

**No reconciliation
without justice**

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movement?**

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Defend trans rights SHUT DOWN HATE



10,000 marched at the Trans pride march in Toronto. 2SLGBTQI+ rights are under attack by the far-right across the world. Coverage on pages 2 and 4-5

Canada has a Nazi problem

Canada has a Nazi problem. There is a problem with Nazis in Ottawa.

No, I'm not referring to the standing ovation given in the House of Commons to a 98-year-old veteran of the Waffen-SS Galicia Division, made up of Ukrainian Nazi collaborators. I will return to this shameful episode later.

I am referring to the ongoing, organized attacks on Ottawa school trustee Nili Kaplan-Myrth. She came in the cross-hairs of the extremist right during the convoy occupation where she used her platform to expose and oppose them. She has been a tireless advocate for better health measures in schools, including mandating mask-wearing for kids,

There is a Nazi problem in London Ontario.

On a pleasant spring evening in 2021, members of the Afzaal family went for a walk. Nathaniel Veltman saw them and drove his truck onto the sidewalk and murdered 4 family members.

Veltman admits that he adheres to Nazi propaganda, conspiracy theories and Islamophobic hatred. To him, just seeing an openly Muslim family enjoying themselves was motivation to commit murder.

Quebec City has a Nazi problem. Saskatoon has a Nazi problem. Canadian Forces and police are training and recruiting grounds for fascist groups. White nationalist parties have popped up in BC,

down, witness Florida where Nazi groups that grew bold within the “parental rights” movement are now openly waving the swastika in front of Disney World.

Canada has a Nazi problem.

Our media treats these events as isolated, acts of maladjusted lone wolves, unwilling or unable to connect the dots and dig into the systemic roots of racism. They boomerang from downplaying the threat, to sensationalizing a gotcha story like the Nazi in the House of Commons gallery.

The details of the Yaroslav Hunka saga are now well known. The 98-year-old veteran of a volunteer Ukrainian Nazi SS battalion was

conveniently forgetting that 3 of his MPs were caught having lunch with a Euro-fascist MEP just 6 months ago.

The press was in a lather trying to find out how the nonagenarian Nazi got in the gallery. They miss the point: how did this Nazi get in the country and become a Canadian citizen in the aftermath of WWII?

It is necessary to point out that all the ingredients of fascism and Nazism have been found in Canada since before its inception. The whole colonial project is racist, based on the conquest and, if necessary extermination, of Indigenous people who are “inferior” by definition. This allows the conquerors to paint their brutality as altruism when it suits them.

John A Macdonald and the “Fathers of Confederation” were mostly enthusiastic supporters of the Confederacy – as a lawyer, Macdonald was employed by the South to arrange the return of stolen “property”, i.e. runaway slaves smuggled into Canada through the underground railway.

In the 1920s the Ku Klux Klan readily took root in the prairie provinces. It was said, if you wanted to get ahead in business or politics in Saskatchewan, you need to be in the KKK. It is believed that soon-to-be Tory prime minister John Diefenbaker got his start wearing a hood. In the eastern provinces, the Orange Order had the same racist ideology, but without the bedsheets and cross burnings.

It wasn't Toryism alone that fostered the ingredients of fascism. It was a liberal strain of superiority and more polite racism that contributed the pseudo-science of eugenics in the 1920s.

There isn't space here to catalogue the racist affronts of the Canadian ruling class and its two political heads, the Liberal and Conservative parties. The short form it this – the ruling class has always required new waves of immigrants to work its farms, factories and mines. And those immigrants often brought dangerous new ideas with them, ideas like collective bargaining, socialism and solidarity with the oppressed.

The ruling class fostered divide and conquer, and workers were driven by their circumstances to unite. This tension would often lead to explosions, like the general strike wave of 1919. In 1933, Jewish immigrants on Toronto's west side, along with their neighbours, beat hell

out of the “Swastika Clubs” that tried to rally in Christie Pits Park.

These are the two rival streams of Canadian history — the official one, whitewashing racism, genocidal violence and exploitation; and one of resistance and struggle, to unite and fight.

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Coming out of the Depression and the WWII years, the Canadian working class had won a toehold for unions, and the fight for those organizations in the auto factories, in the mines, on the seaways brought the ideas of socialism as organizing tools. The Communist Party was influential beyond its numbers and its dead-end Stalinist politics.

One tactic for combating this danger was allowing – even recruiting – former Nazis and their sympathizers to immigrate from Eastern Europe. Anyone who was anti-red was welcome. Corporations like nickel mining giant Inco actively sought former Nazis — people like the Waffen SS Galatian Division veterans from Ukraine — to control the workplace. If they couldn't destroy the unions, they could expel Communists and socialists from the leadership and replace them with more cooperative types. The cold war backlash was never as severe in Canada as in the McCarthy era US, but the same processes were at work, and the ingredients of Nazism were again encouraged.

Through the ups and downs of class struggle, those ingredients — white supremacy, racism, anti-immigrant hatred, misogyny and homophobia — have never been far from the surface.

Nothing epitomizes the Canadian ruling class's equivocal attitude toward fascism than its votes at the UN. For the past decade, Canada has either abstained or voted against resolutions condemning the glorification of Nazism. It was followed this cowardly course in lockstep with NATO allies, most of whom welcomed ex-Nazis into their industries and militaries in the post-war years.

Small wonder that our parliament itself no longer recognizes the evil of fascism when it sees it. Canada will continue to have a Nazi problem until our racist, genocidal history is honestly confronted, and until the ruling class that manipulates the forces of hatred and division is defeated for good.



Monument to the 14th Waffen SS division at an Edmonton cemetery

and vaccinations. And she is an unflinching champion of inclusion and safe spaces for all in schools, and a vocal defender of trans rights.

In short, she is everything that the fascists despise.

