

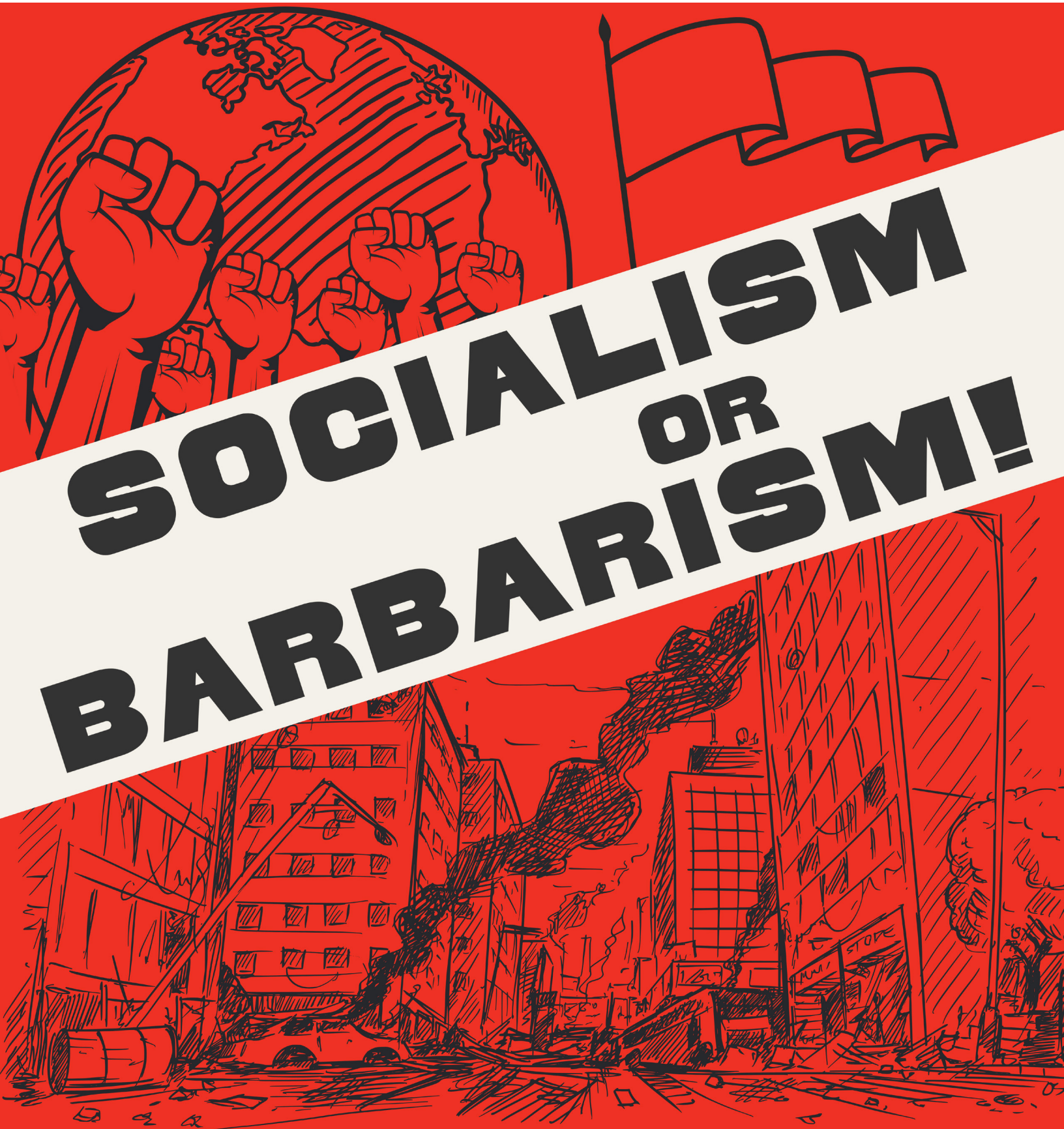
SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

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**SOCIALISM
OR
BARBARISM!**

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

Ames Allen

Following International Working Women's Day on March 8, Socialist Alternative Canada (SAC) organized a nationwide public meeting, in-person and online, featuring speakers within SAC as well as Québec and the US, and a special guest from the Women, Life, Freedom movement.

Crisis is mounting in Iran, where uncounted thousands of protesters have been massacred by the oppressive regime. Amidst the continuing terror of war, we must highlight the bravery of Women, Life, Freedom — a movement started after 22-year-old Mahsa Amini was killed for wearing hijab “improperly.” Its members have continued the radical work of protesting with their heads uncovered despite great risks, refusing to let the right wing turn women's bodies into something obscene.

We spoke of how Indigenous women have been systematically devalued, underpaid, and over-incarcerated. Canada's society and legal system have failed them. Solving these inequities would require land justice, protection for the vulnerable, and adequate pay for those doing the vital care work their communities depend on.

Organized working-class struggle could win these gains, but governments are doing everything they can to stop this. Québec's right-wing government passed a bill to allow greater power in declaring strikes unlawful, allowing them to force a quick end to the transit strikes in November.

The corruption of the ruling class is widespread, as made evident with the release of the Epstein files last year. Perpetrators of unspeakable violence against young women and girls have gone unpunished, protected by politicians and lawmakers whose names also appear in the files.

Though these events seem unrelated, they all stem from a capitalist, patriarchal system of abuse and extraction. We need an inclusive, socialist feminist alternative to promote better lives for people everywhere. ★



Socialist Alternative's public meeting for International Working Women's Day

The Radical Roots of Earth Day

Sammy Albright and Ray Goerke

The world is on fire, and the billionaires are taking away the fire hydrants. In the US, Trump is gutting the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In Canada, Carney's "Build Baby Build" plan will ram through environmentally destructive fossil fuel and mines with limited public oversight.

Republican President Richard Nixon created the EPA, but he didn't do so out of concern for the environment. The EPA was won through mass struggle, culminating in the 20-million-person strong protests on the first Earth Day, April 22, 1970.



The first Earth Day, April 22, 1970, New York City

Unions and the early environmental movement

From the 1950s to the 70s, unions played a leading role in the environmental movement, and the United Auto Workers (UAW) — a union whose members built polluting cars — spearheaded this fight.

Workers saw pollution both at work in the factory and at home in their communities, and used their unions to fight back against both. In 1968, the United Farm Workers initiated a campaign against the use of pesticides, arguing that they both harmed farm workers and the environment. In Detroit, Black auto workers in the League of Revolutionary Black Workers organized wildcat strikes in part against the terrible, polluted air in the lower-paid foundry section of the factories, where disproportionately Black workers had jobs.

