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# Socialist Worker

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# COVID FATIGUE IS CAPITALISM FATIGUE



**C**apitalism is making the COVID 19 pandemic worse and working people are paying the price.

In Ontario, the Ford government has decided to re-open bars, restaurants and theatres even though hospitals are still reeling from the omicron surge.

Ford, like most politicians and business leaders around the world, is only concerned about profit. They want business to open even if it means that people die.

The profiteering from pharmaceutical companies means that vaccines are still not available to the majority of people around the world. Bosses still refuse to waive the vaccine patents despite calls from global medical

authorities to make them available.

Health care systems, already reeling from decades of cuts are unable to cope and politicians respond with pay cuts to essential medical staff.

The cost of living is rising everywhere. Capitalists and their mouthpieces in the media say it is because people won't work and that there are supply shortages causing inflation.

While it is true that supply shortages exist, what is never mentioned in the coverage of the crisis is that the billionaire owners of companies are still raking in massive profits.

Grocery billionaires like the Weston family could keep prices low but that would cut into their money making and so it won't happen.

Rents are skyrocketing and in many places the rent freezes that accompanied the COVID crisis have ended.

Right-wing racist forces are using the crisis to build up their numbers. The recent convoy to Ottawa became a place for many to converge with a whole host of reactionary demands.

The massive coverage that the convoy received is giving confidence to the bigots. And all the while the real grievances from the majority of truckers are not discussed and have been lost in the shuffle.

The capitalist class is now calculating that it may be best for them to just let the virus go and infect the whole population. They have

adopted Ebenezer Scrooge's advice to let the poor die to, "decrease the surplus population."

All the while, the climate crisis gets worse and we now have the prospect of war in Eastern Europe. All of this is being done to keep profits flowing.

This issue of *Socialist Worker* looks at many of these issues, from war to climate to pandemic profiteering. What is becoming more apparent by the day is that we need a fighting force on the left to challenge the capitalists and bring about a new political system that works for people and the planet.

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# What we learned from the Truckers' Convoy

1. The convoy had almost nothing to do with truckers. There were no demands for better pay and working conditions for truckers. There was no mention of the 90% of truckers who are fully vaccinated, and cross-border hauling.

2. None of the convoy organizers were truckers. They were people with long records of racist and Islamophobic statements, and connections to far-right organizations. Anti-Hate.ca has done a good job of exposing the rot.

3. The character of the movement was best exposed by protesters themselves. Swastikas and confederate flags were evident. When one speaker tried to mock the idea that racism was rife, she asked where all the white supremacists were. She looked shocked when a chorus answered "Here".

4. "We're not all Nazis" is neither convincing nor comforting damage control.

5. Slogans of "freedom" were everywhere – freedom from public health regulations and mandates. Protesters deprived people working in downtown Ottawa of their jobs, as malls, stores and restaurants shut down out of health concerns. Ottawa citizens flooded city councillors with complaints that they felt imprisoned in their homes. As one protester told a reporter: "We just want freedom without consequences."

6. Groups of protesters carrying

signs with freedom slogans attacked TV news crews and prevented them from working. "We're for freedom and we're shutting you down" is the essence of their incoherent demands.

7. Many complaints were aimed at police who were collegial and welcoming to protesters. Many observers contrasted this kid-gloves treatment to the brutal police response to events like the G20 protests, or rallies by Indigenous land defenders and groups like Black Lives Matter.

8. Exposing the hypocritical role of police is one thing. Calling for police to get tough and crack heads to end the demonstration is another. Demanding more police, or stronger policing is short-sighted and counter-productive. As anti-racism campaigner Desmond Cole tweeted: "...the police are not the surgeons many people are pretending they can be. they don't intervene in public demonstrations with consideration and fairness. They

either dominate and destroy, or they sit back and watch. Abolishing police means giving up the fantasy they will ever change."

9. By far the most popular flag was the maple leaf. One common refrain from convoy opponents was "This isn't Canada". They were reminded by Indigenous observers and POC that this was exactly what Canada was. "Welcome to my

world," tweeted one Indigenous activist.

10. Finally, the convoy was equal parts grift and recruitment drive for right wing groups and parties. Millions of dollars were donated and have either been frozen by companies like GoFundMe, or just disappeared into organizers' pockets. Groups like the Sons of Odin, the 3%, and Northern

Guard were busy in the crowds drumming up new supporters. And political parties like the racist PPC and the Conservatives were competing for attention. Although some casual supporters will fall away after the extremism was revealed, the hard core will come away encouraged and renewed. The rise of a fascist movement is a real danger in Canada.



## Progressive politician faces violence in wake of convoy

**S**t. Catharines city councillor Karrie Porter was awakened at 3:00 AM, January 30, when a cowardly vandal hurled a large rock through her living room window.

The attack was doubtless deliberately timed to coincide with the right-wing "Truckers for Freedom" protests in Ottawa. It is the second time in just over a month that her home has been attacked. Just before Christmas, anti-vaxx creeps painted hateful slogans and swastikas on her home, and protested at that of Niagara Region Chief Medical Officer Dr. Mustafa Hirji.

Porter was defiant. She tweeted: "Good day to all except the guy who threw a rock through our front window. Look bud, I know the snow removal has been SUPER frustrating but there's a less shitty way to vent to your Councillor! It's the snow, right? Not the video I posted of Cap't Von Trapp ripping the Nazi flag?"

She has a long track record organizing against racism and white supremacy in the Niagara area, both as an individual and as an elected representative. In 2018,

she MC'd a rally against the racist Northern Guard, who threatened to attack the area MP. In 2017 she was front and centre at a rally against Islamophobia and racist attacks.

