



Inequality is a cancer that eats away at individuals and society. Inequality is spreading rapidly across Canada. It is associated with the premature death of 40,000 Canadians a year. Inequality hits women, Indigenous people and recent immigrants hardest.

Women working full-time earn 73.5¢ for every dollar men make. Canada's gender pay gap averages \$8,000 a year, worse than most comparable countries. Indigenous people get an even worse deal. In 2010, the average income on reserves was \$18,586 and \$30,266 off reserves, compared to the overall Canadian average of \$41,052.

But the rich are doing well. The highest paid 20% of Canadians get 39% of total income. This share has increased since 1990, while all the rest of society has lost income share.

Inequality of wealth is even worse. The richest 10% of Canadians' individual wealth increased by

41%, \$620,000, between 2005 and 2013. They have 48% of all wealth, while the poorest 50% have only 5.5%.

The top percentile of wealthy Canadians captured a whopping 37% of income growth over the past three decades, more than in any other country except the United States.

In 1977, the richest 1% received 7.7% of total incomes; by 2007 they had doubled their share to 13.8%.

Real incomes for about two-thirds of households in 25 advanced economies, including Canada, were flat or fell between 2005 and 2014. This comes on top of the real median wage only increasing by \$2 since the mid-1980s.

In recent years there has been increased reporting of the growing stagnation of young people's prospects.

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Inequality Rising

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Sometimes it is claimed that baby boomers have robbed young people. Young people now face exorbitant education costs and poorer employment prospects than in the past. Youth unemployment is double the Canadian average.

Many young people have low-paid and insecure jobs. Today people between 25 and 34 years old working full time make \$4,200 less per year than youth did 30 years ago (adjusted for inflation).

How did this happen?

Inequality is determined in the boardrooms and politicians' offices. Businesses force two-tier contracts with lower pay for new starters. Governments give tax cuts to the rich and then cut funding for students, the unemployed and public services. Governments keep down the minimum wage. Government and business have attacked unions, thus weakening workers' protections.

Blaming baby boomers is another attempt at divide and rule, as it hides the real culprits – the 1% and their political friends.

Inequality is a political decision. We need a political party that will fight the 1%.

Fight for \$15 Growing

by Chris Fofonoff



The campaign for a \$15 minimum wage continues to build across Canada.

In Ontario, the \$15 and Fairness campaign is growing at an impressive rate, with a thousands-strong rally planned for Queen's Park on October 1st. This is in addition to the ongoing struggle for \$15 at Toronto's Pearson Airport and regular tabling and interventions across Toronto. \$15 chapters have been established in Ottawa, Windsor, Hamilton, Brampton, Oshawa, and London, and at Toronto's York and Ryerson universities.

In BC, the opposition NDP has promised to raise the minimum wage to \$15 if they are elected in May 2017. This commitment would not have happened without the campaign, which is winning public opinion, with 76% of BC's population supporting \$15. However, the long timeline for full implementation until 2021 is disappointing. The campaign will continue to push for an earlier implementation. The Fight for 15 also cannot assume that the NDP will win the next election; it needs to continue to build support and apply pressure to all the political parties.

The BC campaign had summer activities at festivals and events including Surrey Fusion. Socialist Alternative continues its work in Surrey including a June rally, regular tabling and attending Surrey Pride. Mass flyering is planned in Surrey on September 15th.

An inspiring example of solidarity is the involvement of decently paid union members in the Fight for 15. Aman Cheema, a CUPE member, is one of the leaders of the Fight for \$15 in Surrey. Asked why he is involved, he recalled his childhood: "My mom struggled on minimum wage when I was a kid. It was hard, obviously. She was working two jobs and money was still too tight, to the point that new school shoes were a luxury." Aman's mother was and is not alone: today, 60% of low-wage workers in BC are women and 81% are 20 years of age or older.

The Fight for \$15 is growing. Join the fight for an inspiring victory.

Precarious & low-wage work is Ontario's new normal

It's growing faster than full-time work

Job growth since 2000



And growing mostly in low-wage sectors

Percent of low-wage workforce



FIGHT FOR 15

Montréal Workers Strike For \$15

Socialist Alternative spoke with Jacques Fontaine, one of the striking workers



Tell us the main points of the strike.

