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Socialist Worker

\$2 | No 685 | July/August 2026 | socialist.ca

**Carney and the Premiers' call for more
tar-sands pipelines while the planet burns**

CLIMATE JUSTICE NOW



**Picture from a resident of the O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation -
forced to evacuate to escape wildfires**

by: Incé Husain, J. Michael Post, and
Cailin Gallinger

This summer the mercury has reached skyrocketing levels around the globe. Across Europe, North America, and India, extreme heat has led to a large number of deaths by devastating heat waves. The cause of these deadly temperatures is known: fossil fuel emissions filling the atmosphere with carbon and slowly boiling the planet.

In May, a heat wave spreading across India was exacerbated by local water shortages, leading to an estimated 3,400 excess deaths per day. In late June, Europe saw its most extreme tem-

peratures since the historic heat wave of 1976. It smashed records in nearly every country and caused more than 3,700 excess deaths in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands alone—a number likely to rise to tens of thousands in the coming weeks. A rising El Niño has begun super-charging summer heat and storms in North America, bringing deadly temperatures and flooding to parts of Canada and the US.

And yet, the governments of the global north turn their backs on known solutions and pour investment into the fossil fuel industry amidst increasing global political and economic instability.

Even before they can be announced, the consequences of these short-sighted policies

are coming home to roost.

Pipe-ing Hot

In Canada in recent weeks, wildfires have forced evacuations in Labrador, in West Kelowna and Fraser Canyon BC and in two First Nations in Northwest Territories. Several western Manitoba communities have experienced severe flooding, and the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation declared a state of emergency and prepared for evacuation. The heat wave in southern Ontario fueled a series of severe storms, forcing Carney to cancel his flight to a planned Canada Day event in Edmonton.

Regardless, the Carney government is doubling down on fossil fuels, recently aban-

doning their 2030/2035 emissions targets. In April, it approved a \$4 billion expansion to the Enbridge Sunrise pipeline in BC, which currently carries 3.6 billion cubic ft/day of fracked gas to the US border. In May, the Major Projects Office approved the Ksi Lisims LNG port facility in Nisga'a First Nation in northern BC, as Germany agreed to a multi-decade, million ton LNG purchase. The LNG Canada terminal at Kitimat is expanding to double capacity. And in recent days the governments of Alberta and Ontario announced the Northern Shield pipeline, to funnel 500,000 to 800,000 barrels of oil, gas, and other products for export to Europe.

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Far right conspiracy theories and residential school denialism

by: Brian Champ

In recent decades, Indigenous sovereignty and justice movements have won wide solidarity across Canadian society. This can be seen by ongoing support for Grassy Narrows mercury justice, the 2020 Shut Down Canada movement in solidarity with Wet'suwet'en land defenders, and the 2021 mass mobilizations supporting grieving Indigenous communities across Turtle Island after ground penetrating radar (GPR) confirmed unmarked graves on former Indian Residential School (IRS) sites.

A dangerous backlash driven by the far right threatens to push back these gains, falsely claiming that GPR findings constitute a “mass grave hoax” initiated by Indigenous people and perpetuated by the media. The far-right denies that residential schools were genocidal institutions in order to undermine solidarity with Indigenous struggles for justice and sovereignty.

A recent editorial in the *Globe and Mail* has pushed these ideas further into the mainstream.

To push back we need to understand the settler colonial foundations of Canada.

European nations claimed the territories of the many autonomous Indigenous nations of Turtle Island, based on the “Doctrine of Discovery”. Canadian confederation further marginalized the original peoples of these lands, subjecting them to: colonial and settler violence; the undermining of Indigenous ways of life; starvation and disease; forced containment on tiny reserves; the pass system; and residential schools. This settler colonialism continues to this day through child and welfare policies, apartheid conditions of life on and off reserve in health, life expectancy, treatment by police and courts and access to public services, anti-Indigenous racism and more.

Altogether, this is a historic and ongoing genocide against Indigenous peoples, a reality that was always resisted.

Red Power and resistance

The truth about residential schools was exposed by courageous IRS survivors testifying to the abuse and terrible conditions they suffered. The militancy of Indigenous youth in the Red Power movement of the 1960s and 1970s across Turtle Island boosted the confidence to speak out and challenged Indigenous leaders to take action.

The Canadian state and the churches that had operated the IRS attempted to keep this history hidden, but knowledge that children had been sexually abused at residential schools became well known by the 1980s. By the early 1990s some abusers began facing criminal charges.

Moderate Indigenous leaders began speaking out. Soon to be Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Phil Fontaine spoke of his own experiences of sexual, physical and psychological abuse at residential schools in 1990. He continued to advocate for IRS survivors as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN).

In 1994, the AFN published a

report titled “Breaking the Silence” that contained testimony from IRS survivors that led to investigations by the Department of Indian Affairs and the RCMP.

The 1996 final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples,

estimated that it could be more than 25,000 children. The report described this as “cultural genocide”. It can only really be described as unqualified genocide: whether or not the children survived, the intent was to “kill the Indian in the child”.

organizers also peddled anti-trans, anti-immigrant and racist ideas, included anti-Indigenous racism.

Various far right figures began claiming there was a “mass graves hoax” media conspiracy. C.P. Champion and Tom Flanagan pub-

used to enforce one-sided interpretations of treaties based on the documentation by colonial powers.

The editorial also ignores the many avenues being explored by Indigenous nations as they grapple with how to honour these children and their communities.

Bringing the children home

The process of honouring the IRS survivors and the children who never made it back home will be decided by the communities themselves. The Tkemlúps te Secwépemc First Nation is divided on whether to exhume the remains or leave them alone. In addition, many of the children who attended the Kamloops IRS came from other First Nations, complicating the situation.

May 25 was a Day of Reflection for the Tkemlúps te Secwépemc on the fifth anniversary of the GPR findings. On that day, Chief Roseanne Casimir delivered a message that said, in part:

“We are engaged in one of the most complex and sensitive investigations in this country’s history! Since 2021, we have made meaningful progress assembling trusted experts, analyzing extensive records, and working alongside communities to begin identifying children who never returned home.

“At the same time, we are navigating significant challenges, particularly in accessing records and archival data across multiple jurisdictions. These barriers have slowed progress, but they have not altered our commitment.

“Let me be clear, and it is important for me to share: This work is not about proving whether children died as we know this. This work is about who they were, where they are from, and returning them to their families with dignity.

“We continue to follow a careful, and evidence-based approach, guided by Secwépemc law, cultural protocols, and the voices of Survivors and families. This work will take time. It must be done properly.

“We also recognize that, at times, the truths of this history are questioned or minimized. We respond with clarity and resolve. The experiences of Survivors, the historical record, and the work underway stand on their own. Our responsibility is to continue forward with integrity, not to be drawn away from the work that honours the children and their families.”

All those seeking justice for historical and ongoing genocide against Indigenous people, must stand firm with the survivors. We must support the efforts of Indigenous communities to honour the memory of these children and the communities they were taken from. Narratives that undermine these efforts have to be exposed for the self serving, settler colonial mythologies that they are. Residential School denialism along with the rest of the lies of the far-right only benefit Canada’s 1% and act to defend the profits they gain from extractive capitalism.

We must seek justice for these past wrongs, but it is just as important to build active solidarity with the ongoing struggles of Indigenous peoples for justice and sovereignty.



established in the wake of the Kanehsatake Resistance (aka “The Oka Crisis”) in 1990, called for a fully funded, national inquiry into the IRS system’s harms to generations of Indigenous people.

Over the next decade the federal government paid out \$350 million to 7,000 former IRS students in compensation for the abuse they suffered. In 2006 they settled a class action suit filed on behalf of 80,000 IRS survivors by paying \$2 billion (avoiding potential liability of \$36 billion) in compensation and spending \$1.6 billion on investigations to locate alleged abusers. The terms of the settlement led directly to the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Driving these developments was the testimony of thousands of IRS survivors despite the trauma of reliving personal horrors, with the support of their communities.

