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# Socialist Worker

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## Their profits cause our misery

**Shell - \$30 billion**  
**Imperial Oil - \$6 billion**

**Loblaws - \$4.1 billion**  
**Boardwalk REIT - \$221 million**



Around the world people are reeling from the high cost of living. What is behind the crisis? More coverage on page 7

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# Alberta politics has a new monster

Just when you thought Alberta politics couldn't get scarier, out pops new UCP premiere Danielle Smith. This is no joke – her arrival is a dark harbinger of things to come.

So long Jason Kenney, formerly the worst person in Canadian politics. His record, as a charter member of the Reform Party, as Stephen Harpers hatchet man for a decade in Ottawa, then pulling the right-wing fragments of Alberta conservatism together into the UCP, squandering billions on bad economic gambles, and racking up the nation's worst public health record during the pandemic, is a complete disaster.

I remind readers of Kenney's record because, on his way out the door, he issued a warning about Smith's "extremism". Something to the effect: if you think I was bad, wait until you get a load of this shit.

"I will not let this mainstream conservative party become an agent for extreme, hateful, intolerant, bigoted and crazy views. Sorry to be so blunt with you but you need to understand what the stakes are here," he told his party.

This is pretty rich, coming from one of the major drivers of a conscious, relentless move to the right that has been going on for decades. It is like seeing Dr. Frankenstein building his monster, and then suddenly trying to disown the kid because it is a bit "extreme".

Well Jason, to quote the bad Doctor: "Its alive!", and even if it turned on you in the final reel, you're the one who breathed life into it.

## Smith – dark forces

Kenney is right though; Danielle Smith is everything repugnant about conservatism, but on steroids. She was a self-professed Margaret Thatcher fan girl, and swallowed her Ayn Rand whole. She literally served her apprenticeship with the Fraser Institute. Greed is good,

property rights beat human rights, and democracy is just window dressing for the chumps. In this she wasn't fundamentally different from Kenney or Harper. But they came equipped with a filter, the pragmatic knowledge that if they ever let the truth be known they would be unelectable. They played up to racists while talking diversity. They courted the anti-abortion vote, but kept them simmering on the back burner. They were masters of the dog-whistle.

Times have changed. Smith has risen to the top, sometimes as a media "pundit" encouraging the far-right, sometimes as a politician channeling it. Now she has traded her place on the slimy periphery for centre stage, buoyed and financed by the "freedom" convoy movement and the dark forces behind it. Emboldened by them she has traded the dog-whistle for the megaphone.

She has taken the anti-Ottawa/anti-Trudeau rhetoric of her predecessors and fanned it into murderous, irrational rage.

The keystone of her election

platform promised to turn Alberta into a semi-autonomous region by enacting the "Alberta Sovereignty Act". I say semi-autonomous because they will always demand a slice of federal resources but now will refuse to answer for the spending. Legal experts pointed out that the act would be unconstitutional, but Smith and her camp have made careers out of ignoring experts.

Almost within minutes of being chosen to replace Kenney, she and her chief advisor, Rob Anderson began to moonwalk, admitting that the not-yet written act would "respect" Supreme Court rulings. So the Sovereignty Act, if it ever appears, will be a lot of huff and puff, playing to the pick-up and white-power crowd.

And within hours of that, to distract her supporters and forestall any post-election letdown, she decided to play up the connection between anti-vaxxer conspiracies and racism. She declared that people who refused to be vaccinated, refused to wear masks, and refused to obey any rudi-

mentary public health measures "... are the most discriminated against group I have ever witnessed in my lifetime. That's a pretty extreme level of discrimination that we have seen."

Those words had to create fear in every Indigenous person, person of colour, Muslim and Jew in Alberta. Every LGBT+ Albertan must be looking over their shoulder, every young trans person must feel more isolated and unsafe. Every woman concerned about their access to reproductive choices should worry.

And every horn-honking, gun-toting, climate change denying, white replacement theory spouting extremist will puff up their chest and feel bolder to speak and act out their bigotry. They've found their political home.

Naturally, she anticipated some blow-back and began to hedge. She issued a standard "sorry, not sorry" statement. But a barrage of her racist, anti-Semitic, conspiracy driven posts to various convoy/anti-vax social media sites confirm the sincerity of her bigotry.

To seal the deal she announced plans to amend the Human Rights Code to protect anti-science hooligans. She even threatened Alberta businesses that try to impose their own health mandates.

Smith's politics are ultra-right across the board. She would completely dismantle public schools, 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."

She announced that Chief Medical Officer Deena Hinshaw is to be fired. Hinshaw's performance during COVID was feeble at best, but even that is too much for Smith and her cult. She announced plans to purge the Alberta Health Service of "experts" (i.e. scientists). She said they were disqualified because they refused to recommend a "therapeutic" response to COVID – that is anti-vax code for horse de-worming medicine Ivermectin. All this is made necessary to end the nefarious influence of the World Economic Forum.

Smith's politics are a closed-loop of conspiracy theories and misinformation. Where Jason Kenney was Frankenstein, she is Freddy Kruger. Even if she is defeated in the next election (not a given thanks to the wretched weakness of the ANDP) she can do horrible damage in the short-term. Alberta organized labour faces an existential crisis.

