

Strike wave

Stand in solidarity
with striking workers

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WE CAN STOP CAPITALISM



Capitalism is the crisis. We need system change

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Almost 70 percent of the population of the Northwest Territories has been evacuated to escape raging wildfires. They are not alone. Fires have ripped through other areas of the Canadian state and throughout the world destroying crucial habitats, emitting huge amounts of carbon dioxide and accelerating the climate breakdown.

Meanwhile Trudeau is spending \$30 billion on the TMX pipeline and a further \$30 billion in subsidies to fossil fuel industries. According to the International Monetary Fund governments subsidize oil and gas industries to the tune of \$1.4

trillion each year.

Trudeau is also spending almost a half a trillion dollars on the military.

But when asked about finding more money for housing or to end the cost of living crisis, our governments say they are broke.

When we need money for human needs the cupboard is bare. When the money is needed to subsidize billionaires or kill people on the other side of the world the chequebook is open.

These are the priorities of capitalism. The system is content to destroy the natural world and the

lives of billions of people to keep profits flowing.

People are fighting back. Strikes have spread throughout the public and private sector in Canada. There are waves of workers resistance in many parts of the world. The US is going through the largest workers revolt since the 1970s.

Tenant strikes are spreading. Indigenous Land Defenders are resisting extraction industries across the country.

This is not the first time that has happened. What is new today is the global scale of the crisis and the many ways that these different issues are

now feeding further deterioration of the system in a downward spiral.

We are in a crucial moment when the weight of the horrors of the system can either point towards revolutionary change or can create despair and the rise of forces like the fascists who intend to use the crisis to build a base.

We can stop the runaway train of capitalism and end the destruction but only if we organize.

Join us as we work to build a revolutionary movement that can end this system and bring about a world that puts people and the planet first.

COVID comeback? It never left.

In July, Bronny James, son of NBA star LeBron James, suffered cardiac arrest during basketball practice with his college team. Young James was a top prospect. Now his career, and possibly his future life, is in question.

This is not to insist that James' condition is a direct result of COVID-19. There are incidents of cardiac issues sidelining young athletes before COVID. The multi-billion sports industry has plenty of ways of exploiting and abusing young athletes.

But there is scientific consensus emerging that contracting COVID – especially multiple times – causes long term damage to organs, particularly the heart.

And they reveal other deadly repercussions from COVID besides cardiac issues.

A 2022 report from Johns Hopkins confirms that even “mild” cases of COVID relate to an increasing number of cardiac issues.

This study also refutes anti-vaxxer misinformation claiming that health issues are caused not by the virus, but by vaccines. Studies prove that un-vaccinated COVID patients have at least as high levels of cardiac issues.

A new study from the Centre for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, based at the University of Minnesota has reported that there is a link between COVID and increased incidence of blood clotting

There is a growing mountain of information and research about the long-term effects of repeated exposures to COVID. Yet it is rarely referred to in the media, making headlines only when a celebrity like Toews is effected,

The fact is that the science surrounding long COVID directly contradicts the corporate and government strategy for dealing with disease: to let people just get it, and then get on with it. “Herd immunity”, and more recently “hybrid immunity” allows them to do nothing, to get on with business as usual. They gamble – with our lives – that what doesn't kill us will make us stronger.

COVID didn't get that memo.

Media are already reporting “mysterious” rises in death rates, not just among children, the elderly and disabled demographics, but also among young adults with no known prior health issues. A recent *USA Today* article, discussed this but stopped short of connecting this to long COVID.

New strains and old cover-ups

What is worse, COVID is a rapidly evolving organism. Sticking with the “get it and get on with it” strategy will allow COVID to continue to return with new variations. This means the “herd immunity” you may have gained from the last variety may not protect you from the next.

The UK is a country that embraced the “herd immunity” strategy early in the pandemic, allowing COVID to rip through much of the population. Yet with each successive wave, with each new mutation, hospitalizations sky rocket and death rates spike. These are reported as “excess deaths”.

Get used to hearing that term. It will be a major tool to dismiss and normalize deaths from COVID and long COVID.

It has become difficult to track and report on this new wave because governments have simply stopped counting and reporting in a timely, transparent fashion. Maria Van Kerkhove is an epidemiologist working with the World Health Organization. She recently tweeted: “Clarification: in our COVID19 global epi reports, we provide into on # of countries reporting cases to WHO. This does NOT mean there are no cases in countries, it means they are no longer reporting this to WHO. Big difference. Take care.”

But someone is counting. Enter the insurance companies. Just as actuaries and insurance adjusters were among the first corporate entities to blow the whistle on climate change disasters, now they are reporting on COVID.

In the US they report that beginning in mid-July hospitalizations rose sharply. And not just in crowded urban centres.

In parts of Oklahoma hospital admissions are up around 450%, according to the Center for Disease Control.

All this is already putting a strain on our under-funded healthcare. In Ontario, the Ford Tories are so intent on transferring wealth to their friends and supporters through privatization the hospital services are visibly suffering.

A recent CBC reports that the city of Hamilton is in need of 473 new hospital beds and 3,348 more staff.

This is widespread. I have personally witnessed regular, open squabbles between overworked nurses and administrators trying to get them to work even more shifts. Hospitals have bowed to political pressure, and dropped all public health requirements in general areas of their buildings. They maintain the fiction that all is well, but the cracks in the system are wide open.

