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# WORKERS' ACTION for PEACE & LIBERATION in GAZA

# ABOUT SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

## What We Stand For

The sun's bountiful energy, nature's diverse fertility and humanity's wide-ranging ingenuity could provide a good quality of life for all on a healthy planet. Socialist Alternative is dedicated to winning this world by breaking the chains of capitalism in a socialist transformation.

- **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 We're Doing

Youth are bearing the worst of capitalism's austerity. Rising levels of youth unemployment combine with ever-higher tuition and grocery costs to create a toxic trap for young people trying to make their mark on the world.

Socialist Alternative Youth (SAY) seeks to help them make this mark through unified political organization. This September, we were at seven university campuses across the country. These included our familiar stomping grounds such as Toronto Metropolitan, Simon Fraser and Victoria, as well as our first-ever forays at Calgary, Memorial in St John's, and Winnipeg. Although most students struggle with the cost of rent and books, they donated more than \$1,000 and snapped up over 100 copies of the last issue of our magazine — contributing to record-breaking sales.

As well as discussing Gaza and campus labour issues, a prominent topic was the Liberal government's huge new military spending plans, and how many opportunities that will take out of young people's hands. Higher school costs and fewer job resources will mean worse prospects in most fields. Perversely, this may make the military look like a potential career for some young people.

Along with activity at campuses, SAY held a well-attended nationwide public meeting on *Why We Need Socialism*. SAY also holds regular meetings on some campuses that helps students' political development and involves them in community activism.

Canada's — and the world's — next generation needs good jobs and a future of peace. This is only possible if the bravest youth take their place in the ranks of socialist fighters against capitalism! ★



Above: Socialist Alternative Youth members at Draw the Line  
Front cover image: Unione Sindacale di Base in Italy

# Carney's Conservative Budget

Simon Schweitzer

Mark Carney's Liberals won the election promising to stand up to Trump and his tariffs and threats to make Canada the 51st state. In office, Carney dropped the "elbows up" approach; instead he is appeasing Trump. The Liberals have scrapped almost all tariffs on US imports. They agreed to join the "Golden Dome," a space-based system of satellites and weapons with a cost estimated between \$1 and \$4 trillion.

The recently passed budget is business-friendly and combines increased austerity with a higher deficit. Despite cuts of \$60 billion in five years that will weaken many public services and slash 40,000 jobs, the deficit will grow to \$78.3 billion for 2025-26. Military spending will explode, to levels beyond what the Conservatives' election platform called for. Military spending is up by \$84 billion over the next five years and Carney has promised to reach 5 percent of GDP by 2035. All to please Trump.

Housing Infrastructure and Communities funding is cut, reducing money for new public transit. The Liberals cancelled the consumer carbon tax before the election and this budget has nothing to replace their previous headline climate policy.

The government plans to increase public-private partnerships for infrastructure, even though they cost more overall. As a sop to the ultra rich the super tax on private jets and luxury yachts is scrapped.

It is claimed that many of the jobs cut, such as in Canada Revenue Agency or Employment and Social Development, will be replaced with AI. However, technology often wastes money. The Phoenix computer payroll system still does not work after 15 years and \$5 billion of extra spending.

## Carney calls opposition's bluff

Although there was speculation that the budget might not pass, thus triggering an election, it was narrowly approved (170-168). The Green's one MP, Elizabeth May, voted for it based on Carney's vague promise. Two NDPers abstained showing the party's lack of determination to stand firm on their principles. As two Conservative MPs also abstained, the Speaker's casting vote would have carried it even if every NDP member had voted no. While the NDP is having a leadership race and is short of money, their lack of a backbone has been noted.

Carney has moved the Liberals in the direction of Harper's Conservatives. Some Conservatives are happy with Carney's conservative Liberals as shown by the recent defection of Chris d'Entremont to the Liberals. There are ongoing rumblings against Poilievre. Much of big business is happy with Carney's government.



Carney has moved the Liberals in the direction of Harper's Conservatives

## Carney imitates Trump on the border

Bill C-2, the *Stronger Borders Act*, claims to reduce both the flow of people and drugs across the border, a further effort to appease Trump. The Liberals had already announced reductions in the number of temporary foreign workers it would permit, and this bill explicitly targets refugees. No one who has been in Canada for more than one year, including people who arrived before the bill was tabled, would be able to claim asylum, regardless of conditions in their home country and what they might face if they were sent back.

