suwet’en land. There is further danger of the federal government investing in the CGL pipeline to keep it afloat.

On unceded Secwepemc territory north of Kamloops, the Tiny House Warriors continue to oppose the TMX pipeline being built over their territory. This construction is ongoing, as TMX workers are currently preparing “man camps” for pipeline workers on land that had been until recently the community blueberry patch. In addition to facilitating the completion of the pipeline, and the climate disaster that would be, man camps have been linked to incidences of sexual assault and murder in the reports of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women’s Inquiry. The links between the struggles for Indigenous sovereignty, justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and the climate crisis are clear.

Without these actions, along with others, on the frontlines stopping pipelines, Canada’s emissions would

have risen through the last period instead of struggling to remaining more or less level.

Climate activists of all ages have taken action to support Indigenous sovereignty, anti-racist and working class struggles and many have embraced an intersectional climate justice framework that sees the need to build the links concretely between struggles for social justice and the need to drastically reduce carbon emissions in building a future of climate justice. These connections are crucial to building a mass movement that can increase the pressure for resolute action and increasingly organize communities and workplaces to fight for the changes we need.

Workers in high carbon industries also hold a strategic place in the struggle to reduce emissions. By building the groundswell for a just transition for workers from high carbon intensity workplaces to the zero carbon economy, we can engage with the majority of workers in these industries who are interested in participating in a transition to a new economy as was revealed by an Iron and Earth poll of energy workers across Canada. These workers have the potential to shut down these industries and make even bigger contributions to carbon emissions reductions.

Ultimately, we need to continue to build concrete links between Indigenous sovereignty struggles, the climate justice movement and workers’ struggles to transform the capitalist system, where bosses are willing to sacrifice the future of billions of people to keep their profits flowing, to a future where the needs of people and the planet take precedence.

Liberals’ war spending must be stopped

by: **Sid Lacombe**

The US, UK and Australia just signed a new deal to produce nuclear submarines for the Australian military. Known as AUKUS, the deal provides the US with a much stronger ally in the south Pacific and supports the US-led effort to surround China - seen as the main rival to US power globally. This is a dangerous escalation of the inter-imperial rivalry between the two and will increase the prospects of a global war.

In Canada the AUKUS decision was met with surprise. Politicians and media pundits focussed primarily on the fact that Canada had not been invited to be part of the deal. The right wing press lamented that the Trudeau government was not sufficiently hawkish and that must be the reason Canada wasn’t a participant in the talks.

But Canada, although not part of this particular deal, has been slowly building up its military capacity for the last decade. This discussion was largely absent from the election race. Indeed, a look at the party platforms and it is difficult to find any reference to military policy. Both the Conservatives and the Liberals have always been on side with whichever US led war comes about.

The Liberals will talk about how they made the right decision not to join the war in Iraq but will, of course, never mention that it was the mass movements on the ground that forced their hands. The Libs under Jean Chretien did everything in their power to join the Iraq invasion. It was after 250,000 workers marched against the war in Montreal March 2003 that Chretien, grudgingly, decided Canada would sit this one out.

They did support the war in Iraq in many other ways. Canadian warships remained in the Persian gulf providing security and support for the US/UK invasion. And crucially the Liberals at the time sent thousands of troops to Afghanistan to free up soldiers from the US.

Both the Cons and Libs have been part of this expansion. In fact, it is hard to see any concrete differences between the two parties. Under the Harper Conservatives plan known as the “Canada First Defence Strategy” and the first Trudeau Liberal version of a defence policy, “A Role of Pride and Influence in the World”, we have seen the same massive buildup of military capability.

The Trudeau plan, now dubbed “Strong, Secure, Engaged” calls for a total of \$164 billion in military spending over 20 years. At present they have already spent about \$42 billion and have more than \$122 billion left to spend. The money is going to provide new fighter jets, warships and expanded military bases both in Canada and abroad. Bases have already been built in Senegal, Kuwait, Jamaica and

Likewise, Canada was quick to

join the invasion of Mali to protect Canadian mining interests in that country and the new bases are located to be able to protect those interests abroad. Canadian gold mining corporations in Mali are estimated to be worth \$7.7 billion.