The bosses often like to pit "jobs against the climate." They say that workers in polluting industries benefit from environmental destruction, tying the industry's profit to the well-being of its workers. Union involvement in the early environmental movement provides a powerful counterargument against the climate versus jobs myth.

The environmental teach-in

In 1969, the movement against the war in Vietnam was reaching its peak. It had developed the "teach-in" tactic to educate and discuss strategy, and this idea was taken up by the environmental movement. In 1970 a call went out for a national day of teach-ins on April 22, which became known as Earth Day.

During the week of April 22, 1970, millions were involved in marches, protests and teach-ins that were held on 2,000 college campuses, in 2,000 community centres and in 10,000 high schools across the United States and Canada. Unions mobilized their members to actions.

Earth Day was a launching pad for ongoing organizing under the name Environmental Action (ENACT). ENACT

and young environmental activists supported the UAW in advocating for the *Occupational Safety and Health Act* in 1970.

The early environmental/labour coalition demonstrated how sustained organizing could win significant reforms. This led to the creation of the EPA in the US and the Department of the Environment in Canada, as well as Clean Air Acts in both countries.

President Nixon signed off on these reforms in the US, even though he was not an environmentalist or secret progressive. Just a month earlier, he used the National Guard to crush the postal workers' strike. The mass pressure of Earth Day forced him to make concessions.

The climate today

The 1970 Earth Day provides valuable lessons for the fight against climate change today, including how mass movements of ordinary people force change from below. Industrial action and the mass teach-ins involving millions show the type of movement that is needed now.

Trump's attacks on the EPA and Carney's "Build Baby Build" show that every reform won through struggle can be clawed back by the ruling class. Today, the path towards environmental destruction has only been accelerated since the 1970s, so protecting the reforms of previous generations will not be enough.

Climate destruction is rooted in capitalism itself. Capitalism's need for constant expansion places profits above any environmental concerns. Unions — especially those in polluting industries — should fight for a massive green union jobs program that would retrain workers faced with job cuts, as well as democratic public ownership of the top 100 polluting corporations. But to mitigate and even reverse climate catastrophe, the working class urgently needs to overthrow capitalism and implement a democratically-planned, just transition to 100 percent renewable energy as part of an internationally coordinated effort. ★

Fearmongering around Cowichan Court Decision

Sara Domok and Leslie Kemp

Indigenous title is not a relic of the past, but a living and continuing reality. The recent *Cowichan Tribes V. Canada* decision affirmed this and, in the process, provoked a storm of confusion, fear and protest. In the wake of the longest court case in Canadian history, BC's NDP leader David Eby said he was worried about the integrity of private property rights. Richmond's mayor fuelled fear by sending a letter to 150 private property owners saying that the decision may "compromise the status and validity" of their ownership. Quw'utsun Nation called these statements "at best, misleading, and at worst, deliberately inflammatory" and that the case has not and does not "erase private property."

Cowichan decision

The Quw'utsun (Cowichan) sought Aboriginal title to their traditional fishing village of Tl'uqinus on the south shore of Lulu Island (modern-day Richmond). They also sought Aboriginal rights to fish the south arm of the Fraser for food. Today this land, covering 1,846 acres, is owned by the federal government, the Vancouver Port Authority, the City of Richmond and private third parties. Evidence of Cowichan's seasonal or year-round use goes back to at least 1824 and into the early 20th century. In 1853, Governor James Douglas promised the Cowichan to treat them fairly and set aside the lands for a reserve in 1859 and 1860. Yet, their lands were sold to settlers without the Cowichan's knowledge. The first illegal purchase was by Richard Moody, the BC colony's first Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, who was responsible for ensuring that Indian reserves were created at sites of Indian settlements. The court concluded that therefore, Canada and Richmond's fee simple titles and interests in the Cowichan Title Lands are "defective and invalid."

The BC Supreme Court judge ruled Quw'utsun Nation had fishing rights in the Fraser River's south arm and Aboriginal title to between 300 and 324 hectares of land on Lulu Island. The ruling found that Canada had breached its duty of care by restricting the Cowichan's rights. The Court emphasized that recognizing their rights is not sufficient and that the Government of BC must continue to protect and accommodate these rights in ongoing practice.

First Peoples Law says "The *Cowichan Tribes* decision is unequivocal. The only lands which the Cowichan sought to be returned are the lands which are held in fee simple by Richmond, Canada and the Port Authority. The Court held those titles are legally invalid not because Aboriginal title automatically cancels out the interests of private landowners,



Cowichan leaders discuss land claim decision

but because they were derived from unlawful Crown grants which unjustifiably infringed Cowichan Aboriginal title."

The court case is being appealed by multiple parties including the Province of British Columbia, the City of Richmond, the Musqueam Indian Band and Tsawwassen First Nation.

The backlash

Fear is the most powerful tool in a politician's arsenal. It turns neighbours and communities against each other and distracts from the real perpetrators — governments that ignore Indigenous rights. The irony is if Indigenous land rights were respected in the first place, there would be no reason to be fearful about losing property "rights." Shana Thomas, chief of Lyackson First Nation, one of the First Nations represented by Cowichan, has said that the decision has provoked public abuse and harassment.

Indigenous people rightly resent the narratives put forward that Indigenous peoples are "taking" something, when they want to correct historic injustices and affirm that their lands were never ceded. As socialists, we reject these harmful narratives and the political leaders that lean into fear and play on the fear of those who endorse them.

Long before land titles, courts, or the ideas of "property," Indigenous nations governed territories through relationships of community, not ownership rights. Under capitalism, fee simple private property ownership gives owners control over the land and the structures on it. In today's world, private property and the practices of rent and property development provide one of the most powerful tools for wealth accumulation. A socialist society would replace private property rights with use rights and the responsibility to care for and protect land. ★

Danielle's Desperate Drive to Distract

Simon Schweitzer

Alberta's United Conservative Party (UCP) leader, Danielle Smith, has been playing to her conservative populist base since her 2022 election. She campaigned for the *Alberta Sovereignty Act*, which authorizes provincial institutions to not enforce federal laws that “attack Alberta's interests.” She introduced privatized healthcare, suspended funding for renewable energy projects, signed an agreement with the federal government to speed up pipeline approvals, and significantly increased funding for private schools.

Attacks on public education and LGBTQ+ rights

While Smith panders to her supporters using right populist language that targets the federal government, vaccinations, immigrants, and environmental activists, her main focus is fossil fuel extraction, and healthcare and education privatization. In 2024 the UCP introduced laws like Saskatchewan's that restrict pronouns in schools, prohibit transgender children over 12 from competing in female sports, and restrict LGBTQ+ themed books in school libraries. Smith has held private meetings with the right-wing Parents Choice for Education that campaigns against “sexual identity and gender identity education.” The UCP frames its attacks on public education as giving parents choice in their children's education. They deliver this “choice” through cuts to public education and funding charter and private schools.