280 workers of the Old Port of have been on strike since May 27. We recently rejected a proposal from a federally appointed mediator, which was not an improvement on the company's previous offers.

Starting wages have only increased 4.25% in the last 10 years, so we have fallen behind other workers. Now 40% of us earn less than \$15 an hour, with a starting wage of \$10.67, which is below Québec's minimum wage. Our main demand is a \$15 minimum wage for all Old Port workers.

As two thirds of the workforce has no sick pay, we are demanding guaranteed sick pay for all.

The company has not negotiated seriously. They simply re-presented their offer three times; this offer had initially resulted in an 80% strike vote. Instead, the company used false claims to get an injunction banning us from protesting on site.

The mediator's proposal was an increase of 12% over 5 years instead of the company's original offer of 9.5% over 4 years. This did not answer the main demands for a \$15 minimum wage or sick pay.

The company has totally underestimated the workers' determination.

What support are you getting?

Most of us are members of the PSAC union and a few are members of IATSE and we have our unions' support. We have received excellent support from city and postal workers, other unions, community and immigrant groups, student unions and the public. Alternative Socialiste has helped from the start.

The Old Port is owned by the Canadian government so what has the Liberal government done?

The Old Port is a tourist area owned and regulated by the Canadian government, through Canada Lands Company. Harper appointed the board of Canada Lands, so they are no friends of working people.

As the Old Port is federally regulated, the company can also use scab workers, which is not allowed in

Québec's labour code. The company can pay below Québec's minimum wage, as the Federal minimum wage was abolished by the last Liberal government. The federally appointed mediator sided with the management and did not propose a \$15 minimum wage or sick pay for all workers.

We have met a couple of local Liberal MPs but nothing has happened. The Liberal government and local Liberal MPs, including Justin Trudeau, have not acted. Trudeau claims that, "*Labour is a solution, not a problem.*" Words are not enough – action is needed!

What can our readers do to support?

This is one of the first strikes in Canada for a \$15 minimum wage, so support from across Canada can help to win this vital struggle, including:

- Build the fight for \$15 in other areas.
- Send messages of support to PSAC Local 10333, Old Port Workers of Montréal, PO BOX 116, Succursale Place D'Armes, Montréal, Québec H2Y 3H8.
- Send financial support with cheques to *Syndicat des employés de la Société du Vieux-Port de Montréal*.
- E-mail Prime Minister Trudeau (justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca) urging the Canadian government to act in support of the workers of the Old Port.

Merci!

Solidarity with Old Port Workers

The Old Port workers' strike for justice and decent wages is important for all Canadians. Please send messages of support to the strikers and messages calling for action to the federal Liberal government.

The BC Federation of Labour has sent a message of solidarity and support is growing.

Socialist Alternative in Vancouver and Toronto spoke to hundreds of union activists at Labour Day events, giving out flyers and raising awareness about the Old Port struggle.

Solidarity can help win a victory for the Old Port workers and build the fight for \$15 across Canada. **Unity is Strength.**

Time For A Student Movement!

By Martin LeBrun and Leslie Kemp

Matt completed his bachelor's program at university and now works long hours at hard physical labour to save money for graduate school. When he finally finishes his program, he will be over \$40,000 in debt with uncertain job prospects. With the high cost of housing and mounting debt, his future is less secure than that of his parents.

Millennials are the first generation of Canadians that are worse off than their parents. While millennials earn 2% more than their parents did at their age, their debt load is 260% higher. Millennials are the most educated generation in history, but 25% of them have a full-time job that doesn't require a degree. The trend towards more insecure, contract and part-time work is making it harder to pay off debt and save for the future.

Student Debt is Sky High

Outstanding student debt totalled \$28.3 billion, in 2012. Average student debt in Canada exceeds \$25,000 with New Brunswick the worst at \$35,200 and Quebec having the lowest average at \$11,900. 34% of full-time students work part-time to make ends meet.

Tuition and compulsory fees have tripled since 1990. Provincial governments have made drastic cuts to post-secondary education. In the 1970s, governments covered more than 90% of post-secondary costs. By 2013, that figure had plunged to 57%.