This pressure led to the public apology by Prime Minister Harper in 2008 on behalf of Canada for the “sad chapter in our history” represented by the IRS system. His apology did not change his government’s ongoing assimilationist policies.

Truth and Reconciliation

The TRC started in 2009 to systematically document the testimony brought by thousands of survivors, chaired by the Indigenous jurist and senator Murray Sinclair. It lacked subpoena powers, leading to difficulties in gaining access to documents and the testimony of alleged abusers. Dene scholar Glen Coulthard further criticized the TRC for only looking at the “sad history” of residential schools, while omitting evidence of ongoing genocidal practices, such as child welfare policies.

Despite these shortcomings, the final report documented at least 4,127 deaths out of the 150,000 Indigenous children who were imprisoned in the Residential School system. They were killed by diseases, physical violence, suicide and other related causes. While we will never know the total number of children killed, Sinclair

The TRC final report included 94 calls to action, including the mandate to investigate unmarked graves at former IRS sites. The Assembly of First Nations has found that by the end of last year only 13 (or less than 14%) of the Calls to Action have been completed, and exactly zero new Calls were completed in the 2024-2025.

Confirmation

The Tkemlúps te Secwépemc First Nation got tired of waiting for action and commissioned their own study using GPR. In May 2021 Chief Roseanne Casimir announced that 215 (later amended to 200) potential unmarked graves had been found. This confirmed “a knowing” in the community about deaths and burials at the former Kamloops IRS site.

This announcement had a profound impact. Indigenous communities across Turtle Island commissioned further GPR studies and confirmed thousands of potential unmarked graves at former IRS and boarding school (similar institutions in the US) sites.

In response, many ceremonies were held honouring IRS survivors and the children who never made it back home, with those in attendance donning orange shirts emblazoned with “Every Child Matters”. People placed children’s shoes and teddy bears outside former schools, churches and at the base of statues of Egerton Ryerson and John A. MacDonald – many such statues of these IRS architects were vandalized, removed or torn down. Many thousands of people attended rallies and marches demanding justice, including on Canada day which became a sea of orange shirts instead of the usual patriotic red and white.

Racists and the “Mass Graves Hoax”

Crowds proudly waving Canadian flags emerged again at the so-called “Freedom Convoy” occupation of Ottawa in early 2022, a breakthrough for far right politics in Canada. While the mobilizations targeted pandemic mask and vaccine mandates, far right

lished two books.

Both have long complained about the inroads that Indigenous voices have made in undermining the British colonial version of Canadian history. Flanagan was a close advisor to Stephen Harper and has written of his fears of solidarity in struggle between mass environmental movements and Indigenous land defenders.

The far-right asserts that the Tkemlúps te Secwépemc First Nation claimed that there were “mass graves” at the Kamloops IRS site and that the media “universally” reported this as truth. A report by the Centre for Human Rights Research at the University of Manitoba debunked this, the vast majority of articles reported the First Nation’s announcement accurately - as potential unmarked graves.

A small number of news articles used the phrase “mass graves” in their reporting, and this became a “conspiracy”.

The far right also asserts that GPR is unreliable for identifying human remains, accuses Indigenous peoples of covering up the lack of proof, and claims that residential schools were a positive experience for Indigenous children.

They aim to erase over 40 years of documentation of abuse and deaths at IRS schools, and the much longer knowledge of Indigenous peoples of this history. Various strains of the far right either say that the genocide did not occur or that it was justified.

Mainstreaming Conspiracy

In May the *Globe and Mail* published an editorial, “No Reconciliation without Truth”, that accepts many of the far right talking points. They even berate their own reporting from 2021. While falling short of denying deaths and abuse at residential schools, they argue that the bodies must be dug up as proof, and that First Nations who refuse to do so are standing in the way of reconciliation.

Denying Indigenous oral histories has a long history in Canadian settler colonialism: for example, it has been

Reject Maple Leaf Militarism

Canada's rearmament, arctic extraction, and the trampling of Indigenous Sovereignty must be opposed

by: **Canan Sahin**

Mark Carney said in Davos that the post WWII world order is breaking. Not because of the continuing genocidal occupation of Gaza, the ongoing war in Ukraine, or the US and Israeli war on Iran, but because Trump's threats against Canada and Greenland have intensified North Atlantic and Arctic inter-state tensions.

The US already has military bases in Greenland, a colony of Denmark called Nunarput by the Inuit. Trump's threats to take over challenge another colonial power with no regard for Inuit sovereignty. Similarly, Canada's Arctic security partnership with Scandinavian powers disregards Inuit sovereignty. Carney also devalues Venezuelan, Cuban, Palestinian, and Iranian sovereignty, and stands ready to commit Canada to "a military role" against Iran.

Canada increasingly seeks to participate more aggressively within the imperialist order. Canada's militarization is, above all, a class project of rearmament, extraction, heightened border security, and austerity.

There is no innocent Canadian nationalism. In periods of sharpening global imperialist rivalry, nationalism presents the interests of the ruling class as the common interest of the nation. Militarization serves those interests with budgets, weapons, logistics, police powers, and a sense of urgency. Carney's government uses the language of resilience and sovereignty to secure working-class consent, boasting of their increasing military spending, now reaching 63 billion dollars and climbing.

Carney's Defence Industrial Strategy promises to "rebuild, rearm, and reinvest," create 125,000 jobs, significantly increase military exports, rapidly increase Canadian sourcing of defence contracts, and align critical-minerals projects with national defence priorities. For Carney, "The work of defending Canada is the work of building Canada." Defense is now infused into industrial policy, regional development policy and labour-market policy. Canadian capitalism is being refocused around armed

capital accumulation. The state-owned Business Development Bank of Canada has already allocated 5 billion dollars for defence, funding companies developing technologies for military and civilian use. Benjamin Bergen of the Canadian Venture Capital and Private Equity Association called this a "seismic shift," as financial institutions begin removing previous defence investment restrictions.

This fusion is most concrete in the Arctic, where so-called Canadian sovereignty meets its arch-enemy: Indigenous nations and their land.

does Bill 5 in Ontario, that allows the cabinet to accelerate mining and resource projects in the name of economic urgency. Both laws facilitate militarization. Rearmament requires logistics, energy, minerals, corridors, and executive power. Threatened sovereignty justifies fast-tracking extraction and containing Indigenous resistance.

The same pattern exists at the border. Bill C-12 tightens access to asylum, expands executive power over migrants and enables mass deportation while closing borders. Meanwhile, Ottawa is preparing