Porter is not the only person to face attacks on their person and property in the wake of the convoy.

All along the route, convoy participants went out of their way to harass and attack retail workers who tried to observe local health requirements. It got so bad both Tim Horton's and Petrocan outlets denied them service.

Indigenous people and racialized people, especially on the prairies, reported that they were laying low until the convoy's dust settled. In Ottawa, one man reports he was repeatedly called a racial slur because he refused to honk his car horn. He tweeted: "Interestingly, I wasn't phased by it. Sad, isn't it?"

### Trucker convoy leaves stinking fumes

The Truckers for Freedom protest fell far short of the goals it set for itself – more than a thousand vehicles, mostly pick-up trucks and SUVs, rather than the 50,000 big



rigs promised; fewer than 10,000 protesters instead of the 1 million predicted.

And QAnon-inspired dreams about attacking parliament and overthrowing the governments boiled down to snarling traffic and harassing staff at local hotels and stores.

But you can bet far-right organizers will walk away patting themselves on the back, claiming

success.

Polling reveals that about 30% of the population sympathized with the protest. Those polls were conducted before protesters descended on Ottawa, and before the racist, homophobic, misogynist and simply delusional content of the rally was exposed. The closer they got to Ottawa, the more confident protest leaders, like Ontario organizer and

spokesperson Jason Lafaci, were to reveal their real agenda and their ties to white supremacist organizations like Sons of Odin.

After some of the protesters' behaviour in Ottawa, those poll numbers will come down. Vandalizing a Terry Fox statue, parking and urinating on the War Memorial, storming a homeless shelter and demanding meals intended for the unhoused, forcing the city's biggest retail mall to shut down by launching a maskless shop-in – none of these is a good look.

Neither is the number of swastika and confederate flags in the crowd. Worst of all, a memorial marking the 5th anniversary of the murder of six Canadians in their Quebec City Mosque, at the hands of a white supremacist terrorist, had to be canceled. Organizers said they were receiving threats of violence.

But still, a significant number of people support the protest in spite of, or more likely because of the extremist content. The convoy and rally was an opportunity for right-wing organizers to gather new supporters and most of all raise funds. We should all be worried by this.



# Sleazy Ontario Tories rake in cash from COVID

It's a twofer for Doug Ford: use COVID as a pretext to privatize health services and at the same time rake in piles of corporate donations for his bulging re-election funds.

Early in January the Ontario Conservative government furthered its privatization agenda by contracting out running COVID vaccine clinics to FH Health corporation. The company bills itself as "Leaders in Corporate Testing and Wellness". FH also got the concession to conduct for-profit COVID testing, costing as much as \$350 per test. According to a Ministry of Health official: "The Ministry of the Solicitor General entered into an emergency procurement with FH Health to establish additional vaccine clinics as they already had physical capacity and Health Human Resources supports in place."

Oddly, the initial announcement of FH Health's contract was made by Education Minister Stephen Lecce, saying the firm would focus on immunizing school students and staff. That seems to have been a smokescreen: a scroll through FH Health's website reveals their focus is in retail malls, not schools.

The choice of FH Health was unilateral, and other companies were not even allowed to put in competitive bids.

In a circumstance which both

FH Health and the Tories say is purely coincidental, just a few months before the partnership was announced, every member of the FH Health board of directors, and their spouses, their children and some their inlaws donated the maximum legal amount to the Conservative Party. Compounding this astounding coincidence, all of these donations were made within days of each other.

FH spokesperson Patrick Kasebzarif insisted: "In every



case they have done so on their own and most certainly not at the behest or suggestion of the company."

As for Doug Ford, like his idol Donald Trump, he doesn't even know the meaning of quid pro quo.

One wonders why this sleazy scandal is not widely reported by the corporate media, and then again one doesn't.

# Ford's Bill 37: Profits 1, Long-Term Care 0

by: **Peter Votsch CUPE Local 7797 (Retired)**

**O**n December 7 of last year Bill 37, amending the Long Term Care Act of 2007 was passed despite strong opposition of the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC), unions in the Long Term Care (LTC) sector, healthcare advocates, seniors' groups, and the parliamentary opposition in Ontario.

While retaining much of the framework of the 2007 Act, Bill 37 has incorporated what the Tories have 'learned' from the pandemic: that seniors, no longer productive, are expendable.

When assessing Bill 37, it is important to look at the cumulative effect of Tory legislation, and actions, or lack thereof. The original LTC legislation, brought in by the Tories' Liberal predecessors, already contained language weak in protection. Now, principal among the alterations in the new legislation is a change from promoting not for profit homes, to those that are "mission driven", thus including the for profit LTC sector. These weasel words will put into law what the Tories have already been doing: awarding planned new beds in the LTC sector to for-profit homes.

This despite resident deaths due to covid in for-profit ("mission driven") homes, being close to double those in the not-for-profit and municipal sectors, and in some cases almost triple. That would include for-profit Sienna and Revera Homes, both who have CEOs sitting on the corporate-dominated Ontario Long-Term Care Association, which heartily supports Bill 37.

One should also consider the Ford government's pledge to insist on air-conditioning in all LTC homes, after the terrible levels of heat recorded in residents' rooms in the summer of 2020. While the percentage of homes that have achieved this has reached 60%, the province's building code does not require that AC be mandatory in new home construction.

Other lowlights in the Bill include making a "target" of 4 hours care per resident by 2025, a "Residents' Bill of Rights", and much ballyhooed increased fines for negligence. This from a government that cut long-term care funding in 2019, when reports were already circulating about residents acquiring bed sores from lack of attention, or being humiliatingly left in bed in their own waste.

