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# Shut down the far-right bigots



"Army of Lovers" shuts down a far-right group on Church street in Toronto. Coverage on page 2



# Far right holds on to its Alberta stronghold

In the end it wasn't even close. Danielle Smith's far-right UCP kicked the ANDP to the curb, winning a clear majority of 52 seats to 35. Late results may see a shift of two or three seats but the outcome won't change.

The UCP campaign served up a potent stew of reckless tax cuts and vote buying, dog-whistle bigotry, faux separatism and visceral hatred of anything connected with Ottawa.

The divide between rural and urban Alberta is stark, and the UCP has had years to redraw electoral districts to take full advantage of the fact.

It is a reminder that the anti-science populism of the convoy crowd has not gone away. The avowedly separatist Alberta First movement organized thousands to enter the UCP, supporting Smith for leader, and dragging the party even further to the right.

Albertans are in for a rough ride. Expect a frontal attack on already bettered public services, healthcare user fees and even more resources siphoned out of public schools to give to private and charter schools, many run by right-wing mega-churches. Smith should find it easy to follow through on her promise to subject any tax increase to a full referendum – she's in the business of tax cutting. After all, it is easy when your end game is to hand all services to corporations on a platter. Small wonder that big money poured into the UCP war chest.

Even the UCP's disastrous handling of the wildfire crisis wasn't enough to derail Smith. Utter dependence on the oil industry is enough to have voters sticking their heads in the tar sand, even as their house burns down around them.

Alberta leads the nation in climate change denial – more than half refuse to believe the science. The province is in the middle of a years-long drought and tinder dry forests are an invitation for destruction that will cost the province billions this year alone.

## ANDP moves right

The ANDP under Rachel Notley ran a horrendous campaign, sprinting to the right in search of conservative votes disturbed by

services, she was a cheerleader for the oil and gas business, and pipelines. The words "climate change" never passed her lips.

In truth, the NDP did see a modest increase its vote share and number of seats in the legislature. Their masterminds will attribute this "success" to their right-leaning strategy rather than revulsion at Smith's extremism. But it doesn't add up to much. Now that Smith has her mandate, the gloves will come off the privatization agenda.

to go after anything they decide is "woke". They may well go too far and erode their own base.

The UCP win is bound to have a big effect on national politics. First it will give confidence to Pierre Poilievre and the Tories. Second it will give right-wing premiers across the country license to continue their assault on public healthcare. And worst of all, it will give the far-right splinter groups across the country, heirs to the trucker movement, energy to step up attacks on the LGBTQ+ community, Indigenous communities trying to assert their rights on their own land, and racialized communities facing a rise in overt bigotry and hate disguised as "free speech".

There is an answer to all this. It means shifting energy from simple electoralism to organizing from the ground up, in our workplaces, schools and communities. When the far-right attacks story time events at public libraries, we are there to outnumber and stop them the way people in Peterborough and elsewhere have done. When they try to mobilize bigots to swamp school boards with homophobic attacks, we use our solidarity to defeat them, as the people of Brandon did. And when provincial politicians carve up our health services, we organize campaigns like the Ontario Health Coalition Citizen's Referendum that gained hundreds of thousands votes against privatization despite being ignored by media and mainstream politicians.

The UCP victory shines a light on the task before us. The failure of the NDP shows us that voting, while still important, is not sufficient to beat back the austerity agenda that threatens us all.



Racist graffiti was common on ANDP signs in Alberta.

Smith's extremism. In the dying days of the campaign they unleashed endorsement from a parade of former Progressive Conservative cabinet ministers and senators.

Instead of running as the champion for public health, education and other essential

You really have to search for a silver lining, but if there is one it is this: the UCP is an internally divided group, with tension between big business pragmatists and ideologically driven extremists. With this win, it is the latter group that will be feeling justified, and eager

# Brandon stands up to anti-2SLGBTQ+ bigots

Across the country an alliance of the religious-right and far right extremist groups is trying to invade school board meetings demanding the removal of any material supportive of LGBTQ+ youth.

These are the same bigots targeting educators and entertainers in drag who perform story time for kids, very popular events hosted by many public libraries.

One recent confrontation came in Brandon, Manitoba. There the public school board bowed to pressure from "concerned parents" to review their policy and examine library books. There was so much local interest that the meeting had to be held in a school gym.

The good news is that the community turnout was overwhelmingly supportive of LGBTQ+ kids. One trans student spoke to the importance of finding positive literature in the library as part of making



Residents of Brandon, MB show how to shut down the haters

school a safe place for them. Parents and teachers echoed the sentiment, citing the need for safe supportive environments to avert the tragically high rate of suicide among trans kids.

In the end the handful of bigots were drowned out and the evangelical former school trustee who pushed for the meeting didn't even show up. The school board voted 6 – 1 to maintain its policy of inclusion.

The cherry on top was when People's Party leader Maxime Bernier showed up to a loud chorus of boos and heckling. The PPC has opportunistically made anti-LGBTQ+ politics its main focus. Seeing things weren't going his way, Bernier slunk out in mid-meeting.

# 2SLGBTQ+ Community mobilizing to fight hate

by: Maureen Aslin

Located in Toronto's gay village, the 519 (Church St Community Centre) has been a hub for LGBTQ2S+ support and advocacy since the mid 1970's.

As the attack on LGBTQ2S+ from the far right accelerates, the 519 is stepping up its response and regrouping community resources to fight the hate.

