

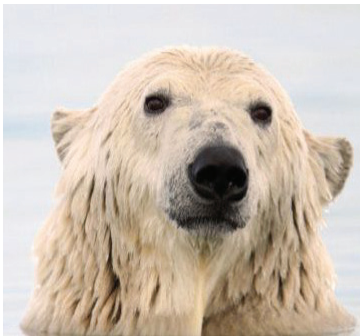
How do we stop  
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# Socialist Worker

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## STRIKE TO SAVE PUBLIC SERVICES



Ontario Nurses are organizing pickets to demand better pay and proper funding for healthcare. Coverage on page 4-5 photo: Toronto and York Region Labour Council



# Doug Ford adds insult to injury on Indigenous rights

**F**ord government lawyers want Indigenous people to pay the historical costs of their own colonization.

If your jaw dropped reading this, imagine the reaction of Indigenous people. “I just don’t have words to express how disappointing it is,” said Chief Patricia Tangie of the Michipicoten First Nation.

While the media has given almost no attention to it, a years-long court case between Anishinaabe First Nations and the Ontario and federal government has dragged on. The communities, situated along the north shore of Lakes Huron and Superior are signatories of the “Robinson Treaties”, dating from 1850.

In the balance is a compensation package potentially worth billions. Even that will be a fraction of the value that has been stripped from their lands.

Every member of the communities was to receive an annuity, to increase as resources were extracted from their territories – rich in timber and minerals. Then in 1874 the province arbitrarily capped payments at \$4 per person per year. According to the Treaties, these First Nations are

owed almost 150 years’ worth of payouts.

The court case is in its final stage. Superior Court Justice Patricia Hennessy has already stated the Anishinaabe are due a major payment plus a modern annuity going forward. At issue are

resources, for the costs of shipping resources to market, and costs of damage done to the land. They should pay for the costs of the Residential School system that tore generations of families apart and sought to destroy Indigenous culture. In short they should pay the

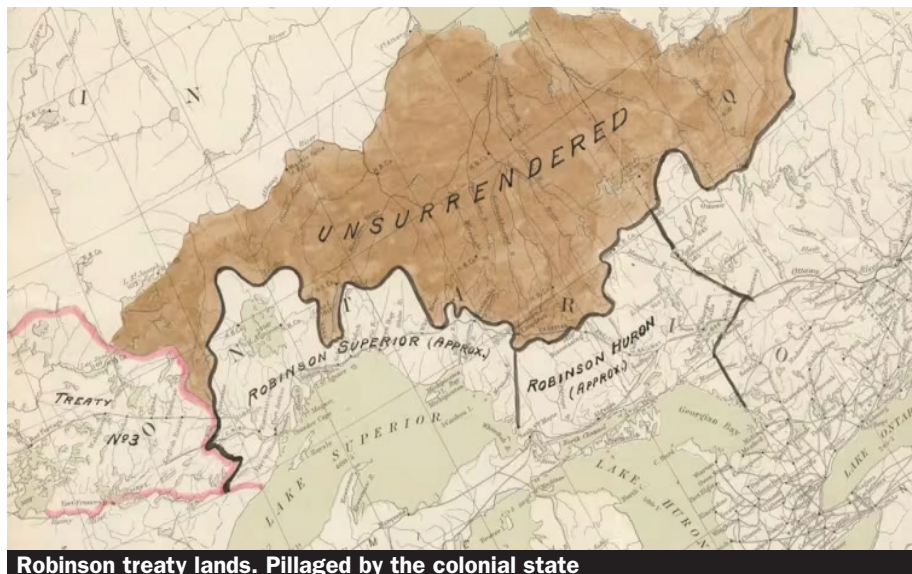
ing, and some equally fallacious bookkeeping, Ontario argues that First Nations are owed nothing for a century and a half of exploitation.

A tactical difference has emerged between the Huron Treaty FNs and those of the Superior Treaty. While the latter pursue a conclusion in court, the former have opted out, believing they can reach a just settlement in direct negotiations with provincial and federal agents. But the two groups remain in solidarity and mutual support.

At issue is not just compensation for the exploitation and injustice of the past. Doug Ford has staked a lot of Ontario’s economic future on development of the so-called “Ring of Fire”, mineral wealth on and under unceded Anishinaabe territory north and west of the Robinson Treaty lands.

The outcome of these legal wrangling will have a huge impact on whether future generations of Indigenous people control and benefit from the development of their own land.

One thing is clear: the racism and colonial arrogance apparent in the Ontario legal tactics foretell many struggles yet to come.



Robinson treaty lands. Pillaged by the colonial state

the amounts.

That is where Doug Ford’s legal team comes in. They are trying to argue that Indigenous people should be charged for building the roads and rail lines to reach the

costs of their own colonization.

So, they argue, First Nations are not only liable for the costs of clear-cutting the forests, but the costs of replanting trees as well. Through this absurd line of reason-

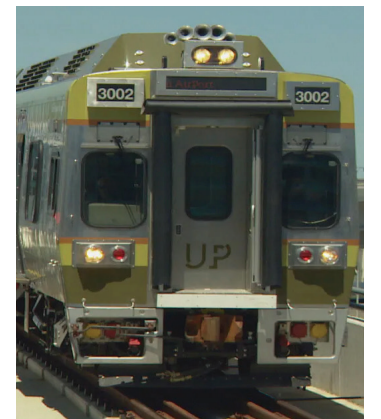
## Metrolinx trains unsafe at any speed

Metrolinx, the “Public Private Partnership” behind the cost-over-run disaster that is the Eglinton LRT, has been forced to shut down its UP Express train connection between Toronto’s Union Station and Pearson Airport.

Its entire fleet of diesel train cars has been taken out of service due to “thermal cracks” in the cars’ brake discs.

The UP service debuted in summer of 2015. That means the non-union made cars are less than 8 years old.

Metrolinx tried to roll the dice and take cars out of service a few



at a time to keep fares coming in while they did repairs. But UP workers, Teamster members blew the whistle. Teamsters spokesperson Greg Vaughan told media: “This is safety, we don’t negotiate, and we don’t mess around when it comes to safety.”

# Healthcare privatization: the feds are in on the con

**T**hose who call on the federal government to put a stop to provincial healthcare privatization need to study the history of Liberal cuts and privatization.

