

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

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JOBS & HOMES

NOT

CUTS & BOMBS

ABOUT SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

What We Stand For

We live in an era of increasing authoritarianism, a growing far right, and rising militarism as conflicting superpowers compete to plunder the world's wealth and resources – all at the expense of working people and the planet.

- **Jobs and a living wage for all.** Unions should demand cost-of-living adjustment clauses in all new and existing contracts.
- **Put planet before profit:** fight climate change with a green jobs program.
- **Take the market out of housing:** a mass program to build and renovate decent, safe and affordable public housing run by tenants' democracy.
- **Defend public services** and take health and social care back into public ownership.
- **For fighting, democratic unions:** run by and for the members to campaign for better pay and working conditions.
- **Respect and enforce existing Indigenous treaty and resource rights.**
- **No to war and imperialism!** Slash military spending and build an international working-class movement against militarism.
- **Take into public ownership key sectors of the economy:** including banking, the internet, the energy industry, transportation and privately-owned utilities.

Socialists stand for a society run by and for working-class people. Join Socialist Alternative to help create a future free of exploitation and oppression, where people and the planet flourish. ★



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What SA Did: Pride

This summer, Socialist Alternative called for Pride to return to its roots as a political protest. We participated in eight events across Canada including several around Vancouver, Victoria, Saskatoon and, for the first time, Calgary. Alternative Socialiste was at Prides in Montreal and Québec City. The season peaked with a public meeting in Vancouver with new people getting politically active with us.

These events were more politically charged than last year's, with people angry about the growing global — and Canadian — backlash against LGBTQ rights. Capitalism has entered a new, post-neoliberal and highly reactionary era. The withdrawal of corporate funding from Pride festivals this year is a symptom of this, showing once more that capitalism's rainbow had as much substance as the ones we see in the sky.

Marxists always seek to link struggles, and this was very easy to do at this year's Prides. Mark Carney's massive new military spending spree enraged countless people we spoke with — they understood immediately that this money will be looted from services that are essential to LGBTQ people even more than other Canadians. One elderly and disabled queer man told us that his local clinic will be closed by government cuts by the time this magazine goes to print.

All of this translated into greater enthusiasm for our call to re-politicize Pride, to bring back a fighting spirit to a movement that began as an illegal protest against discrimination and oppression and won significant advances for queer people. Pride should be a celebration too — but the best celebrations are always those for new and major victories! ★



Above: Socialist Alternative Youth on Dyke March, East Vancouver
Front cover image: Ken Currie

Youth Facing Unaffordable Future

Violet Forrie

It is no longer the case that youth can expect better lives than their parents and grandparents. Despite advances in technology, young people face a future of declining living standards and an increasing cost of living.

Cost of living

For generations after World War II, home ownership was accessible and a secure form of housing for working-class people. But today only 26 percent of those aged 18-34 own their own home, down from 47 percent in 2021. Most young people can afford a home only if they inherit wealth.

Housing is considered “affordable” if housing costs are no more than 30 percent of income. But a recent survey found that over a third of Canadian renters are paying more than 50 percent of their income on rent. Under these conditions it’s impossible to save for a down payment. Meanwhile stress piles up as necessities become more expensive or even unattainable.

On the other hand, businesses have made record profits since the heights of the pandemic. Corporations have raised prices, more than the increasing costs of goods, while real wages have not kept up with inflation. Instead of increasing workers’ pay or benefits, these profits went to increasing shareholder dividends and executive bonuses.

Jobs and unemployment

Youth unemployment rose to 14.6 percent in July 2025. Available jobs are often poorly paid, insecure and unsafe. Many youth do not work full-time hours, whilst others can work upwards of 60 hours in a week. In either case, it’s an unending struggle just to make ends meet.

Businesses, fearful of falling profits in the midst of a trade war, are pushing the costs on to workers by tightening hiring and laying off workers. Youth are often let go before older workers because they are perceived to be less productive.

At the same time, youth are told they are lazy and unmotivated, that they don’t understand how to match skills to a job, or that they need to learn how to adjust to a changing economy. The right wing blames immigrants for “taking jobs,” but it’s the bosses who refuse to hire young workers because they can pay immigrant workers less.

Students are told that post-secondary education is necessary for a good job, but many find themselves working dead-end jobs or opting for gig work. Not only do these jobs make paying off debt difficult (if not impossible), they’re also unsatisfying and mentally or physically damaging. Meanwhile, entry level jobs pay minimum wage, which is below the living wage.



Socialist Alternative-led student walkout

Crisis in education

Over many decades governments have increasingly underfunded post-secondary education. Universities were forced to turn to other sources of revenue including raising tuition fees, especially international student tuition. Now that the federal government has capped international student enrollment without increasing public funding, universities are cutting programs and services.

Corporations have increasing control over universities, using their “generosity” to influence programs through donations and scholarships. It is not uncommon for the leading administrators to have corporate connections whose interests they represent. Many services like food and counselling have been contracted out to private for-profit companies. Post-secondary education has become a money-making investment for the rich, whilst the quality of the education declines.

Fighting the capitalist system

An affordable future for young workers, including the ability to access high quality education and decent jobs, is impossible under capitalism. There is no going back to “when things worked.” It never worked for the majority of us, in any case. The rich will continuously push workers further and further into debt, insecurity, and declining living standards — if we let them.

We don’t have to stand by and let this happen. The working class has the power to take control over society, including workplaces, schools, public services and public institutions.

Fighting the capitalist class and their system requires a militant approach, led by young working-class people armed with a program for socialist change. If you agree, join Socialist Alternative! ★

Follow us on Instagram: SocialistAlternativeYouth

Fare-Free and Excellent Transit for All!

Harland Bird

In Canada, 2025 is the year of the transit fare hike. Fares have gone up in Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, and Victoria, with Edmonton and Calgary soon to follow. Many cities are also cracking down on fare evaders despite Human Rights Watch warning that such crackdowns disproportionately target poor and racialized people.

Meanwhile transit service is being cut. In urban areas buses are often infrequent, late, overcrowded, or in disrepair, and bus stops lack seating, shelter, and signage. Service in rural areas is even worse — if it exists at all. Service between neighbouring communities is also generally nonexistent across Canada.