While the bill included several privacy-violating measures, including provisions for the spy agency CSIS to access users' online data without a warrant, overwhelming opposition forced the Liberals to repackage C-2 into a new bill, C-12, that maintains the restrictions on migrant and refugee rights, but removed some of the most egregious attacks on privacy. This new bill still faces fierce opposition.

## Working class needs to resist Carney

The budget and Bill C-2 both show the Liberals' decisive shift to the right. Increasing militarism, tightening border security, and accelerating the climate crisis will not raise the living standards of Canadian workers, nor will they revive Canada's stagnant economy.

The working class needs to strengthen the unions and build its own independent political organizations to resist the attacks of government and bosses.

The rightward shift is not unique to Canada. Insoumise in France and Your Party in Britain (p. 9) are examples of how the Canadian working class could challenge the right. ★

# Ending Violence Against Women Depends on Ending Capitalism and Class Society

Natalie L and Leslie Kemp



*A misogynist post on X.com replying to a union activist*

“We need [to] bludgeon cunts like you in the streets,” an anonymous account posts under an activist’s tweet about strikes. “Someone needs to cave your fucking head in.” These threats are examples of the misogyny and violence that women face daily. Ending digital violence is the theme of this year’s UN Day on Eliminating Violence against Women. Digital violence, like many other forms of violence against women, is harmful to women as well as to the whole of society.

Violence against women is on the rise. While the overall rate of murder in Canada has declined for two consecutive years, 28 more women were murdered last year than in 2023, nearly half by a current or former partner. Every six days in Canada a woman is killed by her partner, and almost half of women in Canada have been physically or sexually assaulted in their lifetime, with one in ten having experienced intimate partner violence in the last 12 months. Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ peoples are at greatest risk of gender-based violence in Canada.

## Public safety for whom?

Governments are failing to protect women and gender non-conforming individuals. When politicians like Mark Carney and Vancouver’s mayor Ken Sim parade around the phrase “public safety,” they are not referring to women’s safety in their homes, on the street, or in online spaces. Instead, all levels of government steal money from social services to boost military and police budgets. Carney’s government is spending \$1.8 billion over four years to increase federal policing and to hire 1,000 RCMP personnel. Yet budgets to protect women are at risk of losing funding. This includes money for affordable housing and childcare, which are essential to fight oppression against women. A lack of services and increased economic insecurity traps women in vulnerable positions.

Police officers are among perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse of vulnerable populations, even when they are called to help people. One-third of all police suspensions in Ontario from 2013 to 2024 were due to gender-based violence. Women lack trust in the police and legal system, which results in underreporting of all sexual assault cases.

## Defending the “traditional family” but not women

Whether it’s influencers in the Manosphere spewing dangerous rhetoric, or Donald Trump being openly misogynistic, the normalization of violence against women is everywhere. Right-wing ideology asserts white male power and domination, normalizing violence, objectifying women, and pushing the “traditional nuclear family” that exists to benefit capitalist production. (The nuclear family only appeared in the last few hundred years.) Capitalists and the politicians they control may talk about supporting women, but they benefit from women fitting into the so-called “traditional” nuclear family roles of motherhood and “housewife.” Even many women who have jobs outside the household and maintain financial independence are expected to do the majority of childcare and household work.

The alt right is a growing threat to the safety of women globally and in Canada. In particular, some young men are adopting these narrow understandings of women’s roles. The digital sphere provides an easy vehicle to threaten and enact violence, while pushing narratives of control.

## Violence is rooted in the undervaluing of women

Capitalism places value on making money and profit. While women’s oppression predates capitalism (it is the oldest oppression that arose along with class society), under capitalism, women’s value is related primarily to their provision of household labour, wages, sex, and children. Capitalism places low priority on women’s contributions to their families, communities, and society. Gender-based violence is a tool to control women and maintain male power. As long as profits come before human wellbeing and the health of the environment, gender-based violence is inevitable.

We need to fight for a new system that does not depend on the oppression of women, but one that creates the condition for their liberation. ★

**Public Meeting: End Violence and Oppression Against Women**

Saturday, December 6

On Zoom and in-person, scan for info:



## Stories from life... with a Disability

Juniper Moss



Feeling trapped

Job hunting. Doom scrolling on Indeed.com, sending out dozens of applications, anxiously waiting for a response and going to interviews. Once again being asked, “why should we hire you?” Everyone knows how hard it is; for disabled people it’s even harder.

I’m a young person who has been living with Lupus for the past 8 years and everyday I battle with chronic pain, fatigue and judgement from others. Capitalist society is neither built for nor accepting of disabled people. It pressures us to work and “earn our place” but at the same time bars us from the workplace. There is no winning.

