

THE FORD NATION AND WISCONSIN

TORONTO MAYOR ROB Ford recently mused about challenging Premier Dalton McGuinty by bringing out the “Ford Nation” in the upcoming provincial election. Ford’s campaign manager Nick Kouvalis is talking about setting up a “Tea Party North” to shift politics to the right across Ontario. The Sun columnists look at the Republican offensive against unions in the U.S. and urge the same thing here. Is there a connection? Better believe it.

Anyone who has read Naomi Klein’s seminal book “Shock Doctrine” will recognize the approach. In response to any crisis, big business has a ready-made response. In simple language it contains three essential elements:

SHRINK....government and public programs - by cutting or privatizing public services, selling public assets, and weakening public ability to regulate business or the labour market.

SHIFTthe costs from business to working people - by cutting corporate taxes, increasing user fees, and withdrawing from key areas of responsibility so people will have to buy services from private companies.

REDUCE...workers’ income levels - by gutting labour laws, weakening unions, outsourcing or contracting out jobs, increasing precarious work, and reducing employment standards.

At one of the mass rallies in Madison Wisconsin, American film-maker Michael Moore laid it all out brilliantly in a speech to thousands gathered at the capitol building. He contrasted the treatment of working people in the US who are losing their jobs, homes, and unions; to the treatment of the culprits responsible for the financial meltdown. Not one of them has served a single day in jail for their criminal actions. In fact, CEO bonuses are back up to their obscene level before the market crash. The richest four hundred people in the US own more wealth than half of all Americans combined. But that’s not enough for them.

The wealthy want to destroy what little power working people have left – by going after unions. That is clear from the Republican offensive – nine states where public sector workers are under attack; five of those also include “right to work” language that wipes out union security in the private sector. The smokescreen for all this is the deficit crisis caused by the financial mess...and in many cases made worse by further corporate tax cuts

Here in Ontario the Tories under Tim Hudak are looking to exploit the same raw emotions as Rob Ford to pave the way for a number of new GTA seats. So too does Stephen Harper, whose disdain for democracy and due process seems to be mirrored at City Hall in recent weeks. Harper has targeted civil society voices – KAIROS, women’s groups, esteemed civil rights organizations, even top civil servants doing their jobs. We will see the same thing soon at Toronto City Hall, as the Ford regime uses budget cuts to punish tenant and environmental activism.

Ford could hardly wait for the first chance to outsource garbage pickup, and soon that will be followed with other services. It’s no surprise one of his first acts was to ask that the TTC workers have the right to strike removed.

As the people of Wisconsin discovered, there is only one thing to do in the face of all this – stand together! Even the police and firefighters who were exempted from the Governor’s bill came out to support their fellow union members, because they knew they would be next. Here in Canada, we ought to learn from what is happening south of the border, and come together now to build a unified response. Our experience shows we are strongest when working together with our community allies, advocating for fairness for everyone in our society. April 9th sounds like a really good day to start doing that!

Call on Toronto City Hall to
RESPECT

**Our COMMUNITIES
Public SERVICES
Good JOBS**

Help Stop:

- Cuts
- Closures
- User fees
- Privatization



Rally for a
Toronto for Everyone

**Sat, April 9: 1 p.m. rally at Dundas Square
(followed by a march to Toronto City Hall)**

Details: RespectToronto@gmail.com

www.Facebook.com/RespectToronto

cope343

What are you giving up to pay for corporate tax cuts?



Have you made your donation for Ontario's \$2.4 billion dollar corporate tax cuts yet? People for Corporate Tax Cuts offers a comical look at what that means for you! Check out their famously hilarious videos at www.peopleforcorporatetaxcuts.ca

peopleforcorporatetaxcuts.ca

FEDERAL ELECTION TIME

By the time this edition of Labour Action goes in the mail, there could be a federal election underway. Labour has been very critical of the Harper government for pursuing bad trade deals that threaten both jobs and sovereignty, it's terrible environmental record, and the betrayal of seniors. Recently the UFCW started sending out an electronic newsletter called "Politics Now", explaining some of the other key issues to keep an eye on.

NEW JETS TO COST FAR MORE

Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page, whose post was created by Stephen Harper to ensure "truth in budgeting", has found that the total cost of the Conservative plan to buy new fighter jets will cost Canadians close to \$30 billion – almost 70% more than Harper said.

AD CAMPAIGN A SNOW JOB

You can't turn on the TV these days without seeing one of Harper's Economic Action Plan commercials. And while their short-lived gesture to invest in public infrastructure is over, they are spending another \$20 million on ads to make sure you don't forget about it. With a deficit of almost \$40 billion this year the reality presented in these ads obscures the financial condition of our government and the major fiscal challenges to be faced by working families.

GOVERNMENT IN CONTEMPT

For the second time in under a year, Harper's government has been found to have shown a lack of respect for their democratic obligations, and for Canadians. Minister Bev Oda lied about tampering documents to punish the church-based aid group KAIROS, and the failure to provide the cost of its programs to Parliament has Harper's government is bordering on contempt. If he is so uncomfortable with his agenda that he has to hide the cost then maybe the program should be scrapped.

HARPER IGNORES POVERTY

After 3 years, 63 meetings and over 260 witnesses, the House of Commons human resources committee has issued its report on how to combat poverty. The committee heard repeatedly from witnesses that federal leadership was essential in dealing with poverty. But Harper's response is to ignore all 58 recommendations as if to say "poverty is not our problem".

