



**Squid Game and
the violence of
capitalism**

page 7

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**No to the
military coup
in Sudan**

page 5



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**CAPITALISM IS
KILLING THE EARTH**

SMASH THE SYSTEM

**INDIGENOUS LAND
BACK NOW**

**JUST TRANSITION FOR
WORKERS**



Climate chaos will only be solved when we end the system that is based on profits. Photo from the 100,000 strong climate strike in Vancouver. Climate coverage, page 6 and 8.

Photo: Chris Yakimov (CC BY-NC 2.0)

Pandora papers: merciless corporate greed unmasked

The media is working overtime to put a happy face on the monstrous disparity between the uber-wealthy few and the great underpaid, overworked masses.

Exploiters like billionaires Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos have raked in so much by busting union drives and denying their workers toilet breaks that they are locked in a vanity space race. Bezos even gave Canadian hambone William Shatner a free trip to almost outer space as a publicity stunt.

(What got far less publicity was Shatner's actual reaction to the flight: overwhelming sadness. "We're at the tipping point, we haven't got time to wait 30 years and argue about a few billion dollars. Burying your head in the sand another instant about global warming and the destruction of the planet is suicide for all of us." Turns out being a bad actor doesn't mean you are a fool.)

US billionaires have increased their collective wealth by about \$1.8 TRILLION during the COVID emergency. Space cadet Elon Musk alone raked in \$150 BILLION, a 600% raise.

Amazon boss Bezos came a poor second – getting only a 66% raise over the last 18 months. Bezos remains the king of the billionaires, "worth" \$188 BILLION as of mid-August.

Obscenely rich Americans are obscenely richer thanks in part to the obscene President Donald Trump who cut corporate taxes rates from 35% (2017) to 21%. Not that billionaires and corporations anywhere in the world ever paid their "fair share" of taxes.

This is not a uniquely American phenomenon. In Canada, on paper,

corporate taxes are pegged at 26.5% (down from 39.5% in 2010). The number of Canadian billionaires as of 2020 was 53, with 7 new individuals joining the club that year alone.

Coming on fast, by the start of this year China boasted 388 billionaires controlling \$1.19 TRILLION. The corporate tax rate in China is officially 25%.

As of 2020, before the pandemic profiteering, there were 3,204 billionaires worldwide, controlling combined wealth of about US\$10 TRILLION. The people who rule the world could all fit into NYC's Radio City Music Hall, with almost half the seats empty.

And you still aren't getting in.

Pandering and Pandora

All the corporate tax rates cited above are fictitious.

Take Amazon and Bezos. In 2020, following record profits, Amazon paid a tax rate of about 9% – less than half the official rate. That year alone they avoided paying \$2.3 BILLION of their "fair share". And that was a "bad" year for Amazon. During the Trump years Amazon paid about an average 4% tax rate.

They performed this magic with aid of their lovely assistants, governments just waiting to be sawed in half. Big corporations and the uber-rich class that controls them use a variety of tax loopholes. One of the most popular is simply transferring your fabulous wealth to a dummy corporation set up in one of many "tax havens" around the world.

A tax haven is a country that offers foreign businesses and individuals minimal or no tax liability for their bank deposits in a politically and economically stable environment. They are nothing new. But they offer clients a valuable legal

service – laws that protect the secrecy of who, where and how much.

Tax havens no longer need to be off-shore, although technically everywhere is off-shore to someplace else. Such is "The South Dakota Advantage". The oft overlooked state has recently passed laws creating capital and banking services for clients from around the world, no questions asked, and more laws to guarantee them secrecy. Money launderers and human rights abusers came-a-knocking, and now Sioux Falls is home of a BILLION dollar financial industry.

Other cash-strapped states are rushing to catch up – Alaska, New Hampshire, Nevada and Joe Biden's home state of Delaware are all in the running to offer brutal dictators, environmental despoilers and top-tier criminals a safe place to park their cash.



Now, thanks to hackers dumping stacks of previously secret information into our laps, and to organizations like the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) that are mining that mountain of data for stories, we know details. In 2015 it was the Panama Papers (11.5 million

leaked documents); now the even bigger Pandora Papers (12 million documents).

The documents expose lots of individual ruling class gangsters: the Czech prime minister who used his offshore account to illegally purchase 2 villas in the south of France; the leading financial supporter of the British Conservative Party tied to corruption and fraud; the King of Jordan funneling about \$100 million into secret real-estate deals in the UK and across North America...the list goes on and on.

From tax haven to housing bubble

But rather than focus on the individual crimes, I want to make a few general points.

When the story broke it was everywhere – for a few days. Now, just a few weeks after the revelations, the media has all but buried it. Instead we get hours of "news" coverage of Shatner in space, the newest iPhone and all things pumpkin spice.

This shouldn't surprise. Media is concentrated in few hands, in boardrooms controlled by international trusts – the very corporate entities that create, control and benefit from tax loopholes and offshore havens. Six years after the Panama Papers, a few individuals have been busted but, overall, nations like Canada have done next to nothing about closing those loopholes. Never before has the criminal disparity between those 3,200 or so people who hide their TRILLIONS in offshore vaults like so many Scrooge McDucks, and (for instance) the 47% of Canadian workers who live from paycheck to paycheck been so obvious.

This isn't just a symbolic thing.

There is a direct connection between a tax haven in the Virgin Islands and the fact that there is no affordable housing in Toronto, or Vancouver or Montreal. These shadowy, unaccountable trusts are the forces gobbling up housing stock in cities around the world, driving people to live in tents under our bridges. They are why your healthcare is in danger of being privatized. They are why our public education system is being dismantled. They are why it is impossible to bring environmental criminals to court.

Canada is up to its nostrils in this Pandora shit pile. Successive governments have aided and abetted corporations by creating laws making it easy to move money offshore and avoid criminal liability for economic activity in other countries. Canada has the weakest "white collar crime" laws in the OECD. No wonder about 80% of the world's mining industries have headquarters in Canada.

So the uber-rich can shrug and say: "Sure what we do is vile, sleazy and morally bankrupt. But it isn't illegal. Now excuse me while I buy a yacht for my yacht."

A final word: in the Greek myth of Pandora's Box, the gods put all the ills of the world in one box, as revenge because Prometheus stole fire and gave it to humanity. But when the rest weren't looking Zeus put hope in the box as well. I have no direct proof, but I like to think – I hope – that the Pandora Papers revelations and the rise of #Striketober happening at the same time are connected.

For too long capitalism has hidden its crimes and horrors behind a mask of benevolence. The Pandora Papers rips away the last remnants of that disguise.

Jason Kenney's "War Room" fiasco

Not content to champion a war on the environment by funneling literally billions into pipelines and tar pits, Jason Kenney and his Alberta UCP gang funded a war on environmentalists using public money.

Kenney and Co. decided that evil foreign conspirators were secretly funding environmental groups based or active in Canada, and that the purpose was to unfairly turn public opinion against Alberta's tar sands.

So they passed Bill 1 in 2020, the Critical Infrastructure Defence Act. This handy dandy law could be used against environmentalists or against Indigenous activists blocking roads and railways through their unceded lands. The vaguely worded law made it illegal to "obstruct, interrupt or interfere with" any infrastructure the government deems "essential".