I graduated from college two months ago and I’m looking for a job. So far, I have sent out 32 job applications and had 12 interviews. The interviews go well. They are impressed with my experience and qualifications. Then they find out I’m looking for a part-time job. They want to know why. “I have a chronic illness, and my health prevents me from working full time.” They silently nod. I can feel the air change as I sit there and watch the interviewer’s eyes fall to their clipboard. I hold back my frustration and disappointment because I know that I’m not going to make it to the next stage.

Few places want a part-timer, and none want a disabled person. Hiring two part-timers would mean paying two wages, which is more money out of the boss’s pocket. People with disabilities need accommodations, which may include additional/modified equipment, adjusting schedules/working limited hours and extra training. Some of these accommodations cost money, but it’s mostly an inconvenience to reluctant bosses.

I worked hard to get my degree because I thought it would help me get a job, but so far all it has gotten me is student debt. ★

## What Makes Me Angry: Carney’s Profit, Oops, Nation-Building Program

Larry Hyink

Mark Carney’s budget is out. It slashes jobs and public services to fund nation-building weapons of death. As promised, it hands over massive stacks of cash to corporations and the richest Canadians for so-called nation building.

Carney kept the flood of subsidies and tax breaks flowing to oil and gas, junked the industrial carbon tax and hinted at lifting the emissions cap. Nothing says “nation building” like enhancing wildfires, floods and other natural disasters.

Another focus of the budget is AI data centres. Once constructed, AI data centres create a whopping 50-150 full-time jobs (somebody’s got to sweep the floor now and again) and lay the groundwork for earthshaking leaps in “productivity” like Amazon’s layoff of 30,000 workers replaced by AI.

But wait, there’s more! Canada’s corporate tax rate is cut to 13.2 percent. Lowest in the G7. Carney hopes to spur investment, especially from foreign firms. This builds on Canada’s tradition of bribing corporations to come and make money, leading to triumphs like giving Stellantis billions only to have it walk away with the cash and shut its Brampton plant.

Outside the corporate office masquerading as Canada’s government, a quarter of households and one-third of children face food insecurity, rent is unaffordable and workers producing Canada’s wealth watch their lives worsen while growing income inequality bloats the fortunes of the rich. To be sure, the budget continues the National School Food Program. Kids can have at least one meal a day, even if their parents can’t. Nation building means working people must patriotically sacrifice for the wealthy.

Pierre Poilievre clings to his blame the Liberals routine. His act never offered many policies, and it’s getting pretty stale since Carney stole most of them. Faced with a right-wing “Liberal Party,” Pierre is floundering, lamely trying to figure out how to be more right wing than Carney. He’s also clueless about food insecurity, housing costs, medication prices, stagnating wages and the other issues facing ordinary Canadians.

In fact, both parties represent the capitalist class. Their differences are tactical disagreements over how best to make money for their corporate masters. Until Canadians ditch them both and fight for a socialist Canada, where people and not profits come first, “nation building” will only mean lining the pockets of the rich. ★

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Ray Goerke

The so-called ceasefire in Gaza is no such thing. The Israeli military continues to kill people: 280 in Gaza in the first five weeks since the ceasefire was agreed on October 10. They are still destroying homes and buildings. Journalists are still attacked and killed, and at least 95 healthcare workers remain held captive by Israeli authorities. What hospitals are left in Gaza are completely overwhelmed; the World Health Organization reports 16,500 patients are waiting to be evacuated for specialized treatments. Starvation and neglect continue to be deliberate weapons of genocide.

In the occupied West Bank, Israeli settlers and soldiers constantly attack and kill Palestinian farmers and livestock.

The first phase of the deal called for the Israeli military to withdraw to the “yellow line,” which means they would continue to control over 50 percent of Gaza. Hamas returned the last surviving Israeli hostages and began to return the bodies of the deceased, while Israel released 1,968 Palestinian prisoners, of whom 1,700 had been arrested in Gaza over the last two years and never brought to trial.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians walked back to their neighbourhoods and homes, although 92 percent of residential buildings have been damaged or destroyed. Israel promised to allow 600 aid trucks per day to enter Gaza, but they continued to block most of them, with only 145 trucks per day making it through in the first three weeks.

Netanyahu’s far-right government will continue to exploit incidents and construct pretexts to justify further attacks. After two Israeli soldiers were killed, Israeli Security Minister Ben-Gvir, from the extremely reactionary wing of the government, called for a resumption of the genocidal onslaught with full force. The Israeli regime is using the same strategy in Lebanon, carrying out nearly daily attacks despite the ceasefire agreed in November 2024.