The net effect of higher fares, more policing, and poor service is that transit will continue to be used mostly by people who have no other choice. This is to the detriment of both people and planet. Excellent public transit is needed to build communities that are affordable, accessible, convenient, green, equitable and safe. And excellent transit is fare-free transit.

Fares make transit worse, not better

Two years ago, Orangeville, Ontario made transit free for all at the point of service; today, ridership has *more than doubled*. No fare evasion; no discriminatory enforcement; just freedom of movement.

Many other places have also abolished fares, including large cities and the entire country of Luxembourg. New York mayoral candidate Mamdani's promise of fare-free transit has generated great enthusiasm. Riders love it. It makes bus drivers safer (most altercations are over fares). And it eliminates the enormous cost of administering and enforcing fares. It's win-win-win.

And although fares typically fund less than half of transit operations in Canadian systems (usually far less), they weaken the economic foundations of these systems and present a major barrier to improvement and expansion of service. This was illustrated when ridership plummeted during the COVID lockdowns, leaving transit systems teetering on a "fiscal cliff." Translink in Vancouver threatened to cut service by 50 percent!

Excellent transit requires dependable, forward-looking funding. In other words, it must be fully government funded. Taxes on corporations

and the rich (the real perpetrators of climate change) should replace the fares that poor and working people currently pay.

System change for the communities we need

Excellent transit — free, frequent, convenient and non-polluting — would transform people's lives in many ways. It would mean less reliance on cars, which would reduce traffic congestion and air pollution, make roads safer, and liberate the massive amount of space cars use to move and park. This would ease strain on transportation infrastructure, emergency services, and healthcare systems, saving lives and money. Electric transit would further increase the benefit of clean air and lower CO2 emissions. Cities would be far more livable and walkable, improving mental and physical health. Culture and community would revitalize as the working class — the lifeblood of cities — circulated freely, exercising and socializing and collaborating.

That's why Socialist Alternative is helping to build the Victoria Transit Riders Union (VTRU), a grassroots organization in BC that collaborates with transit workers' unions and fights under the slogan "fare-free and excellent transit for all!" The group advocates for free transit for all teens and seniors now, alongside a massive expansion of service.

VTRU also calls for this expansion to be designed and implemented by transit workers — in close consultation with the communities they serve — not politicians and bureaucrats, who are currently in charge despite lacking hands-on knowledge and experience. The latter can't even provide bus drivers with realistic schedules and adequate bathroom access, and truly excellent transit must be excellent for transit workers, too!

But the rich and powerful don't want transit that is built by and for working-class people (cars are much more profitable) and they certainly don't want to do their fair

share to fund it. Poor and working people must organize to fight for excellent transit, and for transforming cities and systems so that they are designed for human need. This fight against the rule of the rich is part of the socialist transformation of society. **Join Socialist Alternative to help us win. ★**



Victoria Transit Riders Union in action

Economic Reconciliation or Economic Coercion?

Leslie Kemp

Calling the government's push toward resource extraction without genuine engagement short-sighted, Temagami First Nation Chief Shelly Moore-Frappier said, "This is not economic reconciliation. This is economic coercion."

The federal government, provincial governments and industry are increasingly

using the mantra of "economic reconciliation" but what they really mean is development in the interests of big business, not necessarily in the interests of Indigenous communities.

This new era of trade wars, nationalism and inter-imperialist rivalries comes with the pressure to develop domestic industries and promote national sovereignty. How to survive Trump's trade war is a key concern. The ruling class's answer is strengthening Canadian capitalism by dismantling "barriers" to economic development such as environmental assessments and the need for "free and informed consent" of Indigenous people prior to the approval of projects affecting their lands or territories, as per the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

The solution from above

Governments — federal and provincial — have responded in unison. The Carney government's *One Canadian Economy Act* (Bill C-5), the Ontario government's Bill 5 and BC's Bills 14 and 15 all have a similar intent: to speed up and push through developments without proper scrutiny. This means foregoing or shortening environmental assessments, weakening oversight and trampling on Indigenous and Labour rights.

Bill C-5 aims to shift power to provincial governments for environmental assessments. But several provincial governments have gutted their own environmental protection standards — bypassing environmental assessments and public consultations. Ontario's Bill 5 includes provisions to overrule local government regulations, to suspend laws to protect labour rights, and health and safety. The rationale for BC's Bills 14 and 15 is to speed up the approval and development of so-called clean energy projects.

The Chiefs of Ontario hosted a Community Wellness Conference recently where serious concerns about Bill C-5 and Bill 5 were raised: Indigenous groups are being asked to support Canada's national development priorities while many



Indigenous youth oppose Carney's Bill C-5

of their communities still lack basic infrastructure like clean water and safe housing. There are still 38 active long-term water advisories, 27 of them in Ontario.

Economic reconciliation will be used to divide communities. After years of government starving Indigenous communities of resources, these

communities are being asked to sign onto despoiling their lands. They will get 10 - 20 years of income and seven generations of poisoned land, water and life.

Mining companies and the Ontario government are pushing to develop the Ring of Fire — a vast mineral deposit covering 5,000 square kilometers in northern Ontario's Treaty 9 territory — citing the need for critical minerals for the green energy transition. The area also contains one of the world's largest and most significant peatlands, storing a massive amount of carbon. First Nations are mobilizing to protect their land and rights, asserting UNDRIP's provisions for Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

Government hypocrisy

Speaking out of both sides of his mouth, Carney has referred to "the fundamental role of First Nations, Inuit and Metis," by which he means getting them on side to help "build, baby, build." Indigenous groups are not blind to government's hypocrisy or to the rhetoric of economic reconciliation but face pressure to bring their communities out of crushing poverty.

First Nations in Ontario are fiercely resisting Bill 5. Several First Nations are taking legal action with talk of injunctions against government projects. Given that Canadian courts only grant First Nations injunctions against the government 18.5 percent of the time, it seems likely that there will be a renewed wave of Indigenous and environmental activism to defend people and planet.