Kaplan-Myrth has been subjected to a vile barrage of anti-Semitic anonymous attacks on social media. She and her family have been doxed and threatened. Far-right, anti-LGBTQ+ bigots have targeted her, and tried to pack school board meetings to attack her. Some of her fellow trustees, who are on the right, have colluded with the attacks.

Police have not addressed the racist, hate attacks. A defiant Kaplan-Myrth has refused to back down, and continues to publicly champion public school inclusion despite the personal risk.

There is a Nazi problem in BC's lower mainland.

Posters for a “Whites Only Mom and Tots” gathering have appeared in the Vancouver suburbs of Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam. It says, in part: “Escape forced ‘diversity’ and join other proud parents of European children as we create an atmosphere in which our kids can feel like they belong.”

“European Pride” events are a long-time tactic of Nazi and white-supremacist groups, to try to put a positive spin on their racism.

Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan. Nationally, Maxime Bernier's Peoples Party openly courts fascist, anti-immigrant activists – they got almost 900,000 votes in the last election.

Far-right pundits promote denial of the genocidal treatment of Indigenous people. Encouraged, far-right racists invaded the grounds of a BC Residential School to dig it up and prove there were no graves.

Then there is the “convoy” movement that pretends to be about freedom but organizes attacks on individual freedoms: a woman's freedom to choose; a person's right to choose who they love; the freedom to express one's identity. Far-right Christians, white-nationalists and fascist groups were active in convoy organizing from the start. Wolves in sheep's clothing, they pretend to be against “woke” censorship, while working overtime to destroy individuals, groups, behaviours and organizations they oppose.

Now that they have shifted their efforts into the “parental rights” attacks on 2SLGBTQ+, their fascist roots are being exposed. At their attempts to shut down public library story time readings, and at anti-trans protests, they are showing up in Nazi regalia and giving the Fascist salute, as they did at a recent “parental rights” rally in Burnaby. For a glimpse of the future is this isn't shut

invited by the Speaker of the House to sit in the gallery during Volodymyr Zelensky's address to parliament. Introduced as an anti-Soviet veteran, not a single MP had the brains or the guts to put 2 and 2 together and come up with Nazi. They unanimously rose and gave the aging fascist a hearty ovation.

Now Speaker Anthony Rota has resigned in disgrace. A red faced Justin Trudeau gives apologies as his government is seemingly adrift in a sea of scandals and self-inflicted wounds. Pierre Poilievre tries to use the screw-up for political gain,



Swastika flags were seen at the convoy protest in Ottawa

Teaching assistants on strike at SFU

by: **Bradley Hughes**

Members of the Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU) at Simon Fraser University are on strike. As of September 28 all teaching work by TSSU members has been suspended. Picket lines are rotating through the three campuses in Surrey, Vancouver and Burnaby.

The collective agreement with the union expired on April 30, 2022. The union represents Teaching Assistants, Tutor Markers, Sessional Instructors, Research Assistants and other support staff at the three campuses of the university. In June union members voted 91% in favour of strike action.

The TSSU is a feminist, non-hierarchical trade union. It was founded in 1978 as Local 6 of Association of College and University Employees (AUCE), a feminist labour union that emerged from the Vancouver Women's Caucus in the early '70s.

The administrators at the university are trying to use this round of bargaining to claw back wages and benefits from workers

who collectively do the bulk of instruction.

The union is demanding wage increases that are tied to inflation. The administrators are offering wage increases less than the rate of inflation. They have also proposed removing the scholarship portion of the wages of Teaching Assistants, thereby dramatically cutting the wages of those teaching assistants who are also graduate students.

TAs and Sessional Instructors also need to have the wage scale modernized to account for the bigger classes. Administrative tasks, remote instruction and other increases to their workload that have been imposed on them over the past few years.

The union is also demanding paid professional development and a pension plan for instructors.

The administration has refused to bargain meaningfully with the union, dragging them through 41 bargaining sessions so far.

You can find the latest updates on pickets lines at support.tssu.ca. In addition to joining the picket lines, the same website has links to support letters that current students, other workers on campus,

and community members can sign.

Anyone who is an alumni of SFU and/or a former member of the TSSU should email the SFU president Joy Johnson at pres_office@sfu.ca to show your support for decent working conditions on campus.

Strike numbers challenge bosses and pressure union leaders to fight for more

The growing number of strikes for improved pay and conditions on both sides of the Canada-US border shows a growing willingness to fight back in the context of a real reduction in working class living standards.

But it is also exposing the mismatch between what union leaders consider a 'good' deal, and the desire by large sections of rank and file workers to fight for more.

In the US, which in August saw the biggest strike numbers in 23 years, the United Auto Workers (UAW) strike is now in week three. Following sluggish negotiations, the union escalated the walkout from 7,000 to 25,000 strikers. For the first time, workers at all three auto companies, Ford, GM and Stellantis are striking together.

After decades of concessions and with the auto companies raking in record profits, workers have had enough. The union, under new leader Shawn Fain, has put forward bold demands: a 40% wage increase, a shorter work week, elimination of tiers, cost-of-living adjustments tied to inflation, protection from plant closures, conversion of temps to permanent employees, and the restoration of retiree health care and defined-benefit pensions to all workers.

"We are standing up to the corporation, this is not just for the UAW but the whole American workforce. We are fighting to keep our class strong," is how one striker characterized this strike.

In a recent poll, 75% of Americans said they support the strike. The level of popularity was noticed by President Biden who visited a picket line in Michigan in late September, the first sitting president to do so. Cross-union and international solidarity has poured

in. Yet even with this level of support, the UAW leadership is risking squandering workers' energy by not bringing out all 150,000 members to the picket lines.

