

How to stop the far-right led 'convoys'

pages 4-5



Stop Ford! Say no to private hospitals

page 3



Socialist Worker

\$2 | No 641 | March 2022

socialist.ca

NO WAR IN UKRAINE Canada out of Eastern Europe

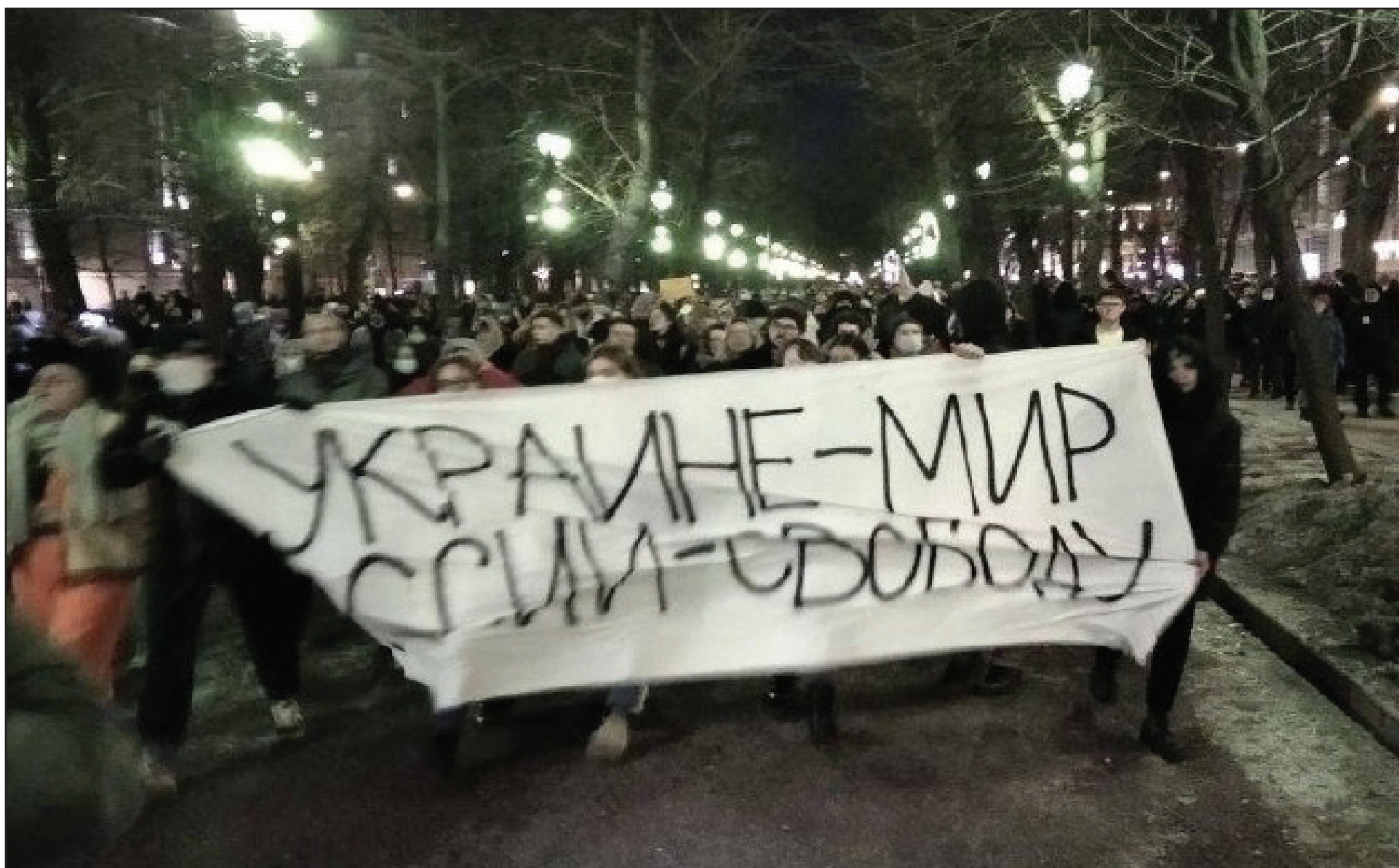


Photo: Anti-war protest in Moscow. Protests broke out across the country after the Russian invasion of Ukraine

Capitalism continues to lurch from one crisis to the next.

In Canada, far right led convoy protests have been wreaking havoc and building the forces of fascist groups.

The main organizers are known bigots. Many of them came to prominence during the 'yellow-vest' convoy movement which was racist, anti-union and funded by big oil companies angry at Trudeau's carbon tax.

Those same fossil fuel companies are now pushing for Canada to enact tougher sanctions against Russia. They believe that they can replace Russia as the main supplier of oil

and gas to Europe and a wider war suits their needs.

The sanctions will only make things worse for working people in Russia and around the world.

Inflation is already causing great hardship and the war is compounding the price rises. The price of energy is spiking everywhere and there are now fears of massive increases in the cost of wheat. The UN believes that approximately 1 billion people will no longer be able to afford bread because of the increased cost.

In the midst of these twin crises we saw

the release of the new IPCC report on climate change which showed that the capitalists are burning the planet at a much faster rate than shown in previous models.

Our political leaders, despite proclamations that they are taking climate change seriously have done virtually nothing to stop the warming.

Capitalism is literally killing us.

And the response from the ruling class is to introduce measures that will exacerbate the situation.

Doug Ford announced that Ontario will introduce private hospitals and the removal of

covid restrictions means a death sentence to millions of immunocompromised people.

The tasks for socialists and anyone who wants to see a world for people and not profit are immense.

But we also see the resistance is ever present. The convoy protests in Canada were blockaded and shut down by average people.

The anti-war movement, particularly in Russia show that people will fight back even under very difficult circumstances.

This issue of the Socialist Worker outlines the terrain we are living in and points to how workers can push back against the destruction.

Eugenics: The sinister ideology behind COVID “normalization”

The headline of the January 12 Bloomberg.com op/ed says it all: “Say Goodbye to Self-Isolating, WFH Mandates, Mass Testing.”

The authors boast, “The balance of power between human and virus is shifting. Better armed against a lesser enemy, our species no longer needs to hide in a bunker waiting for a viral wave to pass. That means it’s time for our Covid response to change.” Note the militaristic rhetoric.

