

**PALESTINE:**  
**Resistance until**  
**return**

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# Socialist Worker

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# SOLIDARITY ACROSS BORDERS



Longshore workers in the US and postal workers in Canada have recently struck for better pay and conditions. Indeed, millions have struck across the continent over the past few years. Our solidarity and support must go to the working class on both sides of the border - not to the bosses and politicians in our own states.

**don't let the rich divide us**



# Tariffs, trade wars and working class unity

As we go to print, Donald Trump has temporarily withdrawn the threat of a 25% tariff on goods from Canada and Mexico in exchange for some largely symbolic concessions. Canada is off the hook because Trudeau agreed to beef up border security and appoint a fentanyl tsar to try and tackle the importation of the drug into the US.

While many of these measures had already been introduced, the agreement still scapegoats migrants and whips up racist rhetoric which is currently being used for draconian attacks on people of colour in the US and Canada alike.

But the threat of tariffs caused real panic in Canada and caused stock markets to crash internationally.

This is not surprising. The US is Canada's largest trading partner and a tariff of that size would likely result in hundreds of thousands of job losses and would push the economy into recession.

There was already a response from the Canadian state and certain provinces who enacted retaliatory measures. US made products were removed from the shelves at the LCBO in Ontario and there were threats of tariffs on Canadian energy exports to the US.

## Workers and the trade war

The trade war would only hurt working people on both sides of the border. It was a spat between Trump and the billionaires in Canada who would lose profits if the measures were enacted.

Workers in both countries would bear the brunt of this fight. Already provincial governments and the feds were planning to subsidize corporations here to ensure profitability was maintained. Premiers in several provinces are reviving planet killing pipeline projects and proposing

lowering or removing environmental regulations on resource projects.

They claim that they are protecting Canadian jobs. The 'we are all in this together' mantra was revived from the days of the Covid pandemic lockdowns. But we don't need long memories to remember that the Covid measures were used by the bosses to build profits and give dividends to shareholders and bonuses for executives. The slogan is as empty now as it was during Covid when it meant that workers worked through the pan-

lose their jobs.

Instead, the trade union leadership in Canada called for unity between workers, the state and the corporations.

We need to be very critical of this new call for cross-class unity. We stand with working people on both sides of what is indeed an 'artificial line' and not with the corporations and governments that are hostile to working people.

Trudeau and Doug Ford in Ontario both put themselves forward as a



demic with no protection and horrible working conditions while their bosses: grocers, Amazon, etc reaped massive profits.

The measures proposed this time would have had the same effect.

If we are all in this together then return unemployment benefits to 100% of wages, levy an emergency tax on bank profits to pay for the lost taxes in industries hit by tariffs, suspend rent and mortgage payments for those who

Captain Canada and said they were there to protect Canadian jobs.

Neither one of them, or the other premiers, has any interest in protecting Canadian workers. In fact their administrations have done all they could to curtail workers' rights. Trudeau used back to work orders against rail workers, port workers and most recently, postal workers. He is no friend of labour.

Ford, likewise has spent most of his

time in office attacking workers from delaying the minimum wage increase to bill 124 which capped public sector salaries.

Nor should we support calls to 'buy Canadian' so we can prop up billionaires like the Weston family, recently convicted of a bread price fixing scheme that further impoverished Canadian workers.

Yes, we need to protect Canadian social services like public healthcare, but the biggest threat to our healthcare comes from premiers that are currently gutting the public system while Trudeau sits back and does nothing.

Protecting workers means reversing the cuts to public services and regulations to end the price gouging of the grocery oligarchs. None of the premiers, or Trudeau, will come anywhere near these proposals.

There is a housing crisis in both Canada and the US. The solution to that crisis is not a retaliatory tariff on lumber that will increase housing costs in the US while American based corporations like Blackrock buy up billions in housing stock in Canada. The way to deal with that crisis is to end the financialization of housing and recognize it as a human right.

But the ruling class in Canada and the US has no intention of trying to protect workers in a substantial way. They want to maintain their own profitability. These measures proposed by Ford and Trudeau are about protecting corporate profits not workers.

We should not line up with the Rogers corporation, the grocery oligarchs or already profitable manufacturing corporations who were calling for billions in subsidies.

## Solidarity across borders

The workers' response to tariffs should never be to support count-

er tariffs. We call for unity of the working class on both sides of the border against the same billionaires that are driving down living standards for profits. We do not support any retaliatory measures from Canada that would hurt workers in Buffalo or Detroit or Seattle.

One of the biggest losers in a tariff war will be auto workers on both sides of the border as auto parts move back and forth several times during the production of cars. In a trade war, each crossing would accumulate a new tariff, raising the cost of cars dramatically. How long would Trudeau and Trump last in the face of an auto workers strike against tariffs and counter tariffs by the unions in both countries?

We never defend the Canadian state. Canada is a prison-house of nations. We will never defend a state that grew rich on the genocide of Indigenous people, the destruction of the natural world and the exploitation of the working class.

The USA is, likewise, a state built on mass murder, slavery and brutality in the name of capitalism. It is responsible for the killing of tens of millions around the world to maintain its own Imperial dominance. In the words of Martin Luther King, 'the United States government is the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today'.

We reject any nationalism or chauvinism in support of either state. The only path to liberation is the overthrow of the landlords and the capitalists and the governments that support them on both sides of the border.

We need to call for Land Back, Indigenous sovereignty and Socialism. For the unity of First Nations and the working class—against borders and capitalism—for the protection of the natural world and for liberation for all on Turtle Island.

# Settler Colonialism and Sovereignty on Turtle Island

by: Brian Champ

Trump's call for Canada to become the 51st State and his threat of tariffs has lead many working class people and progressives to rally behind Canadian nationalism.

This rhetoric, along with calls to take over Greenland and Panama, is reminiscent of Manifest Destiny, the ideological basis for expansion of the US across to the Pacific in the 19th century.

