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Socialist Worker

\$2 | No 665 | July - August 2024 | socialist.ca

Westjet, Bombardier workers show



IT'S RIGHT TO STRIKE!

Rise of Poilievre a result of the refusal to fight Trudeau by labour and NDP

by: **Ritch Whyman**

The recent by-election loss in what has for 30 years been a safe Liberal seat has exposed how deep the frustration with the Trudeau government has become.

The Toronto St. Paul's by-election showed the Liberals are in a deep and protracted crisis. The Tory win in the riding shows Trudeau's unpopularity is not just confined to rural, working class and western Canada. It has now seeped into Liberal strongholds.

The issues driving this are ones that should benefit the NDP and the labour movement. Poll after poll shows the top issues are the cost of living crisis, the deep and profound housing crisis, interest rate hikes, healthcare and the climate.

For over 2 years, more and more people feel their lives are getting worse, young people face a deepening crisis with rent hikes and skyrocketing housing costs. Wages have declined in the face of 2-plus years of the worst inflation in decades. Food prices, gas prices, housing costs and mortgage/debt repayment costs have spiked despite recent claims of inflation being under control.

The solutions offered by the Liberals have done nothing to address any of these crises. Instead, the decision to jack up interest rates in an attempt to deflate the economy and curb wage demands, made lives worse by hiking mortgage and loan payments and enriching the big banks and private lenders.

In response to the housing crisis, the Trudeau Liberals offered the pathetic changes to allow people to use more of their non-existent RRSP savings and take out longer mortgages that only benefit the banks.

Across the country, workers have

been resisting the attempts to use inflation to raise profits at the expense of workers' spending power. Since emerging from the first wave of Covid, workers have fought at the bargaining table and on picket lines to boost wages and benefits. This has resulted in wage gains not seen in decades and workers took advantage of labour shortages to make gains.

This situation should be one that benefits the erstwhile and ostensible friend of workers, the NDP.

The NDP result in St. Paul's was dismal and declined. In that riding in the 2021 general election,

working-class votes in the midst of a wave of working-class militancy.

In an attempt to address the decline of the NDP and the impending 2025 election sweep by the hard-right Poilievre Tories, sections of the labour movement are finally realising the depth of the anger, and that the Tories are the ones gaining from it. The Canadian Labour Congress and many provincial federations, the largest union organisations in the country, along with others are discussing a campaign to 'expose' Poilievre as anti-worker and to 'fight the right'.

While it is welcome to see the

working people – from breaking strikes, to hiking interest rates – is pure folly.

The groundswell of support inside working class communities that Poilievre and the Tories are gaining is based on the reality that in the face of the cost-of-living crisis they were the only ones going after Trudeau. They, rather than the NDP or union leaderships, took the ground of opposing a government that was implementing policies that were immiserating millions.

This is why we have the absurd anomaly of the Tories gaining from issues that should be the bread

The fallacy of such an alliance is exposed by the recent proclamation of the great victory by the unions and the NDP in getting "anti-scab" legislation passed in the House (it still isn't passed in the unelected Senate). Critics had pointed out that this reform, while welcome, was full of holes. It did nothing to prevent or call for the end of the ongoing use of unconstitutional laws that break federally mandated workers strikes. Dock workers, postal workers, rail workers and most recently WestJet mechanical engineers have all seen strikes broken or attempts to break them by the supposedly "labour-friendly" Trudeau. The major victor of the anti-scab legislation has been Poilievre who, recognising the reality, had Tory MPs vote for it. They have used that to say they are worker- and union-friendly.

Exposing Poilievre and the Tories as anti-worker and in the pocket of the banks and CEOs means coming out swinging at Trudeau. It means the NDP has to break its unholy pact and stop propping up Trudeau. A workplace-oriented campaign that targets Trudeau and Poilievre as threats to workers has the potential to gain a hearing in workplaces both union and non-union, particularly in the private sector and the blue collar ends of the public sector.

It may be too late to stop the landslide predicted for the Tories, but such a campaign could form the basis to fight back when the Tories move to gut services, attack the public sector, blame immigrants and hand over millions to the developers and oil barons. A campaign that points to workers taking action beyond the ballot box and that taps into the wage militancy has the potential to form the grounds for a broader fight against the Tories when they turn on the very workers that voted for them.



The NDP needs to end their support for the Liberals to save themselves from irrelevancy

the NDP got 17% of the vote; in the by-election, they got 11%. The Tories are the ones that are gaining from justifiable anger at Trudeau and the crisis working class people are facing. It follows on similar drops in every recent by-election. It seems as if nothing has been learned from the debacle of the 2022 Ontario election where the ONDP haemorrhaged 400,000 mainly

officials of the labour movement finally take seriously the rise of the right and look to tackle the anti-worker politics of the Tories, the plan is unlikely to move anyone as it refuses to tackle the elephant in the room – the NDP alliance with Trudeau.

The idea that you can mobilise against Poilievre and ignore the failures and attacks by Trudeau on

and butter of the NDP and unions. Instead, the NDP pact with the hated Trudeau left them and their union leader backers in the position of propping up a hated government in exchange for piecemeal, if important reforms: means-tested dental care, a flawed daycare plan that enriches private corporations in many provinces, a small start to pharmacare for a few select drugs.

Amazon workers fight back

by: **Chantal Sundaram**

On June 28 the Immigrant Workers Centre, the Montreal Amazon Workers Committee, the Union of Injured or Ill Workers of Montreal, and academic experts held a press conference in front of the Quebec Commission responsible for compliance with workplace standards and health and safety. They called for a public inquiry into the working conditions at Amazon, denounced Amazon's productivity demands that create a climate of harassment and high injury rates, as well as Amazon's strategies to limit access to health and safety enforcement and to dismiss injured workers.

A year ago, the Montreal Amazon Workers Committee met with Quebec Labour Minister Jean Boulet, demanding better protections and a public inquiry into Amazon's conditions. A recent report revealed that 60% of workers suffer from musculoskeletal disorders due to repetitive tasks, and 55% have witnessed or experienced workplace injuries, exacerbated by

inadequate protective equipment and training.

In April, one of Quebec's main unions, the CSN, announced in front of the DXT4 Amazon warehouse in Laval, Quebec that it had filed an application to represent its 200 workers.