The UCP couches its hunger for resource extraction as an appeal to “western nationalism.” The *Alberta Sovereignty Act* was a step in this direction, and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on pipelines was a second. The MOU was meant to show that Alberta could negotiate with the federal government — like negotiating a trade deal with a foreign government. While Smith hoped that her separatist

base would interpret this as Alberta extracting concessions from the federal government, the MOU was loudly booed at the UCP convention. Worse for Smith, the MOU has yet to coax any new pipeline investment. Smith has increased her appeals to separatism, and by significantly decreasing the number of signatures that would trigger a referendum, has made it easier for the Stay Free Alberta group to collect enough signatures for a referendum on Alberta's independence. While it is unlikely that this will succeed, it will give legitimacy to the separatists, and further entrench them in Alberta politics.

These are not popular policies and have not increased Smith's approval ratings. Still the UCP has a 10-point lead in the polls. Smith is striving to keep power by rushing through a “gerrymandering” re-distribution of electoral boundaries that would favour the UCP.

Left opposition lacking

UCP's main organized opposition is the NDP and the labour movement. When the NDP won in 2015, for the first time in Alberta's history, they cozied up to the oil and gas lobby backing the Trans Mountain Pipeline, against BC's NDP government. Since then, they haven't been within ten seats of the UCP. Recently NDP leader Naheed Nenshi reinforced his party's commitment to fossil fuels, denouncing new federal NDP leader Avi Lewis's environmental policies, saying “We believe in . . . Canadian energy and the good jobs it creates. We believe in more pipelines and in reducing emissions.” The Alberta NDP has no strategy to offer rural Albertans an alternative to a fossil-fuel-based economy.

The Alberta Federation of Labour responded to UCP's use of the notwithstanding clause to impose a previously rejected contract onto striking Alberta teachers — forcing them to return to work — by threatening a general strike, but then backed down, saying it would work to get Alberta unions “general strike ready.” The threat of a general strike was enough to overturn similar legislation in Ontario in 2022. In the meantime, the NDP announced a campaign of recall petitions for UCP MLAs, all of which failed. It is the weakness of the left opposition that allows the UCP to continue its domination, despite deep frustration with its policies. Alberta is Canada's most polarized province and there is potential for explosive resistance. Translating the frustration with Danielle Smith into political victory will require the working class to organize itself and the NDP to break with fossil fuels and offer a new economic foundation for Alberta. ★



Until 2025 Alberta was encouraging people to move there... now those who moved are being scapegoated

The Deadly Cost of High Wages

Raine Stephen LeMay

As Carney races to “build baby build,” trades workers are clearly the essential labour force government and big business need to construct mines, fossil fuel expansions, and other resource infrastructure. But while this work may provide high-paying short-term jobs, trades workers are paying a higher price in an industry plagued by addiction and suicide.

According to the Construction Foundation of BC, over 80 percent of construction workers struggle with mental health challenges, and suicides occur at a rate five times higher than for the general population. Trades, transport and equipment operation workers comprise approximately 15 percent of Canada’s workforces but account for around 20 percent of toxic drug deaths. Additionally, in 2023 construction and trades workers suffered 20 percent of all workplace fatalities, while only accounting for 6 percent of all jobs.

Overwhelmingly, workers in the trades report facing isolating and inhospitable work environments — dangerous job sites, work-life imbalance, job instability, unpredictable hours and demands — and a culture of fear and stigma about raising serious mental health concerns. Instead, fighting for better working conditions often threatens job security. Cruelly, this alienation and instability forces workers into a desperate position, where they are willing to tolerate deteriorating working conditions *just to survive*.

It’s under these circumstances that workers are turning to toxic substances and in some cases suicide. Drugs, including toxic substances, offer an immediate — however temporary — release for workers who do not receive help. This can be using a substance to combat exhaustion and burnout to meet the demands of work or as a way to blow off steam. Commonly, drug use also starts in an attempt to alleviate pain from injuries sustained at work, filling the gap where other support is unavailable. But these trajectories offer no route to recovery and instead push already struggling workers into a downward spiral of despair.

Trades have a culture of “toughing it out,” which is reinforced by predominantly male jobsites. Yet men account for 75 percent of all toxic drug and suicide deaths; the dark reality of “the grind.” Clearly, trades work requires drastic changes. No one should be subject to, or forced to endure, such devastating and tragic conditions.



“Mourn the dead, fight like hell for the living.”

— Mother Jones, American labour organizer

Government and industry response to crisis

Unfortunately, Carney’s Liberal government and the extraction and construction industries are unlikely to do anything meaningful to fight this crisis of death and harm. The Liberal’s election platform promised to invest \$500 million in the Emergency Treatment Fund, but with no plan of how to solve the addiction or identifying of its roots in horrific workplace conditions. For perspective, the total proposed effort is a dismal 0.8 percent of the \$63 billion military spending in 2026 allotted to bombs, vessels, and surveillance technologies.

The corporations offer platitudes, but little action to change the work culture that their profits depend on.

Workers must fight for mental health

Contrary to the crisis and current nature of the trades, *work can and should be a fulfilling part of our lives*. People find purpose in developing their abilities and deepening their knowledge. Socialists see work as essential and necessary actions to meet the needs and interests of the working class. The constant struggle for decent working conditions is part of the class struggle. If workers were in charge, they would not put themselves through death and despair. While some unions have highlighted the need for stronger mental health support from companies and governments, meaningful change will only be won by unions and the working class uniting to seize control of Canada’s major industries and reorganizing them in the interests of the working class.

Contrary to the crisis and current nature of the trades, work can and should be a fulfilling part of our lives.

The mental health and toxic drug crisis need immediate and bold action that can be realized by mass workers’ organizations. Workers’ control of trades work would mean building projects led by communities, and work practices and cultures that enrich the human spirit. A struggle won for the health of trades workers would surely be a struggle won for the health of humanity. ★

Stories from life... Working for an Anti- Union Company

Anonymous

I work in a conservative-led, non-union business, part of the capitalist bureaucracy. This was the only company that would hire me at a living wage. In fact, this was the only decent full-time job I could find despite having a degree that promised abundant employment opportunities.

After working for horrible employers, being on EI, and maintaining two part-time jobs to pay the bills, I know better than to take any stable salaried job for granted.

After working for horrible employers, being on EI, and maintaining two part-time jobs to pay the bills, I know better than to take any stable salaried job for granted.

Stability aside, the job eats away at my soul. My hard work contributes to the company's mission of making money for conservative bosses and capitalists, and it often feels like a betrayal to the working class and my own moral compass.