It is one of hundreds of reports and opinion pieces appearing in the corporate media intended to “normalize” the ravages, death and destruction of COVID-19 and its variants.

Exhibit A: from January 21, by National Post Senior Writer Sharon Kirkey. “‘Very nice spring, very nice summer’: Omicron will bring us closer to normal, experts say”.

Too bad the actual article isn’t as reassuring as the rose-tinted headline. The expert quoted is Anna Bershteyn, an assistant professor at NYU. And her actual statement is admittedly based on “hope”, “...if I had to make a guess, I would say that what Omicron will probably give us is a period of respite.” Note the 3 qualifiers in that one short sentence.

This is not scientific information, it is the equivalent of “hopes and prayers”. Pseudo-science at best.

Here’s what they hope: Omicron will infect virtually all of the population, but it is as “mild” as it is virulent. In its wake it will leave a hardier humanity, with natural resistance to any nastier variants that may follow. So why try to stop it? Why bother testing for it? Why even keep track of its indicating numbers?

Omicron: get it and get over it

When pressed about the inevitable death toll, these opinion pieces blithely shrug it off. (On the day of writing 68 people died from COVID in Ontario.) The majority of deaths will be people with pre-existing medical conditions, anything from asthma to arthritis. It will be the elderly. It will be the weak and vulnerable.

Eugenics

There is a word for the belief that humanity can be made stronger, improved, by weeding out the weak and sick: eugenics. This set of beliefs and practices aims to improve the genetic quality of a human population, historically by excluding people and groups judged to be inferior or promoting those judged to be superior.

Eugenics got a pretty bad reputation in the 20th century thanks to its most enthusiastic practitioners: the Nazis. But Hitler and his followers were building their atrocities on the backs of pseudo-scientific ideas popular throughout the western world.

In Canada, through the 1920s and

30s, eugenics societies and clubs were everywhere. The earliest movements to create public health services were entangled with eugenics. Dr. Helen MacMurchy, a turn of the century pioneer for public health, was a tireless crusader for eliminating the inferior, the “feeble-minded”, from the population. She argued such people should not be allowed to reproduce.

In the minds of MacMurchy and her followers, being “feeble-minded” led to criminality, prostitution and moral depravity, and delinquency. And if they deemed that these traits were more prevalent in some races, then those races were inferior too.

MacMurchy’s brand of eugenics

1940s – the Holocaust – he rejected those ideas. But even while Mclung and the “Famous Five” were battling for recognition of personhood for women in Canadian law, she was a campaigner for the forced sterilization of the “feeble-minded”.

For them and their ideology, eugenics was “normal”.

While outright popularity of eugenics waned after the 1940s, the ideas and practices of institutionalization and forced sterilization lived on, particularly in Alberta. Laws allowing sterilization of “degenerates” remained on the books until 1972; 50 individuals were sterilized in that year.

public health to private, individual “self-management” (Henry’s phrase).

Ontario health officials have announced they are combing through the records of all the COVID deaths to determine how many of those where people with pre-existing conditions. Prepare for a new way of counting fatalities: those killed by COVID, and those who’s deaths are “associated with COVID”. The majority will be in the latter category.

This will allow the “get it, get over it” people to minimize the loss and suffering of tens of thousands past, and many more yet to come. They were weak. They were old. They

of new, and potentially more lethal variants to come.

It will mean creating 2 tiers of human beings, those who can fight off the viruses and those who can’t. Those include your grandparents, your friends who are fighting or have survived cancer, those with relatively mild respiratory conditions like asthma, those who are transplant recipients. In fact, why bother to perform some of the medical procedures that allowed those people to live long and productive lives before COVID.

The word “triage” has become common, grim medical decisions made in emergency circumstances as COVID victims outnumbered resources. But now the genie is out of the bottle. Will “triage” become regular medical practice? Unless significantly increased resources are invested in our public health system, that is likely. As more and more services are privatized, ask yourself: will a for-profit business invest expensive care in a patient with a pre-existing condition? Look at the track record of the US health system, dominated by private insurance companies to find the answer.