As concerns over our crumbling, underfunded health system rise, a new agreement between Justin Trudeau and Doug Ford has been reached. Ontario will receive just shy of \$74 billion over the next 10 years. That includes a one-time top-up of \$776 million to address backlogs in children’s hospitals, ERs and surgery wait times.

A similar deal was reached with the maritime provinces. Negotiations with the rest.

Not all the details have been announced, but it looks like there is no stipulation that the new money be devoted to the public system. Instead there is double talk about future “reviews”, while federal officials negotiate separate deals with each province that recognize the “special needs” of each.

Healthcare advocates had been hoping the Liberals would call the premiers’ bluff and offer them new money only on the stipulation that it not end up funding more for-profit clinics and services, take it or leave it.

Instead the agreement confirms that Ottawa has no intention of defending public healthcare from privatization. After all, it was the Liberals in the Chretien/Martin era that opened this Pandora’s Box. On February 27, 1995 Finance Minister Paul Martin delivered a budget that massively slashed transfer payments

the money had to be spent.

In short, the premiers accepted the immediate funding cut in return for much greater future provincial autonomy. So now, when Doug Ford take money from the feds supposedly for affordable daycare, that may end up funding a new highway in suburbia instead. And Trudeau

for their “publicly funded” health system. They don’t mean universal public healthcare. They mean directing tax money – your money – toward the expanding corporate health sector. Then those for-profit businesses will charge you a second time for the services the public system used to provide.



Unions protest lack of action from Trudeau on healthcare in Ottawa

to the provinces earmarked for health, education, housing, etc. Why did the premiers of the day accept it? The key to the deal was the quiet removal of regulations about how

just shrugs and says, not my fault.

So don’t be fooled in the coming days when Ford and his Health Minister Sylvia Jones take to the airwaves to brag about new money

People are right to direct their fury over the theft of our healthcare at premiers like Ford. But don’t let the federal government off the hook – they’re in on the scam.

## Mister Integrity

Doug Ford got testy with reporters asking him difficult questions about soliciting corporate donations at his daughter Kayla’s “stag and doe”.

He thought announcing new corporate welfare for Magna corporation to get into the EV parts business would change the channel, but alas, the questions followed him to Windsor.

He barked: “We’re talking here about Magna, we’re talking about job creation. And you want to talk



about a \$150 stag. You have to have journalistic integrity.”

Mr. Integrity failed to mention his favourite Magna employee – none other than Kayla Ford herself. Ms. Integrity is employed by Magna as an “Analyst, Clinical Health Services”. Kayla is a holistic wellness coach specializing in fat reduction, hormonal health and “mindset”. She is also a vocal vaccine denier.



# Tour by German far-right MEP exposes rot at heart of Tory Party

by: John Bell

**C**hristine Anderson is a notorious and vocal member of European Parliament. She is infamous for her extreme, hate-fueled attacks on immigrants, Muslims, People of Colour, LGBTQ and Trans people. She excels in using anti-vaccine conspiracy theories to draw disgruntled people into the orbit of the far right. In short, she is the template for the rising fascist movement.

She has been visiting Canada, speaking to far-right groups and meeting with extremists, because the lamentable success of the convoy movement has revealed Canada to be a fertile recruiting ground for white supremacists and fascists. This an international movement intentionally trying to nurture like-minded groups.

Reflecting the recent shift in tactics of these far-right groups, from targeting public health to attacking Trans rights and LGBTQ events, she frequently speaks “in defence of the family”, code for rolling back human rights victories won over the past 50 years. She went out of her way to support and endorse the far-right attacks on Drag Queen Story Time that have become common across Canada.

It comes as no surprise she was pictured meeting with members of

the Diagonon militia group, giving the fascist salute. She stopped in Calgary to meet leaders of the convoy occupation like Tamara Lich. She was given star status on Ezra Levant’s Rebel News. Nor is it surprising to see her together with Maxime Bernier, head of the far-right PPC. Bernier gushed in a tweet how excited he was to meet “the legendary [Christine Anderson] with PPC supporters in Montreal.”

More disturbing is a photo of Anderson arm-in-arm with three Ontario Conservative MPs and a room full of Tory staffers. The three are Leslyn Lewis, Colin Carrie and Dean Allison. All were vocal critics of mandated public health measures during the pandemic and supporters of the convoy occupation of Ottawa last winter.

## Two-faced Tories

When the photo hit the press, and outrage grew, alarm bells went off at Conservative Party HQ and its branch office at the Sun newspaper. Pierre Poilievre had been doing all he could to distract from and downplay his party’s collusion with the month-long Ottawa occupation. In the lead-up to the next federal election the Tory leadership was doing all it could to hide the far-right extremists in its ranks.

Then along comes a prominent Euro-Nazi and they all come tum-

bling out of the woodwork.

Poilievre’s office issued a ridiculous statement, claiming: “We were not aware of the views or associations of her and her political party. We do not share or endorse her views and strongly condemn any views that are racist or hateful.”

When this was met with a combination of skepticism and derision, Poilievre’s spokesperson issued a sterner finger-wag/

her. Frankly, it would be better if Anderson never visited Canada in the first place. She and her racist, hateful views are not welcome here.”

Obviously whipped into line by CPCHQ, the MPs have issued fawning apologies and declarations of ignorance about Anderson’s record.

In interviews Anderson has said she has spoken with Poilievre sev-

than Justin Trudeau.” That’s got to hurt.

The repeated claims that the 3 prominent right-wing MPs knew nothing about Anderson’s fascist affiliations – the politician Bernier described as “legendary” and who was widely quoted by Tories for attacking Trudeau’s handling of the pandemic and convoy—are simply ludicrous.

Far more likely is that fact that a large percentage of their voters and supporters lean to far-right ideology. Lewis in particular is a prominent Tory, having twice run for party leadership on a right-wing platform. If anything, she has tried to imitate Anderson’s rise to influence.

Events like this opportunistic fascist tour expose the rot within the Tory party and point-up Poilievre’s dilemma. The ranks of his party are full of extremists, but to break through electorally, beyond his prairie stronghold, Poilievre needs to put on a moderate front.

If he comes down too hard on Anderson’s politics he is condemning his own supporters and risks driving them into the arms of the PPC, or worse, to the plethora of fascist splinter proliferating across the country. If he doesn’t he opens himself up for fresh attacks and ridicule from the mainstream.

It’s not easy being a lying, two-faced tory.