In fact, Almost 80 percent of the world’s mining operations are headquartered in Canada with 621 Canadian firms located abroad worth \$177.8 billion. In Africa there are 94 companies worth \$37.7 billion and in South America 197 companies are worth \$51 billion.

The great fear for Canadian corporations is that in these countries there is a new wave of what the Department of National Defence calls, “resource nationalism”. That is to say, there are movements of locals who don’t want their resources plundered and their environment destroyed by dirty mining operations. Canada can’t allow that to happen. The bases in Senegal and Tanzania are located close to these assets in Africa and the Jamaican base is seen as a good jumping off point to protect mines in Latin America.

Beyond the protection of Canadian mining interests, the Liberals military plans also highlight other concerns such as the impacts of climate change - particularly the possibility of large refugee migrations and the need to secure Canada’s borders against influxes of climate migrants.

And all of the strategy documents speak of the need to be prepared for the changing balance of power globally. Which brings us back to the AUKUS deal. Canada may not have been invited to the table for this particular deal but our government is clearly in the US-led camp which is concerned with keeping rivals, particularly China in check. We are part of the “five eyes” network with the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand to coordinate our security and intelligence operations with those countries. And we specifically coordinate most military operations with the US and NATO.

Make no mistake, Canada is part of the global arms build up and working people will suffer as a result of any war that breaks out. The out of control military spending already has an impact in this country as money earmarked for war means less for environmental protection, social services, housing and Indigenous reconciliation.

Both main parties are in lockstep on this strategy. It is no wonder none of them wanted to talk about it during the election.

Take action. The No fighter jets coalition is building a response to wasteful and dangerous expansion. Find more info at: <https://nofighterjets.ca>



Individuals and collectives

We often hear the idea that history is made by great acts from great individuals. Simon Basketter explores this idea and the strengths and weaknesses of individual activism

Can I make a difference? We are often told that we can achieve anything. But at the same time we are reduced to passively watching the decisions or the performances of our “betters”. We are bombarded with the idea that history is made by great individuals, usually white men.

And so the “failure” to get a job, or be an influencer or a billionaire, is said to be the result of poor individual choices. Yet material reality shapes all our lives, and limits the space for decision-making.

Economic crisis, oppression, poverty and unemployment are features of capitalist society that no individual on their own can alter.

There are two responses to this harsh corrective to the idea we can do anything.

One is “We cannot make history,” as the 19th century German politician Otto Bismarck wrote. “We must wait while it is being made.”

In contrast Karl Marx said human beings “make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.”

But at the same time, “History does nothing, it ‘possesses no immense wealth,’ it ‘wages no battles.’ It is man, real, living man who does all that.”

Marx’s great insight, despite the gender-specific language, was to point out that people make history. But they cannot influence society in any direction they choose.

Individuals cannot exert their will independently of the conditions in which they find themselves. As the playwright Bertolt Brecht put it, “first food then morality.”

If there is not enough food to go around, then feeding everyone is not possible. But if there is enough food to go around—and there is—there must also be subjective conditions to make a world free of hunger possible.

There must be a level of consciousness and organisation among a sufficient number of people to change the way society is organised.

So the extent of influence an individual has is determined by the weight of social forces on them.

As the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky wrote, “Similar (of course, far from identical) irritations in similar conditions call out similar reflexes—the more powerful the irritation, the sooner it overcomes personal peculiarities.

“To a tickle, people react differently, but to a red-hot iron, alike. As a steam-hammer converts a sphere and a cube alike into sheet metal, so under the blow of too great and inexorable events resistances are smashed and the boundaries of ‘individuality’ lost.”

So under the pressure of class society, we cannot simply move to something else by force of will. Now the anger, exploitation and alienation existing within society results in strife.

This manifests itself in a variety of ways,

not all of them positive. But many are—complaining, meetings, demonstrations, strikes and, even occasionally, revolutions.

There are all sorts of divisions in society that can lead to one group dominating and oppressing another.

But suffering and oppression in themselves aren’t necessarily a source of power.

The key group in this context are workers. They make up a powerful class in capitalist societies.

The system relies on their labour so that bosses can make profits. If workers withdraw it, they can stop production and the flow of



profit. But most days most workers don’t feel powerful.

They are central to production but they have no control over it. Workers don’t decide what is produced, how it’s produced or how much is made.