Governments and big business downplay or even cover-up evidence of the continued risks of new variants and of the results of long COVID. It is worth noting here a damning report in indy-media outlet The Maple which has charted the political affiliations of members of the boards of Toronto's hospitals, thanks to the fact that donations to political parties must be made public.

It will come as no surprise that hospital board members overwhelmingly donated to Doug Ford provincially, and John Tory municipally. How much our hospitals are guided by health considerations, and how much by political expediency, is a subject for a public debate that is not happening.

As we head into another school year, there appears to be no new government plan to protect kids, to require masking, to decrease crowding, and to maintain a campaign of vaccination. The new variant is already upon us and cases and deaths are on the rise. And summer is supposed to be the safest season.

COVID is far from over. Take precautions. Take care of yourselves, because the system won't.



As early as 2020, the magazines *Scientist* and the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported on studies of young players who had contracted COVID. Scans revealed an abnormal level of inflammation of their hearts, called myocarditis.

Although the sample size was small, a 2020 German study found that 60% of the 100 athletes studied revealed post-COVID myocarditis. Prior medical conditions were ruled out.

More recent studies reinforce and amplify these early findings.

among cancer patients.

Long COVID

In February, Chicago Blackhawks veteran centre Jonathan Toews announced he was “stepping back” from hockey to try and recover from the effects of long COVID. Toews developed Chronic Immune Response Syndrome. This progressive disease takes advantage of a compromised immune system and can result in inflammation of a number of organs, and can become debilitating.

Infection breaks down the immune system, making the body the target for multiple diseases; cancer, myocarditis, circulatory problems, joint inflammation and loss of mental acuity have all been connected to long COVID. Chronic fatigue and mental health issues also result.

Our governments' herd immunity strategy, especially allowing school kids to catch and spread COVID multiple times, is a ticking time-bomb. We are at the beginning of a great wave of disability which will worsen in the coming years.

Doug Ford corruption... continued from page 8

Looks like the faceless civil servant has a face and a name after all. He is Ryan Amato, Minister Clark's Chief of Staff, and a loyal Tory apparatchik. Mr. Amato agreed to resign on August 22. Minister Clark declared he had no idea what his Chief of Staff was up to because he too is a delegator.

Mr. Amato held his senior post as Chief of Staff to one of the province's key cabinet ministers for years, earning at least \$120,086 a year according to Ontario's “sunshine list” of highly paid civil servants. The fact that he was allowed to resign, as opposed to being fired in disgrace, is an example of the Ford regime's kindness and humanitarianism. Good luck to Mr. Amato on his new career, inspecting the underside of

the bus.

Ford went on to say that he was “confident” there was no corruption involved, that he is famous for not being a crook, and all he cares about was building homes for us common folk, homes that will net his non-friends over \$8 billion.

Ford also faced questions about how, during the crucial days when the Greenbelt lands were being handed over to his non-friends, he pointedly did not use his government-issued phone. Records of such devices must be made public. But wait, there are multiple photos of DoFo using a cell phone during that time. It seems he not only believes in delegating,

but in burner phones and plausible deniability as well.

And he's not the only one. An auditor's report has found that Tory “staffers” either deleted email correspondence with developers and their lobbyists, or used their

personal accounts to circumvent the rules. Oops.

Ford, Clark and the rest of the Tory mafia have shown their hand. They intend to ride this out and hope it goes away. They may throw an occasional fall guy to the lions.

They will deny, gaslight and change the channel. We say “Corruption!” and they reply “Housing”. They believe we have the attention span of gnats, and we'll get distracted and forget about it by the next election.

But it is more than 7 months since the infamous Stag and Dough party, and the story has grown to elephantine proportions. And it is in the room wherever Ford goes. From pointed questions by reporters, to damning reports from

auditors and ethics commissioners, to OPP investigation to, most recently, the RCMP riding in: this sordid tale of kickbacks, greed and wanton environmental destruction will not go away.

Ford can go all Nixonian and declare “I am not a crook” until he turns Tory blue in the face. No one but the most rabid partisans will believe him, and we will not forget. But we mustn't sit back and wait for the next election – by then irreparable damage will have been done. Now is the time to connect this corruption to other Tory scandals: privatizing our precious healthcare, trampling Indigenous rights in a scramble to grab valuable resources, abandoning the disabled and ignoring an affordable housing crisis that grows by the day.

If we can pull these threads together we can weave the rope that will hang Doug Ford and his gang.



Capitalism fanned the flames in Lahaina

by: **Bradley Hughes**

On August 8 fire ripped through the town of Lahaina on the Hawaiian island of Maui. That evening over 2000 buildings were destroyed, almost all of them residences. So far the remains of over 100 people have been found in the ruins, but over a thousand people are still missing.

Identification of the dead is only possible by finger prints or DNA. Pictures of the destruction along Front St. show lines of cars destroyed where they were parked on the side of the road, left by workers and visitors who had no time to return to their car to try to escape. The town simply doesn't exist anymore.

Fertile wetlands

The town of Lahaina has been home to Indigenous Hawaiians since time immemorial. Up until colonization it was the capital of the Hawaiian nation. The town was supplied by numerous canals bringing water from the slopes of the adjacent extinct volcano, Mauna Kahālāwai. This water supplied fish ponds for aquaculture and taro fields. Taro is a root vegetable grown in flooded fields like rice. As colonization proceeded Indigenous Hawaiian

traditional culture was attacked. Many of the canals were filled in and the irrigated fields built over by colonists.