I'm an undercover agent in all my interactions, anxiously waiting to be found out. When my boss or colleagues talk politics, unions, or the economy, I have to agree externally, while internally fighting the extreme urge to oppose their ideas. This is quite the task for a socialist.

I show up to work acting as somebody that I'm not, do my job, then turn around and fight to dismantle the very system that keeps me employed. Non-unionized workers are increasingly put in this position as living wage jobs are hard to find, austerity budgets are passed, and the cost of living is unmanageable.

Most jobs don't pay a living wage and prevent us from being able to contribute to our communities in active and meaningful ways.

Workers can't get a job in their field of study, but hey — at least we can become a cop, or join the army, or compete for one of the 3,500 jobs created by the new NATO defence bank!

It doesn't have to be this way. One day through a democratized workplace and economy, workers will be free from this capitalist hell and receive dignified pay for work that doesn't make them miserable. ★

What Makes Me Angry: Carney's War Crisis

Larry Hyink

Mark Carney and the Canadian ruling class were handed another dilemma/golden opportunity by Trump and his merry band of disruptors attacking Iran.

On the one hand Carney didn't want to piss off Trump. His first statements were mildly supportive of the war with many soft reassuring noises about how “nobody wants Iran to have a nuclear weapon” and the universal rejoicing expected from the theocratic regime's collapse, implying the pathway to peace and democracy is a murderous campaign of bombing and assassination.

Then he remembered that he was DAVOS MAN! CHAMPION OF THE MIDDLE POWERS! It seems giving the hegemonic superpower a blank cheque to destroy any country it doesn't like at Trump's whim is maybe not the best idea ... especially for Carney, who doesn't show enough respect. So, our brave superhero PM mumbled a few phrases about the “rule of law” and that hitting Iran with a sneak attack, might, maybe, y'know, sorta, kinda look like ... a war crime.

Well, DUH!

Having bravely squeaked his piece Carney took off his cape and got back to work chopping services for ordinary Canadians and handing more taxpayer dollars to corporate Canada, mainly military, ~~oil and gas~~, oops, *energy* companies and job-killing AI data centres.

Meanwhile, in the real world, Canadians already facing an affordability crisis are being hammered by skyrocketing fuel prices plus inevitable spikes in food and shelter costs as the impact of fuel increases filters through the economy. One in four Canadians is already facing food insecurity and that's sure to spike too, along with homelessness and despair.

Is the impoverishment of ordinary Canadians top of mind for Carney? Is it the banner headline of every section of the corporate media? Are our “patriotic” corporate masters and their paid political flunkies lifting a finger to avert this disaster?

Silly rabbit! Of course not! Carney and the rest will blather on, pondering if his statements on Trump's war were too mild ... or too tough and other political trivia while they supervise handing over Canada's wealth to the corporate elite. Carney, Poilievre and the rest of capitalism's hired hands will ignore the crisis until working people revolt against this rotten system that gives vast riches for the 1 percent, and poverty and war for everybody else. ★

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Ray Goerke

“A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again,” said Trump on April 7 of Iran and its 93 million people. While this has not happened, so far, the barbarism of this war and its deadly predecessor the Israeli assault on Gaza is on full display. For two years the Israeli regime pummeled Gaza to dust — killing at least 70,000 people and damaging or destroying 92 percent of all homes. Now the Israeli killing machine is applying the “Gaza” tactics in southern Lebanon — wiping out entire villages and targeting medical facilities and staff. Over 20 percent of Lebanon’s population, 1.2 million people, have fled north.

In the first day of bombing Iran the US flattened a school killing 180 people, mostly schoolgirls. In March, 45,000 housing units in Tehran were hit. Many Iranian mosques and historic buildings have been destroyed. Over 300 hospitals and medical facilities have been hit. Bombs destroyed a Tehran synagogue — nothing is sacred. “Smart bombs” don’t exist.

Around the Persian Gulf, burning oil facilities, chemical plants and weapons depots have released toxic chemicals into the air, land and water. Iranian cities have “apocalyptic” toxic smogs. Desalination plants, that provide essential fresh water, have been hit in several countries.

Trump’s blunder in the Middle East

The Iran war is an unmitigated disaster for US imperialism. Trump and his administration were high on January’s successful kidnapping of Venezuela’s President Maduro, aided by the cooperation of Vice President Delcy Rodriguez. They expected another quick-and-easy regime change in Iran. However, there was no one like Rodriguez — a regime insider to cooperate with US imperialism. Instead of demonstrating US prowess, this war has turned into the opposite.

The Iranian regime called Trump’s bluff, choosing to escalate the conflict rather than surrender. Aerial bombardment and drone strikes are extremely effective at destroying infrastructure and neighbourhoods, and killing civilians. But “boots on the ground” are needed to impose a new government. Up to now, Trump has avoided this, aware that returning body bags would super-charge the already widespread opposition to the war in the US.

The Strait of Hormuz

The Iranian regime’s survival is an embarrassment for US Imperialism, but far more pernicious is the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Twenty percent of the world’s oil production, and about a third of the world’s supply of helium (essential to make computer chips), and fertilizer pass through the Strait. Whatever Trump’s original aims were, everything else was pushed aside when the Strait was closed.

Trump announced a hastily arranged ceasefire, through Pakistani hosts on April 8, hoping shipping would resume.

Socialism o



US Navy cargo ship passing through the Strait of Hormuz

But no one agreed on what the ceasefire meant. The Iranian and Pakistani leadership stated it applied to Israeli forces in southern Lebanon. Trump claimed that is “a separate skirmish.” But days later, US imperialism forced Netanyahu into a “ceasefire” in Lebanon. However, Israeli forces continue to destroy villages and towns, planning a long-term occupation of southern Lebanon. In late April, both the US and Iran blocked the Strait of Hormuz. Additionally, ships cannot get insurance to pass through the Strait.

Trump and US Imperialism are searching for a way out and to cut their losses. Neither side wants the war to continue indefinitely. Iran is devastated and will soon run out of storage for the oil it is unable to export. US imperialism has used a high proportion of its weapons supply and is shaken by the economic and political damage. Still, as both sides continue to block the Strait and US masses troops (estimated at 60,000) and ships (a third aircraft carrier is on its way), the chance remains high that a minor spark could reignite full-on war.

Inflation, shortages, hardship and hunger

In March, the International Energy Agency warned that the war posed the greatest threat ever to the world’s energy supply — worse than the 1970s oil crisis and after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. It could take up to five years to repair the damaged oil and gas facilities.

