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Prices skyrocket while corporations make billions

MAKE THE RICH PAY



Vancouver hotel workers struck for better wages and working conditions.

How Tories and Liberals set the table for healthcare privatization

Ontario's healthcare system is in crisis and the Doug Ford Tory government is going in for the kill.

The voices of nurses, doctors, paramedics and health care workers are virtually unanimous. They describe an underfunded, understaffed service, personnel burnt out and quitting, workplace injury and assault, and patients suffering needlessly.

"Common Sense" austerity

Not that healthcare was flourishing before Doug Ford. The "Common Sense" Mike Harris government closed 28 Ontario hospitals, laid off 6,000 nurses and cut another 28,000 jobs from the public health sector. Many of those were good paying union jobs, replaced by privatized cleaning and nutrition companies paying low wages and few benefits.

At the time Harris compared nurses to workers in a hula-hoop factory: obsolete. Under his regime, corporate seniors care corporations like Extendicare, Revera and Chartwell were given free rein in Ontario as provincial and municipal seniors homes were privatized.

You also might recall that Harris has been cashing in royally on this privatization of health services. Two years after leaving office Harris became chair of Chartwell's board of directors and continued until his connection to the disastrous, even murderous COVID crisis in long term care gained him too much notoriety.

He and his wife Laura also bought the Toronto franchise of a private nursing home-care business

called Nurse Next Door in 2012. So he got to hire back those hula-hoop workers he laid off at lower pay.

Liberal cuts

The Liberal governments of McGuinty and Wynne didn't undo these cuts and privatizations. Quite the opposite. In 2014 McGuinty laid off another 1,900 nurses, driving more of them to work for for-profit health businesses. The Liberals promised to economize by "reforming" and reorganizing the system – that meant closing ER services in many hospitals, like the Mindemoya Hospital on Manitoulin Island. Across the province, health units lost beds, and communities like Fort Erie saw their ER shut permanently.

A personal aside. My cousin Mary lived on the southern end of Manitoulin Island, and was dealing with aggressive cancer. She received compassionate care from the health centre in Mindemoya, a 15 minute drive from her home. Under the Liberal "reforms" these services were discontinued. This sick woman was forced to drive for hours to Sudbury – far from her community support – to get treatment.

Delisting: privatization by inches

Many services once covered by OHIP have been delisted over the years, an invitation for private healthcare to nibble around the edges of the public service.

Most prominent is eyecare. Eye exams and optometrist care was first limited to 1 appointment every

2 years, and then cut. This has been happening, slowly, for almost 20 years. In 2001 the Harris Tories allowed the creation of private eye clinics, like the Ivey Clinic. A 2-tier system now operates. In 2012 the McGuinty Liberals delisted and limited access to diagnostic testing for glaucoma and macular degeneration, driving more people facing the threat of blindness into expensive private care.



Other services that have been discontinued by previous governments:

*Physio therapy
Most cosmetic work
Registered massage therapy
Dental work performed by a dentist
Ambulance transportation
Travel medicine*

While Ford is right to point a finger at previous governments – although he never mentions his mentor, Harris – it should be noted that his first budget in 2019 almost doubled the number of delisted

services, including pre-operative assessments, sinus x-rays, and cardiac HOLTER testing.

Nothing but the best for our betters

Ontario's rich have long been catered to by private clinics and hospitals. Some specialize in a limited range of services, others offer more general care in a manner to which the elite have grown

Medcan Clinics were started in 1989, first offering ancillary services like private nursing, and growing quietly into a comprehensive service employing more than 60 doctors. Prices "start" at \$2600 for a 5-hour health assessment. If you've got it, they'll find it. Valet parking, gourmet coffee and snacks are on the house.

For just \$3300/year you can get instant service 24/7 from Healthcare 365, opened in 2010. It prides itself on filling the "systemic gaps" in public health, gaps its lobbyists pushed to open in the first place.

The Cleveland Clinic opened in Toronto in 2006, part of a US chain famously endorsed by Barack Obama. It offers instant care for elite athletes and corporate bosses alike. Executive health plans start at \$3150/year.

For the middle management types Medisys offers a comprehensive assessment and a year's membership for the low, low price of \$1500. It is one of the longest running private health services – it opened in 1987, under Liberal premier David Peterson. It should be noted that the Bob Rae NDP government that replaced Peterson did nothing to shut down this pioneering private clinic.

That was healthcare terrain that Doug Ford inherited – privatization by stealth through hospitals closures, staff layoffs, budget cuts and delisting of services. And slowly but surely a 2-tier system has been created – first catering only to the elite, but now being opened up for corporate thieves like Galen Weston and his monstrous Shoppers Drugmart chain.

Secret deal with Vatican: Harper sold out Residential School victims

Now that the Pope's so-called apology tour is in the books, secret documents have been released under freedom of information showing the Catholic church, in Canada and in the Vatican, had no intention of paying the more than \$25 million restitution to victims of their Indian Residential Schools.

To date the church has paid about \$3.5 million of its obligation to survivors and the families of victims. They have said they would make "best effort" to fund-raise the rest from church-goers.

In 2015, in the dying days of Stephen Harper's Tory regime, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt signed off on a backroom deal letting the Catholic church off the hook. The newly released docu-

ments say, in part: "Canada does hereby remise, release and forever discharge the Catholic entities – its directors, officers, shareholders, agents, lawyers, and employees – of and from all manners of actions, causes of action, suits, debts, dues, accounts, bonds whatsoever against the releasees."

It says the Canadian government "covenants and agrees" not to aid IRS victims in any legal proceedings against the church.

People may recall that Valcourt,

as an opposition MP, dismissed the charge of genocide in the final report from the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls as "propagandist".

The language of his deal is so broad and sweeping that Indigenous advocates concede there is no hope of legal appeal.