Worker confidence and strike activity is also growing in Canada. This summer, Metro workers in Ontario, a mainly low-waged, part time workforce, voted 100% for a strike mandate and then rejected a tentative agreement brought forward by their union, Unifor. Metro, like all the grocery chains, made huge profits during the pandemic and are continuing to price-gouge. Metro strikers held the line for 5 weeks and forced Metro back to the table for a better deal.

BC port workers also went on strike in the summer, turned down a tentative



deal, and forced their bargaining team and the employer back to the table.

One year ago, Ontario education workers went on an illegal strike and in two days pushed back the Ford government's attempt to strip their strike rights.

These strikes garnered public support and wide labour solidarity. According to Statistics Canada, strike days have been rising for the past two years. For 2023, strike days up to August have almost reached the level for all of 2022.

But the mood of anger and frustration on the ground is not matched by

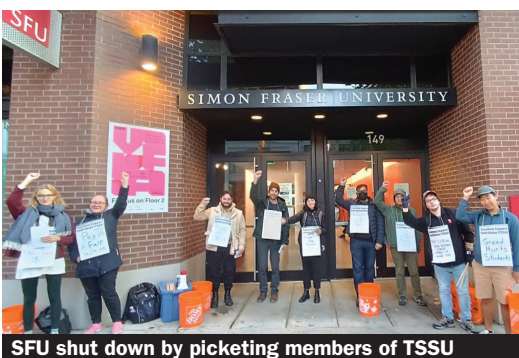
resolve of the union leadership to fight.

In the midst of the militant UAW strike, Unifor, representing Canadian auto workers, pushed a tentative agreement with the Ford. But the members barely ratified it at 54%. Even with some improvements after decades of concessions, it clearly was not good enough given the current affordability crisis. The honeymoon is over for the new Unifor leadership, and negotiations with the other auto companies may be rocky.

Just as the Ford government was awash in the Greenbelt scandal, Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF) inexplicably announced they would choose binding arbitration over striking. Teachers who had this same Ford government on the ropes in 2019, saw OSSTF roll the contract over for a year in 2021, rather than engage its membership to fight Ford during the pandemic. The three other teachers unions – EFTO, OECTA, and AEFO – released a joint statement saying "Binding arbitration would all but guarantee that the key issues we have brought forward at our respective bargaining tables, which are critical to learning and working conditions in our schools, would not be addressed."

Union leaders are underestimating the mood of anger that is out there. Inflation, skyrocketing rents, employer attacks and public sector wage suppression have piled on to frustration as the rich get richer.

If the upsurge in willingness to fight is squandered and allowed to peter away, the right and far-right will benefit. Challenging sub-par deals requires strong leadership and organization at the rank-and file level, an urgent task if the mood to fight is not to lead to demoralization.



SFU shut down by picketing members of TSSU

No reconciliation without justice

September 30 is "Orange Shirt Day" — a day to recognize the abuses carried out by the Canada state against Indigenous peoples in the residential school system. It is an important marker on the road to reconciliation and Indigenous people celebrate the day across the country.

The story that started it all was told by Phyllis Webstad is a Northern Secwepemc (Shuswap) author from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation in central BC. She told of having her new orange shirt stolen from her when she was forced into a residential school. The orange shirt became a symbol of the loss of identity and freedom associated with the genocidal residential schools system.

After years of grassroots actions by Indigenous people, it was made into an official cross-Canada day of remembrance and is now called the, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

But it is also a day that politicians of all stripes don an orange t-shirt and pretend to care about the rights of Indigenous, First Nations and Inuit people. Corporations and cops also cynically get in on the action. The hypocrisy from most of these institutions is astounding but not unexpected.

It is important to shine a spotlight

on those that would use the day to try and whitewash the ongoing crimes of the state.

Justin Trudeau released a statement on September 30 that read, "Today, I encourage everyone to wear orange in recognition that every child matters and to participate in Indigenous-led events to recognize and reflect on the ongoing legacy of the residential school system. Reconciliation is not the responsibility of Indigenous Peoples – it is the responsibility of all of us."

Trudeau called the relationship with Indigenous people's the most important for his government when he was elected in 2015. As of 2023 he and his government had failed miserably on most fronts. Of the 94 recommendations made in the Truth and Reconciliation commission report, so far his government has enacted 13 of them according to the Yellowhead Institute.

He and previous governments spent 15 years fighting against Indigenous child advocates who only wanted equitable treatment by the state. Indigenous children had been given significantly less funding supports compared to children of other backgrounds.

The case was settled and the government is being forced to pay more than \$23 billion in compensation. But

being forced by the courts to meet the basic threshold of equity is hardly a glowing example of reconciliation.

Trudeau is also pushing pipelines through Indigenous lands against his will of the people.

The \$30 billion TMX pipeline that Trudeau bought is now being rerouted through a site considered to have "profound spiritual and cultural significance" to the Stk'emlúpsme te Secwépemc Nation (SSN) in British Columbia. This new route was ap-



An RCMP officer with orange shirt and weapons arsenal

proved by federal energy regulators against the wishes of the SSN people who were not even able to speak at the meetings discussing the pipeline.

Likewise, the Wet'suwet'en people are still fighting against the feds to

stop the construction of the Coastal Gaslink pipeline which is being illegally built on their territory.

The RCMP has engaged in violent raids by para-military police to force the Wet'suwet'en to comply. This is being done with the consent of the Federal government and the Government of BC.

The RCMP, of course, got in on the action for Orange Shirt Day. The force that was set up to brutally enact the genocide of Indigenous people and who are still engaging in the same project tweeted pictures of their members wearing orange shorts and body armour — a visual that reeks of hypocrisy.

Not to be outdone, Ontario Premier Doug Ford released a statement calling on the people of Ontario to wear and Orange shirt as "an important part of Ontario's journey of healing and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples."