The union was certified on May 10, and if they succeed against Amazon's flimsy legal challenge it will be the first of its kind in Canada.

Then, the struggle to build a real union in the workplace will begin.

Even if the Laval warehouse ends up in first-contract arbitration (which either side can request in Quebec) with Amazon bosses sent in from the US, they will need an organized membership that can ensure that health and safety is not only in the contract but enforced.

The experience of Laval has inspired other Amazon worksites in Quebec - more than the example of union drives in the US or in other parts Canada, because it is close to home, and the employer can't spread lies about it. The anti-union « education » that Amazon can muster and force workers to participate in is fierce. But the ability of workers to counter it with courageous perseverance is equally

fierce.

As a worker at another Quebec worksite told Socialist Worker, « Amazon is the Ford of our times, » This is a story to follow for the future of the labour movement.

LCBO workers vote to strike

by: **Pam Johnson**

Workers at the LCBO, members of Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), voted overwhelmingly to strike on July 5 if no agreement is reached in bargaining. It was an historic turnout of 86 percent of members, and 97 percent voting yes to a strike.

One LCBO worker said, "We worked through the pandemic and only got a 1 percent wage increase for years. We have had enough".

Another worker said, "This used to be a good job, we have been pushed to this by years of cuts." 70 percent of LCBO workers are part-time casuals with no job security or benefits.

Along with better wages, the union is demanding more permanent full-time jobs and expanding

permanent part-time jobs to include minimum guaranteed hours, sick days, vacation and benefits.

Ford recently announced a plan to end the Beer Store monopoly and allow sales in grocery and convenience stores. But it won't be the mom and pop stores that benefit most, it will be the big grocery chains like Loblaws

and Metro. Yet another example of Ford starving public services to line the pockets of his corporate buddies.

The LCBO brings in 2.5 billion to Ontario's coffers, but Ford is ready to sell it down the river. Ford has started contracting out parts of the LCBO to the private sector. Instead of negotiating with the workers, Ford's government has vowed to shut down all LCBO stores for two weeks if a strike happens.

From the union bulletin: "When you buy a beer, that should help build a hospital – not pay for a billionaire's new yacht".



CUPE Ontario convention 2024 – continuing the struggle

by: Peter Votsch

Approximately 1200 delegates recently attended the CUPE Ontario Division convention that took place in Toronto from May 28 to June 1. Some of the issues were common to CUPE Ontario conventions, but there were a number of new, and hopeful wrinkles, and resulting challenges.

Labour for Palestine

Labour for Palestine (L4P)-CUPE was well organized and began meeting at least a month prior to the convention. We organized, along with activists from other unions, around the motions to hit the convention floor, staffing the information booth outside the conference room, and presenting delegates with relevant information. The booth itself was co-hosted by both L4P and Independent Jewish Voices (IJV).

CUPE Ontario has had a Boycott, Divest, Sanctions (BDS) position since 2006, the first major provincial union to do so. An emergency resolution that hit the floor called for renewing CUPE Ontario's commitment to BDS, to oppose the bombing of Rafah, and to demand an embargo on Canadian arms sales to Israel (these sales have to be okayed by the federal government). The motion was widely supported.

There was a small group of Zionist members who had launched a human rights complaint against CUPE Ontario, Fred Hahn, Local 3906 (McMaster U.) after October 7, and L4P/IJV members were prepared

for their opposition (which was weaker than in past conventions). Delegates lined up at the mike to support this resolution. In addition, CUPE Ontario, in its "Action Plan", reaffirmed its support for the student encampments that have sprung up all over Ontario and the rest of Canada.

In an interesting form of intersectionality, a motion hit the floor, spoken to by Retiree delegates, opposing pension monies being spent on the arms industry. It stipulated that workers' deferred wages (pensions, benefits) not be spent on war and genocide. The Retirees were joined by L4P/IJV delegates at the mikes. In opposition to the resolution (and in support of the arms industry), the same pro-Zionist delegates rose. Earlier they had called for Fred Hahn's resignation from the floor (he ran for CUPE-O President unopposed), but this was surely a low point for them as they were soundly defeated in the vote.

Building Power at the Base

After years of argument from activists, and the inspiring example of the "Front Commun"(Common Front) in Quebec, CUPE Ontario has begun to seriously embrace joint sectoral bargaining. This strategy will not just bring together in bargaining the largest number of locals in a sector, but also calls for a common front

with other unions. In healthcare, the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, OCHU-CUPE, allied with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU-Healthcare) and Unifor to bargain against hospital management and Ford government healthcare cuts. With support in the community by the Ontario Health Coalition, they were able to make important gains in staffing and pay



for frontline workers who deliver healthcare. In the next round, OPSEU will also be included, making our bargaining power as workers even stronger.

This was reflected in our Action Plan, which calls for sectoral bargaining plans to be made. This is particularly important in the educational field, where workers in the Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU-CUPE) won a huge victory over the Ford government in the Fall of 2022. Formal alliances

with OPSEU, and teachers' unions could only reinforce our power to stop the cuts in education, and restore staffing levels.

Anti-Hate

CUPE Ontario has long been a leading advocate for mobilization against the far-right and the Conservatives. Resolutions to defend CUPE Library workers against the attacks on Drag

Queen Story Time events were reaffirmed. Such motions can serve as a green light for activists on the ground in the anti-hate movement, to contact and involve CUPE locals throughout the province. This stance has been strengthened by CUPE Ontario's Anti-Racism Organizational Action Program (AROAP), in which the demands and representation of racialized members has been, and continues to be brought to the forefront of

the union. AROAP, our commitment to Indigenous Solidarity, and solidarity with the 2SLGBTQ+ community makes our strength in mobilization, and our fight against the far-right that much stronger.

How do we get action?

The question we on the left have to answer in CUPE, not unlike other unions, is how do we bring such positive motions into being. The "Action Plan" brings a lot of activists to the mike, in order to perfect it,

but we then leave it to our Ontario Executive Board to carry out. This top-down approach will not bring the fundamental mobilization that will be necessary to take on the employing class and its agenda. We need to think on the actual mechanisms at the Local level to involve members, such as our District Councils (many of which have ceased to operate), our participation in Labour Councils, and our ongoing participation in the groups like the Ontario Health Coalition, where union presence is important, but stands to get stronger.