Then there was the brief but glorious skirmish against chalk

sidewalk drawings, initiated by Education Minister Adriana LaGrange. Signs in her constituency office window threatened to use mischief laws against chalk drawers.

But behind it all was a \$30 million campaign to expose and counter the propaganda and lies of the environmental movement. With that money they set up a war room which they called "The War Room". It was staffed with UCP true believers and petroleum industry lobbyists. But all true blue Albertans were enlisted to fight the hordes saying nasty things about one of the world's most environmentally destructive megaprojects.

So they took an additional \$3.5 million for a 2-year inquiry headed by an accountant named Steve Allan. Allan et al produced a 657-page document which concluded that, yes environmental groups received some foreign funds, but it remained a small portion of their

incomes. He did not "find that participation in an anti-Alberta energy campaign is in any way improper



or constitutes conduct that should in any way be impugned." All

donations were legal and properly declared in public records, and actions were well within rights of

free speech and assembly. As he usually does when the

news is bad, Kenney was nowhere to be found when the report was finally released. Energy Minister Sonya Savage was left holding the bag, having to admit that environmental groups broke no laws and were within their rights.

"So is it illegal? No," she told the press conference. "Was it wrong? I think the majority of Albertans would say it was wrong, and they want to know how it happened, who was involved." But she stubbornly tried to reanimate the conspiracy, contradicting the inquiry's findings, ranting about "vast amounts of foreign funding", "often untraced".

It was reminiscent of the old Monster Chiller Horror Theatre skit with host Count Floyd desperately trying to convince the kids that a not-frightening old movie was "scarrrrrry".

The real scary thing is that Kenney and his UCP majority can still do plenty more damage before the next election in spring of 2023.

Premier Moe stokes pandemic in Saskatchewan

by: **Christine Wiercinski**

The Delta variant of Covid-19 is playing havoc in Saskatchewan due to Premier Scott Moe's handling or lack of handling of the pandemic.

Healthcare in Sask. is in critical condition. ICU beds are over capacity and most other life-threatening procedures are on hold due to inability to perform surgical operations.

Moe's interest lies in opening Saskatchewan to business. He does not want to talk about COVID as he showed when recently addressing the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce. He just raved about attracting new business.

Moe has never taken the virus seriously. Even at the beginning he was often caught without a mask. To date he has had Covid-19 twice. He constantly has given anti-maskers a hearing and will not denounce them.

Nadine Wilson, MLA and deputy speaker of the house, resigned from Moe's Saskatchewan Party after falsifying proof of vaccination. She was seen speaking at an anti-masking demonstration/rally a few weeks later.

Moe blatantly refused to listen to public health experts. Chief Medical Health Officer, Saqib Shahab, has been thwarted at every move. When all restrictions were removed in July he opposed the move. He wanted a slow implementation until vaccination rates were at least 80%. Moe has steadily ignored advice from doctors and the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

To date we are still at 78%.

Things have gotten so bad Saskatchewan is exporting ICU cases to other provinces, like Ontario. With no clear plan to implement vaccination of 5-to-12 year-olds, the crisis won't end soon.

After Moe's ally, Premier Kenney of Alberta crashed and burned on his Covid response, Moe was left rudderless. The federal government did offer help; however Moe looked first to Montana, N. Dakota and several other US states for help.

businesses and other institutions are done by the individual workplace, school and business. It is very chaotic and haphazard

Moe's inability to admit his mistakes and listen to experts has led to this crisis. His popularity has taken a 20% decline. He looks for scapegoats, blames the opposition NDP for being "negative". He blames Indigenous communities for low immunization rates, without doing anything to address their



They declined.

FINALLY he is accepting help by airlifting patients to Toronto, and some Armed Forces medical personnel. It is a band-aid for a big problem.

Mayor Charlie Clark of Saskatoon is looking to pass a bylaw to set limits on inside gatherings. Regina mayor Sandra Masters is trying to implement restrictions in Regina schools. All restrictions in

problems. He blames Trudeau because that appeals to his base. He says Saskatchewan has also other things to talk about.

Okay. Let's talk about his systematic attacks on welfare recipients. Or changing rent provisions leading to evictions and homelessness. The good news is people are catching on and speaking out. It is a mess but most people know who to blame.

Where did all the nurses go?

by: **John Bell**

Doug Ford says he does not want to impose vaccine mandates on healthcare workers for fear that many will quit. The fact is that far more have already quit because of the rotten pay and work conditions his government has already imposed on their profession.

Politicians of all stripes have heaped praise on nurses throughout the pandemic emergency. But talk is cheap.

In Alberta the Kenney UCP government tried to claw back nurses' wages by up to 5%. Popular opposition, along with all his other public health disasters, forced a backtrack. But a wage freeze remains, and in a period of inflation that amounts to a rolling pay cut. As a result nurses are leaving the profession (and some are quitting the province entirely).

In Ontario Doug Ford's Tories used Bill 124, the COVID emergency bill, to scrap nurses' contracts and put a cap on wages. After months of stress, overwork and loss of control over work conditions, nurses are leaving the profession in droves.

According to CUPE rep Mike Hurley, up to 87% of nurses say they may quit after the pandemic because of the pay freeze, the risk of violence they face on the job, the chronic lack of quality PPE, and understaffing.

Across the country, nursing has been a down-graded profession. Jobs with regular, predictable schedules are rare. Exhausting, long shifts push nurses to the limit. Forced overtime is used to fill the gaps.

Politicians like Kenney and Ford spread half-truths and misinformation. Kenney's propaganda machine tried to portray nurses as greedy and overpaid. They neglect to mention that the few

nurses that earned more than \$100,000 did so because of the overtime they were forced to work.

Ford brags he is creating positions for 1000s of new healthcare workers and nurses. He doesn't mention that experienced, highly educated nursing specialists are being replaced by grads from community college and private school programs that offer 6-weeks of on-line instruction. These so-called "micro diplomas" crank out people with "micro credentials".

This a concerted stealth attack on public health care. It is a way to turn a respected, good-paying, socially productive profession into minimum wage work without pensions or benefits. If Tory governments cannot abolish and privatize public healthcare head on, they are content to hollow it out.

Nurses fight back

Most enter the nursing profession because they want to help people in need. And especially in the midst of a public health emergency it is difficult for them to take collective action to defend their jobs. But the provocations from employers and governments have become so extreme that nurses are saying "No more!"

As I write nurses in Quebec are working to rule in protest over forced, mandatory overtime.

In Alberta rallies by nurses and health workers led the opposition to Kenney's disastrous health care decisions.

And in Ontario, nurses have begun to march and protest to defend their jobs and our healthcare.

If you value your healthcare, now is the time to show solidarity with our nurses. Good jobs for them means good healthcare for the rest of us.

Justice for Joyce Echaquan

by: **Chantal Sundaram**

On Friday October 1st, the day after the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, came the coroner's report into the death of Joyce Echaquan, an Atikamekw woman who died in a hospital North of Montreal in Sept 2020 after capturing on her phone the racist abuse and improper medical treatment she received.