Kyra Willoughby, a member of White Sand First Nation and representative of the Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council, said "As youth, we refuse to accept a future where our voices are excluded from decisions that shape our lives."

True reconciliation cannot happen under capitalism. A new society will rise out of the ashes of the old. This means dismantling the chains of oppression and the scourge of capitalism. We can create a new world — one where respect for people and nature is more important than profit. ★

Unions Can Beat the Bosses and their Government

Chris Fofonoff

The Canadian labour movement turned a major corner this summer when 10,000 flight attendants with the Canadian Union of Public Employees not only struck against Air Canada, but courageously and successfully defied a federal government back-to-work order. This victory, by a workforce which is 70 percent female, will give significant inspiration to upcoming labour battles, of which there will be no lack.

The strike, which began on the night of August 15–16, came after the expiration of an absurdly long 10-year contract, which itself had been preceded by Stephen Harper's Conservative government pre-emptively breaking a strike in 2011. The flight attendants' top demand this time was a simple one, which rightly gained major public support: to no longer be forced to work for free. For years, Air Canada flight attendants had worked an average of 35 unpaid hours per month, because they were only paid from when the plane left the gate until it docked at the other end. Boarding and exiting the plane, transfers, and services during delays were all done for free.

Defiance at last

Only 12 hours into the strike, the government, almost out of habit, ordered the workers back onto their planes with its favourite anti-union weapon of late: Section 107 of the Canada Labour Code, which had broken rail, dock, and postal strikes in 2024 without much ramification. But weapons can wear out with overuse. This time, Air Canada and the federal government were so obviously colluding with one another that their tactic immediately backfired. The company's CEO admitted in an interview that, "Well, we thought, obviously, [that] Section 107 would be enforced,

and that they wouldn't illegally avoid Section 107." Instead, the workers stayed out, forcing Air Canada back to the table and reaching a tentative deal less than a day later.

The summer has also seen other workplace fights, with the biggest breakthroughs coming in BC. In July, up to 700 Uber drivers in Victoria were certified with United Food & Commercial Workers Local 1518, in the first instance of rideshare drivers unionizing in Canada. Potentially even more significant is the successful conclusion that same month of a long drive to unionize Amazon's Delta warehouse into Unifor.

Meantime, workers in Ontario's manufacturing sector have been fighting against attempted wage cuts and movement of machinery and materials to the United States. Management of Dajcor Aluminum in Chatham and Titan Tool & Die in Windsor have both tried this and been opposed by their workers, who don't want to be made to pay for Trump and Carney's trade war.

The long-running dispute of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers against Canada Post drags on. The government used Section 107 in December 2024 to pause the dispute. But in August this year, the workers voted by 69 percent to reject the proposed settlement. The union needs to show the same determination as the flight attendants to defeat Canada Post.

What next?

There will certainly be more fights coming in the metal, automobile, and other tariff-hit industries. In the case of the Amazon workers, there may be a struggle to prevent a retaliatory shutdown of operations, as the company did in January in Québec. Amazon closed all their facilities in the province after workers in Laval unionized.

The flight attendants have probably rendered Section 107 unusable. They have shown other unions that the employers' government can be beaten back. This is by far the major victory of their strike, as their tentative agreement is not groundbreaking and many flight attendants are angered at its modesty after they engaged in such a brave battle. The next hurdle to clear in a major strike is for workers to stay on the picket line until they have approved a new contract, rather than immediately returning to work when their bargaining team recommends an offer.

Canadian employers, private and public, are due to escalate their war on workers' living standards. To defeat them will take deepened union democracy and militancy. ★



Flight attendants' picket line

Stories from life... as a Working Student

Anonymous



Image: Tiffany Jan

All my life I've been told that post-secondary education is a prerequisite to a happy, stable life. But it costs tens of thousands of dollars and doesn't guarantee a good job. It feels like I am being forced to gamble with my future. Have I chosen the right degree? Will my bet pay off? Hey, Student Loans, can you spot me a bit more? I swear I'm good for it.

But behind the poker face I am filled with uncertainty. Even finding a menial job for pocket money is tough: applying to multiple positions and getting no responses is a bitter experience I share with many of my peers. I am one of the "lucky" ones, since I am currently working for minimum wage. But this year I still may have to rack up more gambling — er, I mean student — debt.

Ideally my education won't just help qualify me for work but will also raise my consciousness and help me make sense of the world so that I can help change it for the better. But the people running society must like things as they are, because the constant anxiety about my future and my need to work while I study makes it a lot harder to actually learn. It feels like the system is trying to make me into a more useful worker but restrict my intellectual growth beyond that. No wonder so many of my peers are either resorting to apathy or falling down conspiracy theory rabbit holes.

Wouldn't it be better for society if the education system helped people reach their full potential as human beings and community members? But I guess we'll have to fight for that. In the meantime, I have bills to pay and a life to lead. So, what choice do I have? Hit me, dealer. ★

What Makes Me Angry: Partial Victory for the Slave Revolt!

Larry Hyink

Air Canada, making only \$418 million profit last *quarter*, paying its CEO a paltry \$12 million a year, has been forced into near bankruptcy by greedy flight attendants who perversely don't want to work for free. Boo ho.

Stalling on an agreement until the strike butchers known as "government mediators" take over and force workers into some rotten binding arbitration deal looked not to work this time.

Demonstrating again to unions who owns the Liberal Party, Jobs Minister Patty Hajdu invoked Section 107 of the Canada Labour Code to "protect the economy" (translation: safeguard corporate profits).

Unfortunately for Patty and her banker boss Carney, the Canadian Union of Public Employees didn't immediately cave to the order to get back to work on the old plantation.

Apparently summoning the courage that originally built the union movement, CUPE leaders said they'd go to jail rather than railroad members into a bad deal and a lot of organized labour looked willing to back them. Instead of abjectly surrendering, workers looked ready to fight Air Canada and their government stooges.

Suddenly Air Canada found enough cash to sweeten the deal a bit, although nowhere near what the workers had been asking.