The current Liberal government, and Indigenous Relations Minister Marc Miller are content to release the information to score political points against the Conservatives.

But they were careful to keep it quiet until after the Pope's tour was over.

The federal government paid at least \$35 million for the Pope's travel and security costs. In the end the Vatican got a free publicity tour and Indigenous people got a few pious words.



The trained seals revolt

The first sitting of the Ontario legislature following Doug Ford's re-election has witnessed a mini-insurrection. In a secret ballot, enough Tory MPPs voted to defeat DoFo's chosen candidate for Speaker of the House, Nina Tangri. The assembly re-elected old-style Tory Ted Arnott, who has been hanging around Queen's Park since the Bob Rae days.

Insiders report that Ford and his henchmen were furious at this paltry sign of "disloyalty" from his caucus. Organized crime families like the Fords punish disloyalty. At the inaugural meeting of the new government,

Tory MPPs were berated, told their international travel privileges were revoked, and ordered to leave their cell phones in their offices when they attend caucus meetings.

Worst of all, they were ordered to attend every session of the legislature. Previously requests for absence were freely granted as long as the PCs met their quorum. The stiffest

punishment Ford could hand down was to force MPPs to actually do their jobs.

In the past Ford's caucus had been compared to trained seals, leaping to a standing ovation following every pronouncement from the Dear Leader. Normally we would celebrate any crack in the façade. But this time the silver lining has a dark cloud. If there is a split in the Tory caucus, it is likely toward the far-right. These are those who



grumbled when Ford wasn't supportive of the convoy movement. They think he is too chummy with his federal Liberal peers. What better way to

announce their presence than vote down a woman of colour.

However the trained seals' revolt plays out, you can bet this caucus will be united on the central goals of Ford's second term: an assault on local democracy (imposing a "super mayor" system on key cities) and delivering a head-on, two-tiered system of healthcare and education.

Alberta: UCP leadership race – right and righter



The race to replace Jason Kenney as leader of the UCP is shaping up to drag the beleaguered province even further to the right. The leading contenders are criticizing Kenney for being too moderate – yikes!

Leading the pack is Danielle Smith, former leader of the rural-based, far right Wildrose Party. As leader she defended openly racist and homophobic statements by her members. Realizing she would never achieve her ambitions in Wildrose, she resigned and crossed the floor to the Tories in 2012.

She describes herself as a libertarian. She says she is pro-choice and supports same-sex marriage. But she shows no compunction about surrounding herself with social conservatives.

The Toronto Star described her campaign as “anti-vaxx, anti-science and anti-reality”. Her slogan is “Alberta First”, and she promises to pass laws to give the province complete autonomy from federal regulations – this is a big hit with the anti-vaxx, evangelical, far-right convoy crowd.

Where the Kenney UCP made great strides undermining public education and healthcare, attacking teachers, doctors and nurses, Smith promises to dismantle public services. During a recent campaign stop in Airdrie she unveiled

her vision of education, allowing teacher/entrepreneurs to open “micro-schools” in their own homes: “If we can get funding following the students directly to the schools and allow more teachers to set up their own schools as competition, its going to have a transformative effect.” Indeed.

Brian Jean – another Wildrose retread – parrots Smith’s independence talking points. His slogan is “Autonomy for Alberta”. But conservative strategists suggest Smith will be in a better position to fend off Rachel Notley’s NDP.

Other contenders like former Kenney aide Howard Anglin and former finance minister Travis Toews have been forced onto the defensive, constantly reacting to Smith’s pronouncements. They describe her separatist rhetoric as economic suicide. But they are having a hard time of presenting a vision other than more of the same.

Smith’s right-wing rhetoric may not be practical – the oil and gas industry still depends on federal handouts – but it is mobilizing the forces that launched the convoy movement. Witness the special guest at her recent rally: conspiracy theorist celebrity Theo Fleury.

However the race shakes down, the emboldening and organizing of the Alberta far-right continues.

Massive Ottawa Pride says no to hate

With memories of February’s convoy occupation still fresh in many peoples’ minds, central Ottawa was brought to a standstill again today by an occupation of an entirely different kind. The Capital Pride parade and march the likes of which the city has never seen took over the downtown in a mass demonstration of solidarity. Organizers expected about 5000 people but got perhaps four or five times that number. Numerous unions had contingents and floats, including

PSAC, CUPW, UNIFOR, UFCW, ETFO, and OPSEU, and there were contingents of healthcare workers and emergency services workers as well. This was by far the largest Pride march the city has seen in years. It felt like a collective catharsis, an act of mass solidarity in which a community could recognize itself again and remember that, despite all the trials of the last few years and the hatred being stoked by the right, we remain the immense majority.



Vote Socialist!

Socialist Worker’s Ryan Schebeck interviews Sean Orr, member of the Democratic Socialists of Vancouver

I met with Sean Orr, a candidate running for city council, and member of the Democratic Socialists of Vancouver (DSV) to get an inside look at the political landscape leading up to the October municipal election. This year, for the first time, the DSV will be running candidates under the Vote Socialist banner. Along with Sean Orr for city council, the slate includes Dr. Karina Zeidler for school board and Andrea Pinochet-Escudero for park board. Their platform is to create, “the most livable, equitable, and sustainable city in the world.” A city that is, “fully committed to restitution for the Indigenous nations that have lived in profound connection with this land for millennia.” Where housing is a human right, and one that is “ready to break every rule in the profiteer’s book to confront the climate crisis.” Vote Socialist vows to “defund, disarm, and de-task the police.”

I had many questions I wanted to ask to better understand where the DSV stands on revolutionary ideas and the future of Vancouver.