Her death sparked outrage and protests in Quebec with calls to recognize systemic racism. The coroner agreed, concluding that the racism Joyce Echaquan faced in hospital contributed to her death and that the Quebec government must recognize the existence of systemic racism within its institutions.

In a media conference to respond, Quebec premier Francois Legault, leader of the CAQ, which has consistently refused to acknowledge the existence of systemic racism of any form in Quebec, went to unbelievable lengths to distance himself and his government from the report. In admitting that the coroner's report was "very clear" he went on to say that what it meant was "prejudices," "discrimination" and "racism" but

which were all somehow not the same thing as "systemic racism."

To make his case, he quoted a definition of "systemic" from his "Petit Robert" pocket dictionary as "relating to a system as a whole" and for him that means something that comes from the top – as opposed to employees, in some cases groups of employees, and maybe, sometimes, a few individual managers that have discriminatory approaches.

The two orderlies who were caught on video hurling racist abuse at Joyce Echaquan were fired. But Legault is hiding behind this to escape the argument about what systemic racism really is. The healthcare providers responsible for Joyce Echaquan's death by acting on racism, whether they be orderlies, nurses or hospital directors, cannot be separated from the systemic racism that produced a situation that likely will occur again.

"Systemic" means the government and the state at all levels, including the police and military. It means the direction of public institutions like hospitals and schools, and ultimately private workplaces and services. It means the whole history of colonialism and the way it shapes the system of the present.

Those who whip up ordinary people to whitewash that terrible history and deny its systemic impact on the present, and then throw them under the bus to save their own skins, should not be able to hide behind a creative interpretation of the dictionary.



This is exactly what Legault is doing, and worse, his efforts are feeding the growth of the far-right in Quebec. While he pays lip-service to grief over residential schools, he places it on the federal government and not on the structures within Quebec that ran the very same

schools at 11 sites. If searches of these sites proceed, they are likely to unearth the same horrifying evidence.

And no matter how many crocodile tears he sheds, his government's actions show differently. His is the only one currently contesting

Quebec today on the basis that they mention systemic racism.

The toppling of statues has been emblematic of the fact that those to blame are those who have led, and the demand to defund the police as an institution undercuts the argument that the only thing wrong with policing is the "bad apples" on the force – just as the racism embedded in the healthcare system cannot be reduced to the firing of two orderlies, as much as their individual racist acts must be denounced.

Back in October 2020, in the wake of Joyce Echaquan's death, the progressive Quebec thinktank IRIS published the first part of a series called "Des solutions systemiques au racisme systemique en sante et services sociaux" ("Systemic solutions to systemic racism in healthcare and social services.") It cites the open letter by 37 Indigenous women asking Legault to recognize systemic racism. As they emphasize, his refusal is due to what it would require to completely transform the justice system, the school system, and the healthcare system.

Legault should check his dictionary again and look up "systemic solutions." That definition might come in handy as resistance to racism mounts.

What is State Capitalism?

Recent events on the global front have underlined the importance of the theory of state capitalism. Faline Bobier outlines why the theory is so crucial to understanding politics today.

by: **Faline Bobier**

In the late 1940s Tony Cliff (Ygael Gluckstein) developed a path-breaking analysis of the Soviet Union. He argued that far from being socialist or (as Leon Trotsky contended) a “degenerated workers’ state”, Stalinist Russia was a variant of capitalism—bureaucratic state capitalism.

Tony Cliff was born over 100 years ago, on May 20 1917. Brought up a Palestinian Jew, he came to Britain in 1946. But his theory and understanding of what is meant by socialism seems very relevant today, particularly when looking at the international landscape – the increasing competition and rhetoric being ramped up between China and the US, for example, or the recent protests inside Cuba, mostly about the growing gap between Cuba’s ruling party and the mass of Cuban workers.

When Cliff began his analysis, he expected to shore up Trotsky’s assertion that what was needed in the USSR was a political but not an economic revolution. The contention was that even in the late 1940s there was still a workers’ state, albeit ‘degenerated’, and that what was needed was only a ‘political’ revolution to sweep out the Stalinist ruling class.

However, what Cliff came to realize from actually examining how Soviet society functioned, was that there had been a thorough-going counterrevolution in Russia and that it was not possible to argue, in the face of reality, that the working class was in any way in the saddle in the Soviet Union.

Why was this analysis so important then and why is it still important today? Claiming that socialism still existed inside Russia meant emptying Marxism and the notion of working class emancipation of any meaningful content.

In a society where all decisions were made by the Stalinist bureaucracy and where those decisions were based, not on the needs of workers and peasants, but on the need to compete militarily with the West, Stalin’s insistence that he was building socialism inside one country was a farce and a travesty.

Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolshevik

party had always insisted, along with Marx himself, that socialism could not exist in one country in isolation. Socialism must be international, or it could not survive. This was borne out in Russia and again in countries like China and Cuba later on.

There can be no revolutionary practice, Lenin once wrote, without revolutionary theory. Not understanding the nature of Soviet Russia meant that it was a small step from arguing that socialism could exist without the working class being in power as happened under Stalin inside Russia, to later on insisting that socialism could be brought in by Soviet tanks in Eastern Europe. It meant that you could somehow have socialism by decree with no involvement of the vast majority of society in bringing about their own liberation.

This lay the basis for claiming the mantle of socialism in countries such as China or Cuba where the working class had very little to do with bringing in the so-called socialist or Communist regimes. Mao led an essentially peasant army to take control in China. In Cuba, Castro and a small group of middle-class intellectuals were able to overthrow the corrupt Batista government.

This doesn’t negate improvements in conditions for working people and the peasantry that were made in some cases. However, you could argue similarly that improvements for workers in Western capitalist countries during the same period (universal healthcare, access to education and housing, etc.), although they were welcomed and often fought for from below, didn’t signal that these countries had somehow become socialist through this process.

Nor does this negate sometimes mass support for these regimes, particularly in the case of Cuba, which has been under attack and embargo from the US, since the US-backed regime was thrown out in 1959.

However, although it’s true that the vast majority of Cubans support their government against American imperialism, and have made immense sacrifices to do so, recent protests inside Cuba against their own government show how much pressure is being brought to bear on working class and poor Cubans.

Their lives are much more difficult and impoverished than those

of the middle and upper classes in the state bureaucratic machine who have access to American dollars to buy the goods and services they need. This situation has only gotten worse, both because of the general economic crises affecting working class people globally and because of the way Cuba’s economy has been strangled by US imperialism.

Chris Harman, who wrote extensively on the collapse of Eastern Europe and the USSR from 1989-1991, explained in 2008 the importance of state capitalist theory in explaining the general crisis of capitalist societies, including western capitalism:

“Some people will ask, is any of this relevant today? It is, in two ways. First, state capitalism as a theory never simply applied to the Eastern states. It also had relevance in the West, since at least a third of every Western economy is in the state sector. While otherwise excellent Marxists like David Harvey continue to see this sector as somehow standing outside capitalism, we see it as an integral part of the system.”