The price of oil and gas has skyrocketed at the fastest rate in decades, with worse to come as reserves run out. This boosts the prices for transport, food, electricity and much more. Fuel shortages are mounting in Asia, Africa and Europe. The German airline Lufthansa plans to cut 20,000 flights over the next six months to save jet fuel.



Today's world looks increasingly similar to the world before World War 1, except now at least nine countries have nuclear weapons. The mounting conflict then was between Britain and Germany; now it is between the US and China. Then as now the superpowers were locked into economic conflict. A series of "small wars" in the Balkans, with the major powers involved behind the scenes, spread to engulf all of Europe. Today, the multiple wars are being drawn together.

Arms spending around the world is expanding, reaching US\$2.7 trillion in 2024. Carney's government aims to increase arms spending to \$150 billion a year by 2035, up from \$41 billion in 2024. Drone and anti-drone industries will be built urgently. Military strategists are searching for other "straits" to control. Germany is the first, but not the last, country to look to reintroduce conscription, and has faced mass protest.

Stopping war needs a revolution

The Iranian people have revolted against the murderous dictatorship of the mullahs multiple times. US and Israel are no friends of the Iranian people. Their bombs have temporarily strengthened the regime. Socialist Alternative Canada opposes the US and Israeli attacks. We support the Iranian people against both the current reactionary regime of the mullahs or a second coming of blood-soaked rule through the Shah's son. Discontent and workers' anger have not disappeared and will reappear. We support an organized working-class revolutionary movement in Iran.

Capitalism is driving the world to a precipice of endless war and environmental destruction (see back page) — a new barbarism.

In 1915, one year into the horror of World War 1, socialist revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg wrote:

"Bourgeois society stands at the crossroads, either transition to socialism or regression into barbarism... This world war is a regression into barbarism. The triumph of imperialism leads to the annihilation of civilization. At first, this happens sporadically for the duration of a modern war, but then when the period of unlimited wars begins it progresses toward its inevitable consequences... The future of civilization and humanity depends on whether or not the proletariat resolves resolutely to throw its revolutionary broadsword into the scales."

Three years later, the revolutionary uprising of the working class in Germany and Russia ended the War.

It is difficult to look at the state of the world today and not conclude that humanity will soon once again find itself at this same crossroads. Humanity faces a choice between barbarism or socialism. To choose socialism means to build the independent power of the working class, so that it can wrest control of the productive forces of society from the bosses and place them under democratic control, to be used to meet human needs rather than to make implements of war. ★

The shortage of fertilizer will further hit food production. The World Food Programme estimates 45 million people face acute hunger. Food inflation was a major cause of the many uprisings around the world in 2025. Around the world, 32 million people have been thrown into poverty.

The effects are sharpest in poorer countries and in Asia. Governments in 60 countries have taken measures against price hikes, through subsidies, tax cuts, etc. Already, there have been strikes and protests in the Philippines and Ireland.

There is growing fear of both increased inflation and a world recession — stagflation. The major economic powers are in a much weaker position to deal with a world crisis than they were in 2008-09 and during COVID, as they are buried in mountains of debt.

Capitalism's endless drive to war

The many wars across the world — genocides in Sudan and Gaza, violence in the West Bank, wars in Ukraine, the Congo and the Sahel region of Africa — are increasingly being tied together. Everywhere the interests of the major imperialist powers or their proxies are involved.

The dominant clash is between the US and China — the world's two superpowers. The two capitalist imperialist powers have piled up debt, saturated their home markets with goods that the working class can no longer afford, and are running out of markets in other countries to exploit. They now face off against each other in a clash of survival or collapse. Both sides engage in military build up, an absurd arms race, that further fuels inflation and is paid for by the working class in worse pay, slashed public services and higher taxes.

Lewis's NDP Leadership: A New Chapter for Canada's Left?

Martin LeBrun

“In the chaos that is headed our way, more voters may be willing to give the NDP a look than is presently accounted for.” Prominent conservative commentator, Andrew Coyne, wrote this after Avi Lewis clearly won the NDP leadership. Coyne has a better understanding of the turmoil ahead than many NDP bureaucrats.

For now, Carney is popular, but he will face mounting problems and growing unpopularity as the reality of higher inflation, growing job losses and cuts to public services sink in. He has shifted the Liberals towards the Conservatives, including welcoming Marilyn Gladu, formerly on the right-wing of Poilievre's party. There is huge space in Canada for a bold campaigning party.

Lewis's program faces fierce resistance from the NDP establishment, including Naheed Nenshi and Carla Beck, leaders of Alberta's and Saskatchewan's NDP. Others simply defected to the Liberals, as their politics are really “orange” Liberals. Lori Idlout, MP for Nunavut, crossed the floor. Ontario NDP's former deputy leader, Doly Begum, switched to the Liberals and won the Scarborough Southwest byelection. These actions make it harder for the federal NDP to rebuild.

The Lewis critics ignore the party's membership who voted decisively for him. Lewis gained 39,734 votes, 56 percent of the total, on the first ballot — a higher percentage than either Jagmeet Singh or Jack Layton received. Lewis's campaign raised \$1.23 million, more than the other four candidates combined.

Lewis's platform

Lewis's platform is a sharp break with the present and past failed policies of the NDP. He talked of an NDP “that works for the many, not the money,” in sharp contrast to the Liberals and Conservatives. His campaign understood that an NDP that is only fractionally more pro-worker than the Liberals doesn't have much point.

His campaign demands focused on building public homes, protecting tenants, creating one million good green jobs, and providing free transit. Lewis wants “the unmatched power of public ownership” in groceries, postal banking and pharmaceutical manufacture, while taxing the rich and ending corporate handouts. He opposes further

fossil fuel industry expansion, including LNG, to truly combat climate change, and pledged that “no one who works in the industry will be left behind.” Tackling climate change is a good way to provide rewarding jobs.

NDP's long decline

The federal NDP's long decline from winning 103 seats in 2011 reached its worst ever result in 2025 with only seven MPs. This rock bottom was partly a reaction to Trump, as people “voted strategically” for the Liberals to avoid a Trumpish Poilievre victory. The NDP's confidence agreement with Justin Trudeau, while helping to win a partial, but flawed, national dental care plan and Pharmacare Act, meant that many voters saw the NDP as Trudeau's crutch.

For years the NDP has not built national, working-class movements for change, much less talk to people in the streets. Yet this is how Tommy Douglas won the *Medical Care*

Act in 1966! Instead, the party focussed on trying to chase centrist voters, hoping that maybe the next election might be the game changer.

The way ahead

Avi Lewis faces an uphill struggle to make the NDP relevant. He will have to mobilize his 40,000 supporters to resist inevitable sabotage. The clash of his policies and his supporters against the NDP machine will likely open a debate about what sort of party the working class needs.