If there is a tiny silver lining to this dark cloud, it is that Smith may be a millstone around the neck of Pierre Poilievre on the national stage. If he distances himself from Smith he risks eroding his Alberta base; if he doesn't he will lose support among Conservative voters in the rest of Canada.

All that will be cold comfort for Albertans, soon to find themselves living in a slasher movie.



## Two-faced Liberals: environment gets talk, oil gets money

Federal Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault gave the oil and gas industry a big finger-wag following the release of their latest sky high profit numbers.

Imperial Oil has raked in \$6.2 billion after expenses so far in 2022. For the same period in 2021 Imperial's profit was \$1.7 billion. If you're still wondering why you are paying so much at the pump, Imperial needs the money so they can give a 30% raise to their execs and shareholders.

Imperial is part of a consortium of 6 oil companies active in the tar sands region. Together the 6 banked \$22 billion between January and the end of June. A year ago that figure was less than \$6 billion.

This consortium says it will spend \$24 billion on carbon reduction plans over the next 8 years, but

to do it they want a bigger handout from the feds.

That prompted Guilbeault's public pout: "We're already putting our money where our mouth is. I'm not sure they are."

## \$15 billion for tar sands

He has a point. According to NGO Environmental Defence the federal government has given tarsands oil companies \$15 billion already in 2022. Oil industry analysts dispute that figure, so given their track record for honesty it is probably pretty accurate.

Ottawa has currently committed to paying half the cost of all new capital investments in the tarsands. The industry is demanding 75%, par with the capital subsidy given by the US government to its oil industry.

In a way the arguments over



amounts are irrelevant. When the industry and the Liberals talk about carbon reduction, they mostly mean building carbon capture and storage technology so they can go on expanding the tarsands. Carbon capture is the most expensive and least effective way to reduce carbon. It amounts to an expensive greenwashing project.

The Liberal record is perfect – a perfect failure. They have never even come close to a carbon reduction target, and Guilbeault's posturing isn't going to change that.

And big oil's plan is exposed in the business press: expand production, demand more and more public money with little or no public oversight, and stuff their pockets with record profiteering.

As for the future of the planet – screw that, there's money to be made here and now.



# Cops and property developers win big in Vancouver election

by: **Bradley Hughes**

**T**he municipal election in Vancouver this Saturday saw the new pro-business pro-cop party ABC crush all the other parties. Their mayoral candidate, Ken Sim, got 50% of the 171,494 ballots cast. On council all the ABC councillors were elected giving them seven of the 10 seats. Their votes ranged from 62,000 to 72,000 votes. The next closest was Adriane Car from the Greens with less than 42,000 votes. Last election Car was the most popular councillor with almost 70,000 votes.

## No enthusiasm

Just over one-third of eligible voters cast a ballot in this election. Of the nearly 500,000 people eligible to vote, the new Mayor convinced only 18% of them to make the trip to the polls to vote for him. His most popular councillor got only 15% of eligible voters to support her.

Not surprisingly, his support is strongest among the wealthy. Out of the 105 polling stations, his best five stations accounted for 15,000 votes or 17% of the votes cast for him. All but one of them are on the west side of the city. All of them are in neighbourhoods with median household income is above \$100,000. His best results were at the Kerrisdale Community centre where he took 75% of the votes. This polling station is adjacent to a neighbourhood where the median household income is more than \$140,000. The median household income for Vancouver over all is \$82,000.

These results show that ABC had lots of money and were well

organized to use that money to identify their supporters in rich neighbourhoods and get them out on election day.

ABC is classic Liberal party: pave the way for business while sounding like you care about the rest of us. Their party platform page starts with reconciliation, “ABC commits to a future where a stronger and more meaningful partnership, sharing in



**Socialist council candidate Sean Orr disrupts the VPD debate**

the wealth of the land and sea, and acknowledges that both the history and future of Indigenous people needs to be self-determined” Of course, unlike their proposals for more cops and less regulation of property developers, they have no concrete proposals for change.

## Housing crisis to continue

ABC has made lots of promises about non-More info and zoom link at: socialist.camarket housing but haven’t committed to any numbers. Yet, they do have concrete for slashing the approval times for for-profit housing developers. After four years of this there is no doubt they will have kept all their promises to developers without adding

not previously endorsed parties in Vancouver’s elections. This time they endorsed the ABC party and organized their own candidates debate. Socialist Candidate Sean Orr was kicked out of the meeting for opposing police intervention in the election.

ABC has promised to add 100 new cops, and to give the VDP whatever budget they request. They will also re-start the cops in the schools program that was cut by the previous progressive school board. Cops will justifiably feel that they have their people in office now. Combining that with 100 new police on the streets means that more people will be killed and assaulted by cops. Those who are unhoused, suffering from mental illness and/or racialized are all in more danger now.

## Dead end in the middle of the road

The incumbent Mayor Kennedy Stewart formed a new political party to run in this election. He came in a distant second to ABC’s Ken Sim. His running mates came nowhere near gaining seats.

Kennedy Stewart is a former NDP MP. He has continued the Vancouver middle-left tradition of raking in donations from property developers while promising to look after the rest of us. During his four years as mayor, homelessness increased, rents continued to go up, housing prices went up and deaths due to the poisons in the opioid supply continued to rise. The decade of Vision Vancouver government, with the same record, that ended in 2018 should have been enough to show that this strategy

can’t improve the lives of people in Vancouver. Vision’s only benefit was in keeping the purely business parties out of office. Stewart’s loss shows that this strategy is no longer good enough to even do that.