States do not act in the interest of everyone, but are the executive of the national capitalist class that exploits working people for profits. Parliament and democracy are important, but true democracy happens when workers, oppressed minorities and communities mobilize collectively to wrest concessions from bosses and political leaders.

Canada and the US are both settler colonial states. They were formed through the conquest of many autonomous Indigenous Peoples who were the original

inhabitants of Turtle Island, an Indigenous name for North America.

Like many nations across Turtle Island, the territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) people of Akwesasne straddles the US / Canada border. Why should they

pick one genocidal colonial nation over the other?

Through settler violence, diseases, starvation, treaties and genocidal institutions like Residential "Schools", courts and paramilitary police, Indigenous peoples were

forced off the lands they had stewarded for many thousands of years to make way for US and Canadian sovereignty.

Many Indigenous peoples were eradicated in this process, and those that survived had to adapt to changed circumstances and at times their only way to resist was to maintain their traditional knowledge, spirituality, laws and practices on the land away from the prying eyes of the colonizers.

But resistance was constant and continues to this day, as does the violence that forms the basis of the Canadian settler colonial state.

In recent years, many workers and communities have recognized the historical injustices of settler colonialism in Canada, and have actively supported struggles for Indigenous justice and sovereignty. This includes the resistance of Wet'suwet'en land defenders to the CGL pipeline, the fight for mercury justice for the Grassy Narrows First Nation and the Land Defense Alliance of First Nations fighting to protect their lands for future gener-

ations against plans to mine critical minerals in the so-called "Ring of Fire".

US Tariffs on petroleum will increase pressure for more LNG and tar sands pipelines to the BC coast. Gitksan land defenders are sounding the alarm about the new Prince Rupert Gas Transmission pipeline over their land. The canceled Energy East pipeline to the maritime provinces may be revitalized. And there will be more pressure for mining on Indigenous land over their objections.

Nationalism, even left nationalism, means supporting the Canada of the bosses and colonizers, the state that pushes down wages and working conditions and destroys the lands and waters that Indigenous people rely on to survive, further driving the planetary climate and ecological crisis.

Workers must struggle in solidarity across borders against Trump's attacks and the reaction of the Canadian state, and support Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island for justice to prevail.



Indigenous people march across the Canada/US border.



# Brampton encampment closes but the fight is just beginning

**A**fter 143 days, the immigrant workers and students that held an encampment in Brampton have shut down the camp to change tactics.

The group of Post-Graduate Work Permit holders (PGWP) and supporters has been fighting to end the ‘use and throw’ policy of the Liberal government.

Thousands of Immigrants were promised permanent residency after graduating or working in Canada. The Liberals reneged on that deal this year and are now threatening mass deportations. Trudeau and his cabinet are following the Conservatives and the far-right in building attacks on immigrants based on disinformation and an attempt to appeal to racists.

The change in tactics from the encampment organizers comes with changes in the political terrain. The prorogation of parliament and the upcoming election means the focus has shifted to MP races and other targeted actions.

Although the tents may have come down, the committee can speak of significant achievements. They burst through the bubble of disinformation that is being peddled by politicians and they began to challenge the scapegoating of immigrant workers and students.

They even forced some changes in immigration policy although the changes fall short of their demands. But they have a new and invigorated committee and support network that can continue the struggle and can do so collectively.

People from all around the world and in Canada heard their message

and this will be crucial in the coming days and months as the struggle for just immigration policies heats up.

## Joint statement

The PGWP committee released a statement at an event in Brampton outlining the reasons for the decision to take down the encampment:

“After 143 days of maintaining the encampment the PGWP committee is announcing a shift in its approach. The encampment will no longer be ongoing. We want to remind everyone that this is not the end of our fight.

Our struggle continues on until our demands are met and policies are just and equal for everyone.

This strategic change comes in response to the current political landscape in Canada where both Liberals and Conservatives are trying to scapegoat international students and workers. We believe now is the time to shift towards more strategic actions—actions that can mobilize our community and find our collective voice.

We believe at this time that directing our resources to alternative forms of activism will be more effective in advocating our cause.

tee we send our sincere gratitude to all the unions, community groups, faith based organizations and media outlets who have covered this encampment and joined us throughout our struggle. Your support has been crucial in maintaining our efforts for 143 days. We request that all of you continue standing with us as we continue pushing for fairness and justice in immigration policies.”

PGWP committee activist Bikram Kullewali spoke of the state of the movement and next steps:

“We raised this tent to call out injustice and to say we will not stay silent or despair. We will fight back. This tent was not set up by any public official; it was set up for the court of public opinion right in the heart of the Punjabi community.

In this election it seems that politicians are only concerned with votes and, in their propaganda they have scapegoated immigrants, especially international students as the root cause of Canada’s problems.

But this tent brought global attention to our issue and many thoughtful individuals and organizations stood with us. Even if some opposed us and spread disinformation we still succeeded in taking our message to the people.

We live in a system that is only comfortable serving the very wealthy while ignoring the majority of workers. It is this very system that pushed us onto the streets and that is where we found common ground and posed our arguments.

I have a message to Canada’s labour movement. Many of us are

not unionized but we are still workers. Many union leaders came and stood in solidarity with us. They said that they represent thousands of workers which they do but when they came to stand with us they were alone or in a small group.

We really appreciate these leaders for supporting us but we have two requests for them. One, please share the information about us with your thousands of members and please provide your members with the resources to join us in our actions.

We request this because even the best leaders cannot change the system by themselves. Only the people who work to make the system function everyday can change it. We invite all working people to support our struggle to change the system.

Our second request to the union leaders is to speak out more against the system that exploits all workers. We know that union leaders are engaged in the fight for better wages and working conditions for their workers. We have supported those fights in the past and will continue to support them in the future. Please work to struggle to change the system as a whole to make a system that meets the needs of the vast majority.”

All the participants at this encampment should be proud of the work they have done. It was the largest and most sustained push back in Canada against the scapegoating of immigrants and a crucial salvo against the racism of the far-right. They deserve all of our support in the fights to come.



The fight continues for PGWP committee

Our commitment and advocacy to immigration issues and international issues will be unchanged.