We met just before lunch time over Zoom. Sean Orr lives in the heart of Gastown, an area of Vancouver where the contrast of income inequality is most visible and is within the unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam),

Reasons for running

Sean has been a commentator on all things political in Vancouver for the last 17 years. He describes his reporting as initially absurdist, disruptive, and utilizing humour. However, with the election of Donald Trump, a situation that transcended parody, he began to take a more radical approach to politics. He went back to school to study Marxism to help fill in the gaps in his theoretical understanding.

Sean hopes his strengths as a candidate will help build radical left-wing movements in Vancouver.

This includes a strong social media following and fearlessness for debate. We discussed how parties that traditionally supported the working class are moving further and further right and the need for more radical voices.

“There is this triangulation between left-wing parties to appease right-wing parties”, Sean comments, in reference to Vancouver politics but also extending to provincial and federal level with the failures of the NDP. While other parties are willing to compromise with the needs of capital, the Vote Socialist platform has the sensible, and hence radical, proposals that, “Tenants can and should write housing policy. Workers can and should run their workplaces. Drug users should write drug policy. Public transit

The Platform

Sean highlighted what he loved about DSV’s platform including how it was formed.

“The beauty of Vote Socialist” Sean says “is it’s a small group of people who got together on zoom every week and crafted out this policy together...It’s a municipal movement that asks for input, its still evolving...it’s live, it’s ever changing, it’s not static. Whereas some parties would get their backs up and [say] no this is our position on this... We can be flexible... organic”.

The platform is lengthy, addressing many issues including defunding the VPD, supporting the landback movement, housing, solidarity with striking workers and protection of refugees. There were more issues than we could discuss, however, one point stood out for both of us renters. Our conversation quickly turned to focus on real estate.

Sean comments that real estate, the power the city gives property development companies and the commodification of housing “has become the flash point of class war... fight[ing] for your own suite, in your own building”. Sean supports the grassroots organizations that are on the front line already doing so much good work as one of his missions. For example, using



Rent is too damn high. Vancouver socialists look to shake up the municipal elections

Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔl (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. Gastown is situated between wealthy financial districts, high traffic tourist areas and the Downtown Eastside. As we talked, I could hear the chimes from the Steam Clock coming from outside Sean’s window. The Steam Clock is a tourist hotspot. I immediately thought about the hundreds of tourists coming off cruise ships taking photos and dumping money into a city that ignores the needs of its most vulnerable. As the clock chimed, we started to talk about Sean’s reasons for running, movement building on the left and real estate as a flash point for class struggle.

users can and should run our public transit system. Disabled people can and should make decisions about building codes and accessibility.”

When asked about splitting the left vote, with the emergence of a new party, Sean responded that he has huge respect for other left-wing parties, like COPE, who have a strong history defending the rights of the working class in Vancouver.

“We can help each other, we can say things you guys (COPE, OneCity) can’t, [we can] demand action” ... “maybe they cannot be calling for defunding the VPD”. Sean hopes to push the conversation in a more radical direction by running for city council.

municipal politics to support the Vancouver Tenants Union or front-line workers on the DTES who are already pushing for progressive policies, who understand the needs of the people they serve. Along with active support, city council can implement policy at the municipal level like rent control and vacancy control.

The fight does not end at the ballot box, but there are tools the city can offer to help the fight in the streets and the needs of everyday people.

To learn more about the DSV, Sean Orr and the other Vote Socialist candidates visit: <https://www.votesocialist2022.ca/>

How to beat inflation

strike for higher wages

by: **Bradley Hughes**

Inflation is now at its highest rate since 1983. Compared to a year ago prices are up 8.1% on average. Food has increased by 8.8%, gasoline is 50% more expensive, and goods overall have increased by 11.2%. This means that your standard of living is decreasing. The Bank of Canada is taking action to decrease it even more.

Not everyone is suffering. Big business and the 1% are making out like bandits. CEOs in the top 100 largest publicly traded companies got an average pay increase of 23% last year. The total pay of all 100 CEOs increased by 32%. For the rest of us, from April 2021 to April 2022, the average wage increased by less than 4%.

Combining their salaries and bonuses, these 100 CEOs (nearly all of whom are men) took home over \$1.1 billion last year. That's as much as the combined wages of 20,000 workers making the average wage in 2021 of \$58,790. Philip Fayer, CEO of Nuvei Corp is the highest paid of the bunch. He was given \$141 million, or more wages than 2,390 average workers.

Corporate profits have followed the same trend. A study by David Macdonald from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) showed that profits have increased more since the 2020 recession than any of the previous six recessions that occurred over the last 50 years.

The study shows that, "in the final months of 2019, corporate profits captured 12.4% of GDP. By the first quarter of 2022, corporate profits had risen to 15.2% of GDP. This unprecedented 2.8-point increase during the pandemic recovery is more than three times larger than the next highest recovery of corporate profits, in 1981."

At the same time the share of GDP going to workers has decreased, leading to the second worst decrease in wages after a recession in 50 years.

Inflation is due to businesses increasing prices to boost profits even higher.

The Bank of Canada wants you to suffer

The Bank of Canada (BOC) has been raising interest rates in order to "fight inflation." You might think that they intend for food and shelter prices to come down. That is not what they are after. Instead they want to lower future increases in prices and to do that they want to lower the demand for goods and services.

The key to the BOC fight against inflation is to lower wages and increase unemployment. One of the "key messages" in the BOC July Monetary Policy Report is, "labour markets are tight. The unemployment rate is low,

and elevated job vacancies and widespread labour shortages are pushing up wage growth. With strong demand for their products, businesses are passing through higher input and labour costs to consumer prices." In other words low unemployment and rising wages are problems that the BOC hopes to fix.

Later on the report quotes the Business Outlook Survey of 100 firms which states that "labour shortages" include, "an inability to find suitable new labour at the current wage." And 85% of respondents to the survey expect to have to pay higher wages over the next 12 months. Business owners themselves know that they aren't paying decent wages.