The NDP's March conference decisions to campaign year-round and to empower the local parties are important steps to rebuild the party. The new NDP executive members of Niall Ricardo, Libby Davies and Kiera Gunn gives Lewis support within the machine.

Lewis's priority is rebuilding the party with rallies in cities and towns across Canada. If the NDP does not recover, voters face a grim choice between Carney's conservative Liberals with massive military spending, or Poilievre with his fake anger.

Standing up to the billionaire class on behalf of the working class requires principles based on class analysis, serious movement building, and democratic structures in the NDP. If this movement is built, it will write a new chapter in working-class struggle. ★



Avi Lewis celebrates winning the federal NDP leadership race

Defend the Cuban Revolution!

Larry Hyink

Trump's regime has embarked on a series of political and military offensives in an effort to reassert US imperialism's dominance, even as Chinese imperialism erodes American supremacy.

Trump has attacked Venezuela and Iran, two oil-rich targets, but he never fails to mention that Cuba's next on his list. Why Cuba? It's not a rich country. There's no oil payday for Trump in toppling the Cuban government. The motivation to attack Cuba is historical and political revenge. Since the 1959 revolutionary victory, Cuba's been a thorn in the side of US imperialism and an inspiration for oppressed people around the world.

Pre-revolutionary Cuba was a desperately poor country; most people were illiterate, malnourished, badly housed and without medical care. Most of the productive land, natural resources and industry was owned or controlled by a tiny, corrupt Cuban elite, US Corporations or the mafia.

Fulgencio Batista, Cuba's dictator, welcomed mob bosses spawning a thriving tourist industry based on sun, gambling, drugs and prostitutes. For Cubans, it meant menial, degrading jobs and signs on their beaches reading "No Dogs or Cubans Allowed."



Havana rally, 1959, after the revolution

The Cuban revolution and its gains

With Batista's fall, the revolutionary government attempted significant reforms to better the lives of ordinary Cubans and lessen the looting by American interests. Casinos were closed, other Mafia assets seized, prostitution outlawed, and wide-ranging reforms in education, healthcare, and land ownership proposed — reforms unacceptable to America's capitalist rulers.

In less than a year, the American President authorized the CIA to undertake a campaign of terrorism and sabotage in Cuba, followed by a trade embargo that has lasted, with tweaks, for 67 years.

Cuban leader Fidel Castro, starting as an idealistic liberal, viewed the US as an inspiration. When faced with US imperialism's ugly reality, Cuba's revolutionaries could either be content with a few minor reforms and political managerial positions under their corporate overlords or find an alternative.

Turning to the Soviet Union they moved Cuba in a defiantly socialist direction. America responded with the CIA-organized Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, which was crushed by the revolutionary army.

Soviet aid allowed Cuba to strengthen the reforms, inspiring colonial peoples around the world. Illiteracy was eradicated. A vast construction program of housing, medical clinics, and a nationwide electric grid transformed the country, especially impoverished rural areas. It's *public* health system sharply reduced infant mortality and raised life expectancy to the same age as the US, at a fraction of the cost of US's *for-profit* business. It was a remarkable example of how a planned economy that benefits people and international solidarity improves people's lives.

Cuba also demonstrated international solidarity, sending medical brigades and armed support for other liberation struggles, playing an important role in the downfall of racist apartheid South Africa.

Cuba also imported bad aspects of the Stalinist Soviet leadership: intolerance of dissent, homophobia and misogyny, and bureaucratic planning rather than democratic decision-making.

When the USSR fell, America's rulers forecast that Cuba would soon follow. Instead, Cubans, with aid

from Venezuela's Bolivarian revolution, rallied in a heroic collective effort to preserve the gains of the revolution.

Now, with Trump's abduction of Venezuela's president and tightened blockade, the capitalists wait for Cuba to collapse.

We can criticize, but even a "democracy" like Canada can be repressive; just ask Indigenous people or Japanese-Canadians. As Fidel Castro said, "For forty years you try to strangle us. And then you criticize us for the way we breathe."

Cuba's problems aren't a failure of economic planning. They're the result of 67 years of blockade, terror and subversion by the world's most powerful capitalist country.

Trump sending "Narco" Rubio (first job, in his brother-in-law's import business, a front for cocaine smuggling) to rule Cuba will mean a return to misery for the people and a warning to the world's oppressed that the empire will try to crush any resistance.

The revolution's successes to improve lives for ordinary people drives capitalism's hatred. Every socialist, every decent human, should support Cubans' right to determine their destiny free from imperialist invasion and coercion!★

Working-Class Action Needed to Defeat Trump

Chris Fofonoff

Since the launch of war against Iran in late February, Donald Trump has wildly fluctuated between overtures of peace, declaration of victory, and horrifying threats of further violence. Abroad and at home, the United States is rapidly becoming more fractured, unstable, and dangerous.

Trump began 2026 by a near-effortless regime change in Venezuela, but things have gotten worse since then. Within weeks the working class of Minneapolis forced Trump and his murderous Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) thugs to retreat. A mass political general strike, the first in the US in decades, showed working-class power.

In February Trump, aided by Netanyahu, dragged US and Israeli imperialism into another quagmire in the Middle East. A majority of Americans disapprove of the Iran war according to polls, unprecedented for a conflict this young. There is no longer any way for this to end well for the Trump regime. A retreat would be humiliating for US imperialism, while continuation or escalation would further deepen the lasting damage to the world economy.

Affordability and democratic rights under attack

Americans were already struggling with a cost-of-living crisis that has been exacerbated by the gas-price hikes triggered by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The nationwide average price of gasoline is up by at least a third since the war began. Inflation has reached its highest point since the summer of 2024.

This is shaking Trump's support, especially as working- and middle-class Trump supporters face higher energy,

food, and housing costs, and a tariff scheme that has so far left the average household US\$600 poorer. Not to mention that many of Trump supporters believed him when he said that he would keep the US out of costly foreign wars.

The Epstein scandal will certainly continue to make the front pages with new and horrifying revelations of sex crimes committed by the ruling class, including potentially more by Trump himself, with no one yet facing arrests or charges.

The regime's reactionary policies are clear as it attacks women's and LGBTQ+ people's rights, immigrants and the gains of the Civil Rights' struggles. Unions are under the hammer.

None of this bodes well for the Republican Party prospects in the midterm elections this November, as reflected in dismal poll numbers. But for months now, the Trump regime has been laying the groundwork to either rig the midterm elections or to declare the results fraudulent if they lose. Republicans are using myths of widespread voter fraud to try to pass the *Save America Act*, which would disenfranchise tens of millions of voters, including married women and trans people whose current legal names don't match those on their birth certificates. Trump and his far-right allies like Steve Bannon have also mooted sending ICE to polling stations, ostensibly to "protect the vote," but in fact to intimidate prospective voters into staying home.