The 4 hours of care legislation, intended to be implemented immediately, was long campaigned for by

CUPE, SEIU and Unifor. Supported by the rest of the labour movement, the OHC and advocacy groups, it was finally agreed to by the Tories, under the pressure of the covid pandemic. However the legislated hours of care will only reach 3 by this coming March, and 4 only by March of 2025.

Residents' 'rights' will surely be hard to enforce, when one looks back at Bill 218, brought in by the Ford Tories to shield for-profit homes from legal actions, by making the level of proof, or 'test', nearly impossible to reach. Raising penalties on homes that, upon inspection, do not provide an adequate level of care, looks good if you don't have any actual record of enforcement. Besides, the Tories eliminated surprise inspections well before the onset of the pandemic.

Workers in the LTCs continue to be covered by Bill 124, limiting wage and compensation increases in the public sector to 1%. All homes, whether for profit or not, are eligible for public funding, and therefore workers are covered by Bill 124, despite not working directly for an arm of government. However it is no secret that wages

an attack on public standards, and indeed on public healthcare. This is the 'freedom' sought by the corporations and their political friends: freedom to turn us into cash cows as we age, when our labour is no longer profitable. (NB: except when they require us due to staff shortages. After that, 'as you were').

## Fighting back

There has been a fightback, led by the OHC, unions, and the families of those in LTCs. The Days of Action called by the OHC last October were well attended throughout the province, as have been the motorized processions organized by SEIU and others. In response to this fight, the federal NDP laudably called for the inclusion of LTC care in to the Canada Health Act. This would, in effect, if enforced, bring for-profit LTC Homes into the public sphere through nationalization. When asked about this in a news conference on long-term care, Jagmeet Singh sidestepped the term "nationalization".

On the face of it, such legislation on a federal level, if taken seriously, would have major consequences. Nationalization - removing big

# Big rat jumps DoFoship ahead of election

First rule of political spin: if something is bad for your government/party, announce it late on a Friday afternoon.

Breaking news, announced approximately 3:00 PM, Friday January 14. Rod Phillips, Ontario minister for Long Term Care has left cabinet and is quitting politics. At the peak of the latest COVID wave, he's heading for the hills. He is the first high-profile Tory to abandon ship ahead of the spring election.

Phillips had previously served in Doug Ford's cabinet as Environment Minister, and as Finance Minister. He was briefly demoted from cabinet after being caught sending a fake merry Christmas fireside video to constituents, when actually he was violating government COVID travel regulations and sunning himself in St. Barts.

(St. Barts is a small Caribbean island devoted to luxury tourism, offering many 4-star hotels, restaurants, and tax-free shopping. Let's just say, SunWing doesn't go there.)

His appointment as Minister of Long Term Health was seen as a step in his political rehabilitation.

Phillips must have had a good look at the polling numbers, and

the rabid Tory Party base, and wisely decided there was no future there for him. Now he can wrap himself in Bay St patronage jobs and enjoy his time in St Barts without annoyance.

He will be replaced in cabinet by Doug Ford's far-right-hand man and consigliere, Paul Calandra. Calandra will continue in his current cabinet roles as Minister of Legislative Affairs, and Government House Leader. The Tories have no intention of addressing the deadly crisis in LTC, so why not make it a part time job.

Readers may recall that Calandra was a high-ranking MP in the Stephen Harper regime, acting as the Dear Leader's

Parliamentary Secretary. Not satisfied with the idea of being in opposition, he jumped to provincial politics to again be close to the seat of power.

Before being elected, Calandra was embroiled

in a nasty family fight over money and inheritance in which he was accused of stealing from his dying mother and proposed having his sister killed.

We are sure Calandra is the perfect person for Doug Ford to put in charge of the welfare of Ontario's most vulnerable seniors.



in the for-profit homes are lower, and there is a higher rate of part-time and casual work being offered. This has led to many in the field being forced to look for hours at more than one home. (Workers in multiple homes were limited in doing so by emergency legislation since early in the pandemic due to the risk of spreading covid from one facility to another - however, even with temporary pandemic pay to make up the difference, the problem of low wages and insufficient hours is far from being resolved).

Bill 37, and partner legislation (such as Bill 218), changes in building codes, lax if any enforcement, should be seen, and has been, as

capital from LTC sectors across the country, would require mass mobilizations challenging all private delivery of healthcare. It would also be seen as a direct challenge to the capitalist class, and would signal an end to politics as usual. Politics like those of the NDP, who campaign for popular reforms, with no real strategy, or indeed desire, to fully implement them. The scale of such mobilization, to reverse cuts and privatization, would call into question this system itself, based on profit.

Yet this is the radical thinking that activists will have to engage in, if we are to confront the scale of the attacks we are faced with.



# NO WAR

*Western powers, led by the US, are beating the drums of war and the possibility of inter-imperial conflict is growing. Economic crisis and destabilization because of the pandemic and climate change will only make things worse. We look at the causes of the potential for conflict in Ukraine and Canada's role in stoking the flames.*

## Canada is fuelling tension in Ukraine

Canada's role in Ukraine is intensifying the possibility of war. The Liberal government is sending more military equipment to the region, training fascists in the Ukrainian military and trying to exploit the situation, at least partly, so Canadian fossil fuel corporations can replace Russia as a supplier of oil and natural gas to Western Europe.

Canadian Foreign Affairs minister, Mélanie Joly traveled throughout Europe, pledging Canadian funds and support for the Ukrainian government.