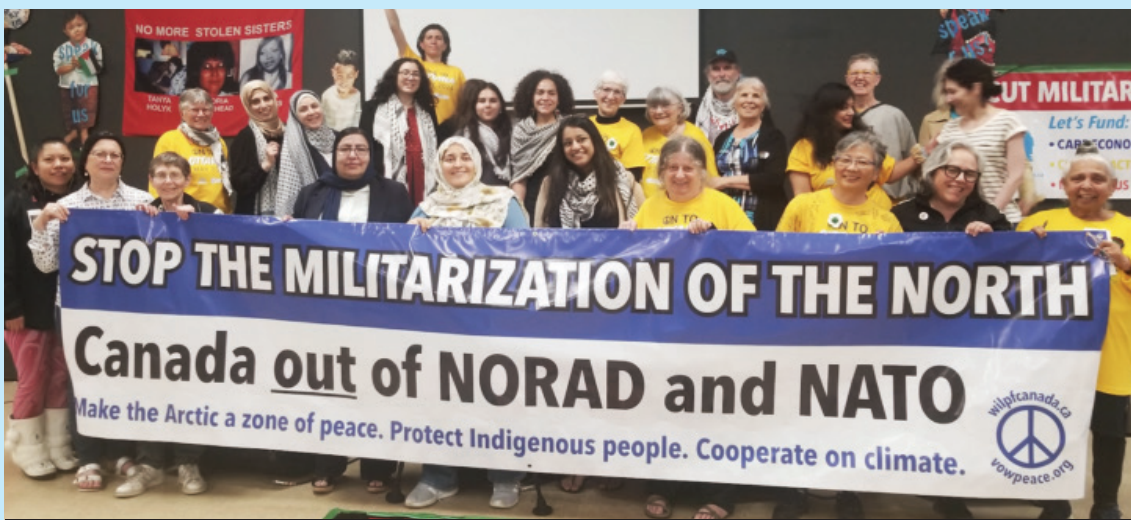
anti-strike measures, and wartime coercion expanded dramatically. The 1918 conscription riots in Quebec were crushed, killing five protestors. The Red Scare after the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919 strengthened centralized anti-radical mechanisms. These historical truths contradict the myth of Canada as a modest and peaceable nation. Canadian nationalism has always been coercive, especially when the stakes for capital are high.

That is why we have to remember the history of the Second International. Before 1914,

people should combat this enemy, located in their own country. This is a political struggle to be waged in collaboration with the proletariat in other countries, who are battling their own native imperialism."

The same political trap is being laid again. The working class and Indigenous nations across Canada and the US have interests separate from both the colonialist-capitalist class in Canada and the fascist oligarchs in the US. Carney's liberal nationalism rallies workers behind rearmament to resist Trump. This does not resist imperialism, but strengthens one of its nodes, Canadian imperialism, while fuelling anti-immigrant racism, austerity and justifying settler-colonial domination. Canada claims to be reducing dependence on the US, but is doing so within NATO, with integrated defence-industrial planning, and increased inter-state competition over the Arctic, minerals, supply chains, and strategic geography.

So where does hope lie? On March 28, eight million people joined the No Kings protests across the United States against Trump, ICE repression and war, including major demonstrations in Minnesota, New York, and Chicago. In Britain, over half a million people marched in London against the rise of Reform UK and the far right. In Ontario and Nova Scotia, students and grassroots movements are mobilizing against government austerity attacks on education, healthcare and housing. Indigenous land defenders and water protectors from coast to coast are standing up to the fast-track agenda. These struggles point away from nationalist alignment with "our" rulers and toward mass resistance from below, crucially involving workers. The task is to build solidarity internationally, linking the fight against fascism, war, austerity, racism, deportation, privatization, and colonial dispossession into a common struggle against imperialism, that is, capitalism itself. As Rosa Luxemburg wrote in 1911: "Militarism in both its forms, as war and as armed peace, is a legitimate child and a logical result of capitalism, and can only be overcome with its destruction. Hence whoever honestly desires world peace and liberation from the tremendous burden of armaments must also desire socialism."



Voice of Women for Peace call for an end to militarization of the arctic

Roads, ports, hydro expansion, radar systems, military readiness, and critical-mineral corridors are being bundled strategically. The Grays Bay Road and Port Project, the Mackenzie Valley Highway, and the Taltson Hydro Expansion are all framed as infrastructure to protect sovereignty and drive northern prosperity: materially, they serve to unlock and move critical minerals and other strategic resources. For Canada, this is security. For capitalists, opportunity. This militarized extraction rests on intensified subordination of Indigenous nations and lands to Canadian capitalist interests.

Federally, Bill C-5, the One Canadian Economy Act, created a fast-track framework for projects deemed in the "national interest," compressing review timelines and concentrating power in cabinet. This undermines Indigenous rights, as

broad program cuts across federal departments while shielding National Defence, the CBSA, and the RCMP. This expands the domestic architecture of militarization with a stronger coercive apparatus, a harsher border regime, and weaker social provision. Rearmament will be funded not by capital, but by workers, migrants, students, Indigenous communities, and those relying on public services.

None of this is new. The Canadian state has always used the language of emergency, security, and national unity to suppress resistance. Long before WWI, Indigenous resistance had already been criminalized as treason and sedition. After the defeat of the North-West Rebellion of Métis and Plains Cree peoples in 1885, Louis Riel and 8 Plains Cree leaders were tried and executed by the Canadian state. During WWI, enemy-alien registration, internment, censorship, disenfranchisement,

International congresses denounced war, and pledged international working-class resistance. But when WWI came, most social democratic parties collapsed into patriotic support for their own states. German Social Democracy voted for war credits, declaring that the triumph of "Russian despotism ... would put much if not everything in question for our nation and its future freedom. It is necessary to fend off this danger and to secure the culture and independence of our own country. ... We will not forsake our fatherland in its hour of need." French and Belgian worker leaders also invoked national defence, while the British Labour leadership justified war in the name of democracy. Karl Liebknecht countered this patriotic frenzy by declaring: "The main enemy of the German people is in Germany itself: German imperialism, the German war party, and German secret diplomacy. The German

...heatwave continued from page 1

The largest of these plans is a massive new trans-mountain tar sands crude oil pipeline, running from central Alberta to BC. The state-owned Trans Mountain Corporation would pay over 90% of the costs—tens of billions of dollars that would take decades to recover. Yet Carney praised the plan as "another very profitable pipeline".

Extracting wealth, exporting disaster

In 2022, climate disaster ravaged Pakistan during mass floods that displaced 33 million people, a third of the country's population—a stark reminder that people that contribute the least to the climate crisis are the

most victimized.

Desmond Tutu coined the term "climate apartheid" to describe this: wealthy states attempt to insulate themselves from the disastrous effects of climate change and continue to invest in the policies driving it; more impoverished nations—that have already borne histories of colonialism and exploitation—suffer the consequences.

This is also true within states like Canada, where unhoused populations and Indigenous peoples bear the brunt.

International law scholar Carmen Gonzalez described the implications of defining "ecocide" as a war crime in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court:

"I examined the pitfalls of adding the crime of ecocide to the Rome

Statute of the International Criminal Court. These include the ICC's tendency to blame a few "bad apples" for injustices that are deeply structural, to selectively prosecute Africans, and to immunize [...] veto-wielding UN



Security Council members who are often most culpable for widespread ecological destruction."

As we have seen this summer, climate injustice will continue to spread as long as the governments and corporations of the global north feel free to prioritize their own profits and "security".

Support Indigenous Resistance

Canada's rulers continue to pour money into fossil fuels. Capitalism's blind pursuit of profits, and the strategic importance of oil to military competition for regional and global dominance sets these priorities.

Hope lies in resistance from below. Indigenous-led resistance blocked previous Enbridge Northern Gateway pipelines, while Wet'suwet'en resis-

tance to the Coastal GasLink pipeline in 2020 sparked the Shut Down Canada movement in solidarity that was only disrupted by the pandemic and RCMP violence. The proposed tar sands pipeline is planned to use the existing Trans Mountain corridor, specifically to avoid further pushback from land defenders.

This reveals the fears of our ruling class.

Indigenous land defenders are mobilizing against encroachments on their traditional lands by "nation building" projects. These same projects seem to offer jobs for workers. But workers' struggles against cuts to public services and jobs can build confidence to fight for the needed job rich transition in alliance with Indigenous sovereignty struggles.

Artificial Intelligence: the AI bubble and labour

by: Rohit Revi and Cailin Gallinger

AI or ‘Artificial Intelligence’ is a term that has exploded in popularity over the past four years, seemingly shoehorned into every new product announcement and technological development. The subject animates a wide variety of issues within our current polycrisis—whether it be energy systems and the climate crisis, access to clean water, Indigenous sovereignty, the ongoing relative decline of the US Empire, the strengthening of military economy and weapons of genocide, newer forms of surveillance and tools for policing, anxieties surrounding mass unemployment, or questions concerning the future of arts and humanities.