The BOC also blames rising wages for inflation, but wages were

falling when inflation started last year, and they still aren't keeping up with inflation. The Monetary Policy Report cites increasing wages also as a threat for future inflation. "The Bank of Canada is keenly aware of the possibility of a wage-price spiral and is firmly committed to ensuring that this dynamic does not set in. This requires setting monetary policy much tighter than in the base case to ensure that long-run inflation expectations remain well anchored." In other words, the beatings will continue until morale improves.

But it isn't wage increases that are creating inflation. Businesses are adding to their own increased costs to increase profits. A study from the Roosevelt Institute in the US showed that markups and profits by US corporations are at their highest level since the 1950s, and the increase in

2021 was the greatest since 1955.

Canadian corporations are doing the same thing. An investigation by *The Toronto Star* found that grocery store chains are bringing in record profits by raising the prices they charge by more than their own costs are rising.

The report states, "In the first six months of the pandemic, the three chains' sales revenue increased by almost \$4 billion. It was more than enough to make up for the increased costs. Gross profit was \$1 billion higher than it had been the previous year." *The Star* calculated that if grocery store profits had not increased during the pandemic, shoppers would have spent \$1.4 billion less than they were forced to.

The BOC is going to defend these profits, no matter what the cost to you is.

Interest rates and inflation

Despite how it's presented by the mainstream media and the BOC, raising interest rates is not like a dial that controls inflation. Rising interest rates are expected to take money away from workers who have mortgages so that they have less to spend. At the same time, it makes borrowing for businesses more expensive, so they are less likely to expand their business and hire more workers. In both cases workers are expected to suffer to try to lower inflation.

Another CCPA study, also by David Macdonald was published two weeks ago that shows that in the last 60 years each time the BOC raised interest rates in order to lower inflation by more than 5% it caused a recession. The study points out, "Recessions often discussed in rather dry terms of two quarters of negative real GDP growth. The practical impacts on regular Canadians through job loss and suppressed wages are often under-appreciated." If the next recession is similar to the last three times the BOC engineered a recession to try to save profits, Macdonald calculates that between 850,000 to 1.3 million people will lose their jobs.



tion: wages

The real story

Inflation comes about due to the chaos of capitalism. Investment flows to where profits are highest. But every business needs inputs from other industries. Grocery stores can't sell bread without wheat farms, and wheat farms can't produce wheat without fertilizer production and all of them rely on transportation companies to move everything around.

But, production isn't planned on the basis of what we need or how it all fits together. As one industry becomes more profitable than others, investment is directed there and its production increases while other sectors grow at a slower rate, or shrink. Eventually this leads to supply bottlenecks when a growing sector needs inputs from a shrinking one. Then a lack of supply can drive up the prices capitalists can demand for their products, allowing them to increase their profits.

Pandemic shutdowns, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and NATO's sanctions on Russia are the most recent trigger for this recurring problem in capitalism. But it is built into capitalism to produce this sort of chaos and price-gouging. The BOC and our various levels of government will act to protect profits and expect us to pay for the continued growth of the wealth of the 1%.

Strike for higher wages

Inflation is a class issue. Business owners are causing it and they want the rest of us to pay for it. The only way to defend our standard of living is to strike for higher wages. Recent strikes have shown that this is possible. In May, workers at concrete plants in BC won a 14% increase spread over three years. HBC warehouse workers in Scarborough won a 13.3% wage increase over 3 years plus \$1,500 in retroactive pay. Operating Engineers in Ontario

struck construction sites across the province in May and won a \$3/hour raise each year for three years. Last August, Steelworkers in Sudbury ended their first strike in over a decade with a 6% wage increase and a cost of living adjustment. They also won a \$2,500 payment for their work during the pandemic and a \$3,500 signing bonus.

Wage gains are possible, but in order to keep up with inflation much greater increases are needed. We need to win 9% or 10% increases



Global revolt: UK dockers strike

per year and/or a cost of living adjustment that rises with inflation.

As more workers strike and win, the employers and their government will fight back. In 1975, the federal Liberal government imposed wage controls that were below the rate of inflation. This was the beginning of a long term lowering of wages that we still live with nearly 50 years later. Several provinces already have wage controls for the public sector. They will all fight to keep those low wage increases and try to divide public and private sector workers from each other.

Only strike action can defend our standard of living right now. But we also need to fight for a society that is free from the chaos of capitalist markets with their disruptions, shortages and attacks on our standard of living. We need a world where workers democratically control production and can increase everyone's standard of living in solidarity with each other and the natural world.

How bosses squeeze us for profits

Sophie Squire shows that Karl Marx analysed how intensifying work is integral to how the system operates

Exhausted and ground down after every day on the job, many of us know we have reached the limits of what we are capable of. Working harder seems impossible, but that's precisely what the ruling class wants.

A recent study called Work Still Harder took data from British Skills and Employment surveys to try and understand why work intensity increased between 2001 and 2017. The study lists how the intensification of work results from the bosses' drive to increase worker productivity.

It notes that disciplinarian management styles, the encouragement of competition between workers, and pay that rewards workers for working harder all contribute to work intensification. The study also shows that the growing prevalence of outsourcing and casual work—and a decrease in the power of trade unions—are also likely factors.

Companies that make the most obscene profits have mastered the most effective ways to exploit their employees. Amazon fulfilment centres are an example of how technology and surveillance has been weaponised to try and squeeze as much productivity out of workers as possible. A system of algorithms calculates how fast an individual worker can complete tasks.

The algorithm then gives them targets to reach. When workers miss a target or spend too long away from their station they are punished for it and given a warning. If they get too many warnings, they risk losing their jobs.