In the 1900's the remaining canals were diverted to provide irrigation for sugar cane plantations surrounding Lahaina. In the late 1900s and early 2000s, the sugar companies decided it was no longer profitable to produce sugar on Maui and abandoned the fields. In the absence of irrigation and any management, invasive grasses took over the vast fields. The native forests and managed wetlands were much less susceptible to drought and trees, of course, create better wind breaks than grasses.

At the same time that these changes were made to protect profit, the climate continued changing. As in many places, droughts have plagued Hawai'i, and hurricanes around the world have increased in frequency and in severity over the last few decades.

On July 31 Hurricane Dora formed off the coast of El Salvador. It traveled out into the Pacific Ocean and is only the second hurricane ever to travel far enough to cross the international date line. Overall Hurricane Dora traveled more than



Virtually all downtown Lahaina was destroyed

16,000 km, more than three times the distance from Victoria, BC to St. John's, Newfoundland. As it passed south of the Hawaiian islands, a stronger than usual high pressure system moved north of the islands. The combination of the two pulled hot dry air across the island of Maui, down the slopes of the extinct volcano Mauna Kahālāwai and through the town of Lahaina. Winds gusted to over 100 km/hr. Once the fire started, perhaps due to sparks from the many downed power lines, the winds drove it through the town.

The fire that took so many homes

and lives also took out the power and water for half of the island of Maui. The days after the fire saw a mass evacuation from all of West Maui. In addition to evacuating residents, 30,000 tourists were bussed to the airport to flee home. Two weeks later, water and power is slowly being restored to those areas. However, for much of that area the water is unsafe for any use. Residents are advised to only drink bottled water, and to only shower in warm water in a well ventilated area.

For many decades, the idea of a fire destroying a city seemed to

be a relic of an older age. The scale and sophistication of our fire fighting techniques meant that we no longer had to worry about wildfires in cities. The Great Fire of London was in 1666. The Great Chicago Fire was in 1871. Between 600 and 1000 buildings were destroyed in the Great Vancouver Fire in 1886. There have been two great fires in Toronto. In 1849, several blocks of buildings around what is now the St. Lawrence market were destroyed. The much larger fire in 1904 destroyed over 100 buildings centred on Front and Bay Streets.

But mass fires that destroy neighbourhoods or entire cities and towns are no longer just in our distant past. Accelerating climate change combined with land uses that have destroyed ecosystems for short term profit will keep creating these catastrophes. Only ending fossil fuel use, and massive rehabilitation of ecosystems combined with the Indigenous knowledge required to live in them, can save us. That will require a dedication of resources and changes to our methods of production that are impossible while defending profits. Either we destroy capitalism or we'll all be taken down with it.

Climate change threatening food supplies

The crisis of climate change is not a matter for the future, it is upon us.

The government of India has banned the export of rice to the rest of the world due to prolonged drought, soaring temperatures, and disruptions in the monsoon weather patterns on which rice cultivation is based.

And when rainfall belatedly arrived, it came in disastrous floods which themselves damaged the already threatened rice crop.

India supplies about 40% of the world's rice exports, more than the next 4 rice-exporting countries combined.

Food shortages will hit different places differently. Tellingly, India has not banned export of high-priced, premium basmati rice, which is aimed at the richer markets of Europe, North America and the oil-rich Middle Eastern states. Shortages will be felt most acutely in poorer Asian and African nations.

Rising oceans

Vietnam is the 2nd biggest largest rice producer. The vast Mekong delta was source of agriculture - not just rice - for generations. A different symptom of climate change threatens all that: rising sea levels.

Salt water is drowning large sections of the delta.

Cung Pham had a thriving farm on the delta. Rice was his cash crop, but he diversified with melons, sweet potatoes and peanuts. For years he watched rising sea levels claim his land, salinate the estuary and poison the land. He and his neighbours tried planting breakwaters of trees and building dikes, but they gave way to storm surges and relentless sea rise.

"I kept moving inland gradually but over the last three years the whole area has been flooded and it is impossible to farm," Pham said. There are thousands of others like him.



Trudeau: climate criminal

by: **Brian Champ**

Canada is on fire. The number and scale of the wildfires is breaking new records each day. On June 26 we passed the record for the most area burned. In early August the number of active fires topped the 1000 mark. As of August 23, the fires have combined to emit 327 megatonnes of carbon.

While forest fire statistics vary greatly year on year, there are long term trends that can be observed: downward for the number of fires, and upward for area burned.

The higher temperatures and drier conditions that have made this fire season catastrophic are linked to the climate crisis and the burning of fossil fuels. But forest management practices more attuned to the needs of the forestry industry than to ensuring healthy forests is also a major factor.

For millennia, Indigenous peoples lived in and around the forests on Turtle Island, developing knowledge and practices in harmony with the ecosystems they were embedded in. Fire management, including controlled burns and tree and undergrowth maintenance to minimize destruction while fostering rebirth formed a part of these practices. Far from wilderness, the forests on this continent

were stewarded by the peoples that lived in their midst, ensuring a rich diversity of plants and animals for the benefit of all species

Settler colonialism displaced Indigenous peoples from the forest lands, relegating forests to logging interests that only saw value in the products that could be made from cutting down trees. Fire management shifted towards attempts at total fire suppression to preserve the future value for private interests. Management of undergrowth and the creation of fire-breaks around communities was neglected. The paradoxical result is the periodic forest fire catastrophes that have marked the last hundreds of years.