Mass action on May Day to dump Trump

Trump will not accept defeat merely because he loses an election or a court rules against him. The opposition from the Democrats in Congress has been ineffective at holding him accountable.

The organized working class can defeat Trump by building the independent power of working-class resistance. The January Minneapolis general strike showed that class struggle methods have the power to force Trump to retreat.

Since Minneapolis, a growing number of labour leaders, activists, and anti-Trump organizations raised the call to make May 1, 2026, a nationwide day of "No Work, No School, No Shopping." Socialist Alternative in the US argues that a powerful nation-wide general strike is the best and only potential way to abolish ICE and defeat Trump for good. This should aim to *unite all the struggles against Trump*. Even partial work stoppages across the country would be a key step forward in the anti-Trump movement. Socialist Alternative is committed to joining tens, probably hundreds, of thousands of workers and young people in strikes, sickouts, rallies, and marches. ★



Socialist Alternative in the US organizing for workplace action on May Day

Hungary: Orbán Ousted

Per Olsson

The recent elections in Hungary delivered a stinging and historic defeat to the autocratic Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his far-right Fidesz party. This is a blow to all the world's Trumpists and a defeat for both Washington and Moscow.

The election, primarily a vote of no confidence in Orbán's 16-year rule, has given hope for change. The desire to oust Orbán was also evident in the record turnout of 80 percent, the highest ever.

Fidesz lost in the cities and in many rural areas, where the party had a traditional base. However, the winning party, Tisza, is a right-wing party and its leader, Péter Magyar, was a member of Fidesz until 2024. Tisza (Respect and Freedom) won a supermajority — two-thirds of the seats in parliament — which opens the door to amending the constitution that Orbán rewrote to strengthen his authoritarian rule.

The vote was primarily against Orbán rather than strong support for the right-wing opportunists of Tisza. It was the lack of a strong left-wing alternative and labour movement that enabled Tisza to capitalize on the growing discontent with Orbán's corruption, nepotism and injustice. The Hungarian economy has stagnated, prices have soared and real wages have plummeted.

Large-scale protests erupted at the end of 2022 and the struggle reached a new level from 2024. 200,000 people marched in Budapest Pride in 2025, despite the government's ban and threats of fines. Magyar was not on the Pride parade.

The difference between Orbán and Magyar is small, with Fidesz and Tisza sharing similar views about Ukraine, agriculture and migration. Magyar's election platform contained few concrete promises, apart from better pensions and tax cuts. He has even more restrictive views on immigration than Orbán.

Tisza was the only alternative to Fidesz and the far-right Mi Hazánk (Our Homeland) party as the so-called Socialist Party did not even field candidates but urged voters to support Tisza's candidates. Most of Tisza's voters consider themselves to the left of Magyar.

"Tisza attracts a strikingly diverse voter base: 43 percent of his voters identify as liberals, 22 percent as left-wing supporters, 10 percent as Greens, and only 11 percent as right-wing conservatives. Holding that coalition together while implementing sweeping institutional reforms will be a balancing act in itself" (*France24*, April 13).

Defeat for Trump and the far right

Before the election, US Vice President JD Vance went to Hungary to support Orbán. Before that, Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited the country to celebrate the "golden era of cooperation between the US and Hungary." Orbán's defeat is a blow to Trump and his allies.

Within the European Union, Orbán's defeat was celebrated as he had stood closest to both Moscow and Beijing, while Magyar is much more positive about the EU. However, many other EU governments have adopted attacks on immigrants similar to Hungary's.

The election outcome opens the door to Hungary receiving some of the loans and aid that the EU has frozen since 2022. However, even with increased EU support, new cuts loom. "The winner of the Hungarian parliamentary election on April 12 will need to cut social spending to stabilize public finances" (*Reuters*, March 24).



Massive turnout at Budapest Pride 2025, defying government ban

The next step — a workers' struggle for real change

Orbán, long seen as invincible, is gone. This could give the working class new confidence. Unless struggle and the working class's political self-organization take steps forward, there is a risk that the hopes that have been raised will turn into demoralization as Magyar will not serve the interests of the working class, but capitalism and the elite of which he is a part.

In the struggle for real and lasting improvements, the working class can only rely on its own strength and solidarity. It is by building its own party — a socialist workers' party — and fighting to abolish capitalism that the welcome end of Orbán's rule can also be followed by jobs, welfare, and housing for all, as well as an end to oppression and discrimination. ★

Review: **No Place Like Home**

Elron Jones

In *No Place Like Home*, Jessica Barrett takes readers on an international journey to answer the question of what home is and how it can be made accessible. Her journey begins in Vancouver with the affordability crisis that has long gripped the city. She then moves to Calgary to find a more affordable home but finds it less spiritually suitable.

The book seeks to highlight how non-market housing can serve to fill the gaps created by the current market system with options from cities around the world. Barrett showcases some of the options outside of the current for-profit housing system, but her focus is mainly on the spiritual question of home and belonging as opposed to the material conditions. She often stands at the edge of serious criticisms of the current system and the inequities that it forces on people and the eventual ramifications that it has on communities, but chooses instead to highlight the humanity that other systems foster.

Her probable answer to this criticism would be that the book's focus is that home doesn't need to be defined in one, exclusive and final manner. Instead, her goal is to show the options in ownership and living arrangements that can comprise what it means to feel at home and have somewhere to call home. The book acknowledges that the wealth interests of the few negatively impact the many. She shows in an oblong way that a non-profit system where those who live in the home share and manage it can solve many, if not most, of the issues in society. However, she settles with making this criticism without attaching it to any of the other areas where profit-seeking hurts communal well-being.

No Place Like Home is a good book about how the current housing system works against community. It highlights the humanity that other ways of thinking about housing can bring about, but it doesn't extend these criticisms to the entire system. It's best read as a light-hearted reflection on a poor system. ★



Working-Class History: **May Day, Montreal, 1906**

Tim Heffernan



Canada's first major May Day rally was 120 years ago in Montreal. A thousand people gathered showing the growing working-class confidence and militancy at the dawn of the 20th century.

At the time, Québec's industry was expanding rapidly, drawing thousands of workers into factories under harsh, exploitative conditions. Low wages, long hours, and unsafe workplaces were the norm, and unions were still in a formative stage.

The workers, many of them recent immigrants, mobilized for the 1906 May Day to assert their collective power and demand improved working conditions. They marched with a red flag inscribed with "Travailleurs du monde, unissons-nous" (Workers of the world, unite). Speeches were in French, English, Russian and Italian.

