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SOCIALISM TO END CAPITALISM'S WARS

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: Organizing Earth Day

The Earth Day march and rally in East Vancouver on Saturday, April 25, was on a beautiful spring day, reminding everyone that nature is worth fighting for.

Socialist Alternative Youth (SAY) has worked to rebuild the large Earth Day rallies that happened before COVID, starting in 2022, with small marches of less than 100 people. This year was bigger and more colourful with over 200 joining in.

In February, SAY contacted unions, high schools, environmentalists and Indigenous nations. Over 20 high school and university students, young workers and members of Young BC Greens, COPE (Vancouver's left municipal party) and SAY attended the first planning meeting in March. The room was buzzing with ideas, discussing poster designs and plans for Earth Day.

A second meeting in April agreed final actions to build for the event. Over 900 posters were put up and hundreds of flyers distributed, along with multiple social media posts.

Drummers from Indigenous Women Rise and Daughters of the Drum led the march and opened the rally. There were dozens of homemade signs. Red Rebel Brigade added colour in blood-red robes and white face paint.

The rally's speakers, who were all uplifting, included two high school students, and people from COPE, SEIU Local 2, Worker Solidarity Network, Young BC Greens and Socialist Alternative Youth.

Solidarity Notes Choir's songs included Water is Life. George Rammell brought his powerful art against bitumen pipelines.

As the rally's MC said, "If we can cleanse the planet of capitalism, where a handful of super-rich run and ruin the planet for their gain, humanity could live a joyful life in harmony with nature." ★



Socialist Alternative Youth members organized and led the Earth Day march in Vancouver in April 2026

Social Media Bans: Blame Capitalism, Not Kids

Natalie L and Violet Forrie

Over a dozen countries including Canada have announced or are planning nationwide bans on social media for youth 16 and under, citing the need to protect youth's cognitive development from addictive algorithms and advertising. Manitoba's government has announced similar plans, and the conversation has begun in BC, where the Tumbler Ridge mass shooting has raised serious concerns about the effects of AI chatbots on young people.

Social media platforms immerse developing young people in a world of targeted ads, AI slop, and bad-faith actors, with limited supervision by teachers and parents. Society should protect kids from harmful content, but banning them from social media platforms will only penalize youth and leave predatory social media corporations off the hook.

Corporations profit from harming youth

Platforms like X and Instagram are designed to encourage and amplify negative interactions between users, because this is a reliable and effective method to generate engagement and retain attention. They then sell this attention to advertisers and provocative lifestyle/political "influencers," who try to recruit and shape young minds.

A policy-director-turned whistleblower at Meta admitted that they saw young teens as an opportunity for profit. They designed algorithms to identify teens, who were feeling depressed, for targeted advertising. In one case, beauty products were advertised to teen girls after they deleted a selfie.

Corporate platforms moderate content to protect themselves from legal liability, not to protect users from harm. Users who promote hateful content towards marginalized communities are allowed to stay active without so much as a warning. Harassment and cyberbullying are often left unpunished. AI chatbots have encouraged suicide.

Algorithms are designed to hook youth on addictive content. Infamously, "brainrot" and AI slop (often one in the same) are mass produced to flood platforms. The effect has been reduced attention spans, lower critical thinking skills and often "doomscrolling," or searching endlessly for the next piece of content to consume.

Social media bans won't work

Social media bans follow the same logic as the war on drugs, often cited by proponents as protecting the health and safety of children and teenagers. But the war on drugs doesn't work because it doesn't address the socio-economic reasons *why* people turn to drug use. It restricts supply without reducing demand, which does nothing except drive people towards unregulated alternatives. Occasionally, a big drug dealer



gets put in prison; the pushers of the social media drugs are among the world's richest and most powerful people.

Despite the negative impacts, youth are using social media to practice creativity and make positive changes in society. Budding activists and organizers are educating themselves and organizing movements such as resisting AI and data centres.

Social media bans are therefore a lose-lose: they leave corporations off the hook while hindering the positive ways that youth are trying to use social media to improve their lives. They won't be easy to enforce, either, as kids in Australia found ways to circumvent the ban just 6 months in. Governments will scapegoat these kids as "bad actors" to protect corporations from deserved scrutiny.

Social media for people, not profit

The early days of social media had no ads, algorithms, or AI slop. Your feed was content created or shared by the people that you chose to connect with. The only "problem" was that it didn't make any money for shareholders.

Social media could be good again, but not if it remains in corporate control. The only reason to include invasive ads, divisive content, or malicious algorithms is to make profits for a few billionaires. The corporate model starts by providing a good service to attract users, then gradually introduces features that make money but worsen the experience. As the adage goes, "the first hit is free."

Rather than policing kids for using platforms designed to be addictive and harmful, the design of the platforms needs to be addressed. Replace the morally bankrupt corporations' control of social media with public ownership and democratic control. By freeing technology from private ownership and the profit motive, the positive creative potential of human ingenuity can be unlocked. ★

Only Working-Class Struggle Will Win Housing Justice

Harland Bird

In recent months, the capitalist media has been full of tales about the dawn of a renter's paradise, and governments have been happy to claim the credit. "Toronto landlords are offering free rent, Wi-Fi and even cash," *Yahoo! News* reported in May, yet "[r]enters still aren't impressed." In June, David Eby's NDP government boasted in a press release that "[r]enters in BC are seeing significant cost-of-living improvements" as a result of their (pro-developer) policies.

Tenants might be forgiven for wondering why their landlord has not offered to lower their rent — why, on the contrary, it keeps going up. Those who haven't moved in the last three years might be wondering why they are still clinging to their leases for dear life, often afraid to even request basic repairs for fear of being cast back out onto the rental market.

In fact, homelessness has continued to increase across the country despite the recent rise in vacancy rates and fall in average-asking rents.

It is good news, of course, that rents for new leases are not continuing to skyrocket as they have for the last couple of decades. But this is hardly a sign that the end of the "housing crisis" is nigh: the real problem is the for-profit, capitalist housing market, which only mass struggle of the working class and tenants can eradicate.

Tenants rising

The real good news on the housing front are signs that tenants are increasingly standing up to this inherently exploitative system.