The Army of Lovers campaign, part of the 519's advocacy, posted a statement:

"2SLGBTQ+ people and their rights are under attack. Not just in the USA and across the world, but also in the city we call home:

Anti-2SLGBTQ+ protestors are showing up at drag performances and storytime.

School boards are navigating heated disputes around raising the Pride flag.

Gender-affirming healthcare is being impacted by transphobic bills, and so much more.

We are angry seeing anti-2SLGBTQ+ rhetoric infiltrate our neighbourhoods, schools, cities, and communities. We are tired of the hate facing trans people and drag artists. We are so over it."

The far right and religious right have particularly targeted the trans community. The 519 has a long history of supporting trans rights. In the face of anti-trans voices from within the queer community in the 90's the 519 was a clear and consistent advocate for trans rights and visibility.

## Army Of Lovers Campaign

In 2019, 'religious' groups preaching homophobia/transphobia began organizing, marching, and harassing people in the Church & Wellesley area. The 519, in response to these attacks initiated the Army of Lovers advocacy campaign.

In September 2019, instead of waiting for the bigots "Freedom March & Prayer" to proceed up Church St, the Army of Lovers rallied, creating an hours long stand-off in the street. The religionists were blocked, and hundreds of LGBTQ2S people and allies took back Church St. marching from Front to Wellesley.

After this decisive win in the streets the harassment by 'Christian' preachers waned.

These attacks on 2SLGBTQ+ people are the result of a coordinated effort to accelerate and misdirect anger. Politicians and media are advancing their own interests by riling others to denying the existence of trans people, the rights of queer people and stopping other marginalized groups from seeking justice and equity.

The 519 proudly states "Our communities, however, are not new to hate and discrimination. Generations of 2 Spirit, queer, and trans people have fought for our right to live in the light with pride and dignity. Queer history has time and again shown us that when we organize, we win fights. When we show up for each other, we win rights."



# Workers at Casino Woodbine fight and win

On May 8th, over 800 workers at Casino Woodbine, represented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada, were locked out by their employer. Early in the negotiation process, the casino tabled an unacceptable and disrespectful “final offer”, effectively telling the workers that they must either accept sub-par working conditions or be locked out of their workplace. The workers, however, were far from intimidated by this. They voted down the employer’s offer and reiterated their resolve to win a fair contract. In the tense lock-out that lasted around 3 weeks, the workers held strong and resolute picket-lines at each of the entrances to the casino, costing the employer millions of dollars in revenue every day. Eventually the casino was forced to present an acceptable offer with several gains, which was finally ratified by the members on May 26th.

This story of working-class resistance and fightback at Casino Woodbine is a small milestone on the trail of the growing militancy of the working-class struggles in Canada.

## The Casino industry

At least since the 1970s, provincial governments have become incrementally dependent on gaming revenues. The growth of the casino industry in Ontario goes hand-in-hand with the larger story of de-industrialization of the Canadian economy. Since the late 20th century, as capital expanded globally in search of new markets as well as cheap labour, much of traditional industries of North America shifted their production-sites to the Global South, leading to a sharp decline in industrial capacities and activities here. In this context, service-oriented economic activities emerged as the main industry. The growth of gaming and gambling activities, a part of this larger trend, continued to accelerate as governments sought to tackle the revenue deficits caused by the 2008 crisis of capitalism.

The original incentive behind the development of the Ontario casino industry was to capture tourist and gambling dollars from the US, funneled through establishments that were approved and developed along de-industrialized border cities, such as Windsor and Niagara Falls. However, with the rise of competitive casinos on the US-side of the border as well, and the erosion of the tourist market post the 2008 crisis, this no-longer became a viable target demography. In 2010, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation was pressed by the crisis to develop an alternate approach – what it dubbed as a “modernization project”. The focus now shifted towards cities with high population densities such as Toronto, and the target client demography became local residents of Ontario. However, what has remained constant across this shift is the ever-deepening dependency of the city as well as the province on gambling dollars to offset revenue deficits caused by the long crisis of capitalism. When it comes to casino capital, the state itself appears to be a gambling addict.

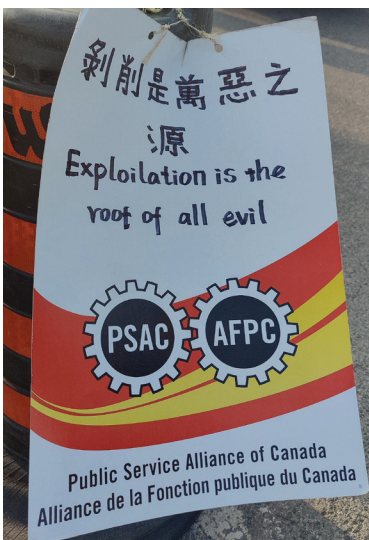
Today, there are 70 ‘gaming establishments’ in Ontario of which there

are 28 casinos, including 7 that are within a short distance of Toronto. Many of these are ‘racinos’, establishments that began as racetracks, but soon incorporated gambling facilities, starting with slot machines. Woodbine Racetracks, now Casino Woodbine, located in and around the suburban Etobicoke wards that once belonged to the Ford brothers, is one such establishment that has benefited from deep and ongoing political patronage especially from the conservatives.

Within the span of a decade since expanding from a racetrack, the Woodbine Entertainment Group is an incredibly large for-profit institution today – set to launch what they describe as “Canada’s largest” casino resort this summer, costing upwards of \$1 billion. With 4800 slot machines, 145 table games, a soccer stadium with its eyes on the 2026 FIFA World Cup, and a mega residential project for 60,000 residents, the group aims to build “a city within a city”.

