

May 1, 2023 - No. 24

May Day 2023

Workers and Oppressed Peoples of All Countries Unite!

Video

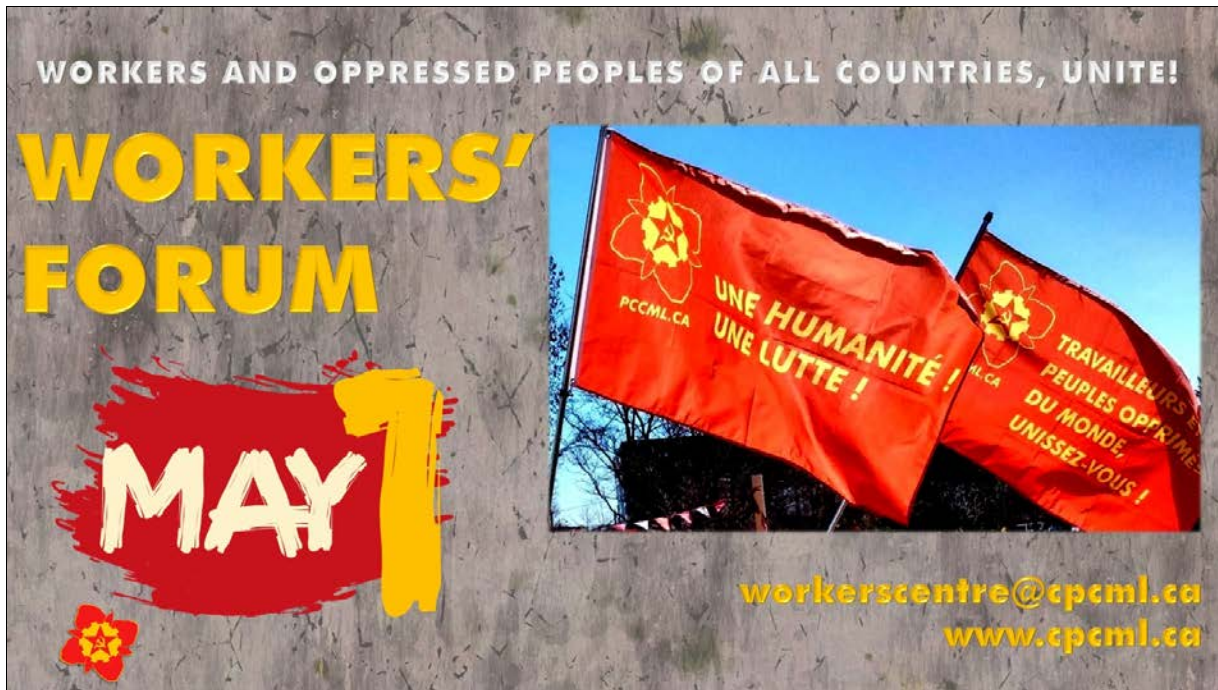


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Challenges Facing the Workers' Movement in 2023

– Workers' Centre of CPC(M-L) –



On the occasion of May Day 2023, the Day of International Working Class Solidarity and Struggle, the Workers' Centre of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) sends its warmest greetings to the Canadian, Quebec and international working class and wishes all contingents and individuals well in defending their rights and moving society forward to the New.

How to become an effective organized force is the overall challenge facing the workers' movement in 2023: effective in defending workers' claims on the value they produce, effective in defending the rights of all, and effective in providing solutions that favour them to the problems facing society and the people. The people must empower themselves to make decisions on all issues that affect them and for the right to put those decisions into practice. To become an effective force, workers must continue to speak out and act in their own name on the issues, conditions and problems. This will open a path which reveals the measures which are necessary to take next.