## People not profit

The only reasonable solutions to our problems are radical solutions. The average rent for a one-bedroom apartment is now more than \$2500/month in Vancouver. Wages are not keeping up with inflation. There was no rain from the beginning of August to nearly the end of October. The bright light in the midst of this gloom was the Vote Socialist campaign fielded by the Democratic Socialists of Vancouver. Their platform started with the premise that balancing the needs of the 1% equally with the rest of us was the source of the city’s problems. Their three candidates, Sean Orr for City Council, Andrea Pinochet-Escudero for Park Board, and Dr. Karina Zeidler for School Board did not get elected, but they did show the potential for the anti-capitalist left. Orr received 13,744 votes, Pinochet-Escudero 15,526, and Zeidler 17,710. This put them in the middle of the pack and ahead of several candidates for the NPA and Vision, the parties that dominated municipal politics until 2018.

Now the left in Vancouver will need to continue building solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty, the tenants right movement, the movement for a just climate transition and more. It’s the movements in our workplaces and in the streets that will determine what happens over the next four years.

# Ford guts public healthcare, rewards profiteers

by: **Faline Bobier**

**A**t a press conference on October 26, the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) delivered proof that the Ford government lied about its plans to privatize Ontario’s public hospital services.

“The Ford government lied to the public leading into an election,” said Natalie Mehra, Executive Director of the OHC. “You can’t just outright deny you are expanding private for-profit clinics while you are in fact shunting millions over to expand private for-profit clinics. You can’t pretend you are not going to privatize before an election and then, as soon as the election is over, announce plans to privatize.”

“By every measure, this is wrong. It is fundamentally undemocratic and cannot go without challenge,” she said.

Before the provincial election in June 2022, then Health Minister Christine Elliot made a bombshell statement: “We are opening up pediatric surgeries, cancer screenings... Making sure that we can let independent health facilities operate private hospitals.”

The statement came at the same time as the province was privatizing

long-term care, home care, vaccines, COVID testing, and allowing for-profit virtual care companies and COVID testing corporations to charge patients for access to doctors and vaccines respectively, in violation of the Canada Health Act.

The Minister’s spokespeople claimed that she misspoke or was misinterpreted. They denied plans to expand private health clinics and hospitals, and repeatedly said that any such claim was “categorically false”.

But data from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario — a body which reviews Ontario’s fiscal reporting — shows that the government in fact doubled the funding for the private clinics [Independent Health Facilities] in the same time period.

Two months after the election, the Ford government announced that they are going to privatize public hospital services and expand private for-profit clinics and hospitals.

Ontario Health Minister Sylvia Jones says Doug Ford’s government will work with private health clinics to find more “opportunities” for private companies in the public health system. Jones unveiled the government’s plan to “relieve” the health system’s surgical backlog by “increasing the number of OHIP-covered surgical procedures

performed at independent health facilities” [read private for-profit clinics].

Ford’s privatization is not about “stabilizing” the health system or adding capacity. Every large hospital in Ontario has operating rooms that have been closed for weeks or months or



more due to inadequate funding and, more recently, staffing shortages. Private clinics take scarce staff out of local public hospitals, worsening wait times for the public system. The evidence is that the private clinics charge patients illegal user fees and other fees for medically unnecessary add-ons.

This is not about improving healthcare. It is about expanding a profit-seeking industry that wants access to the billions in public funding for healthcare.

Doug Ford’s playbook is being copied by provincial governments across the country. At a recent forum with speakers from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, representatives from provincial Health Coalitions reported the same rampant privatization and underfunding of public healthcare across the Prairies. As a speaker from Friends of Medicare in Alberta stated, “This [increasing privatization of healthcare] is not about incompetence; it is intentional on the part of our governments.”

How fitting then that Doug Ford inducted former Tory premier Mike Harris into the Order of Ontario on October 24. The Mike Harris government launched the Health Services Restructuring Commission that ordered the closure of 43 hospitals.

Not only did Harris close thousands of public chronic care hospital beds, when he became chair of Chartwell after leaving office he reaped the rewards of the replacement of these chronic care beds with LTC beds, and his privatization of those LTC beds.

Over 18 years, Chartwell paid Mike Harris \$3.5 million for his services,

the bulk of it in Chartwell stock.

Harris also privatized the majority of Ontario’s home care. In 2012 he and his wife started a for-profit home care company, Nurse Next Door.

In August, Harris came out in support of Doug Ford’s plans to privatize our public hospitals. No wonder.

Doug Ford and Mike Harris are brothers in arms. They are waging a class war against all of those who depend on the public health system for life-saving care.

## Stop the privateers

The OHC is demanding Ford stop this privatization and take real action to deal with the emergency in healthcare that his government had a significant hand in creating so they could offer the ‘solution’ of private clinics — effectively paving the way for a two-tiered healthcare system.

OHC has launched a major campaign that is being taken up in towns and cities across the province with townhall meetings, community organizing, protests and escalating actions. We are in the fight of our lives, for our lives, and everyone needs to be a part of ending the drive to turn healthcare into a for-profit nightmare for the vast majority.