The headline here is the founding of the Toronto Tenant Union in April. Formed through a merger of several groups including the York South-Weston Tenant Union, the Toronto Tenant Union has already won its first rent strike! The establishment of a city-wide, fighting tenant union in Canada's largest and second-most expensive city is a major positive development for housing justice, although it has received relatively little media coverage.

Meanwhile, in BC, the Northern Tenants Union was founded in Prince George in January.

Also in BC, the Victoria Tenants Union (of which the author is a founding and leading member) won a major victory in March by successfully waging a high-profile campaign against the eviction of a low-income senior in poor health, who missed a \$24.84 rent increase. Not only did this victory allow the tenant to stay in his home (and force his landlord to replace his non-functioning stove, fridge, toilet, and kitchen sink), but it also brought into public view the incompatibility of the capitalist housing market with housing justice and the potential of grassroots tenant organizing to push back against corporate and bad landlords.

Labour unions, through bitter struggle, won the eight-hour day, the five-day work week, and minimum wages. Likewise, the few tenant protections that poor and working people enjoy today — rent control, the right to quiet enjoyment, maintenance requirements — were won through working-class struggle. To achieve housing justice, this struggle must continue.

No illusions in capitalist governments

Under cover of the marginal fall in average-asking rents, governments are doubling down on their failed policies. In June, Mark Carney and David Eby announced plans to bail out developers and housing speculators by spending \$3 billion to buy at full price BC's glut of empty condos to convert into affordable housing, and to continue slashing developer fees that cities depend on to fund amenities and public services. Meanwhile, BC's \$3 billion Community Housing Fund has been suspended, leaving thousands of half-finished, publicly built affordable rental projects in the lurch.

Giving public money to the private sector — which skims about 20 percent off the top as "profit" — instead of using it to build social housing makes no sense and is exactly why these thousands of empty condos exist while homelessness is rampant.

Illusions in capitalist governments, who are much more responsive to pressure from landlords and developers than renters, are a recipe for perpetual homelessness and ruthless exploitation. Socialist Alternative supports building fighting tenant unions to help win true housing justice. ★



Toronto Tenant Union members organized a rent strike in May 2026 to oppose an 8% rent increase

Carney's Cruel Cuts

Tim Heffernan

Mark Carney's political image is of a "responsible progressive," a pragmatist — someone who speaks about climate change, affordability, inclusion, and protecting Canadians during economic uncertainty. He talks nice about "Canada for All" and that "the government is protecting the essential social programs — child care, dental care, and pharmacare."

But dig into the details and there are lots of cuts. There is no new money to create more child-care spaces. Federal health-care spending is drastically being cut — while hospital emergency rooms are inundated or even closed, the population is aging, and mental health needs are often left unmet. Ottawa won't be renewing the \$1.2 billion in annual transfers to the provinces that support mental health and addiction services, as well as home and community care, nor the \$600 million in annual transfers for long-term care. It is likely that the \$500 million annually set aside to increase Canadians' access to expensive drugs for rare diseases won't extend beyond March 2027. Meanwhile, the government is looking at privatizing airports and ports. Behind Carney's polished image is a conservative program of austerity, corporate-friendly economics, and public spending restraint.

Carney often frames his approach as "spending less to invest more," promising to cut government "waste," improve productivity, and reduce operational spending, while still protecting affordability programs. He presents cuts as "efficiency," and austerity as "responsible management." One example of this is the government's dragging its heels over implementation of the \$1.5 billion, two-year-old "national pharmacare plan." The intention was to study the initial roll out of the plan and then expand coverage to more drugs. However, only British Columbia, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island and the Yukon have signed on to the plan and now the federal Minister of Health has vowed to "protect" only these four agreements but has made no commitment to negotiations with the other provinces and territories.

The so-called affordability measures — such as targeted rebates (e.g., Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit), temporary fuel tax relief, or housing affordability — do not fundamentally challenge the reality of the cost-of-living crisis or its causes. Affordability problems are rooted in privatization, weak public services, low wages relative to inflation, corporate profiteering, and the financialization of housing (where housing is treated as a commodity — a vehicle for wealth and investment — rather than as a human right and a social good).

Cutting jobs to buy more weapons

Carney's policies soften the symptoms, while preserving the same economic system that created the crisis. There is a deep contradiction between Carney's progressive rhetoric and his government's actual fiscal direction. The government has announced cutting 40,000 jobs in the public services and is "sunsetting" social programs (letting them quietly die on the vine by not renewing their funding), while Canada Post is slashing 30,000 jobs. Most federal departments' spending, except military and policing, have been reduced by 15 percent.

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In contrast, military spending is exploding, going from \$30 billion (1.3 percent of GDP) in 2023, to a target of \$150 billion a year (5 percent of GDP) by 2035. This reveals the government's true priorities: cuts to social programs, but massive funding for military expansion and corporate-backed infrastructure in the form of the Canada Strong Fund with its initial federal contribution of \$25 billion.

This is not that surprising given Carney's background. He was a governor of both the Bank of Canada and the Bank of England. He worked for Goldman Sachs and later was vice-chair of Brookfield Asset Management, two of the world's largest finance companies, specializing in making money from property speculation and playing the stock and money market casinos, all at the expense of working people. He is progressive in tone, moderate on social issues, market-oriented in economics and comfortable with cuts if framed as "modernization."

Carney seeks to present a progressive image, but his actions are rooted in protecting markets and corporate profits. Working people need public investment, workers' control of key industries, stronger unions, and expanded social programs. Carney's sweetness and light will not deliver these. It will take working-class organization and struggles. ★

Immigrant Workers Face Systemic Abuse

Chris Fofonoff and Elron Jones

The exploitation of immigrants is not new. Even before the establishment of the Canadian state in 1867, immigrants were abused. It is usually linked to racial discrimination; at one time Irish workers were not “white.” As the capitalist ruling class expanded and deepened its grip on the land, it required more labour for this than was domestically available. Each new layer of the working class was always in a disadvantaged position, by design.

The exploiters are businesses, large and small, and the state is tasked with helping them on their way. In recent years, this has been through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, student visas, and other highly conditional means of bringing workers to Canada. A UN special rapporteur stated that this program “serves as a breeding ground for contemporary forms of slavery,” and many workers in the program agree. They are typically tied to one employer, or at best to one industry. This effectively silences dissent in many cases, as a boss can simply withdraw a work permit to get an undesirable worker out of the country.