Within our technological moment, where a large portion of our waking hours involve being part of the attention economy of social media platforms, the subject of AI also brings together many cultural questions. What are the psychological consequences of being immersed in a world filled with AI slop, where it is often becoming increasingly difficult to separate the real from the AI-generated, whether it be a photograph, video, or news article? What becomes of us when our access to reality is increasingly mediated by algorithmically-curated and artificially-fabricated content?

In more ways than one, the subject of AI is omnipresent within every dystopian element of our social life. Yet, at the same time, there is often a lack of clear popular consensus on what ‘Artificial Intelligence’ actually is.

What is ‘Artificial Intelligence’?

First and foremost, what is referred to in broad strokes as ‘Artificial Intelligence’ is not one thing. It is a family of computing technologies based on the idea of replicating human patterns of thinking and learning from data, including neural network architecture and ‘machine learning’ optimization techniques, which originated shortly after the development of the first reasonably-powerful computers in the 1950s. While the field languished through the 80s and 90s, in the 2000s rapid advances in computing power and memory opened up the prospect of training these systems on the massive volumes of data being created on the internet.

Most modern AI systems are based on the ‘transformer’—a type of deep neural network invented by Google researchers in 2017. While originally intended to improve their translation service by extracting more general meaning from samples of text, it was soon discovered that these models could be modified to generate new sentences based on an input prompt. The popular analogy is a kind of ‘fancy autocorrect’: the models essentially predict a single next word at a time that is statistically most likely to follow a given input. By recursively repeating this

process, they can generate much longer sequences, and through specifying different rewards and goals during training they can be shaped into “useful” forms such as an eager and helpful digital assistant.

These language-based transformer models, which developed surprising capabilities purely through training on and finding patterns in immense

already taken place towards the production of generative AI, and how these investments are inflating a bubble that may threaten the entire global economy.

At the same time, we are constantly being sold on the more-than-human qualities of these tools and urged to fetishize their capacities. But there is nothing fundamentally



quantities of text, came to be known as “large language models”. Today, when corporations, politicians, and the media casually use the term AI, they are typically referring specifically to such models—those at the heart of ChatGPT, Claude, and others, which have been popularized as consumer-oriented tools. The impact of these tools have been simultaneously under-appreciated but also over-estimated in the popular domain.

On the one hand, it is far too easy to waive off these “AI systems” as merely a ‘shiny new object’ being pushed by growth-obsessed corporations, while having no real-world impact. Such outlooks severely underestimate the disruption they are already causing in several economic sectors, including education, medical and legal documentation, and software development—regardless of whether their output is truly adequate or functional. Dismissive attitudes also undersell the massive economic investments that have

mystical or impossible to grasp about AI. In the most concrete form, every AI function today is a series of mathematical operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) carried out on large arrays of numbers, that generate a probabilistic outcome. (Indeed, it is this inherent probabilistic nature that makes avoiding incorrect outputs and ‘hallucinations’ mathematically impossible—but as with many other industries eroded throughout the 2010s and 20s, the only real limitation on labour devaluation is the starry-eyed CEO’s capacity to overlook the decline in quality.) The idea that AI is a fundamentally new kind of technology is part of the mythos generated by Silicon Valley in pursuit of investments. The civilizational arguments raised by tech CEOs serve only to create the hype necessary to keep the bubble inflated.

The spectacle of AI

We are living in an era where Silicon

Valley tech-bros have consistently peddled spectacular promises of futuristic technologies in order to drive investor funds. This is especially the case as the decline of the US continues to steepen in the global economy, a trend that has particularly intensified since the pandemic—whether it be the famed Metaverse project which Zuckerberg likes to pretend never happened, or Jeff Bezos’s massive promise of space tourism within our lifetime (subsequently scaled back to briefly tossing millionaires just high enough above the atmosphere to technically reach ‘space’).

Coming out of the pandemic, where the brutality of the capitalist system was laid bare and naked for what it was—an ugly death-machine that puts profit over people—we have seen numerous attempts by the ruling class to try and generate excitement over these middling endeavours, all to get investors to trust the market and win back popular consent for capitalism.

Elon Musk’s SpaceX is a further example of this. On June 12, SpaceX went public with a valuation of 2 trillion US dollars, the highest ever initial public offering in US history—and close to 100 times the company’s annual revenue—all in the name of fulfilling Musk’s delusional grandiose pipe dream of transporting human civilization to Mars.

Even the ominous warnings against development of AI released over the past several years are part of the spectacle selling it to the public. Most of these warnings have come from within the AI sector itself by figures like Musk, OpenAI’s Sam Altman, and Anthropic’s Dario Amodei, all in service of hyping the “dangerously super-human” capabilities of their models (regardless of whether these actually exist), while shielding themselves with the fig leaf of “public responsibility”.

AI investment bubble

Economist Michael Roberts has said that AI is nothing but “one big trade” within the US economy. It is a massive bet that investors have made on the US, despite its consistent decline in international influence, especially in the Trump 2.0 era of flailing attempts at maintaining global hegemony.

The amount of money being fire-hosed into AI models and data centers far surpasses even the percentage of GDP invested during the 19th century railroad boom. Currently, GDP growth in the US is driven almost entirely by rising tech spending—if this starts to drop, the US economy will enter recession very quickly, even if investments decline by just 4 to 6 percent.

Equally dangerous is that hyperscalers—companies like Amazon, Meta, and Google who are rapidly expanding computing infrastructure to supply the AI boom—are beginning to depend on external funding to finance their investments. As no private entities other than themselves have the stores of capital necessary to support this unprece-

dent investment, they have now contorted themselves into ‘circular financing’, propping each other up to keep the hype-powered stock market rising. In practice, this means that Microsoft might buy hardware from Nvidia; Nvidia then uses that revenue to buy a multi-billion-dollar stake in OpenAI; OpenAI then signs a contract for cloud computing with Microsoft, and so on, all generating seemingly bountiful net-positive cash flow to dazzle their shareholders in the next quarterly report.

As a result, we are now caught in a fragile house of cards increasingly poised to collapse. The massive costs of data centers and electricity demand mean hyperscalers are having to move past even circular financing—they are now reliant on borrowing money to keep up their investment rates, and then offloading that risk onto shareholders by going public.

We now have numbers for the estimated rate of return for all the major hyperscalers by 2030. Even if we are to assume there is zero cost accrued by these companies, every single hyperscaler except Amazon is predicted to have negative return on investment by 2030. This is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to corporate losses as 60% of the data centers they are supposed to have built by 2027 are either still under construction or have not yet even broken ground.

Human Labour and AI

Hidden behind all the glowing announcements and dazzling claims of capabilities is the question of the material inputs enabling the meteoric rise of AI. The major technological breakthrough in this regard was the development of “deep learning”, where patterns are extracted from huge quantities of data through trillions of calculations operating in parallel. In 2020, OpenAI released a paper demonstrating that the capabilities of their Generative Pre-trained Transformer models—the ‘GPT’ in ChatGPT—scaled exponentially with more data, compute time, and model size. Suddenly, the race to ‘hyperscale’ the consumption of energy and human creative output was on.

The most obvious victims of this rapacious drive were the endless hours of human labour put into creating the modern internet, which were happily devoured with zero regard or compensation for their creators. Artists and writers have felt this most acutely, as their works were fed into these machines without their consent and now spit out facsimiles with no reference, credit, or remuneration. Anthropic acquired millions of copyrighted books and then sliced, scanned, and destroyed them to create its Claude model. And Zuckerberg’s Meta has even taken to redeploying 6,500 employees—20% of its engineers—to writing problem and solution sets to train its AI systems, after the contents of the entire internet and all written media in history turned out to be insufficient for its bottomless maw.