The Ontario government has put in place a new grant system, re-structuring several schemes into an upfront grant. However, this does not mean that low income families will receive 'free tuition.' The grant covers the average tuition fees in Arts and Science programs, which is lower than the actual average. The overall ceiling for loan debt (on top of the grant) is going up by over \$2,500 a year, which means more student debt.

Where does your tuition go?

Universities are splurging on administrative salaries, with a 78% rise in Ontario from 2001 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2015 Simon Fraser University President, Andrew Petter's salary increased by 42% to \$400,000. Meanwhile, universities increasingly use sessional instructors instead of regular professors. Professors have secure jobs and make between \$80,000 and \$150,000 a year, while instructors are insecure and, with an equivalent course load, earn about \$28,000.

Universities' thirst for money has led to increased privatisation, as well as increased sponsorship, funding and influence from corporations: a real threat to academic freedom.

Fighting for Change

Change happens through struggle. That was the lesson from the 2012 Maple Spring in Quebec when students took to the streets to oppose and defeat proposed tuition increases. In Newfoundland and Labrador, after student protests, the government froze tuition in 2005 and replaced student loans with grants.

While the Trudeau government has increased funding for financial aid and youth employment programs, this is only a small step toward making higher education accessible. Students can win if we fight and have clear demands for free tuition, proper funding by government, comprehensive grant programs and forgiving student debt.

Joining with workers in the fight for a \$15 minimum wage will help ensure a brighter future when students graduate.

Site C: Stop

By Bill



The Federal Liberal government has given the necessary permits to allow the BC government to go ahead with its plan to waste \$9 billion on constructing an unnecessary and environmentally destructive dam.

The plan is to build a third dam on the Peace River to produce 1,100 megawatts of unneeded power. The Joint Review Panel concluded, "that the Proponent has not fully demonstrated the need for the Project." The only possible use for the power from the dam is for future fracked gas or for export to the Alberta tar sands.

The dam would flood 8,300 acres of rare good farmland in BC. The valley has excellent summer growing conditions, and has the potential to feed one

Poverty Kills: Inequality Is Bad For Health

By Aiden Sisler and Jim Sugiyama

“Income is a powerful determinant of health – more so than many medications I prescribe,” says Toronto’s Dr. Gary Bloch. Rich, unequal countries fare worse on all categories of health and social ills, including: violence, drug abuse, imprisonment, education and child well-being. The prescription for a healthy society includes redistributing wealth and income fairly.

People living in poverty, particularly women, ethnic minorities and those with disabilities face higher levels of stress and mental and chronic illness. Being poor is challenging, makes you sick and die younger. As Canada’s inequality soars, disease and ill health increases. Residents of the poorest area of Hamilton die 21 years younger than residents of the richest area.

Even the well-being of the rich is affected by inequality. In highly unequal societies, those at the top



are more stressed, depressed and addicted. In unequal societies, people experience low trust, high anxiety, illness and excessive consumption.

Capitalism’s greed creates inequality. In diagnosing our sick capitalist system, the symptoms are easy to spot: rat race stress, pointless consumerism, cutthroat competition, decaying social fabric and polluted water and air.

People suffer from a system where the richest 1% skim off the cream and flick leftovers to the 99%. People are pitted against each other in life’s struggles. As the African proverb goes, *“when the watering hole shrinks, the animals look at each other differently.”*

The 99% have little say in how income and wealth is distributed and experience diminishing control over their lives and communities. This breeds alienation and despair. A crisis of addiction and suicide has created the sharpest rise in mortality apart from HIV/AIDS in the ‘developed world.’ Capitalism’s hollowing out of vital public services means that people face barriers in accessing what remains whether taking transit, spending time in nature or accessing medical care and social services.

Fortunately, the most economically beneficial prescriptions are long lasting and all-inclusive. Crosscutting policies like increasing the minimum wage, universal health care, job security and workers’ rights are effective harm reduction measures. Dr. Bloch states, *“Analysts have demonstrated that programs to alleviate poverty can pay for themselves through increased tax revenues, reduced health costs, lower crime, and increased productivity.”* \$1 invested in children’s early years can save \$9 down the road for the healthcare system alone.