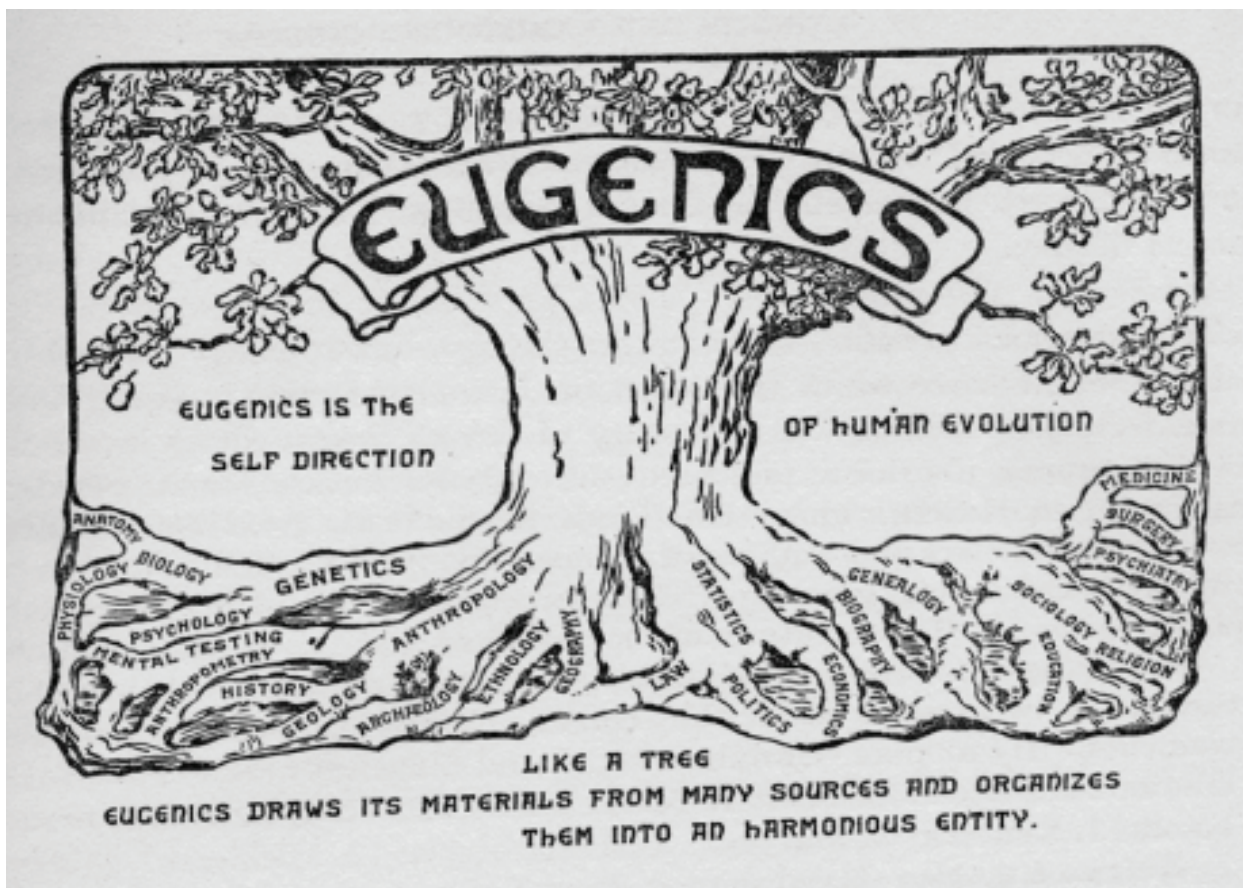
Human nature

The right-wing view of human nature is based on the assumption that capitalism is the perfect reflection of human behavior. It is an ahistorical and deeply flawed view. It is a logic that defines the vast majority of humanity as losers. It seeks to destroy our empathy and urge toward solidarity. Human need is not a guide for decision making. But capitalism is torn by a fatal flaw: it wants to treat workers as isolated, disposable parts; but to maintain its rate of profit it must bring workers together in large numbers to collaborate in production.

Another view of human nature, more consistent with the long history of human development, is that our species seeks to defend and protect weaker members. Current archeological research shows that our ancestors found ways to help elders or those with disability fit in and contribute as they could.

COVID has often brought out the best in most of our population, and the worst in the tiny subset who own and control production and profiteering. But now, after 2 years and more of personal effort and sacrifice, fatigue and depression are real factors. It is in that context that a propaganda campaign pushing a eugenics agenda – get it and get over it – is particularly dangerous.

The disability community and seniors are acutely aware of the danger they face. We know it is political decisions, prioritizing the economy over our health, that is the biggest threat. We know that ultimately, normalizing COVID means normalizing our untimely and unnecessary deaths.



seemed benign, for she argued that the “feeble-minded” should be treated with paternalistic care: “It is the age of true democracy that will not only give every one justice, but will redeem the waste products of humanity and give the mental defective all the chance he needs to develop his gifts and all the protection he needs to keep away from evils and temptations that he never will be grown-up enough to resist, and that society cannot afford to let him fall a victim to.”

What better way to help the inferior resist temptation than sexual sterilization. Not only would “degenerates” not pass their traits to their offspring, but their remaining lives would be happier and more pious.

These eugenicists convinced themselves they were doing a service to society and the victims as well. Icons of the left, like Tommy Douglas and Nellie Mclung, were influenced by eugenics. Douglas’s graduate thesis was a treatise on “The Problems of the Subnormal Family.” To his credit, when he witnessed to logical extremes of eugenics in the

As might be expected certain groups, especially Indigenous women, were targeted for forced sterilization. Indigenous people made up about 3% of Alberta’s population, but they accounted for about 25% of the forced sterilizations. Together with Residential Schools, eugenics was a tool of genocide and land theft.

2-Tiered humanity

It seems we’ve wandered a long way from where we started, the normalization of COVID. But there is a direct link to the neo-liberal ideology that rules almost uncontested in capitalism.

Alberta’s top doctor Deena Hinshaw, Ottawa’s CMHO Dr. Vera Etches and Ontario’s chief doctor Kieran Moore have all issued statements in recent days, arguing for the normalization of COVID Omicron. BC’s chief doctor, Bonnie Henry, argues that we should keep up the fight, sort of, but yes now is the time to learn to live with COVID.

In line with their shared ideology, they are stepping back from

were sick already. They don’t exactly deserve to die, but it was going to happen anyway, so what can you do....

If the word eugenics is out of style, all this fits with a reactionary, pseudo-scientific ideology of “human nature”. Survival of the fittest, law of the jungle, the clichés that have been used for centuries to justify racism, slavery and oppression.

These arguments all allow capitalism and its defenders off the hook for prioritizing profit-making and business as usual over public health and human need. Capitalism has used COVID as a cash grab. Our rulers refuse to suspend man-made patent laws and trade rules in order to make vaccines freely and universally available. In the name of “intellectual property” they have created a global petri dish where viruses thrive and mutate. And they will blame the results on “nature”.

Dismantling public health regulations won’t produce a stronger, healthier race. It will only make us more vulnerable to an endless parade

Stop Doug Ford's plan to privatize healthcare

by: **Sid Lacombe**

Ontario Health Minister, Christine Elliot announced that the Tories are going to introduce private hospitals in Ontario. She said that more health services will be delivered by 'independent' health facilities to overcome a backlog in cases resulting from the pandemic. Those independent facilities are mainly for-profit.

This is a major assault on the public health care system and will have devastating effects for years to come. It is a further erosion of the public system that has been reeling from cuts over the last decades. Those cuts are the reason there is a backlog. They have resulted in a system that is underfunded, understaffed and barely able to cope.

Private hospitals have been banned since 1972 but there have been many attempts to bring in private clinics for certain procedures. COVID is being used by the government as an excuse to expand the services covered by for-profit health centres.

The Tory plan will take resources out of the already underfunded public system and the result will be worse care and a further scarcity of nurses and doctors.

The Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) held press conferences across the province to denounce the plan and to spread the word about their campaign to stop the privatization scheme.

At the conference, Nathalie Mehra from OHC said, "We are here to raise the alarm. This is an unprecedented privatization of our health care and plans for austerity budgets after the election will lead to more privatization if they are not stopped. It is a mortal blow to our public health

system."

Long term care

Ford has been eying private health-care since elected and has cut health-care funding to the lowest levels per

eters inserted improperly to 24 hour spans without food and told of seniors who died of dehydration.

But people have little choice because of cuts to the public LTC system. Many people are forced onto

between the Tory party and the for-profit system. For example, former Premiers, Mike Harris and Ernie Eves are both making money off the private LTC homes. Harris has \$7 million in investments in LTCs alone.



capita in Canada.