We expect this to intensify in the coming days.

On behalf of the PGWP commit-

# Amazon shuts Quebec operations to stop union drive

by: Chantal Sundaram

**A**mazn, led by the ultra-rich Jeff Besos and followed by equally disgusting Amazon Canada bosses, sank to a new low on January 22: they shut down all of their Quebec warehouses in a clear attempt to head off the spread of a union drive that began in Laval, Quebec, in spring 2024. More than 3000 workers will lose their jobs because of the decision.

The first Amazon warehouse in Canada to become a union shop was such a threat to Amazon that it was willing to lose all its warehouses in Quebec – only 5 years after opening its first facility in Lachine. This is a scorched earth tactic to stop a union drive.

Quebec courts ordered the company to stop interfering with union affairs and to remove and destroy all the anti-union posters the company put up at its facilities and to pay moral and punitive damages. It is clear that this is part of the motivation.

None of this would have

happened without the courageous actions of the workers themselves, who risked their employment to fight for a union in the Laval warehouse and beyond. This is what Amazon is really afraid of.

Only a few months before, *Socialist Worker* spoke with a worker at another Amazon warehouse near Montreal about its impact and potential to spread. That worker

called Amazon “the Ford of our times,” referring to the Ford Motors assembly line of the 1930s and 40s.

Like Ford, Amazon is setting new trends in how to maximize the exploitation of labour. In a capitalist society, that usually starts with intensified conditions in the workplace. If that doesn’t work easily, or encounters resistance, then employers use more overt tactics to assert their

control in the workplace.

In 2020 when it opened its Lachine facility, Amazon announced that employees would work “alongside Amazon’s innovative robotics technology to pick, pack and ship items to customers.”

These are precisely the conditions that pushed employees to unionize: “We scan boxes: every time we move a box in the physical world, we also have to move it in the virtual world. So, the managers keep track of how fast we work. They give us these automatic warnings, especially in the first warehouse in the chain of the Amazon system. If you get a few warnings for being a “slow worker” you can get fired. But again, Amazon says it’s not us, it’s ‘automatic warnings.’” Even for those not fired, Amazon was rife with immediate and chronic injuries.

When the Laval union was certified last spring Amazon contested by claiming unionization “does not respect the interests of its employees.” And now, it’s cutting more than 3000 jobs across all its warehouses in Quebec, claiming this has nothing

to do with the union but only with “cost-saving” – and because outsourcing Amazon deliveries will save customers money.

This is union-busting, pure and simple. Amazon is not even making much attempt to disguise it.

The other way of looking at Amazon as the “the Ford of our times” is to remember what it took for Ford and the whole auto industry to unionize. In Canada the United Auto Workers went on strike for 99 days in 1945 in Windsor, Ontario to win formal recognition as the sole negotiator for all Ford employees. It’s also the strike that led to the Rand Formula, which gave legal recognition to all unions.

Amazon shows that bosses can strike back too, by closing their plants and trying to take their capital investment out of the reach of union drives. We have to follow wherever they go.

Solidarity with the Quebec Amazon workers for trying to fight for decent work and wages. Shame on the billionaire Besos for attacking the workers who make his wealth.



Amazon union activists in Montreal



# The origins of class society

*Humans lived for millions of years in cooperative societies where mutual support was the norm. But that seems far away from the competitive world we live in today. What changed? It was the rise of class societies that came with new advances in production. Below we outline the way class societies developed and what it means for today.*

In the global capitalist system today, our lives are completely shaped by class and class divisions. But how did the domination of one class over another begin? Understanding the origin of this division of society into classes is vital to seeing the possibility of abolishing capitalism and classes altogether.

When Karl Marx and Frederick Engels first formulated their ideas, they developed a completely new understanding of how human beings relate to the world around them. They saw human beings as products of the natural, biological world, and history as part of natural history. But they also saw how humans had a specific ability to react back on the circumstances that had created them, changing those circumstances and themselves in the process.

This framework, called historical materialism, rejected the two dominant ways of seeing the human relationship to the natural world: idealism, which sees human beings as separate from the animal world, or as divine creatures; and crude materialism which sees humans as just like other animals, biologically programmed to behave in certain ways.

The species *Homo sapiens*, what we know as modern humans, evolved about 130,000 years ago. For 95 percent of this history, humanity has not been characterised by many of the forms of behaviour attributed to a so-called ‘human nature’ today – wars, competition, racism, sexism and so on.

Through evolution over millions of years humans emerged very different from other mammals – lacking the specialised physical features to defend themselves, stay warm or run away that we see in other mammals. Instead, early humans evolved with extreme flexibility in response to the world around them – using their hands to hold and shape objects, their voices to communicate with each other, and having the capacity to investigate, study and generalise about the world around them. Through long years of child rearing humans could pass on their skills and learning.

This required the growth of large brains and the ability and desire to socialise. It also led to the develop-

ment of language, a means of communication qualitatively different to that of any other animals. With language came the ability to conceive of things not immediately present, to become conscious of the world around them and of themselves within it.

As humans spread around the world, how each social grouping developed depended on how it could adapt its skills and cooperative abilities to the needs of surviving in any given environment. The form taken by this ‘mode of production’ of the necessities of life was the foundation of the different societies that emerged, each with its own distinct customs, attitudes, myths and rituals.

These different societies shared certain common, fundamental features until about 10,000 years ago. This was because they all obtained their food, shelter and clothing in essentially the same way, through ‘foraging’ – obtaining food and materials like fruits and nuts, roots, wild animals, fish and shellfish, and processing them for their use.

As Chris Harman writes in *A People’s History of the World*, “Many survived in wide regions of the world until only a few hundred years ago, and the remnants of a few still exist today. By studying these societies anthropologists have been able to draw conclusions about what life was like for the whole of our species for at least 90 percent of its history... People lived in loose-knit groups of 30 or 40 which might periodically get together with other groups in bigger groupings of up to 200. But life in such ‘band societies’ was certainly no harder than for many millions of people living in more ‘civilised’ agricultural or industrial societies.”