All of these decisions are in the hands of bosses.

Workers aren’t in charge of their labour and feel alienated from the whole process.

This is why some can accept the dominant right wing ideas.

It’s easier to blame a migrant for attacks on jobs when a collective response targeting the boss seems impossible.

And a great deal of ruling class expense and energy is expended on dividing and atomising us on the basis of oppressions based on sexuality, gender and race.

The idea that there is no alternative seems to make sense if you don’t feel there’s a force that can change it.

Many people will go along with some right wing ideas while rejecting others.

This is why socialists put so much stress on workers’ self-activity. It isn’t just that action can win real reforms—though that would be enough reason to resist.

Action can also shake people’s ideas about how the world works and their position within it.

From thinking that it’s impossible to beat

the boss, someone who won something after striking can see things very differently.

Every struggle has the potential to shift ideas.

Even small gains plant the seed of future ones. But this process isn’t automatic, it is contested.

The return of normality can make gains seem distant and the victories coming not from self-activity but from above.

The problem is socialists can expect radical responses to events that may not occur.

In William Shakespeare’s Henry IV, Owen Glendower brags, “I can call the spirits from the

of extreme tension—because the wider social forces are balanced—is broken in one direction or another by the action or inaction of individuals. Do we go forwards or back?

This tension lies within every movement of resistance and campaign. Whether to resist and in what way is a constant debate. How individuals respond and how they convince others to act is of vital importance.

One aspect of this is building up a counterweight to the respect for the establishment, and the status quo.

There is no shortage of people who will argue that it’s in the best interest of all to calm things down.

But when someone urges caution are they right or conservative?

When another urges charging at the cops are they foolhardy or grasping the potential of the moment?

At one level this is simply the lived experience of a movement, but it is important not just to re-enact experience.

So when a revolutionary says, “We must occupy this factory”, do they have the respect of their workmates to know that they are not a fool but are to be trusted and are convincing?

One way to make that more likely is through the previous experience of shared struggle and resistance.

Knowing when to fight and what it is possible to achieve at any moment comes through both individual experiences and those of the class as a whole.

A key mechanism for distilling that experience is for people to organise together as a revolutionary party.

And it makes absolute sense not to wait for a big moment for people to organise together.

Any revolutionary party has to be full of “leaders”—people who can take initiatives, think on their feet and most importantly learn from the battles that they are part of to take the struggle forward.

So can I make difference? Of course you can.

And you’ll make a real difference if you get organised.

Originally posted by the Socialist Workers Party: swp.org.uk

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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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REVIEW

The Chair: Students as Idealists and Workers in the University

by: **Perna Subramanian**

The Chair attempts to deal with how universities are dominantly perceived: as a marketplace with students as consumers, and the faculty as producers of knowledge. It is an imagination of an American Private Ivy League-ish university and it gets many things that resonate with people who studied Literature: the way English departments function in an American University as straddling the vestiges of the past (is anyone interested in Henry Melville anymore) and reading of our literary greats for their flaws (what about the women in lives of Melville?).

The exploitation embedded in the industrial complex of academia is also very clear in the tokenization of the role of the Chair itself - the Chair can solve and tackle every problem, or is supposed to, even when the first racialized woman is finally offered that position in the midst of a budgetary crisis that devalues the Humanities (played by Sandra Oh).

Sandra Oh’s character, Ji Yoon, is called on for almost everything: from fighting for a better office for one of her profs, to deciding the distinguished lecture. But someone like a contract instructor might be doing a lot of the teaching workload with less money in her bank account (where is the teaching happening, really, if the upper echelons are busy doing everything but teach?) but we don’t see this in the show. Although it is hinted that the university runs like a profit-making machine relying on the exploited labour of the people who do not teach but keep the university running.

For example, the Title IX complaints department keeps merging disparate offices run by a singular administration staff person who also happens to be an Asian woman--the university clearly, according to The Chair, has diversified in race/ethnicity but only by doubling down on the amount of work this diverse faculty and administrative staff are supposed to do. Thus, the Chair, in her new role, is suddenly answerable to problems she did not create. To add to departmental budget cuts and the university administration’s bureaucratic structure, she also has to clean up the mess of the man she loves.