Beyond the financial help, Canada has sent special forces to shore up the Ukrainian military and to train Ukrainian troops. This is in addition to previous Canadian forces deployments to Ukraine, Latvia and air and navy deployments in the Black Sea region. This is all part of what the government of Canada calls 'operation reassurance' designed as a show of force to Russia.

Canadian officials spent much of the week after Joly's return stating that they did not send any lethal weapons to Ukraine. This is a smokescreen. Canadian weaponry was sent with previous deployments and the soldiers themselves are armed.

This is a play we have seen before. When Canadians were sent to Afghanistan and Syria on training missions they ended up being part of firefights rather routinely.

Although the mainstream media has labeled these deployments a necessity against Russian

'aggression', there is no reason for the Trudeau government to be adding fuel to the fire.

The Russian state certainly has its own imperial aims but, to be clear, Russian troops are building up within Russia's borders. Canadian troops have flown more than 7000 kilometres away to amass within countries bordering Russia.

We needn't have any illusions in the benevolence of Russian intentions to know that Canada and its NATO partners are clearly aggressive.

The possibility of conflict - even an accidental confrontation - is increased with each deployment. There was a great deal of sable

rattling in Canada when CF-188 warplanes were scrambled from a base in Romania to intercept Russian attack aircraft over the Black Sea last fall. These types of confrontations could spiral out of control very easily.

### Inter-imperial rivalry

Since the fall of the USSR, the goal of NATO planners is to surround Russia and to ensure that it can never again rival the US as the dominant power globally. Far from being the 'end of history' the collapse of the Eastern bloc was seen as an opportunity to pillage former lands of the USSR by western corporations.

That project is the fountainhead of the conflict we see today. Ukraine is a key piece in NATO's imperialist rivalry with Russia.

### Canadian oil and gas

For Canadian capitalists, the conflict offers potentially new avenues for profit. The Canadian Energy Centre (CEC), set up by Jason Kenney argues that Canada needs to do more to open up the lucrative Western European market for oil and gas to Canadian fossil fuel corporations.

In an article titled, "Canada is missing out on a \$1.2 trillion European Union natural gas market", the CEC calls for the Trudeau government to make policy

changes to encourage Europe to buy our fossil fuels rather than be dependent on "autocratic" Russian energy supplies.

For its part, Russia wants to expand the territory under its control and is engaged in other smaller regional imperial interventions from the Crimea to Kazakhstan.

Those competing aims are coming to a head in Ukraine. Neither side has benevolent intentions and the people of Ukraine will continue to suffer.

Any war launched by Russia or NATO would be a disaster for working people in Ukraine and throughout the region.

Canada must withdraw its troops and equipment from Ukraine. They are not only adding to the tension in the region, and they are, as a number of recent reports have detailed, training fascist elements within the Ukrainian military which will further increase conflict in the area.

Training fascists and deploying troops and military equipment will not de-escalate the current situation. It only adds fuel to an already dangerous and growing fire.

### Main enemy is at home

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

We need to oppose Canada's role in fuelling this war drive.





# Capitalist competition creates war

## Rivalry between the US and Russia threatens a devastating war in Ukraine

**R**ussian president Vladimir Putin has amassed 100,000 troops along Ukraine's border. While the US remains the world's strongest imperialist power, it is weakened and Putin hopes a military build-up will force it to the negotiating table.

He wants president Joe Biden to make assurances that the US's military alliance Nato won't expand any further eastwards. Biden has ruled out military action in Ukraine, but is determined to maintain US dominance against Russia.

While neither side wants a prolonged war, it could easily happen. That's because the Ukraine crisis is a product of imperialism—a global system driven forward by competition between the big capitalist states. When tensions run high, a small spark can set off a wider war.

Ukraine is at the centre of a much bigger site of imperialist rivalry between the US and Russia and many other regional powers. This fault line starts in northern Europe on the border between Russia and the Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania.

From here, it cuts down into Ukraine, goes through the oil-rich Caucasus region on Russia's southern tip, and then extends into central Asia.

Tensions are rising right along it. The US is determined to defend its position in the world while other states see its relative decline as an opportunity to jockey for position. US imperialism's defeat in Iraq signalled it was possible for weaker powers to assert their interests against US wishes. Russia is one such power.

In 1991 the Soviet Union split apart into Russia and 14 other republics along its borders, including Ukraine.

For much of the 1990s, it was a shadow of its former power. But a combination of high oil prices and Vladimir Putin's iron hand strengthened the Russian state. It began asserting its imperialist interests in what it calls its "near

abroad", the republics that used to be part of the Soviet Union. Ukraine—industrially developed, and a buffer between the West—was one of the most important.

After the Cold War, the US broke its pledge not to expand Nato into eastern Europe. In 2008 Nato agreed that Ukraine and Georgia should join. Russia invaded Georgia to prevent this happening.

There's also an economic side to the rivalry. The European Union (EU)—a wannabe imperial power aligned with the US—tried to get Ukraine to join it in 2014. Russia had set up the Eurasian Customs Union (ECU) to compete with the EU and strengthen its hand against China in central Asia.

In 2014, Ukraine looked to align more closely with the West. In response, Russia took over the Crimea region from Ukraine and supported separatist militia in the south east. This conflict rumbled on since and has now flared up again.

How should socialists respond? Firstly, we should have no truck with US or British hypocritical claims to protect Ukraine from Russian aggression.

The revolutionary Vladimir Lenin argued that "in every country preference should be given to the struggle against the chauvinism of the particular country, to awakening hatred of one's own government".

So, in the West, socialists' main job is to unite around opposition to our ruling class's drive to war.