There were no rulers, bosses or class divisions in these societies. The anthropologist Richard Lee writes: “Before the rise of the state and the entrenchment of social inequality people lived for millennia in small-scale kin-based social groups, in which the core institutions of economic life included collective or common ownership of

land and resources, generalised reciprocity in the distribution of food, and relatively egalitarian political relations.”

It is easy to see how cooperation, reciprocity, and egalitarian features would have been necessary in foraging societies. Hunters and gatherers were intensely dependent on one another. Those who did the gathering typically supplied the most reliable source of food, and those who did the hunting provided what was most valued. The hunters depended for their daily survival on the generosity of those who gathered, while those who specialised in gathering relied for valued additions to their diet on those who managed to kill animals.

From what we know of such societies that existed into recent times, while there was often a division of labour between the sexes, depending on the specific conditions, it did not amount to male dominance as we know it. Both women and men took part in making key decisions.

The material conditions in which human beings lived produced very

different societies and very different dominant ideas to those taken for granted today. But about 10,000 years ago, people in certain parts of the world learned to cultivate crops instead of relying upon gathering, and they learned to domesticate animals instead of hunting them. These innovations transformed their whole way of living.

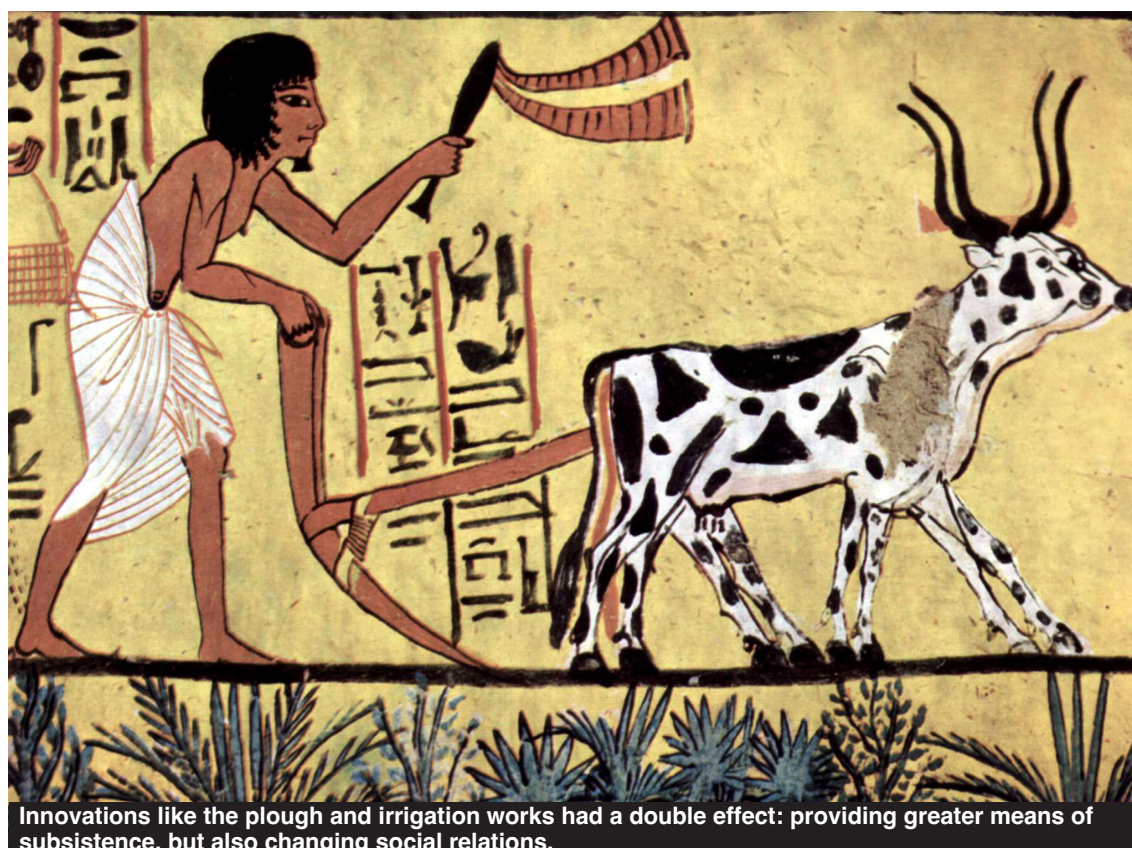
The new methods of production of life brought many changes, including changes in reproduction. With a fixed village life based on agriculture, the greater the number of children, the greater the area of land that could be cleared and cultivated in future. Unlike in foraging societies, the premium was on larger families.

As well, stocks of stored food provided a motive for attacks from outside. War, virtually unknown among foraging societies, was endemic among many horticultural peoples.

These changes happened in several parts of the world over several thousand years. Loose bands gave way to life in villages, organised through strongly structured kin groups, rigid norms of social behaviour and elaborate religious rituals and myths.

Not every society made this move. But once agriculture was established in any part of the world, it started to spread. It transformed people’s lives, spreading village living and warfare. But society still didn’t have most of the elements we take for granted today – class division, a permanent state apparatus based on full time bureaucrats and bodies of armed men, women’s oppression. A second series of changes in the ways people gained a livelihood was necessary.

Those farming groups which undertook technological innovation could survive the threat of famine, while those who didn’t eventually died out or dispersed. These innovations included the discovery that domesticated animals pulling a plough could more effectively break up the ground than a hand-held hoe; that building dams and ditches could protect crops from flooding and channel water to dry areas; and using animal dung as fertiliser avoided exhausting the soil and having to constantly clear new land.