This is the same Doug Ford who less than a week prior to the day refused to even meet with the leaders of five Indigenous nations from Northern Ontario who are opposing mining operations on their land in the 'ring of fire'.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler wrote to Ford: "These are noble sentiments from our provincial Treaty partner. It

is most unfortunate however, that your recent actions have not matched your words. Instead of considering our shared interests and what should be a thriving relationship, this week you insulted leaders of the First Nations Land Defence Alliance by refusing to meet with them about legitimate concerns over mining activity threatening their traditional territories. Likewise, your government's decision to revoke First Nations' access to government, show me that you are more interested in continuing the agenda of your paternalistic predecessors instead of sitting with us and considering the needs and vision of all people in Ontario."

We could write many more pages about the hypocrisy of our political leaders and the corporations who try to profit off of the day but what their insincerity illustrates is that the needs of the corporate plunderers that are continuing the atrocities against Indigenous people will always be the most important relationship for the Canadian state and its provincial partners.

Canada was founded on the genocide of Indigenous people and the ravaging of their Traditional Lands. While it is important to commemorate days like Orange Shirt Day we cannot let the colonizers off the hook with some pretty statements that hide the ongoing violence.

Why is the ri growing?

And how do we stop it?

If there was ever any doubt, the recent Conservative party convention put it to rest – this is the party of the convoy. The far-right politics that animated the Ottawa convoy, anti-vax and anti-trans movements are now firmly embedded in Pierre Poilievre's party.

Policy resolutions calling for an end to medical support for trans kids and against vaccine mandates passed by super-majorities and the far-right is feeling vindicated and emboldened by the support.

The anti-trans position is also being bolstered by Conservative provincial premiers who are recognizing the value of whipping up a fanatical religious base. Doug Ford, reeling from the revelations of the Greenbelt scandal, used the same language to deflect attention from his own corruption.

The communication team for Poilievre has been focusing on bread and butter issues such as housing and the cost of living in recent months, yet the policy resolution to outline how they would support housing didn't even make it to the floor of the convention.

The only resolution that was voted down was a weakly worded one about protecting fresh water sources – even that was too “woke” for this Tory mob.

Of course, the Conservatives don't really have any intention of making housing more affordable. For Poilievre the main culprit in creating the housing crisis is ‘red tape’ imposed by Liberal governments which is apparently slowing house construction. What he fails to mention is that this ‘red tape’ is often the only means of creating affordable housing. For example, in most jurisdictions

in the country, developers are required to set aside a certain percentage of new housing units as affordable. Definitions of what is affordable are inconsistent and outcomes often don't help those in need – but even those slight measures are too much for the Cons.

Yet they are leading in the polls in most places across the country

Trudeau Liberals have done nothing to make things better for ordinary people. Poilievre may not have a solution to the housing crisis but the Liberals have overseen the largest increase in housing costs of any government in Canadian history. Yes, provincial premiers are also responsible – but for people worried about how to house and feed themselves,

contempt for workers, legislating dock workers in Montreal back to work and threatening the same with longshore workers in BC. His government nickel-and-dimes federal public sector workers while wasting billions on corporate subsidies.

He has raised anger with his carbon tax, a regressive tax that forces working people to pay for

food bank lineups grow daily.

Trudeau is an easy and deserving target. But the track record of Conservatives – including in provinces with Tory governments – shows that they have no intention of reining in corporate greed. Indeed, they have always been the biggest champion of the oligarchs in the country.

Where is the NDP?

The real problem is that there isn't a left of centre party that can articulate the class demands of working people. The NDP is seen as nothing but a prop to the Liberals and has become a bit-player both federally and provincially.

It is testament to the ineptitude of the NDP that the Conservatives have been able to situate themselves as the champion of the working class while consistently working against the interests of workers.

For example, on interest rate hikes the Tories outflanked the NDP quite easily. The party gave little indication that it would challenge the hikes, which are squeezing even more out of working people. Instead, we have Doug Ford taking credit for stopping a recent hike.

This has created a vacuum on the left which the convoy movement is trying to fill, aiming to become the voice for people angry at the system and the elites who benefit from attacks on workers.

In the absence of another pole of attraction, it is seen as the only alternative.

This is incredibly dangerous. The convoy movement was led by far-right racist, homophobic, transphobic figures and has the potential to be the base of a fascist movement.



Rally against the bigots in Toronto on September 20

and their support is growing.

A party that is basing itself within the political fringes on many social issues and has an atrocious track record on cost of living issues and an even worse environment record is ahead. How do we explain this?

Trudeau's record

For one, the policies of the

they are going to look at the big cheese as a primary culprit.

If one is worried about the state of the climate and environment, Trudeau – despite his lofty rhetoric about being a climate champion – is spending billions on new pipelines and is looking to expand fracking operations in southern Alberta.

Trudeau has demonstrated his

the climate crisis while letting the big oil companies off the hook, and which is hopelessly inadequate for dealing with the scale of the crisis.

He may have convened a meeting to get to the bottom of the soaring cost of groceries, but will do nothing to slow the greed and profiteering of the big grocery cartels who are making billions while

ight

Many who are attracted to the Conservatives are not full-blown racists. But the party's embrace of the far-right assures that Tory supporters will begin to rub elbows with these elements and can be brought further towards more hardened positions.

NDP brass will point to one or two tiny metrics to suggest that they are on the way up – boasting, for example, about Jagmeet Singh having the highest approval rating of any federal leader. Yet they are still languishing in 3rd place and haven't budged since the last election. They will point to the dental care policy as a victory, and it will help some poorer Canadians – but that is a drop in the bucket for people who can't afford homes and groceries.

If there is a glimmer of hope for a left alternative, it isn't coming from the halls of Parliament or the boardrooms of union bureaucrats. It is coming from the picket line.