• Join the campaign at [ontario-healthcoalition.ca](http://ontario-healthcoalition.ca)



# POLICE, POWER CAPITALISM

*More than \$15 billion is spent each year in Canada on city, provincial and federal police. In most municipalities it is the largest budget item while other departments like housing and health are starved of resources. The campaign to defund and end policing as we know has been growing worldwide. We look at the history and politics of policing under capitalism and what can be done to build a better system.*

by: **Brian Champ**

One year after Confederation, the Dominion Police became the first federal force, operating in the established colonies of eastern Canada. In 1873 the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) was formed to assert Canadian dominion in the west and to ensure the completion of the trans-Canada railway to the Pacific.

NWMP waged war against First Nations and the newly formed Metis nation led by Louis Riel. Defeated peoples were crowded onto reserves to allow the exploitation of natural resources. The reserve system later provided the inspiration for South African apartheid.

The new police prevented U.S. military incursions across the border. In 1896 the NWMP was deployed for similar purposes to the Klondike during the gold rush and later went to fight for the British during the Boer War in South Africa, earning the addition of “Royal” to their name in 1904. After the RNWMP crushed the Winnipeg General Strike with violence in 1919, the RCMP was formed a year later by merger with the Dominion Police.

The RCMP today proudly identifies its founding with the brutal settler colonial origins of the NWMP in 1873 as they prepare for their 150 anniversary “celebration” in 2023. This is fitting since their settler colonial legacy continues to this day.

## **Present day oppressors: C-IRG**

In 2017, the Community-Industry Response Group (C-IRG) within the BC RCMP was formed “to provide strategic oversight addressing energy industry incidents and related public order, national security and crime issues.” While they claim its mandate is for police responses that are “consistent, standardized and impartially administered”, in reality they are a private army for CGL, TMX and other megaproject developers to run roughshod over unceded Indigenous

territory.

Although the Supreme Court of Canada recognized the sovereignty of the Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chiefs over their unceded territories in 1997, the RCMP has enforced injunctions by lower courts that rely on the approval of Wet’suwet’en band councils, despite the fact that they have no jurisdiction over the

excessive, discriminatory on the basis of race, malicious and an abuse of police powers. They represent an effort to suppress lawful activity and the assertion of Indigenous rights and title.”

On the June 17th APTN Nation to Nation (N2N) podcast, Wet’suwet’en Hereditary Chief Na’Moks explained: “They seem

the “Peterloo massacre” occurred when cavalrymen armed with sabres charged a crowd of 50,000 workers demanding Parliamentary reform in Manchester, killing 18 and injuring up to 700 people. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peterloo\\_Massacre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peterloo_Massacre) The next year, police forces armed with less lethal truncheons were formed to

capitalist state. Well documented cases of police violence point to the overwhelming brutality required in order to keep capitalism safe for the wealthy. If you look at prison statistics in the US and Canada, it’s overwhelmingly poor, Black, Hispanic and Indigenous people who are incarcerated.

Wealthy criminals who steal millions from ordinary people are dealt with lightly, because they are protected by the system that they serve and perpetuate.

Police also routinely break occupations, strikes and protests. Anyone who has been on strike will recognize that the police are not neutral in these situations. The state does not preside neutrally over society, but is fundamental to propping up the class divisions and the rule of the wealthy few over the rest of us.

## **Defund, disarm, disband**

The demands to defund the police that gained momentum with the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 after the death of George Floyd should be supported. But the anti-Indigenous, anti-Black and anti-working class nature of the police cannot be reformed out their ranks: they are not the result of aberrations, or a “few bad apples”, but are the expected and desired result for the capitalist class they serve.

True justice for Indigenous peoples, Black communities and workers will start by disarming and dismantling the police and smashing the state that keeps the mass of people “in their place”. To do so will require a socialist revolution based on the self emancipation of workers in alliance with the self-determination of Indigenous nations to supplant this destructive and unjust system.

Every assertion of Indigenous sovereignty against the Canadian settler colonial project and every strike by workers contains the seed of revolution. Building solidarity for these struggles and the connections between them is the urgent task of socialists in so-called Canada today.



**Militarized RCMP units violently attack Wet’suwet’en Land Defenders**

pipeline route.

This has led to: RCMP invasions into Wet’suwet’en territory for the past 3 years to violently arrest and remove Indigenous land defenders and their allies from the path of the CGL pipeline.

Cops enforce “exclusion zones” that block access to the land for Wet’suwet’en people, media, guests, medicine and supplies. They harass and intimidate Wet’suwet’en people in their own homes and communities; they spy on land defenders and allies.

This year the intimidation and harassment campaign has been escalated so much that members of the Gidimt’en clan of the Wet’suwet’en on June 22 filed a notice of civil claim against the RCMP, stating: “The police tactics used on Gidimt’en territory have had no lawful purpose or basis. They have been unreasonable and

to be unrestrained in what they can do, there seems to be no limit to the violence, the harassment and what they perceive as their duties.”

The existence of the C-IRG unit, their seemingly unlimited and flexible budget, and the willingness of the BC NDP government to continually use them to suppress Indigenous people on their own land, for the benefit of oil and gas industry profits, demonstrates that the state is not neutral.

## **Bodies of armed men**

For Lenin, “the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another”. To create this “order” based on class oppression, a public power is formed, consisting of “not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons, and institutions of coercion of all kinds”. In 1819,

suppress demonstrations and strikes without as much bloodshed.