**Innovations like the plough and irrigation works had a double effect: providing greater means of subsistence, but also changing social relations.**



# People before profits: Marxism and mental health

by: Ryan Schebek

## The Profit Motive

Capitalism is an economic system driven by the profit motive. Profit dictates the allocation of resources and (re)investment of capital. If companies do not seek to exponentially grow profit they are put out of business by their competition. The entire system revolves around this motive and does not prioritize what is sustainable for the market or the environment. This results in a state of crisis. There is an economic crisis (more goods flood the market than the market can absorb or that workers can buy) marked by recession. There is also an environmental crisis (unsustainable resource extraction creates a metabolic rift between humans and nature)

Wages do not fully compensate workers for the value they produce. Capitalists steal the surplus value produced by workers and re-labelled as profit. Taking care of the needs of the working class past the point which is necessary for the creation of surplus value is either superfluous or the burden is shifted to other parts of society. Capitalism, with the profit motive at its heart, is a system that relies on exploitation. When you combine exploitation and a disregard for well being (outside of productivity) and this creates a third crisis: the mental health crisis

## The mental health crisis

There has always been mental distress, that is not unique to capitalism. History is full of accounts of war, trauma, oppression and exploitation that required healing or intervention on the community level. Healing through community is seen in many indigenous cultures with roots in shamanic practices. If the individual was “sick”, the community was sick and they would respond accordingly. Today mental distress is an individual problem that is labelled as pathology or as a psychiatric disorder. Psychological healing has been co-opted by a medical establishment and relegated to a professional class of therapist, psychiatrists and psychologist where healing is stripped of its cultural context. What is different today is that not only does capitalism create new mental distress, it often exacerbates symptoms and prevents healing. Under capitalism the onus is on the individual to find a way to mitigate and alleviate this distress often at a high financial cost. Therapy is not cheap. Capitalism denies us the salve to the wound it creates.

## Alienation

The psychological impacts of capitalism are highlighted in Marx’s concept of alienation. Workers are alienated from the product of labor. This means workers have no say in the use or distribution of

the goods they produce. They are also alienated from the process of labor. Under capitalism the process of labor is dictated by profit and efficiency over creativity. As a result work becomes monotonous, repressive and oppressive. Humans are laboring creatures and what we produce is what makes us human. We seek to creatively express our identity by shaping the material world around us through our labor. Therefore an alienation from the labor process is also an alienation from our species being. Finally, we are alienated from each other. The structure of capitalism pits individuals against each other in competition, fostering isolation and estrangement. Workers may feel disconnected from their fellow workers due to the hierarchical nature of production, as well as from the capitalists who exploit their labour. Relationships become transactional, based on economic interests rather than genuine human connections. This has tremendous impacts on our mental health.

## Disruption of healing

During our downtime from work, we can rest, relax and recharge for the next workday. To recharge we need to be present, embodied and grounded. With the emergence of social media and smartphones, a new economy of attention was created. Your data and sustained attention have been commodified.

Burnout Society, that what makes us human is our ability to become bored. Animals are in a constant state of shifting attention. For us to be caught up in the animalistic shifting of attention is an alienation from our species being, to put it into Marxist terms. My homework for clients suffering from work-related burnout is to “do nothing” more often. Doing nothing cannot be commodified and is a radical practice that rebels against a capitalistic economy. You have a right to be lazy.

## Mental Health Under Socialism

Self-care is a bandaid for the mental distress created by capitalism. Self-care, under capitalism, is individualistic and commodified. Workers are told to invest what’s left of their wages into commodified practices such as talk therapy, gym membership, attending a meditation class or seeking nature in gradually shrinking urban green spaces. The ultimate goal is to “get better” and return to the work that created the distress in the first place. If you struggle to return to work that is your fault and you are labelled unproductive. Psychiatric labels are social constructs intertwined with capitalism and the pharmaceutical industry.

There is a time and a place for individual care. If someone is laid off from work and is feeling depressed then that is an individual issue that may require talk therapy. If the system creates cycles of mass unemployment that is a social issue that therapy cannot fix. One could argue that some psychological disorders (bipolar disorder or schizophrenia for example) have biological origins in the brain that require medication and are not social issues. However, why is it that low socioeconomic status is correlated to all disorders of the mind? Why does mental illness have higher rates for women and people of colour? True healing requires a village but individual healing is also important. We, as socialists, seek to dismantle the system that creates the source of distress and more towards collective solutions to issues within society.

All psychotherapists should be inherently anti-capitalist as capitalism is the river from which mental distress and trauma flows. Healing from trauma is personal and cannot be commodified and manualized. As revolutionary socialists, we fight for a world free from oppression in all its forms. We fight for radical worker’s democracy. This applies to how we treat mental wellness; we should be able to decide collectively how we want to address our own healing. We have a right to decide and participate in community based wellness that has been essential for most of human history. Healing cannot be profit-driven.

On the one hand, the new techniques provided people with additional means of livelihood. Groups which previously had only been able to produce enough for subsistence could begin to produce a surplus. On the other hand, there were changes in people’s social relations including an increased division of labour between the sexes, since ploughing was a form of heavy labour not easily done by women bearing or nursing children.

The building and maintenance of regular irrigation channels required the cooperation of dozens or even hundreds of households. It also encouraged a division between those who supervised work and those who undertook it. The storing of food encouraged the emergence of groups responsible for maintaining and supervising the food stocks. The existence of a surplus for the first time allowed some people to be freed from agricultural work to concentrate on craftwork, preparing for warfare or trade with other peoples.

Grain was stored in sizable buildings and those who supervised them oversaw the life of the rest of the population as they gathered in, stored and distributed the surplus. The storehouses were the first temples, their superintendents the first priests. Sizeable cities developed around

of society.

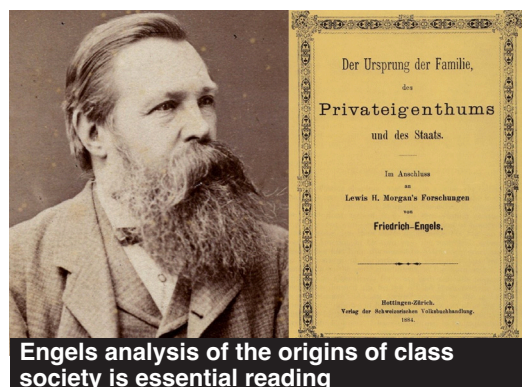
Why did the rest of society put up with this new exploitation and oppression? Marx’s framing looks at the interaction between the development of ‘relations of production’ and ‘forces of production’. Human beings find new ways of producing the necessities of life that seem likely to ease material problems. But these new ways of producing begin to create new relations between members of the group. At a certain point they either accept the new ways of relating, or reject the new ways of making a livelihood.