Anderson poses with members of the Diagonon militia

denial. “Christine Anderson’s views are vile and have no place in our politics. The MPs were not aware of this visiting Member of the European Parliament’s opinions, and they regret meeting with

eral times and liked him. Poilievre denies ever having spoken with her. Following the statement from his office, Anderson told Rebel News that she was “disappointed” in Poilievre and said he was “no better

# How do we stop the rise of the far-right?

**T**he growth of the far right in Canada and globally is alarming. These forces are now well embedded in the mainstream political process. Conservative party leader Pierre Poilievre has embraced the far-right ‘convoy’ movement and continues to show that he and his MPs are very close to fascist movements.

New political parties have developed on both the provincial and federal level, most prominently the ‘People’s Party’ headed by Maxime Bernier. But many of the smaller upstart parties gained substantial votes in recent elections.

The ‘convoy’ occupation in Ottawa gave the leaders of these movements a huge platform and sympathetic media coverage brought even more people into their orbit. There are now numerous offshoots. Some are targeting Drag Queen Story Time events and more broadly Trans-rights. But there are new grievances each week. There is now a movement to stop ‘15 minute cities’ - an innocuous concept that suggests people should live in neighbourhoods where you can find all the necessities within easy walking distance. The far right has decided that this is an attempt to restrict the movement of people which is a completely baseless accusation but that doesn’t seem to matter to adherents.

These movements aren’t new but the scale and influence of these groups has grown.

After the election of Trump in 2016, we saw the beginnings of racist groups feeling the confidence to try and mobilize publicly in a way not seen for quite some time. In January 2017, a far right demo was called for city hall in Toronto. The demo was outnumbered by anti-racists and was stopped from marching.

Thus began a multi-year campaign by the far right to have a public presence on the streets. Eventually they were defeated by a combination of much larger and broader anti-racist rallies that confronted them.

## Pandemic

The COVID pandemic gave these forces a new impetus and allowed them to build their numbers.

The resulting economic crisis and the offshoots of the racist response to the Indigenous sovereignty movement and Black Lives Matter demonstrations in the US has given them a series of new grievances around which to organize.

The history of post-war fascism is one of small bands of disconnected people who live on the margins of society who suddenly find traction for their ideas in times of crisis. The anti-lockdown demos were disturbingly large mainly because they tapped into the fear that comes from instability caused by the pandemic.

## Shutting down hate

It is important to note that the majority still find the ideas of racism, fascism,

homophobia etc... repugnant. In fact, recent polling shows a majority of Canadians would like to see the country move towards socialism rather than move further right.

But there is still a need for a much broader opposition to the far right in Canada. There have been great mobilizations against anti-black racism, for Indigenous sovereignty, for migrant rights and against Islamophobia and Transphobia and each plays an important role in

pushing back against the bigots.

We need to support those forces and build the demonstrations whenever possible. But we also need to broaden the forces who can both respond to an immediate situation and build an anti-racist/fascist movement on our own timeline.

The need now is to push for a multi-layered campaign against the right. The solidarity demos against racism are key and we need to confront the fascists when and if they try to march again. But we also need to push back in other areas. The right feeds of despair and anger. We need to support union fights against austerity, stand against evictions and call for a just recovery from the pandemic chaos.

As British socialist Tony Cliff said, “Our policy of fighting fascism was two-track: attacking the rats and attacking the sewers in which the rats multiply. Fighting the fascists is not enough. One has also to fight the unemployment, low wages and social deprivation that create conditions for the growth of fascism.”

Trade unions offer a good place to start. There are developing anti-racist/fascist groups at labour councils in Canada. Unions often have diverse memberships and the unity of the class in struggle against a common enemy - the boss - has helped to build a solid foundation for future growth.

Building broad united fronts with unions, faith, community and other

organizations will allow for the movement to cut off the oxygen for the right before they even get to the streets.

The community solidarity groups that sprung up, starting in Ottawa during the convoy protests, need to be built and supported.

Organizing events - beyond just responding to the bigots is key in building the kind of movement that pushes the ideas of the far-right back into the shadows.

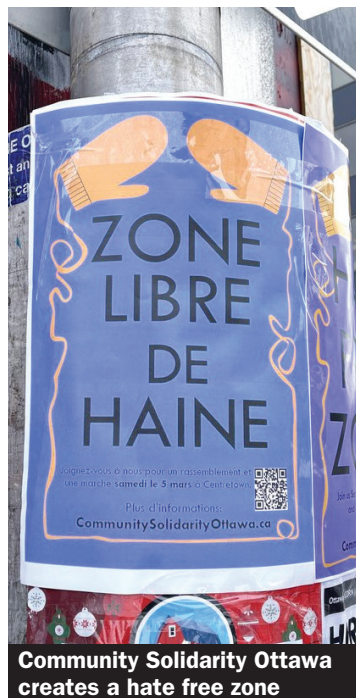
## Capitalism and oppression

And crucially we need to understand that the bigoted ideas motivating the right are coming from the top of society.

Governments and the business interests they serve have always profited from creating divisions in society. The divide and conquer tactics are designed to forestall unity among the working class. A united class becomes a threat to profits.

In Canada one of the main drivers of the far right have been the oil and gas industries. They are deeply concerned that the growing climate justice and Indigenous solidarity movements could shut down the tar sands and pipelines. Bosses from these industries have a material interest in building division and racism.

As long as capitalism is in place, those incentives will exist. If we want a world without hate we need to smash the system itself.





# Workers are the key saving public service

*Hundreds of thousands of public sector workers are in various stages of fight back against cuts, austerity and shrinking real wages. Their fight is crucial for pushing back against privatization and worsening conditions for the working class.*



Parks Canada workers threaten to strike against Trudeau

**P**ublic services are under attack across Canada. Provincial governments who are responsible for many of the services we rely on - particularly healthcare and education - want to move many services to for-profit agencies. This would be disastrous for working people in this country already reeling from high cost of living brought on by corporate profiteering.

The federal government is not interested in stemming the slide towards more for-profit services. Justin Trudeau calls Doug Ford's healthcare privatization plans 'innovative'. He has done little to nothing to save services or to hold premiers accountable for their spending. This is because the Liberals are also beholden to the same corporate interests that want to make money from privatizing essential services.