With the heating up of competition between China and the US, two imperialisms battling for hegemony, it should be clearer than ever that China has as little to do with socialism, if by socialism we mean working class control, than the US itself.

China’s capitalists are among the richest and most powerful in the world. They are tied to the Chinese Communist Party by multiple visible and concealed links. And China is ever more clearly the US’s greatest rival. This is why president Joe Biden says the US must win the 21st century from Xi’s “autocracy”.

It matters what we define as socialist. If Xi’s China is socialist then socialism can be about a Communist ruling class riding roughshod over workers and peasants, creating a situation where workers have been committing suicide, rather than continuing to work in inhumane conditions in China’s humongous factories.

Cuba is of course in a much different situation than China. It is a tiny country that has been constantly battered by US imperialism.

However, you can’t explain away the discrepancies in wealth and living standards between Cuba’s Communist Party elite and the mass of Cuban workers and the poor, or the very real oppression of LGBT people in a society which claims to be socialist, by pretending these contradictions don’t exist.

Like other statecapitalist countries, Cuban society has been marked by repression and the



Workers and students face off against Russian tanks in Prague in 1968.

crushing of dissent.

Workers’ struggle was actively discouraged, and land reforms were carried out, without the input of peasants or farmworkers.

Trade unions came under state control.

What were claimed to be elements of grassroots democracy became methods of transmitting orders from the top.

Socialists are always for Cuba against US imperialism. But crucially we are also for workers’ self-activity, the right to protest and to organise, and the right to fight for genuine socialism against the government.

One of the very real consequences of not understanding the nature of state capitalist societies and painting them as somehow socialist, simply because of the declarations of their leadership, is the disillusion that then arises as the real nature of these societies has been exposed – whether in the former USSR or Eastern Europe, in China or even in Cuba.

It can lead to the notion that actually existing ‘socialism’ is just as bad or worse than Western capitalism, which is the lesson some leftists, such as George Orwell, took

from the brutal nature of the Soviet Union under Stalin.

This identification of socialism with state control misses the crucial question – who controls the ‘workers’ state’? For Marx socialism represented real democracy, not the sham of parliamentary democracy, where we get to elect our representatives every 3 or 4 years. Because in the end these representatives are controlled by, and answer to, the real rulers in society, the corporations and companies who control the capitalist, or state-capitalist, economy.

Workers’ control, as Marx saw it, would be real democracy for the first time – because it would be the vast majority in society making decisions about what to produce, how to produce it and for whom. But this democracy could only come about through the self-emancipation of this class itself. Through the process of self-emancipation workers would throw off the ‘muck of ages’ – the ideas of sexism, racism, homophobia – that divide us from each other and that help to keep our rulers in control.

This is why the first workers’ revolution in Russia was not simply concerned with economic democracy (the soviets, or workers and soldiers’ councils that began to take on decision-making within society) but also with liberation for the oppressed groups inside Russia: women, Jews, Muslims and other national minorities, lesbians and gays.

The revolution saw some of the most progressive legislation in the world at the time, including in comparison with the so-called advanced capitalist nations of the West: the creation of communal childcare, laundries, etc., the legalisation of abortion and homosexuality. This was because the Bolsheviks understood that the creation of workers democracy necessitated the participation of the whole class in throwing off the chains of exploitation and oppression.

The International Socialists in Canada stand in the tradition founded by Tony Cliff and others. The theory of state capitalism and the understanding of workers self-emancipation as the heart of creating socialism continues to be critical to politics today.

How can the revolution win in Sudan?

by: **Charlie Kimber**

With extraordinary courage, ordinary people have been defying a military coup in Sudan.

They have demonstrated in huge numbers, night after night. Workers in oil fields, airports, schools, hospitals and universities have struck and called for civil disobedience.

People have resisted despite arrests, beatings, shootings and many killings by security forces.

The military, which has a long history of mass murder and torture, thought it could intimidate the population of 45 million into fearful acceptance of its rule. It has instead met an enraged fightback which has the potential to accelerate change.

What began as an attempt to bury the idea of radical change could become a spur to a far more revolutionary outcome. But that depends on how the most determined and far-sighted people in the pro-democracy movement now organise.

The central battle at the moment is against the military. The strongest unity in action is needed to defeat it.

But there is also a sharp battle inside the pro-democracy forces. In 2019, the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) that headed the movement gained strength from the great waves of struggle and strikes against the military.

But its leaders channelled this power into securing a compromise deal.

Instead of overthrowing the killer generals, they installed them as the leading elements in a transitional government.

And they have worked with these generals ever since, despite widespread anger at the slow pace of change.

The non-military members of Sudan's transitional council undoubtedly oppose the coup. Some of them are under arrest and fear for their lives.

But they also want to fit in with the global powers, particularly the US, that are central to the capitalist system. Over the last year, the civilian prime minister Abdalla Hamdok had tried to extract debt relief from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This was achieved—at a high political and

economic price.

Sudan had to persuade the US to remove it from the list of state sponsors of terrorism. This required opening full diplomatic relations with Israel. The military pushed this hardest, but the civilian cabinet members went along with it.

In April, the Sudanese cabinet as a whole did away with a law that has existed since the 1950s which imposes a boycott of Israel. And last month Sudanese authorities seized assets of companies linked to the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas.

the FFC, says, “There is no room for any political settlement to save the partnership or keep the military council in power.”

Good. But there is always a danger that the military can be formally sidelined while pulling the strings in reality. This is probably what the generals now want.

The only place for them should be behind bars, and facing full investigation for their murderous deeds in the Darfur area and in 2019. The military should also be stripped of its control of businesses that dominate large parts of the economy.

Mohamed spoke to Socialist Worker last week from the streets of Burri, in Khartoum. He said, “The people are rising. The military are dammed by the blood of the martyrs wherever they go.

“We are organising. In my area we have set up what we call a ‘disobedience committee’. It is open to everyone who rejects the military coup.

“We want to involve all of those who are open to organising life in a difficult time when there are fears of attacks and shortages of food and other essentials.

water supply and so on. For most people this is much better than what is available in ‘ordinary times’.

“Another group is responsible for making sure everyone has enough food. Nobody goes hungry, not even the street children who are often hungry. We take donations of goods and money from those who have enough to give to those who do not have enough.

“A very important group does protection for protesters and the people in the area. It might mean putting up barricades and other obstacles to the military. We could, for example, set out spikes to stop vehicles.

“We are trying very hard to banish fear. But we are peaceful.

“Other people do communications with other committees.

“Finally, there is a group that I can only say is about uplifting our spirits and about joy. We will have music, and stories and poetry. We will make things with the children.

“We are not the beasts that the military sees us as. We are human and will insist on our humanity.

“Can this be a long-term way of organising? I don’t know. It is positive I think. It can be better.

“We need to have elections for these committees and, although many women are already involved there must be more women—and more young people.”

These are important developments.

Mass demonstrations are crucial in Sudan. But as we have seen in Myanmar, a brutal ruling class can sometimes drive people from the streets by slaughter.

That’s why workers’ strikes are so central. They are the strongest and most collective form of resistance.

If they spread and are sustained the military cannot win.