Workers are also barred from sitting, except during their statutory 30-minute break, to ensure they are as productive as possible. Yet despite all the physical and mental pain we are forced to endure, the Tories and the bosses are still dissatisfied.

Capitalists only make profit because they don't pay workers what their labour is worth. Take a worker doing an eight-hour day, for example. The boss pays them for four of those hours only what they need so they can buy food, pay rent and survive work another shift.

For the next four hours, the worker will be grafting solely to grow the boss's profits. This is what Karl Marx called this "surplus value."

He wrote, "The fact that half a day's labour is necessary to keep the labourer alive during 24 hours does not in any way prevent him from working a whole day." But to grow profits, even this level of exploitation is not sufficient.

Marx identified two main ways in which capitalists can squeeze even more surplus value out of their workers. The first is to simply pro-

long the working day, say from eight hours a day to nine. Marx said that this process would increase "absolute" surplus value. And by boosting the number of hours worked and increasing surplus value, the bosses can maximise their profits.

This crude method of increasing surplus value was popular with early capitalists but, of course, not with workers, who were being worked to an early grave. In the 1870s workers toiled on average 70 hours a week but often did not live past 40 years old.

Struggle became the only way to force the bosses to reduce working hours. Gas workers in London went on strike in 1889 to demand an eight-hour day and won.

The following year, on May Day, some 200,000 workers took the streets and marched behind a banner calling for an eight-hour day. Many separate battles for a shorter working day were fought and won throughout the nineteenth century, but it was only after the second world war that an eight-hour day became the norm.

The combination of workers' resistance and the fact that boss-

scientific management, founded by F W Taylor in the 1890s. He wrote, "Taylor believed that every task done in the industry could be broken down into individual components and timed, so as to determine the maximum which workers could accomplish.

"In this way, any breaks in the tempo of work could be eliminated, with Taylor claiming he could increase the amount of work done in a day by as much as 200 percent." He added, "The speed at which people worked now depended on the speed at which the line moved, rather than their individual motivation. In other industries, the same pressure on people to work flat out was achieved by increasing surveillance by supervisors."

Nowhere was this method of increasing surplus value carried out more comprehensively than in car manufacturing. In traditional car plants, workers worked "productively" for 45 seconds each minute. In technologically advanced car plants that relied on "line work", workers worked productively for around 57 seconds a minute.

So assuming a ten second per minute increase applied to a plant of 2,000 workers. That means 2,667 extra work hours are performed over the course of an eight-hour shift.

That is the equivalent of hiring an additional 333 workers or the equivalent to each worker performing more than an extra day's work every week. When workers resist attempts to make them work harder, for

no extra pay Tories such as Truss will call them "lazy".

But workers have endured over a decade of austerity since the financial crisis and are now suffering the cost of living crisis. A workforce that gets poorer, sicker and more miserable every year will not be a particularly productive one. And when wages don't cover the cost of living, why would we work harder for no more pay?

This poses an issue for the bosses in Britain. They could intensify their tactics to try and make us work harder or raise wages and provide better conditions. The answer is almost always to pile on the pressure, target trade unions and to try to crush workers' resistance so they can keep their profits high.

But in the last few months, hundreds of thousands of workers across Britain are making it clear they won't stand for this anymore. More strikes are needed now, or workers will not be able to withstand the onslaught on their conditions. The only way to beat a productivity crisis is to smash a system where workers' labour is only valued for how much profit it can bring in.

See the full article at [swp.org.uk](https://www.swp.org.uk)



es noticed that workers weren't as productive when they had to labour every hour of the day led to change. Firms now had to find other ways to squeeze more productivity from workers.

Their aim was to find new ways to cover the cost of their workers' wages in a shorter amount of time. If this could be achieved while workers' laboured for the same as usual, bosses could increase surplus value.

Marx called this an increase in "relative" surplus value. He identified three ways the bosses could boost surplus value without necessarily making the working day longer.

The first was introducing new technology into the workplace that could reduce the time it takes workers to produce goods. The second was to try and bring down the cost of essential products that workers need to live by increasing productivity in agriculture and the consumer goods industries. And the last was increasing the pressure on workers to make them work harder.

Socialist writer Chris Harman described in his book *Zombie Capitalism* how the bosses did this by embracing the movement for

Strike for Safety!

What are the TSSA workers fighting for?

by: Pam Johnson

Ontario safety inspectors who work for the Ontario Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA), went on strike July 21, after their employer walked away from the bargaining table. These workers, members of Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) local 546, have been bargaining for a first contract since November 2021.

They kicked off their strike at Canada's Wonderland on July 21. It is a fitting location because TSSA workers inspect amusement park rides to insure they are safe. They also inspect elevators, fuel burning equipment, boilers and pressure valves, and nuclear plant equipment. Their work is vital to the safety of everyone in Ontario.

In negotiations for a first contract, the employer has so far refused to even maintain the previous working conditions let alone engage the current concerns of these workers. For example, the employer wants to roll back overtime pay and to refuse to maintain the scheduling protocol currently in place. The employer has also refused to improve wages, benefits and working conditions. Currently workers who have 20 years on the job have not reached the top of the wage grid.

The workers are also concerned that public safety standards and their on-the-job safety is being compromised and they are demanding accountability. On the opening day of the CNE, three weeks into the strike, strikers and supporters held a boisterous picket to high-

light that the TSSA is compromising public safety by refusing to negotiate with the safety inspectors.

One striker explained, "Supervisors are doing our jobs this year. There would normally be eleven people inspecting rides and food trucks before the opening and then walking through the grounds all day. But, there are only three supervisors, so they are skipping the daily walk throughs. This is not safe."

OPSEU has organized solidarity rallies and pickets at multiple locations including the Toronto office of MPP, Kaleed Rasheed, Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery, responsible for TSSA oversight and calling on him to intervene in the standoff.