Second, this doesn't mean that "my enemies' enemy is my friend"—that the West's rivals are in any way anti-imperialist. As Lenin went on to say, socialists also had to "appeal to the solidarity of the workers of the warring countries, to their joint civil war" against the warmongers' system.

We build opposition to our own rulers—but as part of a struggle against the system of imperialist rivalries that causes war.

*Reprinted from Socialist Worker UK*

# Uprising in Kazakhstan

by: **Socialist Tendency Russia**

**I**n early January, mass protests erupted in Kazakhstan. Initially, the protests were the workers' reaction to more than doubling of car gas price from 50 tenge per liter to 120 tenge per liter.

Protests began in the gas and oil-bearing western regions of the country, in particular in Zhanaozen, a city with a rich history of labor struggles. Here, in 2011, workers in the mining industry went on strike, in response to which the authorities responded with state terror and the shooting of workers' demonstrations. At that time, dozens of workers were killed in Zhanaozen.

Seeing no willingness on the part of the government to make concessions, the protests began to spread not only to cities in the west - Aktau, Zhanaozen, Atyrau and others - but also throughout Kazakhstan. So far, such cities as Uralsk, Aktobe, Kostanai, Nur-Sultan, Pavlodar, Taraz, Shymkent and Kyzylorda have been affected by unrest. The most violent confrontation is taking place in the southern city of Alma-Ata.

When the government agreed to return gas prices in the western regions of the country to their original value, it was already too late. Not only because the protests had spread to almost all regions of the country, but also because the protesters had expanded their demands, which now affect a wide range of socio-economic and political relations. Here is an incomplete list of the demands of the workers of Kazakhstan:

1. A change in the political regime
2. The coming to power of a person recognized as revolutionary
3. The complete removal from power of Nazarbayev and all his proxies, including the current president of the country Tokayev
4. Popular elections of akims (mayors, governors) of each region and each city (at the moment, these positions are filled by appointment from above)
5. Return of the 1993 constitution (this constitution differs from the modern constitution in that, for example, the legislative body of the state is the Supreme Soviet, not the parliament)
6. No prosecution of civil and political activists
7. Reduce the prices of housing and utilities services.
8. Reducing the price of food
9. Raising the wages of all workers
10. Increase in sick pay
11. Raising pensions
12. Reducing the retirement age to 60 for men and 58 for women
13. Reduction of fuel prices
14. Increase in child benefits

Based on this set of demands, we can conclude that the driving force of the protests are the working people of Kazakhstan. Among the demands it is impossible to find demands for the expansion of freedom of private property or lowering of income taxes for entrepreneurs. This may speak of the lack of influence of the petty bourgeoisie or the bourgeoisie on the protesting masses.

Because the authorities of the

country showed their inability to meet all or at least most of the protesters' demands, the protests began to escalate into open rebellion. The situation of the government of Kazakhstan was also exacerbated by a national strike in the country's extractive industries.

This uprising is characterized by a high degree of violence. The rebellious workers are storming administrative buildings, disarming and capturing members of the National Guard and state police, seizing small arms from arms stores, building barricades and organizing street patrols.

This is particularly evident in Almaty, one of the country's largest cities. Here, the rebels seized and burned to the ground the city's akimat (mayor's office), set fire to the president's residence, and attempted to storm the city's police department and the military academy. At one point, the security forces left the city altogether.

State propaganda accused the rebels of looting and plundering. However, the rebellious workers themselves organized patrols to identify looters and stop their activities on the spot. There are unconfirmed reports that authorities may have deliberately released convicted prisoners from detention for the purpose of looting and pillaging.

It's worth mentioning that President Tokayev made some concessions after some time: he issued the decree about reduction and fixing of gas prices, dissolved the government, dismissed the former President



Workers in Kazakhstan hold the line

of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev from the post of the Chairman of the Security Council and took this post by himself. The latter is significant because Nursultan Nazarbayev, having made the transit of power and appointed his successor Tokayev to the presidency, continued to exert enormous influence over government policy. At the moment, Nursultan Nazarbayev has gone into hiding with his daughters in Russia.

The problem is that the current President Tokayev has no concrete plan to implement reforms and meet the demands of the rebels. This fact contributes to the continuation of the rebellion.

Also important is the fact that National Guard and police units are partially siding with the rebels. There are numerous testimonies of armed guardsmen and policemen refusing to use force against the workers, some of them joining the ranks of the protesters, and one of the units has gone over to the side of the resistance along with its armored vehicles.

### Counter-revolutionary intervention

Rapidly developing events made it clear to Tokayev that it was not possible to cope with the situation

using personal forces. Therefore, on January 5, he contacted President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation and President Alexander Lukashenko of the Republic of Belarus by telephone, after which he sent an official appeal to the CSTO to intervene in the situation and "restore stability in the country. But the CSTO is a collective security treaty against external threats, so Tokayev needed to accuse the rebels of having been organized by foreign forces, of being "terrorists," and of being under foreign control.

Kyrgyzstan initially refused to send its troops to Kazakhstan and declared its non-participation in the punitive operation on the territory of Kazakhstan. Perhaps, it was connected with the protests in Kyrgyzstan against sending troops. But already on January 7, the president of Kyrgyzstan signed a decree to send troops to Kazakhstan.

Belarus, Tajikistan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan are now semi-colonies of Russia and occupy a subordinate position to its imperialism. This means that the CSTO, despite the formal equality of its members within it, is also militarily and politically subordinate to the will of Moscow.

There is a good chance that the Russian authorities will once again fail to produce a "little victory"; on the contrary, it may turn out that the Russian Armed Forces will be delayed in Kazakhstan for a long time.