Sometimes, the regular exploitation of employee by employer isn't enough, and the boss resorts to extortion and robbery. Workers in other countries are often lied to by recruiting agents about jobs in Canada, then coerced into paying bogus “government fees” of up to tens of thousands of dollars. Restaurateurs, farm owners, meatpacking operators from coast to coast have been fined — and even a few jailed — for wage theft, assault, and sex crimes against employees. The potential for abuses is doubled when the employer controls their workers' housing, whether on site at a farm or as a worker's direct landlord. Improper training or lack of safety gear leaves workers dead or maimed from dangerous machinery or toxic chemicals. The state occasionally cracks down on this, but only in order that the greater system of organized plunder through low wages can operate more smoothly.

D is a socialist, who immigrated to Canada from Iraq two years ago, no longer able to safely engage in politics in her home country. She headed two dental clinics there, but her credentials were ignored here, and she had to volunteer in a clinic. “Two months volunteering without any payment. I was working. I was supporting the team. And after a while, they promised me that there would be a time when I would get paid. So, I was happy. I thought, finally, I got something. But then, after three or four days of that discussion, they brought someone else from another office [to compete] for the same one month [of paid] work.”



Chinese workers building the Canadian Pacific Railway

Divide-and-rule tactic harms all workers

At the country's birth, the railroads' Chinese and European workers were deliberately kept separate — the Chinese workers were paid less and assigned more dangerous work, and the European workers were taught to hate them for “undercutting” white wages. This divide-and-rule policy has been used by the ruling class ever since. As D relates about a later workplace, “there was some tension [from co-workers] even from the first day. I think it's all because of the tight job market. And everyone is scared, actually. No one is feeling safe. That's why everyone is competing and fighting with each other.”

These divisions harm Canadian-born workers as it helps hold down wages. Migrant workers can't be left to fight against discrimination alone. Class unity will mean better pay and rights for all workers. Unions must take a leading role in this, linking with migrant-rights campaigns, to demand:

- Equal rights for all immigrants regardless of status
- Recognition of international qualifications
- Full rights of asylum for refugees and an end to the Safe Third Country Agreement
- Justice and solidarity among workers, whether immigrants or Canadian-born — end cheap labour with full labour, human, and citizenship rights for all migrant workers in Canada

Canada is a rich country, and everyone who lives, works and pays taxes here should have full rights at work, for health care and voting. Nobody should have to settle for less! ★

Stories from life... as a Workplace Organizer

Anonymous

I helped unionize a small workplace in BC, in part inspired by Socialist Alternative. It was both easier and harder than I expected. Most of my co-workers were onboard for it, and in BC if at least 55 percent of workers sign a union card there's no need for a vote — the union is certified. So that happened before the bosses even found out that we were organizing.

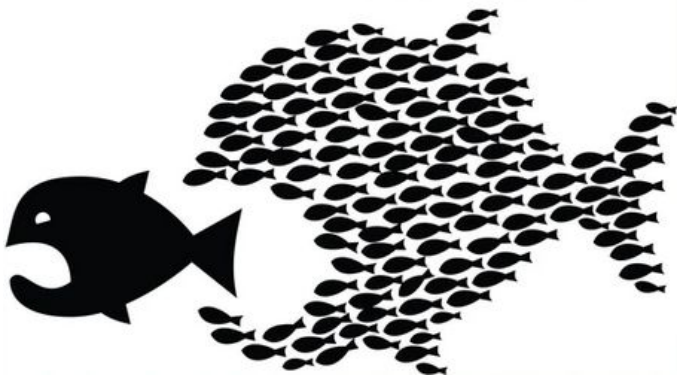
But when they did find out, the retaliation was swift and shocking, and only partly mitigated by the somewhat helpful labour board and almost completely useless WorkSafeBC. The owners claimed repeatedly that the business makes no money, yet spent exorbitantly to fight the union. They surveilled us and turned the managers against us. Some of us took heavy damage mentally and emotionally, and several people had to leave.

But in the end, we won. The employer had to accept the union, and our workplace is now changed forever. We got a substantial raise. We got new protections. New and future workers are now much safer and better compensated. And the care and solidarity we showed each other affirmed our dignity in a powerful way.

If you're thinking about unionizing, first talk with a small number of trusted co-workers. Reach out to several unions — you may need to talk to a few to find one that's a good fit. Be prepared for the boss's counterattack. Remember that only you and your co-workers know what you really need, and you may need to advocate for yourselves fiercely even to the larger union at times. Anticipate resistance, even from "good" employers, and expect them to say that it will destroy the business or organization. Expect them to act like they really believe it.

And know that even if you're unsuccessful, showing up for yourself and your co-workers is never a waste. Solidarity forever! ★

ORGANIZE!



What Makes Me Angry: Carney's (Corporate) “Canada Strong Fund”

Larry Hyink

On April 27, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced the creation of a \$25 billion Sovereign Wealth Fund. It would be used as a "national savings and investment account" to funnel money to projects government wants to see built, but which lack enough private investment.

Usually, these funds are established using surplus revenues from highly profitable sectors of the economy. The prime example is Norway, which invested roughly US\$300 million from oil revenue in 1996 into its Sovereign Wealth Fund. This fund, set up and managed according to the principles of the Social Democratic government of the time, is currently the most valuable in the world at over US\$2 trillion.

The “best” Canadian example is the Alberta Heritage Trust Fund, started in 1976 with an initial investment of \$1.5 billion and currently worth \$31.5 billion. Obviously, the Norwegian fund has done way better. That's because the “free enterprise” government of Alberta has either withheld investment or raided the fund to keep corporate taxes low.

One thing Norway and Alberta have in common is the fact that their initial investment came from surplus revenue ... of which Canada has none. The \$25 billion will have to come from raising taxes (on working people) or cutting programs (for working people) or most probably, borrowing (paid back by taxes on working people). God forbid that corporations should sacrifice a nickel's worth of profits to contribute.

But never fear, Carney has promised that the average Canadian will be entitled to invest their spare cash (yeah, right) in the fund to help build a strong Canada.

Ironically, at almost the same time as the fund was announced, the government said it was ending the rollout of the National Pharmacare program as of 2029. Obviously, helping Canadians afford their prescription drugs doesn't make Canada as strong as subsidizing corporate profits.