To show your solidarity, go to: <https://opseu.org/strikeforsafety> to find picket locations and other ways to support these workers.



TSSA workers rally at the CNE in Toronto

Alberta Amazon drivers file for unionization



Teamsters local 362 is working to unionize workers at 2 Alberta Amazon warehouses.

The union has filed with the Alberta Labour Relations Board to unionize workers at the Nisku warehouse south of Edmonton and has just recently added the delivery drivers at the Leduc fulfillment centre to another unionization drive.

Amazon warehouses are notoriously dangerous places to work. The company has designed tracking technology that can assess the speed of a workers and punish them for not meeting quota requirements. The result is that the rate of injury in an Amazon facility is twice the national average.

The company has been using all the anti-union tactics it can find to stifle the drives at other locations but there have been breakthroughs in Staten Island, Albany, NY and Campbellsville Kentucky.

Vote Union!

Actors rally to end lockout



The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) workers who held a rally in front of Cossette Communications in Toronto, one of the commercial ad companies that has locked out these unionized actors.

Cossette is one of a group of companies that proposed outrageous changes to the collective agreement at the bargaining table including a 60% wage cut, no retirement contributions and no benefit plan. ACTRA refused to accept this bald-faced union busting and its members were locked out.

Toronto ACTRA president, David Gale, highlighted the hypocrisy of the claim of diversity and inclusion by Cossette, and the fact that it is the BIPOC and marginalized ACTRA members who are most impacted. He also highlighted the fact that for all members commercial work is precarious, even though ACTRA members' faces and voices would be familiar to everyone who sees TV ads. He vowed that the union

would continue the fight to protect members from the greed of corporations like Cossette using the uncertainty of the pandemic to attack them.

A large contingent of striking OPSEU safety inspectors joined the rally as well as other labour supporters.

For information about this lock-out see: actra.ca

Territorial Acknowledgement

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

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WHERE WE STAND socialist.ca/ourstand

The capitalist system is based on violence, oppression and brutal exploitation. It creates hunger beside plenty, it threatens our sustenance through unsafe and unsustainable farming, and kills the earth itself with pollution and unsustainable extraction of oil, minerals, animals, trees, and water. Capitalism leads to imperialism and war. Saving ourselves and the planet depends on finding an alternative.

Capitalism cannot regulate the catastrophic effects of climate change. We stand for climate justice, including the

concept of "just transition" for affected workers.

Workers' power
Any alternative to capitalism must involve replacing the system from the bottom up through radical collective action. Central to that struggle is the workplace, where capitalism reaps its profits off our backs.

Capitalist monopolies control the earth's resources, but workers everywhere actually create the wealth. A new socialist society can only be constructed when workers collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its

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

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

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

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

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

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

Read the full statement at: socialist.ca/ourstand

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Climate crisis poses stark choice: Socialism or Extinction

by: Alex Thomson

In his latest book, *Socialism or Extinction: The Meaning of Revolution in a Time of Ecological Crisis*, Martin Empson neatly lays out his argument as to why the climate crisis cannot be solved under capitalism. The title itself references Rosa Luxemburg's use of the words 'socialism or barbarism' to describe the choice facing humankind during World War I, thus underlining both the higher stakes we currently face with climate change, but also referencing the role of revolution in bringing that conflict to an end.

As a longstanding environmentalist, socialist and member of the Socialist Workers Party (UK), Empson is bringing to this work years of activism and discussion. As such, he describes the work as 'an apologetic defense of revolution'.

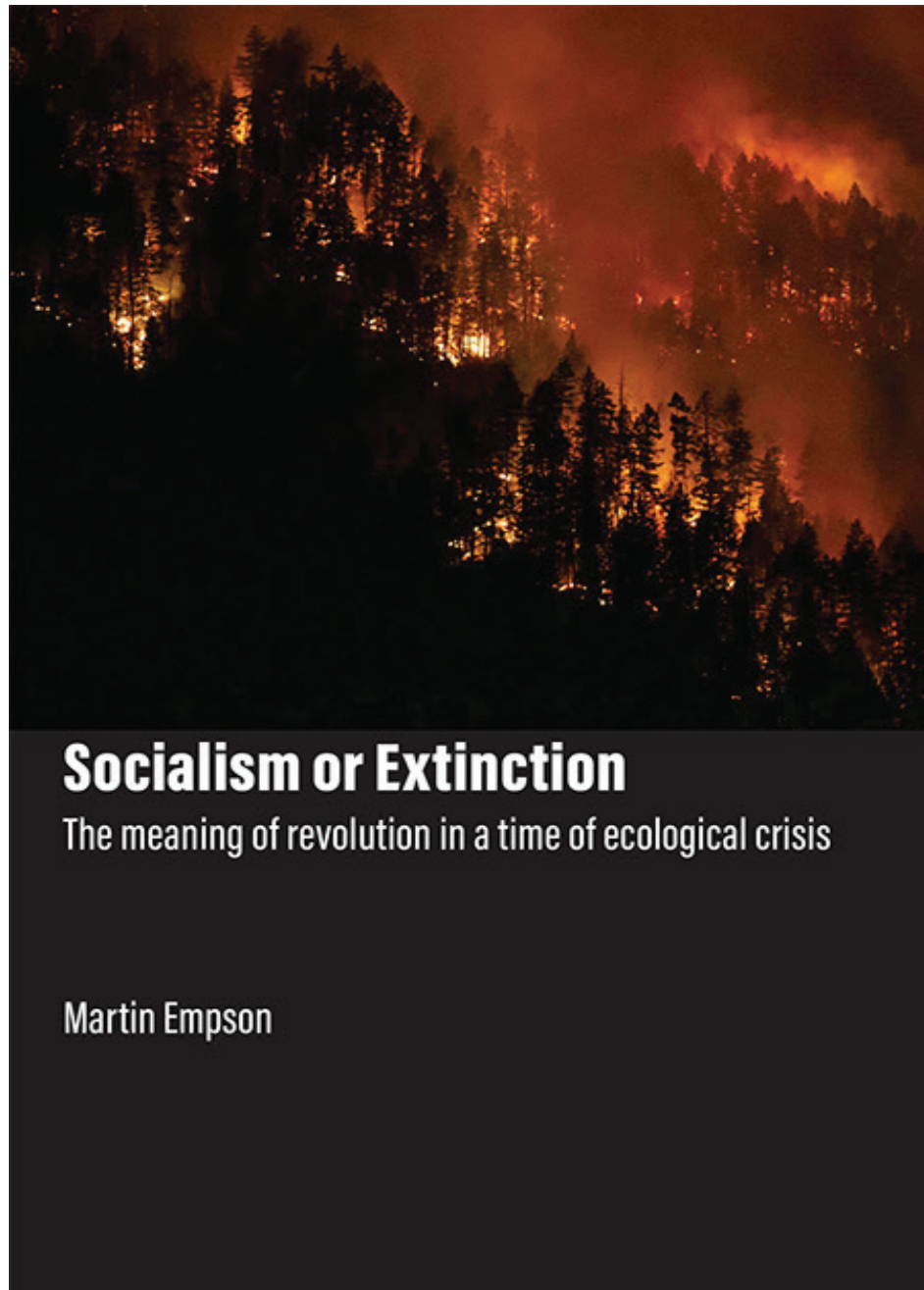
Empson puts the work into context by describing the current environmental crisis facing the world, 'a code red for humanity' as per the 2021 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In outlining the urgency of addressing climate change, he references the particular impact on the global south and how closely the current crisis is tied to capitalism, citing loss of biodiversity, factory farming, unequal impacts to the poor and the global south.