He has recently privatized COVID testing services and announced that the government will pay for 18,000 long-term care (LTC) beds in private for-profit homes

Cathy Parkes whose father died in the for-profit Orchard Villa LTC home described the situation in the private system. She said that seniors face horrible conditions from cath-

long wait lists which means they have to go to the worse care in the for-profit system.

Not only has Ford not stopped this he is expanding privatized care and giving money to Orchard Villa and other LTC homes. These LTCs are being rewarded for killing seniors with cash and extended operating licences.

And there is a close relationship

Michael Hurley, President at Ontario Council of Hospital Unions said that we, "lost 4,000 residents in LTC homes during the pandemic but death rates were much higher in for-profit facilities. This case shows why for profit care doesn't work."

He cited a recent US study that found worse outcomes from the private system. As an example, the study found that death rates at private

dialysis clinics were 8 percent higher because they were using watered down blood cleaning products to increase profits.

Hurley closed his presentation by saying, "We need a popular uprising against for profit health care."

Crying poor

Ontario director for Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Randy Robinson said that the government isn't being truthful when they say they don't have the money. COVID has had a tiny effect on the provincial budget because of billions in funds coming from the federal government. Revenues in Ontario are 19 billion higher than was estimated in the budget documents one year ago. The Financial Accountability Office has said that Ontario's program spending is not keeping up with population growth and the needs of the people. It is expected that this will be worse under the next Tory budget should they win the election.

He said, "Why are you reducing revenues by 5 billion through tax cuts for the rich if you say you are so broke?" He also noted that revenues lost from the elimination of the licence plate sticker program could pay for 11,000 new nurses.

The OHC conference also outlined a campaign to push back against the Tory plan.

Mehra described it as, "the largest fightback campaign ever taken." Emergency summits will begin soon across the province to mobilize people to stop Ford.

Canadians overwhelmingly support the public health system and will fight to stop this erosion of services.

Please see: ontariohealthcoalition.ca for more details.

Living with Covid in Saskatchewan

by: **Christine Wiercinski**

Scott Moe and his Saskatchewan Party government want people to deal with COVID on their own.

They cut COVID vaccination verification and isolation of infected people. Mask mandates are gone. It is illegal to demand people to wear a mask.

Medical experts and hospital staff are asking to wait until there is improvement in spread of the disease. Wastewater testing shows a small improvement. But actual testing is limited to hospitals, vulnerable communities (nursing homes), where the number of people with COVID rose to 410 people, a rise of 26%.

There has been 63 deaths so far in the month of February with 42 dying in the last week. This is before the mask mandate is lifted. Medical experts predict more significant rises in COVID infections.

What is Moe's response? Decrease testing and only report once a week. Don't listen to the health experts but support the truck convoy

that crippling border crossings and the city and people of Ottawa.

Unified Grassroots, an online Facebook group that promotes anti-vaccination and opposes public health health measures also seems to get listened to when deciding on policy. Of course hatred and potential violent acts are only from a "few bad apples". The rest only want unity, love, freedom, and peace – like the blockaders at Coutts who had an arsenal hidden..

Moe certainly did not show the same understanding for the Indigenous protesters against the Coastal GasLink pipeline that blocked the railways in 2020; or when Tristen Durocher held a hunger strike to protest the high Indigenous suicide rates in Northern Sask.; or when he went to the courts to evict a teepee settlement in Wascana Centre in Regina.

His idea for help for a crumbling healthcare system is to invite more private clinics to take over repairing knees and hips and whatever else he can think of to privatize. This will only give us a two tier health system and adds to the backlog of

operations.

The unions are asking what staff will they use in all these facilities. Recruitment to healthcare has always been a problem and is



worse after this government's lack of support for healthcare workers.

The public workers, nurses, teachers and teaching assistants, that were on the front line of COVID are now on the front line of cuts, privat-

ization and union busting.

Indigenous groups remind him constantly there are problems to fix. Highways, other infrastructure concerns, negotiations for better mental

healthcare (addictions and suicide prevention), negotiations for more sustainable economic pursuits, and help to uncover unmarked graves in residential schools to name a few issues.

Leaders in Northern communities are expecting help from their provincial government, not total abdication to the federal government. Healthcare and educational workers are exhausted, demoralized and getting fed up. As in other provinces there is an increase in sick-time and workers either leaving or moving to another position. Workers will be in good positions when contracts are due to proposed action. There are some protests with petition signing or taking full page ads in the newspaper. There were even rallies in Regina and Saskatoon. The one in Saskatoon last week had a few hundred to support healthcare workers and keep some COVID restrictions.

One of the Sask. Health Authority coordinators of rural health is leaving for Ontario as a doctor citing poor decisions of the government to handle the pandemic.

The one thing that is very clear is that this government only cares about whoever can forward their right wing agenda and only listen to those who support them. As their ideas will not help anyone, the fightback can only get stronger.

HOW DO WE STOP THE FAR-RIGHT?

While the far-right led convoy has been pushed off the streets of Ottawa, they are reappearing in places across the country. There is still much to do to stop the spread of this movement and to end the threat of racist violence that comes in the wake of their mobilizations. Below and on the next page we look at the protests that have stopped the bigots and outline the next steps in the struggle.

Ottawa mobilization stops them on the streets

After weeks of far-right led convoy protests which took over cities and border crossings, working people had enough and are taking matters into their own hands.

While the main convoy in Ottawa was eventually moved out of the city, the bigots who organized them have not gone away and they are still mobilizing in a number of locations.

In Ottawa, the epicentre of the bigot occupation, people mobilized in neighbourhoods around the city to block the convoys. At Bank St and Riverside Ave, the largest blockade, hundreds of people gathered to stop a line of mainly pick up trucks and SUVs. They stayed in place throughout the day demanding that the trucks go home. Eventually the convoy participants were allowed to leave but only if they removed their stickers and flags.

It was a humiliating defeat for the convoy and one that was repeated in many cities. In Edmonton, people set up a blockade and forced the convoy to turn around and not drive the provincial legislature. In Winnipeg, anti-racist activists took over the lawn of the legislature to deny access. There were similar actions in other cities and towns.

This is how we defeat the far-right. We stop them on the streets.