Global capitalism and imperialism have been fueled by coal, oil and gas. Since WWII fossil fuel use has

vening 35 years has seen more than half of the increase of atmospheric CO2.

Trudeau and the Canadian government continue to fund the fossil fuel industry to billions in direct subsidies and more billions indirectly through infrastructure decisions that perpetuate the use of fossil fuels.

Oil and gas profits ensure market mechanisms that claim to lead a transition to renewable energy sources will have limited effect. Forestry profits are safeguarded similarly by governments overseeing clear cut logging licenses on crown land and forestry product export negotiations.

The truth is that capitalism is burning the planet for the short term benefit of a tiny minority. The profits they feed on are based on the blood and sweat of the millions who

labour and the ongoing colonization of Indigenous peoples and lands to clear the path for further resource extraction. But increasingly workers are fighting back against the exploitation of their labour, and Indigenous peoples are actively asserting their inherent rights over their



Residents of Kelowna watch as the fires threaten the town.

risen exponentially, with atmospheric CO2 rising in lockstep and leading to global average temperature increases as predicted by climate scientists. Governments first committed to reduce emissions in 1988, but the inter-

lands. A livable future depends on forging links between these struggles to build a force from below that can pull the emergency cord and bring this destructive economic system to a halt before it's too late.

Capitalism is the crisis

Why you should join the socialists

The world is beset by multiple interlinking crises. Climate chaos, mass extinction, a soaring cost of living, mass poverty, inequality, rising fascism and endless war are the main features of the age. There are many complex causes for each of these individual issues but they all stem from the same foundation — an economic system that prioritizes one thing — extracting maximum profit from both working people and the natural world.

To end the horrors of the system we need the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. We will never be fully rid of the destruction while the current set up endures.

But for most people revolution sounds like a far-away dream. It is something we read about in history books but the idea that it could happen here seems very far-fetched. That simply isn't true. Revolutions are the locomotives of history and have shaped the world we live in now. Capitalism itself relied on revolutionary movements to develop and mass uprisings that contain the nucleus of revolutionary change happen around the world.

Politicians and billionaires will use all of the means of disseminating ideas at their disposal to convince us that this is the best system in world history. They will dismiss any calls for substantial change and will fight to preserve their wealth and power at any cost, even if it means destroying the planet.

But none of this is inevitable. The system is a product of human activity and can be replaced by human activity. The notion that capitalism and the market are the natural outcome of historical development is false.

To study human history from below — not the standard history we are taught in school which is

usually confined to lists of acts of the ruling class — we see that the class struggle is ever present. All of the aspects of capitalism that we see today were contested by working people throughout our history. The reason why they exist today is because the capitalists imposed the system by force. Likewise, those aspects of the system that we enjoy were brought about by mass struggle from below to make things better.

But how do we achieve revolu-

tionary change? What mechanisms can move us past the seemingly unassailable power of the ruling class?

First we need to understand that the power of the rulers comes not from some inherent qualities that they possess. Their power comes from their wealth and the people who produce that wealth are workers. Those workers there-

fore, become as Karl Marx said, “the gravediggers” of capitalism. It is us workers that have the power to shut down the profit making machines. When workers strike and withdraw labour the bosses lose the foundation of their power.

There are of course, many barriers that need to be overcome for that to happen. Most workers are drawn to the ideas of the rulers. We are constantly told that the system is the zenith of human

that no matter who you vote for your rent will still go up, the planet will get hotter and more dangerous and billions will still be spent on police and the military. But in the absence of a revolutionary alternative, workers simply put up with the system as it is.

The capitalists also use other mechanisms to keep the workers divided. Racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia are central to the project of the ruling class. As long as people are fight-

ing people's fears. The right, for example, is now trying to tell us that the housing crisis is a result of refugees and immigrants taking all the empty units. This is completely false. Rents continue to go up regardless of the levels of immigration. The people raising your rents are banks, developers and landlords — not international students. But Conservatives like Pierre Pollievre know that this is a great way to distract and confuse people thus leaving the billion-aires profits intact.

The Liberals are hardly any better. They may say the right things but they are still for example, pushing pipelines through Indigenous territories against the will of the people who live there. They rely on centuries of racism against Indigenous peoples to achieve this goal.

They still spend billions on the RCMP and border guards that do the work of policing the lives of racialized people and exacerbating the oppression they face. The only difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives is a different strategy of achieving the same goal which is the continued rule by the capitalists.

How do workers break from these backward ideas?

The main way that is achieved is through struggle. When workers engage in the struggle they begin to see the contours of the system and they confront the dominant ideas of the age by forcing open the contradictions between these ideas and lived experience.

In most cases, the struggle is not explicitly revolutionary but is rather calling for reforms of the system.

Revolutionaries support all those struggles to challenge the worst aspects of the system even if we are clear that full emancipation cannot come under capitalism.



Protest in Tahrir Square during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution

accomplishment and cannot be bettered. And so workers will believe, for example, that they can vote away a bad ruler and bring in another and that will achieve change. On some level they know this isn't true. Elections may allow for some policy tinkering around the edges but will never confront the foundations of the system.