This would allow us to organize seamlessly to support strikes, and to picket any employer that even dares to propose a cut to public services and staffing. As a comrade wore on his inspiring t-shirt: "Create Terrifying Union Power". We need to find a way to get there – and that can only happen when we build links between the Locals, and with other unions in each region of the province.

This quote should say a lot, from the Action Plan: "As part of the working class, we face similar challenges and threats from capitalism. The pursuit of profit in capitalism prioritizes individual gain over collective well-being, leading to exploitation, inequality, environmental degradation, fragmentation, and financial instability. These threats highlight the need for a more equitable, sustainable, and socially responsible system that prioritizes well-being and environmental protection". We need to find a way to make this a reality.

Strikes can win against cost of living crisis

Despite the claims of inflation being under control, workers across the country are still fighting to recoup losses over the past few years. Since the end of CoVID restrictions when given a chance workers have stood up and fought back. For years employers told workers that wage demands needed to be in line with inflation trying to keep wage demands low. Now that inflation has been steadily eroding wages, employers are fighting to stop wages from keeping up with inflation.

In Guelph, Ontario, nearly 1,000 workers at the largest beef processing plant in Ontario have been on strike for over a month. Their employer Cargill is one of the largest and wealthiest multinationals in the world. For decades the food processing giants have suppressed wages and reaped huge profits. In 2023 Cargill reported revenue of \$177 billion.

The members of UFCW 175 & 633 handily rejected by nearly 84 percent the tentative agreement reached by the Union. The previous agreement had limited wage increases to roughly \$.50/hr each year - meaning that the past 2 years of rampant inflation have seen these workers' wages fall well behind the cost of living.

The strike is causing panic amongst the beef barons that run the cattle industry in Ontario.

These are also workers who were pushed back to work early in the CoVID crisis despite CoVID related deaths at meat packing plants owned by Cargill elsewhere in Canada.

On June 2 nearly 200 members of United SteelWorkers Local 2918 at IMT Defence Industries in Ingersoll Ontario, went on strike over the employer's refusal to scrap an unfair two-tier wage grid. The employer attempted to portray the strikers as unreasonable by claiming they offered wage increases of 19.5% over 4 years. The union noted the employer didn't mention that was only for some and that many senior workers would face wage freezes under the employer's proposals.

On June 17th 130 members of Teamsters Local 106 went on strike at a Richelieu warehouse in Montreal. The employer offered wage increases that failed to make up for the past years' inflation and were likely to be lower than inflation over the next few years. Workers overwhelmingly voted to strike and to demand wages that made up for the past few years to ensure they wouldn't fall behind in the coming years.

In BC hundreds of food concessions workers at Vancouver Airport went out on a one day strike June 27th. The members of Unite HERE local 40 are in the midst of fighting for their

first collective agreement to show their opposition to the employers' proposals, which would leave workers earning well below the living wage for Vancouver.

The workers are fighting with multinational service provider SSP who runs food concessions at airports and other locations around the world and is known for its low wages and poor conditions.

Thousands of Teamster members at CN and CPKC are moving closer to a strike that could shut down major transportation corridors and test the Trudeau government and their NDP backers. Previous strikes have all been ended either by back to work legislation or the threat of it by Liberal and Tory governments.

Already Seamus O'Regan, the minister of Labour, has utilised federal labour laws to delay the strikes, using spurious grounds presented by the Propane industry about safety.

In Alberta 50,000 hospital workers from the United Nurses of Alberta and Alberta Union of Public Employees are in bargaining and moving towards possible strike action against UCP wage restraints. At the end of August collective agreements covering 51,000 education workers in that province also expire.

In Ontario thousands of LCBO employees, members of OPSEU,

are preparing for a strike on July 5th which could see picket lines go up in hundreds of neighbourhoods across the province.

The potential strike occurs as the Doug Ford government is handing hundreds of millions of dollars to the beer monopoly CEOs in exchange for pushing beer sales into corner stores. The move would take millions in revenue out of the LCBO and the public's pockets.

Mississauga Transit workers in ATU Local 1572 rejected the employers last offer and voted overwhelmingly to approve strike action if the employer wouldn't make a better offer.

Thousands of Canada Post workers have been in negotiations since

November last year with their employer. CUPW has yet to trigger the onerous and lengthy process to get to a strike under federal labour law.

This partial list doesn't include the dozens of workplaces that have seen strikes loom, only to be called off when the employer meets union demands, such as with Toronto Transit workers in early June of this year.

It shows that the mood to fight amongst workers remains strong. Despite it being over two years into a cost of living crisis that has wreaked havoc on workers the trade union leaders still haven't mounted a united fight back. Instead union leaders have promoted the tepid reforms under the Liberal/NDP government as signs of progress. This totally ignores the looming Tory threat and slowly gathering storm of an employers offensive to knock back the ongoing wage militancy at workplaces.

What is desperately needed is a push to unite the strikes, build broad and mass support inside workplaces for any strikes and to knit together the various fights. The potential of large strikes in Alberta, coupled with a rail and postal strike, could open up the terrain to get rid of Trudeau and expose Poilievre as no friend to workers.

That will take activists inside every union organising to demand action, not empty words, from union leaders.



On the picket line at Cargill

Can violence be moral?

Understanding Palestinians' use of violent resistance through Frantz Fanon's perspectives on de-colonization and national liberation.

by: **Umang Chokshi**

"In all armed struggles, there exists what we might call the point of no return. Almost always it is marked off by a huge and all-inclusive repression which engulfs all sectors of the colonial people."

These are the words of revolutionary anti-colonial writer Frantz Fanon writing in *The Wretched of the Earth* in 1961, but it could just as well be about Gaza in 2024.

As a psychiatrist, Fanon believed that the violent struggle of the colonized for liberation was a kind of shock treatment that would "restore confidence to the colonized mind" and "overcome the paralyzing sense of hopelessness induced by colonial subjugation," but "was only a first step toward the birth of a new humanity."