And, striking workers need their own form of democracy and organisation. At first setting up workers’ councils is about running society at a time of turmoil. But these councils can become a force to challenge for state power.

The neighbourhood committees in Sudan are not workers’ councils. But they show the potential for such organisations.

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



1 million people took to the streets of Sudan on October 30 to protest the military coup.

Justice minister Nasredeen Abdulbari, one of those detained by the military during the coup, met two Israeli government ministers three weeks ago.

Prime minister Hamdok also implemented the usual pattern of IMF economic structural adjustment—removing subsidies and moving to a floating currency exchange rate.

Such moves have fueled the inflation rate which is now 400 percent a year.

It is empty to talk of “democracy” if people face poverty that is little different to the days of the dictator Omar al-Bahsir.

Now, the Sudanese Professionals Association, a leading element in

Those who want real change in Sudan have to fight the liberal opposition elements politically and by raising urgent working class demands over wages, union rights, women’s rights, food supplies and many other questions.

That means that the struggle for democracy has to be linked to the battle to advance the interests of workers and the poor.

“We are not the beasts that the military sees us as”

In 2019, and again today, people have shown the will to develop beyond the structures of how society is usually organised.

“We are doing this because we have to. There is no other authority we can trust now except our own work with one another.

“And we are drawing on our experience of 2019 when the sit-ins showed we could set up structures that were both a form of protest and a form of running our lives ourselves.

“We have committees to organise parts of life. One is for medical treatment. It distributes medicines and transports seriously ill people to hospitals that we think will be safe. We also give treatment to any protesters who are injured.

“Another group works on repairs to people’s homes—electrical work,

Leon Trotsky: Permanent Revolution

The theory of permanent revolution developed by Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky explains why the working class has to lead the battle for democracy

Trotsky developed the theory as a result of his direct experience of the 1905 Russian revolution.

At the beginning of capitalism, in uprisings such as the French Revolution, the forerunners of today’s ruling classes had fought the old feudal rulers. They carried through change under the banner of liberty and equality.

But, said Trotsky, those days had passed. In 1905 the capitalists sided with the archaic Tsarist monarchy. They opposed basic democratic and social rights, such as the removal of the Tsar, voting rights for ordinary

people and land redistribution.

In the 17th and 18th century the capitalists could fight the old order without worrying about a strong working class challenge for power. The working class hardly existed.

But the expansion of industrial capitalism and the development of a modern proletariat had made the bourgeoisie a conservative class everywhere.

It feared that if workers were encouraged to reshape society they would not only bring down feudal relics but might target the capitalists’ wealth and power as well.

Trotsky concluded that only the working class, using revolutionary methods, could carry through the battle for democracy and social change.

And having spearheaded the fight for democracy, the working class

in power was compelled to go beyond abstract notions of freedom or equality and to struggle for socialist change.



Then working class could lead other classes, such as the peasantry, but it had to play an independent role and lend no credibility to the fine phrases from liberals who would later betray it.

Even in countries with a small working class, this could happen because capitalism was now a world system. What Trotsky called the system’s “combined and uneven development” meant that different parts of the world were in very different economic situations.

Imperialism destroyed progress. But the whole globe was united by the expansion of capitalism.

No country’s workers could achieve socialism solely on the basis of a national revolution. They had to work at all times for the spreading of the revolution internationally or they would perish. Trotsky said, “Permanent revolution will become, for the Russian proletariat, a matter of class self-preservation.”

This is what happened in 1917 in Russia. The working class, led by the

Bolsheviks, first broke the monarchy but then was compelled either to impose its own state or to be crushed by reaction.

And, negatively, the failure of the revolution to spread opened the door to Stalinism.

In later revolutions, such as in China, the old order was defeated by armed revolt. But instead of workers taking power it was a layer of middle class intellectuals or peasant organisations that headed up the new governments.

In Sudan permanent revolution means fighting both the military and the capitalists at the same time.

And, instead of looking to the Western imperialists, the appeal should be to the struggling workers and poor across the Middle East and north Africa.

Light Rail Fail

Interview with Ottawa Centre MPP Joel Harden

by: **Chantal Sundaram**

Socialist Worker spoke with Joel Harden, Member of Provincial Parliament for Ottawa Centre about what is behind the problems with the Ottawa LRT project.

SW: The first phase of the new Light Rail Transit (LRT) line that was supposed to transform commutes and provide cleaner public transport to Ottawa has been plagued with problems since it opened before the pandemic. It has now made provincial news as the trains remain shut down indefinitely. What has this debacle meant for Ottawa residents over the last couple of years?

Joel: A lot of us had a premonition that this would not go well despite the optimism at the opening. Within weeks of being operational they were blaming riders for doors not working, for problems the train was having.

And as we got into the winter you had significant problems with the train functioning in the Ottawa climate: blowing snow distracted sensors, threw trains off, stalled them; parts of the train were breaking, the wheels connecting the trains to the track were flattening or having defects.

There have been five derailments on this LRT since it opened a year and a half ago. The most recent was September 19: it was caused by a gearbox becoming unglued from where it

sits on a post and the train struck it, dragged it, and derailed – and this happened not far from a bridge. I think for a lot of us who care about public transit and want it to be part of Ottawa's response to the climate emergency, this was the straw that broke the camel's back. We bought a lemon.

It has functioned better during the pandemic because fewer people are using it: you haven't had the same volume due to people working from home. I think at the end of the day this



derailment has shown the problematic way in which this project has been procured and built on a public-private partnership model where the City does not have the means to understand what's gone wrong in the contract.

SW: All along, the public-private partnership (P3) with Rideau Transit Group (RTG) to procure, build and run the line, and the corporate veil it hides behind, has been the subject of controversy. What can you tell us

about that?

Joel: I'll give you an anecdote about how bad it is: Councillor Catherine McKenney, one of the colleagues I'm proud to work with here, one of four City Councillors in Ottawa Centre, asked to see the \$5 million per month maintenance contract, given how RTG has clearly not been able to deliver service.

What Catherine was told was that the only way that she could see this contract was in the presence of the City's lawyer, a paper copy on a desk, and no notes could be taken, no photographs could be taken, there was no electronic copy that could be taken away for scrutiny.

We have been teleported back to 1940 or 1950 where some lawyer working for the mayor has to peer over your shoulder while you try to understand what your city just agreed to, to build the biggest public transport project Ottawa's had in decades. The subcontractors to RTG include SNC Lavalin, which has a history of significant corruption, scandals and gaffes in almost any contract they've had anywhere in the world.

All of us, myself included, have lost faith in the City to be able to assess what's gone wrong. That led to a movement for a judicial inquiry, which is something you can do under the Municipal Act in Ontario if you have lost faith in your municipality as a city councillor. You can ask for an independent judicial panel to inquire into whatever has gone wrong.

In the City of Toronto this happened with the procurement of computers for City of Toronto Councillor offices, and there was a \$9 or \$10 million inquiry into costs, alleged improprieties, etc.