Meanwhile, Patty Hajdu's planet finally received news that flight attendants weren't paid when the plane wasn't flying. She was shocked, SHOCKED! She could introduce legislation banning unpaid work, but that's not the Canadian way. Instead, there'll be a commission of inquiry requiring lots of time, money and Liberal party hacks.

"Workers' Friend" Pierre Poilievre, asked how Conservatives felt about the strike and the Union's defiance, replied that he didn't support unpaid work, but "we support law and order." In other words, "the law is the law...back to work."

The deal's details may be disappointing for workers, but at least the union didn't just mumble "yes master." Hopefully the union movement saw what can be accomplished by courage, solidarity and militant organization and fight harder next time they're faced with government strong-arming.

However, Canada's government of the people by the bosses, for the bosses won't end until both capitalist parties are tossed aside and there is a genuine socialist government by and for the working people of this country who actually produce its wealth. ★

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Ray Goerke

Times are tough for working-class people in Canada. The cost of living keeps going up, including the cost of housing, debt, transportation, and groceries. Wages aren't keeping up with inflation. People are struggling to pay rent in inadequate or poor-quality housing, and welfare rates are insufficient to keep recipients above the poverty line. Youth face record levels of unemployment and university graduates increasingly find that their degrees can't get them a job that can pay off their student debt. When unionized workers fight for better pay and working conditions, they face nothing but resistance from the Liberal government, which intervenes to help the bosses wherever possible (page 6).

On top of all this, Donald Trump is coming after the Canadian economy and threatening people's jobs and livelihoods, even threatening to make Canada the 51st state. Mark Carney's Liberals won the federal election because he was seen as best able to lead the country through these crises and stand up to Trump. But after a few months, the Carney government is capitulating to Trump in the trade war in order to protect big business, pushing through massive public spending cuts that will make working people's lives even harder. Yet at the same time, the government can find billions for weapons of death and destruction.

Carney cuts deep

A July Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives report estimates that Carney's plan for federal departments to cut their budgets by 15 percent could result in up to 57,000 full time job losses in the federal government between 2024 and 2028. These are workers who help people get their Employment Insurance and pension payments, issue passports, and ensure food and medications are safe. Other national public services, including CBC/Radio-Canada, Via Rail, the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, and Statistics Canada face the same across-the-board cuts. Things like dental care, services for Indigenous communities, environmental protection programs, scientific resources, and veteran support, are all at risk. These cuts will be historically deep. As CUPE National President Mark Hancock put it, "not even Stephen Harper could dream of cuts this deep."

Not all departments face such deep cuts. The Department of National Defence, the RCMP, the Canada Border Services Agency, the Supreme Court and the Parliamentary Budget Office are only being asked to cut 2 percent from their existing budgets. In other words, the repressive state apparatus is being spared, while services that help working-class people are being slashed.

There's always money for war

Carney plans to redirect all this public spending towards the largest increase in military spending in 75 years. For



Mamaweswen, the North Shore Tribal Council, protest cuts in Toronto

the last 25 years, Canada has typically spent between 1 and 1.2 percent of GDP on the military, and never more than 1.4 percent. Now Carney has announced he'll join Trump and other NATO allies in raising defence spending to 5 percent of GDP by 2035! This would cost the Canadian government an estimated \$150 billion per year.

That's \$150 billion that will not be spent to build desperately-needed public housing, mass urban and long-distance transit and rail, or improving healthcare, pharmacare, dental care, long-term care, or childcare. Instead that money will be spent on weapons, bombs, and military bases. Not only that, the Canadian government continues to aid and abet a genocide in Gaza. Despite multiple assurances from the Canadian government to the contrary, a report in July by Arms Embargo Now revealed that it has continued to send arms and military equipment to Israel.

Is this what "elbows up" means?

In the trade war with Trump, Carney is under fire for backing down, rescinding the Digital Services Tax, and signaling that any negotiated deal with Trump would include some tariffs. In August, Trump increased the across-the-board tariff on Canadian goods not covered by the Canada-US-Mexico free trade agreement (CUSMA) to 35 percent. While 95 percent of Canadian goods exported to the US are covered by CUSMA and thus exempt from the 35 percent tariff, Trump's Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick signalled that Trump will want to renegotiate



CUMSA next year. The US ambassador to Canada, Pete Hoekstra, has questioned the future of the agreement. He criticized the Canadian government's 25 percent counter tariffs on some US goods, including those covered by CUMSA. Carney has now backed off on many tariffs.

In a recent meeting between Mark Carney and Ontario Premier Doug Ford the two leaders agreed that if they could not prevent Trump from imposing tariffs, they should instead focus on "the things they could control" by building up the Canadian economy. But their plans will only protect big business profits, they won't protect jobs or the environment. The so-called "one Canada economy" plan to remove inter-provincial trade barriers is really a race to the bottom on environmental and labour protection as actual barriers to trade between provinces are grossly overstated. Carney's plan to support prefabricated housing construction and to protect the Canadian steel and softwood lumber industries are sold as plans for more affordable housing and to protect jobs. His real purpose is corporate handouts to the steel and softwood lumber bosses and to private housing developers.

Workers need a socialist alternative

Carney's policies will not actually make housing more affordable, and there is no guarantee that jobs in the steel or softwood lumber industries will be protected. All they will do is line the pockets of the bosses and help them to continue to export resources and products for profit. These policies won't create new jobs and provide needed goods and services.

A socialist plan to protect jobs and the environment would involve the public ownership of steel, softwood lumber, and housing development corporations. This would allow democratic control, with society collectively deciding how to use the steel and lumber produced by Canadian workers to improve the lives of their families and communities. This would include a mass program of public housing construction and an expansion of transit and rail infrastructure, including electrifying and twinning most of the railway lines. Passenger rail would be re-established between all the country's major cities and towns, with high-speed rail between Windsor and Québec City, and between Calgary and Edmonton.

To protect working-class people's homes, livelihoods, and the environment, fossil fuel companies should be taken into public ownership for a planned phase-out of fossil fuel and nuclear power, along with a rapid expansion of renewable energy production and storage including wind, solar, water and geothermal energy, including guaranteed jobs and reskilling for workers.