US supported far-right win in Columbia election

by: J. Griffin

On June 20th, Colombia went to the polls for run-off elections between two different visions of future of the country. The candidates were Abelardo de la Espriella, a self-proclaimed far-right candidate, representing the movement “Defensores de la Patria” (Defenders of the Homeland). His opponent was Iván Cepeda, politician, human rights activist and philosopher, representing the “Pacto Histórico” (Historic Pact), the largest left-wing movement in the country that led current Colombian president Gustavo Petro to attain the presidency in the year 2022.

After a contentious first round on June 2nd, that led to unsubstantiated accusations of electoral fraud by sitting president Gustavo Petro, a difference of just over 250,000 votes gave the victory to De La Espriella; a fact that raised another round of fraud accusations by president Petro. De la Espriella has been surrounded by controversy throughout his career due to his ties to Alex Saab, former Minister of Industries and National Production in Venezuela and presumed figurehead for former president Nicolas Maduro, and due to his ties to the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia – AUC (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia), a paramilitary organization charged with massacres, war crimes, forced displacement, assassinations and torture.

Setting the stage

To better understand the landscape that led to the far-right victory in Colombia, it is necessary to examine the presidency of current president Gustavo Petro. Coming to power in 2022 through “Pacto Histórico”, composed of a vast coalition of groups and individuals who wanted to see political change in Colombia and, with Petro’s victory, became one of the largest movements in the country. However, Petro’s win came with a narrow margin of victory, his presidency required working in coalition with more traditional liberal and conservative parties in the political spectrum.

Although he was successful in passing important reforms focused on labour and pensions, his administration has also been fraught with problems. Charges of corruption have dogged the Petro administration, from family members and government agencies being accused of financial crimes, to abuses of power by members of his administration, such as a case of illegal wiretapping carried out by Petro’s former chief of staff (and current ambassador to the United Kingdom) Laura Sarabia.

Asides from these charges, the aforementioned broadness of his coalition proved to also be a hindrance to Petro’s agenda, such as in the case of his rejected health

reform, which made Petro call for a referendum on such reforms and led to a stand-off between the executive and legislative branches. And, some measures by the executive to carry out its agenda have been deemed unconstitutional by Colombia’s Constitutional Court.

As a result, this made the Petro administration have a mixed result during its time in power and a conflicting perception. Although some sectors of civil society openly cheered the government’s proposals and marched in support of them, more traditional sectors of political power stood as staunch opponents of the government’s plan to bring prosperity to the country. Also, the drug trafficking cartels and paramilitary forces have proven to be a problem the administration has been unable to effectively combat, as indicated by a surge in violence in the country in the previous months and even an assassination attempt on Petro

What comes next?

Abelardo de la Espriella has profiled himself as a “far-right”, styled after other Latin American figures such as Javier Milei in Argentina and Nayib Bukele in El Salvador, and even received an official endorsement by US president Donald Trump. As part of his campaign promises, he’s promising a tough stance on crime and has openly criticized the “Paz Total” (Total Peace) plan set forth by the Petro administration, a plan that has had mixed success in its implementa-



Far-right Trump ally Abelardo de la Espriella

tion.

In matters of security, de la Espriella is seeking to build 10 privately run mega-prisons, in the style of El Salvador’s controversial CECOT detention centers; destroying 300,000 hectares of coca plantations, deploying the military to combat drug trafficking and dismantling the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz – JEP), which is tasked with investigating, clarifying, prosecuting and punishing the most serious crimes committed over the more than 50 years of armed conflict in Colombia, before December 1, 2016.

In matters of economy, he has vowed to restructure public debt and reducing government through layoffs and “fusion of redundant agencies”, which is aiming for

\$31.8 billion in savings and a reduction of state apparatus to 1/4 its current size (1.4 million in a country of 53.9 million people); implementation of AI for the DIAN (Office of Taxes and National Customs) and seeking to create a “pro-business” environment that’ll guarantee a 3% GDP growth.

Alongside these measures, de la Espriella has promised to put a halt to the land reform program being carried out by the Petro administration, a move that has benefited historically forgotten communities and victims of the arm conflict in Colombia and has been signalled he’s proposed an investment in oil and gas exploitation, including off-shore and inland gas extraction infrastructure and transport. An expansion of “legal mining” framework and fast-tracking of fracking projects. And, although he’s promised investment in renewable sources of energy, this proposal includes investment in a nuclear energy policy and express licensing for such projects; effectively overturning advances made in environmentalism in the country.

In conclusion

Abelardo de la Espriella’s victory in the Colombian elections not only signals another win in the far-right string of victories in Latin America, which mean not only a regression of hard-earned popular victories that benefit the oppressed classes throughout the territory; but they also provide a way for wealthy local classes to consolidate political and economic power at the expense of the proletariat of such countries and they open the doors to an increased influence of American politics thanks to the Trump administration and their “Donroe Doctrine”.

It is fundamental to keep in mind that, although the result comes through popular vote, the policies this new government seeks to put forth will represent a clear and present danger to several group within the country: from people in rural areas, native communities, environmental and human rights

activists. And, this also serves to remind us that the far-right never stops, never rests in its attempts to subvert previous victories and overturning them in the service of capitalist ideology that seeks only to extract resources, maximize profits and destroy anyone and anything that stands in the way.

The only method to combat this is through popular action and it is our responsibility to support, in any way possible, popular efforts geared towards maintaining and expanding hard-earned victories for the populace, stopping any excesses of power or oppression carried out in the service of capital. And, to be mindful of any attempts that either the Canadian government or Canadian corporations may carry out to capitalize out of Colombia’s newly elected government.

Another direct source of human labour are the thousands of minimally-paid workers who engage with the models’ output as they are trained, providing the necessary feedback that guides them toward more “desirable” behaviour. This process is known as Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback (RLHF), and it is the key to turning statistical models of relationships between text—the core of LLMs such as OpenAI’s series of GPTs—into a usable, user-facing end-product like ChatGPT. While compute power may be endlessly scalable with material inputs, human judgement is not; therefore, to keep costs down, AI companies have consistently outsourced this labour to the Global South.

OpenAI, for example, paid Kenyan workers less than 2 dollars an hour to make ChatGPT “less toxic”.

Workers in the Global South have also been tasked with watching and labelling graphic and psychologically-harmful visuals such as executions, child pornography, and sexual assaults, in order to ensure models are compliant with laws in the global north. This violent and visceral exploitation of human labour is very much at the heart of AI.

Furthermore, the extraction of value from nature is also a labour process. On this front, the energy demands raised by the AI paradigm are massive. From 2010 to 2017, the energy consumed by data centers was about 60 terawatt-hours (TWh), which has since exploded three times to 180 TWh a year. In 2024, datacenters in Ireland consumed more energy than urban households. Colossus, the main data center behind Elon Musk’s xAI, consumes as much energy as a city of 250,000 people.

The value of environmental ‘externalities’

The current AI paradigm has also complicated the energy systems debate. If ever there was a faultline between Big Oil and Big Tech on the future of energy investments (the latter often married to a techno-optimist ‘green capitalism’ future), the fanatical hunger for energy to power AI systems has brought them once again into alignment. For example, most new data centers being built in the hyperscaler expansion race are powered by gas-fueled generators, as the electricity grids of the small communities they are placed next to are unable to handle the massively-increased demand. When it comes to the imperative of profit-making, all fractions of the ruling class are finding common ground.

This is why the term that is being used by Indigenous activists on Turtle Island to describe our current moment—“resource colonialism”—is crucial. The AI infrastructure is centrally built upon extraction of value for Indigenous lands, and from the exploitation of value from labour in the Global South.