All the while, the premiers are sitting on piles of cash that could alleviate the crisis we are seeing but they won't spend the money where it is needed. They want to keep a stash to be used for further tax cuts for the rich.

And the Liberals are short changing federal public sector workers while spending billions on new war machines like the F35 fighter jets and warships. The priorities of capitalism are to funnel money to war and corporate profit rather than people's needs.

But this can change. There is a real possibility of larger fight back from the public sector on both provincial and federal levels. Contract negotiations are at an impasse in a number of sectors, many offers have been rejected and different public sector unions are, at least, preparing for strike action.

This is crucial if we are going to push back against the attacks on working people. In Ontario, the strike

by education workers against Ford's back to work legislation electrified not only union members but millions looking for a way to fight for a better world. Strike action and workers struggle can reshape the terrain for years to come.

## **Pandemic and workers resistance**

Throughout the pandemic essential workers, having been called heroes by their bosses for going to work in dangerous conditions, have been fighting for fair pay and better conditions. Over the past year we have seen a significant up-tick in strike actions. In the summer, 45,000 construction workers struck in Ontario and more around the country. The size of the strike scared the developers and their political friends and many demands were met.

There were numerous smaller strikes by, warehouse workers, longshore workers, and smaller manufacturing operations. Most of the strike actions happened in the private sector and the numbers reveal that it was the largest number of strike days lost in almost 20 years.

Most of the public sector workers, reeling from the requirements of the pandemic workplace had not yet fought back in an organized way. Provincial governments also set up barriers like anti-union laws such as bill 124 in Ontario that capped pay raises.

This appears to be changing. In Quebec, public sector workers are once again bargaining in a common front. They have rejected Premier François Legault's offer which was well below the rate of inflation and didn't address issues of working conditions.

Public sector workers in the CSN will see their contracts expire on March 31 and preparations are being made to escalate workplace actions towards a day of action in the fall.

In Ontario, nurses with the Ontario Nurses Federation are organizing escalating pickets to demand better pay after years of real wage cuts. They are not allowed to strike outright but there is a tremendous amount of support for their struggle.

On the federal level, more than 150,000 public sector workers at PSAC are in the process of voting to strike. Talks came to an impasse in late 2022 and there has been little movement from the Trudeau government suggesting any changes

to the shoddy deals offered.

Generally, wages, job security, pay equity with comparable positions, remote work provisions (especially after the December policy being announced in bad faith by the Employer), anti-racism training, and Indigenous languages allowances are demands that cut across all of the tables for the federal workers.

## **Saving public services**

The fight by public sector workers is about saving those services. In almost

all cases, workers are demanding funding increases not just for wages but to keep the system intact.

There will be many forks in the road for each of these struggles and there will remain a tension between rank and file orders and the union leaders who have capitulated to government demands in the past. It is crucial that rank and file movements be nurtured to stop those compromises from materializing.

During the education workers strike in Ontario this became clear. Many teachers, for example were furious with union brass who refused to offer their support for the strike. Had it lasted longer the possibility of a bottom up revolt was real.

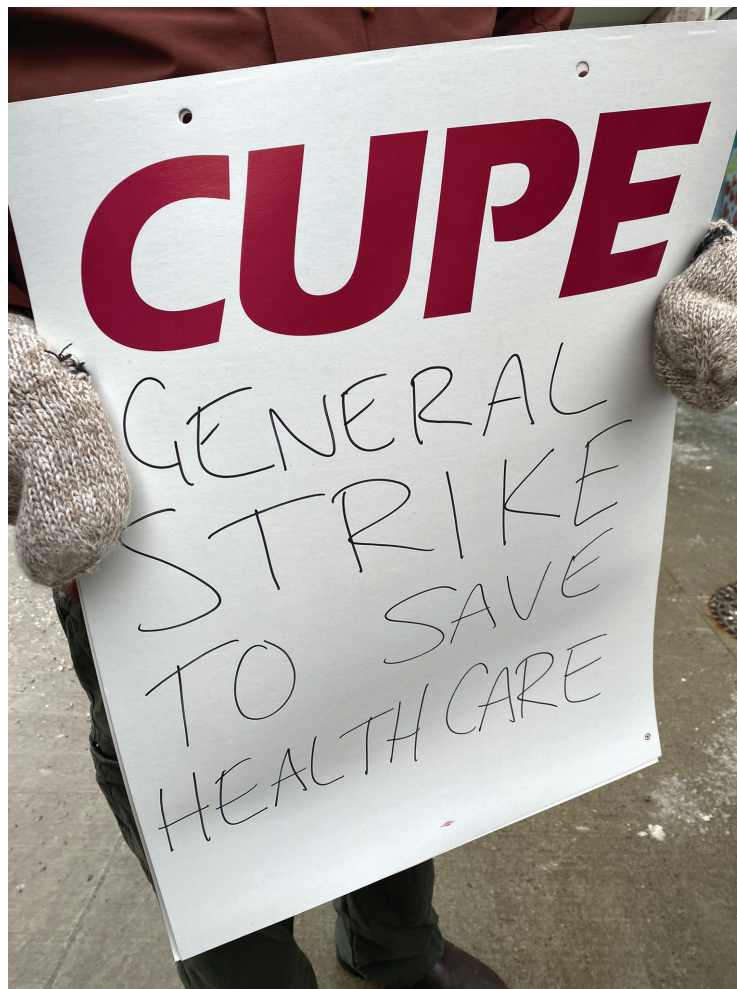
While movements against privatization have been building strong bases of support and organizing meetings and rallies, the inclusion of the public sector workers will be key to altering the balance of class forces in a way that can actually push back against the cuts and austerity.

Workers already run the system but the governments and corporations are still in power. The ruling class have convinced people that they are a necessary element in our society. It isn't true. The bosses do nothing more than steal the value of work for their profits.

The working class has immense power to shut down the profit makers and reshape the world.

For socialists this means we must support all these struggles. For those in unions, the task is to build rank and file networks to secure a base for further escalating struggle. For those outside the unions it means doing all your can to build solidarity. The rank and file will feel ever more confident to advance the struggle if they know that they are not alone.

Join picket lines and rallies wherever they pop up and help build the kind of force that can shut down the drive for for-profit services.