Workers are fighting from coast to coast to coast and have multiple concerns as they address the actual conditions. Their concerns centre on the restructuring of the state being implemented by those in control whereby narrow private interests, through oligopolies which act as cartels and coalitions, take over the decision-making power. The legislative assemblies have become dysfunctional while the prerogative powers of ministers are given a legal green light to rule by decree. The integration of the Canadian economy into the U.S. war economy leads to more



handouts to pay the rich and the refusal to negotiate collective agreements, with the dictate instead of concessions, wages and working conditions. Permanent emergency measures are now in place to suppress dissent. In the name of stability, constitutional order and national security the direction of the economy is set through ministerial prerogative and decrees without the say and consent of the people.

Workers are not enemies of stability, order, national security, peace or a healthy economy and environment. On the contrary, their lives are devoted to having a healthy social and natural environment. But to suggest that these things can be achieved by paying the rich, restructuring the state to make it even more hierarchical, unequal and an instrument of discrimination is disinformation meant to disorganize the working class and prevent it from transcending the limits of what the rulers and their constitution and laws say can and cannot be done. The measures being taken through ministerial prerogative are causing serious problems on every front.

In opposition and to open a way forward for society is the refusal of workers in all sectors of the economy to be made disposable, to be eliminated as an organized force, and to be silenced and criminalized for laying claims on what belongs to them by right and what is just in a modern society.

Speaking in one's own name, representing oneself and fighting for one's own rights within the context of the fight for a society that upholds the rights of all, is the greatest challenge facing the workers' movement today. This is empowering. It breaks the reliance on some so-called higher power to decide for the working people what to think and what they can or cannot do even if the measures decided do not favour the working class and people. Acting in a manner which empowers oneself opens the path for progress and is literally history-making. Since May Day 2022 the workers' movement has made headway in this respect. It provides the workers with confidence and smashes the humiliation of being passive in the face of the dangers inherent in the present and which lie ahead. The Workers' Centre of CPC(M-L) dedicates all its efforts in the coming year to cultivating this perspective and practice.

*Long Live the Spirit and Fighting Unity of May First!
Workers and Oppressed Peoples of All Countries, Unite!*



The Challenge to Make the Working Class Movement Effective

– Pierre Chénier, Secretary, Workers' Centre of CPC(M-L) –

Since May Day 2022 the workers' movement has made definite headway in breaking the limitations imposed on it, whether by governments, the courts or the rich and their media. A challenge facing the workers' movement is how to organize itself further so that it can put the justice of its cause into play to favour its own interests. The movement faces stepped-up attempts from governments to eliminate any say for the workers and divide their ranks on every basis possible.

The defiance of education workers of CUPE's Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU) to the government's Bill 28 and its use of the notwithstanding clause in November forced the government to repeal the legislation. This victory opened a path for the workers' movement to unite in self defence and assert its *No!* to government dictate. Teachers and education workers across the country are following this lead by speaking out about their conditions and refusing to be silenced. It also made the workers aware of the limitations imposed on them by labour law itself and that they

have to transcend the limitations of the arrangements which favour private interests to the detriment of the working people and society itself, as well as the natural environment.



Across North America health care workers are refusing to be limited in their actions to what governments deem acceptable. Nurses in Quebec and New York recently went on strike in defiance of laws denying them that right.

In addition, the decision by the Quebec Federation of Labour (FTQ) to discuss openly how to renew the trade union movement and discuss the challenges of today shows that working people are conscious that conditions have changed. A realization has emerged that workers must act in new ways according to what the conditions demand, rather than what they are told they are permitted to do by the rich and the governments and courts in their service.

Many other examples are emerging whereby the workers' movement is expressing itself with its own thinking and consciousness and defying the limitations imposed on it by those in control with their power and privileges. The strength of the movement depends on the mobilization of its numbers and organization, not only in one place of work but on a mass basis. This is a step forward which empowers the workers and strengthens the workers' movement.