Combined with several other conflicts in which Russia is now directly or indirectly involved, a presence in Kazakhstan could contribute to the collapse of the reactionary Putin regime in the long term.

There is also the possibility that the long-term presence of Russian military forces could lead to the emergence of new separatist "republics" in Kazakhstan, along the lines of the "LPR" and "DNR" in Ukraine.

Nationalist-oriented Russian activists and media figures call

for the occupation of the northern regions of Kazakhstan, where the Russian and Russian-speaking population is widely represented. The nationalists refer to the fact that Russians in Kazakhstan are threatened by inciting ethnic hatred and Russophobia.

Of course, no evidence of anti-Russian demands and sentiments among the rebellious workers is given. The struggling workers of Kazakhstan do not make demands and slogans aimed at inciting ethnic hatred, chauvinism or racism. Losses on the part of both the security forces and the opponents of the current regime are already dozens of people killed and hundreds wounded, more than 3,000 protesters have been detained.

The rebels in Kazakhstan need broad support and solidarity. A huge role in the victory of the revolution against the interventionists is played by the mass movement within the aggressor country.

May the lessons of the past serve as an example to us all in the present.

*This article is an edited version of the original which can be found at [socialist.ca](http://socialist.ca)*





# Bloody Sunday - state terror used to crush dissent

Fifty years ago British troops opened fire on the streets of Derry. Simon Basketter explores how the British state murdered innocent people on Bloody Sunday—and then tried to get away with it

In a deliberate act of mass murder, ordered from the top, British paratroopers massacred unarmed civilians in Derry in Northern Ireland 50 years ago.

The Tory government wanted to crush the Civil Rights Movement, which had flourished in the late 1960s in protest at the second class treatment of Catholics.

British troops were sent into Northern Ireland in August 1969. The armed sectarian police force in the North could no longer contain an effective insurrection in Derry, the province's second largest city.

People were fighting back against a system where access to jobs, housing, and effective votes depended on whether you were Catholic or Protestant.

The Labour government acted to prop up a Unionist government that ran Northern Ireland as a sectarian, one party state.

Just five months before the 30 January massacre, internment without trial was introduced. Hundreds of Catholics were rounded up, detained and tortured. A march was organised in opposition to internment—and was deemed illegal.

It was scheduled to begin in the Creggan area of Derry and to weave through the Bogside before proceeding to Guildhall Square in the city centre.

It never got that far. Soldiers went into the Bogside and opened fire. Thirteen died on the day and one more shortly after. A month earlier, General Harry Tuzo, the army commander in Northern Ireland, told the then Tory government it had to make a choice.

It was “between accepting that Creggan and Bogside were areas where the army was not able to go or to mount a major operation which would involve, at some stage, shooting at unarmed civilians.”

On 7 January 1972 General Robert Ford declared in a memo to Tuzo, “I am coming to the conclusion that the minimum force necessary is to shoot selected ringleaders.”

Four days later prime minister Ted Heath told his cabinet, “A military operation to reimpose law and order would be a major operation necessarily involving numerous civilian casualties.”

Bloody Sunday meant the end of the Civil Rights Movement. The massacre drove young men and women to join the Provisional IRA.

Within weeks of Bloody Sunday the government replaced the Unionist Stormont parliament with direct rule from Westminster.

The British government tried to cover up the truth of its butchery from the moment the last shot was fired. The army claimed it fired because

it was shot at by the IRA and that demonstrators were armed with nail bombs. This was a lie.

## False reports

Former head of the British Army, Sir Michael Jackson, was second in command in Derry on Bloody Sunday. He wrote entirely false reports of what the soldiers did on the day, including a number of alleged personal accounts of senior officers and a shot list. It describes unnamed

list appeared to match any actually fired.

Jackson agreed that he must have been ordered by someone to write down his fiction—but couldn't remember who. But he said, “The requirement may have been instigated in London”.

Jackson's documents were at the time of the massacre used in press releases, in parliament and at the first inquiry to prove the army's version of events.



British troops killed 13 people on Bloody Sunday in Derry on 30 January 1972. A 14th person died later

people firing an inaccurate number of bullets at people who, in reality, were in completely different places.

Apparently bullets went through entire buildings. Lord Chief Justice, Lord Widgery, the highest judge in Britain, headed an inquiry. It was a whitewash. Successive governments continued to cover up the truth about Bloody Sunday.

It took long campaigning by relatives of the murdered to get their names cleared. Finally in 1998 the Labour government set up a new public inquiry under Lord Saville.

In 2003 Jackson gave evidence to it. He could remember next to nothing and could not explain why none of the shots described in his

But Saville concluded, “We have found no evidence that anyone involved in military information falsified any Army or government document relating to Bloody Sunday, nor any evidence that anyone involved in military information disseminated to the public anything about Bloody Sunday, knowing or believing that information to be untrue.”

The reality, was that evidence Saville showed revealed that the orders for the massacre of civilians came from the top of the British establishment with, at least, the connivance of the British government.

Jackson ended up head of the British army. Bloody Sunday exposes the brutality at the heart of the British state. And it also shows that if

anything critical of the state emerges, our rulers will try to convince us that it was an aberration.

Importantly there was a wave of revolt immediately after Bloody Sunday in both the north and south of Ireland. There were strikes, protests and riots across Northern Ireland. In every major town thousands stopped work, marched, and occupied British-owned businesses.

A week after Bloody Sunday, 50,000 defied a ban and marched in Newry. In Southern Ireland thousands immediately gathered in angry protest outside the British embassy in Dublin. Thousands of workers joined a general strike.