The Canada Strong Fund is just another taxpayer-funded slush fund for capitalist rulers to lavish on favoured corporate cronies. We need to stop this travesty and demand that, at the least, corporations pay their fair share and at best the industries workers need for a strong Canada are taken into public ownership and managed for the benefit of all Canadians and not the corporate elite. ★

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Ray Goerke

The attack by US and Israeli imperialism on Iran is a historic blunder. On March 6, after only a week of war, Trump wrote that “there will be no deal with Iran except UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER” [his emphasis]. Three months later, he surrendered.

After the US military kidnapped Maduro in Venezuela without any US casualties, Trump, overcome with hubris, believed the same could be achieved in Iran. Trump’s advisors warned that an attack on Iran would likely result in the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, advice that was ignored at great cost to millions of people and the world economy.

It is a colossal undermining of the prestige of US imperialism and its military that the Iranian regime was able to survive its attack. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard’s grip on power is strengthened and the mass pro-democracy movement in Iran is pushed back. Iran will gain \$12 billion in unfrozen assets and sanctions’ relief — even before the commencement of negotiations on a longer-term deal.

The whole region is permanently changed. Even if a form of peace is achieved in the short term, there will be no return to the status quo of the recent past.

US-Iran deal

The US-Iran peace deal announced on June 14 is a defeat for US imperialism. The deal is vague on many things, pushes key decisions down the road and is unlikely to last. It is more like the “ceasefire” in Gaza, which Trump defined as “shooting in a more moderate manner.”

Trump’s biggest selling point is reopening the Strait of Hormuz, but this solves a problem that Trump and Netanyahu’s war caused in the first place! Iran’s control of shipping through the Strait is strengthened rather than weakened, as ships will now pass with the Iranian regime’s kind permission, when the pre-war status quo was universal free passage.

Trump and Netanyahu claimed other reasons for attacking Iran, including ending its nuclear program, limiting of Tehran’s missile capabilities, and ending its support for allies including Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen. None of these have been resolved in favour of the US.

Every aspect of the reported deal is vulnerable to being blown apart by continued volatility and unresolved tensions. In both Washington and Tehran, the deal has vocal critics, who favour a return to all-out war. But the most explosive factor in the short term is the contradiction between the war’s chief co-instigators. Trump is desperate for the war to end before the US midterms in November. Netanyahu needs endless conflict in a bid to stay in power (and out of prison) and to win the Israeli elections that must take place by October.

Socialism to End C



Although the deal included an “immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon,” Israel was not party to the agreement and Netanyahu has threatened to “enhance the blows” and “intensify the force” rather than withdraw his army from Lebanon. The Iranian government is clear that they will not sign until Israel leaves Lebanon.

No return to "normal" in the Middle East

The prospect of any real return to “normal” in the region is a pipe dream. The destruction of human life and infrastructure in Lebanon and Iran will be felt for decades. Well over 6,000 people have been killed and millions displaced — an immense human tragedy.

It will take months and even years to repair damaged infrastructure and restore oil and gas shipments to pre-war levels. Prices will not return to pre-war levels anytime soon. For the foreseeable future shipping companies will be cautious about using the Strait and their insurance premiums will be elevated.

The Israeli-American wars on the Palestinians and on Iran have destroyed illusions about the “Gulf model” and the region’s global rise. Western money and residents fled the Gulf and over 30,000 flights were cancelled as it was no longer a safe place to do business. Oxford Economics predicts a recession in the six-country Gulf Cooperation Council.

The war has intensified the simmering conflict between the authoritarian rulers of Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Saudi Arabia supported the US talks with Iran, while the UAE escalated its attacks and argued against any deal. The UAE increased its links with Israel, receiving a secret visit from

Capitalism's Wars

INTERNATIONAL



Netanyahu and military equipment including an Iron Dome air defence system. The UAE recently quit the Saudi-led oil producers' alliance, OPEC, in a further rebuff.

Knock-on impacts around the world

The economic impacts of the war will continue to be felt around the world. The oil shortage and price hike has been devastating for people in much of Asia. The shock to the energy industry and shortages of crucial items such as helium will radiate out to manufacturing and continue to push the price of goods up. The shortage of fertilizers will add to food scarcity and costs.

The war has upended world politics and alliances. Heads of state in Germany, Italy, Spain, and others have publicly distanced themselves from Trump and the US's war. Israel is more isolated than ever on the world stage.

The US-China conflict remains the main axis of world politics. The US had a "win" by installing a compliant regime in Venezuela, with no response from China. The massive blunder of attacking Iran has shifted the advantage to China. However, China is beset with domestic problems (p 11) that limit its ability to exploit the US's weakness. Both the US and China are declining powers. However, cornered animals often lash out in desperation. The continued tensions over Taiwan are highly dangerous.

US domestic situation

The Trump regime is also facing growing opposition at home. The Minneapolis rebellion against the ICE invasion was a major setback, although activists are now being victimized. Trump's approval ratings have hit a record low,

with frustration bubbling around the economic fallout of the war. The Epstein files continue to haunt him.

While Trump still has a tight hold on the Republicans, cracks and divisions are opening in the party — even within Trump's hardened base. Trump promised no more wars and lower prices! However, Trump will not quietly retreat. His regime is stepping up plans to rig or steal the midterm elections in November.

Cuba is next?

US imperialism for decades longed to defeat the Cuban revolution, as its strong public health and education systems were a beacon of hope to millions in Latin America.

The Iranian humiliation has increased the risk of a US military intervention in Cuba. The new sanctions and an energy blockade since January has aimed at suffocating the country and causing terrible humanitarian consequences. Now the US has mobilized military forces around the island. The threat is real, even if the immediate goal is to intimidate the Cuban regime and extract further concessions than it has already offered.

Sending troops into Cuba risks a quagmire like Iraq or Afghanistan. While many Cubans are weary of the shortages there is no love for US imperialism among most of the population.

The socialist response

Revolutionary socialists welcome the defeat of US imperialism. However, we are not cheerleaders for the reactionary Iranian dictatorship. Instead, we stand in full solidarity with the workers, women and oppressed people who have dedicated their efforts and lives in opposition to imperialism. An end to this war would allow for renewed struggle against the Iranian regime and all the region's other capitalist regimes. The world's working class can have no confidence in any capitalist government.