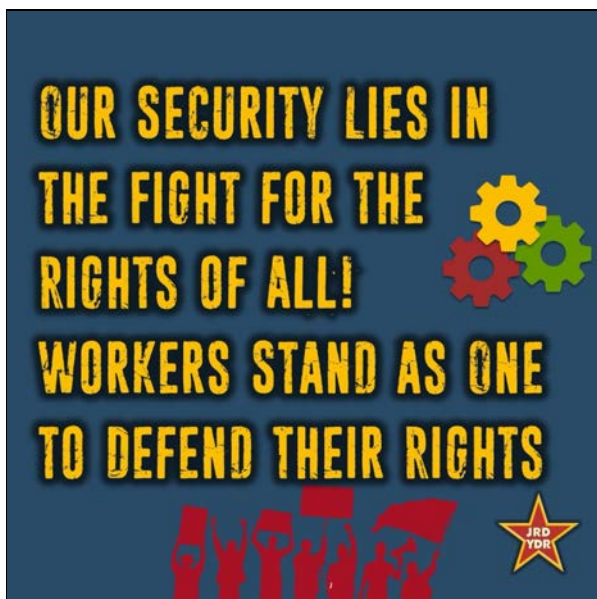
Opposition to Stepped Up Attacks on Workers' Rights and Social Programs



Ontario health care workers participate in May Day 2022 march in Toronto

Looking at the experience of the workers' movement since last May Day, it is clear that attacks on the right to health care, education and social programs are being stepped up across the country. In the wake of anti-social legislation passed in Ontario to impose limitations on education workers, the government in Quebec has tabled a health care bill containing more than 1,000 articles which seriously restructure the health care system. It says this bill is aimed at putting the "top guns" of the

private sector in charge of the management of the health care system and it reduces 130 bargaining units of health care unions to four through amalgamation.



Every effort of governments is directed at eliminating the voice and demands of the workers who actually know what is required to solve the health care crisis. Meanwhile, the changes which put management into private hands do nothing to create a modern system based on the highest achievements of science and technology which are considerable. Doing so would greatly favour the diagnosis and treatment of people's conditions by helping doctors, nurses and health care workers carry out their duties in a socially conscious way. Instead, by putting the private health care monopolies and their narrow interests in a position to decide directly what happens on a day to day basis, governments are forcing doctors and nurses and health care workers to constantly pinch-hits in not just

emergency situations but on a day-to-day basis to give care to patients who are suffering. The aim of the restructuring is highly suspect and this is the heart of the matter.

The serious problems of the health care system coming out of the pandemic, such as the staffing crisis, arise from years of the anti-social offensive, underfunding and restructuring of the state in the name of flexibility, efficiency and accountability. Governments are in the hands of consulting firms which advise and supervise, and even manage how the private monopolies can profit from all aspects of the health care system. They are not addressing the broad problems that the people and especially health care workers and their organizations have identified and this is not their intention.

Across the country, in the midst of negotiations following the pandemic, governments are putting in place laws that deem public sector and public service workers essential so as to eliminate their right to strike. The New Brunswick government passed legislation in December 2022 to permit the deployment of replacement workers (scabs) from outside workers' bargaining units whenever the government decides, such as in the event of a strike.

Governments have reverted to operating with impunity by removing limitations on their power which have thus far been part of the rule of law established over time. They are permitting ministers to act on the basis of prerogative powers commanded by narrow private interests. The Ontario Ford government's use of the constitution's notwithstanding clause to eliminate limitations on its actions is but one example of many across the country. Restructuring of the state aims to eliminate any limits on what narrow private interests represented by governments can do in their drive for maximum profit at the expense of the people, society and Mother Earth.

An example of removing the limits is that companies are permitted to self-regulate, as in the case of the railways, agribusiness, construction, outsourcing of mining and industrial jobs and every other sector of the economy, including health care, education, the public service and even military operations. There is no concern about the consequences for workers' health and safety or accidents which are bound to occur, let alone the destruction of the social fabric.