What is crucial for socialists today is that we remain open to

identifying and locating newer sites for class struggle made possible by these developments within capitalism. The worst aspects of this AI paradigm—the extent of social and economic problems it has generated en masse—can also be used against the corporations profiting from it. All of us are affected by this in ways that we deeply care about, so the extent of the issue makes it possible for us to come together in struggle.

Ultimately, and undoubtedly, the aim of that struggle must be to strengthen the resurgent Indigenous resistance against Carney’s resource colonialism. This death machine can be stopped, but only if we build working class struggle in a manner that constantly strengthens solidarity with Indigenous self-determination.

Opposition is growing

One US survey found over 70% of Americans oppose data centers in their communities — a huge jump from only 47% a year prior. This opposition is galvanizing into a more coordinated public movement against data centers and shows the possibility for grassroots opposition to beat back this unfolding environmental and labor disaster.

Many climate activists have turned their attention to the environmental impacts of data centers including groups like Sunrise Movement.

In Hamilton, Ontario, public pressure, including from the local the Labour Council is pushing the city to change the zoning regulations in order to pause planned data centers.

Some unions are beginning to fight for contract language that protects against AI. The Communication Workers of America have a resource kit so other unions can follow their example.

Although more than 300 bills have been introduced in US states this year to rein in data centers, labor’s resistance to data centers is highly fractured. Many building trades unions—like IBEW—actively support them to secure well-paying construction jobs.

In this debate, we can keenly see how capitalism pits workers’ short-term interests such as having a construction job for a year or two while the center is being built, against our long-term interests.

While developers promise jobs, data centers typically employ very few people once construction is complete. Local communities often miss out on promised tax revenues due to heavy incentive packages, leaving towns with permanently altered environments and strain on civic infrastructure.

The unplanned nature of the capitalist economy forces all of us to pay the costs for every advance that promises profits for the few.

Building a unified movement that brings together workers, Indigenous Land Defenders and environmentalists is crucial to rein in the billionaires whose reckless and ruthless use of these technologies will mean more crises for people and the planet.

Art is a Weapon

Revolutionary and Antifascist Posters from Spain, 1936-39

by: Chantal Sundaram

by Education for Liberation Collective,
Ottawa

This is the 90th anniversary of an earth-shattering event of resistance against fascism, known as the Spanish Civil War. However, the years 1936-39 also saw a revolution from below where in the words of George Orwell “the working class was in the saddle.”

The ultimate victory of the fascists was followed by bloodshed, mass graves, and the Franco dictatorship lasted until the late 1970s. But the moment of hope that emerged in 1936 must not be forgotten and holds much inspiration today – the possibility of uniting a society against a fascist threat and the potential for this to lead to even more fundamental social change.

In the heat of the moment, art deployed in the streets has always been used to move hearts and minds. Agitation and propaganda, for the right purpose, can counter all the false capitalist advertising controlled by the corporate media and corporate-owned social media. In the philosophy of the anti-fascist thinker Hanna Arendt “cultural artifacts” such as art, literature, monuments – and posters – can capture and freeze in time the all-too-fleeting experience of revolutionary struggle and make it feel a little bit real again.

That is very much true of this powerful poster exhibit, curated for Ottawa’s Education for Liberation Collective by Claire Nicolson-Hurtig (@encrenoire.illustration, Posters for Palestine 2024 exhibition, Education for Liberation Collective). It was organized with a view to the present rising of the far right internationally and the silence and collaboration of present-day governments.

As the exhibit description attests, the posters “illuminate a history that extends into the

present moment and to struggles we continue to fight today, from opposing fascism, fighting for gender liberation, defending children’s genuine health and well-being, and defending the dignity and well-being of working people to fighting for environmental sustainability, for public education and art, and supporting international solidarity.”

From socialized childcare and libraries



Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion calls to fight the fascists

for workers, to the presence of women in all aspects of the revolution, including the workers’ militia, the images and slogans in the posters chosen painted a vibrant picture of a society that was being transformed from the bottom up.

Even the posters themselves demonstrated

this concretely: they were identified not only by artist but by the name of the newly-collectivized print shop where they were produced and the union the printers belonged to.

Posters, artifacts, screenings

The exhibit presented reproductions of 25 of the thousands of posters produced by the artists, organizers, unions, and leftist

(Spain).

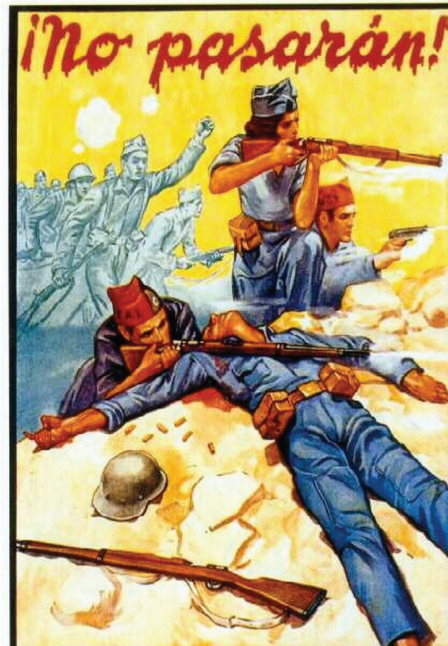
One section of the exhibit focused on reproductions of artifacts from the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, the Canadian contingent of the International Brigades that fought in Spain. It included letters from some of the 1500 Canadians who volunteered to fight to defend republican Spain against Franco’s fascist coup, with no official support from the Canadian government.

I was fortunate to get a tour of the exhibit by curator Claire Hurtig, who previously curated an exhibit about the genocide in Gaza in the same space. Part of the exhibit highlighting posters calling for international solidarity with republican Spain also included a call for support for Gaza, creating a meaningful echo with the present.

But Claire also pointed to other parallels: the inaction, complicity, and sometimes active support of mainstream governments for genocide and other policies that are fueling the growth of the far right. She read key passages from George Orwell’s Homage to Catalonia that pointed to the contradictions of a movement simultaneously resisting a fascist coup and trying to defend the new society of collectivized industry and land, run democratically by workers and peasant themselves – all the while dealing with forces that claimed to be keeping the fascists at bay but which ultimately betrayed the movement on the ground.

The program surrounding the exhibit also included screenings of important films about the Spanish Civil War and other working class struggles of the 1930s (Land and Freedom, Cradle Will Rock) as well as a workshop on political poster-making and collage. The exhibit ended on June 20 with a sale of beautiful poster reproductions, and a promise of more to come from Education for Liberation Collective in Ottawa.

In the words of the Revolution to the fascists: No pasaran! (They shall not pass).



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LAND BACK!

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.



Winnipeg Nakba exhibit uplifts Palestinian voices

by: Tami Gadir

Palestine Uprooted: Nakba Past and Present opened at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) in Winnipeg.

The purpose of what became known colloquially as “the Nakba exhibition” was to use a national institution for historical education for Palestinian Canadians to relate their own and their families’ experiences of the Nakba. The Nakba, Arabic for “calamity,” took place when the Israeli state was established through forcible and violent displacement of Palestinian inhabitants of the land in May 1948. Palestinian Canadians in Winnipeg have been requesting such an exhibit since the CMHR opened in 2014, so they could have a voice among the stories of other groups who have suffered human rights violations, discrimination, oppression, apartheid, and genocide.

The advisory network involved with research for the exhibition included several Palestinian academics and one Jewish academic from various parts of the country, as well as two local Palestinian community leaders from Winnipeg. Head curator of the exhibition, Isabelle Masson, estimated that there were 50 or more people involved in the various aspects of the development and construction of the exhibition from start to finish.

The proposal of this exhibition and agreement to proceed with developing it four years ago instigated a great deal of fear among people invested in the Zionist myth of how the Israeli state was established. Groups such as the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg fought the exhibition’s development in one or another way since it started.