During World War One, people thought it was a "forever war" with no end in sight. The war in Ukraine has now lasted longer than that war did. WW1 did not end by a military victory; it was revolutions that ended it. Russia withdrew from the war after Russian workers took power in October 1917. In November 1918 the German navy and then army mutinied, which ended the war. In Russia, feudalism and capitalism were abolished by a workers' government. Tragically, in Germany the revolution was betrayed by misleaders who protected capitalism.

The Vietnam war ended as the heroic Vietnamese people stood firm. The US ruling class, faced with a disintegrating army and mass opposition at home, had to withdraw.

The only way to permanently end imperialist wars is with socialist revolution. For the poor and working class the way to achieve peace is to engage in international working-class solidarity and wage a struggle against our own ruling classes. ★

The Indian Act: 150 Years of Control, Colonial Power and Assimilation

Sara Domok and Leslie Kemp

For over 150 years, Indigenous peoples' lives were betrayed, strained, and ripped apart. No Canadian legislation has had more far-reaching, harmful, and enduring consequences than the *Indian Act*. Enacted in 1876, this legal framework for governing First Nations sought to assimilate Indigenous peoples into Euro-Canadian society and eliminate Indigenous cultures. It dismantled independent nations, exerting extensive government control over their communities, lands, and lifestyles.

Federal government Indian Agents and the Department of Indian Affairs controlled identity, governance, education, mobility, culture, and even morality. Band councils controlled from Ottawa replaced traditional governance systems that had successfully guided Indigenous nations for thousands of years. Hereditary leadership structures were ignored.

The *Act* was an outright imposition of colonial capitalism on Indigenous peoples. Duncan Campbell Scott, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs from 1913-32, wrote: "I want to get rid of the Indian problem... Our objective is to continue until there is not an Indian that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department."

Indigenous peoples robbed

The *Act* stole everything it could. It stole land through reserves and forced displacement; culture by outlawing ceremonies such as the Potlatch and Sun Dance; political independence; and humanity through residential schools, where children were punished, abused, and beaten for speaking their languages. By severing generations of children from their families and communities, governments robbed them of their languages, identity and freedom.

The last residential school was closed in 1996, but intergenerational trauma endures to this day. While the schools were intended "to kill the Indian in the child," it was the children themselves who died, disappeared, or ran away. Of the 150,000 who attended the schools, at least 6,000 died.

The *Act* undermined the role of women, who held respected roles in matriarchal communities. A French Jesuit missionary observed in Iroquois-speaking nations: "Nothing is more real... than the women's superiority.... In them resides all



An Indigenous woman smoking meat; Photo: Harry Pollard

the real authority: the lands, the fields, and all their harvest belongs to them." However, the racist and patriarchal *Act* removed Indigenous women's status when they married anyone other than an "Indian," profoundly impacting women. Today, they experience higher levels of poverty and violence than any other group in society. Indigenous author, Lee Maracle, wrote that "the denial of Native womanhood is the reduction of the whole people to a sub-human level."

Any Indigenous person who earned a university degree or served in the military gained the right to vote but lost their Indian status. The message was unmistakable: Indigenous people could participate in Canadian society, but only if they stopped being Indigenous first.

Twin evils of colonialism and capitalism

Above all, the *Act* was a tool to facilitate capitalist expansion by controlling Indigenous lands, resources, and communities. This was not merely an unfortunate byproduct of economic development; it was a prerequisite for it. Recently, capitalist politicians — Stephen Harper and Pierre Trudeau — wanted to abolish the *Indian Act* so that the collective reserve lands could be privatized and capitalism could gain control of all the lands. Indigenous territories contain valuable minerals, timber, farmland, waterways, and transportation routes that governments and private corporations want access to.

However, Indigenous peoples have always resisted, defending their lands, waters, languages, and ways of life against a state and ruling class that treats Indigenous sovereignty as an obstacle to profit. Indigenous people kept ceremonies alive underground, fought to reclaim cultural belongings stolen by museums, and worked to restore languages. They have also organized politically against pipelines, mines, and other extractive projects dressed up as "development."

Indigenous peoples are not struggling for recognition from the institutions that engineered the harm; their struggle is for the right to self-determination, a struggle that socialists fully support. Self-determination means more than symbolic apologies or managed inclusion into a colonial order — it means the power to control land, community, and a collective future free from capitalist exploitation and state domination. Real reconciliation will only come through abolishing the *Indian Act* and the capitalist system that spawned it. ★

Note on terminology: The word "Indian" is used because of its legal and historical context. "Indian" in the context of the Indian Act is a status Indian.

China's Deep Crisis

Bill Hopwood

The most significant thing about Trump and Xi's meeting in Beijing in May was that it happened. Nothing of consequence was agreed and the two rulers' reports of the discussions and agreements told differing stories.

Both autocrats face mounting problems, and the meeting was an opportunity to look important to their respective domestic audiences. The world's spotlight has been less focused on Xi's problems, but they are just as real.

China's unique but capitalist economy

China's route to capitalism differs from the historic path of the older capitalist countries. It was introduced by the regime from the top, initially in small steps — "crossing the river by feeling the stones," as China faced economic stagnation in the 1970s and was being outpaced by the "Asian Tigers," such as South Korea and Taiwan. While Chinese capitalism is unique, with a very high level of state intervention, it is a capitalist economy.

Capitalists from around the world invested heavily to exploit the low-waged, skilled and disciplined workforce. This was profitable for them, and it rapidly industrialized China. Its share of world GDP rose from around 2 percent in 1980 to 18 percent today.

As capitalism increasingly dominated the economy, the "iron ice bowl," China's public services and social safety net, was smashed. Workers pay for much of their pensions, health costs and children's education, which reduces spending on consumer goods. At the same time, a section of capitalists became billionaires.

For several decades, the growing Chinese economy benefited capitalists in China and internationally. But as China moved to produce more advanced commodities — cars, engineering machinery, electronics, etc. — the economies of the US and other countries were threatened. Relations changed from mutually beneficial to antagonistic as the US and China began a struggle for domination in markets and technology.