Trump publicly excuses Israeli ceasefire violations and their supposed justifications, stating that “nothing is going to jeopardize” the deal. Rightly or wrongly, Trump presents himself as the controller of the situation. For Trump, the continued deadly attacks and starvation conditions are an acceptable part of the plan so long as US imperialist interests are satisfied, which is to say that Israel remains a strong and stable proxy for western imperialism in the Middle East.

The Israeli regime has emerged temporarily strengthened after the last two years of war, not only in Gaza, but against Lebanon, Iran, Syria and the Houthis in Yemen. It continues to enjoy unconditional support from western imperialism despite crossing every red line they bother to draw. The Canadian government, under pressure from mass protests, rhetorically condemns the worst excesses of the Israeli regime, nevertheless continues to supply it economic and military aid.



*Italian general strike in defence of the Global Sumud Flotilla*

## Workers' actions pushed for the ceasefire

Trump stepped up pressure for a ceasefire because of US imperialism’s concern about escalating protests and revolts in solidarity with Gaza, especially in the Middle East. Trump wants to strengthen economic ties with the billionaires in the Gulf states. These rulers do not care about the Palestinians, but they cannot accept the continuation of the Israeli regime’s genocide as they fear the anger of their own populations.

The mass protests around the world and the general strikes in Europe also endanger imperialism’s agenda. Support for the state of Israel and its actions in the region have plummeted. In November, young Jews in New York City backed mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani, an outspoken critic of the Israeli government.

Neither the US nor the Israeli government fear a military defeat of Israel by any government or paramilitary force in the region, including Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis, or Iran. As long as western imperialism backs the Israeli regime to the hilt, there is no prospect of its defeat in war. But direct actions of the organized working class internationally against their own imperialist governments do represent a genuine threat that could stop the flow of arms and supplies to the Israeli military.

## Workers have the power to win peace

The Israeli economy is heavily tied to Europe and North America. The EU is the source of 34.3 percent of Israel’s imports and receives 28.8 percent of its exports. Much of the trade to Israel from the United States and Canada



flows through European ports. This means that industrial action by European workers would be extremely effective if coordinated on a large enough scale.

Italian workers demonstrated the way forward on October 3, when more than two million workers and young people walked out in a 24-hour general strike. It was called by Italy's largest trade union, the Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL), and the more grassroots Unione Sindacale di Base (USB). The strike was organized in defence of the Global Sumud Flotilla, which was intercepted by the Israeli military and blocked from delivering supplies to Gaza. As the flotilla was on its way, Riccardo Rudino of the Autonomous Port Workers' Collective in Genoa declared "If, even for twenty minutes, we lose contact with our comrades on the flotilla, we will block all of Europe: from Genoa's docks, not a single nail will leave, it will be a global strike."

The Italian general strike was powerful, and the example now needs to be taken up by workers around the world. But a 24-hour general strike doesn't fall from the sky. It took many months of organizing and discussion by workers within their own workplaces, with workers from other unions, and linking up with student and political activists. The October 3 strike was preceded by smaller protest actions that served to test organizational methods as well as to build momentum and confidence. Unionized workers in Canada are already taking action including building organizations like Labour 4 Palestine. These worker-activists should not limit themselves to advocacy and protests but continue to push the official

union leaderships and structures towards turning the full power and resources of the labour movement towards taking industrial action against Canadian companies and the government that continues to send aid to the Israeli military.

## This deal is not peace

There is no peace in Gaza and the Middle East. The starvation, bombing, and genocide of the Palestinian people continue. Trump's goal was to ease the growing pressure in the Middle East and internationally. The aim was to stabilize the region for imperialism and eventually allow relations between Israel and the neighbouring Arab states to "normalize."

While Palestinians and working-class people around the world express genuine relief at a temporary pause in the full-scale onslaught, it is highly likely that the Israeli regime will continue to kill and destroy and may return to full-scale slaughter.

It is unclear if the second phase of the ceasefire will ever happen. Hamas is supposed to disarm, but what does that mean for the future of Gaza? There is speculation that Egypt, Jordan and perhaps even Iraq will contribute soldiers to a "stabilization force." But the current situation is not peace with the capitalist and Zionist state of Israel occupying parts of Gaza and stealing ever more in the West Bank. Israel's overwhelming military strength, backed by western imperialism, sits just across the Gaza border.

There is no plan to create real peace or to advance the Palestinians' liberation. Peace, with secure homes and public services, requires the end of the Israeli occupation in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon. It will require the removal of the Netanyahu government. Gaza needs rebuilding from the rubble, with new homes, schools and hospitals, and water, sewage and power systems. This will cost around \$70 billion and take years. No one will undertake it while the occupation and bombing continue.