An international working-class anti-war movement

Unfortunately, for the working class, none of the major political parties are putting forward alternatives to Carney's cuts, corporate handouts, and jacked up military spending. The NDP has opposed Carney's plan to spend 5 percent of GDP on the military, but only as an "excessive focus on security." The NDP does not oppose the imperialist Canadian military or NATO, believing that they just need to be managed more responsibly. Working-class people who are horrified by the escalating war, destruction, and genocide in Gaza are not likely to be impressed by the NDP's pledge to be the kinder, gentler, imperialists.

Working-class people have every right to defend themselves and their communities from invasion, including by force of arms. But NATO military forces, including the Canadian military, do not exist to protect working-class people; they exist to protect the Canadian bosses and corporate profits and the interests of their imperialist allies, including US imperialism and the genocidal Israeli government. Working-class solidarity and opposition to all forms of imperialism is needed.

International Socialist Alternative is calling for an international anti-war movement and for the working class in every country to organize and to use its power to block ever-expanding militarization and prevent the bosses from marching us off to the next world war. The working class in Canada is not in this together with the Canadian bosses, nor with the bosses in any other country. Workers share an interest with the working classes of all countries and can best secure these interests through solidarity and a common struggle against the global capitalist class. ★

Women and War: Sisters in Resistance

Leslie Kemp

Women are victims of war but have also long resisted war. Organizing, protesting, negotiating peace agreements and helping victims of war and violence are all forms of resistance. Women's resistance is borne from war's impact on themselves and their families. Knowing that their partners and children might not return also spurs women to resist war.

In 2023, 40 percent of those who died due to conflict were women. The number of women who were victims of sexual assault rose 50 percent in 2023 over 2022. Those living in war zones lack access to healthcare: 500 women and girls die every day from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. In Gaza, 180 women gave birth every day in 2023, yet most had no access to medical care.

Women resist nationalism, imperialism and war

Women, especially socialist feminists, have opposed war and, its cousin, rampant nationalism.

Leading up to WWI, Marxists were at the forefront of this struggle, including Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg. In 1910, Zetkin organized the second International Conference of socialist women in Copenhagen that condemned war and militarism, advocating for peace.

The women's movement was split by World War I. Leading British suffragists Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst supported the war and suspended all agitation for women to get the vote, instead urging men to enlist for the slaughter. In contrast Sylvia Pankhurst, a socialist, opposed conscription and advocated for equal pay for women doing war work.

In March 1915, the first International Women's Anti-War Conference was held in Bern, attended by 29 delegates. The conference adopted a manifesto, which was widely circulated. When Zetkin returned to Germany, she was accused of treason and imprisoned. In April 1915, the International Congress of Women held a conference in The Hague with over 1,100 women participating. This event led to the creation of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), which is still active today. WILPF in Canada was founded by an anti-war activist, feminist, and socialist.

The killing fields of World War I, in which 22 million people were killed, justified the opposition.

War breeds repression

In war, the ruling class clamps down on dissent. Many socialists paid for their resistance with imprisonment (Zetkin) and death (Luxemburg).



Fraen an Gender (Women and Gender), Luxembourg

US imperialism cynically encouraged the Taliban, ignoring its reactionary treatment of women, to oppose the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Later, when fighting the Taliban, the US and Canada falsely claimed it was to defend women's rights, only to abandon them in 2021. Before the Soviet Union was driven out, 60 percent of Kabul University students were women. Now women are not permitted to go to school beyond age 12 or grade 6, under the most repressive regime for women globally. This is another kind of war on women.

Women's resistance today

Like the resistance of women a hundred years ago, women's resistance today takes different forms. Zla Mavka in Ukraine is an all-women's resistance movement, founded in 2023, that uses non-violent methods to fight the Russian occupiers. Operating in various Russian-occupied regions of Ukraine, from Donechchyna to Crimea, Mavka produces leaflets, posters and a weekly newspaper to counter Russian propaganda.

The bloodiest conflict since WWII has taken place since 1996 in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Over 6 million people have died. The prevalence of rape and other forms of sexual violence is considered the worst in the world. Kivu women, for whom survival is an everyday battle, have stood up to their oppressors. While the world has turned a blind eye to the atrocities they experience, they decided to "stand strong," creating a women's collective that for 20 years has been helping victims on a medical, psychological, family, legal, and professional level. They say that "with few resources, we have saved 18,000 women."

Palestinian women have long resisted occupation, violence, home demolitions and war. In the 1970s and 1980s, their resistance emphasized working-class solidarity and grassroots mobilization. Now they struggle to survive genocide.

Socialist feminists today continue to resist oppression, imperialism and war and fight for a better future for all. ★

Britain's New Left-Wing Party: A Beacon for Working-Class Struggle

Tim Heffernan and Bill Hopwood

British politics is in turmoil. The launch of a new, socialist-leaning party, by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana, is gaining widespread support. Within weeks of announcing it, over 700,000 people signed up, making it Britain's fastest growing political force. Even before it is formally established, with an interim name of "Your Party," in recent polls it tied with Labour at 15 percent support.

Conservatives and Labour in deep crisis

Conservatives and Labour, that have dominated politics for a century now, risk becoming irrelevant.

Labour leader Keir Starmer has made Labour into a reactionary party for big business. It hasn't reversed the Tories' austerity and tax cuts for the rich, instead cutting benefits for the poorest in society. It fuels racist attacks. Nothing remains of Labour's tradition of a party built by the working class.

Labour won the 2024 election with only 34 percent of the popular vote, the lowest support of any majority government in Britain's history. Starmer won only because the Tories collapsed.

The Tory Party is near death. In the 2024 election it gained just 24 percent of the votes and 121 seats — its worst defeat ever. Since the election it has been invisible and largely irrelevant.

Nigel Farage's Reform Party dominates right-wing politics, tapping into the deep mood of anger after decades of austerity, declining public services and living standards. It leads every opinion poll with between 30 and 35 percent support. Reform is a Trumpish party, mixing right-wing and populist policies.



Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana launch new party

It is anti-immigration and transphobic, supports cutting the taxes of the rich and big business, slashing public spending, backs more privatization, and opposes tackling climate change. It also proposes to scrap student debt, to partly nationalize some utilities and increase health spending.