The roots of May Day lie in the struggle for the eight-hour working day highlighted by workers' militancy and police repression in May, 1886 in Chicago. By the 1890s, May Day was widely celebrated by workers in the US and Europe. While May Day in Canada was not revolutionary in scope, it revealed a growing class consciousness. Strikes, protests, and solidarity actions were becoming more common, influenced by international socialist ideas.

However, militancy at this stage remained uneven. Craft unions dominated the labour movement, often limiting solidarity across industries, and the leadership frequently chose compromise over confrontation. Nonetheless, this period showed the potential strength of the working class.

Throughout the 20th century, Québec developed a distinctive labour tradition marked by periodic upsurges of mass militancy. From the Asbestos Strike of 1949 to the Common Front strikes of the 1970s, Québec workers repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to engage in bold, collective action. These struggles often went beyond narrow economic demands, raising questions about political power, national identity, and social transformation.

Labour needs to reclaim these traditions, as the bosses and governments step up attacks on workers' jobs and conditions. The lesson is clear: sustained organization, democratic unions, and a clear political alternative are essential to transform episodic militancy into a force capable of fundamentally reshaping society. ★

Capitalism's Ecological Chasm *(continued from p.16)*

For most of humanity's existence, after humans had consumed food and used objects, what was left — human waste and worn-out goods — returned to nature, as is the case for all forms of life. Even in cities, human waste (known as night soil) was collected and returned to the land, so the circle of nutrients was unbroken. Humans are not the cause of ecological disasters.

Capitalism disrupted the circular economy, creating instead a linear economy. Raw materials are removed from the land, transformed into commodities and at the end of their life many are dumped into garbage piles. Human waste is often pumped out to sea, so the nutrients are lost to the land. Even where the solid human waste is collected in sewage treatment plants it is often contaminated by exotic chemicals, toxins and plastics.

Even worse, capitalism deliberately makes products that will break and cannot be repaired, wear out, or quickly go out of fashion — adding to the waste of nature and labour — all to boost short-term profits.

Metabolic chasm

Metabolism is the flow through and transformation of materials and energy in a living organism. Marx expanded this concept from individuals to society, saying the labour process "is the universal condition for the metabolic interaction between [humans] and nature."

All societies have metabolic interactions, but capitalism produces "an irreparable rift in the interdependent process of social metabolism." Marx first analyzed the robbery of soil nutrients as the farmed crops and animals were shipped to the cities and the waste flushed out to sea — a one-way flow of nutrients. Capitalist agriculture first tackled this decline in soil fertility by mining bird and bat guano (deposits of droppings built up over thousands of years). More recently nitrogen is extracted from the atmosphere, in an energy intensive process. Two other key nutrients — phosphorous and potassium — are mined from finite deposits.

Since Marx's time the rift has grown into a gaping chasm. One after another of the planetary boundaries are shattered, ever more plastic fills the environment and an increasing number of everlasting chemicals, many of them toxic, are produced.

Fossil fuels are a one-off "gift" from nature formed over hundreds of millions of years. Capitalism, unless overthrown, will burn most of it in 300 years.

Humans are part of nature

A key point in Marx and Engel's writing is that humans are part of nature. We rely on nature to live. All life, including humans, is in constant interaction with nature,



Socialist Alternative Youth at Earth Day in Vancouver, 2022

changing nature as nature changes life. An earthworm changes its world, breaking down leaves into soil.

Unlike most other forms of life, humans' capacity for reasoning and imagination allows them to consciously make changes to their environment. However, there are often unforeseen and harmful secondary effects of human changes. Plastics were hailed as a great invention as they didn't rot — the first effect, but a further effect is that because plastic doesn't rot it almost lasts forever.

Scientific research needs to look for the second and even third consequences, which means abandoning the short-term profit-driven view of capitalism. Humanity's understanding of nature needs to be all-rounded, seeing the interconnections, the webs and flows.

The fight for nature is a fight for jobs

Socialist Alternative will fight for every action that slows climate change. However, we recognize that capitalism must be defeated to end the robbery of nature and the exploitation of workers.

The core of a program for nature and workers is ending the private ownership of wealth and industry by a tiny minority of society. Public ownership and workers' control is central to ending the bosses' greed and misrule.

A program to repair the damage to nature will provide millions of rewarding and fulfilling union jobs. A key part will be democratic planning of society with workers having control over their workplace. This will end the massive waste and built-in obsolescence of capitalism.

The ecological disasters are global; they do not stop at borders so international cooperation will be vital to avoid climate catastrophe. Restoring nature will unleash humanity's ingenuity and talents. This is the most underestimated benefit of a socialist society.★



Bill Hopwood

Face reality! That must be the starting point for anyone who wants a world conducive to humanity. Almost all today's infrastructure and technologies, used in food production, buildings, transportation and much more, were developed to suit global climates and ecologies that are rapidly disappearing.

The disruption of earth's ecologies is accelerating. The best-known disruption is climate change, and there are others. There are nine planetary boundaries that if crossed, can destabilize the earth's ecology. Seven have been crossed in the last 25 years — climate change, ocean acidification, loss of biodiversity, the nitrogen cycle, excess freshwater use, land use and chemical pollution.

Failure and delusion

After 30 years of United Nations conferences (COPs) that aimed to tackle climate change, more carbon dioxide was added to the atmosphere in 2025 than in any other year. The 2025 conference's statement did not even mention fossil fuels!

Some commentators have argued that at least the UN climate process has slowed the rate of increase of carbon dioxide releases. A slow road to hell is still a road to hell. While China has ramped up its production of renewable energy, it also built 95 percent of all new coal-powered electricity generation in 2023. The increase in renewable energy is not

primarily replacing fossil fuels; it is supplementing it as the world's use of energy continues to increase.

Feedback loops are boosting climate change. Ice reflects sunlight, while water absorbs it, so as the Arctic ice melts more heat is absorbed in the ocean. Canada's forests have become a source of CO₂; in 2023 forest fires released more CO₂ than all other Canadian sources.

Why the abject failure?

The technology exists to tackle climate change. The earth is bathed in plentiful free energy — from the sun that drives the winds and ocean currents, and the heat of earth's core. There are multiple clean ways to harness and store this energy.

Most politicians and corporate bosses have utterly failed to protect the environment. However, ecological destruction has much deeper roots. It is capitalism, a political and economic system with the purpose of keeping the capitalists in power and increasing their profits and wealth.

All wealth ultimately comes from nature and labour. Nature provides energy, water, air and raw materials, and human labour transforms nature into things to meet human needs. The capitalists' wealth comes from exploiting labour and robbing nature.

(continued on p. 15)