There is a thread of liberal thought that wants the police or the military to deal with the convoys. But putting more power into the hands of the state will not solve the problem. Whenever new powers are granted to the authorities, they will be used

against the left.

In Toronto, after far right groups began organizing rallies at city hall in 2017 a similar plan to ban them was proposed by the city council. When the motion was made public, however, the first group named and targeted as extremists by the ban was the annual Al Quds day rally for Palestinian rights.

While there is a real desire to shut down the avenues for the right to grow, we know that the state will not get this job done.

The obvious collusion between the police and the support given to the far-right by the media and conservative politicians shows whose side they are on.

Canada is a country that is built on the genocide of Indigenous peoples and the actions of the state itself are what are propagating the racism in our society. Trudeau may say nice things about opposing racists but he then pushes for more attacks on Indigenous land defenders.

Racism comes from the top of society and those that perpetuate it will not stop it.

To see an example of how to defeat the far right we need only look to Greece. The anti-fascist group Keerfa was able to defeat Golden Dawn fascists through organizing with immigrant and refugee organizations, the trade unions and the left. This broad mobilization gave confidence to progressive movements and led to demoralization and drop in popularity of the far right. Yes, the courts intervened but the groundwork that really stopped the fascists was laid



by the movement.

A state crackdown won't stop the rise of the far-right. That can only be done with a 2 pronged strategy. As Socialist Tony Cliff stated:

"Our policy of fighting fascism was two-track: attacking the rats and

attacking the sewers in which the rats multiply. Fighting the fascists is not enough. One has also to fight the unemployment, low wages and social deprivation that create conditions for the growth of fascism."

The left in the Canadian state can

and must protest these ongoing mobilizations from the right. There are expected counter demonstrations being planned in locations across the country as new convoy protests sprout up. It is crucial that these events are built and broadened. The majority of people are opposed to the convoys and are looking for a lead.

That lead is starting to develop. Unions are now organizing to oppose the attacks on working people that these convoys represent. But that only came about by developing pressure from below. The NDP and the major union federations were largely absent up to that point, doing nothing more than posting strongly worded statements.

The total absence of a coordinated fightback on key issues confronting workers during the pandemic – from income support to paid sick days to Bill 124 to healthcare funding – has shamefully left the field open for the right to seize the initiative.

We need to build a fighting left that can not only stop the right in this current manifestation but also provide a political alternative for the many thousands who have suffered under the pandemic. That means fighting for proper healthcare funding, taking on bill 124 and campaigning for supports for essential workers including paid sick days.

The political polarization that we have been watching over the past number of years is intensifying. The anti-fascist blockades we saw this weekend prove that there are thousands of people who want to fight for a better world.

Attacks against elected reps smell like far-right violence

by: **John Bell**

In the last few months, federal, provincial, and local elected representatives have seen their offices and homes targeted with violence. These are not random attacks. They come in the lead up to, during, and in the wake of the far-right-led convoy movement. These tactics are consistent with the street violence of fascist and white supremacist organizations.

In December, progressive and pro-public health St Catharines councillor Karrie Porter had her home vandalized, part of a campaign of harassment from far-right anti-vaxxers. About a month later they returned to throw a large rock through her front window.

In January, Jill Andrew found her constituency office had been defiled by a large container of feces, and eggs. The Toronto NDP MPP is a woman of colour and a strong advocate for the LGBTQ+ community.

On February 15, Tory MPP Lisa Thompson had her office-front smeared with red paint. The Huron-Bruce rep is one of the few

Conservatives to be targeted, but the Doug Ford Tories were not considered to be enthusiastic enough supporters of the convoy's right-wing supporters.

Just the day before, in Welland, Liberal MP Vance Badaway's office had its front window smashed. He told the press that he had received so many threatening calls and messages during the convoy blockades that he



had instructed his staff to work from home and had left his office closed.

On February 19, NDP MPP Doly Begum's office window was smashed. Begum represents Scarborough Southwest. The attack on her office came at midday on a Saturday.

The attacks are not limited to Ontario. In Parksville, on Vancouver

Island, workers at NDP MP Gord Johns' constituency office arrived to find windows and the door smashed.

At almost the same time, about 100 K up island, another NDP MP was targeted. MP Rachel Blaney's office windows and doors were covered in anti-vaxx graffiti.

There may well be more examples in other parts of the country, and fears of more violence to come. This was the real threat the convoy posed, of far-right groups becoming linked, and their members becoming bolder with their racism, bigotry and violence. The threat is far from over, even if the trucks are gone.

One thing the convoy revealed, there are far-right social media "news" sources that would share such stories approvingly, encouraging other thugs to follow suit.

It is worth noting that the left, including myself, have a history of demonstrating at MP and MPP offices. When we do it, we do it in public, with banners and signs stating our grievances, with the intent of engaging local people in discussion. We don't come like cowards in the night.

Peterborough/Lindsay stand up to fascist forces



by: **Peter Votsch**

High School students in Lindsay have organized to push back against an anti-vax group that had taken over part of the downtown on Saturdays, they have been joined by trade unionists and activists from the Lindsay & District Labour Council, CUPE, and the Northumberland Coalition for Social Justice. They have also received support from The Peterborough & District Labour Council, the Peterborough & District CUPE Council, and CUPE Local 997 (Public School Board workers in Lindsay). They plan to stay on the streets as long as the anti-vaxxers are present.

The picket takes place Saturdays, in Lindsay, from 1-3 pm, at the corner of Kent & Victoria Sts.

New Ottawa coalition bulding a hate free zone

by: **Chantal Sundaram**

Organizers and supporters of Community Solidarity Ottawa, a new coalition that emerged to challenge the far-right-led trucker convoy that occupied downtown Ottawa, gathered in a park in centre town today to declare Ottawa a "hate free zone" with information tables, music and anti-racist speeches. Afterwards participants fanned out in the neighbourhood to put up posters and hand out leaflets for a march against hate in Ottawa's centre town on Saturday March 5 at 1pm.

Visit CommunitySolidarityOttawa.ca for details.



Community solidarity groups form across Canada



by: **Carolyn Egan**

The people of Ottawa mobilized against the siege of their city by a truck convoy that was organized by the far right, funded by the far right, and led by the far right. Thousands of local residents marched under the banner of Community Solidarity Ottawa led the by the Public Service Alliance of Canada and other trade unions and community groups. They demanded that the protesters leave their city and end the harassment that they had been subjected too.