Rather than applying band-aids to the capitalist cancer, socialism would eliminate inequities and alleviate unavoidable suffering. It would get at the root causes of our ills, unlike capitalism, which recklessly contributes to them in the name of profit. Under socialism, solutions that harness human and technological potential in medicine, science, and technology would provide the ‘political medicine’ that will lift us all, contributing to happy, healthy people and communities. Socialism is the best guarantee of maintaining and expanding the *“watering hole.”*

The Damn Dam

Hopwood

million people. At a time of growing food insecurity, and BC already importing 52% of the food consumed, it is insane to destroy farms.

The Panel stated that dam would “significantly affect the current use of land and resources for traditional purposes by Aboriginal peoples.” The First Nations and many other residents of the Peace region are opposed to the dam. The West Moberly and Prophet River First Nations are challenging this project in court.

Grand Chief Stewart Philips said that giving the go-ahead is *“an absolute betrayal,”* and discredits Trudeau’s promises for a “renewed nation-to-nation relationship” with Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

In a most unusual action, the Royal Society of Canada called on the Federal Government to put permission for Site C on hold over concerns about serious environmental impacts and ignoring of First Nations’ rights.

The dam will provide very few jobs. After construction, according to BC Hydro, there will be 25 permanent jobs. If \$9 billion was invested into renewable energy, insulating buildings and public transit, it would provide around 70,000 jobs.

There is a strong and growing fight against Site C in BC.

Liberal Honeymoon: Clouds on the Horizon

by Tim Heffernan



Does Trudeau see the Clouds on the Horizon?

Images: Fort McMurray Fire, First Nations' Resistance to Climate Change and Pipelines, Trudeau at Unifor Convention and Manufacturing in Decline

"A honeymoon lasts not nowadays above a fortnight," said 18th century English writer, Samuel Richardson. This is not true of the relationship between Justin Trudeau and the Canadian public. Even after a year in office, the love-in between Trudeau and most Canadians continues.

The reasons for this are many – Trudeau is such a contrast to Harper: smiling, friendly, youthful and accessible. He has the 2008 Obama touch; he talks of hope. He's pushed the right buttons – *"because it's 2015"* when appointing a gender parity cabinet, adding 'and Climate Change' to the Environment ministry's name, appearing at Pride parades and apologizing to Indigenous People for past abuses. Even with the labour movement, Trudeau leads a charmed life, receiving a hero's welcome at Unifor's August national convention.

The Liberals' popularity is a reality with them polling around 48% throughout 2016. This level of support for a governing party is rare. However, as one wit noted, *"a honeymoon is a short period of dotting between dating and debating."* The love-in, sooner or later, will come to an end. Liberal measures to date cannot be dismissed as mere window dressing. However, they are mostly low cost, without requiring fundamental changes.

Economic Warning Signs

Although Canada managed to weather the global financial crisis of 2007-08 better than most industrialized countries, it has not seen much of a recovery unless one counts explosive housing markets of Toronto and Vancouver as indicators of such. Over the last 9 years,

most people have not seen any real recovery in living standards.

The global economy is teetering on the edge of renewed recession. Canadian manufacturing, in decline over the last 20 years losing 600,000 jobs, has lost a further 30,000 jobs in the past year. The steep slump in oil prices was already taking its toll of jobs in Alberta when the Fort McMurray fire made matters worse. StatsCan reported that a loss of 38,000 paid positions was made up by a similar increase in self-employment; a loss of 40,000 full-time jobs was replaced by a gain in part-time positions. In other words – precariousness and McJobs. The youth unemployment rate stands at 13.3%, nearly twice the national average.

Liberal Clouds

Moreover, there are growing signs that Trudeau's sunny ways will likely become cloudy in the coming months. At some point the Liberals will return to the policies of the last Liberal government – doing what Bay Street wants.

On the labour front, Trudeau gets hurrahs for repealing Harper's anti-union laws but, beyond that, he has not acted as a friend of workers. Trudeau was silent on the postal workers dispute, especially noticeable given the importance of pay equity in the union's claim. The Harper-appointed Canada Post management is still in place.

The Old Port workers of Montréal have received

no support although their workplace is federally regulated and their fight is for a \$15 minimum wage, surely needed to help “those working hard to join” the middle class.

The Liberals have not restored a full Employment Insurance plan or returned the money governments took from the plan. Nor have they acted to protect the pensions of Hamilton steelworkers being taken by US Steel.