Councillor McKenney and Councillor Caroline Meehan co-sponsored this resolution for a judicial inquiry into the LRT. At a recent Council meeting, the mayor intervened in the debate and substituted the motion for a judicial inquiry (which had been tabled with notice) for a different motion: for the City of Ottawa's own Auditor General to inquire into the LRT. The difference is the Auditor General reports to the mayor, and it's not a public inquiry. They don't have the power to compel people to depose before them so they can't force any of the private sector partners to depose.

A lot of us were upset about this, but the mayor runs a tight ship in the city. A councillor who questioned the mayor's procedure literally had her microphone turned off in the middle of the debate.

Sometimes I look at the way this city is run, and I feel like I'm living in Las Vegas in the 1950s. You see all these very powerful private sector partners at the table, and that's what it was like. And now the mayor has thwarted any democratic debate. But it's not over.

We asked Joel many more questions. The full interview can be found on socialist.ca

...US strikes continued from page 8

Strikers at Kellogg, makers of breakfast cereal are also rejected a two-tier plan to pay new hires less with fewer benefits. The 1,400 members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM) in Michigan, Tennessee, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania stared down threats by the employer to offshore their jobs and hit the picket line.

"We're fighting for our future," said a local president at Battle Creek, Michigan plant. "We made it very clear from the onset of negotiations that this was not something we'll be able to accept."

Rank and file pressure on the labour leadership

Workers' frustration and anger at eroding conditions escalated by the pandemic is not only directed at the bosses. Labour leaders who have for decades supported concessions contracts and undermined internal democracy to keep themselves in power are facing rank and file revolts.

At Deere, the union initially refused to reveal details of the tentative agreement. But, member frustration over not being able to see the full language of changes, as well as high-profile contract rejections by UAW members at Volvo's Virginia truck plant earlier this

year, prompted the union to post the information ahead of the vote.

All 100,000 UAW workers and retirees are about to vote in an unprecedented referendum to decide whether top officers will be directly elected by the membership. This could break the delegate-based system that has been manipulated by executive officers for seven decades.

Teamsters union members are also voting on new leadership after the retirement of James P. Hoffa, who, in 2018, undermined UPS workers' rejection of a company offer and then had the contract imposed upon them. The slate backed by Hoffa and his supporters is facing a serious run from the Teamsters United slate that is challenging Hoffa's management-friendly strategy that has led to decades of concessions.

Workers refusing to return bad jobs

A secondary issue for employers is that people laid off during the pandemic are not coming back. Although US employers are begging workers to return to work in the post-pandemic recovery, there is currently a massive labour shortage with millions of jobs unfilled.

Many of these workers in grocery, fast food and care work were deemed 'essential', but most are low waged, non-unionized jobs with no benefits or sick days. For many there are still COVID impediments to working, like childcare and transportation which haven't returned to

normal. But, even with incentives like signing bonuses and small wages increases, workers are not coming back.

"Corporate America wants to frame this as a 'labor shortage,'" writes Robert Reich, former US Secretary of Labor. "Wrong. What's really going on is more accurately described as a living-wage shortage, a hazard pay shortage, a childcare shortage, a paid sick leave shortage, and a healthcare shortage. Unless these shortages are rectified, many Americans won't return to work anytime soon."

Working class opportunity

Workers' frustration at the obscene profit taking by employers in the midst of a deadly pandemic and the history of decades of working conditions being eroded by these same employers is stoking the rising tide of strikes and refusal to return to bad jobs.

These strikes are being supported by the mass majority of the workers within workplace, cutting against employer attempts to divide them. There is also solidarity coming from the community and the labour movement similar to the support for teachers strike in 2018.

Bikers in Omaha Nebraska showed up at Kellogg picket line to prevent scabs from crossing.

Striking John Deere workers in Ottumwa, Iowa, reported that restaurants are bringing down food for picketing workers and giving

in-store discounts to union members, and Teamsters and UPS workers are refusing to cross the picket line.

The pandemic has in many ways made it more difficult for workers to organize because of isolation. Based on a history of concessions and atomized workforces, employers planned to come out of the pandemic by breaking unions and driving down wages.

Workers have different ideas. The pandemic has exposed more clearly how capitalism's profit drive will relentlessly continue. The similar situations of poor and deteriorating conditions for both unionized and non-unionized workers is creating a foundation for confidence and solidarity across the entire working class and tipping the balance of power away from employers.

The fight for the future starts now.

Territorial Acknowledgement

As settlers, we acknowledge our occupation of lands that are the Indigenous territories of Turtle Island. Furthermore, we support all struggles for Indigenous sovereignty in whatever forms they take by the hundreds of First Nations and Inuit communities that have resided here for many thousands of years, and by Métis communities that have developed in the last hundreds of years.

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WHERE WE STAND socialist.ca/ourstand

The capitalist system is based on violence, oppression and brutal exploitation. It creates hunger beside plenty, it threatens our sustenance through unsafe and unsustainable farming, and kills the earth itself with pollution and unsustainable extraction of oil, minerals, animals, trees, and water. Capitalism leads to imperialism and war. Saving ourselves and the planet depends on finding an alternative. Capitalism cannot regulate the catastrophic effects of climate change. We stand for climate justice, including the

concept of "just transition" for affected workers.

Workers' power
Any alternative to capitalism must involve replacing the system from the bottom up through radical collective action. Central to that struggle is the workplace, where capitalism reaps its profits off our backs. Capitalist monopolies control the earth's resources, but workers everywhere actually create the wealth. A new socialist society can only be constructed when workers collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its

production and distribution to satisfy human needs, not corporate profits—to respect the environment, not pollute and destroy it.

Oppression
Within capitalist society different groups suffer from specific forms of oppression. Attacks on oppressed groups are used to divide workers and weaken solidarity. We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support the right of people of colour and other oppressed groups to organize in their own defence. We are for real,

social, economic and political equality for women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination and homophobia against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people.

We oppose environmental racism. We oppose discrimination on the basis of religion, ability and age.

Canada, Quebec, Indigenous Peoples
Canada is not a "colony" of the United States, but an imperialist country in its own right that participates in the exploitation of much of the world. The Canadian state was founded through the repression of Indigenous peoples and

the people of Quebec. We support the struggles for self-determination of Quebec and Indigenous peoples up to and including the right to independence. In particular, we recognize Indigenous peoples' original and primary right to decide their fate and that of their lands, heritage, and traditions. Socialists in Quebec, and in all oppressed nations, work to give the struggle against national oppression an internationalist and working class content.

Read the full statement at: socialist.ca/ourstand

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Squid Game: Capitalism's Violent Spectacle

by: **Perna Subramanian**

The Netflix streaming show Squid Game is hugely popular, but for contradictory reasons. It is a blatant critique of late-stage capitalism, but it empties its own critique of capitalism by getting co-opted within the contemporary capitalist flows of media production.

It should be getting attention for this sharp social critique, but is this what explains the attention it's getting?

It is the first South Korean show to win such unprecedented global attention (although K-Dramas have long existed and find a very strong global audience). Recent South Korean cultural products that take issue with class and global imperialism, like Parasite and the remake of Snowpiercer, have garnered Western adoration too.