The particular role of the RCMP in policing Indigenous bodies, communities and lands to make way for colonial settlement, extractive industries and infrastructure megaprojects has been shaped by the needs of the Canadian ruling class. A federal paramilitary police force was needed from the very beginning, and they were armed to the teeth, authorized to use deadly force in particular against Indigenous peoples.

Whether armed with guns or not, police forces protect the property and interests of the capitalists.

Capitalism as a system uses the tools of racism, homophobia and sexism to divide and conquer. It’s no accident, then, that these same tools are used by those institutions charged with propping up the



# AND

**“Defunding the police is not simply about withdrawing funding for law enforcement and doing nothing else. It’s about shifting public funds to new services and new institutions — mental health counselors, who can respond to people who are in crisis without arms. It’s about shifting funding to education, to housing, to recreation. All of these things help to create security and safety. It’s about learning that safety, safeguarded by violence, is not really safety.”**  
— Angela Davis



## Cops and fascists hand in hand

**T**he thin blue line between police and fascists is getting thinner all the time.

Early in October two Annapolis NB RCMP officers were sent to address a noise complaint about an outdoor party. About 50 people were attending the bash organized by “self-identified Freedom Fighters”. The militia-style group uses the vague libertarian rhetoric of the convoy movement as cover for their violent intent.

What is certain is that while there the RCMP officers posed for selfies with the “Freedom Fighters” and gave money for “admission” to the party.

According to the RCMP press release the officers did so in order to “de-escalate” the situation and to keep the peace.

Maybe. Maybe the cops were so threatened they were just acting to save their asses. But that isn’t the way police usually act. If officers

are threatened they call for re-enforcements and impose their authority. That they just left on good terms is peculiar to say the least.

### Police and the convoy

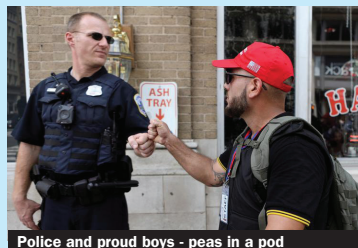
This instance needs to be seen in the larger context of the dangerous growth of the convoy movement that occupied Ottawa for almost a month last winter. There the Ottawa Police Service stood by and did next to nothing while the far-right led convoy terrorized downtown residents, and bullied and harassed retail workers until stores and malls had to close.

Plenty of evidence showed OPS officers fraternizing with the occupiers. Later investigations showed police and retirees donating money to the convoy.

The Emergencies Act inquiry is exposing more of that collusion. It is also exposing an embarrassing incompetence on behalf of the Ottawa

police.

Early in the inquiry an ‘intelligence’ report was tabled by the OPS. The report borrowed extensively from an article written by



Police and proud boys - peas in a pod

right-wing columnist Rex Murphy.

What is disturbing is not just the lack of rigour in the report but that the officer responsible, Sgt. Chris Kiez spent a good deal of time in the report sympathizing with the far-right led convoy.

The Ottawa police also decided at the outset that there was no “policing option” to get rid of the

occupation.

For anyone who has dealt with police before this is an absurd idea. Police have never found it difficult to find a policing option at large scale demonstrations led by Indigenous people or groups like Black Lives Matter.

At the Quebec City summit of the Americas in 2001, the police fired more than 1,600 rounds of tear gas into the crowd and dispersed people at every turn.

That protest was significantly larger than the Ottawa convoy yet police had no such self-imposed restrictions on their powers.

When the left confronts racists at rallies, the police always attack and arrest the leftists and leave the far-right alone.

They are ideologically aligned with the right which is why they didn’t move to disperse the protests earlier.

The reality is that the emergencies

act was invoked - and the police in Ottawa began arrests - only after regular working people took matters into their own hands and started organizing against the bigots.

Thousands marched in the streets in a union-led demonstration on February 12th and within the week thousands more took part in blockades, the largest of which stopped convoy 2.0 from entering the city at the Battle of Billings Bridge. Within hours of that blockade Trudeau and the various police forces decided to act.

The reaction from police and Trudeau wasn’t about stopping the convoy, their fear was the self activity of working people who had, in their masses, decided to do the job of cleaning out the racists themselves.

That is the lesson we can learn from the convoy. When it comes to defeating the far-right, we cannot rely on the cops or the state.

## Vancouver cops add insult to racist injury

**I**n 2019 Heiltsuk elder Maxwell Johnson took his 12-year-old granddaughter to a Vancouver branch of the BMO. Bank staff wouldn’t accept their government-issued ID and called 911. Two Vancouver Police Service officers arrived and put them both in handcuffs, humiliating them in public and terrifying the young woman.

In September, after a 3-year fight to get an acknowledgement that the incident was based in racist discrimination, a Human Rights complaint was upheld and a settlement reached with the Vancouver Police Board that included an undisclosed financial compensation, and a public apology.

In late October a ceremony of cleansing and apology was



Heiltsuk elders wait in vain for the Vancouver police

organized in the Heiltsuk community of Bella Bella. Johnson specifically asked the Police Board to invite the officers involved. “If you could give them that message,” he said. “It’s all about forgiveness for us. I really, really did wish they could come so we could all have closure.”