## Our socialist program

International Socialist Alternative calls for a new and bigger flotilla backed by a general strike across Europe and the Middle East. Organize the mass opposition to the war across the Middle East into a huge, working-class-led movement to break the siege. End the surrounding Arab governments' complicity with genocide and occupation, and overthrow dictatorial regimes that exploit and oppress their own populations. Dockworkers in Genoa have shown the way: workers in Canada should continue to organize and escalate to block arms to Israel and expose the government's role in supporting the genocide of Palestinians. Build the struggle for socialist change to provide peace, democracy, and national rights to self-determination for all the peoples of the region. This includes a free, socialist Palestine ★

# Youth in Revolt: Fight for International Socialism!

*Martin LeBrun and Rachel Wilder*

Corruption, unemployment, and inequality run rampant globally. But the youth-led, “Gen Z” protests are fighting back. In Indonesia and Nepal, tens of thousands of young people kicked off anti-corruption revolts, whose demands quickly expanded to address inequality and bleak prospects, inspiring youth across the global South.

Today’s young people grew up in an era of declining living standards after the 2008 financial crisis, marred by COVID, plagued by the climate crisis and the rise of right-wing authoritarianism. Record youth unemployment is endemic, not just in the global South. Canadian youth face record unemployment, while the richest 20 percent get 42 percent of disposable income and own 65 percent of Canada’s wealth.

## **Nepal: revolt drives out prime minister**

Nepali youth rebelled in September after the government banned 26 social media apps to suppress a viral social media trend exposing the extravagant lifestyles of politicians’ children. These #NepoKid videos were emblematic of deep inequality in a country ravaged by 21 percent youth unemployment and corruption.

The government’s bloody crackdown showed the capitalist state’s real priorities of protecting their own power, with over 150 protesters killed. The movement forced so-called “communist” prime minister K. P. Sharma Oli to resign. As parliament buildings were set on fire, young people elected judge Sushila Karki as the new interim prime minister in Gen Z style: democracy via the gaming chat app, Discord.

## **Indonesia: students block corrupt housing subsidy**

The Nepalese protests followed student-led Indonesian protests against a proposed \$3,000 housing subsidy for all 580 members of the House of Representatives, who each earn 10 to 20 times the national minimum wage! The state tried repression, but this only drove anger deeper



*Photo from the #NepoKid protests in Nepal*

into society after a police vehicle killed a 21-year-old taxi delivery driver, Affan Kurniawan. Importantly, gig worker unions played a role in organizing these protests.

Indonesian president Prabowo slashed budgets and laid off 20,000 workers per month in early 2025, while raising taxes and cutting programs. Yet, Prabowo has clung to power by granting concessions, including cancelling the housing allowance and making a large payment to Kurniawan’s family. These concessions do not address the protests’ root causes. At the same time the government has stepped up repression. While the protests have shrunk, this revolt gives a glimpse of what mass struggles can win.

## **Lessons from Bangladesh**

Last year, a similar revolt took place in Bangladesh, where student-led protests drove out the prime minister Sheikh Hasina. The state murdered over 1,500 protesters during the uprising. Key unions and workers’ organizations joined the students in struggle, forcing the state to negotiate. The student leaders unfortunately allowed neoliberal economist Muhammad Yunis to lead the interim government. One year later, Yunis’ capitalist government has not addressed the inflation, corruption and weak job market, leaving many to question the bloody sacrifice of thousands.

## **No going back to the status quo!**

The Nepalese and Indonesian revolts partly inspired youth protests in the Philippines, Timor-Leste, Morocco, Madagascar, and Peru. Social media did not create these protests but served as an accelerant. It is only when the movement takes to the streets that it effects real change. While all different, these revolts each saw young people initially revolting against corruption, followed with broader economic demands.

The working class has yet to fully intervene in these movements. In each case, “leaderless” protesters did not have a party or organization of their own that could take power on behalf of the movement. This leaves a vacuum that is inevitably filled by a new wing of the corrupt pro-capitalist elite, which will not fundamentally transform society.