The following day residents came out of their homes stopping two separate convoys entering the city to join the demonstration on Parliament Hill. The counter protest grew all day long until there were over one thousand in the streets. They kept the blockade in place for over seven hours and only allowed the trucks and cars to go, one by one, after removing their flags and banners. They left demoralized having been unable to enter the centre of the city.

This is the way to push back the growing far right movement in this country that has been unfortunately drawing supporters who feel disenfranchised and voiceless. In times of crisis people can be drawn to the right as well as the left. We are seeing a growing polarization, though it is still a small minority that is accepting the ideology of the right, and we have to organize against it.

Whenever and wherever the far right shows itself we have to mobilize large numbers of trade unionists, racialized communities, and other progressive peoples to show concretely that we are the majority.

We have to put forward clear demands and an alternative vision of creating a world without the exploitation and oppression that is grinding people down and taking

away hope.

The city of Toronto was also locked down for a number of weekends because of smaller convoys showing support for those demonstrating in Ottawa. A demonstration called by health care workers, who had been subject to abuse by right wing anti-vaxers at their workplaces, marched to Toronto General Hospital demanding that the harassment stop.

Shortly after that the Toronto and York Region Labour Council and other anti-racist and community groups came together to form Community Solidarity Toronto. It was a broad grouping forming a new united front against the far right. Its



first act was to call a demonstration at city hall square. It was well attended with representatives driving from Ottawa to share their experience of organizing the fight back there.

There were speakers from labour, from the health care sector, from anti-racist organizations and others talking about the need for unity and the importance of continuing the mobilizations. We have seen the rise of the far right in many areas around the world, and there are lessons to be learned such as the defeat of the fascist Golden Dawn in Greece. It was ongoing organizing that brought an end to this neo nazi group drawing people to its banner. This is the model that we must use to confront the threat we are facing.

Community Solidarity groups are now forming in other cities in Canada as well. In Toronto our next action will be organizing a demonstration on Saturday, March 19 for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. We will be joining with others in Europe, Africa and Latin America challenging racism and the rise of the far right showing the international solidarity that is so critical in these times. We hope others in cities across Canada will join us!

Before Black Lives Matter: Black Action Defense Committee

by: **John Bell**

In Ontario, if you were at all involved in politics in the 1980s you immediately encountered three catalytic organizations.

There was the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) formed in 1982 from the ongoing struggles of women for full access to free abortion.

There was Pride Toronto, formed in 1981 in response to LGBTQ+ oppression, and in particular regular police harassment and violence. This peaked in 1981 when over 300 people were arrested in one night during a sweep of popular Toronto bathhouses.

And there was the Black Action Defense Committee (BADC), founded in 1988.

BADC was certainly not the first anti-racism organization in Toronto, or in Canada. But it – as did the other 2 organizations mentioned above – mobilized large public rallies and marches in addition to education, lobbying and legal tactics. All 3 organizations began in response to violence from the police, judiciary and government.

With the wave of immigration during the 1970s from the Caribbean and Africa, came the criminalization of Black Canadians. In 2014 Blacks accounted for 3.5% of the population, but almost 9% of prison inmates. During the decade 2003-2013 Black incarceration increased by 90%.

This was a result of systemic racism within the courts and policing. Often, Black defendants were given longer, harsher sentences. And racial profiling targeting young Black men was standard police policy.

It also resulted in a long list of Blacks, mostly men, many with mental health issues, shot and killed by police. In Toronto, the high profile cases of Buddy Evans (1978) and Albert Johnson (1979) brought protesters to the streets. Then in 1988 Lester Donaldson was shot and killed by police while sitting on his boarding room bed. The victim had a long history of hospitalization and mental health issues, and according to reports produced a small paring knife to defend himself from the 5 TPS officers in his room.

This shooting was far from the last, but it was the catalyst for the creation of BADC, dedicated to exposing and opposing racist police violence. The founding members were 4 civil rights activists with deep roots in Black communities: Dudley Laws, Charles Roach, Sherona Hall and Lennox Farrell. There were many other long-time members,

including well-known community and union activist Owen Sankara Leach.

BADC organized public protests which drew thousands into the street behind two central demands: an end to racist police procedures like “carding”; and creation of an independent, civilian oversight body to make police accountable.

A few months later BADC was mobilizing again, this time after the shooting death of Michael Wade Lawson, an unarmed 17-year-old car thief. Months of organizing and public pressure forced the Ontario government of Liberal David Peterson to create an inquiry into racism and policing. One of the results

broken store windows on Yonge Street, and a long, loud day of protest. Police and media called it a riot – if it was, it was incited by police over-reaction.

One of the first initiatives of the Mike Harris Tories, in 1996, was to roll back police reform in the name of “cutting red tape”. It introduced Bill 105, drafted after consultation with police organizations but no community groups, which undermined any civilian oversight. BADC lobbied hard against it, arguing “Bill 105 totally destroys the principles of police accountability, accessibility, fairness and impartiality.” To no avail.



Lennox Farrell speaks at an early meeting to BADC

was the creation of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) in 1990. Although history has exposed the SIU as being toothless, unable to compel officers under investigation to cooperate, and biased in favour of police, at the time it was seen as a positive reform.

Rodney King protest

In 1992, the unprovoked racist beating of Rodney King by LAPD officers sparked solidarity rallies all over North America. In Toronto, BADC organized a rally and march of several thousand Black community members and allies. When the angry march headed for the upscale Yorkville commercial district, police quickly blocked the march and used violence to stop it. The result was a few

Cultural work

Although struggles against racist cops and courts was central to BADC, they were also rooted in community and cultural work. It launched the Freedom Cipher, which concentrated on creating employment and education opportunities for youth in underserved, predominantly Black neighbourhoods like Jane/Finch. These initiatives showed real promise but lacked the resources to make a big difference.

In 1989 the Royal Ontario Museum exposed its racist, colonialist roots with a major exhibition called “Out of Africa”. It was mostly comprised of artifacts taken from African nations by several generations of

Anglo missionaries and soldiers. The show was organized without any consultation or input from African scholars or African-Canadian communities, and BADC led a series of high-profile information pickets and protests at the museum. The public stayed away in droves and in 2016, the ROM issued a belated, retroactive apology for the exhibit, and for the tone deaf way it met criticism from the Black community.