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# Revolutionizing instruments: The impact of AI on capital and labour

by: Ibrahim Alsaahy

**A**s we move into the future of artificial intelligence (AI), the path ahead is illuminated by the beacon of unsupervised learning. Recent breakthroughs, such as the ChatGPT-3, have already changed the way we interact with machines and brought us closer to a world where AI is a crucial part of our daily lives. While some might fear a future in which robots rule over humans, it is important to understand the role of AI in a capitalist society.

In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels wrote, “The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society.”

AI has had a significant impact on both the capital and labor markets. On the one hand, AI has increased efficiency and productivity in various businesses, leading to increased profits for capital. On the other hand, it has also led to job losses and wage stagnation for workers, as AI systems can perform many tasks faster and more accurately than humans. The integration of AI has resulted in a shift in the balance of power between capital and labor, with the former becoming increasingly dominant.

In the age of AI in the “Fourth Industrial Revolution,” under capitalism, we recall Marx’s words: “The production of too many useful things results in too many useless people.” In a capitalist system, the drive for profit and efficiency leads to the automation of many tasks previously performed by human workers. This can result in widespread jobs loss and a growing surplus population of people who are deemed “useless” in the eyes of the market.

For example, a report from the World Economic Forum estimated that 75 million jobs may be displaced by AI and other technological advancements by 2025. Another report from the McKinsey Global Institute estimated that up to 800 million workers globally may lose their jobs to automation by 2030.

On the capital side, Gartner reports a 270% increase in the number of businesses adopting artificial intelligence over the last four years. Furthermore, according to a 2019 PWC report, AI has been shown to increase profitability by up to 40% in some industries, with some reporting increases of up to 70%. According to the report, AI has a greater impact on profitability in industries such as finance, healthcare, and manufacturing. Another

study conducted by McKinsey & Company in 2018 found that AI has the potential to generate an additional \$13 trillion in global economic activity by 2030.

This revolution in AI is affecting the relationships between production and capital as capitalism seeks to sustain itself by constantly revolutionizing its methods of production. The integration of AI is one of the latest attempts to prolong the life of capitalism.

Stanley Kubrick’s iconic science fiction film, “2001: A Space Odyssey,” begins with a sequence showcasing the evolution of humanity, starting from the earliest moments of time to the inception of tool usage. This sequence highlights the idea that tools have played a significant role in shaping the evolution of mankind.

Past industrial revolutions saw the substitution of human manual labor with tools and machinery. This time, however, we are witnessing a revolution like no other. The machines are replacing not just our physical abilities but also our mental faculties, specifically our capacity to forecast and decide.

Contrary to popular belief, artificial intelligence is not a recent development, but rather a field of study that dates back to the

understanding. This technology has impacted industries such as customer service and marketing and opened up new avenues for AI applications, changing the way we interact with machines.

The impact of AI on society has also been a topic of much discussion, particularly in light of its increasing use in the workplace. Companies like Amazon, Uber, and Lyft are using AI to monitor their workers, maximizing productivity at the cost of their health and well-being. This has led to concerns about the unequal distribution of power and the exploitation of the working class by capitalists.

Marxist economist Michael Roberts has commented on this issue, pointing out that AI has the potential to transform our society but also reveals the unequal distribution of power, where the working class struggles to assert their rights and benefits in a system dominated by capital. He argues that the working class cannot sit back and watch as the capitalists dictate their lives and determine their fate, and that the rise of AI can only lead to real benefits, such as shorter working hours and increased social goods, if the profit motive is replaced.

In a socialist society, the rise of AI could lead to a massive uplift in both the economic prosperity and cultural richness of the population. The automation of tedious and physically demanding jobs will create more leisure time, opening up new opportunities for education, familial growth,

and cultural enhancement. The integration of AI and automation in the building and construction sectors, as well as its applications in gene sequencing, drug development, and medical research analysis, will lead to major advancements in human health that are accessible to all.

In conclusion, the field of AI has come a long way since its inception and will continue to shape the future. The impact of AI on society and the workplace is a complex issue that requires consideration of both the benefits and the potential risks. However, by striving for a brighter future in which AI works for us rather than against us and by ensuring that the fruits of technological progress are shared by all, we can harness the full potential of AI to create a better and more equal world.



## Support Ontario nurses

by: Pam Johnson

**T**he Ontario Nurses Association (ONA) set up dozens of pickets at hospitals across the province on February 23 to call for better wages, better staffing and better care for patients.

The nurses are in bargaining with Ford’s government for a new collective agreement. After working through the pandemic and having their wage increases capped at 1% under Bill 124, nurses are fed up and are demanding better wages and working conditions.

They are also demanding better care for their patients whose safety is at risk after years of understaffing and crushing workloads. One nurse at Toronto picket said, “I am a mid-career nurse and I’m held together by orthotics and support hose, but I want to stay with my patients. I worked through the pandemic and all

I am getting from Ford is meaningless praise.

Another nurse said, ‘We can’t have a revolving door of temporary nurses without stable jobs, this is our time to fight, and I’m so glad to see so much support from other unions.’

Several hundred supporters were at the lively picket today at hospital row on University Avenue in Toronto including unions members from OPSEU, UFCW, OSSTF, IATSE, Steelworkers and several NDP MPPs.

The Ford government tabled a bill this week to open the door to private hospitals to ‘deal with’ the crisis they created in hospital care. Nurses and their supporters are rightfully furious that the funding that should be going to public healthcare is being handed to private corporations to make profit.

For more information and to find out how you can support the nurses: [www.valuenurses.ca](http://www.valuenurses.ca)



Revolutionizing instruments: The Impact of AI on Capital and Labor

1950s with the first use of the term “artificial intelligence.” Over the years, the technology has undergone significant advancements, making it accessible to not only large corporations and scientific institutions but also small and medium-sized enterprises. The affordability of AI technology, which is comparable to many older technologies, has facilitated its widespread adoption across various industries, leading to hundreds of diverse AI implementations and use cases.

One of the most notable recent advancements in AI is the ChatGPT-3 (Generative Pretrained Transformer), which has changed the way we think about AI and its capabilities. With its advanced natural language processing abilities, ChatGPT-3 has set new standards for human-like text generation and



# Earthquake in Turkey and Syria not a ‘natural disaster’

1. We declare our solidarity with all the victims of the terrible earthquakes that struck Turkey and Syria on Monday 6 February. This is a huge human catastrophe. The death toll has already reached over 33,000, but insurance companies are assuming as many as 200,000 deaths. But this is not a ‘natural disaster’. Earthquakes are inevitable in regions such as this where they have been taking place since antiquity. The terrible death toll, however, is a consequence of human action and inaction, shaped by a capitalist system based on exploitation and driven by the competitive accumulation of capital.