It is a feature of official politics

ing over questions of identity they cannot possibly unify to the extent needed to overthrow the system. That's why all workers need to unite to combat racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia to stop the divisions.

The far-right and conservative parties explicitly encourage those sorts of divisions. It is easy to see the way they are manipulat-

the



The RCMP attacking Wet'suwet'en land defenders. The state exists to police the people for the benefit of billionaires.

If a group of workers is on strike, they aren't calling for an end to capitalism, just for a more equitable distribution of the wealth they create.

We support that struggle because any concession made to the working class by the capitalists is a victory. It boosts confidence that people can fight back and provides concrete value as well.

This was so beautifully spelled out in the Movie "Finally Got the News" by an activist in the League of Revolutionary Black Workers who said, "every dollar we win in a fight with the bosses is another dollar for dues for the revolutionary organization, it is another dollar for more leaflets, it is another hour off to agitate at the plant gates, it is another dollar in the strike support fund and another meal for our sister or brother who has been fired."



The people of Sudan overthrew military rulers in 2019

The revolutionary needs to be there to cut through the morass of ideas and throughout the reform process to discuss and generalize the lessons of history and previous struggles. We need to make arguments which cut against the reactionary ideas in everyone's heads and point the way forward with strategy and tactics that can

win change.

Definitions of socialism

When people hear the word socialism it can conjure up a lot of different things. Those who grew up during the cold war will see it as akin to the communism of the former USSR and the eastern block with its totalitarian rule. Others see a socialism that can work within the existing capitalist framework as we see with certain social democratic parties like the NDP.

Neither of those choices are a path to real liberation for the working class. The first is the Stalinist distortion which required the use of capitalist style exploitation to create a state that would be able to compete with the advanced capitalist countries. In practice, that means killing the revolution in order to save it. That specific political approach also led to a form of "communism" which was imposed on working people by military force.

The Social Democrats on the other hand want you to support their electoral ambitions and electoral victories become the goal. They also assume that there is a way to tame capitalism and mitigate its worst tendencies. While there are times when capitalism has allowed for some reforms to develop, such as winning union rights, universal healthcare and other social services, those need to be seen in context. When the capitalist system is expanding and there are strong movements on the streets, there is a possibility of some reforms. When the system goes into crisis the ruling class works to limit reforms or more likely roll back the gains of the workers.

Both the Stalinist and Social Democratic perspective are deeply flawed as a means of achieving liberation. They rely on a state apparatus to achieve their goals. But the state itself is part of the

problem.

The state is not a neutral entity. It is a body set up by the capitalists to police the working class for the benefit of the rulers.

Bourgeois ideology portrays capital as a neutral economic force, based on the "laws" of economics and market forces and beyond the scope of human influence. But capital is not neutral or democratic. It is not an abstract economic force. It is a social force. It creates the social relations and exploitative conditions we live under.

Why the revolutionary party

The only force that is capable of overthrowing the system is the working class yet most working people are filled with ideas set out by the rulers. How do we overcome that contradiction?

We need a revolutionary party that can provide the framework to understand how capitalism operates and how we can get rid of it. Looking at history and a scientific analysis of the existing system we can see how all the various pieces fit together.

Crucially we organize around the principle that the emancipation of the working class has to be the act of the class itself. The working people - the 'essential workers' as we heard during the pandemic - are the people who actually know how to run society. They also make up the vast majority of people in the world.

Socialism therefore requires the overthrow of a system that acts for the benefit of a minority of people in power and replaces it with a bottom up democratic system that represents the vast majority for the benefit of the vast majority.

It would mean an end to the yoke of the capitalists and the landlords and the prospect of true liberation in our time.

Strikers need our support

by: Carolyn Egan

Workers at Metro locations across southern Ontario have brought confidence and momentum to their picket lines. The level of community support is continuing to grow with regular rallies, and customers bringing food to the members. The constant honking by passing cars is showing that working people are with them.

The strike vote was 100% and the members overwhelmingly rejected a tentative agreement letting the leadership know that it was out of touch with the rank and file. These workers, who represent the diversity of Toronto, see the huge profits that this company is making, the excessive salaries that upper management is being given, and they are up for the fight.

There are 3,700 workers striking and the vast majority are part timers. This has been a deliberate strategy by the grocery industry to cut costs and build profits. Full time employees earn an average of \$22.50 an hour and part timers \$16.62. Once upon a time these were good jobs but as decades have past wages have not kept up with inflation. It is harder and harder for these workers to make ends meet.

Recently they have upped the ante and started picketing Metro food warehouses, effectively shutting them down. "No trucks in. No trucks out." The company has applied for an injunction, not only going after the union, but twenty individual strikers as well, produce clerks, bakers and others.

This is clearly an attempt to intimidate the workers, accusing them of "unlawful confinement, intentional infliction of mental distress, and more." This strategy is backfiring and strengthening the support for the strike. Ordinary people have been subjected to ongoing price gouging by these stores knowing that they have been making exorbitant profits. They can't afford to put food on the table. Food banks can't keep up with demands, and homelessness is increasing.

These workers are fighting for

all of us. Canada has a higher household debt to GDP ratio than the United States, and inequality between rich and poor is growing at an unprecedented pace. Rents in cities such as Toronto are pricing apartments out of reach of so many. There is incredible anxiety about the future and how people will survive.