Class divisions were the other side of the coin of the introduction of production methods which created a surplus. The first farming communities established themselves without class divisions in places with exceptionally fertile soil. But as they expanded, survival came to depend on coping with much more difficult conditions – and that required a reorganisation of social relations.

There was nothing automatic about this process. In many parts of the world societies were able to prosper right through to modern times without resorting to heavy ploughs or extensive hydraulic works. But in other conditions survival came to depend on adopting new techniques. Ruling classes arose out of the organisation of such activities and, with them, towns, states and what we usually call civilisation.

From this point onwards the history of society was the history of class struggle. Humanity increased its degree of control over nature, but at the price of most people becoming subject to control and exploitation by privileged minority groups.

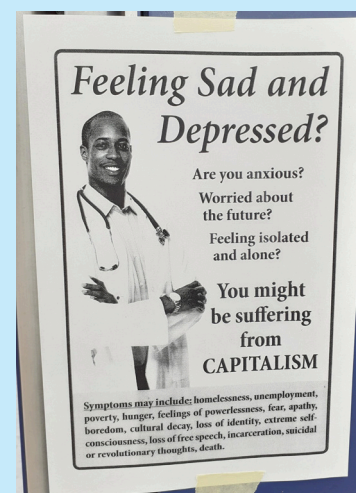
The inequality, oppression and hierarchy that characterize capitalism and other class societies are relatively recent developments in the sweep of humanity’s existence. They are not inevitable consequences of ‘human nature’ but are a result of economic and political developments that can be transformed through revolutionary change.



Engels analysis of the origins of class society is essential reading

these storehouses.

This urban revolution, or ‘civilisation’, was accompanied wherever it happened by the development for the first time of class divisions, with a privileged minority living off the labour of everyone else, and by the setting up of bodies of armed men, of soldiers and secret police – in other words, a state machine – so as to enforce this minority’s rule on the rest



Social media companies need to keep users engaged with their content to maximize profit. Endless scrolling tricks our attentional systems with sensationalized content to prevent disengagement. This leads to an exhausted, scattered and dysregulated mind, unable to be present and embodied. Social media and its content drains us and prevents our bodies from engaging in its natural ability to regulate. Boredom and doing nothing becomes the antithesis of an attention economy. Boredom and doing nothing are natural states that are the foundation of creativity and contemplation. Philosopher Byung-Chul Han argues, in his book



# Climate crisis: Nuclear is no solution

by: Brian Champ

The top issues for workers today, according to most opinion polls, are wages falling behind the cost of living, unaffordable housing and health-care privatization. Trump's potential imposition of tariffs has only exacerbated them. It was only a few years ago that the climate crisis was top of mind for many people, as the escalating impacts of the climate crisis hit home more and more in extreme weather events, heat domes, rising sea levels, floods and of course wildfires.

The last ten years are the hottest years ever, with 2024 topping the list. This is truly a crisis of planetary proportions, caused by the failure of business and political "leaders" to transition away from burning fossil fuels, despite the alarm being raised almost 4 decades ago.

But multiple, intersecting crises characterize the global capitalist system. These include climate and ecological breakdown, inter-imperial rivalry, war and genocide, economic crisis and the rise of the far right. Having enough food, shelter and access to medical care dominates the concerns of working people. Only where climate catastrophes hit, such as those impacted by the wildfires in LA, are the connections clear.

But decisions made now to invest more in nuclear and fossil fuel energy systems make further deepening of the climate crisis inevitable, which ultimately threatens humanity's survival on the planetary level.

## Ford's new nukes

In Ontario, the Tories are championing massive new investments in nuclear electricity generation by investing in refurbishments of existing plants and building new ones, including unproven small modular reactors (SMRs). They continue to push for more gas-fired electricity, but the success of local campaigns pushing back against this has caused them to change tack.

At an announcement of contracts worth \$960 million with BWXT in Cambridge for nuclear power plant pressure vessels and generators, Energy Minister Stephen Lecce crowed that they were leveraging Ontario's "nuclear advantage" so that Ontario could "build out a clean and affordable energy future". He bragged that they were the first jurisdiction in the G7 to build SMRs and that they reduced red tape to make it happen before 2030.

Proponents argue that nuclear is the only way to reduce emissions, and many environmentalists have grudgingly conceded that nuclear may be necessary. And unions whose workers operate the plants see the expansion as a way to ensure stable, high

paying employment for their members, despite the health concerns.

It is only the climate crisis that has rehabilitated nuclear power from the days when Chernobyl and other nuclear "accidents" seemed to have buried it forever.

The new SMRs planned for Darlington are estimated by environmental NGO Ontario Clean Air Alliance (OCAA) to be at least \$26 billion - and experience shows that these bills will go up and up. Far from affordable, these investments will have ordinary people paying indefinitely for plants that will not produce power for at least a decade, despite Lecce's boasts. Cutting "red



tape" on building these plants means cutting inspections and cutting corners which will increase the likelihood of catastrophic "accidents".

In addition, nuclear power production means that fossil fuels will continue to be used for energy. This is true for the period before plants become operational. And because nuclear power production output can only be raised or lowered in a limited way, fossil fuel plants will continue to be used indefinitely to supply electricity at times of peak demand.

This money instead could be spent on building the lowest cost, lowest emissions renewable energy solutions like wind and solar which could come online much more

quickly. Changes to the grid to reduce transmission energy loss and storage systems to smooth the difference between the periods of peak power production and consumption will also be needed. Instead of basing expanded production on projections of a 75% increase in power needed by 2050 (as the Independent Electricity System Operator - IESO - calls for), we need to plan for energy conservation and more equitable distribution.