In the days leading up to the opening on Friday the 26th, outlets like the National Post and the Globe and Mail repeatedly published the arguments of the groups that took issue with the exhibition. While they sometimes made space for counterarguments that supported the exhibition, any such counterarguments were immediately followed by the publication of more objections. Capitalist media gave an out-sized voice to the Zionists, which is consistent with their coverage of the genocide in Gaza and Palestinian struggle in general.

By contrast, some in-depth coverage should be emerging from The Breach in the coming week, as well as ongoing coverage from Samira Mohyeddin, the Toronto-based journalist and owner of On the Line Media, who left the CBC to become independent.

A statement was released by Independent Jewish Voices, the Jewish Faculty Network, and the United Jewish People’s Order the day before the opening to counter the objections. It was used in some of the recent press coverage of the opening, but its use was limited because it supports the exhibition, whereas mainstream media outlets tend to seek out controversy. Moreover, these are the voices who want to challenge the status quo, which is not in the interests of these outlets. The Zionist organizations, whose interests intersect with those of the State (and therefore with policing as well), repeat the statistic that 94% of Jews in Canada

prevented the event from being relished by the 750 people present. On the third floor of the museum, Palestinian women led tatreez (traditional Palestinian embroidery) workshops, accompanied by a live oud performer. On the fifth floor, people were permitted a walkthrough of the exhibition itself. Visitors were greeted to a reception on the ground floor, where the evening ended with speeches by the CEO of the CMHR, Isha Khan, and a slideshow presentation by curator Isabelle Masson, who also provided a verbal guide through the exhibition. Khan stated that she stood by the decision to persist with the exhibition despite the intense pressures on her from several directions. Palestinian Canadian youth recited poems selected by the museum, such as *Revenge* by Taha Muhammed Ali.

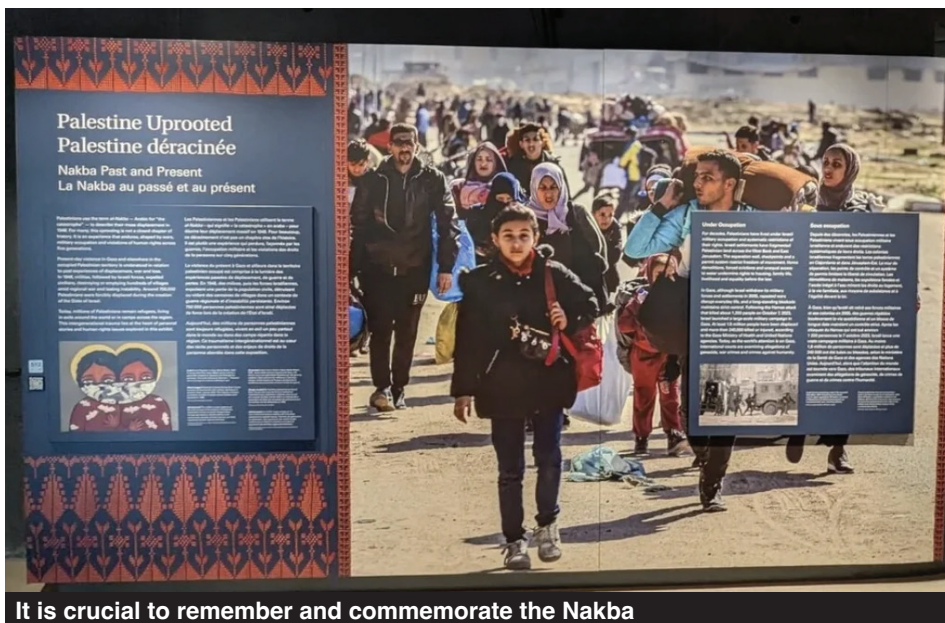
Zionist protesters showed up in larger numbers than they normally would in Winnipeg,

from the museum entrance, so had no impact on the event inside.

The exhibition is very small. Members of the United Jewish People’s Order (UJPO) and the Jewish Faculty Network (JFN) took a humorous but pointed photo of themselves using a tape measure on the space, to compare its dimensions with the space taken up by other exhibitions. When coming face-to-face with these humble proportions, many attendees of the opening commented on how the reactions against the exhibition appeared to be out of proportion. Yet the amount of physical space taken up by *Palestine Uprooted* is not what is at issue for the people who object to it, who fear the very idea of the exhibition. It is threatening to the Zionist account of history that visitors to the museum may learn a different version of that history than the one used to rationalize the ethnic cleansing and forced displacement of 750,000 Palestinians from over 500 villages in 1948. Zionists do not want people to be exposed to different conclusions than those of the Canadian state, which reinforces ideological and material support for the Israeli state’s genocide in Gaza.

At the same time, the broad polls in most English-speaking western countries whose governments still support the Israeli state would suggest that the cat is out of the bag: most people recognize the oppression of Palestinians through the violence of Israel, and most people do not support it continuing.

As a federally funded institution with philanthropic contributors, there are limits to what this exhibition means for anyone suffering inside Palestine today. Socialists know that any institution such as a national museum is beholden to interests much larger than a principled CEO with a human rights law background, and that such institutions do not serve the goal of smashing the capitalist state or the struggles against oppression brought about by capitalist imperialism and settler-colonialism. But symbolic or reformist victories can still be real victories. Museums are a bridge, in that they can communicate with a wider, less radicalized general population, and therefore play an important role in the public education of such human rights issues as anti-colonial struggles. It is therefore significant what kinds of stories they do and don’t include.



“support the existence of a Jewish state in Israel.” This statistic is highly suspect, given the political perspective of its author. In addition, what the original claim actually said does not always square with how it is weaponized against Jews with the “wrong” opinions.

Regardless, the exhibition opening encountered no direct disruptions or anything that

with estimates at around 200. Present among them was Gail Asper, a trustee of the Asper Foundation and daughter of Israel (Izzy) Asper, the philanthropist responsible for initiating the proposal for the museum that became the CMHR. She had been raising concerns with the so-called one-sidedness of the exhibition. Protesters were a long way

...TS2023 continued

They must be allowed to stay. Their struggle is one of many by migrant workers, temporary foreign workers, immigrants and post graduate work permit holders against increasingly restrictive and racist border controls. Canadian bosses and political leaders scapegoat all these workers whose legal rights are curtailed, while profiting enormously from their labour and the money they bring to the country. Working class power is weakened when the rights of some workers are restricted. Only bosses benefit through the super-exploitation of racialized migrant labour. That is why socialists must argue for the abolishment of border controls on people and for the full and equal rights of all who arrive on these shores from elsewhere.

Most of the people of Canada are immigrants, whether they came here hundreds of years ago or arrived last week. It is only Indigenous peoples that are not immigrants. In southern Ontario, the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant – a treaty between the Anishinaabe, the Mississaugas of the Credit and the Haudenosaunee that predates Canada – invites all newcomers to share the land and its resources in order to sustain it for future generations. Indigenous understandings of treaties across so-called Canada similarly call on settlers to be “treaty people” and honour their commitments to stewarding the land

for future generations. It is the capitalist ruling class of Canada, that has consciously pursued genocidal settler colonial policies to claim the land and resources, that has not honoured these treaties. Workers have no objective interest in supporting these policies and can be won to support a radically different future.

While we support the TS2023 campaign, there is some problematic language in some of the slogans put forward that emphasize the “legal” nature of their community. This is an understandable defense mechanism because the attacks on immigrants are fierce. But slogans such as “Are we being punished for not being a burden to Canada” that was seen on a social media post implies that other groups seeking status in Canada are a burden and thus not worthy of staying. This cedes ground to the far right, who scapegoats immigrants for the impacts of government policies on housing, healthcare, jobs and social provision. There must be a way for TS2023 campaigners to make their demands while building bridges to other immigrant, migrant and temporary foreign worker communities – and those seeking refugee status – who face similar (and worse) conditions under Canada’s racist immigration policies.