Crises with Chinese characteristics

The growth of Chinese manufacturing has hit the limits of the market. Consumers cannot buy everything that is made, resulting in massive overproduction. Chinese EV companies are selling every car in China at a loss, trying to overcome declining sales. China produces over twice as many solar panels as worldwide demand. Companies are slashing prices, going bust and firing workers.

Chinese companies are desperately boosting exports to Asia to make up for weak domestic sales and lost sales to the US. But Vietnam, Indonesia, India, Türkiye and others are putting up barriers.



Unfinished apartments in Kunming were demolished

Alongside overproduction, consumer spending has fallen in recent years. This is due to falling population, rising unemployment and the property market's collapse.

Between 2006 and 2020, half of the world's new residential properties were built in China, but gross oversupply caused a massive collapse. The property sector went from a third of the economy to 11 percent now. Between 2020 and 2024, property values fell over US\$18 trillion. China's better-off invested heavily into the property market: around 40 percent of urban dwellers own more than one property. Once these were investments; now they are liabilities.

Much of industrial expansion and construction of infrastructure and housing was paid for by debt. As companies collapse and local government income is hit by the property collapse, these debts cannot be paid off. The Institute of International Finance estimates China's debt-to-GDP ratio is now over 330 percent, far worse than other major economies.

Youth unemployment is at record levels. Deng Xiaoping, as he introduced capitalism in the 1980s, talked of "Socialism with Chinese characteristics;" in fact he introduced "Capitalism with Chinese characteristics." Now, these characteristics will not save China from the laws of capitalist economics.

Power struggles

Behind the scenes there is a bitter power struggle among the Chinese leadership. Xi has purged over a hundred of the top military, seeking to remove any opposition to his autocratic rule. However, the working class in both China and the US can have no confidence in any wing of the ruling class.

The real power struggle will happen when an independent mass working-class movement challenges the dictatorship of capital and moves to a socialist revolution. International Socialist Alternative will be part of the revolution in China, the US and Canada. ★

For more on China: chinaworker.info

Labour Party Devastated in British Elections

Martin LeBrun

The British Labour Party was devastated in the May elections, losing 1,498 of the 2,566 council seats it was defending in England. It was destroyed in Wales, a Labour bastion for 100 years, losing 35 of the 44 seats it previously had in the Welsh Parliament. It also suffered losses in the Scottish Parliament.

Just six weeks later, Prime Minister Starmer resigned, opening the door for Andy Burnham to take over, only four days after he won a by-election. Starmer was the lightning rod for widespread anger against the Labour government's failures. However, he is not the root problem, it's Labour's acceptance of the demands of big business.

Labour was built through working-class struggle to give workers a political voice. Yet, Labour's historic base, from the inner cities to the former industrial heartlands, ditched it in the council elections. Inner-city voters mainly went to the Green Party, which has a more radical program than Labour. Smaller cities and the periphery of the urban centres largely swung to the right-populist Reform Party.

The elections confirmed the collapse of the establishment parties — Labour and Conservative. The Tories suffered further major losses from their disastrous 2024 results. Faced with the erosion of the establishment parties, the capitalist class is turning to even more reactionary forces.

Rise of Reform

The Reform Party, with its anti-immigrant emphasis (coded racism) and fantasy of "Make Britain Great Again," benefited from the collapse of both Labour and Tories. Reform won more council seats and the most votes, 26 percent, of any party.

Reform is dangerous and should not be underestimated. Given the fracturing of politics, with five parties in England having over 15 percent support, Reform could form the

next government. Its more extreme fascistic fringe, headed by Tommy Robinson, has grown in confidence and support.

Some working-class voters supported Reform to punish Labour and Conservatives. But Reform is not "anti-establishment;" many of its donors are well off and connected to fossil fuels and banking. In local government it has cut services, raised council taxes and used its platform to stir up hatred and division. Trade unions and local communities urgently need to build well-organized campaigns to oppose Reform.

How to stop Reform

Large sections of the working class are desperate to find a way out of decades of austerity for workers and get-richer policies for the elites, delivered by both Labour and Tories.

Andy Burnham, former Mayor of Manchester, decisively won a by-election that was a contest between Labour, winning 55 percent, and Reform, with 35 percent. The Tories', Greens' and Liberals' combined vote was 3.3 percent! Burnham is not tainted from being in the current Labour government. He will give Labour a short-term boost but unless he decisively breaks with Starmer's policies, which is unlikely, his popularity won't last long.

Hopes were high that Your Party, launched in the summer of 2025 by ex-Labour MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana, could be an answer to the decades of misery. In just a few weeks, 800,000 signed up. But, in a historic failure, Your Party has virtually collapsed due to its crisis-ridden founding and Corbyn's weak leadership.

With Your Party's failure, voters turned to the Greens in large numbers, especially in the big cities of England and Wales that were former Labour strongholds. The Greens' policies, including a wealth tax, tapped into society's huge class anger.

The high hopes in the Greens may be dashed as they have a record on councils of cutting services, and they have ruled out building a mass campaign to win increased government funding.

Build a Socialist Alternative

In this situation, Socialist Alternative in England campaigned in three areas, along with Your Party members and community campaigns, to sink roots in the working class. These campaigns generated thousands of conversations with the message: no cuts, no privatization, no more council tax rises, and support affordable housing. These campaigns achieved modest results but are a preparation for the future to build a socialist alternative to all the pro-capitalist parties. ★

For more on Britain: socialistalternative.info



Socialist Alternative members in Britain campaigning for Your Party

What's Next for the NDP?

Simon Schweitzer and AJ Guddé

It's been three months since Avi Lewis was elected federal NDP leader, and not everything has gone smoothly. The NDP is down to 5 MPs. Nunavut MP Lori Idlout crossed the floor to the Liberals, and Québec MP Alexandre Boulerice quit to run provincially for Québec Solidaire.

Yet in amongst Lewis's policy proposals — banning algorithmic/surveillance pricing; putting a surtax on corporations making profits of \$100 million or more; ending fossil fuel subsidies; accelerating renewable power, electric transit and home heat pumps; and opposing wars in Gaza and Iran — he has focused on rebuilding. The polls show a slight increase in NDP support: in mid-June, 338 Canada reported a rise of 3.5 percent since the 2025 election, to about 9.8 percent. If an election was held today, the NDP would win 13 seats.