At the same time we have seen increased unionization in previously unorganized workplaces such as Starbucks. Strikes have been fought by federal workers, long shore and warehouse workers, at National Steelcar, and Windsor Salt, most rejecting tentative agreements agreed to by the leadership. Some of these strikes have provided the opportunity for workers to rebuild their local unions on the line and make real gains.

We are seeing glimpses of rank and file networks, not as strong as we have seen in the past, but there is an increase in struggle with workers telling the leadership that they need more. Building the confidence of workers is critical to strong and effective unions, and activists must do all we can to strengthen grass roots organization.

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation has just made an agreement with the ministry of education to go to binding interest arbitration if they can't come to a tentative agreement. Other teachers unions have rejected this. It supports the view that strikes are unnecessary, as well as destroying unity among the teachers' federations. Very importantly members will not be able to vote on the final agreement. It will be imposed upon them. Hopefully this will be voted down. Maintaining the right to withdraw labour in the fight for a just settlement is very important. The right to strike has been hard won.

The Metro work stoppage is continuing and building solidarity is key. There are many picket locations and the workers are showing their strength. They were on the job throughout the pandemic and kept the country going. They deserve everything they are demanding and we have to build the lines to help them win.



Syria: ‘There are protests every day,’ say socialists

In August, people joined major protests across Syria against poverty and calling for the downfall of the governing regime. The Revolutionary Left Current in Syria writes for Socialist Worker about the significance of the revolt, after years of horror and division.

The protests began, following a decision by the ruling regime of president Bashar al-Assad to increase wages by 100 percent, but at the same time to raise fuel prices by 200 percent. Wages for Syrians in the area controlled by the Assad regime vary between \$13 to \$34 a month. This is not enough to live on for even a few days. Calls for strikes and civil disobedience have been issued by movements such as the 10 August Movement, the Civil Action Movement and our party—Revolutionary Left in Syria. The masses have responded to these calls, and demonstrations and other forms of protest have been taking place for the past week, especially in the south of the country—Soueida and Daraa, in Damascus, Jaramana, in Aleppo and the coastal towns of Tartous and Latakia. These protests have had echoes in

Hama, Salamieh, and the north east (under Turkish occupation). Every day there are demonstrations and protests. The protest movement is in its infancy, and it’s difficult to predict its future. It is subject to manoeuvring by the regime itself and the pro-Turkish liberal opposition. But democratic and left wing movements are also taking an active part. A coordinating committee for the strike

and civil disobedience was set up three days ago under the name “Qaouem”, which means “Resist” in Arabic. It’s made up of several active movements, including our party. So we’re fighting a two-pronged battle—against the regime and against conservative and counter-revolutionary currents. The outcome will depend on our ability to mobilise the Syrian masses for radical democratic and social change. Committees organising grassroots struggles are springing up and spreading. A majority of the movement has learned from the failures and lessons of the first wave of the revolution 12 years ago. The Syrian people have no illusions about being saved by the United States or any other country. Their salvation lies in their own hands. The masses in the movement are fighting for peace, the release of prisoners, the return of refugees and displaced persons, reunification, democratic change and the withdrawal of all foreign armed forces from Syrian soil. They also want policies of social justice. In this struggle, our party is pushing ahead the fight for socialism. For more on the Revolutionary Left Current in Syria go to linktr.ee/revoleftsyrria



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There are currently about 37,000 vacant hospital staff positions around the province, with some workers leaving due to burnout. Michael Hurley, president of OCHU, states, “They know that no matter how hard they work — even if they work through their breaks, their lunch, if they stay late, or if they pick up extra shifts and work through the weekend — it doesn’t matter. The quality of care never really improves, and so they become demoralized.” The OCHU report recommends a number of measures, including massive investment in services for an aging population, banning the use of agency staff, raising real wages, increasing full-time work,

tackling violence in healthcare. The Ford government is counting on the multiple crises people are living through — from forest fires to skyrocketing housing costs to navigating an ailing healthcare system — to push through its privatization plans. But people across the province are fighting back. On the opening day of the Ontario legislature, September 25th at noon, join unions, community organizations, patients and advocates at the mass protest at Queen’s Park, called by the Ontario Health Coalition. Stop privatization of our hospital services — Fund the system — Pay the workers! Join the protest September 25! For info see: <https://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca/>



resistance in an age

of crisis

**saturday
october
21**

12:00 pm est
9:00 am pst

Steelworkers Hall
25 Cecil St, Toronto

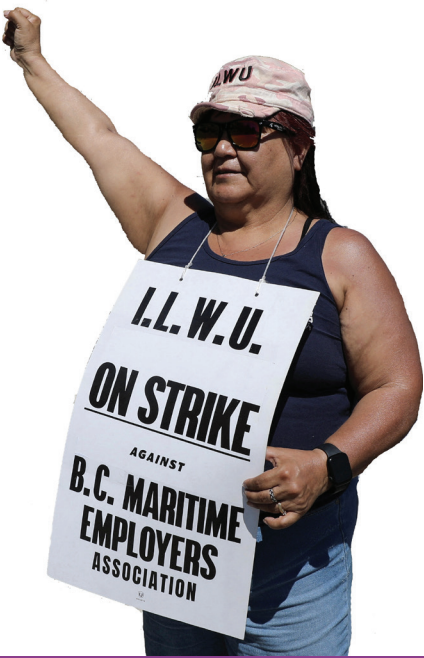
On the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples.