Yet around 60% of the workers at the Casino are part-time, many work minimum-wage jobs in grotesquely poor conditions, and face severe employer disrespect on a day to day basis.

Pointing to that very newly built resort building awaiting inauguration, a locked-out worker told us “That (building) was built on our backs. We made it possible, and now they tell us to get out? So many of



us are working minimum wage and stuck part-time with no shift assurance. The table-hands have to deal with bed bugs on the felt and worry about diseases all the time. We have to put up with harassment from clients that has been normalized by the employer. The casino is ugly on the inside.”

The arguments that were once raised in public debates as “for-casino” points by the political establishment, including Ford, are now nowhere to be seen. The ‘good jobs’ and ‘wealth in the community’ arguments have been rendered obsolete by the crony relations between the state and casino capital. The ‘good jobs’ have been exposed as part-time precarious work that are minimum wage. As casinos rake up profits and make gross expansions, virtually nothing comes back to the workers that make this possible, and they become sites of intense worker exploitation.

## Workers fight back

The class anger of the Casino Woodbine workers was palpable through the lock-out. They understood the underlying strategy behind the Employers’ decision of setting premature deadlines to negotiations this spring. The Employer was trying to ensure that the plans for this summer – the launch of their mega-casino – remained unperturbed by “labour disputes”. This was widely understood as an insult. These workers, many of them employed by Woodbine for over a decade, built the casino and are now being told to not interrupt the inauguration.

The fight back was impressive. Workers held hard pickets at each of the 7 entrances to the casino, backing up traffic all along the highway, for three weeks. The pickets were 7 days a week, and strategically coordinated to interrupt construction sites on casino property as well as inflow of clients. While the employer hired private security at each of the entrances to surveil the workers and apply psychological pressure on them, the workers ignored this and continued their pickets for 3 long weeks until the employer succumbed to the economic pressure.

A worker told us proudly that they were able to cost the employer millions each day of the lockout. Some of the clients at the casino, addicted to gambling, too were aggressive when faced with long delays at the picket line. A few of the workers were hurt over the first few days of lockout, as clients drove into lines that blocked the entrances. But the union responded strongly by taking a day to engage in robust picket-line protocol training, and to strategize the means to ensure that hard pickets could still be held without worker safety compromised. And the workers came back to the lines stronger than before. For the three weeks that followed, the picket-lines were filled with music, dance and resolve. The employer was then forced to resort to cheap tactics, such as mass emails directly to members trying to draw wedges between the different employee groups. But the strong rank and file unity of the local meant that this was easily countered by the workers themselves.

On May 20th, other PSAC members from across Ontario visited the line on a day of action, and brought solidarity and support. Andria Babbington, the president of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, gave her message of solidarity to the workers and walked the line with them.

Until ratification, some of the key outstanding demands were: guaranteed part-time hours, a better sick leave plan, and fair wage increases. The new ratified collective agreement sees advances on all fronts, including some assured hours for the members. The workers will see more than a 16% wage increase over the term of the agreement, which is also a significant result of the fightback.

The workers return to work now having achieved something more than just the new collective agreement.

They have once again reminded us that when workers fight against greedy employers they can win.

# Toronto paramedics fight underfunding

by: Alex Thomson

Toronto paramedic services are suffering from a lack of staff and lack of ambulances, and it is dramatically affecting services and putting residents at risk. CUPE Local 416, the union representing paramedics in Toronto has launched a campaign called #Status Code Red to raise awareness of this urgent situation, the effect it has on paramedic response times in the city, and working conditions for their members.

The goal of this campaign is to increase hiring of paramedics within the service, and to increase the number of ambulances as current resources are stretched too thin.

Twenty years ago, the Toronto Paramedic Services was considered to be a leader in paramedic services in North America. At that time, the capacity of the TPS was such that it could manage day to day emergencies and still have the capacity to handle a major event.

Currently, while Toronto paramedics represent the largest municipal paramedic service in Canada, with close to 1400 members, the service is understaffed to the extent that it is a struggle to manage day to day capacity. This is resulting in gaps in service where an ambulance is simply not available when needed. Status Code Red is an expression used within the service to identify such a situation, which results in delays to emergency response times and puts patient lives at risk. In 2022, there was an average of 5 hours and 36 minutes per day where fewer than 10%, or 5 ambulances were available. In 2017, there were a total of 36 code red incidents in Toronto, but this

This left the service short-staffed as the need increased. Currently, the service needs new ambulances and a significant number of paramedics to keep up with demand. In 2019, the City committed to hiring 60 new staff per year in this area until 2024, but due to unprecedented rapid attrition, this is still not enough, and it is difficult to find new paramedics due to the particularly tough working conditions created by inadequate staffing numbers. As the time frame nears an end for this hiring initiative, the service is barely breaking even. High numbers of Toronto paramedics are resigning, either to take jobs elsewhere, or to quit the profession altogether.

Those who are leaving are finding work outside of Toronto, with higher rates of pay, shorter commutes and working conditions that are less stressful. Others are leaving the profession entirely due to the high stress of the work.

How stressful is this work? The workload for Toronto paramedics has steadily increased where workers are working their shifts without downtime or scheduled breaks, and with a 30% increase in overtime. In a line of work where workers witness traumatic events every day, this has led to an increase of injuries on the job, 2368 in 2022 compared to 1357 in 2017. Most of these injuries are psychological in nature.

There has been an increase of 26% of occupational stress injuries over the past year alone, and a fourfold increase since 2017. Assaults on paramedics has doubled since 2017.