BADC was also notable for always showing up in solidarity with communities subjected to legal prejudice and police harassment.

Because of its significant successes mobilizing against police, BADC leaders and activists were subjected to a decades long series of surveillance and harassment. Millions were spent spying on them, secretly tapping their homes and phones. There was an attempt to frame Charles Roach, an immigration lawyer, in an illegal immigration setup, but it was too clumsy, and Roach was too canny, and it was easily exposed and discredited.

In subsequent years BADC gave up its focus on organizing in the streets, and focused on lobbying and legal actions. But disproportionate police violence against Blacks continued, disproportionate incarceration of Blacks continued, racial profiling against Black youth continues.

Stepping into the vacuum left by BADC, inspired by towering figures like Dudley Laws and Sherona Hall, and the activism it achieved at its peak, is a new generation of anti-racist activists to put the police on notice. Groups like Black Lives Matter <https://www.blacklivesmatter.ca> have moved beyond calling for civilian oversight – they demand “Defund the Police”.

This article is dedicated to the memory of our friend and comrade, Owen Leach (1935-2022)

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.

Find us on: @socialist_ca /socialistca socialist.ca

Never miss an issue.

Yearly subscription **\$30**

Institutions, 1st Class & U.S. **\$50** international: **\$60**

Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Mail to: PO Box 339, Station E,
Toronto, ON Canada, M6H 4E3
Phone: 416.972.6391 / E-mail: reports@socialist.ca

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

Join the Socialists

Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Fill in the form and send to **International Socialists**, PO Box 339 Station
E Toronto ON M6H 4E3
416.972.6391 / reports@socialist.ca



No War in Ukraine! Canada out of Eastern Europe

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is a dangerous escalation that could devolve into a much larger war and must be opposed. Russia needs to pull its troops back and cease any further attacks.

Ukraine is once again paying the price as a state stuck in between two major imperialist rivals - Russia and the US-led NATO alliance. Neither of these sides is motivated by the interests of the Ukrainian people. The lives of innocent Ukrainians will be lost because of the intractability of capitalist competition.

This could have been stopped through negotiation but the drive by NATO powers to surround Russia continued unabated. This expansion process - started after the fall of the Eastern Bloc at the end of the cold war - is the original source of this round of conflict in the region. The US reneged on promises to end NATO expansion eastward. They are determined to not allow Russia to gain an advantage and potentially become a rival to the US led world order.

Likewise, Russian expansionism is a hostile force and Russian attacks from Georgia to Crimea show that brutality. Their recent attempts to curtail the uprising in Kazakhstan highlight that Putin is no friend of



working people.

But our politicians and media will make the case that this conflict is a result of Russian aggression alone while minimizing or neglecting to mention the decades of ruthless NATO wars and expansionism.

The massing of troops by both sides is the result of that NATO design. It was only a matter of time before that standoff became a full fledged conflict.

How do we oppose the war from Canada?

Canada has played a terrible role in all of this. Successive Canadian governments have sent military equipment, planes, troops and lethal weaponry to the region making it a much more dangerous place. And we have been training fascists within the Ukrainian military.

Large sections of Canadian capital - crucially the fossil fuel sector - have wanted this war to happen for years. They believe that Canadian LNG can replace Russian energy

exports to Western Europe. The National Post gleefully greeted the news of this war with the headline, "Ukraine Crisis puts East Coast LNG back on the map."

We need to call for Canada to bring its troops, warplanes and weaponry home and away from the conflict zones in Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, the Trudeau government sent an additional 450 troops to Latvia when Russia recognized the breakaway republics in eastern Ukraine. That is exactly the kind of response that will further inflame tensions in the region. They are throwing gasoline onto a fire.

The intractability of both sides in the failed negotiations is not an aberration but is a reflection of a central dynamic of capitalism that forces competition between states. Until we get rid of the system that creates these impasses we will never be rid of the scourge of war.

Oppose Canada's involvement in the war. Bring the troops home!

Sanctions and no-fly zone: A recipe for bigger war

Hard sanctions against Russia will hit ordinary people and are driving the ferment of war. The US and its Western allies have agreed to impose curbs on the Russian central bank, stopping it from using its reserves of foreign currencies. This has led to massive inflationary pressures in Russia.

And the West has removed a group of the country's lenders from the Swift messaging system—which is crucial for global payments.

A White House press briefing on Monday, attributable only to a "senior administration official", brought home the planned nature of the moves.

The officials said, "Our sanctioning of the Russian Central Bank, which we're taking with Germany, France, the UK, Italy, Japan, Canada, the European Union, and others—with the culmination of months for planning and preparation across our respective governments; across technical, diplomatic, and political channels, including at the highest levels. No country is sanctions-proof when we act together."

They added, "The rouble is in freefall, and soon you'll see inflation spike and economic activity contract." This is a form of punishment against ordinary Russians.

The West believes that this will build a movement against Vladimir Putin. But it could equally rally support behind him and make it easier for him to slur brave anti-war protesters as stooges of a vengeful Nato.

Yet almost all of the criticism of the sanctions is that they don't go far enough. We don't need more "effective" sanctions against Russia's population—that are never applied against the West for its imperial wars.

Oil and gas prices are likely to soar if the conflict continues. Germany blocked approval for the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline last week. This caused benchmark gas prices in Europe to shoot up by as much as 13 percent. This is likely to see retaliation.

Gideon Rachman, writing in the Financial

Times, says, "If Russia cuts off gas supplies to Europe, then consumers and industry will suffer badly...the whole of the Western world could be tipped into recession and inflation".

And the disruption to world trade will hit some of the poorest people in the world. The price of food has already risen sharply in the last two years because of the pandemic.

Between April 2020 and December 2021, the price of wheat increased 80 percent, according to data from the International Monetary Fund. That was on a par with rising

wheat prices and prices of bread for ordinary people."

Together Ukraine and Russia produce about a quarter of the world's wheat. About 12 percent of wheat and 13 percent of corn production comes from Ukraine. Exports of grain from Russia will likely be on hold or face delays, according to the Russian Union of Grain Exporters. The delay will greatly impact large buyers of grain from the Black Sea. This primarily includes countries in the Middle East and Africa.



costs for corn and higher than increases for soybeans or coffee.