The recent Metro strike in Toronto enjoyed the highest level of support for any strike in decades. People understand that workers are generating billions for the bosses, and deserve a fair share. Essential workers in many sectors have found a voice, and are calling for a more equitable society.

In fact, we have seen a shift to offensive demands in some strikes. In recent decades, strikes were often about saving jobs and reducing the attacks on workers. The strikes today are being led by workers who are fed up and need to fight because they have no choice but to demand more simply to keep up with the cost of living.

The fact that we saw workers reject deals recommended by their union reps – at Metro, BC ports and Windsor Salt – shows that workers are willing to fight.

The education workers in Ontario who struck and defeated an anti-union law, and the PSAC strikes which showed widespread militancy, suggests that this can happen in the public sector. Unfortunately in both cases, the union leaders called for the pickets to be shut down and recommended that the workers take bad deals but the readiness

building trades. Union leaders keep looking to anywhere but the shop floor to build a fight against the right, some sadly have cheered on the NDP and Liberal coalition style government, again ceding the anti-Trudeau ground to the far right.

We are two years out from the next federal election and the prospects look grim when watching the polls – but a lot can change in that span of time.

There is a prospect, for example, that the global climate strike can grow and break out of the pandemic doldrums that saw numbers dwindle from the high point in 2019.

There are also new strikes on the horizon, with more grocery workers entering bargaining and the Big Three auto manufacturers are facing high strike votes and advanced demands.

In Ontario, the Greenbelt scandal and the destruction of healthcare are key focal points and have the potential to crush Doug Ford and crystallize as a new opposition to the Tories.

The NDP still has time to do more than simply tweet pictures of leaders shaking hands with workers. They could use their platform to help build the strikes and protests. They could use their infrastructure to build solidarity networks that materially support strikes. Workers want to fight. The question is whether the NDP has the political will to bolster that fight in a meaningful way, to create a pole of attraction on the left that can build a real movement for the change that is so desperately needed.



Poillievre marches with freedumbers in Ottawa

to fight from the base is not in question.

These worker's movements are the nucleus for a possible fightback that is not dominated by the far-right. The fact that convoy forces harassed pickets during the PSAC strike exposed the lie that they are movements of the working class. Picket lines clarify class demands and show workers who is actually onside with the fight for a better world.

The potential to link strikes and fights has also been squandered by national union leaders and the CLC. In Ontario the OFL took its lead not from strikes, but from a failed ONDP campaign in 2022 that saw the ONDP lose 800,000 mainly working class votes in the middle of near general strike of

Combat Transphobic Hate

by: **Morgan Oddie**

Far right organizers held nationwide actions on September 20 in opposition to 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion in public schools.

They were met by thousands who managed to drown out their hate but the events were disturbingly large and the movement they are building shows few signs of slowing. New calls for actions on October 21 must be met with even greater opposition.

Parents rights?

Under the guise of parental and religious rights, various groups are calling for a challenge to “gender ideology” and “overt sexualized materials” in curriculum.

However, it is very clear that is not about keeping children safe. This type of dog whistling is intentionally deployed by the far right to spread and amplify homophobia and transphobia.

Ontario Premiere Doug Ford has also strategically signal boosted this hate, following the lines of Blaine Higgs of New Brunswick and Scott Moe of Saskatchewan. By calling out the “indoctrination” by school boards and teachers, Ford attempted to shift the conversation from the Greenbelt scandal. We can also see this as a vindictive attempt by Ford to build public anger against education staff who have been at the forefront of rejecting his austerity regime. This ongoing attack on public education is a convergence of both social and economic conservatism, and trans identities have become core far-right talking points.

To understand why we need to resist and outnumber to the far-right, it is also important to know why it is important to protect and strengthen trans inclusionary education.

The educational policies that are at stake here are guidelines that preserve the privacy, confidentiality, health, safety, and dignity of transgender and gender non-conforming students. This includes the right for students to change their names, pronouns, and appearances as free and full expressions of their genders. These ensure equitable access and full participation in public education, including participation in sports teams and field trips, and access to safe washroom facilities.

Far-right organizers see the confidentiality of transgender

expression as a violation of parental rights and want schools to be less safe for 2SLGBTQIA+ students. They wish to make it difficult or impossible for trans youth to find safe spaces. Wild accusations of “grooming” argue that children will be more susceptible to sexual abuse by educators.

This is another queerphobic dog whistle that stigmatizes and disproportionately targets 2SLGBTQIA+ workers in public education.

Since 2012 with the passing of Bill 33 Toby's Act, the Ontario Human Rights Code has recognized gender identity and gender expression as prohibited grounds for discrimination. The strawman of “radical gender ideology” that the far right seeks to combat is just demonization of basic provincial human rights law, which protects workers and public institutional access.

As with the Convoy protests, the multiple groups organizing have different messaging, but all are aligned in their aim to eliminate gender diversity in youth, and by extension, the adults they become. These organizers are an alliance of far-right ideologies, from Hands Off Our Kids, headed by a few ultra-conservative Muslim leaders, to right wing anti-vaxxers and xenophobes. Among these are also settlers who have tried to appropriate the message of ‘Every Child Matters’ to cater to their hate politics.

However, we are also seeing a grass-roots alliance in resistance to this message of hate. Queer Muslim networks across the country have responded strongly. In an Instagram post last week, the Queer Muslim Network Toronto wrote, “In this frightful time, please remember that queer and trans Muslims have always existed, and always will. We all built this community together, and it will never be torn down by the haram police.”

Indigenous activists, labour unions, and racialized community groups have also spoken up against the far-right actions, and all across Canada we are witnessing counter-protests with progressive and inclusionary messaging.

Local actions are varying by community. It is essential that counter-protestors show up to challenge each of these, and ensure there is no space for transphobia in education or in our communities.