However, what everyone is united on, despite these contradictions, is the confounding tonality of the show when it comes to its treatment of violence. Every critique has recognized the way the series takes up violence.

Each episode's pace is directed towards how gory and violent the world of Squid Game is - and yet, it is justified on the grounds of equal treatment and fair chances. The aesthetic quality of the violence on screen can be called simply merciless. The makers leave no stone unturned to zoom in on every body shot dead, slapped, maimed and thrown away.

Its shock and alienating violence is the biggest critique of capitalism - we are used to it, and in our images, we are thrilled by the games that kill. Anything that isn't thrilling seems so

distant from the violent reality we are now used to. Indeed, dreaming the death of capitalism and a revival of our humane and humanist relationalities, feels out of the ordinary. Even the kindest acts in the end feel like they might have an agenda behind them - the paranoia instilled by this winner takes-all game is the essence you are left with.

However, not everyone watching Squid Game has appreciated it for its critique of

the games, central character Gi-hun talks about a flashback to a strike he went through at the auto plants part he was laid off from after 10 years. This resulted in the death of a coworker. He says that the Games nightwatch he was on in the violence of the Games reminded him of taking turns in a factory occupation. His flashback is not gory, but hinted at, with blurred imagery, which only inspires sorrow and potential solidarity.



South Korean and general capitalist culture while some have written long twitter threads detailing all the Easter-eggs appraising the real violent uprisings and events which are metaphorized in the show.

Violence is judged differently, if you can spot it. In the middle of the brutal violence of

The moment is recognized by an older player, who says, yeah, I remember that was a big strike, and someone died. And then, back to the game, back to the show, where a lot more will die on screen.

Some might watch it for their K-Drama favourites who are suddenly being discovered

by global media audiences thanks to the value provided by Netflix. The violence becomes cool because it is Gong-Yoo slapping Lee Jung-Jae and in that turn, capitalism's critique itself becomes cool, consumable, comfortable when it is pretty, gory, desensitizing and glamorized by your favourite faces.

These are big stars only being valued when the Global North nurtures its own critique in platforms like Netflix. Its maker Hwang Dong-Hyuk was cancelled by multiple production houses, and now Jeff Bezos tweets in praise of Netflix's "internationalization strategy" for "obscure" i.e. non-English shows.

But sadly, Squid Game is such a spectacle of capitalism and a product of its own violent contradictions, we need to focus our attention as discerning viewers and Marxists on what relations of oppression and exploitation get obscured behind the spectacularly gory images.

Why do the rich and powerful in Squid Game talk about being "gganbu" (sharing a common goal together, being collectivist and not individualist), while putting the indebted prey they find into a violent game against each other? Is it a thirst for gore or a need to justify a system that masks the violence and individualism outside with a controlled system inside that is ultimately the same but with the rules made explicit and therefore somehow 'fair'?

A game that seems better than the one outside, but still quashes unions, undercuts their dangerous solidarities, and pits their survival against each other for feeling human again.

And disguises it all as a game played by children.

The Great Climate COP Out

by: **Alex Thomson**

With the upcoming COP26 to be held in Glasgow this November (delayed a year by the COVID 19 pandemic), environmental groups the world over urgently put pressure on governments for a solution to the climate crisis. Increasingly, they do not rest their hopes on the COP deliberations and Martin Empson explains why in his pamphlet, The Great Climate Cop Out, Why COP26 Will Not Solve the Environmental Crisis, published by the Socialist Workers Party in the UK. The 25 page pamphlet lays out concisely and effectively why we cannot look to heads of government under a capitalist system to come to an agreement on phasing out fossil fuels, cutting emissions and creating a more sustainable economy.

Empson explains that these leaders represent banks and industry who have a vested interest in the system as is and in continuing the use of fossil fuels. Beyond that, governments tend to support of programs, such as cap and trade, or net zero carbon offsetting, which are not only of questionable value in curbing climate change, but generate huge profits and can even incentivise increasing carbon emissions.

COP fails because of the basic inequities between the Global South and the Global North. The economies which are part of the Global North are responsible for most of the carbon emissions, but people in the Global South are impacted by them more,

while the countries of the Global South have less influence to determine the outcome of decisions at the meetings.

The current programs supported by governments fail because they are based in a capitalist system of continuous growth, which is not environmentally sustainable. The COP talks themselves are actually sponsored by industry, often the fossil fuel industry. Ultimately, the talks fail to create solutions to climate crisis because governments have to move to replace fossil fuels with sustainable energy sources as soon as possible, and they have too much invested in fossil fuels to do this.

After setting the context for COP26 with a description of the state of the current climate crisis, with rising temperatures, unprecedented forest fires, droughts and famine, and a concentration of carbon dioxide of 417 p.p.m. not experienced in the previous 3 to 5 million years, Empson illustrates the aforementioned points with a brief history of COP negotiations.

The COP is the Conference of the Parties that were signatories to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, signed by 154 nations in Brazil in 1992. The Kyoto Protocol, which was in place from 1997 to October 2020 and was the best known agreement on climate emissions, came out

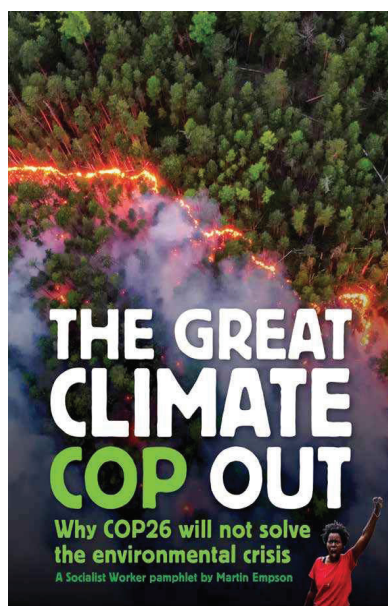
of COP3 held in Japan in 1997. Environmental groups and activists the world over held high hopes for COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009, but Barack Obama arrived at the talks with the Copenhagen Accord in hand, signed by US, China, India, Brazil and South Africa. This side deal undermined whatever positive developments might have been possible at that year's conference. More positively, at COP18 at Doha in 2012 it was finally acknowledged that the Global South should be compensated for climate damage. COP21 in 2015 generated the Paris Agreement which provided hope as delegates agreed to limit warming to below 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels. Unfortunately, this was non-

binding, unenforceable, and ultimately not implemented by a majority of nations.

Having outlined the limitations for fighting the climate crisis under capitalism in the pamphlet, Empson finishes up by suggesting a different, more positive solution. Using the slogan that emerged in the protests around the COP in Copenhagen, he proposes 'system change not climate change'. Karl Marx identified the metabolic rift between humans and nature under the capitalist system, where the relationship between humans and nature was destroyed by private ownership and nature became a commodity. The need for perpetual growth that is fundamental to capitalism is unsustainable, even in an economy where fossil fuels are phased out.

While the COP meetings are not effective, the mass protests around the world and around the meetings are in themselves meaningful, as they serve to pressure governments for better agreements, but more importantly, to build movements between environmental groups, the left, trade unions and others to dismantle capitalism and build a more democratic society from the ground up. These movements are pushing for sustainable economies, climate justice and climate jobs.