Members of the Board at-

tended and VPS Chief Adam Palmer came bearing a gift, but the two officers, Canon Wong and Mitchell Tong, refused to attend. What was to have been a healing and cleansing ceremony for all concerned instead added a fresh layer of trauma to the victims. Grim-faced Heiltsuk elders refused the gift and admonished Palmer, who is on record denying the existence of institutionalized racism.

Hereditary Chief Frank Brown told him, “The light was shone on the ugly face of racism in Vancouver by the Vancouver city police. To say racism doesn’t exist is not true.”

The whole fiasco exposes the anti-Indigenous racism at the core of the VPS, and the hollowness of their “apology”.



# Canada out of Haiti

## Canada only wants to protect profits from sweatshop labour

by: **Sid Lacombe**

**T**he unelected Haitian government is asking for an international 'peacekeeping' force to quell unrest in the country and has specifically called for Canada and the US to send troops. That call has been echoed by UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres.

Anthony Blinken, the US secretary of state visited Canada to urge our government to send troops to intervene and Canadian warplanes landed in Port Au Prince and have unloaded weapons and light armoured vehicles for a potential invasion.

There have been widespread demonstrations in Haiti for many weeks against the cost of living and against the corrupt reign of Prime Minister Ariel Henry. Recent protests saw thousands in Port Au-Prince demonstrating against the call for foreign military intervention.

Canada's Foreign Minister, Melanie Joly met with other leaders of the Organization of American States - a mouth-piece for US policy in Latin America - and says that 19 countries signed a joint statement on Haiti calling for stability and an end to protests and gang violence.

But Trudeau and the government of Canada



have no interest in protecting the rights of the Haitian people. Even a cursory look at the history of armed intervention by the Canadian state shows that they never have.

The CORE group - consisting of Canada the US, France and a host of international agencies has been meddling in the politics of Haiti for years and their interventions have always had disastrous consequences. Henry is himself an

appointee of the CORE group and is the most recent source of instability in the country.

Since the Canadian/France/US led coup that overthrew the elected government of Jean Bertrand Aristide in 2004, Canada has played the role of maintaining power for unelected oligarchs. It was the government of Canada that convened the "Ottawa Initiative on Haiti" that made plans for the coup.

They did so mainly for the benefit of Canadian corporations who make a killing off of the sweatshop labour of the Haitian people. Earlier this year, Haitian police violently attacked striking garment workers at the Sonapi Free Trade Zone in Port-au-Prince. The workers were on strike against Centri Garments a major supplier for Gildan Activewear which is headquartered in Montreal.

Many of the gangs that Joly and the Canadian Government are denouncing have been working with the current Haitian government. According to the Haiti info project, "The evolution & role of gangs in Haiti is clear... First they worked with police to serve as enforcers of the US-installed client PHTK regimes of Martelly/Moise. Today these same gangs serve as the main justification for yet another foreign military intervention."

Haitian journalist and filmmaker Etant Dupain said, "In the letter the Haitian "government" sent to the UN, the first demand is asking for 15 thousand soldiers/police for a time period of 5 to 10 years. MINUSTAH spent 15 years and more money and left the country in a in a terrible state."

We must oppose any military intervention by the Canadian forces or police agencies. The people of Haiti have suffered long enough at the hands of the imperial powers.

...continued from page 8

Other demands made by OSBCU are equally important: pay casuals the same rate as permanent workers (taking away the incentive of the employer to favour them), introduce language that will set minimum staffing requirements directly in the Collective Agreement (CA), schedule and pay workers for prep time and give them 5 paid days before the school year starts. Extra ECEs for full-day kindergarten; minimum staffing in school libraries; better overtime provisions; language on workplace violence. Crucially, OSBCU is looking for funding to increase the complement of workers in all positions, to make up those positions lost/not filled during the last bargaining round.

The Tories have threatened OSBCU members already, with back to work legislation if they don't knuckle under. A threat that comes on top of Bill 124, which removed the rights of public sector workers to bargain wage and benefit increases, Bill 195 that allowed employers to ignore provisions of legally binding agreement during Covid, and forced back-to-work legislation being used on university teaching assistants and power workers.

The battle lines are drawn - ordinary working class people who depend on quality public services accessible to all, versus a Tory government bent on providing private services to those that can afford them. This means the

entire labour movement have an important stake in this battle, most likely to be fought out on the picket line. As OSBCU moves

towards setting up their lines, there must be open communication with the OFL and local labour councils, so that solidarity on the lines

can be coordinated on day one. If the Tories get their way, there may be no day two, and we as workers will suffer another setback.

It is not up to OSBCU-CUPE to confront this use of repression alone. There needs to be open discussion in the labour movement about how we can go about defying back-to-work legislation in the moment - not going to court and getting a result years later.

As the crisis of capitalism deepens, this and other repressive tools will become the norm - if we allow it. We will continue to pay for high inflation, and a 'corrective' recession (for them), that will destroy our standard of living.

We can fight back - when we fight as a class, united in solidarity. The details of what we do today will determine the terrain on which we fight tomorrow. Let's get to it.

### Territorial Acknowledgement

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

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### WHERE WE STAND [socialist.ca/ourstand](https://socialist.ca/ourstand)

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

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

concept of "just transition" for affected workers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# Why is everything getting worse for working people?

From tuition fee increases to the cost of living crisis to the destruction of the planet, the drive for profit under capitalism is squeezing us more each day

by: Bradley Hughes

**T**he cost of nearly everything has been rising since January 2021. You don't need statistics to know this, you know it from trips to the grocery store. The official inflation numbers follow average prices for numerous things and try to weight them to get a number that represents over all how prices are changing. Statistics Canada announces this number every month.