The low carbon aspects of nuclear power have been oversold and the impacts on human and ecosystem health are well known. Mining for uranium has a massive impact

Fukushima in 2011.

And spent nuclear fuel rods pose an environmental problem for hundreds of thousands of years. At these time scales there can be no confidence that even seemingly stable geological formations will not be ruptured. It is the height of irresponsibility to future generations to stockpile more of these radioactive materials when there is no solution.

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization announced their decision last November to store nuclear waste at a site at Revell, ON in the heart of Treaty #3 territory despite widespread criticism by Indigenous groups and communities across Northern Ontario. Together, they have organized for years in an alliance called "We the Nuclear North - Tataganabiwiin" (more information at <https://wethenuclearfreenorth.ca/>) that has petitioned Parliament and is calling for organizations and individuals to support them. There is similar opposition to the expansion of the Bruce Nuclear Power Plant on Saugeen Anishinaabe territory near Kincardine, ON.

Nuclear by-products such as plutonium can be used to make nuclear weapons, which is another reason that governments pursue nuclear power. While some other by-products are useful for medical use, there is no need for an expansion to produce these.

Workers building the components of nuclear power plants and who operate the plants are highly skilled and are likely to be paid higher wages than the average worker and have good pensions. But these skills could be used to instead build the infrastructure we need to make a transition away from destructive energy production systems towards low carbon energy production, as well as the many other components of a sustainable economy such as expanded electrified public transit.

But as long as we allow the bosses to set the agenda, these decisions will be made to further their goals of accumulating capital. We need an economy whose purpose is to produce the needs of humanity and the ecosystems on which we rely for survival before it's too late. This can only be achieved through actively connecting struggles for Indigenous sovereignty, fightbacks against racism, oppression and hate and the fightbacks of workers at the point of production into a revolutionary challenge to the rule of the Trumps, Musks and Fords.

Elections matter, and it would be a boon to all these struggles if Ford was pushed back at the ballot box. But whatever happens in the election, these times demand an increase in militancy in every struggle from the grassroots if we hope to make headway towards a livable future.

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Territorial acknowledgment:

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





# Next steps in the fight for Palestinian Liberation

by: Sid Lacombe

The ceasefire agreement that ended 15 months of mass killing by the Israeli state appears to be holding for the most part. Israel will, of course, still launch some attacks on Gaza as they always do but the pattern of mass killings that we have seen is at least lessened temporarily.

## Return to the north

The scenes of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza marching north to reclaim their land has brought a sense of joy and is a symbol of the resilience of the people.

Resistance fighters have reappeared throughout the strip putting a lie to the assertion by the Netanyahu government that they had degraded resistance capabilities.

Some aid trucks are entering the strip - although the Israelis are still blocking and delaying some crucial aid. The Rafah crossing is open and 50 critically injured Palestinian civilians are being taken to Egypt for medical treatment.

For many who have marched week in and week out over the last year and a half, these new developments are welcome but there is very real fear that this cannot hold for long and that the fight for true liberation for Palestine cannot be pushed to the side. The fight is at a crucial new phase.

## Israel can't be trusted

It is difficult to believe the Israeli state is going to implement the agreement as outlined. Indeed, as people in Gaza met for celebrations on the streets the Israelis launched new attacks killing more than 80 people in one day.

The details are still being worked out on the second stage of the agreement and already Donald Trump is interfering with the negotiations by stating that all the people of Gaza should be removed and sent to Egypt and Jordan.

And Netanyahu is already trying to accuse Hamas of breaking the deal.

Each stage of the proposed ceasefire is to be assessed by the parties to see if they will move on to the next step.

This gives the Israeli state a lot of wiggle room. They are, for example, allowed to alter terms if they deem that certain conditions have or have not been met and their penchant for misinformation and distortion may come into play here.

## West Bank

The Israeli's have also ramped up assaults on Jenin and across the West Bank. Palestinians detained by Israel are being released only to have their homes raided and destroyed by Israeli forces. Dozens of Lebanese civilians were killed this week as they tried to return to their homes in the south of that country.

According to the UN Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights "An alarming number of civilians from the occupied West Bank and especially Jenin refugee camp have already been detained and at least 16 people killed, including a child that was shot in the head, while at least 3,000 families have been displaced. The Israeli Government must instruct its military and security forces to immediately cease any use of excessive force and exercise restraint and withdraw its troops from the occupied West Bank, as ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in July 2024."

The Zionist state has not accomplished its stated goal of cleansing the Palestinians from Gaza. The tension that this is creating within Israel is destabilizing. Donald Trump's suggestion that the people of Gaza should be expelled shows that he sits firmly inside with the Zionist project.

But the real problem is that Israel has

rights of Palestinians to return to their land and to call for the dismantling of the violent ethno-nationalist Zionist state.

But the mass mobilizations over the last 15 months have radically reshaped the public perception of the Israeli state and the role of the US globally.

Both have been increasingly isolated

Many of the local groups that sprung up over the past months are now shifting focus to making Palestine an issue in the next federal election. The disastrous campaign kick off for Chrystia Freeland - drowned out by pro-Palestine activists - is an indication of things to come. There are dozens of groups that have vowed to challenge federal



Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians returned to the north of Gaza as the ceasefire took hold.

never actually abided by any ceasefire agreements in the past. All they need is for one Palestinian to fight back and they will use that to justify further brutality.

And either way, the agreement will still place the Palestinian people in the position they were in before the current genocide started - living in a massive concentration camp with little hope for the future.

The key issues of land theft, apartheid rule and ongoing violent settler colonialism have not been addressed.

Until those issues are firmly put to rest we will not see anything resembling a lasting peace.

And the dynamics of the Zionist project and its rapacious need for further expansion ensure more violence will be likely. The key role that Israel plays for the western imperialists has also not changed thus ensuring that injustice will continue.

## Keep up the pressure

The only solution is to campaign for the

because of their steadfast support for the genocide. We have seen a growing number of official agencies, NGOs, international courts and academics that have denounced the Israeli aggression and have cemented the idea that Israel is a genocidal state.