Peterborough stops the bigots on September 20

David Fennario

A voice of revolution in the theatre — and in the streets

by: Chantal Sundaram

It is with heavy hearts that we learned of the death of Dave Fennario on September 16th. Dave was a playwright and poet who aimed to tear down the fourth wall between stage and audience. But he was also a revolutionary socialist who believed that art could break down the walls between working people and their own power to change society.

Fennario brought revolutionary politics to every story he told, even when it wasn't explicit. But as Dave always said, a show should also always be a good night out.

Before he even wrote his first play, he was "discovered" and hired at a theatre as a writer in residence. He had a natural ear for dialogue that made a play « sing » and reflect a working-class sound and experience in the community of Verdun, Montreal.

But his plays had a deep echo in francophone Quebec as well. He was a proud recipient of the Prix Pauline-Julien for his 1991 play *Joe Beef*, set in Verdun, and he will always be widely remembered for *Balconville*, the first bilingual play in the history of Canadian theatre — a play about breaking down the walls between the two solitudes of Quebec's working class anglophones and francophones.

Bolsheviki and Motherhouse

But Fennario should also be remembered for his last two plays, *Bolsheviki: A Dead Serious Comedy* and *Motherhouse*, companion pieces about the disaster that WWI disproportionately

wreaked on working-class Verdun. These two plays became the basis for a coordinated action by activists across Canada using staged readings to challenge the horrific display of militaristic Canadian nationalism on the hundredth anniversary of Vimy Ridge in 2017 — a ruling class propaganda exercise that Dave referred to as "Vimy-ridding."

And 2017 was also the 100th anniversary of what Fennario believed really brought an end to WWI: the Russian revolution of ordinary workers and peasants. This is a central theme in *Bolsheviki*. The playwright's note explains the play is based on an interview Dave did with Harry "Rosie" Rowbottom, a WWI vet who was wounded at Vimy Ridge.

In 1979, over a bottle of Bushmills and a tape recorder, Rowbottom told him about being in a military hospital in November 1917 when news broke out about revolution in Russia: "He said he could see the news spreading from bed to bed along the ward like an electric shock — that Russian soldiers were deserting en masse in their millions. 'And we knew then what we had to do...put an end to the war before it put an end to us.'"

His first inspiration for *Motherhouse* was a war-time munitions factory near his home in Verdun, now turned into condos. More specifically, it was a canteen photo with one woman munitions worker in the crowd staring into the camera with a defiant gaze. From this came the character of Lilibet — and an entire play about resistance not only to war but to the exploitation of workers in unsafe conditions who paid with their lives on the home front as well.

Motherhouse was produced at Montreal's Centaur Theatre in February 2014. Dave brought a whole crew of his friends from Verdun and comrades from out of town to help him oversee the production and its politics.

He made sure the set integrated the anti-war symbol of the white poppy, and that on opening night there would be a table in the theatre lobby to distribute white poppy pins and information from *Échec à la guerre*, the main anti-war coalition in Montreal. It had been instrumental in the mass demonstrations of 2003 that kept Canada out of the war in Iraq. For him, building the anti-war movement had to be central to the production.

He organized his own political outreach for *Motherhouse*, beyond simple theatre publicity, to reach francophone students in CEGEPs and UQAM. Even though the play was in English, at an English theatre, many came. This was in the aftermath of the incredible 2012 "Maple Spring," the uprising of Quebec students that repealed legislation and toppled a government. That was an event that Dave could not celebrate enough.

He reveled in joining the "casseroles," a



Dans la rue: Supporting the Quebec student strike in 2012

nightly event during that student strike when supporters came out onto their street corners to bang pots and pans in defiance of government repression and in support of the uprising. It was a moment when the audience was finding ways to join the action onstage.

Theatre and revolution

For Fennario there was never a separation between theatre and politics. He once even picketed one of his own shows to respect a picket line of striking ushers.

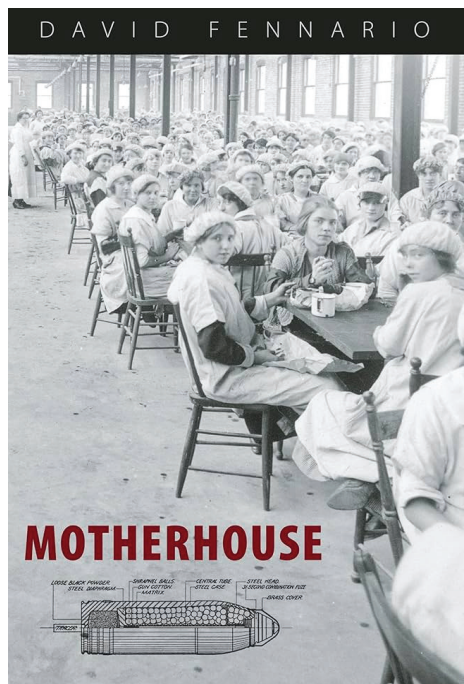
During the shooting of the 2014 documentary, *Fennario: The Good Fight* by Martin Duckworth, Dave visited the War Museum in Ottawa and stopped in front of an exhibit from nearly every war, from the Boer war to WWII, to talk about its impact on his family or someone he knew. These experiences fed his incredible ability to tell a story.

He sacrificed fame and fortune by being

principled in an industry that is so often not. While others put success before politics, he put money and time into supporting community theatre projects like the Black Rock Theatre, named for the memorial at the site of a mass grave of Irish refugees, in Verdun/Pointe Saint-Charles. Despite his long and fruitful association with The Centaur Theatre, this commitment to his roots was always central.

Fennario was the first electoral candidate in the riding of Verdun for the left party of the ballot and street, Quebec solidaire, in 2007. He was also a long-time and committed member of the International Socialists. His presence will be sorely missed in the theatre, but also in the trenches of struggle and resistance. Rest in Power, Dave.

We express our deepest condolences to Liz, Tom, Joe, Joel and all who knew and loved him.