The last three inflation announcements were for inflation numbers that were smaller than in June. That doesn't mean prices are going down, only that they are not increasing as fast as they were earlier this year.

In particular rent and grocery prices have not even seen their rate of increase slow. as prices for food purchased from stores (+10.8%) rose at the fastest pace since August 1981(+11.9%), while average rent in Vancouver has hit a new high of over \$2500/ month for a one bedroom apartment.

Since January 2021 overall prices have increased by 10.4%, groceries by 12.8% and transportation by just less than 15%.

Much of the inflation we see is due to price gouging. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, grocery stores made \$1.4 billion in pre-tax income between April and June of 2022 alone. Over the same period in 2019, before the pandemic, they made half of that: \$797 million.

## Tuition fees

Across so-called Canada, in 2022/2023, international undergraduate students will pay \$36,123 on average, about an 8.0% increase from the year before.

In 2006/2007, international graduate students paid 106.0% more than Canadian students, whereas undergraduate students paid 204.0% more. The gap has widened over the years. In 2022/2023, international undergraduate students will pay 429.0% more than Canadian students, while international graduate students will pay 184.0% more. At snəwəyəl leləm - Langara College in Vancouver, international students pay six times as much as domestic students.

Average Canadian undergraduate tuition fees have increased from \$4400 in 2006 to \$6834 in 2022 – an increase of 150%. International undergraduate fees went from \$13,378 to \$36,123 which is a 270% increase.

In BC the minimum wage is \$15.65 per hour. June 1, 2021 was first time it rose above the 1976 value which adjusted for inflation would be \$14.62. Since the minimum wage now rises with inflation, it will stay stuck at the purchasing power of the 1976 minimum wage. In the intervening 45 years while the minimum wage has been below its 1976 high, the GDP per capita in Canada has increased by 600%.

In 2000 taxes in Canada were 14.9% of GDP in 2020 they were 13.3% of GDP. In 2020, that difference of 1.6% of GDP equals \$26.4 billion taken out of social programs.

## Climate crisis

Vancouver went from August 3 to October 23 (81 days) without rain and broke numerous temperature records in September and October. The average number of rainy days for September alone is eight.

Hurricane Fiona in September was the worst hurricane to hit Canada and the floods in Pakistan at the same time displaced over 30 million people, nearly the same as Canada's population.

Edward Teller was a physicist who pushed for the development of fusion bombs and later Reagan's failed "Star Wars" program – so he was a real monster. In 1959 he addressed a symposium on the 100th anniversary of the American Oil industry. *The Guardian* newspaper recently reported some of his remarks to the assembled oil executives on the consequences of using fossil fuels, "Carbon dioxide has a strange property. It transmits visible light but it absorbs the infrared radiation which is emitted from the earth. Its presence in the atmosphere causes a greenhouse effect [...] It has been calculated that a temperature rise corresponding to a 10 per cent increase in carbon dioxide will be sufficient to melt the icecap and submerge New York. All the coastal cities would be covered, and since a considerable percentage of the human race lives in coastal regions, I think that this chemical contamination is more serious than

most people tend to believe." He calculated that this damage would be severe by the 1990's.

In 1968 The American Petroleum Institute commissioned a report that told them that "Significant temperature changes are almost certain to occur by the year 2000, and these could bring about climatic changes. [...] there seems to be no doubt that the potential damage to our environment could be severe."

## Why?

Why have fossil fuel companies known for over 60 years about climate change and not only not done anything but instead spent millions to lobby to prevent anything being done?

If the wealth of this country has increased by six times over the last 45 years why have wages to our lowest paid workers decreased for most of that time, and only returned to the 1976 value recently?

Same for tuition fees, why the increases if the country is more wealthy? And if education is becoming unaffordable, why not increase taxes to pay for it?

Because the ruling class will do all it can to maintain it's position of privilege.

**Everything we produce requires workers, and all profits flow from our labour. But we don't get back all the profit we produce.**

## Labour creates all profit

As the old song says, "without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn." Everything we produce requires workers, and all profits flow from our labour. But we don't get back all the profit we produce. Most of it goes back into expanding production and profits for the 1%. Every penny that goes to wages or social wages via taxes comes out of the bosses' profits. The reduction of our living standards and social spending isn't just because individual capitalists are greedy - although people like Musk and Bezos show that some people's greed has no limits.

The attacks on us are driven by competition. Much of the profit we produce goes back into production. Since each business is in competition with others all of them need to expand their businesses and profits. As a consequence they fight us for every penny we win from them for wages or social spending. This competition is international, so every state looks after its own capitalists by reducing their taxes, passing laws making it harder to strike, subsidizing big businesses like oil producers and so on.

This is why everything is getting worse. Capitalist competition and defending the privileges of the few is so important to them that they are willing to risk the extinction of our species with catastrophic climate change.

## Is there any alternative?

Socialism is the idea that we all should collectively and democratically control production of all the wealth that we produce. Workers should decide what the minimum (and maximum) income should be.

All together we should decide if our wealth should go to subsidizing expanding fossil fuel production or to subsidizing workers in a just transition.