Building the links between these immigrant communities under attack, and with workers organized in unions can build a powerful movement to challenge these attacks.

Blame billionaires not immigrants.

...OPSEU continued from page 8

During this campaign, OPSEU community service locals have adopted the ‘Common Front’ strategy, used in Quebec for decades. By syncing contract durations and end dates well in advance, they have brought the power of large numbers of workers to bear on employers and the province. A year of campaigning has made the strike immeasurably stronger.

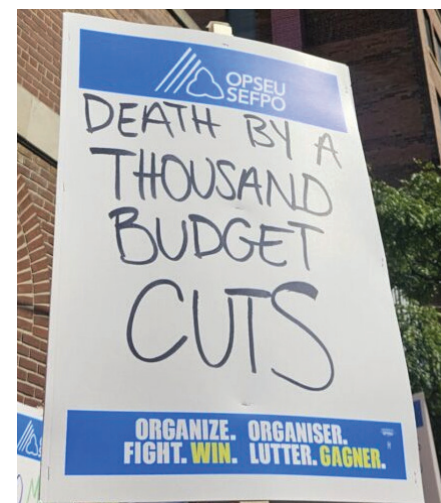
But what is really needed is broader labour movement solidarity on a much larger scale. OPSEU is only one union that organizes community service workers, who are also members of CUPE (in the main), and also of private sector unions such as Unifor, UFCW, USW, Teamsters and LIUNA. At CUPE Ontario’s last convention, activists pushed hard from the floor, calling for Common Front bargaining in every sector, as we face intransigent employers and governments. OPSEU’s Worth Fighting For campaigning strike would have been much stronger if CUPE, and other sectoral unions had coordinated agreement end dates in tandem with OPSEU.

Contracts expire for Ontario’s 255,000 education workers on August 31. Seeing the power of the Common Front strategy, Elementary and secondary teachers (EFTO, OECA, OSSTF AEFO) and education workers (OPSEU and CUPE) have vowed to bargain together to fight Ford’s relentless

education cuts.

Unionized workers organizing collectively can win in sector after sector, and rebuild our strength. The solidarity seen so far on OPSEU picket lines shows the appetite for this – unfortunately not shared at the top echelons of the labour movement.

Building maximum solidarity with workers whenever there is a fight back can change this. From OPSEU workers, to education sector workers, to healthcare workers, to airline workers – solidarity on the ground can move our labour leaders to act – let’s build it.



Opseu workers unbowed after weeks on strike

by: Betty Cree, Pam Johnson, Peter Votsch, with files from Jess Bushey, President, OPSEU 358

Over 4000 Community Services workers throughout Ontario, represented by OPSEU-SEFPO, are entering week seven of a strike, as part of the “Worth Fighting For” campaign.

Workers in developmental services, shelters, group homes, child welfare and addiction recovery services, and many others, are campaigning to re-coup money stolen across the Ontario public sector under Bill 124. Introduced by the Ford Tories in 2019, this bill stripped the public sector union right to bargain wages and benefits by limiting increases to 1% per year. OPSEU is demanding an immediate 6.5% increase.

The courts declared Bill 124 unconstitutional in late 2022 for violating basic union rights. But for workers in community services, where low-pay and precarity are the rule, the damage had already been done.

From its beginning over a year ago, Worth Fighting For has been an activist campaign, mobilizing union members at regular gatherings and labour and community events. Workers have publicized their issues and advocated for the people and families they support day in and day out.

There are five picket lines in Toronto. Other OPSEU locals, public and private sector unions and the Toronto and York Region Labour Council have shown solidarity at

pickets. Local musicians and other artists have joined weekly picket line parties at Sistering, a 24/7 drop in shelter. Strikers at Surrey Place, who provide autism services, joined the Ontario Health Coalition’s mass healthcare protest on May 28.

In the Kawarthas region of Central Ontario OPSEU 358 Developmental Services (DS) workers in Peterborough, Lindsay and Halliburton have been picketing both the workplace (Community Living Trent Highlands - CLTH) and the offices of Tory

MPPs Dave Smith and Laurie Scott.

Community members, OPSEU education workers, teachers, CUPE healthcare, Long Term Care, and DS workers, and ATU 1320 transit workers (Peterborough Transit) have supported the picket lines. The two Tory MPPs have remained silent, ignoring the strikers and their supporters - all of whom are also their constituents.

Instead of settling the strike, the employer, CLTH, has used public money to hire scabs and extra security, putting them up in a hotel. In response, OPSEU 358 has set up ‘hard pickets’ to disrupt scabs from entering the workplace. CLTH has not budged, bringing back the same offer members turned down 6 weeks ago – a slight to workers and their clients.

OPSEU has kept the momentum up in week seven of the strike. Banners were dropped across the province on Monday, July 6, including in Peterborough and Lindsay. On June 7, picketers showed up at the office of Interim Treasury Board president Peter Bethenfalvy in Pickering, and on June 8, buses brought strikers in from across the province for a rally and march in downtown Toronto.

On Thursday, July 9, OPSEU and representatives from the Ontario Federation of Labour planned to meet Treasury Board representatives. If a just settlement is still not reached, the strike will enter a ‘Phase 2’, including ‘visits’ to Tory MPPs during their lengthy vacations.

... continued on page 7



Workers crashed Ford Fest to demand the premier invest in public services

Support TS2023 work permit extensions Blame billionaires not immigrants

In February 2023, two earthquakes shattered Turkey and Syria – magnitude 7.8 and 7.7 – killing almost 60,000 people and injuring over 120,000 more. More than 25 million people were affected by the twin quakes that destroyed almost a million homes, severed road and communications infrastructure and undermined agriculture in the region.

People and nations around the world donated money, supplies and personnel to support search and rescue efforts, humanitarian aid and rebuilding efforts.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) also created a special humanitarian program for Turkish and Syrian people affected by the disaster – known as TS2023 – to stay for 3 years in Canada under open work permits, and extend the status of those who were already here. IRCC granted similar provisions to Ukrainians who fled after the Russian invasion.

Approximately 20,000 people came to Canada as a result, residing in cities and towns across Canada. Like the vast majority of immigrants, they contributed to Canada in a myriad number of ways. They brought money that has contributed to the Canadian economy. Those who could find it, worked in jobs such as delivery drivers, food service workers, construction workers, teachers and engineering consultants.

Whole families came and became part

of communities across Canada in school, at work and at play. Children have been born here. While the majority of those who came under TS2023 have left Canada, at least 3,000 people are still here. After their homes and

communities were destroyed back home, they rebuilt their lives here, though it has not been easy. Rebuilding has been slow in the earthquake affected regions, and their main hope is that their children can grow up here.

Unlike the Ukrainian humanitarian program, TS2023 did not last long: in January 2024, IRCC stopped accepting applications, which are now expiring. Now this community is in crisis, facing an uncertain future in the face of increased border controls and shrinking pathways to permanent residency and citizenship.

They argue they’ve obeyed all the rules, have worked hard to rebuild their lives after the devastation in Turkey and Syria, and are not a burden on Canada. Liberal MP Sima Acan sponsored petition e-7288 calling for a minimum 2-year extension of TS2023 work permits, Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) exemption and a new pathway towards permanent residency.

The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Peter Fragiskatos, rejected the petition in early June arguing that the “measures were intended to be temporary in nature.”

Undeterred by this rejection, TS2023 work permit holders are taking to the streets to raise the visibility of their struggle. Rallies and marches were held on the weekend of June 27 & 28 and raised their demands in Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver.

And the organizers vow to continue mobilizing, including a walk from Toronto to Ottawa this summer.

continued on page 7...



Extend TS2023 organizers gather signs for the march in Toronto