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From India to Canada: The global reach of Hindutva extremism

by: **Mathew Edassery**

In a recent address to the Canadian Parliament, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau brought attention to the alleged links between the Indian government and the assassination of Canadian citizen Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada. This revelation has placed the Canadian government at a crucial juncture, entangled in a multifaceted issue involving alleged foreign government interference and the presence and activities of Hindutva (Right wing Hindu supremacist ideology) groups within its borders. These groups, most of them purporting to represent Indian culture and Hinduism, present a substantial challenge to democratic values and the cherished secular environment. These concerns have long been voiced by South Asian diaspora communities and human rights organizations in Canada.

Debunking Hinduphobia allegations

First and foremost, it is imperative to dispel the notion of widespread Hinduphobia in Canada. A Hinduphobia petition circulating has garnered 8000 signatures in support. Apart from undermining the anti-oppressive and anti-caste efforts undertaken by Dalit and other social justice groups; allegations of Hinduphobia have been wielded to stifle freedom of speech and artistic expression. For instance, filmmaker Leena Manimekalai's work depicting Goddess Kali triggered a firestorm of backlash. Goddess Kali is revered by various castes and indigenous groups in India, with offerings of tobacco and alcohol as part of this tradition. Yet, a poster depicting Kali smoking a cigarette led to outrage, both in India and Canada. While the Supreme Court of India upheld the artist's right and granted protection, Hindutva groups in India and Canada continue their protests.

More alarmingly, there was a public backlash against Leena Manimekalai led by the Hindutva groups in Canada along with the Indian High Commission (Ottawa) issuing a press release reprimanding those who screened Ms. Manimekalai's film, this was also supported by Liberal MP Chandra Arya, a vocal supporter of Hindutva groups in Canada. This has resulted in ongoing harassment and violent threats, essentially putting this eminent artist into a forced exile.

In Canada, human rights activists, academicians, journalists, community organizers, and even students in Canadian universities have reported to have faced threats and harassments from the Hindutva groups here for highlighting the human rights abuses in India and for opposing the Hindutva hate politics being imported to Canada. There have been multiple instances where Canadian Universities and Institutions had bowed to such external pressure undermining academic and artistic freedom.

The crux of the issue lies in reducing the diverse identities and traditions of Indian culture and beliefs to a narrow 'upper-caste Hindu' narrative. This not only erases the identities of indigenous cultures and traditions but also stifles anti-oppressive and anti-caste efforts undertaken by Dalit and other social justice groups.

Hindusim: A complex tapestry

Appreciating the distinction between Hinduism and Abrahamic religions is essential. Oversimplifying this comparison perpetuates the Hindu supremacist ideology (Hindutva), aiming to homogenize diverse cultures and castes into a uniform identity. Hinduism is a complex tapestry of castes with distinct identities, cultures, and deities. The term 'Hindu' originally served as a geographical identity and attempts to force it into a singular religious mold should be met with skepticism. The voice

of Dalit, Adivasis (Indigenous tribes) opposing this classification must be acknowledged.

It should be acknowledged that racism affects Hindus too, much like other racialized immigrant groups; this should be condemned and combated in solidarity with all other racialized groups using existing anti-discrimination laws. Simultaneously, it is of paramount importance to remain vigilant against Hindutva - a right-wing Hindu supremacist ideology; and to protect human rights in both Canada and India, opposing Hindutva and its supporters is

and not a relic of the past as many outside the Indian diaspora believes.

Historical migration patterns influenced by caste and class privileges, have led to a majority of immigrants from so-called 'upper-caste' backgrounds arriving in Canada and other Western countries. Regrettably, some have imported regressive practices under the guise of "Indian Culture". Recent efforts of South Asian groups and Dalit organizations to challenge this narrative, aiming for a more inclusive representation of Indian and Hindu identity, have

security agencies in Australia has traced these back to Hindutva groups. There have also been deliberate attempts to vilify other communities to garner support for the alleged Hinduphobia in Western countries. The riots in Leicester UK and recent assassinations of similar nature in other countries and now Canadian citizen Hardeep Singh Nijjar serves as a tragic reminder of the global reach of this divisive ideology, especially after 2014; when the Hindu nationalist BJP came to power in India with a brutish majority.

The urgent need for action

Given these concerns, In a joint statement released on Tuesday, several Indian diaspora civil society groups called on the Canadian Government to "stand with the oppressed peoples of India including Muslims, Dalits, Christians, Sikhs, Kashmiris, and others".

The civil society groups, namely, Canadians for Indian Democracy (CID), CERAS (Centre sur l'Asie du Sud), Collectif d'action de la diaspora sud-asiatique (SADAC), Hindus for Human Rights Canada, India Civil Watch International (ICWI), Justice pour tous Canada, Punjabi Literary and Cultural Association Winnipeg and SADAN - South Asian Dalit Adivasi Network- Canada urged the Canadian government to take concrete actions: a) publicly condemning the state-backed violence and persecution of those resisting Hindu supremacy and holding the Indian state accountable; b) stand up for the rights of religious minorities and oppressed communities in India; c) banning organizations in Canada that are affiliated to and funding the RSS, and their promotion of hate; d) ensuring Canadian trade agreements with India are contingent upon respecting human rights and protecting vulnerable communities; e) taking concrete steps in Canada and globally to stop transnational state surveillance and vigilantism.

It is paramount to recognize that Hindutva is a violent and extremist Hindu supremacist ideology. It poses a direct threat to the liberal, democratic, and secular values.

It is our duty to safeguard these values and protect our citizens from the divisive ideology that threatens to undermine the, even limited democracy, of the Canadian state.



Trudeau and Modi had a tense meeting at the G20

imperative. Hindutva cannot be equated with Hinduism.