Fanon's treatise on violence has often been misconstrued, by supporters and detractors alike. Fanon does not valorize violence (as some contend), but rather acknowledges that colonialism is a project - which is in and of itself, violence manifested. This violence has shaped the social constitution of the colonial subject. The colonial subject's land, resources, and life have been seized by a state of violence, and within the framework laid before him, the only route out is violence.

"Colonialism is not a thinking machine," wrote Fanon. "It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence." The way out of colonial oppression and the colonized person's "inferiority complex and his despairing attitude," is through the "cleansing force" of violence. Fanon believed that violent resistance would restore the humanity of the colonized, elevate them psychologically to a position of equality, and deliver social justice: "The native discovers that his life, his breath, his beating heart are the same as those of the settler. He finds out that the a settler's skin is not of any more value than a native's skin."

"The colonized took up arms not only because they were dying of hunger and witnessing the disintegration of their society," wrote Frantz Fanon in his incendiary book *The Wretched of the Earth*, "But also because the colonists treated them like animals and considered them brutes. As soon as they are born, it is obvious to them that their cramped world can only be challenged by out and out violence."

What Fanon implored us to do was to view the struggle of the oppressed as a struggle to create a new mode of being, a new form of humanity. Within the revolutionary struggles of the masses, he insisted, lie the seeds of a new humanity. The ongoing resistance in Palestine today is not a new phenomenon, but is rather the latest episode in a decades' long struggle for freedom and recognition. This

recognition is not the recognition to live within shriveled little cantons and drip-fed subsistence, but recognition as a human being in the holistic sense of the term. The stone throwing, the stabbings, and the bombings, are a reaction to a colonial regime which denies this recognition.

Who was Fanon?

Frantz Fanon was a French physician, psychiatrist, philosopher, revolutionary, and author who supported the Algerian struggle for independence from France. Born in 1925 on the Caribbean island of Martinique (which was then a French colony), Fanon left the island at the age of 18 and traveled to British-controlled Dominica to join the Free French Forces fighting against Nazi Germany in World War II. After the war, Fanon

went to France and studied medicine and psychiatry in Lyon, and qualified as a psychiatrist in 1951.

Fanon became disenchanted with the racism he had encountered in his life and work, and moved to Algeria in 1953. There, he practiced in the native ward where he treated both French colonial officers and Algerian Arab patients. While in Algeria in 1956, Fanon joined the FLN (Front de Libération Nationale - the Algerian Liberation movement) which was actively engaged in an armed struggle against the French.

Algeria by then had been a French colony for almost 200 years, so Fanon's ideas stem from his knowledge of psychoanalysis and a study of literal colonialism in Algeria.

What makes Fanon's thoughts and ideas on colonialism and post-colonialism

unique and different from others in the field is that Fanon applies his psychoanalyst training at understanding the psychological impact of material causes of colonialism on both the colonizers and the colonized. His most famous works include *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), *A Dying Colonialism* (1959), and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). Frantz Fanon died of leukemia in 1961 at the age of 36, shortly after dictating *The Wretched of the Earth* (which was published posthumously) to his wife.

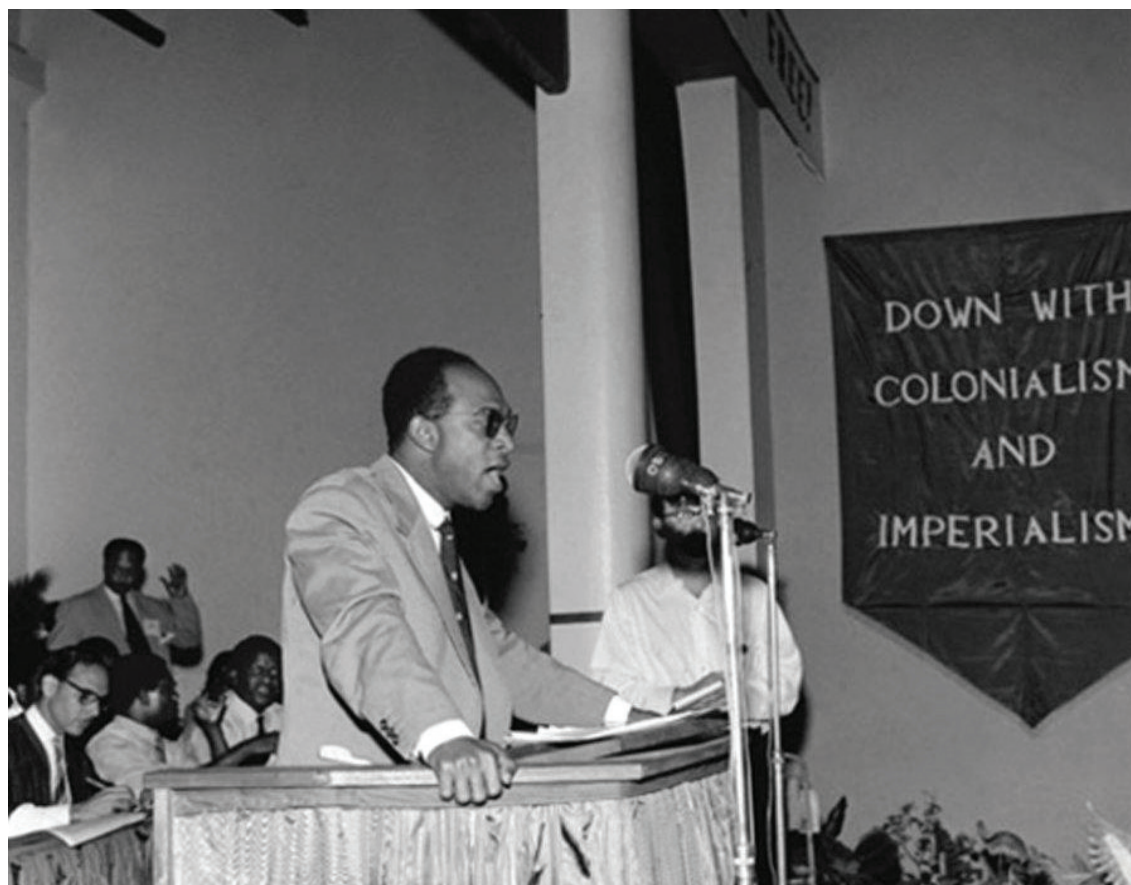
"The violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms, that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges forward into the forbidden quarters."