Find and download Martin Empson's pamphlet, The Great Climate Cop Out, Why COP26 Will Not Solve the Environmental Crisis at the Socialist Worker site: <https://swp.org.uk/pamphlets/the-great-climate-cop-out/> A bibliography is included.



STRIKE! US Workers take on bosses' greed

by: Pam Johnson

October is ushering in a growing strike wave in the US. Thousands are on strike now with possibly thousands more on picket lines by the end of the month. The fallout from the pandemic, in which workers risked their safety to work or got laid off, piled on top of decades of concessions has workers saying enough.

"#Striketober is a function of greedy bosses trying to recoup the un-recoupable. Workers across every sector in our economy are being pushed to the brink to make up for the lost time during the pandemic shutdown" said Jonas Loeb, communications director for IATSE, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE).

60,000 IATSE members who work in film and television are set to strike, industry wide, for the first time since the 1940's. Nearly 90% of the membership turned out for the strike mandate vote and 99% voted for a strike. Industry employers were forced back to the table and a tentative agreement has been reached but the membership has yet to vote on it. This would be the largest private sector strike since 2007 in the US.

Currently, 10,000 workers at John Deere and 1,400 at Kellogg are on strike in multiple

states. 2,500 healthcare workers in Buffalo, New York have been on strike since October 1. 1,100 coalminers in Alabama and 2,000 carpenters in Washington have been on strike since September.

Workers across the US and in many sectors are currently taking strike authorization votes and could be on the picket line in the coming weeks. A list that is growing daily includes:



communications workers in California, transit workers in Beaumont, Texas, and Akron, Ohio, public works employees in Minneapolis, Minnesota, dining workers at Northwestern University, hundreds of group home workers in Connecticut, plus graduate workers at Harvard

and Columbia University.

No concessions, no two-tier contracts

Defining features of this strike wave are the unprecedented turnout at strike authorization votes, huge majorities voting in favour of strikes, and workers rejecting poor tentative agreements. 2,000 healthcare workers in

than 98 percent of them in support in a workforce of 60,000. A glaring issue is that the use of streaming services like Netflix skyrocketed during the pandemic with a massive jump in profits for streaming companies. But for workers it has produced a brutal production ramp-up. The current workday for IATSE members on film and television sets is a grueling 14 hours with ten hours off between calls.

Workers are also turning down contract offers by large majorities as employers are using the pandemic insecurity to try to squeeze wages and conditions which have already been chipped away for decades.

Deere and Co saw massive profit increases before and during the pandemic. Yet, their contract offer would eliminate pensions for new hires. Workers, members of United Auto Workers (UAW), already face a two-tier system where newer workers receive lower pay, benefits and pensions. This would effectively create a third tier.

The workers, overwhelmingly, voted down the offer--90 percent of members turned out to vote, 90 percent voted to reject. They are on the picket lines now. One local president said, "The membership is not at all in the mood for another concessionary contract."

continued on page 7...

All Eyes On Wet'suwet'en

by: Brian Champ

The ongoing struggle over control of Wet'suwet'en territory is heating up again as the pristine headwaters of the river Wedzin Kwa are under imminent threat from CGL drill rigs. The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs are asserting control over their territory and are again calling for actions to stop the CGL pipeline.

In 1997, the supreme court of so-called Canada agreed that the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs alone have sovereignty over these lands. But the federal and provincial governments, provincial courts, RCMP and CGL have all acted as if the constitutional question doesn't exist, continuing the settler colonial policies Canada is built on.

Again and again the Wet'suwet'en people have asserted their right to "free, prior and informed consent" over all matters on their lands, which they have lived on for tens of thousands of years. These rights have been continually denied.

In 2019, Wet'suwet'en land defenders and supporters were violently arrested for blocking CGL employees on their own unceded territory, leading to protests from coast to coast.

On January 4, 2020, the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs evicted CGL from their territory. The BC government declared a state of emergency, authorizing the RCMP to set up roadblocks and eventually invade and arrest dozens of land defenders standing in their way. The image of the RCMP chainsawing through a sign that read "Reconciliation" on the bridge to Unist'ot'en camp captured the truth: Reconciliation is Dead.

When Freda Husan from Unist'ot'en camp called for people to #ShutDownCanada,

Indigenous people ran to the frontlines on rail, road and port blockades all across the country, and were joined by unprecedented numbers of settler allies. This included ILWU 502 workers at Deltaport treating a road blockade as a picket line. At the height of the actions, the business world was reeling from \$425 million of goods being stranded daily and mass disruption of trade routes.

The federal government was forced to the table with the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs and the blockades came down. Before new



actions could be called the Covid-19 pandemic shut down Canada again.

After a short lull, CGL construction continued on the Yintah through the months of the pandemic with characteristic destruction. In September, 2021 an open letter by 25 archaeologists decried the destruction of an archaeological site at Lamprey Creek, arguing that this could erase the culture of the creek and

its landscape. Nevertheless CGL continued construction, coming near to the lifeblood of the territory, the river Wedzin Kwa, preparing to drill under it. In late September, with these pristine and sacred headwaters under threat, Wet'suwet'en land defenders and water protectors occupied the drill rig location, mobilized heavy machinery to block access to man camps and the drill site and called out for urgent support.

On October 27th, when Chief Dtsa'Hyl of the Likhts'amisyu went to go into their unceded

territory, it was blocked by heavy machinery. Gidimt'en Checkpoint spokesperson Sleydo' reported that Chief Dtsa'Hyl of the Likhts'amisyu and Kolin Sutherland-Wilson of the Gitksan fireweed clan were arrested by RCMP forces. Likhts'amisyu and Gidimt'en are two of the five clans of Wet'suwet'en. Sleydo' reported more RCMP on the territory and that the land defenders desperately needed support: "We

need everybody to get your boots on the ground. Please come to camp. Support the Wet'suwet'en in the struggle that we've been on for ten years now. We need everybody to just shut shit down. Wherever you are, whatever you can do. If you can't get here, you need to start making noise, start making a fuss. Get things going wherever you are."

These words are echoed by Sklyer Williams, the spokesperson for 1492 Landback Lane: "The Haudenosaunee people are here in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en. To amplify, to support, to do whatever it is that we need to do in order to make sure that our people are taken care of...to protect their lands for future generations... If you can't get here to get boots on the ground...then we need to be making sure that we are on every bit of colonial infrastructure."

#ShutDownCanada in 2020 showed that support for Indigenous sovereignty is stronger than it's ever been. The explosion of the Black Lives Matter movement globally, the confirmation of Indigenous genocide at former IRS sites that has detected over 7,000 graves and the wildfires, floods and extreme weather events has radicalized many more people who are questioning the settler colonial capitalism of Canada.

It's time to shut down Canada again in 2021 in support of the Wet'suwet'en people, building the links with 1492 Landback Lane on Six Nations treaty territory, the Tiny House Warriors on unceded Secwepemc territory and the many more struggles of Indigenous peoples asserting their rights to traditional territories.

For updates: IG @yintah_access @1492landbacklane @officialtinyhousewarriors

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