2. Action – the government of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, based on the neoliberal Islamist AKP but now in coalition with the fascist MHP, has been in power in Turkey for more than 20 years. The economic growth of which Erdoğan boasts has been driven by a construction boom that has enriched the AKP’s capitalist backers. In this boom, even by the admission of ministers, building regulations have been systematically ignored. Around 20,000 people died in the 1999 Gölcük earthquake; thanks to precautionary measures, just three people died in the 2022 earthquake in Fukushima, Japan, despite the fact that both were earthquakes of 7.4 magnitude. Inaction – after the Gölcük and Düzce earthquakes, a special earthquake tax was introduced, which raised \$37bn. According to an ex-minister, the money was not spent on constructing earthquake-proof buildings, but on “health, roads, tunnels, bridges”. As our comrades in the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party say, this is nothing short of murder.

3. This criminal negligence is compounded by the Turkish government’s response to the disaster – the imposition of a state of emergency to increase the repressive powers of the state, sluggish mobilization of aid and rescue services that left people to suffocate under the ruins, Erdoğan’s denunciations of “whingers” and “looters”, and an official

campaign against “disinformation”. “There’s no state,” a surgeon in Adiyaman told the Financial Times. But the truth is that the Turkish state has its own priorities, which includes protecting the trio of politicians, contractors, and bureaucrats who created the conditions for this catastrophe. Rather than trying to compensate for all that it has done



and has failed to do, the AKP-MHP government is busy blaming the victims.

4. The earthquakes have affected a vast area stretching from Trabzon to Palestine. Not only do the effects span state borders, but they represent a further blow to regions afflicted by war – the civil war in Syria, the rivalries among regional sub-imperialisms, the Turkish state’s war against the Kurdish

people, the interventions of US and Russian imperialism. The disaster is a particular blow for the people of Syria, where their lives have been devastated by years of imperialist interventions and the brutality of the regime of Bashar al-Assad and vast numbers of refugees are scattered across the country and in neighbouring countries.

5. The scale of this crisis exceeds the resources of the affected states. Currently the Western imperialist powers have three priorities – making their own working people pay for the inflationary crisis by pushing interest rates and unemployment up and wages down, pouring weapons into Ukraine to defeat their Russian rivals, and closing the borders to migrants and refugees. The recent EU

summit, which shed crocodile tears over the earthquake, was dominated by the drive to strengthen Fortress Europe. It approved another €500m in military aid for Ukraine and €6.5m “emergency humanitarian assistance” for Syria and Turkey.

6. In contrast, ordinary people throughout the region and beyond have shown the way by themselves raising aid for the afflicted areas. This solidarity shines through, for example, in the support given by the citizens of states that proclaim themselves “enemies” of Turkey such as Armenia and Greece.

7. We demand that all states:
- Rush money, food, medicines, and rescue services to the region to help the victims;
  - Scrap the sanctions against Syria permanently, not just for six months – no discrimination over who gets helped;
  - Give full support for refugees and migrants within and from the region – open the borders!
  - Initiate criminal prosecution of those politicians, contractors, and bureaucrats responsible for the shoddy buildings and the failure to prepare for the predicted earthquakes, and provide swift aid that have killed so many people.
  - Cut arms spending and redirect the resources to meeting real human needs.

8. Though climate change probably has not played a role in directly causing this disaster, what has happened gives us a glimpse into how climate catastrophe will be handled – with negligence, repression, and denunciations of the victims. Socialist revolution is needed more urgently than ever to rid the world of the capitalist system with its distorted priorities and corrupt and callous ruling classes.

Coordination of the International Socialist Tendency  
[internationalsocialists.org/](http://internationalsocialists.org/)

## Capitalism and the crisis of biodiversity

Sunday March 12th, 1pm eastern, 10 am pacific

**Speaker: Sarah Ensor** – UK climate justice activist and socialist, member of the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) Union, author of “Capitalism and the biodiversity crisis”, in System Change not Climate Change (Bookmarks, 2019)  
Find info and zoom link at: [socialist.ca](http://socialist.ca)



**Territorial Acknowledgment**  
*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 <a href="http://socialist.ca/ourstand">socialist.ca/ourstand</a>	
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.  <b>Workers’ power</b> 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.	<b>Oppression</b> 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.	<b>Canada, Quebec, Indigenous Peoples</b> 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.	<b>Read the full statement at:</b> <a href="http://socialist.ca/ourstand">socialist.ca/ourstand</a>

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# Ukraine, China and Imperial rivalry

The war in Ukraine is fueling a rapid rise in war rhetoric and the US drive to surround China could spread to a wider war.

by: **Sid Lacombe**

**T**he war in Ukraine is making the world a much more dangerous place. The confrontation, which is essentially a proxy war between NATO and Russia, shows no signs of ending soon.

The US and its NATO allies have been pumping more and more weaponry into the country in an attempt to weaken Russia - long seen as a potential geo-political rival to the US. The numbers are staggering. The combined NATO shipments are worth much more than the annual Russian military budget and have topped \$100 billion.

The US has consistently undermined any attempt at a negotiated solution to the crisis. At the beginning of the war, Russian and Ukrainian diplomats held peace talks - first near the border with Belarus and later in Turkey. The talks would often be followed by a press conference where both sides showed some optimism for continuing discussions. After one of the sessions in Turkey there was even a breakthrough when Ukraine agreed to remain neutral and Russia responded by removing troops from the west of the country.

In each and every case there would be a quick press conference by the US administration dismissing the peace effort - usually accompanied by a promise for billions more in weapons to Ukraine.

These decisions to sabotage the talks underline that the US is not actually interested in ending this war. It is in many ways a perfect option for them. They can weaken an imperial rival and they don't have to spend any US soldiers to do so. They can simply send more and more Ukrainians into the line of fire without all of the problems that come domestically from a long war and lots of US casualties - as we saw with the wars in Iraq

and Afghanistan.

The war is also a gift for those who feared that the NATO alliance was being undermined by Russia and, specifically Western European reliance on Russian oil and gas.

US and Canadian officials have long held that the Nordstream pipeline project was a threat to the unity of the trans-Atlantic partnership. Canadian fossil fuel companies see the war as a chance to replace Russian energy supplies. They are betting on a long and bloody war so they can get more customers.