Corbyn is popular

The mainstream media and Labour politicians try to discredit Corbyn. However, in the 2017 election when he led Labour it campaigned for public ownership, green jobs and free education. Labour gained 40 percent of the votes and over three million more votes than Starmer in 2024.

Corbyn-led Labour had 600,000 members, the biggest party in Europe, and many were active. Now it has 309,000 members and most are inactive. Starmer has low approval across all age groups. On the day the new party was announced, Corbyn had a rating of plus 18 among 18–24-year-olds, while Starmer was negative 30 among the same group.

What kind of party?

The new party is in its early stages, but it is being built outside the confines of electoral considerations. It — supported by individuals, socialist organizations, trade unionists, and community activists — is a critical reassertion of class politics.

The party needs to define itself by socialist politics and democratic organization. The program needs to be based on the common interests of the working class in all its diversity. This will cut across Reforms' scapegoating and divisions. Policies must include (but by no means be limited to) taxing the rich to fund education, health and public housing, and ending privatization of the health service including kicking out the private companies bleeding it dry. The new party should repeal all anti-union laws and fully support unionizing all workers — migrant and British-born — to oppose the billionaires' divide-and-rule agenda.

The new party must oppose all imperialism and militarism. Starmer has ramped up military spending. Despite some mild criticisms of Israel, he is its staunch ally and utterly complicit in the genocide in Gaza. The new party should promote taxing corporations to fund welfare, not warfare.

To build the maximum strength, the new party should welcome both individual members and affiliations from unions and socialist groups. It should be fully democratic with an accountable and elected leadership. Every member would have a say in a party of, for, and by the working class. The party should fight elections and be involved in the day-to-day struggles of workers and oppressed groups.

Socialist Alternative in Britain is campaigning to build and influence the new party. The shake-up of British politics offers Canadian socialists both inspiration and urgent lessons. ★

For more on Britain: socialistalternative.info

Democratic Party Not the Way to Defeat Trump

Martin LeBrun

Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) members Zohran Mamdani and Senator Omar Fateh are making headlines, with bold policies that would improve working peoples' lives.

Mamdani won the New York City Democratic primary with key demands like rent freezes for rent stabilized apartments, a \$30/hr minimum wage by 2030, free buses, no-cost childcare, city-owned grocery stores, taxing the rich, and seizing properties owned by slumlords. Mamdani has supported the movements against the genocide in Gaza, for workers and for public utilities. His victory is a testament to the power and popularity of working-class demands that address New York's affordability crisis where median rent is 70 percent of median household income. Mamdani's 50,000 volunteers door-knocked 1.5 million homes, demonstrating the working class's power.

Fateh won the Democratic-Farmer-Labour Party (DFL) endorsement for Minneapolis mayor on a platform of building public housing, a public-health centred approach to unsheltered homelessness, stabilizing rents, broadening access to public transit and punishing cops who help in deportations.

Their campaigns coincide with the Democratic Party being at a 30 year low in the polls. Despite Trump's continued unpopularity, most voters do not see the Democrats as an effective alternative. Mamdani's Democratic establishment and billionaire-backed opponent, Cuomo, faces multiple sexual assault allegations and covered up the deaths of thousands of seniors from COVID. Fateh's opponent champions clearing homeless encampments and increasing the police budget, while opposing limits on rent increases and Gaza ceasefire resolutions.

A "new era" for the democratic party?

Mamdani and Fateh do not signal the potential for a progressive Democratic Party. The party supports the genocide in Gaza, failed to defend abortion rights and never tried to win a decent minimum wage. Bernie Sanders stated that current Democrat leaders "would rather be the captains on a sinking Titanic, rather than change course."

Socialist Alternative has consistently opposed workers' candidates running within the Democratic Party, as the entire party machine turns against them. Already establishment Democrats are attacking Mamdani and Fateh. The party apparatus uses its full weight to either defeat or capture any left-wing candidates as they have done with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. She started by leading sit-ins for a Green New Deal but now has dropped Medicare for All and the Green New Deal, and voted to break the 2022 rail strike.



Socialist Alternative in the US fight for a new party

Already Democratic district leaders, New York CEOs and Obama have lined up to co-opt Mamdani. Mamdani claimed his victory was "bringing people back into the Democratic Party," but socialists cannot rehabilitate parties hostile to workers. In his victory speech, he watered down his message by saying he'd be mayor for "all New Yorkers," even the city's over 100 billionaires.

What's next?

Socialist Alternative in the US calls for an independent political movement of working-class people to fight for Mamdani and Fateh's demands and for workers to vote for these candidates in the November general election. Resounding victories for genuine working-class programs in major US cities would be an enormously positive development. Yet, running in the Democratic Party should not be seen as a blueprint to win changes, nor should reforms to the existing capitalist system be mistaken for genuine socialism.

If Mamdani and Fateh fail to deliver without a fight, voters could disengage or turn to right-wing ideas. If either candidate wins, their own party will be the biggest obstacle to implementing their programs. To overcome this resistance, they will need to transform their volunteer support into permanent neighbourhood-based organizations of struggle, fully independent of the Democratic Party. These organizations will need to build a mass movement with petitions, meetings, rallies and workplace actions. This could lay the foundations for a new, democratic working-class party.

Victories for Mamdani and Fateh's platforms will require class struggle organized by unions from the bottom up, with union leadership accountable to their members instead of to establishment Democrats. Such independent working-class movements could provide a real alternative to the failing Democrats and inspire a much-needed national movement against Trump and the capitalist system. ★

For more on the US: socialistalternative.org

Millions Protest as Genocide Continues

Bill Hopwood

Starving children, bombing hospitals and the deliberate killing of famished people seeking food have sparked new waves of protests worldwide and inside Israel. After nearly two years, Gaza is reduced to rubble with most homes, schools, mosques and churches destroyed. The Israeli regime is using famine and starvation against the people in Gaza.