We must understand that Fanon was not writing for a white European audience, he was writing for people in the midst of an anti-colonial revolutionary struggle, and so he does not try to hide or dilute his meaning.

Jean-Paul Sartre, in his preface to Frantz Fanon's work, wrote: "Violence in the colonies does not only have for its aim the keeping of enslaved men at arms length, it seeks to dehumanize them."

Sartre wrote explicitly of the violence of revolt: "The rebel's weapon is the proof of his humanity." On the reaction of the colonial regime to armed resistance, he says: "The colonial army becomes ferocious, the country is marked out, there are mopping up operations, transfers of population, reprisal expeditions, and they massacre women and children. The new man knows this. He considers himself as a potential corpse, that he will be killed. And he accepts this risk, he's sure of it. Others, not he, will have the fruits of victory."

This could very well have been a description of Israel's genocidal actions in Gaza since October 2023, and it's very hard to read both Fanon and Sartre and not make this connection.



“Capitalist exploitation and cartels and monopolies are the enemies of underdeveloped countries. On the other hand the choice of socialism, which is completely orientated toward the people as a whole and based on the principle that man is the most precious of all possessions, will allow us to go forward more quickly and more harmoniously, and thus make impossible that caricature of society where all economic and political power is held in the hands of a few who regard the nation as a whole with scorn and contempt.”

- The Wretched of the Earth

Fanon perceptively diagnosed the disease of colonialism that Israel continues to propagate as it replicates its primary pathology: the obliteration of Palestinians. As a recent UN report states: “Israel’s genocide on the Palestinians in Gaza is an escalatory stage of a long-standing settler colonial process of erasure. For over seven decades this process has suffocated the Palestinian people as a group - demographically, culturally, economically and politically - seeking to displace it and expropriate and control its land and resources.”

Settler-colonialism operates through the elimination of Indigenous people’s existence on the land. Without this reducible element, settler colonialism cannot operate. Settler colonialism is not interested in simply exploiting the “natives”. Rather, it attempts a totality through eradicating its negation, the existence of Indigenous people, and reducing them to an invisible, a persona non grata. This is why the Palestinian-Israeli impasse should not be seen from the angle of a particular event, but rather as a structure that operates on the elimination of Indigenous Palestinians as an entity.

If one examines the history of colonialism (and settler colonialism), there appears to be a consistent pattern: the moral dismissal of non-state perpetrators of violence - via the label “terrorist” (for example: with the Houthis in Yemen, Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and many others throughout history). Perpetrators of violence are always portrayed as acting outside the boundaries of morality, and violence itself is regularly dismissed as irrational or subject to reductive explanations: the assertion of the perpetrators lack of self-control, their dehumanization (as they are usually an or ascribing to them sadistic and psychological tendencies. But is it justified to lump all acts of violence in the same category with resis-

tance movements such as those in Palestine, fighting against foreign occupations that they consider illegitimate? Why are those that are engaged in acts of physical violence deemed “extremists” while those who accept or work with

inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect”

According to Fanon, colonial rule is sustained by violence and repression. With violence as the “natural state” of colonial rule, it follows that in fact it is the

colonialism. Thus, Fanon theorizes that violence enables the colonized to restructure their country politically, and also recreate themselves and resume a self-determining existence.

Fanon understood the deep paradox of the violence of resistance, which is that it is both necessary and, at the very same time, a curse. Suffering from extreme violence and inflicting that violence left both parties, though not moral equivalents, permanently marked. To use Fanon’s language, both were “mutated”. No emancipation - partial, flawed, and uneven as it was after national liberation - could be achieved without the “equalizing” violence of the oppressed. This violence punctured the settlers’ self-image as superior; it asserts, and to some extent reverses, the profound sense of inferiority in the colonial subject. Interestingly, Fanon was clear that after independence, those colonizing “jackals” who had inflicted the worst violence of the colonial state, and those who had suffered this violence would only be redeemed by psychiatry.

Without denying the potential of violence to be moral or immoral, understanding Fanon’s thoughts on violence as both a creative and cathartic, yet limiting, power for the colonized, allows us to look at other revolutionary movements, whether anti-colonial or anti-establishment, as surges or collective movements acting against perceived aggressors, rather than in conformity with universal moral norms.

The struggle in Algeria ended with the defeat of France and the independence of Algeria. We are at a point of no return for Israel and its Western backers. Palestinians are at the mercy of the world’s most powerful military machine armed by the United States, with only Hezbollah in Lebanon, Iraqi militias and the Yemeni Houthis backing them with a blockade of the Red Sea and strikes on US and Israeli forces. But politically, in the global South and among the public in the West, the cause of Palestine has never been stronger, and the West’s position never so unpopular.



Algerians take to the streets to kick out French Imperialists

foreign occupying forces deemed “moderates” Who decides, and what is the criteria?

The excerpts below (from *The Wretched of the Earth*) highlight both the practical and psychological reasons for violence against the colonizer:

“He [the native] (Palestinians in our context) of whom they have never stopped saying that the only language he understands is that of force, decides to give utterance by force. In fact, as always, the settler (Israeli Zionists in our context) has shown him the path he should take if he is to become free.”

At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and

colonizers [Israeli Zionists] who only speak and understand the language of violence. As such, only the use of violence by the colonized [Palestinians] can physically restructure society.

Furthermore, Fanon argues that psychologically, violence returns agency to the colonized [Palestinians] who were hitherto dehumanized, and allows them to recreate themselves in a light that is not tainted by the colonizers. In *Black Skin, White. Masks*, Fanon states that freeing oneself of colonialism through violence can be “cathartic”.

In the context of the Algerians, violence was cathartic as it allowed them to restore the “self” which was systematically destroyed by

Their violence and ours

Fanon emphasized the distinction between the violence of the oppressor and the violence of the oppressed. Moreover, he deepened our understanding of the undeniably emphasized, or “re-cerebrating”, effect of revolutionary violence. Occasionally, in his political practice, Fanon did elevate armed resistance to the status of the sole “real struggle” that would “radically mutate” the oppressed. Nonetheless, in his last book *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon demonstrates that he was a subtle and complex thinker on how violence could reverse a profound sense of inferiority among the poor and oppressed. He never advocated violence as the prime political instrument.