Waste and capitalism

By the very competitive nature of capitalism, he argues that it is inherently wasteful, and 'endlessly hungry'. Not only does it function by anticipating future demand and thus creating waste when estimates are incorrect, but also its products and processes are in a state of constant change to get ahead of the competition.

By suggesting that industry developed a reliance on fossil fuel not to make production cheaper or more efficient, but to gain power over workers, he reinforces an inextricable link between fossil fuels and capitalism. He also argues that the climate crisis was created by capitalism, is inherent in capitalism and thus cannot be solved under capitalism, that the system must be dismantled and this can only be done by workers through a socialist revolution.

The limitation of top down approaches to fixing climate change is that making real change would be counterproductive to the tiny minority who hold so many of the world's resources and concentrated power, and thus so many of the existing 'solutions'



are simply greenwashing.

Revolution

In defining the concept of socialist revolution, Empson is emphatic that it must be from the bottom up, using the power of workers to regain control the means of production. He discusses the role of violence in a revolution,

saying that while socialists should not condemn violence out of hand, non-violence is a more successful method of making change. He emphasizes that such a global issue requires a global solution by transforming the world, and providing a decent life, home, diet, health and education to all.

In the second half of the book, Empson

describes how society would work after a revolution, making the point that while revolution is not inevitable, it is possible where the status quo becomes untenable and enough workers come together to stand up to demand change and implement it.

He describes the conditions under which such a revolution would occur, and points out that the capitalist state itself was created by breaking down the feudal society that came before it. In analyzing previous revolutions, Empson illustrates how workers are capable of creating an effective workers state as long as they can defend it against counter revolution. The workers state would eventually fall away to socialism. Empson illustrates his theory with case histories of past revolutions, both in the recent past in Egypt, Sudan and further back with the Paris Commune and the Russian revolution of 1917. He does make the point that different factors must be at play to make a revolution successful, such as a mass mobilization of workers who are pushed to the point of refusing to continue under the current system, but as well, a significant number of socialists who are in place to provide support and guidance, as the Bolshevik Party did in 1917. The point that stands out in his examples is that again and again during periods of revolution, workers have come together, put aside their differences and worked effectively to organize their community.

While each of these revolutions was part of a wider movement and/or spread geographically, Empson makes it clear that a socialist upheaval would effectively have to be worldwide to transcend and eventually break down borders to deal with a global issue.

Martin Empson effectively argues that only a socialist revolution can rescue us from imminent climate catastrophe. Building on the thought of Marx, Lenin and Luxemburg, he makes the case that this is urgently necessary and how it is possible. Along the way, he gives us examples of revolutionary communities successfully organized by the working class. While he does take the time to sketch out the issues of climate change that put us at risk, he does not map out climate solutions specifically, but instead makes the case that workers have the knowledge, the skills and the power to transition to a more sustainable socialist society. *Socialism or Extinction* is an engaging and compelling read.

Socialism or Extinction: The Meaning of Revolution in a Time of Ecological Crisis, by Martin Empson is published by: booksmarksbookshop.co.uk

...Stop Ford continued from page 8

Building fierce resistance

Activists in the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) met in June to look at the OHCs recent activities around the provincial election campaign, to look at the lay of the land in terms of healthcare in Ontario, and to map out a strategy moving into the Fall of '22.

Twenty different local groups held well attended healthcare summits in their localities. A lawn sign and sticker campaign was initiated. Hard hitting videos circulated regarding the dangers of private health.

At the strategy session, local coalitions reported that during the campaign, they continued to pressure the Tories by tabling at local markets and on street corners, and linking to local media. A thread ran through the reports – links through-

out the province with the labour movement, especially healthcare workers represented by ONA, OPSEU, CUPE, SEIU and Unifor. Many local coalitions attended the May 1st mobilizations for a 'workers first' agenda, called by the Ontario Federation of Labour, deepening those links.