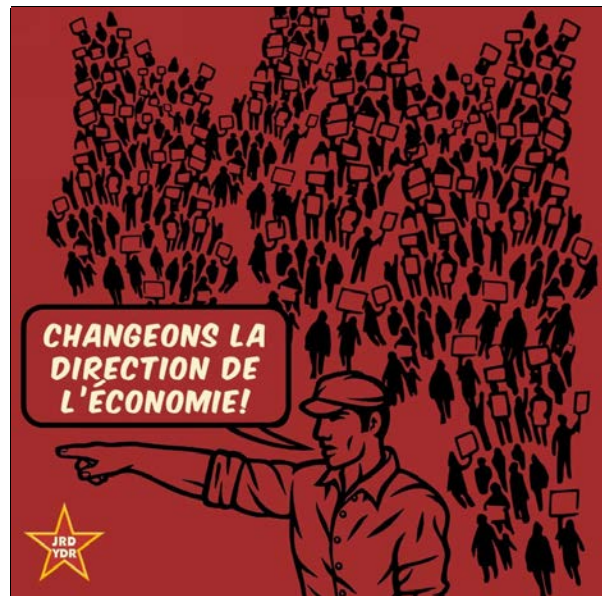


Mass picket of striking federal public service workers in the National Capital Region, April 19, 2023.

In transportation, rail tragedies have become a common occurrence throughout North America as governments act in the name of the rail monopolies. In Canada, the government permits CN, CP and other private railways to self-regulate causing tragedies such as at Lac Mégantic, in Quebec and Field, BC, as well as in the Prairies and industrial heartlands. In the U.S., in the midst of negotiations, the Biden administration imposed a contract on the unions which rejected the demands of rail workers by decree. This was done despite the tragedies taking place that the whole world can see due to the self-regulation and dictate of the private railways and transport companies.

In education, the emergency funding put in place in a number of provinces during the pandemic is now being cut back in the midst of negotiations with education workers for new contracts. The cutbacks in funding are occurring even though conditions are deteriorating and a serious staffing crisis plagues the education system nationwide, made worse by years without proper investments. This is also the case in the health care sector.

Companies are following suit by refusing to negotiate with their workers and using labour law to break unions that refuse to submit to their dictate. Instead of recognizing what the pandemic showed -- that workers are the producers of all wealth and must be respected -- companies are declaring that no discussion or negotiations of wages, working conditions, and health and safety will be tolerated. There will be only company and government dictate and rule by decree. Companies make these declarations in the name of flexibility and to gain investment and public handouts for a "green economy." Government and company flexibility for those in control means contracting out at will, and no security, say or affirmation of rights for the working class -- the very ones who produce what the people and society need for their existence.



Gig and temporary workers are abused mercilessly. More and more, new immigrants and international students are being used by companies as a source of cheap labour along with migrant labour. In some cases, they are used to replace workers on strike. Many answer job placement ads not knowing they are being recruited as scabs. These unsuspecting workers become a focus of

abuse, often accused of being scabs when they themselves do not know what is going on. In fact, the companies and governments organize a system of human trafficking and should be held to account for profiteering while undermining the unity and cohesion of the working class.

This too is a new reality. It must be taken into account by the workers' movement which takes responsibility for the conditions that exist and how to bring them under control by activating the human factor/social consciousness. All is being done by those who own the means of production and distribution to disorient workers and prevent them from finding their bearings and uniting in action to be effective and achieve their demands.



Across the country, forces fighting for social justice are also opposing governments that super exploit workers from other countries as a source of cheap labour to serve the monopolies. Those new workers are denied the rights which belong to them not by virtue of a law which might or might not list them but by virtue of being human. Other newcomers are refugees fleeing the destruction of their homelands by U.S. imperialist wars of aggression and economic warfare of various kinds, which Canada supports. They likewise are denied their rights and humanity.

Governments talk about having an orderly system of migrant workers applying for permanent status to cover up the corruption inherent in the system. Recruiters of migrants and governments are both human traffickers, routinely violating any responsibility for refugees under well-established international conventions. The recruiters profit from the situation while governments accept only those refugees that suit their purposes, leaving others to be mistreated in camps and jails and eventually deported.

In the coming year, the fights in defence of the rights of all are bound to increase in scope and intensity.