Currently, Toronto needs 27 new ambulances and approximately 100 additional paramedics in order

**TORONTO PARAMEDICS ARE UNDERSTAFFED, UNDERFUNDED AND OVERWORKED. THIS HAS LEAD TO LONGER AMBULANCE WAIT TIMES AND 2492 CODE RED ALERTS IN 2022 ( ZERO AMBULANCES AVAILABLE FOR A 911 CALL ).**

**CITY OF TORONTO:**



rate has been steadily rising since that time, and in 2022 there were 2492 incidents. Over this period, response time has decreased while medical emergencies requiring EMS services has increased by approximately 4% per year.

Staffing the TPS remains a challenge. For 10 years, there was a hiring freeze, where the City of Toronto only replaced paramedics by attrition and did not hire additional paramedics to increase numbers.

to maintain an adequate level of service.

As part of their campaign, CUPE 416 and their members, Toronto paramedics, are asking Torontonians to contact their local councilor to request more staffing, and they are requesting that people share the #StatusCodeRed social media campaign as widely as possible on Facebook at @StatusCodeRed, on Twitter at @416TPSUnit, and via Instagram at @StatusCodeRed.



# What is the to revolution

*As capitalism fails billions of people globally, many have repeatedly resisted and fought back. Isabel Ringrose asks how small struggles can develop into wider scale revolts with the potential to topple the capitalist system*

**W**hether they think of themselves as political or not, a great many people are drawn into struggles that have an impact on the kind of society we live in. Think about the strikes that have spread across the working class in Britain recently, or the fights against oppression, or protesters trying to highlight the danger of climate catastrophe.

They are all examples of people taking action against one aspect of the system. But many people's experience of joining battle, even if over a comparatively small issue, is that it changes them. They now see more potential in uniting with others, and they fall less easily for the lies sown to divide us.

Not only that. Many find they can, perhaps for the first time, see connections between their own struggles, and those of others. Some will go further still and understand that behind all the rottenness of the world stands a single system—capitalism—that needs to be overthrown.

The great Russian Revolutionary Leon Trotsky understood this process well. "The masses go into a revolution not with a prepared plan of social reconstruction, but with a sharp feeling that they cannot endure the old regime," he wrote.

"Only the guiding layers of a class have a political programme, and even this still requires the test of events, and the approval of the masses. The fundamental political process of the revolution thus consists in the gradual comprehension by a class of the problems arising from the social crisis—the active orientation of the masses by a method of successive approximations."

A closer look at recent struggles shows why Trotsky was right to see even the smaller battles as seeds for a far wider change.

In Sudan, trebling of bread prices and other basic goods lead to protests. These spiralled into a

revolt against the Omar al-Bashir regime in 2019, leading to months of protests, sit-ins and strikes.

In Egypt, unrest had been brewing for a decade. Then in 2011 the murder and torture of a young man, Khaled Said, and a revolution in nearby Tunisia, triggered an uprising.

People had the courage to fight back—with protests leading to mass strikes. Eighteen days later the hated dictator Hosni Mubarak was toppled.

The initial plan isn't necessarily to make a revolution, and those taking part are often on different pages about what the solution is. So, how do struggles go beyond limited reforms and ultimately

challenge for workers' power?

It's true that one big crisis isn't going to bring down the system. Our rulers won't let their rule collapse under the weight of its own contradictions.

We can't wait around. There's no guarantee that what follows next is a glorious revolution and socialist society—it depends on how organised our side is. The task is to convince our class that it has the power to free itself.

## **Exploitation and workers power**

Workers are exploited under capitalism, with profits derived from the surplus value they create. That's why when workers withdraw their

labour, the system halts. On a mass scale it can paralyse it for good.

Workers, as Karl Marx said, are the "gravediggers of capitalism". Capitalism is an unplanned system of bosses competing with each other, racing to accumulate more wealth. Attacks on workers are plentiful. Not every worker who strikes over pay is going to see themselves as the agent of systemic change.

Workers are told they're too stupid to run society for themselves. This is reinforced when disputes are kept to the individual workplaces' problems. And the way workers are today excluded from any meaningful control over their jobs and society mean they can believe they have little control over how things

happen.

But when on strike, or out on the streets, workers can see themselves as the force for real change. Fighting for even the most limited demands raises ordinary people's consciousness about what is possible.

As Marx wrote, "This mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle."

The workers' fight is boosted when tackling both political and economic questions. It makes them able to challenge the reactionary ideas that keep them divided over gender, sexuality or race.



Millions of Egyptians fill Tahrir Square in Cairo during the revolution that ousted long-time dictator Hosni Mubarak



# e route on?

It's easier to see that it's not refugees who are to blame when it's your boss spreading lies in the media. This doesn't happen over night. But the real enemy becomes clearer when workers struggle collectively.

Ideas and possibilities develop during struggle. This can be seen in Sudan's resistance committees, organised through general assemblies, executive committees and delegates based on local and district-wide coordination.

The networks ran society during the revolution, emerging when government factions split. They bring activists together, call people to the streets, organising mass strikes and protests, and have even overseen the supply of flour, bread and gas and other essentials.

But there are always forces trying to limit struggle. Repressive anti-union and anti-protest laws look to restrict resistance at every level. Union leaders want strikers to accept the first deal they can get, and don't encourage them to look beyond their economic battle to the wider political struggle.

Ideas coming out of a struggle aren't automatic. Sometimes a below-inflation pay rise is enough for a worker who thinks they couldn't win anymore.