In this era of imperialism and capitalist decay, only the working class has the power to complete the fight against corruption and poverty and for democratic rights. Throughout history, youth have sparked revolutionary movements, but it is when the movement inspires the wider working class into action that it can secure lasting victories. Across all countries, the working class shares a common interest with each other, not with their national capitalist classes. The struggle for democracy and socialism cannot be contained within national borders and must be spread internationally. ★

# Fight the Right with a Socialist Program

Bill Hopwood

The ruling class is abandoning the political centre and embracing reactionary policies and politicians including Trump, Milei (Argentina), Farage (Britain) and others. Capitalism's new era of inter-imperialist conflicts includes economic and political nationalism, protectionism, racism and attacks on women and LGBTQ+ rights.

The best, and only effective, answer to reactionary politics is campaigning with socialist demands that fight the rich in favour of the working class and the oppressed. This has nothing in common with “woke” liberalism. Socialism means good union jobs that meet society's needs and protect nature. Socialism would take the power and wealth from the rich and corporations, instead establishing public ownership and democratic planning.



***“We’re fighting for socialism ... a fundamental transformation of society, where workers control the means of production.” — Zarah Sultana***

## France: Macron is hated

Macron, President of France since 2017, was the darling of the centre. Now he is hated and faces a deep crisis: five prime ministers have resigned in 22 months. France has been rocked by multiple strikes and general strikes, massive demonstrations and protests.

Macron's budget, with deep cuts and increased military spending, has been rejected multiple times by MPs. Parliament is divided into three blocks. The largest is the left, built around Insoumise (Unbowed) led by Mélenchon; among its policies are a shorter working week, taxes on the rich and a higher minimum wage. The second block is the far right around LePen's Rassemblement National (National Rally) that pretends to care about ordinary people but emphasizes hostility to immigrants and Islam. The smallest block is Macron's supporters.

France's next elections will be a battle between the left and right. The capitalist class will back Rassemblement over Insoumise. The working class will need to mobilize to defeat Rassemblement either in the ballot box or on the streets and in the workplaces.

## Your Party: hope for working people

The far-right Reform UK, led by Farage, is currently ahead in opinion polls and would win the most seats if an election happened today. Both Labour — now a right-wing party

— and the Tories — even more right wing — are deeply unpopular. Neo-fascists have mobilized on the streets.

The hope for working people is the surging Your Party led by Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana. Its launch tapped into deep anger, signing up over 800,000 supporters in a few weeks. If these become members, it will be Britain's largest party.

There have been tensions and upsets in its birth, infighting between the more right-wing MPs of Your Party on one side, and on the other side Sultana and the grassroots of the party, who want bold policies and a democratic structure with the members controlling the party and its policies.

Socialist Alternative in England, Wales and Scotland has an important role in mobilizing Your Party's membership to push past the leaders' disagreements, arguing for democracy in the party, helping to build demos and meetings in support of Your Party and campaigning for socialist policies. A democratic, socialist Your Party is the best way to stop Farage.

## Mamdani's program can defeat Trump

The US Democrats are clinging to the centre and keep giving Trump victories. Empty words will not stop Trump or win over his supporters.

Mamdani won in New York with an army of 100,000 volunteers (in a city of 9 million people!), inspired by policies including a rent freeze, a \$30 minimum wage, building social housing, free public transit and free childcare. This is how to defeat Trump. However, the Democratic Party's machine is working to control and co-opt Mamdani. The Democrats, Trump and big business will use every dirty trick to block Mamdani's policies. Only mobilizing the mass movement of Mamdani supporters can win his program.

## Canada needs dynamic socialist movement

So far, the NDP leadership contest has not generated the energy of Sultana or Mamdani. To not only win the leadership but to change the NDP into an energized campaigning force, a left candidate needs to reach far beyond the usual NDP circles and mobilize new, especially young, people.

Socialist Alternative is working to replace failing capitalism with bold socialist policies. We will be part of a large and dynamic left and socialist movement, whether it comes through or around the NDP. We are growing and we invite you to join us. ★

# Working-Class History: Louis Riel: Traitor or Hero?

Leslie Kemp and Sean Rohne

Louis Riel has been transformed from a traitor to a hero. The *Louis Riel Act* was passed in the Manitoba legislature in 2023, giving Riel the honorary title of "First Premier of Manitoba." Premier Kinew called this a "historic correction." This is a far cry from his vilification as a rebel and traitor, depictions long disputed by Manitoba's Métis community.

Just three years after confederation, the first military action of the new Canadian state was against Canadians, to suppress the Métis in the Red River Resistance (1870) and again in the Northwest Resistance of 1885. This was the first of many incidents in which the Canadian state used the police and army to defend the interests of capitalism against Indigenous people. Engels wrote about the "armed bodies of men," which keep class antagonism "within the bounds of order" but at the end of the day defend the interests of the ruling class.