The proposed infrastructure investment is wide open to privatization schemes. The Liberals have not reversed the action of the last Liberal government in 1999 to make rail companies responsible for safety – with the inevitable decline in safety.

They are pushing for a tar sands pipeline and have given permits to build the Site C dam in BC, enraging First Nations. They have failed on the human rights file by selling arms to Saudi Arabia.

Where is the Opposition?

The Liberals are helped by the weak opposition. The Tories are trying to re-brand themselves, with interim leader Rona Ambrose claiming, “*the bad man’s gone away.*” Internal tensions between the different wings of the Tories are showing. Although the Tories have maintained their core support, at around 28%, they have a lot of repair work to do. It will take Canadians a long time to forget Harper.

The leftwing opposition is not in parliament. The NDP, despite ditching Mulcair, shows no signs of a Corbyn-like turn and have not only failed to rebuild federally, with support mired at around 13%, but have lost government in Manitoba and dropped to third place in an Ontario provincial by-election. Rather than the NDP rebounding, the Liberals are making serious efforts to woo a section of its support.

Opposition to the Liberals is outside of Parliament. Campaigns and struggles point to Liberal failures such as not repealing the anti-democratic Bill C-51, in union actions, and resisting pipelines and other environmentally-damaging projects.

Canada is in a bubble of seeming stability compared to much of the world. At some point, the bubble will burst and Canada will face turmoil and mass struggle. Even now, Canadian capitalism cannot provide good jobs, affordable education, healthy lives and a good environment for all. As the crisis of capitalism grows, Socialist Alternative will work to build support for socialism and a world where people flourish.

Postal Workers Stop Management Attacks

By David Rennie, Postal Worker



The postal workers union (CUPW) has won tentative agreements for both the urban, and rural and suburban mail carrier (RSMC) bargaining units. The agreement does not concede to management attacks and prevents major rollbacks, especially of pensions for newly hired workers. CUPW is seeking to preserve past gains and win improvements, especially for the RSMC workers who are 70% female, and have lower pay rates.

With a government appointed mediator, the union and management reached a short-term collective deal of only two years. No doubt, management wanted to preserve the business and prevent the loss of customers and revenue, especially with the busy fall and holiday season approaching. However, bargaining will start again next year.

One hopeful part of the agreement is that the low pay of the mainly women RSMCs will be reviewed by a third party over the next 13 months.

Pensions will likely be under attack again in the next round of bargaining. Management uses the solvency test on the pension fund, which makes little sense for a profitable crown corporation, showing that privatization is probably on management’s agenda.

With many unresolved issues, this agreement delays the battle until the union is in a stronger position. CUPW hopes that the federal government’s postal review, to be completed by April 2017, will include the preservation of home door-to-door delivery, the possibility of postal banking and other service expansion. Hopefully, the Harper-appointed Chief executive, Deepak Chopra, on a base salary of \$500,000, will be removed or resigns. CUPW over the next 2 years will prepare for possible future battles and build up the union defense fund.

The fight is far from over. This is only a momentary truce declared to prepare for even greater challenges.

Brexit Shocks Elites

By Daniel Petrovic



The UK vote to leave the European Union (EU) is a defeat for the British and European ruling classes. Almost the entire establishment supported staying in the EU and assumed that working people would blindly follow and vote to remain. After the shock result, the elite denounced the voters as uneducated and racist. The president of the European Council, Donald Tusk, claimed it was *"the beginning of the destruction of not only the EU but also of western political civilization."*

In England and Wales over 2 million more people voted to leave the EU than remain. For local reasons, Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to stay, so the overall UK majority to leave was over 1 million votes.

The vote expressed the anger at years of low wages, the lack of good jobs, austerity and cuts to public services. The Financial Times stated, *"the referendum result may well go down in history as the pitchfork moment."* The vote opens the possibility of Scotland leaving the UK and a 'hard' border between Northern Ireland and the Republic, threatening instability and the possible break up of the UK.

Young people voted to stay largely based on idealism about a Europe without borders and a view that Europe was somehow less racist than Britain. The stay campaign claimed that the EU is a progressive and internationalist institution, which guarantees economic prosperity for all within its borders.