With the conflict food prices are set to soar even further. As World Trade Organisation director general Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said, "There will be a big impact with respect to

The Tunisian government is already beginning to look into importing wheat from elsewhere. And in Egypt, which imports 50 percent of its wheat from Russia and 30 percent from Ukraine, delays could see ordinary people go hungry.

'No fly zone' is a recipe for a bigger war

Some UK Tories have demanded a "no-fly zone" to prevent Russian military aircraft operating over Ukraine. It sounds like an alternative to war, but it's a precursor to a wider conflict.

Former cabinet minister David Davis said, "It is far too late to get boots on the ground but it is not too late to provide air support to the Ukrainian army."

And the chair of the Commons Defence Committee, Tobias Ellwood, said "We've now got to assist Ukraine militarily, and look to see how that can be done."

"Whether it be with our weapon systems, a no-fly zone, we need to be far more front-footed on this." Such statements underline that no-fly zones, blockades and similar manoeuvres lead inevitably to armed confrontation and wider war.

How the West wrecked Libya

The establishment of a no-fly zone over Libya in 2011 was the first step in a much wider war. The only exception is where the opponent is very weak compared to the Western forces—such as when Britain, the US and France imposed them over Iraq from 1991 to 2003.

These led to over 1,000 Iraqi civilian deaths from bombing and prepared the ground for disastrous future invasion. British government officials privately admitted the West used the zones to weaken Iraq's air defence systems instead of the stated aim of defending ordinary people.

But in the case of Ukraine a no-fly zone would have to be imposed on a massive Russian force, and would lead swiftly to fighting. Even British defence Secretary Ben Wallace admitted it would mean "Nato would have to effectively declare war on Russia because that's what you would do." Nobody on the left should be pulled behind such ideas.

Republished from the Socialist Workers Party: swp.org.uk

IPCC: “Rapidly closing window to secure a liveable future”

The new report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change outlines a dire situation for people and the planet.

The report estimates that about half of the global population - 3.6 billion people - are now in the danger zone and will face the worst consequences of the climate disaster.

Most of those people are poor and live in the global south even though most of the emissions come from the northern industrial countries.

And those emissions are still rising. According to a recent Berkeley Earth study, the planet will hit the 1.5 degree threshold by 2033.

The last seven years were the seven warmest ever recorded.

Fires, flooding, drought and species loss will cause the largest impacts and will make hundreds of millions of people each year lose their source of livelihood. Farmers and rural workers will be most effected and some low lying cities will also be destroyed.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres spoke about the report's findings:

“Today’s IPCC report is an atlas of human suffering and a damning indictment of failed climate leadership. With fact upon fact, this report reveals how people and the planet are getting clobbered by climate change. Nearly half of humanity is living in the danger zone now. Many ecosystems are at the point of no return now. Unchecked carbon pollution is forcing the world’s most vulnerable on a



frogmarch to destruction now. The facts are undeniable. This abdication of leadership is criminal. The world’s biggest polluters are guilty of arson on our only home.”

The arsonists

Canada is not only contributing to the arson of the planet but is actively expanding fossil fuels’ production and distribution. The Canadian state is pushing new pipelines through Indigenous land and the oil and gas companies are looking to use the war in Ukraine to expand markets for their products.

Our government is actively making things worse to make a few oil barons richer.

And we are not doing nearly enough to mitigate the impacts of climate chaos. In fact, rich countries have largely abdicated their responsibility to protect the most vulnerable. They really don’t care about the billions who will suffer.

A renewed climate change movement is needed now. The March 25 global day of action under the banner “People not Profit” is a great place to start.

And in Canada the fight for climate justice means taking on the big polluters who are destroying the planet and urging war.

That means siding with Indigenous Land Defenders who are opposing the CGL pipeline on Wet’suwet’en territory and campaigning against the expansion of LNG production across the country.

University faculty striking back!

by: Pam Johnson

Faculty at Acadia University, Ontario Tech University, and the University of Lethbridge are currently on strike.

These strikes follow successful strikes at the University of Manitoba in December and Concordia University of Edmonton in January which was the first ever Alberta faculty strike that forced stonewalling employers back to the table. And, more university faculties are taking strike votes in the coming weeks.

The issues in all of these strikes are remarkably similar: crushing workloads for all faculty, increasing part-time, precarious jobs, no wage increases, and lack of diversity and equity in hiring.

University administrations have attempted to use the chaos and uncertainty of the pandemic to bully and stonewall faculties in bargaining. The Ontario Tech University Faculty Association (UOITFA) stated, “The University held firm on its ‘Final Offer’ that was rejected by 80% of our members...the University refused to engage with any of the UOITFA asks or priorities”.

The complete refusal to actually negotiate is the same situation that every striking faculty association has faced. On top of this, wage cap legislation brought in by conservative governments, including Alberta, Ontario and Manitoba, have been used as an excuse not to bargain. “We just feel like the government is in their back pocket or in that room with them, and that’s not appropriate. The university is to be independent from the government,” said University of Manitoba Faculty Association

president Orvie Dingwall.

Where a bargaining impasse would usually generally move negotiations to arbitration, Universities, like Ontario Tech, have refused to allow this to happen.

The pandemic has exacerbated the already

deteriorating working conditions which is the result of decades of underfunding, refusal to create full-time jobs, contracting out and inequity.

Faculty, who faced huge workload increases when they made a quick pivot to on-line, are

saying enough is enough and taking strike action.

Student support

Students who have also faced continual chaos and uncertainty, are supporting striking faculty. In two years of the pandemic, universities have created huge strain on students. Faculty have been the front-line supporting students through the twists and turns of the pandemic.

Students see that it is the administration, not faculty, making the decisions impacting them.

Students have been organizing solidarity, showing up at picket lines and calling out the administration.

During the University of Manitoba strike in December, students blockaded all entrances to the administration building. “There’s a fear students have that the administration just isn’t listening,” one student supporter said. “We’re going to keep showing up whether or not they’re listening and we’re going to try our best to make it so that they have to listen.”

Lethbridge students organized a rally in support of faculty prior to the strike. One student said, “I am a disability student and the last two years have been a complete nightmare. Most people would be dropping out. It hasn’t been administration or anyone else reaching out to us, it’s been our faculty”.

Striking university faculty are leading the pandemic strike back among public sector workers that started last fall. They are showing the way to fight for public education and push back employers trying to use the pandemic to erode working conditions.