## Riel led resistance movements

The Red River Resistance of 1869–1870 lasted for 416 days. Red River's population was 12,000, 85 percent of whom were Métis people of mixed First Nations–European descent. It was part of Rupert's Land, owned by the Hudson's Bay Company, until it was sold to the Canadian government.

The Red River Resistance was an assertion of Métis land rights and culture. Riel established a provisional government, which negotiated the terms under which Manitoba entered the Canadian Confederation in

1870. During the resistance Thomas Scott, a Canadian nationalist, was executed after he was found guilty of charges against him in a Métis trial conducted by the provisional government. The Canadian government under John A Macdonald sought retribution, led a campaign of terror against both the provisional government and Riel, who fled to the US to escape prosecution.

The North-West Resistance of 1884–85 took place after a delegation of Saskatchewan Métis leaders, led by Gabriel Dumont, persuaded Riel to return from exile to help address grievances with the Canadian government. At the Battle of Batoche, the Métis and First Nations fighting the Canadian militia were defeated. Riel was imprisoned in Regina and convicted of high treason. Despite protests, popular appeals and calls for clemency, on November 16, 1885, the Métis leader was hanged.

## Riel as founder of Manitoba

In recent years, Riel has been transformed. He is now celebrated as a leader and true founder of Manitoba. This is largely due to the determination of the national government of the Red River Métis Nation: the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF). He has been brought into everyday life with Manitoba's declaration of Louis Riel Day in 2008. The province officially recognized Riel as Manitoba's first leader, setting the stage for the MMF's goal of proving that Riel's government in 1869–70 was the first legitimate government of the province.

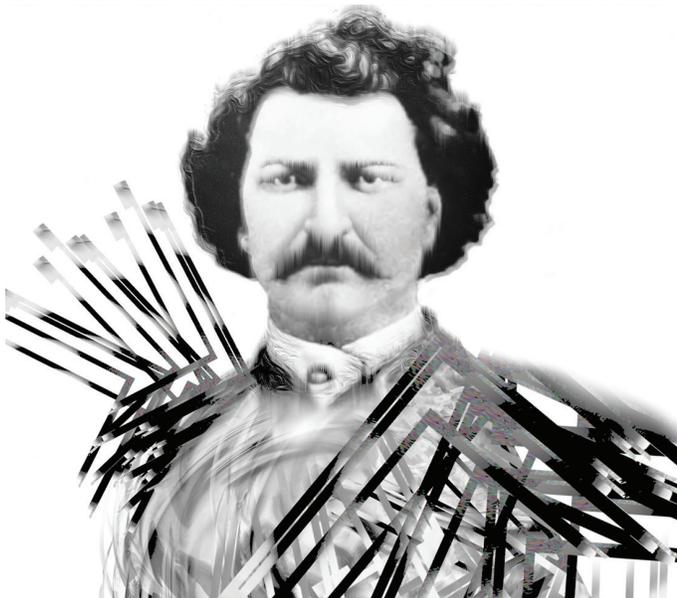
Lenin warned of the tendency of the ruling class to canonize historical figures after their death who led significant movements that challenged the status quo. A sanitized version of such figures is presented that separates them from the radical ideas they fought for, to present a sense of unity. On November 16, Mark Carney spoke of Riel as "a foundational figure in the histories of Manitoba and Canada. One hundred and forty years ago, Louis Riel helped unite our young nation."

The Métis Nation has rejected calls for a pardon or exoneration as Métis Nation legal scholar, Paul Chartrand, put it, "The hanging of Louis Riel is a stain on the honour of Canada. Let the stain remain."

In his last days, Riel said, "In a little while it will be over. We may fail. But the rights for which we contend will not die." Future generations are now learning about Riel not as a rebel, but as the leader who defended the Métis' rights, built Manitoba, and fought for a diverse province. ★

### Additional Reading:

- Chester Brown, *Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography*, 2011
- David Doyle, *Louis Riel: Let Justice Be Done*, 2017
- Jean Teillet, *The North-West is our Mother*, 2019
- George Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont*, 1975



Louis Riel: image by Evan Tremblay

# The Silver Lining of COP 30's Failure

Harland Bird

In 2025, renewable power like wind and solar surpassed coal to become the leading global source of electricity, proving that humanity has the technology to beat back climate change. But this year's United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP 30, highlighted the major barrier to be overcome.

The annual event took place this November in Brazil, making it the third consecutive COP to be hosted by a major oil-producing state. The real perpetrators of climate change — corporations and the rich — once again dominated the event. It was swarmed by corporate lobbyists (including 1,600 from the fossil fuel industry) and featured events sponsored by wealthy donors including the Bloomberg Foundation and major corporations like pesticide giant Bayer (aka Monsanto), giving them a platform to stall and greenwash.