*Our Future Lies in Defence of the Rights of All!
All Out to Uphold the Dignity of Labour!*



Work of the Workers' Centre in the Coming Year – *Workers' Centre of CPC(M-L)* –

The situation today requires a strong workers' press. The task of the Workers' Centre in the coming year is to strengthen our journalism and take discussions of the challenges facing the workers' movement into more places of work and sectors of the economy. *Workers' Forum*, our internet newspaper, reports on what the workers are fighting for, what they stand for as concerns their wages, working conditions and their aspirations for the younger generations, for themselves in retirement, and for society as a whole.

Workers' Forum also reports on the conditions of work and what is happening in different sectors of the economy. The workers' movement being informed on a timely basis about what is happening across the country, allows it to learn from itself and its experiences. This also allows it to unite in

action to smash the isolation and marginalization of each contingent of the class imposed by the status quo and the reporting of the monopoly-owned media.

It is not possible to have an organized workers' movement without this kind of journalism that carries the independent politics of the working class, not the politics of this or that faction of the ruling class to cause divisions and perpetuate the status quo.

Regular reporting in both English and French in *Workers' Forum* permits the workers' movement to benefit from a national discussion irrespective of where they work, the nature of their job, union or lack-of-thereof etc. In this way, advanced workers educate one another and can then educate those with whom they work and live. This is one important way the power of the workers as a class can be brought to bear in defence of the rights of all. It is all about educating the educators, which is all of us.



By espousing this mass democratic method of reaching conclusions which are warranted, workers gain confidence. They become spokespersons themselves for what they think, arguing out what is right for their peers and society as a whole, not on the basis of preconceived notions, beliefs or disinforming views and opinions provided by government sources, think tanks, cartel parties and media.

Organized workers are quite capable of providing themselves with information which reveals what is right and just. They do not need to rely on those who claim to represent us, but act to get us to give up our own thinking and experience, claiming that we need mediators to say what we think, and that this is necessary to be "reasonable." These forces in fact owe their living and swear allegiance to a system of rule whose sole purpose is to keep working people in line based on such considerations as conciliating with the anti-social offensive and turning workers into things that are disposable. Meanwhile those in control claim to speak in our name to retain their wealth and privilege.

We encourage those interested in joining in this important work to get in touch so that *Workers' Forum* can carry reports of their living and working conditions, their struggles, and their views on matters of concern. This will broaden and strengthen the unity of the workers in action. The capacity of the workers' press can also be enlarged and strengthened in this way.



The situation is very serious in the world. The economy has become a casino, where speculators run massive Ponzi schemes in which we all lose our shirts, where the economy is in constant crisis, war is a constant feature and social conditions deteriorate by the day. We cannot rely on those in power to solve the problems their system has created.

Our future lies in the fight for the rights of all. It lies in a new direction for the economy under the control of those who do the work, not in

supporting the Biden administration's plans to steal everything north of the border.

For the privileged elite in control, workers are disposable. That is the truth of the matter. Next worker up -- who cares about those who have fallen as long as wealth and privilege remain in the hands of those with power and privilege. Likewise for the environment, which has been turned into an excuse to suck dry the public treasury for powerful private interests and fatten the pockets of a few. Nor do they care about the youth or women as they are left to fend for themselves in the midst of a continuing anti-social offensive. They are eliminating the hereditary and treaty rights of the Indigenous Peoples by declaring that band councils and private Indigenous businesses speak for the Indigenous Peoples as long as they agree that pay-the-rich schemes are legitimate and a few are accommodated. It is a downward slide for humanity and society. This anti-social nation-wrecking tide must be reversed!

The Canadian and Quebec working class are one. They are also international by virtue of their composition and the globalized processes of production and distribution. They are fully capable of sorting out how to humanize the natural and social environment, defeat the anti-human/anti-conscious factor, build a modern economy to serve everyone not just a few, and unite with the U.S. working class in our common fight against the enemies of humankind, along with the workers and oppressed peoples the world over.

This year we pledge to strengthen the workers' press and call on all those who benefit from this work to support us in whatever way they can by writing, distributing and financing this endeavour to the best of their ability and means.

All Out to Strengthen the Workers' Press!



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