This fact also undermines the assertion that Russia blew up the Nordstream pipeline. These pipelines were key geo-strategic levers for the Russians. It allowed them to apply pressure to both Eastern and Western Europe as they deal with an energy crisis. It makes no sense at all that Putin would get rid of such crucial assets. There is however, one party

that has consistently opposed the creation of the pipelines and that is the US.

## China

This war is also being used to attempt to isolate and threaten China. There are repeated assertions that China is supplying arms to Russia although there is very little evidence of this. But that has not stopped Biden from using the narrative to reinforce US dominance in the Pacific. They are planning new war games in the straits of Taiwan to threaten China and are calling for more sanctions if China's official policy of neutrality is altered in any way.

And the war drums are beating ever more loudly for a larger confrontation with China. The preposterous coverage of the Chinese 'spy' balloons shows the lengths that both Canada and the US will go to to build a case for war.

They are doing so because China still has the

ability to potentially rival the US in economic terms globally and for the US administration and its allies, that cannot be allowed.

All of these considerations have led to a new war fever. It is now seen as appeasement to even suggest peace talks between the parties in Ukraine which ensures a never ending war between two nuclear powers which is an incredibly dangerous prospect.

## Canada's role

Canada's minister of national defence, Anita Anand has stated that our country is on the side of the 'rules based international order' and therefore will stand with the US in prolonging the war.

While it may sound like a good and noble thing to support the 'rules' it is a smokescreen that needs to be exposed. The rules of the international order are set by those countries that have the most money and weaponry. It is a set of rules designed to provide NATO countries with the ability to pillage the world of its resources under the rubric of international institutions whose policies are solely defined by the needs of western Imperialism.

Canada is firmly embedded in that NATO camp and is spending billions on new weaponry to ensure they can reap the rewards of being the US lapdog. Trudeau is also using every opportunity to sow fear of China to help build the case for war.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine must be opposed. But we, in Canada must also oppose the militarism of our state and its NATO partners.

Wars are never conducted in the interests of working people but are about protecting the interests of ruling classes in all of the belligerent countries. The only solution is to get rid of the capitalist system that compels competition between states and forces this inter-imperial rivalry.



# COP biodiversity meetings compromise our future

by: **Brian Champ**

**T**oo much fanfare, the Biodiversity COP15 meetings ended on Dec 19th announcing the adoption of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Also known as the Kunming-Montreal GBF for the official host cities for the meetings, the Chinese Environment Minister Huang Runqui declared that the agreement "can guide us as we all work together to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and put biodiversity on the path to recovery for the benefit of all people of the world." Canada's Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault concurred, adding "This is tremendous progress".

The proceedings had some drama, including the walkout for several hours of 70 African, South American and Asian delegates from the negotiations over questions about financing the "protection" of 30% of land, water and marine areas by 2030, a target championed by mainly developed nations.

Many of the participants indicated the compromises reached in order to come to global agreement. The final text included language recognizing the role of Indigenous peoples at the forefront of protecting biodiversity, calling for the rights to "free, prior and informed consent" (FPIC).

Many NGOs and environmental commentators cautiously called it a step forward, but warned that much depends on the implementation.

But, much like the international climate meetings, 30 years of talks haven't stopped the unfolding biodiversity crisis. There is no reason to think that this agreement will prove any different.

This is not just because the US Congress

ment mechanisms exist for compliance.

Furthermore, the reliance on finance mechanisms, the capitalization of "ecosystem services" and other market mechanisms to drive the changes are inadequate to the challenge we face.



**Endangered Blanding's Turtle. Under threat from corporate greed**

never ratified the Convention for Biological Diversity.

The time frames for action are too slow, many of the targets lack specific goals or dates for implementation and no enforce-

While the adoption of language around Indigenous Peoples' rights to FPIC is important it is always limited by reference to "national legislation". While some Indigenous groups participated in the proceedings, others

took the opportunity to protest for their rights. As the conference began, the Muskrat Collective brought their message during Trudeau's opening speech, drumming for their Indigenous rights and holding a banner reading "Indigenous Genocide = Ecocide, To Save Biodiversity Stop Invading Our Lands". This lays bare the hypocrisy of the Canadian State that claims to act for biodiversity, yet allows RCMP armies to clear the path for pipelines and extractive industries on treaty and unceded lands without the consent of the Indigenous peoples who have stewarded them since time immemorial.

The drive to profit that lies at the heart of the capitalist economy trumps Indigenous rights and the ecosystems that all humans rely on. It threatens the viability of human life on the planet. Indigenous peoples are at the forefront of protecting biodiversity: 80% of the remaining planetary biodiversity is on lands and waters controlled by Indigenous peoples and stewarded in their traditional ways.

The same system that threatens their lands, attacks public services and good union jobs that working people rely on. Building the links between the struggles of Indigenous land defenders, the fight against the privatization of public services and workers' struggles for wages and working conditions is crucial for mobilizing the forces from below that can overturn the capitalist system before it's too late.

We have a planet to win.



## SHUT DOWN CANADA

### Three years on, historic Indigenous solidarity movement could spark broader struggle

by: **Brian Champ**

**T**he struggle of the Wet'suwet'en people against the settler colonial violence of so-called British Columbia and Canada has a long history. Wet'suwet'en territory was never lost through treaty or conquest.

The Wet'suwet'en people maintained a continuous connection to the 22,000 square kilometers of territory from time immemorial to the present day, guided by Anuc 'nu'at'en, their traditional law. Even as many of their people were forced onto reserves, their cultural practices banned and their children taken away to "residential schools", the traditions connected to the land remained alive.

The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs maintained sovereignty over their unceded territory - this was recognized in the landmark Delgamuukw-Gisday'wa decision of 1997, which included similar recognition for the Gitksan people just to the north.

Instead of ushering in an era of respect and recognition for Indigenous sovereignty, however, governments at all levels reacted to pressure from businesses urging that these rights be surrendered to counter "investment uncertainty".

It is no coincidence that a decade after the court's decision, multiple pipelines crossing over Wet'suwet'en land were proposed. First the Northern Gateway diluted bitumen pipeline, which was defeated in 2016. Then Coastal GasLink and the Pacific Trails fracked gas (LNG) pipelines that remain on the agenda. Similar projects exist that affect the Gitksan people as well. The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs have stated again and again that they oppose ALL pipelines on their territory.