Rebuilding from the ground up

Lewis is talking with ordinary people, attending town hall meetings in Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC and elsewhere. He kicked off his Saskatchewan tour at the Cowessess First Nation, listening to elders who were frustrated and cynical: 20,000 acres of farmland was taken from the Nation in 1907 and the negotiations on this claim started in the 1960s. The Cowessess have yet to see any payment despite reaching an agreement with Ottawa in 2023. Their economic development plans are stalled, and elders are dying while they wait for the money.

Lewis underscored why First Nations communities are “suspicious of the entire political system,” saying they need action, not words. This is also true for the wider working class.

Lewis also met with the Star Blanket Cree Nation, and on May 16 he spoke to a nearly sold-out audience in Saskatoon, sharing the stage with local Indigenous community leaders and CUPW, CUPE and UFCW unions. SaskTel is the last publicly owned provincial telecommunications company in Canada, and Lewis emphasized the need to preserve and reinforce its role as an affordable public provider, especially in rural northern communities. Defending public ownership, he pointed to the gaps in provincial transit infrastructure after the Saskatchewan Transit Company — a public intercity bus company — was privatized in 2013.

Saskatchewan campaign organizers designed a new pamphlet, “Jobs Come First,” unveiled by Lewis in a discussion on renewable energy. In a province where employment and economic growth are tied to fossil fuels, this emphasized the job-creating aspects of his platform. Lewis had come at the request of his Saskatchewan campaign organizers and had taken their advice on which communities to visit and how best to deliver his message.



*Avi Lewis visited Star Blanket Cree Nation, Treaty 4, Saskatchewan
Photo: Monse Munro*

Both Alberta and Saskatchewan provincial NDP leaders were critical of Lewis's environmental policies. Yet despite its support of fossil fuel industries, Saskatchewan's NDP trails the ruling Saskatchewan Party. The Alberta NDP's failure to capitalize on the ruling UCP's shortcomings mean their ratings still lag far behind those of unpopular UCP leader Danielle Smith. In BC, expanded LNG and resource extraction investments, along with damaged relations with Indigenous nations, have tanked NDP premier David Eby's popularity, including within his own party. In stark contrast, the popularity of Manitoba's Wab Kinew's policies on renewable energy and stronger social supports prove that working-class Canadians long for the leftist policies that Lewis is promising.

NDP organizational changes

In early May, NDP National Director Lucy Watson announced that she was stepping down. This — and the election of a new Executive — was a welcome change for many members, who identified Watson and the previous Executive with a top-down, controlling approach that had led the NDP to its worst-ever electoral defeat. The new Executive slate was supported by all the leadership candidates except Heather MacPherson.

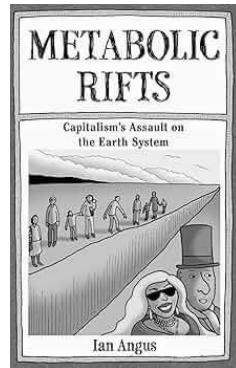
Former MP Matthew Green has been appointed as Interim National Director while an open hiring process seeks a permanent director. Lewis described Green's appointment as flowing from the membership's mandate to “chart a new direction for our party.”

These changes, and the townhall meetings, underscore Avi Lewis's belief in a grassroots process — led by local organizers and activists — as the foundation for rebuilding the NDP. While it is early days, indications are that this approach is beginning to bear fruit. ★

Book Review: *Metabolic Rifts*

Bill Hopwood

Ian Angus's *Metabolic Rifts* joins the growing body of writings (for example from John Bellamy Foster) that counter the widespread and false claim that Marx, Engels and later Marxists had little to say about nature and the environment. The environmental writer Anna Bramwell stated that "Marx does not like nature." Reading Marx and Engels disproves this.



Angus explains that in the 1840s Marx and Engels developed "a materialist philosophy that began with the undeniable fact that humans cannot live unless we obtain food, air, water, and other essentials from the world around us." Humans are part of nature. In *Capital* Marx wrote that capitalism "disrupts the metabolic interaction between man [sic] and the earth," and causes "an irreparable rift in the interdependent process of social metabolism, a metabolism prescribed by the natural laws of life itself." Engels developed these ideas in *Anti-Dühring* and *Dialectics of Nature*.

Angus points to the Stalinist reaction in the Soviet Union in the 1920s that largely abandoned Marxism, including its understanding of nature, and instead trampled on nature and people in a drive to industrialize. This productivist view became widespread among socialists, even many who did not swallow other Stalinist distortions of Marxism.

Growing knowledge of the interconnected flows of matter and energy reveals increasing disruption of these flows — Marx's metabolic rift. Angus writes: "Five tightly interconnected characteristics distinguish capitalism from all previous human societies and pit it against the natural world: generalized production of commodities; profit maximization; competition among multiple capitalists; short-termism, and unending capital accumulation."

Metabolic Rifts considers the disruption of the carbon and nitrogen cycle, the destruction caused by industrial agriculture and the devastation of the world's oceans. Angus rightly warns that: "If radical changes are not made soon, today's climate emergencies will appear benign by comparison [with what is coming]."

Angus argues for an "ecosocialist revolution." However, he is weak on how to build the mass movement needed to carry out that revolution. That role falls to those who understand capitalism's disastrous metabolic rifts and are active Marxist revolutionaries. That describes Socialist Alternative members. Join us! ★

Working-Class History: IWW Local 526 "Bows and Arrows"

Harland Bird



Members of IWW Local 526

Eighty years ago, in 1906, a group of mostly Squamish Nation Indigenous longshore workers formed the first labour union on the Vancouver docks: Local 526 of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). It was also known as the Lumber Handlers' Union, or the "Bows and Arrows" — so called to demonstrate militancy, Indigenous pride and defiance of colonial oppression.

The local met in a hall on a Squamish reserve in North Vancouver. However, it was deliberately organized on the basis of class: the docks were worked by people of many nationalities, so the local, rightly, did not exclude members of any race or ethnicity. This was in defiance of the employers, who encouraged and maintained racist divisions of labour on the docks, selfishly pitting workers against each other.

Indigenous men and boys were typically compelled to specialize in loading lumber onto the ships — often the most difficult, dangerous, and poorly-compensated dock work. This wage labour often supplemented more traditional modes of subsistence, such as hunting and fishing, which were becoming increasingly difficult due to industrial development and colonial laws that restricted Indigenous access to, and freedom on, their lands. In an incredible display of defiance and resiliency they became renowned for their lumber-loading prowess, using their earnings to buy goods for potlaches, and speaking in their native tongues to bolster solidarity with each other and frustrate employer surveillance.