Israeli minister Katz talks of building a concentration camp in Rafah to house two million people. Netanyahu's



Over 1 million in Israel say end the war

government has approved the expansion of settlements, driving Palestinians from their homes and farms and dividing the West Bank in half. The reactionary politician Smotrich stated "We are erasing the Palestinian state."

The Israeli military now dominates the region, having degraded Hezbollah in Lebanon and weakened the Iranian regime. The Turkey-backed militia overthrew Assad, an Iranian ally, in Syria.

Imperialism aids genocide

Western leaders, including of Canada, Britain and France, cruelly talk of recognizing a Palestinian state, while they continue to supply the Israeli military with weapons and parts for the genocide and destruction. (See July report from Arms Embargo Now on Canada's role.) The British government has declared Palestine Action a terrorist organization for peaceful protest. Russia and China do nothing but issue statements, even when their close ally, Iran, was bombed by the US and Israel. The reactionary Arab regimes oppose the occupation in rhetoric but privately seek to normalize relations with Israel.

Both Biden and Trump backed the Israeli regime with billions of dollars of weapons and military actions. Trump proposes the ethnic cleaning of Gaza and fully backs Netanyahu.

The Palestinians cannot look for help from any capitalist power, regardless of which imperialist block they belong to.

A new stage of the global protest has opened

Support for the state of Israel has plummeted internationally. Even in the US and Germany, long standing allies of the regime, the public attitude has changed. A recent Gallup poll found that only 32 percent of Americans

back the Israeli regime's action in Gaza, down from 50 percent in late 2023. Mamdani, an outspoken critic of Israeli genocide, is supported by 67 percent of New York Jews under the age of 44. In Germany the net negative view of Israel has soared since October 2023, from minus 4 to minus 44. A recent Angus Reid poll found most Canadians now think Israel is committing genocide.

Israeli military and intelligence officers have consistently raised doubts

and concerns about the government's war aims, only to be ignored and then retired, silenced or forced to acquiesce.

Harder to silence is the growing opposition within Israeli society as the war drags on, more reservists are called up (a further 60,000 have been summoned for the assault on Gaza City), and the hostages are still not returned. Slowly the wall of censorship and government propaganda is breaking down and more Israelis are learning the true horror of Gaza.

On Sunday, August 17, over one million Israelis out of a population of 10 million went on strike and marched to demand the end of the attack on Gaza. Israeli society is deeply divided; Netanyahu is deeply unpopular but is determined to cling to power through endless wars.

Workers' action against the roots of the genocide

The protest movement globally and the protests in Israel must be directed at the root of the genocidal war — the occupation, the historical oppression of Palestinians, and now urgently against the famine, with demands for an immediate and permanent ceasefire.

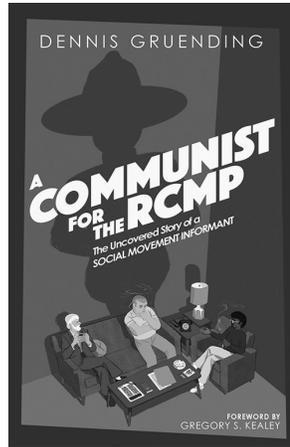
Workers have refused to load shipments of arms to Israel. Mass solidarity demos have filled streets around the world. International solidarity can help open the divide in Israeli society and point a way forward. Protests in Israel must extend into workplaces, building towards a real general strike that escalates to bring down the government.

While today it may seem a dream, it is the working class of the region and the world that has the power to end the genocide, remove the reactionary regime in Israel and the Arab countries, and launch a struggle for a socialist region that would end the death and destruction. ★

Book Review: ***A Communist for the RCMP***

Ray Goerke

A Communist for the RCMP is about Frank Hadesbeck, who was recruited by the RCMP to infiltrate the Communist Party, after returning from fighting fascists in the Spanish Civil War. He did this for 35 years. Through the story of Hadesbeck's life, Dennis Gruending details how the RCMP crafted a widespread surveillance state to suppress dissent by labour, socialist and Indigenous activists.



Formed in 1920 as a merger of the Royal North-West Mounted Police and the Dominion Police following years of rising social unrest that culminated in the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, the RCMP's main target for surveillance was left-wing rather than right-wing groups.

Its surveillance cast a wide net, indiscriminately watching anyone who "exhibited a progressive bent," including 800,000 people and organizations between 1919 and 1971. In the 1930s, RCMP commissioner Rivett-Carnac argued that communism was a greater threat to Canadian capitalism than fascism. The RCMP infiltrated communist, socialist, Indigenous and peace organizations, unions, and the NDP. A secret file on Tommy Douglas was maintained for 40 years; others involved in the struggle for universal healthcare — under suspicion of "communist sympathies" — were also targeted. The RCMP coordinated with employers to try to prevent workers from unionizing, and to break strikes.

The RCMP informed the federal government that they were ready to round up large numbers of "subversives" on short notice should the need arise. During WWII they put this into practice: Japanese Canadians, Communist Party members and labour activists were forced into internment camps.

RCMP surveillance continues to this day, with its focus on environmental and Indigenous activists. The RCMP intervenes on behalf of oil-and-gas companies to quash resistance to their projects, often using intimidation and the threat of lethal force as occurred in its raid of Wet'suwet'en territory in 2023.

A Communist for the RCMP is a well-researched and detailed book. Gruending provides important historical context to paint a convincing picture of the RCMP as the surveillance and enforcement arm of the Canadian state, used to counter any and all challenges to the colonial capitalist system. ★

Working-Class History: **Ford Windsor Strike 1945**

Fionn Maier

On September 12, 1945, 11,000 workers at the Windsor Ford plant, one of the country's largest workplaces, walked off the job. One of the workers' main demands was that the factory be a "closed shop," because as every worker benefited from union-won contracts, they should all be union members and pay dues.

After a month of the strike, the Windsor Police Commission called in Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and RCMP reinforcements. The workers understood that the police were preparing for a violent assault. In response, the workers formed a blockade of 2,000 vehicles around the plant to prevent any attack on their position.



Autoworkers blockade Ford plant

Prime Minister Mackenzie King's Liberal government announced that it was prepared to send in the military, including armoured tanks, to break through the picket line. These threats prompted workers from twenty-five other plants across southern Ontario to walk off the job in solidarity, with 8,000 solidarity picketers flocking to reinforce the Windsor line.