Majorities in Canada now have an 'unfavourable' opinion of Israel. In the US, J-Street polling, which measures the opinions of Jewish people show a majority want to see an end to offensive weapons shipments to Israel. The tide has shifted.

But this fight is far from over. Zionist supporters have not slowed their work. They are still working to attack any expressions of solidarity with Palestinians. The arrest of Chris Nineham at the recent UK protests are part of a global trend to demonize Palestinian solidarity.

The university of Toronto is working on new definitions of anti semitism designed to silence critics of Israel. They are doing their best to try and recapture ideological ground lost during the genocide.

politicians at every turn during the upcoming campaign.

There are also ongoing campaigns to force an arms embargo to halt Canadian shipments of weapons to Israel. There are planned protests for the Invictus Games set to take place in Vancouver as they will be hosting Israeli troops.

We have no way of knowing how long this ceasefire will last. The first part of the agreement covers 6 weeks but the further steps have not been fully agreed to by this point.

The mobilizations for Palestine have shaken the imperial core and have isolated the Israeli state and the US globally. The myth of western benevolence has died and this has opened up a new space for radical ideas to develop and spread. It is part of the crisis of legitimacy that is following the ruling classes globally. Wherever possible we need to build on those gains and push for the full liberation - right of return and an end to the Zionist project.



## Join the campaign Sarah Jama for Hamilton Centre

The Sarah Jama independent provincial election campaign was officially launched on February 2 at the constituency office in Hamilton Centre.

The meeting was packed with labour and community activists who all pledged to support Sarah.

Fred Hahn, president of CUPE Ontario pledged support from the political action caucus to help get Sarah elected. There was support from federal NDP MP, Matthew Green, Anthony Marco on behalf of the Hamilton and District Labour council and more.

This is an exciting chance to see what a politics of principle can achieve. It is an opportunity to build a new kind of politics - without concessions to party loyalties of the provincial NDP.

It is shameful that the provincial NDP has decided to run a candidate against Sarah. It is a spiteful move that has discredited the party and is resulting in huge numbers of activists abandoning the party to support Sarah.

It is even more shameful that the NDP decided to do this to appeal to the supporters of genocide in Israel. Their decision gives succor to those advocating a racist apartheid state and only builds the forces of the far-right. The Zionist supporters applauded the provincial NDP publicly.



Sarah has a long track record of fighting for housing, healthcare, affordable food and job security. Working class leaders are flocking to her campaign.

At the launch, Rolf Gerstenberger, past president of United Steelworkers 1005 in Hamilton reiterated his support and called for union activists to come over to the campaign.

Sarah's speech at the event outlined her priorities, "Our public healthcare is crumbling and there's a shortage of family physicians, the air quality is troubling and lack of funding for greener spaces and multi-mode transportation is grossly apparent we need to pay more fair wages for education workers and full-time support for disabled students, and affordable housing for renters and home-owners is not prioritized during an encampment crisis."

We have an opportunity to continue the work to collaborate and fight for the voices of Hamilton Centre, a working class riding built by working class people."

The campaign is looking for volunteers and there are canvass days planned from now until the election on February 27.

Get involved in the campaign! See: <https://www.votesarahjama.ca/> for information about how to volunteer or donate.

## Stop Ford! End his destruction of Ontario for corporate profit

Doug Ford's Conservative government has survived more corruption scandals than any government in recent memory and he is still giving billions to his corporate buddies.

He survived these scandals because he was never really challenged by the opposition or in the media. The auditor general of Ontario has raised the alarm about his relentless grifting but to no avail.

He is, in the words of late *Socialist Worker* columnist, John Bell, a 'gangster'.

He has given as much as \$2 billion for the Therme deal at Ontario Place, \$1.5 billion to privatize alcohol sales, \$3 billion in bribe cheques to constituents, more than \$100 million in partisan ads. He is the new gravy train embodied in one person.

He says he is seeking a strengthened mandate to give him the credibility and power to challenge Donald Trump in the tariff wars to come. He never had a real mandate. He secured a grand total of 18 percent of the eligible voters in the last election.

He, like Trump, is a symptom of a system long bereft of any concept of fairness or accountability.

But he may be vulnerable, mainly on the question of healthcare, in this election.

On the eve of calling the provincial election 15 months ahead of schedule, Ford and his henchpeople were exceedingly busy rolling out announcements of multi-million dollar programs.

On Monday January 27, Minister of Health Sylvia Jones held a press conference with

former federal Minister of Health and current figleaf, Dr. Jane Philpott. After overseeing the destruction of public healthcare since her election in 2022, Jones announced that at long

last, she would be getting right on the issue of the 2.5 million Ontarians not having access to a family doctor. "The work starts today!", she proclaimed.



Later the same day, Minister Jones popped up in London, Ontario, to announce new initiatives as part of the 'government roadmap to wellness'. Emptier words have seldom been spoken, even by a politician.

Public health care in Ontario has never been in such crisis and disarray. Jones and Doug Ford have literally driven it into the ground. Across the province, emergency rooms and urgent care centres are closed. Hundreds lined up in a blizzard in Walkerton for the chance to sign on with a family doctor. Hospitals are in deficit and understaffing is at record levels.

But not to worry. Jones reminded us that "this is about patients". Does she mean the patients relying on home care supplies whose delivery the government criminally bungled? Or the patients in private Long-Term Care homes that were abandoned and died during the Covid crisis? Or the patients (mostly seniors) being charged thousands of dollars for cataract surgery in government-funded private clinics?

The opposition at Queens Park is so bereft of ideas that they still trail Ford in the polls. But even if he does win this election, he can still be beaten back from destroying public healthcare if enough people join the fight.

The Ontario Health Coalition is working to push back on the Conservative government's destruction of public health care, including building a rally at Sylvia Jones office on February 8 at noon. There are many other ways for you to join the campaign.

See: <https://stopforprofithealthcare.ca> to get involved.