Bill Dobson, a professor who teaches Death and Modernism, is dealing with his wife’s death and is going through a moment where his own narrative authority seems to be questioned - much like the literary style he teaches. In the

Canada where students are actively unionizing and asking for better working conditions and throwing up the university as an exploitative workplace, seeing students as contrarian idealists and not workers is what struck me

supervise her? What will happen to her funding? Instead, the gag order, as it is called in the show, is used as a device to make us feel bad for the Chair who has been decontextualized, just like Bill is, from her well-meaning intentions to save her department.

And yet, one is left thinking--what is the department without the TA who both studies and works? This might have been answered through the scene between Ji-Yoon and Lila wherein Ji-Yoon is trying to make amends, where Lila breaks down when she is being assigned a different supervisor in order to save her research. This was the most relatable moment for me as an academic worker myself: it is people like Lila who bear the dearest costs and have to settle for pennies and compensatory acts pushing them to pivot their research. In the end, in a classic Hollywood style happy-ish ending, Lila gets her “due” in a book contract --she is chosen over a rich, white student by Dobson and thus begins a slight gesture towards a redemption arc for Bill.

Radical and Marxist academics like Fred Moten and Joss Winn have illuminated for us that both student labour and faculty labour produce the knowledge commodity on campus--the labour process isn’t really as simplistic as The Chair makes it out to be. However, rather than lamenting what The Chair doesn’t do, we can work with what it does: the divide between students as idealists and faculty as workers.

The only student worker in the show, the TA Lila, arrives in important moments and yet is the most unimportant character--much like how student academic workers are treated in universities. I want us to think about the character of the TA as both the student and the worker, to understand that students on campus do not just dissent against dying departments because they love their professors, but because budget cuts and corporatisation of the campus affects them directly as workers as well.

This treatment of Lila as both important and insignificant is where I found The Chair’s understanding of the university at best: it is on the backs of those underpaid and under-valued thinkers that the university can call itself the bastion of knowledge and resistance.

debacle where he gives a Nazi salute in class lies the articulation of dissent on campus: in his mind, it is pedagogical, for students it is unacceptable. This brings to mind the debate over the use of the “N” word that has erupted in university classrooms recently.

But the show treats students as props of dissent. Their demands are unclear and even shown as so impossible that even the greatest writer on campus doesn’t pass the perfect apology test (perhaps a slight hark to the term cancel culture?) Students are seen signing petitions, vie for their racialized professors to get tenure, call out the Nazi-saluting Professor by recording his lecture only halfway through. Students of this university are sarcastic and mean with their professors whose credibility they are ready to question at the tip of the hat. There is no engagement of students on campus outside of saving the dying departments or outcrying the teaching of the walking dead on campus and their outmoded logic of thinking.

Given the current climate in the US and

as a choice to be thought about more. For The Chair, Students do not know how money works--all they can do is sign petitions, and indeed, this is why, according to the show, we should empathise with the academic 1% that is The Chair who is doing her best, and in the end, also thinks of students as people who cannot be fooled with a simple termination of the Professor and demotes herself.

This is where I want us to focus on the moments the Teaching Assistant, Lila, comes in. She is clearly facing the brunt of Bill’s entitled behaviour in the classroom and outside of it as a thesis supervisor--right from the beginning, we see her being the shield of her Professor’s self-aggrandizing and self-degrading behaviour. She is running around searching for her Professor who is more busy wallowing about death than caring about Modernism. When she comes to the Chair with how Dobson’s behaviour is impacting her research, she is told to not take this up with the media lest the department goes down---and if it does, so will she. Who will



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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

Ford hoards COVID funds

Money for COVID safety sits unspent

The financial accountability office (FAO) in Ontario has confirmed that the Ford government refused to spend more than \$2.7 billion in COVID emergency funds.

The money was part of the increased social transfer from the Federal government called the COVID-19 Response transfer. It was meant to make up for shortfalls and to deal with the climbing costs of COVID.

This is a slap in the face of Ontarians who have been begging for more funding for everything from school safety improvements to increased healthcare costs.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said in response to the findings, "It is disgraceful that (Premier) Doug Ford refuses to invest the dollars necessary to help us tackle this virus, and that has been a problem all the way along."