That's why filling ordinary people with as much confidence as possible is crucial to overcoming the might of the system grinding them down. Each battle is an opportunity to arm our side with the ideas it needs for the bigger challenges ahead.

Revolutionaries must be involved in every partial struggle. From national strikes over pay to local disputes over rotas. From global movements such as Black Lives Matter to demonstrations for trans rights. It means being "tribunes of the oppressed" and uniting and pushing movements to their most radical conclusions. Revolutionary politics don't start with a revolution. Fighting for reforms and justice in the here and now is

important, as that's what develops people's ideas.

But challenging the system as a whole and going beyond reforms gives us the best chance of making lasting change. This means going further than individual campaigns and movements to a more general fightback.

Revolutionary politics has to shape every struggle. That doesn't mean reducing revolutionary politics to a set of everyday interventions, but preparing ourselves for a much wider fight.

To kick off a revolution needs a mass walk-out of workers. That's reflected in our agitation for bigger strikes. It's not just so they win their dispute, but so that as many workers as possible have the opportunity to understand their strength.

Revolutions also give way to new forms of democracy—economic and political power and decision-making really being in the hands of workers. That's why it's crucial workers are in control of their own strikes, through voting and strike committees. Then they can begin to realise they don't need politicians to do it for them.

Revolutionaries also call for

defiance of anti-union and protest laws, cops on picket lines and state repression. That's not because it looks fun, but because during a revolution ordinary people clash with the existing regime. They confront the state at every level—from the media to the courts—because it is built against our interests.

Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin said revolutions are "festivals of the oppressed". Central to any workers' takeover of power has to be the contestation of divisive oppression—wiping away as Marx said the "muck of ages".

Fighting those divisions now, alongside economic issues, reveals where these ideas really come from, and whose interests they serve. And crucial to any successful revolution is a strong revolutionary party rooted in the working class. It has to be ready to organise people together when crisis escalates and steer the struggle.

That organisation has to be built now, not later when it's too late. Workers preparing for such a takeover of power gives us the best chance of winning the world we need.

*reprinted from: socialistworker.co.uk*



"The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in historical events. In ordinary times the state, be it monarchical or democratic, elevates itself above the nation, and history is made by specialists in that line of business — kings, ministers, bureaucrats, parliamentarians, journalists. But at those crucial moments when the old order becomes no longer endurable to the masses, they break over the barriers excluding them from the political arena, sweep aside their traditional representatives, and create by their own interference the initial groundwork for a new régime. Whether this is good or bad we leave to the judgment of moralists. We ourselves will take the facts as they are given by the objective course of development. The history of a revolution is for us first of all a history of the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny."

— Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*



# G7 summit reveals tensions over China

by: **Alex Callinicos**

**T**he G7 summit of Western powers in, of all places, Hiroshima, Japan last weekend was a war summit. It marked a further step in the push by the United States to unite leading capitalist powers—not just G7 members Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan, but also this time Brazil, India, South Korea, and Vietnam—against China. The G7 issued what the Politico website called “tough messaging against Beijing”. It denounced China’s “economic coercion” and warned it against any attempt to reincorporate the US-backed island of Taiwan by force.



The charge of “economic coercion” is laughably hypocritical. China has used blocking market access and the like as a form of political pressure on, for example, Australia and South Korea. This tactic badly rebounded, pushing both states, despite their close economic links with China, towards the US and its system of alliances. But what is the imposition of the neoliberal Washington Consensus on indebted Third World states through the US-dominated

International Monetary Fund and World Bank but “economic coercion”? Is the sanctions weapon increasingly used by the US, not only against Russia, not “economic coercion”? Lacking military power, the European Union specialises in “economic coercion”, which it has used in the past decade or so against Greece, Britain, and Switzerland. Nevertheless, the summit will probably be seen as a success for US president Joe Biden and the host, Japanese prime minister Yukio Kishida. The conflict with China, says Christopher Willcox of Nomura bank, “is very good for Japan, the fourth-largest economy in the world, very deep investable markets, and world-class companies. It’s the obvious place where international investors, if they want to have exposure to Asia, will invest over the next five to ten years.”

The second reason this was a war summit was of course Ukraine. More than anything else the summit was an opportunity for Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky to grandstand. He arrived via Saudi Arabia, where he addressed a meeting of the Arab League.

Zelensky’s main aim in Hiroshima seems to have been to ambush Narendra Modi, prime minister of India, and president Lula da Silva of Brazil. Both governments have refused to back the US proxy war in Ukraine and Western economic sanctions against Russia. But Zelenskyy’s efforts to shame them into the pro-war camp seems to have been a flop. He didn’t even manage to meet Lula.

As for India, its decision to start importing Russian oil after the invasion in February 2022 has been critical in keeping Vladimir Putin’s regime afloat. The International Energy Agency reported Russian oil exports

reached their highest level since the invasion. Last month, some 80 percent went to China and India. Russian oil sells below global price benchmarks.

Anyone who believes, during an energy crisis, Modi will give up cheap Russian oil because of a homily from Zelensky is kidding themselves. And Saudi Arabia has defied US pressure to join in sanctions against Russia, instead working closely with Moscow in the OPEC+ oil cartel.

There’s a more general point here. As the Financial Times newspaper admitted last week, “This is the hour of the Global South... Many non-Western nations have looked on at the West’s full-throttle support for Ukraine and seen hypocritical powers yet again prioritising their own interests and

concerns over the big global issues such as health and climate change. They also sense two major opportunities—to play the US and China off against each other, and, as they see it, a long overdue rewriting of the post-1945 world order.”