## Marched

In Cork for three days running 10,000 people marched. Irish prime minister Jack Lynch was forced to declare 2 February, the day of the victims' funerals, a public holiday.

Some 100,000 people marched, burning the British embassy to the ground. Some 15,000 people marched in London.

Bernadette Devlin, now McAliskey, the socialist and Westminster MP, punched the Tory home secretary Reginald Maudling in the face.

At a protest afterwards she said:

“Maybe you felt better after I had hit Maudling in the House of Commons. But if you think my fist is going to bring down the Tory government, you've got another think coming.”

“The Labour Party certainly isn't going to do it, and the only people who can do it is you. Look around Britain today and you will see the miners being kicked on their picket lines.”

“It is not our function in life to die for Ireland. It is our function to live, work and struggle for a workers' republic.”

“It is not sympathy or feelings of frustration that are needed now. You must go away determined to organise and act.”

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## 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](https://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](https://socialist.ca/ourstand)

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# IWD 2022: Continuing the fight for a better world

by: Carolyn Egan

**A**s we move into 2022 we confront an increasingly difficult world with the COVID crisis, the climate crisis, and the economic crisis, along with the ongoing systemic racism which impacts every area of our lives. The ruling elite is driven by an ongoing thirst for profit, and government policies reflect this as the gap between rich and poor keeps growing.

The working class and the poor in all our diversity, bear the brunt of these policies with racialized women being hardest hit.

As we build the movements for change, fighting back against these attacks, we can gain inspiration from the hard fought struggles and victories that have taken place through this time such as the farmers strike in India, Black Lives Matter, Land Back, the abortion victory in Argentina and the successful work place organizing going on across North America. These all show that collective action can bring real change, and provide an alternative to the right-wing scapegoating that is turning one against another.

We can also look at historical struggles that have taken place in years past, the Paris Commune the Winnipeg General strike, Paris 1968, the Common Front in Quebec and so many more where people rose up and fought back.

A significant event also occurred in Copenhagen in 1910 when socialist women gathered, among them the revolutionary Clara



Zetkin, and declared International Women's Day to commemorate immigrant women garment workers in New York City who fought against powerful employers for dignity and respect in the workplace.

A few years later thousands of women textile workers in Lawrence and Lowell, Massachusetts walked off the job against the robber barons who owned the mills and treated them as cogs in a machine. They spoke 22 different languages and yet built the unity necessary to win a significant victory which showed the strength of women workers. "Bread

and Roses", often viewed as the anthem of the women's liberation movement, was born out of that strike.

The declaration for International Women's Day sparked rallies and demonstrations world wide as years went by, and they continue today.

## Toronto march

In Toronto one of the largest marches in North America has been taking place since 1978. Thousands take to the street highlighting the key issues of the day; reproductive justice, racism, Indigenous sovereignty, violence,

workplace issues, migrant rights queer and trans issues etc.

## This years theme is, "People and Planet Over Profit, Revolutionary Love to All"

Themes have included "No to Racism, from Toronto to South Africa" and "No to War, from Oka to the Gulf". This year it is "People and Planet Over Profit, Revolutionary Love to All" (the second phrase a nod to bell hooks who recently died). It is organized by an activist committee led by Women Working with Immigrant Women, made up of trade unionists, student organizations, women's groups, anti-racists, socialists, queer and trans gender activists.

It presents a militant face of the women's movement, fighting in the streets for the issues that affect the most vulnerable. The speakers are from the rank and file, from the grass roots who are struggling in movements for change. In 2021 those who spoke were long term care and child care workers, women facing eviction, Indigenous activists, anti-racist activists, trade unionist and others. IWD in Toronto reflects the history of the immigrant women garment workers fighting in the early 1900s. We stand on their shoulders celebrate their legacy and continue the fight for a better world for all.

# International Women's Day, 1917: When Russian Women Shook the World

by: Chantal Sundaram

**W**hen thousands of women workers in Petrograd, Russia marked International Women's Day of 1917 with a strike to demand bread, little did they know they would spark a revolution.

By the old Russian calendar, March 8 fell in February. Food was in short supply due to World War I. February 23, 1917 became the first day of the Russian Revolution, when women textile workers took to the factories, streets, and public trolleys, calling on others to join them.

They were soon joined by other factory workers, including men, and then by women in their homes. It was a groundswell that even caught revolutionary activists in the Bolshevik Party by surprise; in fact, by deciding to strike and march the women were ignoring the advice of party leaders to "keep cool" to avoid repression.

But instead of keeping cool, Russian women went up to the soldiers' lines, took hold of their rifles and called on them to "Put down your bayonets - join us!"

Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky would later write, "Women's Day passed successfully, with enthusiasm and without victims. But what it concealed in itself no one had guessed even by nightfall."

An editorial in the Bolshevik paper Pravda week later proclaimed "The

women were the first to come out on the streets of Petrograd on their Women's day. The women in Moscow in many cases determined the mood of the military; they went to the barracks and convinced the soldiers to come over to the side of the Revolution. Hail the women!"

In raising the cry for bread, Russian women set in motion a mass demand for three things both simple and revolutionary: peace, bread, and land. These became the three demands

of the Russian revolution that echo a hundred years later: an end to war and oppression, an end to austerity, and an end to the destruction of the earth.

## From women's revolt to counter-revolution

By October workers had taken power and began to enact legislation on women's rights still unmatched by any government today:

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

It was a huge project for a fledgling state facing economic collapse, starvation and a devastating civil war after 1917, which threatened the very survival of the revolution. But the Bolsheviks did not see combating women's oppression as something that could wait for more stable times. They believed that the very success of the revolution depended on women playing an equal role.