With a renewed Tory majority at Queen's Park – no mandate to privatize, as they received only 17% of eligible votes – the Tories are directing more public funds to private, for-profit LTC homes, coupled with a phase-out of inspections – allowing the industry to 'police itself', as is common in the US. New beds in LTCs will go to those private homes where seniors continue to suffer the highest death rate due to COVID.

It is crucial that we focus on OHC support



for ending Bill 124, which will bring many public sector workers, including those in healthcare on a crash course with the Tories in coming bargaining rounds. With solidarity from OHC activists, building public supports for potential job action, public sector wage and benefit restraint and erosion of service can be pushed back.

It will require unity in struggle on the ground between community members and labour to turn the tide. The public medicare system was brought in through the struggles of working class people – it's in our interest to fight together so we can keep it that way and bring the much needed improvements we need.

Resist Ford's health privatization plan

Community, labour and seniors activists and advocates will gather in Toronto on the October 1 and 2 for a Summit Meeting in defence of public healthcare, organized by the Ontario Health Coalition. A serious fightback is essential to stop the drive to profiteer off our health system.

Following his re-election Doug Ford disappeared into his cottage/bunker while the crisis in Ontario's hospitals grew worse daily. Emergency rooms, in smaller towns and major urban centres, closed due to lack of staff and nurses.

Shortages grew while the government steadfastly ignored a new spike in COVID cases that filled beds and struck down crucial personnel. Comparing Ontario COVID deaths to last year: Aug 1 to 18, 2021 recorded 86 deaths; Aug 1 to 18 this summer saw 207 deaths. Hospital admissions are up with comparable numbers.

Repeal 124

Bill 124, the Tories' legislation removing the right to bargain wages and benefits in the public sector, limiting settlements to a 1% increase (while inflation is close to 8%), continues to hollow out the complement of nurses and other skilled healthcare professionals in the public sector.

Harkening back to the Harris era is the Tory policy on home-care. They propose to re-introduce competitive bidding as was introduced in the 1990's, allowing private home-care companies, mostly non-union, to under bid not-for-profit agencies, many of



whom are unionized. To add insult to injury of those in need of home-care services, the Tories have proposed that instead of the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) making decisions on the appropriate care needed, it will be those very private healthcare corporations who are set to take over awarding contracts in home-care – a clear conflict of interest. The Ford government is set to put the profiteers in charge in the home-care sector, as they are doing in the LTCs

At first, when Ford and his new Health Minister Sylvia Jones did emerge for comment, it was to deny that any crisis did exist. Then, in mid-summer Ford and Jones suddenly changed their tune: there is a crisis (which they created), and the only solution is to open a 2-tiered system with private hospitals and clinics. You will get sick and maybe die from COVID and other causes, so Ford's friends might as well make some profit from it.

Ford's proposals aren't just greedy, they are outright cruel. His Bill 7 puts the blame for the crisis on the elderly and people with disabilities, labeling them as hospital bed blockers. His legislation states that targeted patients can be arbitrarily transferred to private Long Term Care facilities. In major urban centres your mom or dad could find themselves transferred to LTC 40 k from their home; in rural areas and the north you can be moved up to 300 k from home, family and friends. Adding insult to injury you will be billed for the trip.

If you object you may be encouraged to end your life with MAiD.

continued on page 7...

Code **red** for humanity

Strike for the climate

The flooding in Pakistan is the worst ever seen in that country's history. At the time of writing, almost a third of the country is under water. Thousands have died and millions have lost their homes. Worse still, the rains have wiped out key crops and drowned hundreds of thousands of animals. All of this will result in an acute food shortage.

A combination of heavier than usual rainfall and accelerated glacial melt from the recent heatwave is the immediate cause of this crisis. But the real cause is that the capitalist system is addicted to the burning of fossil fuels and our political and business leaders have done all they can to sabotage and action on climate.

It is no exaggeration that millions will die because of the chaos caused by climate change.

The rest of the globe is in no better shape. Heat waves and wildfires are widespread across Europe. Most of Southern Eurasia and Africa are in the depths of prolonged drought and soaring temperatures. Rivers in Europe are drying up. The Po river in Italy, the source of a third of the country's agricultural production,

has dried up and rice crops have failed.

In the US, drought is followed by flooding. In an 11 day span the US saw 4 flooding events that would normally only happen every 1000 years. Andreas Prein, a climate change scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research told the *Guardian* newspaper, "We are going to have to change the labeling because these are not one-in-1,000-years events anymore. It's shocking to see all of this flood damage but it follows a pattern. These rare events are

becoming more and more common and our infrastructure is just not keeping up."

In Canada we are also seeing these extremes. Lytton, BC was the site of the highest recorded temperature north of the 45th parallel last year and the area was hit again this summer.

The areas around the town have experienced fires and floods and fires again all within a year. Each catastrophe has interfered with efforts to build back from the previous one. When we look at Lytton, we look at the future for us all

as increased exploitation of fossil fuels dumps more and more greenhouse gases into the air.

Scientists have been warning about these scenarios for decades. Severe storms, flooding and drought are all increasing in both frequency and are becoming more widespread.

Canada is one of the main contributors to greenhouse gas emissions but politicians of all stripes are lining up to expand oil and gas production. The Trudeau Liberals are still actively building pipelines to expand markets for tar sands oil and other LNG being extracted in Alberta.

It has never been clearer that we need to topple the capitalist system if we want any kind of future on this planet. A movement that combines the call for Indigenous Sovereignty, climate justice and a just transition for workers is crucial if we are going to reverse the tide.

Join the global climate strike on September 23rd and help build the movement to end this climate chaos.

Learn more about the climate strike at: fridaysforfuture.org/



Millions are effected by the floods in Pakistan