The more powerful Southern states aren’t going to give up the advantages the war is giving them. The same weekend as the G7 met, Chinese president Xi Jinping pointedly held a summit with five Central Asian ex-Soviet republics in Xi’an, China. Thus, Beijing may be prepared to support Putin economically, but it’s honing in on his “near abroad” while he’s embattled on his Western frontier.

The G7 represents a shrinking portion of the world economy, and the rest are increasingly flexing their muscles.



The people of Hiroshima protest the G7 meeting

RCMP continued from page 8

## Rebranding

So the “creation” of the RCMP in 1923 was really a rebranding, to downplay the force’s military roots and play up its policing role. But the leopard doesn’t change its bright red tunic. Whole books catalog the ineptitude, corruption, sexual abuse and racist violence of the Mounties over the years.

Mounties were regularly used to undermine union organizing, sending spies into workplaces in a crusade to expose “communists” (i.e. anyone who stood up to the boss). In 1933 RCMP thugs murdered 3 unarmed coal miners in Estevan Saskatchewan, striking for union rights. In the 50s the RCMP colluded to smash the socialist led Canadian Seaman’s Union, create a company-friendly union in its place, installing an American gangster named Hal Banks to head it up.

In the 1950s and 60s the RCMP led the slaughter of sled dogs, part of an effort to force Inuit people into communities designed to establish Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

In 1971 RCMP agents stole dynamite and used it to frame FLQ activists as terrorists. A year later they burned down a barn belonging to the mother of an FLQ member, fearful that activists were going to ally with the Black Panthers. Through the 70s the RCMP conducted over 400 illegal break-ins and set off bombs to discredit the nationalist movement in Quebec.

It got so bad, and the RCMP so discredited, that the feds took away the RCMP’s role in national security and spying, and created CSIS.

Along the way the RCMP has been busy: - Framed Alberta farmer Wibo Ludwig who was complaining about his land being poisoned by a gas well owned by Alberta Energy. On

company instructions they exploded a bomb and tried to frame Ludwig.

- Violently suppressed Seewepmc people from celebrating their Sun Dance on their traditional land in 1995. Over 400 Mounties, with backing from the army, were sent against a handful of Indigenous people who took up arms to defend their rights

- Deprived innocent Canadians of Muslim descent of their rights and sent them overseas to face torture, all in the name of a “war on terror”. Mahar Arar, the best known, fought for years to clear his name and win compensation.

- The ongoing assault against Wet’suw’ten people defending their own territory against a pipeline project.

- Currently covering up its criminal ineptitude in dealing with the deadly mass shooting in rural Nova Scotia in 2020, that left 22 dead.

The idea that the RCMP is “respected”, or something to be celebrated is ludicrous. We

need to know its real history, not the white-washed version that Trudeau is peddling. And we need to stand in solidarity with Indigenous nations that once again find themselves in the RCMP’s cross-hairs.

## 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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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.

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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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# How did Erdogan win?

## For the working class, there is no short-cut to defeating AKP-MHP alliance and Erdogan

by: **Canan Sahin**

**T**he run-off presidential elections in Turkey on May 28th ended with the victory of the incumbent Recep Tayyip Erdogan, with the 52.16 % of the votes. In the first round on May 14th, Erdogan's People's Alliance had already won the majority of the seats in the parliament by securing 322 spots out of 600.

The Nation's Alliance, the six-party platform in opposition whose presidential candidate was Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu from the center left Republican People's Party (CHP), won 213 seats in the same round. With its failure in run-off elections, the Nation's Alliance neither has the majority in the parliament nor the Presidency.

Turkey, a country with a population of 85 million, has 64 million registered voters and the turnout in the first round was almost 90% and in the second one, just slightly lower. The high participation rate shows how much people invested in the electoral competition.

The HDP, the mass party supported by the Kurdish people and radical Turkish left, entered the elections under the name of the Green Left Party due to the court proceedings threatening to close the party. They formed the Labour and Freedom Alliance with some small leftist parties in Turkey and the total number of seats they secured in the parliament is 65. In the presidential race, on the other hand, Kurdish people supported Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu in both rounds en-masse despite a lack of vocal defense of Kurdish people's rights.

While Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, an Alevite politician from the non-sunni minority, challenged the official position of his own party on the issues of headscarf and, in a rather limited way, on the Kurdish issue, political and economic vision of the Nation's Alliance was based on a consensus on a strengthened parliamentarianism and economic neoliberalism proper. Despite all his shortcomings, his victory would have created a space where the working class, Kurdish people, women and the LGBTQI+ community would gain some confidence and morale.

Western media coverage is mostly centered on Erdogan as a charismatic populist leader with increasingly authoritarian politics and little is known about the shifting alliances that took place since the end of the peace process in 2015 and in the aftermath of the coup d'état in 2016.

Since 2016, Erdogan's AKP has been ruling the state and the society in a coalition with the fascist National Movement Party (MHP), which received over 10 percent of the votes in this election and the Great Unity Party (BBP), a much smaller fascist party with an awful record of violence. Calling themselves the People's Alliance, AKP and MHP collaboratively endorsed the regime change to presidentialism in 2017.

It must be remembered that AKP was a party, in whose election brochure in 2011, LGBTQI+ rights were given space, and which initiated a peace process with the Kurdish leadership, officially starting a dialogue with Ocalan in 2013. AKP and MHP were on the opposite poles of the political spectrum for a long time. Although the merger between religion of Islam and Turkish nationalism constituted the founding identity for the modern Turkey, we saw a relatively long period during which AKP's political direction did not endorse Turkish supremacism. It is a widely held idea on the left that AKP's authoritarian turn is a natural outcome of its neoliberal agenda. Although this explanation holds, it eschews accounting for the political shifts that characterized AKP's authoritarian

turn and nature of the alliances this authoritarianism is built around.