All of this was reversed with the rise of Stalin in the late twenties and thirties. The very unity between men and women workers upon which the revolution had relied became a threat to the counter-revolution led by Stalin and the new ruling class that emerged out of the economic devastation of the Soviet Union. Women's newly-won rights were repealed—though not without a fight by both men and women resisting the rise of Stalinism.

Defeat was not inevitable, and the short years of revolution showed that resistance by women is key to resistance by all workers to the forces stacked against them.





## Spring into climate action All out March 25

by: **Brian Champ**

**T**he year 2021 brought home the reality of the climate crisis here in Canada, with a brutal “heat dome” that claimed over 600 lives in BC, a hellish wildfire season that burned the town of Lytton down at the end of June and unprecedented storms in BC and Newfoundland that caused massive infrastructure damage. These reflect similar disastrous effects that are happening all around the world.

### **COP26 failure**

The COP26 meetings, top-heavy with fossil fuel execs and bankers, once again successfully blocked meaningful action, agreeing only to “phase down” coal to say nothing of oil or natural gas. While continuing pressure has forced some victories, such as fossil fuel divestment wins at U of T and SFU, governments across Canada continue to push fossil fuel projects, announce unambitious emissions targets and generally fail to meet the challenge.

This includes the BC NDP government, sending in the RCMP to make sure the CGL pipeline is built over Wet’suwet’en land; the Ontario government that has gutted environmental legislation and is reopening already phased out natural gas electricity plants and the Federal government whose plan relies on revenues from Trans Mountain Pipeline operations.

Protests at the COP26 meetings saw Fridays for Future marchers join with city sanitation workers to call out the hypocrisy of what was happening behind closed doors. The next day saw 100,000 on the streets of Glasgow, and about a million joined worldwide in over 250



actions worldwide, calling for climate justice and plans to phase out fossil fuels. In the UK, the fantastic climate actions last fall bode well

for a hot spring of action, including the upcoming March 25 Global Climate Strike, called by the international coordinating committee of

Fridays for Future under the banner of #People Not Profit. This shows the development of the politics of the movement, increasingly seeing that it is capitalism, and that the profit motive lies behind the destructiveness of the system.

There will be a climate strike here in Toronto on March 25, as part of the global day - more details will be forthcoming. But it is already shaping up to be a hot spring of climate action.

### **Just transition**

On March 12th, distributed actions calling for the government to pass the Just Transition act are being coordinated by the Council of Canadians and 350 Canada. Find your local action here: [350.org/just-transition-day-of-action/](https://350.org/just-transition-day-of-action/)

Further actions targeting big bank fossil fuel investments will be happening in April.

Climate Voice, the coalition of Indigenous, labour, social and climate justice groups that formed to organize the Nov 6 rally at Queen’s Park on the Global Day of Action for Climate Justice, is discussing plans for a mass mobilization in the spring, details coming soon.

In addition, we have to continue to provide ongoing support to the frontlines of Indigenous struggles standing up against mega project development, including the Wet’suwet’en land defenders who are taking a stand against the Coastal Gas Link project, backed by the Liberal federal government, the BC NDP government, Alberta pension plans, big banks, BC courts, RCMP and the fossil fuel industry. This cabal that rules energy policy in Canada will surely destroy the Earth as we know it if they are not stopped.

## Amnesty International: Israel is an apartheid state

by: **Sid Lacombe**

**A**mnesty International has released a new report labeling Israeli policies towards Palestinians as apartheid. It has been a long time coming but it is crucial that one of the largest human rights groups in the world has finally come around to that conclusion.

The report titled, *Israel’s Apartheid Against Palestinians: Cruel System Of Domination And Crime Against Humanity* is a comprehensive look at the systematic oppression of the Palestinian people.

The report states:

“Amnesty International has demonstrated that Israel has imposed a system of oppression and domination over Palestinians wherever it exercises control over the enjoyment of their rights – across Israel and the OPT (occupied Palestinian territories) and with regard to Palestinian refugees. The segregation is conducted in a systematic and highly institutionalized manner through laws, policies and practices, all intended to prevent Palestinians from claiming and enjoy-

ing equal rights to Jewish Israelis within Israel and the OPT, and thus intended to oppress and dominate the Palestinian people.

The organization has concluded that Israel has perpetrated the international wrong of apartheid, as a human rights violation and a violation of public international law wherever it imposes this system.”

This follows other groups including Human Rights Watch and B’tselem, the largest human rights group in Israel, who are labeling the system as apartheid.

Supporters of Israeli

policies are having an increasingly difficult time keeping the world in the dark about human rights abuses.

There have been mass mobilizations both last summer and in recent weeks against the ongoing eviction of Palestinians from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of east Jerusalem. Each mobilization builds the forces against the Israeli state.

On the question of Palestine the gap between our own imperialist leaders and the general public is growing. Attempts to

smear opponents of Israel as antisemites are falling flat.

The death of South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu became a flashpoint recently as well. Tutu, a leader in the movement against South African apartheid was clear in his writings about the similarity between the two apartheid systems. He stated, “I have witnessed the systemic humiliation of Palestinian men, women and children by members of the Israeli security forces. Their humiliation is familiar to all black South Africans who were corralled and harassed and insulted and assaulted by the security forces of the apartheid government.”

Official online obituaries for Tutu rarely mentioned his stance on Palestine but human rights activists used the comment and social media options to highlight his position despite attempts to shut them down. *The Guardian* newspaper in the UK went to far as to ban Tutu’s own words as against community standards in his obit.

This Amnesty report should help build the confidence of Palestinian rights activists and help to broaden the campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions against the apartheid state.