In reality, the EU is a Free Trade zone to favour the expansion of the big corporations. The brutal crackdown on Greek workers through mass privatisations and devastating cuts to social programs and income is the true face of the EU. The cruel treatment of refugees seeking safety shows the EU is not progressive.

Unfortunately, the majority of union and Labour

Party leaders, including Jeremy Corbyn, argued to stay in the EU and so right wing politicians, such as Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson dominated the leave campaign. They whipped up anti-immigrant and racist views resulting in an increase of racist attacks.

Attempted Coup Against Corbyn

This defeat for the hated Prime Minister Cameron and his resignation was a great opportunity to push the Tories, deeply divided after the referendum battle, out of office. Instead, the majority of Labour MPs decided to attack Corbyn and the Labour Party membership, 60% of whom had voted for him just a year ago. This attempted coup has unleashed seething anger in the working class. Even with the right-wing's attempts to rig the vote, Corbyn is likely to be re-elected as leader. This opens the possibility that Tony Blair's counter-revolution of New Labour will be defeated, or some of the right wing will split away. The Labour Party could cease to be a party of war and cuts and instead be a party that fights for working people.

Our sister organization, the Socialist Party, continues to campaign against the Tories and their policies, to combat the raise of bigotry and racism and advance the vision of a socialist Europe.

ROSA on the Rise in Ireland

By Laura Fitzgerald (Socialist Party Ireland)

ROSA (for Reproductive rights, against Oppression, Sexism & Austerity) was initiated by women in the Socialist Party in Ireland (part of the CWI) to promote and organize events, actions and campaigning activity on these issues.

It's named after Rosa Parks, the inspirational black campaigner who refused to give up her seat for a white passenger, sparking the Montgomery bus boycott of the Civil Rights Movement. And after Rosa Luxemburg, exceptional and leading socialist theoretician and activist of the early 20th century, killed for her revolutionary politics in 1919.

ROSA campaigns for legislation that includes women's health. This means repealing the 8th Amendment (which denies women the right to have abortions, forcing them to go outside the country). Socialist Party MP, Ruth Coppinger, moved a bill to do this and in the autumn the campaign steps up. ROSA demands the right of women to choose, without veto from doctors or the state.



US Election Exposes Anger at Establishment

By Patrick Ayers (Socialist Alternative, USA)

As the US presidential election draws near, dissatisfaction with the two establishment parties and their nominees has reached new heights. Most people in the US are angry at the loss of jobs, continuing poor wages, police racism and violence, environmental destruction and a host of other issues.

The key issue for most people is stopping the Republican campaign of Trump, who has captured a portion of this populist anger by attacking the establishment and whipping up racism. His 60% disapproval rating is the highest for any major party candidate in modern history, highlighting that the vast majority of people oppose his politics. His only chance of winning is because his opponent is Hillary Clinton, the second most unpopular nominee in modern history due to her establishment and corporate record.

A Washington Post-ABC News poll showed a record 56% now disapprove of Clinton. In the month of August, her approval ratings fell from 56% to 45% among women, 71% to 55% among Latinos, and 76% to 63% among self-identified liberals. This does not

reflect growing support for Trump, whose campaign stumbled with a series of offensive missteps. Polling website FiveThirtyEight states that Clinton's chances of winning have increased to 84%. A Quinnipiac University poll found that 62% of people expect Clinton to win.

In this context, support for "Third Party" candidates has risen. Gary Johnson of the right-wing Libertarian Party has polled at 9%, while left-wing Green Party candidate Jill Stein is polling around 5%.

After Sanders

Bernie Sanders' endorsement of Clinton has left many supporters feeling angry and betrayed. Socialist Alternative has worked to keep the momentum of the Sanders' campaign going – 125,000 people signed our petition for Sanders to run as an independent. We have consistently campaigned for a new party of the 99% to mobilize the power of working people. Now, we are calling for a vote for Jill Stein, to rally all those who want radical change. Stein has gained support from Sanders' supporters who disagree with his endorsement of Clinton. However, the final vote for Stein is likely to be squeezed as the campaign heats up, with many people voting for Clinton to stop Trump.