While the first ten years of the AKP rule saw this party's constant conflict with the "deep state", dubbed as Ergenekon, the post-failed coup d'état period saw a close alliance with the same political currents. In this period, the peace process with the Kurdish movement was replaced with aggressive military strategies in Northern Syria and Turkey.

Furthermore, municipalities run by the major players from the HDP were jailed with accusations of terrorism, belying every notion of democratic governance. Selahattin Demirtaş, who was leading the HDP during the 2015 elections, a party which won 13.2% of the votes back then, has been kept in jail since November 2016.

The People's Alliance, which was born with a rigid nationalistic political consensus, grew further with newcomers in the 2023 elections. The Islamist New Welfare Party (YRP) with a solid anti-LGBTQI+ and sexist rhetoric joined Erdogan. Also, HUDA-PAR, a party which was borne out of the Hizbollah organization that was used by the Turkish state in its counter-guerrilla warfare against the Kurdish liberation movement during the 1990s, was put on stage against the HDP in the Kurdish populated region.

While the fight against the Kurdish autonomy in Northern Syria and Kurdish movement in Turkey became the central pillars of their campaign, the People's Alliance also used an increasingly polarizing language around women's and LGBTQI+ community's rights. The AKP government had already withdrawn

political representation.

From the alliance described above, it is easy to discern that there has been a crisis of hegemony for the AKP over the last decade, combined with the crisis of the state in geopolitical terms. However, this is not the only crisis in Turkey.

In 2018, the economy in Turkey went into a currency crisis, followed by a spike in inflation, which still marks the economic sphere. One US dollar was 3.17 Turkish Lira in 2018 and it is just below 20 today. The inflation rate was below 20% in 2017 and it is over 100% now. Turkey has one of highest inflation rates on food in the world according to the World Bank, with just below 70%.

While the gap between the working class and the ruling class is growing at an unprecedented pace, the rate of unemployment with relaxed definition is currently at 21.8%. The rate of youth unemployment, which was the trigger for the revolutionary upheavals in the Middle East in the 2010s, is currently over 20%.

By the time the earthquake hit 10 cities in Turkey, causing more than 50 thousand deaths according to the official statistics, the economy had already been in shambles. Having seen the utter failure of the AKP government to provide rescue support and relief for the people in the region, the opposition grew optimistic about the elections, with a plan to bury Erdogan's rule in the ballot box. This sentiment became prevalent in the labour unions and among the leftist organisations.

Based on this expectation, the strategy to

campaign to appeal to nationalistic voters, who direct their anger at the economic crisis towards the most vulnerable populations in the society.

The more the People's Alliance of Erdogan emphasized the significance of anti-terrorism in the second round, the more the Nation's Alliance emphasized the significance of sending the refugees back to their countries, condemning Erdogan for bringing over 10 million migrants into the country.

The electoral race was almost like a competition between anti-Kurdish racism and anti-refugee racism. Anti-refugee politics in Turkey is so electorally exploitable that there was an independent candidate in the first round who gained 5.2 percent of the votes solely based on an anti-Syrian campaign. Therefore, the opposition ran a highly nationalist and anti-refugee campaign to gain the votes of the resented 'citizens' who would normally vote for the MHP or AKP.

The electoral opposition in Turkey forgot that it was the BLM movement that created the conditions for Trump's defeat in the US; similarly, it was the mass movement against Bolsonaro that made it possible for Lula to be released and re-elected in Brazil.

In Turkey, it is obvious that there is no short-cut to defeat the authoritarian neoliberal regime whose coalition with the most reactionary racist forces will introduce a new set of austerity measures with a poison of nationalism going forward.

Today, the last thing we need is a spineless coalition which is far from articulating the politics that working class needs for



from the Istanbul Convention, an international agreement designed to protect women's and LGBTQI+ community's rights, and defended this position to polarize the society further.

Their homophobic, transphobic and sexist rhetoric solidified over the last four years, and it has been used to consolidate the conservative votes in his constituency. Combined with the MHP's central tenet around the anti-Kurdish hatred, the atmosphere in Turkey's political space got poisoned with a polarization formed by the hate speech against the LGBTQI+ people as well as an anti-terror campaign aiming to suffocate the Kurdish

defeat the AKP-MHP coalition was to form a broad alliance of parties from different ideological currents with a single purpose of winning the elections. This prompted the CHP to ally with the Good Party (İYİ Party), an offshoot of the fascist MHP. Also, some small parties formed by the former AKP leadership were included in the Nation's Alliance.

Basically, the working class was made to choose between the two bourgeois platforms with similar economic agendas to each other. Sadly, although political emphasis of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu was mostly focused on ending the one-man rule, his platform used anti-refugee and anti-terror language a lot in their

unity. We are entering a period of struggle that requires building an anti-capitalist bloc within the working class which can show solidarity with refugees, Kurdish people, LGBTQ+ community and women.

The working class in Turkey is still deeply divided and this is what we need to overcome. Without a massive working-class movement that refuses to pay the price for this economic crisis and challenge divisive reactionary and nationalistic politics of the ruling coalition, we cannot bury the AKP, Erdogan or its oppressive, nationalist, homophobic, misogynistic, and militaristic alliance.