Capitalism brings avian flu pandemic closer

by: **Bradley Hughes**

Protection measures implemented by the US department of Agriculture and the US Centre for Disease Control have failed to halt the spread of avian flu in US dairy herds. A month ago when *Socialist.ca* last covered the avian flu panzootic in May it had been detected in 63 dairy herds in nine states. One month later the number of herds has more than doubled to 133 herds spread across 12 states. This is due to the lack of mandatory testing. Outside of cattle traveling across state lines, all testing is voluntary.

Several studies suggest that the flu is being spread by milking machines not through the air. Infected cows produce milk with a large amount of active viruses and the virus can stay viable for over an hour on the metal and rubber components of the milking machines.

Avian flu also been found in house mice in New Mexico adding one more species to the list of 21 species of wild mammals in the US with this flu.

The US Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports that, “Millions of people in the United States attend agricultural fairs each year, usually in the summer season.” At these fairs many species of farm animals will be housed and displayed in close proximity to each other and to the human visitors. Despite the danger this poses to spread avian flu to more poultry and cattle farms as well as to other species, including humans, the CDC has no requirements of exhibitors or fair organizers. They do have plenty of useful recommendations, but none are mandatory. When avian flu has spread to people it has killed half of them. In the face of this grave danger animal exhibitions should be canceled.



The CDC does have some good news. They studied how the bird flu virus attacks bird and human cells. Flu viruses are able to enter cells by binding to receptors. In a 2018 paper Melissa Maginnis explains, “The viral attachment protein can be viewed as the “key” that unlocks host cells by interacting with the “lock”—the receptor—on the cell surface, and these lock-and-key interactions are critical for viruses to successfully invade host cells.” In the CDC study, they isolated the protein that enables the H5N1 virus to invade cells from the bird flu virus that infected a Texas farm worker’s eyes. When bird and human cells were exposed to this protein, it was able to bind to several receptors on the bird cells but on none of the

receptors on the human cells. This shows that right now, the bird flu circulating in cattle is still well adapted to infect birds, but has not mutated to easily infect people.

The CDC also has bad news. In another study they used blood from blood samples collected across the US in the 2022 – 2023 and 2021 – 2022 flu seasons. By exposing the blood to the virus they were able to determine that there is “extremely low to no population immunity” to bird flu. They also showed that this lack of immunity was unchanged for people who had had the seasonal flu vaccine. However there are other vaccines that have been developed that can protect against bird flu.

To contain the threat of avian flu spread-

ing to other species, including us, mandatory testing of cattle and workers should be put in place. Paid sick leave for farm workers should be put in place, so workers are not penalized for participating in screening programs. Bird flu vaccines should be produced and distributed to farm workers immediately and included in the seasonal flu vaccine for the rest of us this fall.

All of those things will cost money and increase costs for farming businesses. It would also run up against the anti-vaccine politics of right wing politicians. Instead of taking action our ruling class is content to ignore the problem knowing that the bulk of disease and death will be among workers. Once again profit is more important than health.

Amazon’s automation push increases worker injuries and boosts profits

Amazon’s aggressive push towards automation has led to a significant rise in worker injuries. As robots increasingly take over tasks in warehouses, workers struggle to keep up with the intensified pace. From 2021 to 2023, Amazon’s global workforce shrank by 5.2%, from 1.6 million to 1.5 million, while the number of robots surged by 50%, from 500,000 to 750,000. Consequently, the production load on the remaining workers has increased dramatically.



In order to imagine the brutality of the situation, in 2014, the company had 10 workers for every robot. Today, it has 2 workers for every robot. The company seeks to make this equation one worker for every robot before the year 2030, according to the company’s data.

In 2023, Amazon’s injury rate was 71% higher than the industry average, with a shocking 41% of workers reporting job-related injuries. This alarming statistic highlights the severe risks to worker health and safety in the

company’s operations. The use of robots has also reduced delivery times by about 25%, leading to a notable increase in Amazon’s profits.

Despite the heightened work intensity and exploitation, Amazon achieved approximately \$30 billion in profits in 2023, a stark contrast to the \$3 billion loss reported in 2022. This profit surge underscores the company’s prioritization of revenue over worker health and safety.

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Modi loses majority

by: Rohit Revi

On June 4th, people in India were glued to their seats as election results were being announced for the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections. The winning party or coalition in the Lok Sabha elections would decide who holds political power in the central government for the coming 5 years, until 2029. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his right-wing Bhartiya Janata Party, has been in power for the last 10 years, winning two consecutive elections and are now positioned for a third term.

Lok Sabha elections in India are conducted for 543 constituencies across the country, over five phases and across six weeks. A party or coalition that wins in at least 272 constituencies would receive the majority seats that are required to be able to form a government. In the previous elections held in 2019, Modi's BJP alone secured a historic number of 303 seats and was able to form its government comfortably, with or without allies. Modi's campaign slogan this year was "Abki Baar, 400 paar", or "this time, we cross 400 seats".

As the vote-counting was completed, the election results revealed to be a huge setback for the BJP. It was able to secure only 240 seats, losing its single majority status in parliament. As a result, they were now completely dependent on allied parties in the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) to build a coalition government. The NDA was successful in negotiating amongst each other and securing power through a coalition in which the major players, alongside the BJP, are Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party and Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United), who now find themselves with significant bargaining power.

Finally, the BJP still leads a coalition government and Modi has received a third term in office, but the election results have made the process humbling for the BJP. It is also an equally stinging and sobering reminder to the other stakeholders, from political institutions to the corporate media, who have all been servile to the Modi administration in the last 10 years, that democratic power in India is not permanently bequeathed to the BJP. There is change in the air.

"There is change in the air."

'Ram Temple' doesn't yield electoral gains

In the lead up to the elections, on January 22nd, the Prime Minister had publicly inaugurated the controversial Ram Temple, constructed recently upon grounds razed during the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992. The demolition of the mosque was a watershed moment in rise of BJP in modern India, where the party succeeded in building a mass movement based upon an Islamophobic conspiracy theory that the mosque had been constructed upon the birth site of Hindu God Ram. It was this Hindu nationalist movement that eventually secured political power in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The timing of the inauguration of the temple was widely understood to be an electoral move with Modi's figure taking center stage in the ceremony.