Supporting the corporate campaign of Clinton does not help build the kind of movement needed to defeat the threat of right-wing populism represented by Trump. Kshama Sawant, Socialist Alternative's Seattle councillor, explained the problem with the "circular logic" of uniting behind Clinton to defeat Trump: "People who are supporting Trump are doing so because they are angry at the establishment of which Clinton is the epitome. It makes no sense, if you want to peel away people from Trump, to present as an alternative the very thing that makes people go towards Trump."



Abortion should be provided through the Irish health service, without cost and shame for women.

ROSA also campaigns for fully free contraception and secular and progressive sex education in schools. ROSA demands the separation of church and state including in schools and hospital boards. It demands ending violence against women, equal pay, free childcare and stopping austerity. This can be achieved by taxing the rich, refusing to pay the bankers' debts and challenging the rule of capitalism that breeds inequality and poverty.

Socialism is International

Capitalism is global. Climate change affects the whole planet. The workers' movement and socialism needs to be internationalist too.



Socialist Alternative Canada is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), an organization with members in 45 countries around the world. We are involved in struggles: for better wages and conditions and basic union rights; to protect the environment; for women's rights; and against war, racism and oppression.

Read news and reports from around the world:
www.socialistworld.net/

Ten Days That Shook Alberta

By Carol-Anne Hudson



Workers in hospital laundries defeated Alberta's Tory Premier, Ralph Klein.

In 1995, after two years of relentless cuts to public health and human services, hospital laundry workers at Calgary General Hospital had enough. They walked off the job in a wildcat strike, followed the next day by laundry workers in Foothill's Hospital and triggering massive sympathy strikes by hospital and care workers across Calgary, effectively shutting

down all 8 city hospitals and numerous nursing homes.

The 120 Calgary hospital workers, mostly immigrant women, reacted to the Klein government's plan to contract out their jobs after they had already agreed to a 28% pay cut. The walkout was initiated by the rank and file rather than their union leadership.

During the ten days that shook Alberta, hospital workers in Edmonton, Lethbridge, Grand Prairie, and Red Deer conducted wildcat strikes. 5,000 workers across the province were on strike and thousands of people poured into the streets. A general strike, being prepared for by the rank and file in AUPE, CUPE and the Alberta Nurses Union, was only averted when Klein blinked and then caved. The laundry workers and many other workers kept their jobs and won the restoration of significant funding to the health care system.

This was a massive victory not only for the laundry workers but for the working class and against the neo-liberal agenda. This historic event demonstrates the power of workers. As noted by Calgary Herald columnist Don Martin, "*Mice spooked THE elephant. It took 120 Calgary laundry workers to shake the government's resolve to keeping health-care cuts firmly on schedule and damn the consequences. Yup, the mice spooked the elephant, all right. The absolute bottom of the health-worker pyramid...*"

Earth Alert (Continued from Back Page)

Energy East will cost \$15.7 billion and (according to Energy East) will provide 9,000 direct full-time jobs during construction with about 900 full-time direct jobs during operation. However, investing the same money in renewable energy, insulating buildings and public transit would provide over 100,000 good, secure, long-term jobs.

If the resources and wealth of the big corporations were democratically and publicly controlled, we would have a healthy environment and plenty of good jobs.

Buffy Sainte Marie "We Will Be Idle No More"

By Leslie Kemp



Buffy Sainte Marie's Juno award-winning album, **Power in the Blood**, reverberates with anger, anger born of her experience watching capitalism's treatment of First Nations, the environment and humanity. The tone is defiant, determined and dignified. Sainte Marie is boosted by the energy of Idle No More.

Sainte Marie takes the music and words of Alabama 3's song, **Power in the Blood**, and makes a denunciation of war. Her definition of war includes: "*No time for spin-doctors' medicine. Corporation government selling me some cover up*" and "*Young soldiers driving tanks, but old thieves they drive the banks.*"

Several songs reflect her Indigenous heritage and perspectives. **Ke Sakihitin Awasis** is a love song for Native America whose title is in Cree. **The Uranium War** tells the true and tragic story of Mi'kmaq activist Anna Mae Aquash, who was assassinated because of her involvement in the American Indian movement. The compelling lines of this song are repeated: "*And me I watched it grow: corporate greed and a lust for gold. And coal and oil and hey now uranium. Keep the Indians under your thumb; pray like hell when your bad times come. Hey, rip 'em up, strip 'em up, get 'em with a gun.*"

In **Sing Our Own Song**, she articulates her determined fight for a better world: "*We will slide your control from our lands. Redirect the flame of our anger and pain. And pity the shame for what you do in God's name. We will stand for the right to be free. We will build our own society. And we will sing, sing our own song...We will be Idle No More.*"

About Socialist Alternative Canada:

World Social Forum, Montréal



The Committee for a Workers' International (to which Socialist Alternative is linked) had a brilliant week at the World Social Forum in Montréal. With over 1,200 events on a huge range of topics and over 10,000 people attending, the Forum can be bewildering. The CWI however had a clear purpose – to build support for socialism.