## RCMP 150: a history of racism and violence

**O**n May 15, the broken body of a 15-year-old Quw'utsun Mustimuhw girl was found behind a Super-8 Motel in the Cowichan Valley, on Vancouver Island. Passers-by found her buried under a pile of wood pallets and garbage. She died soon after.

The case was investigated by the local Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachment. Their initial finding: "police told the Cowichan Valley Citizen that investigators believed there to be no criminality involved in the death..."

This would have come as no surprise to Indigenous people, but they weren't having it. They organized and pressured the RCMP to take the investigation seriously. The cops upgraded the death to "suspicious" and say they are awaiting results of their tests. Meanwhile this child joins the disgracefully long list of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls.

On May 23 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau issued an official statement "celebrating" the 150th anniversary of the RCMP.

"For a century and a half, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has served and protected Canadians. Today, we thank all RCMP employees, past and present, for their dedication, relentless commitment, and significant contributions to our country.

"The RCMP is one of the most respected police organizations in the world – and remains committed to becoming a more modern, inclusive, accountable, and trusted police organization for all Canadians."

The statement goes on to acknowledge, sort of, the fact that the RCMP's history is full of violence, genocidal racism, corruption and down-right incompetence. But these are blemishes to be soft pedaled and brushed aside. "As we mark this milestone anniversary, we acknowledge that while the errors of the past cannot be forgotten, they can be learned from. The RCMP will continue to support healing and reconciliation, as it continues to keep our communities safe now and into the future."

At this point it is worth noting that, when the Trudeau government recently redesigned Canadian passports, the nation's right wing collectively shit their pants. Evidently changing the illustrations in the pages of the document –

images that I must confess I did not even know existed – was an egregious example of Trudeau "rewriting history". This of course is just partisan nonsense.

However, when Trudeau actually does indulge in wholesale rewriting of history, as in his distorted and dishonest tribute to the RCMP, not a single peep is heard.

So let's have a quick peek at the RCMP's real history.

### Born out of colonial racism

First off, the only thing 150 years old is the name. The actual force was created in 1873 as the North West Mounted Police, a para-military force designed to conquer Indigenous

and Metis nations in the west.

The people who had lived and sustained these lands since the beginning organized resistance and in 1869 declared an independent nation, and created a provisional government headed by Louis Riel. This is portrayed in conventional history as the "Red River Rebellion". The name is a distortion; there was no "rebellion". It was resistance.

NWMP uniforms were modeled on British military styles. Their role was to enforce colonial rule, like their cousins in the Royal Irish Constabulary, suppressing legitimate independence movements.

Conquering the west was an urgent priority. The creation of a continental state depended on connecting the newly created province of British Columbia to the industries of the east, and that meant a railroad. Building a railroad through other people's lands is a bit of a problem and requires violence and coercion. Hence the creation of the NWMP. And if this new "army" enforced the arbitrary border with the US, and its dreams of "manifest destiny" and northward expansion, so much the better.

The NWMP job one was enforcing the growing federal government's genocidal policies, forcing Indigenous people on to cramped reserves, outlawing their ceremonies, customs and beliefs.



400 RCMP officers were sent to stop a traditional Secwepemc Sun Dance at Gustafsen Lake

*continued on page 7*

## Hundreds of thousands say no to Ford's healthcare privatization

**A**cross Ontario, hundreds of thousands of people voted in late May in a people's referendum on the question of privatizing healthcare. The vote was organized by the Ontario Health Coalition and saw an astounding number of people participate as volunteers and organizers.

There were advance polls at union conventions, on campuses and in neighbourhoods across the province. Those votes – along with online voting – had already topped 200,000 by the time the main voting days arrived.

On the main voting days, May 26 and 27, there were close to 1,000 polls in small towns and large cities. Workplaces, social agencies and community groups set up polling stations. There were ballot boxes in coffee shops at rural roadside stands and in parks.

It was a truly huge undertaking by the OHC but it also showed the breadth of opposition to the Ford agenda. The many thousands who participated were glad to have an opportunity to have a voice.

Ford has no mandate to privatize public services. He was elected with a measly 18% of eligible voters casting a ballot for the Tory party. During the election he didn't once mention that he planned to transfer hospital services to private, for-profit entities. The anger on the streets towards his policies was palpable at the referendum polls.

The question is how to turn that anger into a movement. The hundreds of thousands who voted and the thousands who volunteered during the OHC campaign have been mobilized and have found common cause

with neighbours and co-workers in this fight. The local health coalitions have been reinvigorated and expectations have grown. The campaign is only scratching the surface of the anger throughout the province.

Crucially, the momentum needs to find ways to tap into the sentiment in the workplaces, particularly the healthcare fields. There was great support from many unions. Unifor and USW both provided much needed resources. Union members at conventions and meetings of OPSEU, CUPW and UFCW became part of the campaign. There is a great basis to continue in workplaces such as at hospitals and among education workers. In many places, local labour councils took up the cause.

The Ford Conservatives are worried. That is why they moved at lightning speed to push through Bill 60, which puts in place the privatization of hospital surgeries and diagnostics. They have been forced to back down before – first by education workers who pushed back the anti-union Bill 28, and are facing a huge challenge from farmers, First Nations and environmental groups on the proposal to destroy the Greenbelt.

But this is going to be a long fight. As the cost of living continues to increase, we will see more people looking for an avenue to fight back against the greed of the bosses and the politicians that serve them. The referendum was a huge opening salvo in a larger fight against privatization across the board. The next few months will be crucial to see if these great events can be the foundation for a movement that can finally push Ford back from his agenda.



Voting to save public healthcare in Toronto, one of almost 1000 polls across the province