Much of BJP's electoral discourse has been unsurprisingly communal and Islamophobic. For example, in a mass rally, Modi mischaracterized the opposition party's wealth redistribution promise as an attack on Hindus, claiming that the opposition seeks to "forcibly snatch the golden wedding ornaments" of Hindu women and gift it to Muslim "infiltrators". These public statements, alongside Modi's implementation of the CAA legislation in the

lead up to the elections, created an atmosphere of religious hatred. In a moment that showed classic authoritarian delusion, Modi also declared that he believes his birth to not be biological but a divine gift from the Gods to help the people. After this declaration, Modi confidently proceeded to go on a prolonged spiritual meditation even before the elections were completed, obviously with his personal camera crew invited to capture his posterity in high definition for the social media.

Throughout the electoral campaign, the corporate media such as Republic TV, completely

to a hundred and fifty thousand votes. Modi's counterpart in the opposition camp, Rahul Gandhi, who contested from two constituencies increased his margin of victory to around three and a half hundred thousand votes in both constituencies respectively, indicating an increase in public acceptance and legitimacy of his opposition to Modi. Similarly, Smriti Irani, a sitting minister in Modi's government, who had previously unseated Gandhi in 2019, lost her sitting seat to her opposition candidate.

The Indian National Congress, whose election manifesto this time around was the

class, caste, and colonialist oppression that founded the country.

The BJP-RSS agenda of establishing a Hindu Rashtra – a religious ethnostate – is contrary to the ethos of the constitution and would require them to have a massive majority in the houses of power to make those fundamental changes. With this election, the people of India have shown the Modi administration that is neither impervious nor infallible, and the future of the country will be decided by its people. The people do not want a Hindu Rashtra.



married to Modi, sang praises, and ran scripted interviews to promote the BJP. Exit polls run by pro-Modi corporations and thinktanks had also predicted a massive sweep in favor of the BJP.

But finally, when the ballot spoke, the results were sobering for Modi and the BJP, bringing them down from the divine clouds back onto the real world, inaugurating a potentially hopeful era for the working class. The shifting tide comes directly from BJP's traditional strongholds, including the largest state of Uttar Pradesh, where the workers and the rural poor appear to be seeing through the false promises and communal propagandas of the BJP.

Some results of note

Among the results, there are some upsets that are of note. Primarily, it is a matter of importance that the constituency that includes the city of Ayodhya, where the Ram Temple was constructed, rejected the BJP electoral candidate who contested from there.

Signs of a changing tide can also be seen within the margins of victory of major candidates.

For example, in 2019, Modi won his seat by a margin of more than four hundred thousand votes, but in 2024 that margin has been reduced

most worker-friendly it has been in years, was able to double its seats in parliament, securing at the minimum a strong oppositional voice in the house. This is also a clear indication that substantive politics that focuses on the failures of crony capitalism is what the people demand, not communalism or politics of hate.

Another victory of note was Chandrasekhar Azad Ravan, a grass-roots leader for oppressed caste liberation, who was arrested, detained and slandered multiple times in the last many years by the BJP forces. Carried upon the shoulders of people, Azad will now be a member of parliament, an equal among equals in the corridors of power.

"Voters saved the Constitution"

In the immediate response to election results, opposition leader Rahul Gandhi held a press conference holding up a copy of the Indian Constitution. He declared the election results to be a victory of the Constitution of India, and a setback to the forces that are trying to alter the founding document forged during the

anti-colonial era. The constitution, drafted by Dr BR Ambedkar and the Constituent Assembly, enshrines India as a socialist and secular union of states, and is a valuable reminder of legacies of struggles against



What does the third term of Modi look like?

The third term of the Modi government, currently, appears to be much less confident than the previous two terms. With the emergence of an opposition block in the house, and the formal appointment of a Leader of Opposition, debates and discussions in the parliament are no longer unilateral sycophancies of the Modi government. At the same time, contradictions within the BJP are also like to emerge between the fascistic RSS faction led by Nitin Gadkari, and the crony capitalist faction that serves the multi-billionaires Gautam Adani and Mukesh Ambani. Signs of these contradictions are becoming visible now. For example, shortly after the election results, the RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat had publicly called out "arrogance" of the BJP leadership, without explicitly naming Modi but making it very clear who he was referring to. Caught between the business interests of the big bourgeoisie and the cultural-political interests of the Hindutva forces, which are very often aligned but not always, these tensions are likely to pull BJP towards further extremities, of which we are seeing signs. For example, noted author and political thinker Arundhati Roy was recently charged on UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act) charges, which are draconian and non-bailable charges that can hold someone incarcerated for decades while waiting for a fair trial.

As the country slips into the throes of unemployment and inflation, the election results – which refused a full mandate to Modi – have broken open the world of possibilities that exist latent within Indian politics. It remains to be seen how those possibilities are realized.

Warning from Europe

Organize to stop the fascists

by: **Faline Bobier**

The snap general election results from France June 30 demand a massive anti-racist response. And they are a terrible warning to the whole world of how the fascists can prosper at a time of crisis.

The fascist Rassemblement National (National Rally, RN) grabbed 33 percent of the vote, the left wing New Popular Front alliance (NPF) won 28 percent while neoliberal president Emmanuel Macron's coalition was humbled with just 22 percent.

As we go to press, we don't yet know what the outcome will be but the rise of the far-right should be a warning to all.

French president Emmanuel Macron called a snap election for June 30 following the surge in support for the fascist RN winning nearly 10 million votes in the European parliamentary elections earlier.

Macron's neoliberals, who have been in office for seven years, in a cynical attempt to hang on to power, presented themselves as the only barrier to fascism.

But it's the racist and nationalist politicians like Macron, the border closure policies, the anti-immigrant policies that legitimise the ideas of the fascists. Emmanuel Macron has done this.

In the past, Macron presented himself as "neither Left nor Right" and chose some of his ministers among ex-Socialist Party members. Next, he claimed to be the only obstacle to fascism. But this time round, he is claiming he wants to save France from the twin evils of left and right extremism. In reality, he steals policies from the far right, and attacks the Left whenever he can.