Although Local 526 was short-lived, being busted by the bosses during a bitter strike in 1907, the workers built a new "Bows and Arrows" of the International Longshoremen's Association in 1913. After many strikes and some bitter defeats, finally in 1948 the legacy of the Bows and Arrows gave rise to the International Longshore and Warehouse Union: the proud, militant union of Vancouver's dock workers. ★

Pride: The Fight for Liberation *(continued from p.16)*

New Brunswick's Conservatives attacked young people's gender rights. The unpopularity of these policies contributed to their defeat in the 2024 election. The new Liberal government restored these rights.

In BC, attacks on Pride flags, university DEI programs, and anti-discrimination protections have largely failed to find any footing.

The colonial history of queer oppression

LGBTQ+ identities were not criminalized throughout much of recorded history. There are records of queer and gender-nonconforming people living peacefully on every continent. Oppressive anti-gay laws were enacted by a few rulers and monarchs, often using religion as an excuse, but they quickly spread with colonial expansion.

The Ottoman, British, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese Empires spread discrimination around the globe. In seeking to uphold the tenuous social order that kept them in power, the ruling class was happy to crush the colourful identities of local populations.

Revolutionary periods have offered a reprieve from these oppressive laws. Homosexual activity was first decriminalized in France in 1791, during the revolution. After the workers' revolution in Russia, gay sex was decriminalized and same sex marriage was recognized. As the Stalinist reaction overturned many of the democratic and social gains of the revolution, same-sex activities were again recriminalized.

Gains through struggle

Social movements like Pride have further power to drive social change. The Stonewall riots took place in 1969 after a violent police raid on the Stonewall Inn in New York City, setting in motion a more radical and organized gay rights movement. Communities in Canada carved out queer safe spaces, such as the well-known 519 in Toronto, or the Turret in Halifax. However, police raids were common until the early 2000s. Toronto's AIDS Action Now (AAN) network organized a two-year protest movement to win access to life-saving medication. Vancouver's Little Sister's Book & Art Emporium fought a 15-year legal battle against the Canadian Border Security Agency that continually seized shipments they deemed "obscene." The bookstore endured three bombings over the years, but with the support of the local queer community, emerged victorious over this censorship.

It is marches and protests that have changed public opinion and won victories to end the stigmatization of LGBTQ+ identities, and to promote equality under the law. Most politicians and corporations have, at best, followed behind.



Little Sister's book store fought a Charter case to protect LGBTQ+ rights, commemorated on a Canada Post stamp

A future worth fighting for

Today, the rights of trans- and gender-nonconforming people are being attacked, same-sex attraction is still a crime in much of the world, self-expression is at risk of being suppressed, and the basic needs of the average Canadian worker are not being met. Queer people need relief from the same affordability crisis plaguing all working-class people in Canada. Under liberal capitalism, queer liberation has been reduced to debates over bathrooms and sports when it should mean improved access to social supports, expanded medical access, affordable groceries, and safer transit and housing — gains that will improve the lives of everyone. The Liberal government cannot be trusted to fight our battles, especially now that they have embraced pipelines, cuts to public services and a huge boost in military spending.

The radical roots of the Pride movement need to be restored. The power of the working class must be wielded to protect LGBTQ+ rights — whether that means working with teachers' unions to shield trans students, or nurses' unions to protect trans health care. The most powerful engines of queer people's defence are already in the hands of the working class; they just need to be mobilized for such a purpose. As right-wing state violence threatens to push us all back into the closet, it is vital to remember who are LGBTQ+ people's truest allies — not the corporation slapping its logo on a Pride parade, or the politician who shows up for a parade. Queer people's allies share a common desire for mutual liberation, organize direct action in workplaces and unions, attend marches, rallies, and picket lines. That rainbow flag invites us *all* to join the fight against the system that wants to silence us. ★



Ames Allen and R O'Brien

Image: Toronto Pride 2024

Pride's rallying cry is struggling to be heard amid overlapping crises. Rising militarism, affordable housing shortages, and economic precarity dominate the attention of working-class queer people who are increasingly struggling to survive. Amid news of another bombardment, another pipeline, another data centre, corporations covertly cancel Pride initiatives and legislators quietly erode hard-won queer rights.

The past three years have seen a stark increase in criminalization of LGBTQ+ people worldwide. Uganda, Mali, Ghana and Burkina Faso have all implemented new laws with harsh punishments for same-sex sexual activity, as well as for the "promotion" of LGBTQ+ identities and practices. The UK Supreme Court defined women as based only on biological sex, excluding trans women from gender-based discrimination protections. In the US, the White House began circulating documents defining a terrorist as anyone with "extreme viewpoints on immigration, radical gender ideology, and anti-American sentiment." Such language in a time of rising police violence has many LGBTQ+ Americans feeling scared.

Canada has not been immune to this growing trend of restrictive new laws. The past year has seen a flurry of bills seeking to punish, isolate and restrict LGBTQ+ people from living their lives. Alberta has banned gender-affirming care

for trans youth, removed sex ed from school curriculums and banned some books from libraries. Québec now prohibits public workers from using inclusive they/them pronouns and has banned schools from building gender-neutral washrooms.

In BC, the far-right OneBC Party recently proposed several anti-trans bills, but they went nowhere. More worrying than OneBC, the BC Conservatives' new leader, Kerry-Lynne Findlay, is opposed to sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) curriculum in schools and gender-affirming care, and has other reactionary views. Given the ruling NDP's failures and unpopularity, the election of a Conservative government is highly possible, which would be devastating for schools, health care, the environment, and the lives of workers across the province.

This rising hostility from conservatives is an attempt to turn queer people into scapegoats for the crises of the failing capitalist system. The ruling class — the billionaires, corporations, and politicians — manufacture this divide-and-rule hatred, trying to weaken workers' unity and to deflect blame away from themselves.

There is resistance

The right-wingers are not getting it all their own way. In Hungary, Orbán banned Pride in 2025, but the marches were huge. In 2026 Orbán was soundly defeated in the elections.

(continued on p. 15)