Together we should decide how to use our collective wealth to heal the planet, and our relationship with it, as well as deal with the disasters that we are facing. This is only possible if the working class, the vast majority of humans, takes on this task. This level of unity will never be possible if we ignore sexism, racism, transphobia, homophobia and all the other oppression that capitalism maintains. So the battle against oppression must be in the forefront of every struggle.

## Join!

If you believe we all should have the greatest possible control over our lives, our bodies, and our labour, and if you believe that collectively we can do a much better job of organizing society then our bosses do now, then you are a socialist. Socialists need an organization to set priorities and to work to influence as many struggles as possible, while winning more and more people to the realization that we don't need our bosses. Join the International Socialists and help build that organization.

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# Strike down Ford!

by: Peter Votsch, CUPE retiree

**E**ducation Assistants, daycare, maintenance and clerical staff, members of the Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU-CUPE) voted overwhelmingly in favour of a strike and are ready to walk out on November 5. Conservative Education Minister, Steven Lecce has announced that the government will force back-to-work legislation, essentially depriving the workers of their constitutional right to strike. At the time of printing, the education workers are poised to walk out in defiance of the new law. They need full support from working people across the province.

## How did we get here?

Public sector workers, and in particular, workers in the education sector, have been the favourite targets in the last decade for first Liberal, and now Tory provincial governments in Ontario. This is dating back to the Dalton McGuinty-Kathleen Wynne Liberals, who brought in Bill 115, removing bargaining rights for education workers, and centralizing bargaining to remove any wiggle room school boards may have had to offer better settlements to educational workers, to the Ford Tories attack on teachers' wages and conditions in 2019



and early 2020.

Cuts have been the order of the day, especially under Ford. In the most recent Tory budget, education expenditure has seen a \$1.3 billion shortfall. This is on top of the push, during the pandemic, to move students to

permanent online learning as part of their education; on top of the teachers' unions fights of 2019 to limit the Ford government's attempts to increase class sizes.

Meanwhile, educational assistants, members of OSBCU have seen their numbers decrease,

and a concurrent increase in workload. Maintenance staff have found themselves scrambling to keep schools clean during a pandemic. This despite earning on average \$39,000 a year.

How did wages get this low? A decade of accepting negligible increases in the 1-2% range, despite increasing costs of living. This in a workforce that is 70% women, which represents the true face of the lack of equity faced by women workers. Add to this the fact that 60% of school board workers are laid off for the summer (taking EI is no relief – it amounts to a maximum 55% of earnings). As a result, 51% of OSBCU members have to take at least 1 more job, and 91% report facing financial hardship. This while being tasked with one of the most important and difficult roles – preparing the next generation for adulthood.

OSBCU members have had enough – they have demanded an 11.7% wage increase, to the Tories' best offer of 2%. Given the \$2.1 billion surplus the Tories have recently announced, paying educational workers should be a no-brainer, except when we remember that the Ford Tories are set on gutting public education and healthcare, by creating a crisis, and thereby stoking public anger.

*continued on page 7...*

# Scrap Bill 23

## Ford's new housing bill means less affordable housing, and billions for developers

by: Sid Lacombe

**D**oug Ford's new 'More Homes, Built Faster' act, known as Bill 23, is a gift to billionaire developers and will make the housing crisis worse while gutting even the most basic legislative powers of municipalities to protect affordable housing. The bill also reduces environmental oversights, and forces municipalities to cover the cost of infrastructure to service new developments.

It is a massive reshaping of the way land is used in Ontario and changes regulations in 9 different provincial acts in one fell swoop.

Dawn Parker, a professor in the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo described the bill as "a wholesale dismantling of 50 years of planning history in the province."

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark says that the bill is designed to build 1.5 million housing units in the next 10 years.

But the issue in most cities isn't the supply of housing. In Toronto there are roughly 5 empty housing units for every person experiencing homelessness. Those units are held as investments or short term rentals such as airbnb's.

And the provisions in the bill mean that this new housing is not going to be affordable. Indeed, as an incentive to developers the bill will reduce the number of affordable units required in any new buildings.

Most municipalities have rules about how



many new units in a building are to be designated as affordable. In larger cities that number can run from 10 to 20%. Ford wants to cap that

at a province wide 5%. He also wants to impose time limits on how long those units are to remain affordable to 25 years which means older

units that have been designated as affordable can be recategorized and rents jacked up.

The bill also changes rules about demolition or renovation of older buildings. According to ACORN: "It will make tenants more vulnerable to renovations/demovictions, increase the homelessness crisis and destroy existing affordable housing. The bill strips the tenants' right to return in case of demolition. This is extremely disturbing since it will destroy existing affordable housing and accelerate evictions and the homelessness crisis since the new units will be out of rent control."

Further, the bill reduces the ability of local conservation authorities (CA) to protect local ecosystems by changing oversight rules and forcing CAs to provide more land for development.

Phil Pothén from the group Environmental Defence stated, "It's going to potentially unleash one of the biggest reductions in biodiversity and losses of habitat that we've seen in decades."

All told the bill will result in small unaffordable, underserved and unlivable housing while the developers walk away with billions.

Parker outlined the impact of the legislation: "Humans know how to build very dense developments with small dwelling units with no green space. They're called prisons. Let's not incentivize those kinds of builds."

Ford is determined to make working people suffer and to destroy the natural world so his donor developer buddies can make their money.