In fact, in the two weeks leading up to the June 30th election Macron spent most of his time, not attacking the fascist RN, but denouncing the Left alliance New Popular Front's programme as "totally immigrationist". The same day he tried to attract transphobes by commenting that some NPF policies were "grotesque, like the fact that you'll be able to just go down to the town hall and change your sex".

Blocking the fascist route does not pass through various kinds of electoral manoeuvres and compromises with racism.

There are millions who have mobilised in recent years in France over pensions, the climate, for Palestine, against racist laws, against police killings and to oppose assaults on education.

It is only possible to block the route to fascism through the fight against racism in unity and in solidarity with immigrants. Anti-fascists need to be rooted in the neighbourhoods and workplaces.

The fascist threat is real. Potential president, Bardella has vowed to push through an immigration law enabling the expulsion of "delinquents and Islamists", if he becomes prime minister.

Popular front

On the left a New Popular Front alliance has brought together the Labour or NDP-type Socialists, Greens, Communists and France Insoumise (France Unbowed), the party of



French anti-fascists take to the streets against the RN

Jean-Luc Mélenchon. Mélenchon is a French politician who was a member of the National Assembly from 2017 to 2022. He led La France Insoumise group in the National Assembly from 2017 to 2021. Mélenchon has run for president of France three times; in 2012, 2017, and 2022. In 2022, he came within 400,000 votes of reaching the second round in France's two-round voting system.

The pressure for the deal came mainly from below. Young people, immigrants and workers demanded their leaders come together to fight the RN.

The NPF agreement calls for opposition to racism and the RN. It also says it will repeal brutal attacks on unemployment benefit and reverse the increase in the pension age that saw mass strikes last year.

In the week leading up to the 2nd round of voting in France many activists will be campaigning for a vote for the New Popular Front against the fascists. This is completely understandable.

But it must be accompanied by an understanding that a purely electoral strategy cannot stop the fascists. For many years the left in France ignored the attacks on Muslims, on the wearing of the hijab and so allowed the fascists to make inroads into the working class, in an attempt to divide and conquer.

Of course, they were aided and abetted by politicians like Macron and the leader of the Socialist Party, François Hollande, who preceded Macron and paved the way for him (and the RN) with his vicious attacks on workers and repressive laws.

There are good things in the programme of the New Popular Front alliance but there are also problems since the Socialist Party politics dominate, against the more radical positions of someone like Mélenchon, who supports the Palestinian resistance.

Millions of people will feel it's right to vote enthusiastically for the Popular Front. But the

key mobilisation is not in the elections but at the base, to fight fascism whoever wins at the polls.

The compromises socialists have made with the right helped Marine Le Pen and the RN. For example, calling for a vote for Macron at the presidential elections in the past has tainted the left with his assaults.

He promised to be a wall against fascism. He has proved to be a pathway towards its rise.

The hardship and desperation caused by Macron's policies accelerate the fascist growth. His Islamophobia and repeated hardening of the state repressive apparatus give credence to the fascists' policies.

Workers need a broad united front in action against fascism. But there also has to be a wider movement.

It's good to see the unions in France calling for and participating in protests but they also need to openly confront the RN's racism. At present almost all their propaganda is about the RN's pro-boss policies.

The Marche des Solidarités anti-racist group has said, "We need a response that goes beyond petitions and calls for votes.

The fascists do not just threaten to dominate parliament. The increased confidence for the RN feeds through to the street thugs that seek to attack immigrants, Muslims, LGBTQ people and the left.

These groups are still limited. But Bardella and Le Pen, even though they won't do so openly, give them a massive boost.

In the city of Nancy in northern France, a violent fascist mob attacked an anti-racist march. Anti-fascists beat them back, and the cops then defended the Nazis.

In the city of Lyon recently fascists roved through the streets shouting, "We're fucking Nazis," and, "Islam out of Europe."

It's possible to organise to stop the mobs. That means confrontation on the streets but also more long-term work.

Everywhere we look today the threat of

fascism is real – in France, in Italy (where the fascist Giorgia Meloni was elected Prime Minister), in the US where a possible 2nd term for Donald Trump looms ever larger. Although Trump is not himself a fascist, he gives confidence to the racism and anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, anti-trans sentiments that have seen a rise in the far right in recent years.

Leon Trotsky argued that fascism was a form capitalism could take in extreme crisis. When push came to shove, he argued, big capital will choose fascism over democracy, if it means safeguarding their system and their profits.

As he wrote, "Throughout the entire world, the iron heel of fascism is becoming the last resort of desperate capitalism."

We have seen glimpses of this in France recently where business has said they would prefer the RN to the New Popular Front, since the policies of the NPF, although they are by no means revolutionary, would threaten the profits of big capital.

This is a lesson we must re-learn in the current context. The vote for the RN in France is alarming, particularly in terms of what it could mean for Muslims, immigrants and others, if it gives confidence to the fascist street thugs who have mounted recent attacks in Montpellier, Lyon and Paris.

But even with the increased votes for the RN they do not yet have the power to bring hundreds of thousands out onto the streets, as the movements and the unions have done in France. If the power of workers and the movements can be united to challenge the fascists whenever they raise their ugly heads, every time they attempt to hold meetings or to leaflet in the streets, the fascists can be pushed back.

Canadian far-right

We also have similar forces here in Canada. And the openings for fascism to grow, just as they have in France, are provided by mainstream bourgeois politicians (like Trudeau, Doug Ford, etc.) who have presided over the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, the environmental crisis and done nothing to create or defend affordable housing, to defend public healthcare, education and all the other services ordinary people depend on.

During the pandemic we've seen the rise of the forces of the far right and a hardening and shift to the right on the part of Poilievre's Conservative Party.

This needs to be a cautionary tale for the left in Canada and for all who are opposed to fascism. To oppose fascism, you must oppose the anti-immigrant racism of the fascists – it is the bedrock of their politics and the way they hope to recruit and grow.

If Trotsky was correct when he argued in the 1930s that fascism is a form capitalism can take in extreme crisis then we have to take the outcome of the French elections very seriously, but even more seriously the lesson that we can't count on the very governments that have opened the door to reaction and racism to solve this problem.