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On the ancestral, traditional, and unceded land of the Musqueam people.

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Room is still dirty: A photojournalism exposé of the Ottawa Civic Hospital

by: Chantal Sundaram

The Ford government along with crony hospital administrators are working hard to hide the human face of privatization. A photojournalism exposé, *Room is still dirty*, by a terminated hospital cleaner and housekeeper, shows the graphic reality of an Ontario hospital in decline, sliding towards the cataclysmic reality of what privatization will bring everywhere if we don't stop it.

David Wightman blew the whistle on the Ottawa Civic hospital over the cost of encroaching privatization and corporate mismanagement to both patients and the working conditions of hospital workers. First, his written exposé *Code SOS at the Ottawa Hospital* for the local Ottawa progressive publication *The Leveller*, laid bare the behind-the-scenes reality of working at the Civic. Then his photos documenting the deteriorating conditions inside the hospital were shown in an Ottawa public gallery space, Club SAW, on July 19.

The photos were grouped by theme. From "Catering to Chaos" documenting the enormous waste of corporate catering, to "No Prison Orange in Hospital" showing incarcerated patients in shackles with no OHIP coverage, to "May Court MayDay", which shows how the May Court hospital library ceased functioning during the pandemic and became a depot for rags and mops – it was an inside view of what is already going on as the public system is starved and eroded by the piecemeal encroachment of private contracts.

The photo collections "Perpetually soiled"

and "Trashed" show mountains of garbage and linen bags and overflowing garbage cans.

But the caption cautions against blaming the workers instead of the monopoly third party service provider and the hospital administration.

How can we stop privatization?

The photo exhibit included a panel moderated by community organizer/activist Khadija El Hilali with David Wightman, Ed Cashman, coordinator of the Ottawa Health Coalition, and Farhat Rehman of Moms Offering Mutual Support. Local NDP MPP Joel Harden was scheduled to

speak but had a last-minute conflict.

All three talked about the growing inequities of the hospital system and the need to take action, from lobbying for ethical healthcare access for prisoners, to the inspiring popular referendum against Ford's legislation to allow private clinics to operate in public hospitals. Following this Ontario-wide referendum, held by the Ontario Health Coalition and its regional members, local membership in the Ottawa Health Coalition grew exponentially.

While much of the resistance to healthcare privatization in Ottawa has been focussed on

the Riverside campus of the hospital system, where a private clinic was allowed to operate even before the passing of Ford's Bill. There is also widespread concern about the state of the Civic campus – but also concern over the current plans to replace it.

A new Ottawa hospital campus is now under construction. One of the final captions of *Room is still dirty*, titled "Subject to Change Without Notice" asks "who will own the hospital" and "what services and procedures will be privatized?" What are the implications of building a hospital on a private-public partnership model? The exhibit asserts that corporate profiteering was not the model employed by the administrators a century ago when the Civic hospital was built, and asks: what will this new privatized "public" hospital be like for workers and patients a hundred years from now?

During the discussion, a retired physician active with a group of environmentalist physicians spoke against the plans for the new hospital megacampus, the lack of proper investigation into soil toxicity, the destruction of tree coverage, and the lack of community consultation about what kind of health facility is needed. Meanwhile, the current decrepit campus of the Civic hospital is scheduled to become a private long-term care facility.

A collection of photos of medical dummies used as stand-ins for real people poses the stark question: Are We The Dummies? The caption warns: "Privatization will only increase the exploitation and immiseration of workers, which will further erode patient care. All for the sake of enriching already wealthy individuals and corporate interests."



The healthcare system is being destroyed to make way for for-profit hospitals

Barbie is plastic—but the film has real heart

The Barbie movie is no revolutionary tale but it does offer important critique of being a woman under capitalism

by: Laura Verdasco

I would never have expected to be writing a positive review on a film so blatantly attempting to sell you a product. However, *Barbie Movie*, directed by Greta Gerwig, left me with positives.

The film portrays a personal journey for the famous doll, who must grapple with the human world and the realities of sexism under capitalism.

This journey is triggered when Barbie must leave Barbieland to find the reason why she is no longer the "stereotypical Barbie".

She leaves her perfect reality to find a world where gender roles are reversed and men rule over women. In this new reality, for the first time, Barbie is forced to experience harassment, sexism and what it means to be a woman in a male-dominated society.

With the film being described by right wing thinktanks and commentators as "anti-men", I knew I would enjoy it. However, what these right wing types miss is how the film presents multiple layers of the experience of women in the world.

It shows how the burden that it is placed on them is to be perfect, never complain, and do as they were designed to do. Nevertheless, I feared that Barbie would follow a corporate narrative advocating for more women to be elevated to the "boss."

I worried it would be utterly uncritical of women's role under capitalism. However, it portrayed a more nuanced understanding of sexism. The film is a surprisingly self-aware and self-deprecating critique of consumer capitalism and of Barbie manufacturer Mattel as an organisation.

The film portrays the company as a male-dominated capitalist

enterprise that packages plastic women's liberation if it makes them money. Furthermore, multiple perspectives of Barbie are presented in a tongue-in-cheek way.

This includes the liberal idea that Barbie represents how women can do everything. It also presents a more critical perspective that the world has not been radically changed because a company produces

dolls that include one with her as the US president.