Global reach of Hindutva ideology

In a rather remarkable statement, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a member of the far-right Hindutva paramilitary organization RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) and a leader of its political wing BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) said in the Indian parliament "...corruption, casteism and communalism will have no place in our national life". Acknowledging that casteism is indeed a very contemporary issue

challenged the status quo. It is here we must recognize the link between these challenges and the falsified notion of Hinduphobia in Canada.

The influence of extremist Hindutva ideology extends beyond India. The well documented propaganda against minorities in mainstream media in India, often with direct links to the BJP/RSS, has disseminated regressive and extremist ideas worldwide, coinciding with the growing global Indian diaspora. Reports surfaced of instances of defaced Hindu temples and harassment of individuals in Australia, the UK, and even Canada. An investigation by the



Modi not welcome here - Protesting the Indian PM in Vancouver

Ford surrenders on Greenbelt

Now up the pressure on health privatization

by: John Bell

In a startling reversal, Doug Ford raised the white flag. He announced he is reversing his plan to open swathes of the Greenbelt to development, and has no plans to re-zone any more of the protected land surrounding the GTA.

For a while it looked like Ford was going to try and bluff his way out of a corruption scandal that has so far claimed 3 of his cabinet ministers' jobs, and a handful of highly placed Tory staffers. He defiantly said he was going to open even more Greenbelt land for his developer pals.

But almost daily revelations linking his government to the real estate oligarchs who virtually rule the province have convinced even Ford's own voter base that Greenbelt is synonymous with corruption. A tight-lipped Ford emerged from a policy meeting with his caucus, held in Niagara Falls, to utter the words: "I made a promise to you that I wouldn't touch the Greenbelt. I broke that promise. And for that, I'm very, very sorry."

It seems that another cabinet minister having a clandestine meeting, and "opulent" massage in Las Vegas with one of the developers was the tipping point. Kaleed Rasheed, Ford's Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery, resigned from cabinet and the Tory caucus, sitting as an "independent" MPP.

Of course, a Ford promise is never carved in stone. What to do? Serve the environment and the people of Ontario? Or grease the wheels for his billionaire buddies.

Weasel words

Within hours of his apology, his Labour Minister, Monte McNaughton resigned from cabinet, quitting politics after more than 15 years at Queen's Park. McNaughton, an old style Tory, was once considered at the top of the list of potential leaders – in today's trucker-loving climate he wouldn't stand a hope.

But after 5 years in cabinet with Ford's collection of crooks and creeps, who can blame him for wanting to get out before he gets more shit on his shoes.

Since his "apology" there have been nothing but mixed messages and weasel words from Ford Nation.

First there is the question of whether the Greenbelt plunderers should be "compensated" for the \$8.4 billion profit they were estimated to make.

Quizzed by the media if he intended to pay his pals for (checks notes) nothing, a usually blustering Ford mumbled the following: "We'll make it public, that's for sure. The minister is working through those



Thousands joined the rally to stop the privatization of healthcare in Toronto. Large union contingents from CUPE, Unifor, SEIU, ONA, USW and many more. Ford had to backtrack on the greenbelt — we can force him to stop selling our healthcare too.

details and they'll be pubic once we ... uh ... once we find out."

Ford and the oligarchs who lined up at that fateful "stag and dough" say they are disciples of capitalism's "free market". Perhaps they need a refresher course in the concept of "risk capital".

Even if you believe that these developers bought up Greenbelt land on the up-and-up (and if you do, seek help), that means they took a big risk with their capital. As the deal

with Ford has unraveled, they still own the lands they bought. They are out nothing – unless you count the bags full of cash payoffs which of course never existed. Why should they be compensated for houses they haven't built, because their speculation – their risk – didn't pan out?

Ford's deputy, Paul Calandra then contradicted the boss, sort of. He said there would be no compensation and all would be made clear when they tabled their Greenbelt legis-

lation "very soon".

Another of Ford's A-listers, Vic Fideli added to the confusion by defending Ford this way: "His motivations were right. But (pause) doing the right thing isn't always the right thing to do."

Do the wrong thing should be Ford's motto.

There's an old saying, "An oral contract isn't worth the paper it is written on." And a promise from Doug Ford is worth less than that.

He proved that on the first day of the fall session of the legislature when he and his caucus voted unanimously to defeat an NDP motion to restore the Greenbelt lands to their previous protection.

Calandra tried to deflect renewed anger by promising their own legislation "very soon."

Meanwhile all we really have is Tory delays and double talk. We can't let down our guard. Until all the Greenbelt land is safely protected, we need to watch out for a double-cross.

Victory

People have the right to celebrate Ford's beat-down. A victory on the Greenbelt is important, a win for our environment, a humiliation for Ford, and a slap on the wrist of the developer oligarchs.

But when your enemy is on the ropes, that is not the time to ease up on your attack. Remember that Ford is in the midst of stealing another public asset, Ontario Place, to hand over to another shady corporation. The last publicly owned piece of Toronto's waterfront will become a casino and playpen for the rich.

Ford backed down as far as he has because he has to protect other parts of his agenda – especially dismantling public healthcare and education. The \$8.4 billion at stake in the corrupt Greenbelt dealings is a gross amount. But it pales to insignificance next to the kind of money that corporations stand to profit from privatized public services.

And it should come as no surprise that Ontario's hospital boards are studded with real estate developers and hedge fund financiers.

And it isn't just the money at stake – privatizing social services and busting public service unions are a higher ideological priority for Ford and his oligarch friends.

Remember – Ford also promised never to privatize our healthcare. He blatantly broke that promise. Now we can force him to surrender on this as well, but it won't happen if we let up the pressure now.

If Doug Ford thought his weasel-words mea culpa, and hasty Titanic-deckchairs cabinet shuffle was going to turn off the heat from the Greenbelt scandal, let's prove him wrong.