After a three-day standoff, the union and the employer agreed to binding arbitration. Justice Ivan Rand proposed a compromise that became known as the "Rand Formula." All workers at the plant would be required to pay dues to the union, whether they were members or not, with dues deducted from each paycheck. In return, the union would follow a "grievance process" in which workers could seek redress when the employer violates their collective agreement, but during that time they would not be allowed to go on strike.

The Rand formula quickly became a widespread standard for unionized workplaces across Canada and remains so to this day. It is a compromise in which unions give up some of their ability to legally strike, but they gain financial stability. This compromise was won against Ford's opposition and state repression by a 99-day strike driven by the workers' confidence to take control of their workplace and the widespread solidarity of the working class. ★

NDP: Campaign or Die

Bill Hopwood

Carney has rapidly proven he is ruling for the bosses. He is slashing public spending by 15 percent and tripling military spending (page 8) and tried, unsuccessfully, to take away the unions' right to strike (page 6).

In this grim situation the NDP, after its worst ever defeat, is nowhere to be seen. Instead, the Conservatives, now with Poilievre back in parliament, can pretend to stand up for working people.

There is a desperate need for a political force that loudly campaigns for policies that favour the working class and would provide good-paying jobs, including building millions of publicly owned homes with affordable rent, fixing the health care system, tackling climate change and taxing the rich.

In Britain, Corbyn and Sultana's proposal to launch a new party has gained amazing support (page 13). A bold campaigning party here could tap into a similar mood. In

the past the NDP and the CCF had more radical working-class policies that they campaigned for in communities and on the streets. Now the NDP has virtually disappeared from the streets.

The NDP's leadership seems utterly complacent both about its own deep crisis and about the attacks on the working class. To launch a campaigning party would require a major struggle against this bureaucracy, which would include reversing the policies of the NDP in office. BC's NDP government consistently refuses even the modest reform of full rent control, instead favouring handouts to developers. It backs major fossil fuel expansion even as Canada burns.

Imagine if the NDP had tables on major shopping streets with placards and slogans including "Tax the Rich," "Homes not Bombs," "Good jobs for all" and "Protect the Environment." Imagine the NDP holding public rallies in cities and towns across the country.

Unfortunately, it is likely only to happen in our imagination. The working class will have to build a party that fights for and with them. ★

Climate: Fight for Jobs and Nature *(continued from p.16)*

companies within the Pathways Alliance finally moving forward with their carbon capture and storage (CCS) project. CCS claims to address climate change by capturing carbon emissions. However, the CO₂ is mainly used to extract more oil from wells, so would increase fossil fuel use. So far it is expensive, energy intensive and does not work.

Federal and provincial governments along with companies like Chevron, 3M and United co-fund CCS research, but these companies largely do not buy their own technology as it is not profitable! Even the right-wing, pro-market Fraser Institute pans CCS, stating its questionable usefulness "outside of private for-profit use" pushing more oil and gas out of depleting reservoirs. Pathways Alliance, who netted \$35 billion in 2022, want taxpayers' dollars to fund two-thirds of "their" useless \$16.5 billion project.

A real solution

The working class needs affordable and ecologically sound homes, a rapid shift to renewables, urban and trans-Canada rail, expanded transit, sustainable agriculture, durable products, and ecological restoration. Implementing this program would create millions of jobs. But corporations will never take on this program because it is not profitable for them.

That is why Socialist Alternative supports public ownership and democratic control of key sectors of the economy, including finance, transport, communications, energy and large manufacturing. With public ownership and democratic control, society can collectively decide to



Socialist Alternative Youth march on Earth Day

make the necessary transformations while securing good jobs for all involved. Workers, with their wide range of skills and knowledge, can take decisions that benefit society and improve productivity, safety and quality of goods, while reducing wasteful spending on advertising, weapons, and private jets for the super-rich.

Capitalists and their politicians always choose profits over people's needs and nature, regardless of decades of pleading. Mass mobilizations are needed to take control of society for the majority. Environmentalists, the workers' movement, and Indigenous communities united around a program for jobs, social needs and nature would be a powerful force that could win a healthy planet and future. ★



Martin LeBrun

Canadian governments want to produce *more* fossil fuels, even while the country burns.

The 2015 United Nations Paris Agreement set the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels to avoid the worst disasters spurred by climate change. In just nine years, 2024, that benchmark was broken.

Around the world heatwaves, fires, floods, storms and droughts are all increasing, driven by climate change. They are killing people, shattering communities, and damaging agriculture and infrastructure.

Canada's two worst forest fire seasons on record were 2023 and 2025, pumping even more CO₂ into the atmosphere. The Arctic is warming three times faster than the world's average, devastating the ecology. Glaciers around the world are disappearing, including in the Rockies, which will destroy prairie agriculture, large parts of which are suffering from long-term drought.

Yet politicians are not sounding the alarm and massively shifting Canada towards renewable energy. Instead, they want more pipelines, committing to expanded oil and gas production for decades to come.

Citing economic difficulties, sovereignty, and security in the face of Trump's tariff war, Carney is entertaining plans for another pipeline to the BC coast, an export port on Hudson's Bay and a plan by Danielle Smith, Scott Moe and Doug Ford to build a rail export corridor and a pipeline from Alberta to Ontario.

Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew refused to sign this agreement, citing the need for Indigenous consensus before building infrastructure projects. Smith, Moe and Ford all say they will consult First Nations, but their words are hot air given Carney's *One Canadian Economy Act* and *Building Canada Act*. The Act, fast-tracked by both Liberals and Conservatives, allows the federal cabinet to approve what they deem "nation-building projects" before an environmental assessment or Indigenous consultation is complete. Many Indigenous communities oppose the Act as it betrays their rights.

Recently, Carney spoke about "decarbonized oil" — a contradiction of terms — resulting from a "grand bargain" where Ottawa would facilitate another bitumen pipeline to tidewater in exchange for the highly profitable oil



(continued on p. 15)