It also invites the audience to consider their relationship to a sexist society that forces people

into boxes based on their gender.

In a climate of transphobia, the casting of a trans Barbie, albeit in a small role, was welcome. Finally, and although very much secondary, the role of Ken, played by Ryan Gosling, in the film was important.

The character of Ken was used to portray multiple realities throughout. Initially, he occupies the traditional role of women in mainstream cinema. He is merely an accessory to their love interest.

But as the film progresses, we see how a directionless man can fall into the sexist pipeline of sexist ideas.

Finally, he ends up representing a way forward for men not to be destructive towards women. Both dismissing Barbie as a shallow product of consumer capitalism or a fake empowering corporate feminist narrative is doing the job of director Gerwig a disservice.

Although the film does not try to be a revolutionary narrative, one can forgive Barbie because of its well-landing jokes, emotive scenes, and, most of all, for upsetting all those right wingers once again.

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“I am not a crook!” —Ontario style

by: John Bell

Months ago, it came to light that the elite of Ontario’s developers had lined up at a “stag and doe” party to give big cash gifts to one of Doug Ford’s daughters, I think it was Krispy Kreme but I’m not certain.

At the time DoFo accused reporters and critics of being churls, or at least he would have if he knew what churls were. He said that it was all cool, that they were all not just massive financial supporters of him and his party, but dear personal friends who were naturally invited to the party. They were just showing respect and affection for Krispy and her intended, and to suggest otherwise was just plain mean.

But now, just because those same guys miraculously bought up protected parcels of Greenbelt lands just months before Doug and his pod of clapping seals coincidentally decided to un-protect those very parcels, everybody is upset. Corruption, they say! Crooks, they say! Typical Tory douchebags they say!

All just because a bunch of his friends and donors stand to make billions destroying precious wetlands and farms, threatening the GTA’s watershed, just to slap up hectares of ticky tacky tract homes and call it “affordable housing”.

But wait, now DoFo denies that they were ever his friends in the first place. Standing in front of reporters, he tried to rewrite the past.

“You’re saying they’re my friends. I have more friends, regular common folk than builders. Again, you want to imply that? It’s just not accurate.”

Reporter: “Premier, you said they were your



friends.” Being the pious premier that he is, he made like the Apostle Peter and declared 3 times “I do not know the man!”

High on the list of Ford’s not-friends are the multi-billionaire real estate moguls, the De Gasperis family. (This same family is deeply invested in privatizing healthcare, but that is another crime story.) They are such not-friends that they brought him down to Miami in 2018 and hosted him in their luxury skybox at a Florida Panthers game. Coincidentally the De Gasperis familia managed to grab 58% of the freed-up Greenbelt land.

When the incredulous scribes asked how it was possible that such a massive policy shift, one which blatantly broke his repeated personal promise to protect the Greenbelt land, could accidentally put billions of dollars into the pockets of his non-friends, he reminded them that he was a statesman, and above such tawdry details.

“I can’t micromanage hundreds of thousands of employees. I don’t believe in micromanaging. I believe in delegating.”

So, by inference, one of the biggest changes to Ontario’s environmental policy since the Greenbelt was created in 2005 was carried out by some faceless civil servant.

Evidently it wasn’t made by Steve Clark, DoFo’s Housing Minister. Oddly enough, back in 2018 Clark declared, “My commitment to protecting the Greenbelt has not changed... Our government remains steadfast in protecting it for future generations.” (Or 5 years, whichever comes first.)

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Ford driving healthcare into the ground

Protest September 25th

by Michelle Robidoux

If there was ever any doubt that the Ontario government is consciously driving public healthcare into the ground, a recently published report lays out the proof in damning detail.

The report titled “The Hospital Crisis: No Capacity, No Plan, No End”, published by the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU), exposes all of the ways the Doug Ford government has ensured a deepening crisis in the healthcare system.

It states that Ford “ran in 2018 on a promise of ending hospital hallway healthcare. When COVID hit, the focus became preserving limited hospital capacity. Now we have a near constant stream of Emergency Room closures in rural areas, long waits in backed up urban Emergency Rooms, a record level of hospital hallway healthcare, and many other problems.”

Another recent report, by the independent Financial Accountability Office (FAO), says the provincial government spent \$1.7-billion

less than planned on health care in 2022-23. This decision to deprive the healthcare system of badly needed funds was made despite rural and small-town hospitals struggling with

staff shortages, forcing a growing number of emergency rooms to close across the province. In Minden, the ER closed with only 6 weeks notice, forcing residents to drive 25

miles to the nearest ER.

Yet private clinics have seen their funding increase massively. As the OCHU report states, “The increase for public hospitals in the 2023/24 Budget Estimates is 0.5% compared to last year’s Budget Estimates. In contrast, so called “Independent Health Facilities” (i.e., private, for-profit surgical and diagnostic facilities) are budgeted to get a 212% increase from last year’s Budget Estimates. It is a boom for private profits, even as the government implements harsh austerity for public hospitals.”

The Ford government is trying to sell privatization as a way to solve the capacity crisis in the health system. Far from providing a solution, it will make staffing shortages and waiting lists longer as resources are drained from the public system. As the report points out, for-profit care means extra-billing for patients, higher costs for the public purse, diverting public money to private profits, and unaccountable oversight mechanisms.

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Thousands rally to save public healthcare in Toronto.