Nevertheless, both the provincial and federal governments and lower courts have worked to enable the construction of these pipelines. CGL started construction in late 2018, and obtained a temporary injunction from the BC Supreme Court to clear opposition.

In early 2019, RCMP violently arrested 14 Wet'suwet'en land defenders and their allies and dismantled a gate they constructed at Gidimt'en Checkpoint with "lethal overwatch" - snipers ready to use deadly force on unarmed people defending their land. Demonstrations in solidarity with Wet'suwet'en erupted across so-called Canada and farther afield. Led by Indigenous people these actions brought allies onto the streets, outraged about violations of Indigenous and human rights, the developing climate crisis and the hypocrisy of the federal and provincial governments.

In February 2019, land defenders re-established their presence on Wet'suwet'en land. In June, CGL requested a permanent injunction to clear opposition to the pipeline on Wet'suwet'en land.

#### Global Climate Strike

In September, 2019 the worldwide climate movement erupted in huge protests at the Fridays for Future global climate strike: half a million came out in Montreal, 100,000 in Vancouver, more than 50,000 in Toronto to demand real action on the climate crisis. There were many smaller actions in cities and towns all across the country, and over 7 million participated worldwide.

Climate justice demands respect for

Indigenous sovereignty, open borders for climate refugees and a just transition for communities and workers to a green economy. A powerful alliance was formed.

Climate justice activists joined actions in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en people as CGL construction inched closer to their land, with well attended marches and rallies in November and December set the stage for the drama in the new year.

On New Year's Eve the BC Supreme Court issued its decision upholding the permanent injunction, calling for the removal of any opposition to CGL.

On January 4th 2020, the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs asserted their sovereignty and evicted CGL employees from their land. Within days, RCMP had set up roadblocks preventing people from bringing in supplies, and illegal "exclusion zones" that kept journalists from observing the ongoing violation of rights. RCMP equipment and personnel began amassing in nearby towns, preparing for the onslaught to come.

On February 6th, the invasion of Wet'suwet'en land began. Dozens were arrested over 4 days, as an army of militarized RCMP removed improvised blockades on the road, backed by helicopters and snipers. Unarmed land defenders bravely asserted the sovereignty of the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs, despite hundreds of weapons trained on them.

After the 4 days invasion the RCMP took control of Unist'ot'en Camp at the end of the road, after arresting Freda Husan, Karla Tait and other leaders in the middle of ceremony.

A widely shared video captured the moment: RCMP officers chain-sawing through a sign reading "Reconciliation" and throwing to the ground red dresses - symbolic of the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women, a continuing legacy of Canadian colonialism. The word went out from Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs to #ShutDownCanada and that #ReconciliationIsDead.

#### Shut Down Canada

Almost immediately, the BC legislature was occupied and ports, railways and highways were blocked across the country. Canadian National Railways freight traffic from Halifax

International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 502 refused to cross a "picket line" of protesters blocking the access road to the Deltaport in Greater Vancouver that handles \$1 billion worth of goods yearly, shutting down the port - the Port of Vancouver was also shut down. Police arrested 57 protesters to reopen them.

Mass solidarity actions were organized in

The onset of the pandemic prevented the resumption of #ShutDownCanada once it was clear the government had no intention of halting the CGL pipeline.

During 2021, the finding of physical evidence of mass graves at the site of the former Kamloops "Indian Residential School" sent shock waves across the country and around the world. To be clear, this merely confirmed what



Tens of thousands marched to Cancel Canada Day on July 1, 2021

cities across the country including 15,000 on a march in Toronto, and bridge, port and road shutdowns in Vancouver.

After 2 weeks, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters body estimated that \$425 million in goods was being stranded daily, and business talked of economic "catastrophe". PM Trudeau threatened that the government patience was running thin and for the blockades to come down: Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs responded by pointing out that "there is a difference between inconvenience and injustice".

Solidarity poured in from across the country from activist groups, communities of faith and union bodies.

On February 26th, 20 days after the start of the invasion, BC and federal government ministers sat down with the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs for negotiations. This provided a framework for recognizing Wet'suwet'en sovereignty while leaving the pipeline construction issue unresolved.

had already been documented in the Truth and Reconciliation reports, but on Canada Day there was a sea of orange shirts from coast to coast instead of the usual red and white maple leaves.

In November, 2021, Wet'suwet'en land defenders occupied Gidimt'en territory, joined by Six Nations and other allies. Earlier that year, the traditional government of the Six Nations Confederacy had pledged support to the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs and land defenders Skyler Williams, Layla Staats and Logan Staats stood with them against CGL and the RCMP. The third RCMP invasion in three years did the bidding of industry and the settler colonial state and cleared the way for their planet killing project.

NGOs and protesters targeted RBC for their funding of fossil fuels and the CGL pipeline. In April 2022, the Hereditary Chiefs traveled to Toronto for the in person AGM to confront shareholders with their resolve. RBC shifted their meeting online to avoid this situation.

In November, as the CGL rig was poised to drill under the pristine Wedzin Kwa river, land defenders again occupied the drill site and solidarity protests grew across the country at RBC branches and Liberal MPs offices. Though the solidarity with Wet'suwet'en still exists, the pandemic created immense challenges for the movement to recreate the magic of #ShutDownCanada 3 years ago.

The combined effect of the pandemic and the Oil & Gas industry-backed "convoy" movement has been a challenge to mobilizing in solidarity with Wet'suwet'en, other Indigenous struggles and the attacks from governments on the environment, public services and democracy.

But the fire that fed the #ShutDownCanada movement of early 2020 never went out - and in 2023 the smoldering embers can be sparked to full flame again in support of the struggle for Wet'suwet'en sovereignty and the many other struggles for Indigenous justice, rights and sovereignty across so-called Canada.



Activists in Toronto gather for a march to shut down rail lines

to Toronto was brought to a halt. Solidarity blockades went up on Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, Listuguj First Nation territory in Quebec, Kahnawake Mohawk territory south of Montreal and near New Hazelton, British Columbia.

On February 9th, 300 members of

Blockades from coast to coast to coast were brought down during consultations with the Wet'suwet'en people.

The governments tried to trade recognition of sovereignty for an agreement to continue the pipeline. But the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs never wavered in their opposition.