Eighteen members were actively involved from Québec, US, Belgium and Canada. We raised nearly \$1,900. We sold 300 Québec papers and over 60 Canadian, Belgian and US ones. We held a lively table, staffed from 8:30 am to 6:30 pm, Wednesday to Friday. There were constant discussions in French and English with people from around the world.

We went on two demos – an opening one on Tuesday afternoon and on Friday in support of the striking workers from the Old Port of Montréal.

Over 90 people attended our 2 workshops on 'Good Jobs and a Healthy Environment' and 'New Left Formations.' Over 30 people attended our meeting about the CWI, with potential members from Québec and the US. We have recruited new members in Québec, and there are many interested people from Québec, Canada, the US and worldwide.

What We Stand For

- An end to poverty wages; raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour
- A 35 hour working week without loss of pay
- A living income for those unable to work
- Reverse the cuts and privatization of public services
- Fully funded, high quality, free public education from early childhood to university
- Massive public investment in clean energy, mass transit, health care, education, and affordable housing to create good unionized jobs and fight climate change
- Phase out the tar-sands and nuclear power
- Higher taxes on the rich and corporations, lower taxes for working people
- Democratic unions run by and for the members, with elected union officials paid the same wages as those they represent
- End discrimination – full equality for all
- Equal rights for, and solidarity with, immigrants and refugees
- The right to self-determination and self-government for all Aboriginal peoples, and respect for historical treaties and resource rights
- Scrap NAFTA and other exploitative trade deals
- Democratic public ownership of key sectors of the economy such as: banking, utilities, manufacturing and resources
- A socialist transformation of society to allow for the democratic planning of the economy based on the interests and needs of the overwhelming majority of people and the environment

Full list: socialistalternative.ca/what-we-stand-for

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

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By Bill Hopwood

The world's climate is in crisis due to global warming. And time is running out. Environmental scientists caution that warming be held to 1.5°C to avoid catastrophic changes. This year, each month has been at least 1°C hotter than the baseline of the 1.5°C limit. July was the hottest month on record. Each of the previous 14 months set a new record for the hottest.

This soaring heat has real impacts with more unstable and dramatic weather events. Droughts, floods, storms, heat-waves and fires are all becoming more common. In India, temperatures reached 51°C in the midst of a serious drought. Hurricanes are the strongest ever recorded, with devastating impacts. California is back into a long drought with serious impacts for North America's food supplies.

In the Arctic, ice is disappearing and ice-free summers will soon be a reality. Fires, such as the 'beast' that came close to destroying Fort McMurray this May, are becoming more common and intense. Global warming is real and it is happening in Canada and around the world.

The World Economic Forum states that climate change is the most severe global economic risk, causing water shortages, crop failures and

increased spread of diseases, all of which increase the number of refugees and social tensions.

At November's Paris conference, the Canadian government committed to the 1.5°C goal. Yet the government is pushing for pipelines and has given the go-ahead to other environmentally disastrous projects, such as BC's Site C dam. They claim, falsely, that they need to balance between jobs and the environment. What they mean is trading off the environment for profits. The National Post reported that "Trudeau has told his senior lieutenants to draw up plans to make the Energy East pipeline and the Trans Mountain expansion in BC a reality."

First Nations, environmentalists and elected mayors oppose both pipelines, as they will boost climate change and risk poisoning thousands of waterways, used for drinking, fishing, recreation, and farming.

Most people who support the pipelines do so because they want jobs. Official unemployment has been above or around 7% since 2009, and well-paid full-time jobs are disappearing and being replaced by insecure, low-paid, part-time work. Canada needs a jobs' program. However, pipelines are not a good way to provide jobs.

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