Meanwhile, environmental activists and even poorer nations struggled to attend, with hotel rooms alone costing over \$500 per night. Local Indigenous protesters who tried to enter the main venue were repelled by security.

All of this, combined with the lack of any reduction in CO2 emissions (a record 37.8 gigatons of carbon was emitted in 2024 — a 16.5 gigaton increase over 1995, when the first COP was held) — shows that the COP process has failed.

Some may find this depressing, but for socialists this abject failure has a silver lining as it clearly shows capitalism's inherent inability to address climate change —



Cartoon by Osama Hajjaj

let alone the wider environmental crises. The COPs are an annual reminder of the existential threat posed to nature and humanity's well being by an unplanned, profit-driven economy, and perpetual international competition — two of capitalism's defining features.

Increasingly, poor and working people are correctly concluding that system change is needed to save the environment, that working class struggle to overthrow capitalism is the way forward, and that true hope is in the fight for socialism. ★

## Unions Need Determined Leadership *(continued from p.12)*

### Change is needed

Workers' real power is in the workplace: they can stop the business or service. Unions should focus their energy and resources on union members, rather than on well-paid staffers.

Union democracy, with the active involvement of the membership, is essential. Before the flight attendants' strike, they held hundreds of meetings over two years to discuss and listen, ensuring that the members were united and determined. The longshore union's contract gives time off for members to attend monthly union meetings. Real union democracy, where members actively debate and decide policies, is fundamental to strong unions.

Too often union leaders become isolated from the membership, making them more likely to bend to the pressures of the capitalist class, the government or employer. Instead, union leaders should be elected from the workforce and paid the same as the members they represent. This would help ensure leaders are not detached from their members.

Socialist Alternative members everywhere, who hold or run for elected union positions, carry out this pledge.

Fiery speeches, which are far too often not supported by determined action, are no substitute for a strong strategy to build workers' power and win. Power is built through bold demands, and real and sustained grassroots energy and organization.

During a strike, mass picketing involving all members is vital. This builds confidence, provides an opportunity to regularly discuss the strike, share news and updates, and shows the public the power of the union.

Union leaders must reject the relentless propaganda of the ruling class that capitalism is the only possible and sane option, and that what is good for the bosses is good for the workers. No! There is a fundamental class conflict between bosses and workers. The bosses' profits come from the wages that workers do not get. These Socialist Alternative policies would help labour win the victories that the workers deserve. ★

# SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

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*Air Canada flight attendants on strike*

*Chris Fofonoff and Tim Heffernan*

Canada's unionized workers have shown a fighting spirit over the last two years. Since 2022, workers have struck in education, rail, public services, retail, docks, airlines, post office, manufacturing and in other industries.

While these workers were determined, many of their struggles accomplished less than what was deserved and possible. They were, of course, attacked by employers and politicians. But often it was the unions' leaders that held back struggles. Organized labour must step up action against wages that are too low and do not keep up with inflation. Unions should resist workplace closures, service cuts and job losses, both in the private and public sectors. Unions need to combat racism and sexism that divides workers. Winning these struggles requires the transformation of many unions.

Ontario's educational workers strike in 2022 indicated both possibilities and shortcomings. Doug Ford imposed a contract using the notwithstanding clause. The 55,000 members rejected it, and Ontario's unions threatened a province-wide general strike. Ford withdrew the legislation. A great victory was in sight, yet the union leadership backed down and accepted a poor contract.

Public sector workers were a major target of governments. While the NDP makes speeches, it never blocked the Liberal government's repeated breaking of strikes. The BC NDP forced 25,000 BCGEU public sector workers into an eight-week strike before offering a pay increase of only three percent per year.

Alberta's teachers struck for a month against lagging pay and ballooning class sizes. The United Conservative Party (UCP) government legislated them back to work, using the notwithstanding clause, on a contract that 90 percent had rejected. There was popular support for a general strike. But after some strong words, Alberta's union leaders backed away and diffused the energy into humdrum recall campaigns against UCP legislators.

The labour movement's biggest victory recently was 10,000 Air Canada flight attendants' defiance of the federal government's order to end their strike, delivering a crippling blow to Section 107 of the Canada Labour Code, by which the feds declared any strike illegal. The union did not win its full demands and might have won more if the strike had continued longer. It would have been better to continue the strike until the members had time to see and vote on the agreement.

(continued on p. 11)