Teachers, who have been arguing for more funding for increased ventilation in schools or smaller class sizes were equally angry.

CUPE Ontario released a statement saying, "In the middle of a fourth wave, the Ford Conservatives are still senselessly sitting on billions of dollars that could go towards saving lives and ensuring a recovery for all."

President Fred Hahn went on to say that, "The single clearest lesson of the last 18 months is that public services save lives and that spending to bolster them is the least governments could do. At a time when cases are steadily rising, when there are outbreaks in schools, when Universities and colleges are reopening without additional measures like physical distancing, and when front-line workers across sectors are being forced to



accept below inflation wage increases, sitting on \$2.6-billion is a complete abdication of responsibility."

The Green Party of Ontario responded

by saying, "Ontario's health care system is being overrun. Nurses are burnt out and underpaid and hospitals are understaffed. Yet Ford hasn't spent any of the \$2.7 billion

COVID-19 Response transfer payment..."

This is an ongoing problem in Ontario. The same FAO released a report in July that detailed how Ford spent \$10 billion less than expected through the previous year on pandemic support.

And the end result is there are increasing case numbers in schools with more than 1000 infections in 593 schools as of the 21st of September. Most of those are students (874) and 117 staff have also tested positive. Some schools have already been forced to close.

Ford's school reopening plan was designed by McKinsey & Company, a global consulting firm known for siding with the needs of big business. They have been paid more than \$3 million to consult with corporate stakeholders and to build any response in their interests.

According to Press Progress, McKinsey has consulted with governments around the world and their main objective is to push for privatization of school systems:

"One McKinsey report, titled "School-system Priorities in the Age of Coronavirus," encourages school officials to consider outsourcing with private education providers to meet the unique challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As has been the case from the beginning, Ford is more concerned about his future electability and the needs of big business than the safety of people in Ontario. During the last election campaign he promised huge tax cuts for the rich and ultimately cut taxes by about \$3 billion. He is now using public funds needed for COVID safety to pay for that and working people are paying the price.

LEFT JAB

by John Bell

Oppose the racists

People's Party gains are bad news

As the dust settles only one party can honestly claim success in the 2021 election, the party that did not win a single seat in parliament.

The People's Party of Canada scored about 5% support across the country. It did even better in some regions. In Southern Ontario it tallied about 6%, and did well across the Atlantic region. Across the board it tripled the support it won in 2019.

It could have been worse. Before the election, opinion polls had the PPC at about 8% support nationally, and up to 20% in some Alberta ridings. If those numbers had translated into votes PPC leader Maxime Bernier would be boasting a few new MPs. More than a half-million people voted for the party that opposes public health in the midst of a pandemic, would eliminate public services, opposes Indigenous reconciliation, would eliminate multiculturalism,

and blames problems on immigrants.

As it played out, a lot of those voters returned to their previous home in the Conservative Party, as the best chance to defeat the hated Trudeau. On the eve of the election, the Toronto Sun and other PostMedia papers featured a plea from Tory apparatchik Brian Lilley, appealing to PPC supporters to vote strategically for Erin O'Toole.

Enough PPC voters ignored that advice to hurt O'Toole's seat count. CBC analysts suggest that splitting the right-wing vote

may have cost the Tories as many as 24 seats. But a closer look suggests that the PPC did not steal many votes from the Conservatives. They are the one party able to mobilize people who didn't vote last time, people who think that the CPC is not far enough to the right.



When they talk about the PPC, media pundits usually portray it as just a COVID protest party. They don't refer to the racism never far beneath the surface. They dismiss the party, saying that when COVID is gone the PPC will be gone too.

They don't take the PPC seriously as a vehicle, not just for anti-vaccine protesters, but the simmering white-supremacist movement across the country. These groups were around, growing, long before COVID showed up. They organized opposition to the anti-Islamophobia motion, M 103. They organized thugs to break up Indigenous rail blockades. They put on yellow vests. They recruited from the military and police. They believe in Qanon-style conspiracy theories.

Certainly COVID, and protesting for the right of individuals to ignore public health and social responsibility, has given them a big boost and an organizing focus. While Tories fret about losing support to the PPC, white nationalist and fascist organizations are urging their members to get active in the party.

...continued on page 7