You can find more about federal election issues at the following websites:

[Canadian Labour Congress - Canadianlabour.ca](http://CanadianLabourCongress.org)

[Council of Canadians - Canadians.org](http://CouncilofCanadians.org)

[Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - policyalternatives.ca](http://CanadianCentreforPolicyAlternatives.org)

UNIONS SLAM BILL 150

THE HEAD OF the union that represents most of the workers targeted by pending provincial legislation taking away their right to strike, has told the committee studying the bill that the premises upon which it is based are incorrect and without foundation. ATU Local 113 President Bob Kinnear cited the three main reasons given by Labour Minister Charles Sousa for the necessity of designating the Toronto Transit Commission an “essential service” and then speeding the bill through the legislative process with minimal consideration and public consultation.

“The figure of \$50 million per day as a cost to Toronto of a TTC strike is fictional,” Kinnear said. “It was pulled out of thin air. Yet it is used as a reason to take workers’ rights away.” He also slammed the Minister for claiming that banning transit strikes was a matter of public health and safety.

“There is no evidence of this, in fact the police, fire and

emergency services have all said that TTC strikes do not interfere with their response times. And the Toronto Public Health Department says there is no data on the effects of TTC strikes on public health.”

Finally, Kinnear mocked the Minister for claiming he had to introduce the bill because the City of Toronto had requested it.

“That same city asked for \$150 million for TTC funding this year, which the government has denied. So we’re not talking about a principle here, are we?”

“All three main justifications given for this bill are bogus,” said Kinnear. It is outrageous that citizens of Ontario can have their rights stripped away based on misinformation and twisted principles.”

Many other union leaders went to speak out against Bill 150, including Labour Council President John Cartwright, Sid Ryan of the OFL, Fred Hahn of CUPE and Ken Lewenza of the CAW.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

ON MARCH 12, 2011, women from across Toronto celebrated International Women’s Day and rallied under the banner “Our City, Our Services, Our Future,” calling for protecting public services and good jobs. After the rally, the march was led by public housing tenants and unionized women who work in the public sector as they wore signs or uniforms to identify and celebrate their work.

HEARTLESS ON BAY STREET

ON VALENTINE'S DAY, hundreds of protestors joined the Labour Council rally against Scotiabank and Brookfield. These Bay Street executives sit on the Board of U.S. Steel, which has locked out its workers since November 2010, demanding they agree to de-index the pensions of 9000 retirees and widows. 84-year old Mary Fiori was one of the speakers who called on U.S. Steel and Bay street to stop attacking seniors and their pensions.



9th Annual
Workers of Colour/Aboriginal Workers Conference

The Politics of Change
Government, Unions & Leadership

Keynote Speaker – Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

Saturday, April 30, 2011
OFL Building, 15 Gervais Drive
Registration - 8:15 Start - 9:00

As a result of the in-depth discussion about recent experience with tough strikes and lockouts, the Labour Council is holding a one day forum on:

Winning Strikes and Defeating Lockouts

Saturday, June 4, 2011

OFL Building

15 Gervais Drive

Registration - 8:30 Start - 9:00

Registration Fee - \$40.00
(includes lunch)

For information and registration, visit
labourcouncil.ca, or call Ana Fonseca
at 416.441.3663 x221

YORK REGION LABOUR AWARDS



APRIL 26, 2011

Bond Lake Arena

70 Old Colony Rd., Richmond Hill

The Toronto & York Region Labour Council is presenting a series of awards recognizing the efforts of unions and union activists in York Region. Come out and celebrate with us.

Awards to be presented for:

- United Way Leader
- Julius Deutsh Veteran Award
- Community Leader
- Equity Leadership
- Health & Safety Activist
- Best Newsletter
- Best Website
- Newly organized workplaces

Visit labourcouncil.ca to download a flyer, or call Ana Fonseca at 416.441.3663 x221

THE PROVINCE HAS **\$8.7 BILLION** TO BUILD TRANSIT IN TORONTO

HOW DO YOU WANT YOUR TAX DOLLARS SPENT?

52 km Current Light Rail Transit Plan



Cost per
Kilometre **\$167 Million**

TORONTONIANS SERVED

Number of people living and working within 500 metres of the proposed lines

460,000

25 km Proposed Light Rail Transit Plan



Cost per
Kilometre **\$348 Million**

TORONTONIANS SERVED

Number of people living and working within 500 metres of the proposed lines

217,000

Mayor Ford has been working to push hard for privatization, selling off public assets and cutting so-called "non-core" services. Torontonians are looking at a major budget crisis in 2012 because of the irresponsible tax cuts pushed by Ford. Our public services are under serious threat. Here's what you should know about them:

PUBLIC SERVICES FACTS AND FIGURES

- ▶ The Mayor is spending \$3 million on private consultants to evaluate which city owned assets can be sold off and which public services can be outsourced to the private sector.
- ▶ Past experience in Ontario and the U.S. has shown that consultants are usually involved later in the self-off or outsourcing of the services they reviewed.
- ▶ These public services could include Toronto Hydro, Toronto Parking Authority, and Enwave, which provide the city of Toronto more than \$200 million in revenue every year.
- ▶ Service cuts have already been made in areas such as Child Care, the Toronto Public Library system, and the TTC
- ▶ The Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) has properties that are worth an attractive \$6 billion.
- ▶ The TCHC manages almost 60,000 rental units which house over 164,000 tenants, all on moderate or low incomes. Toronto has another 143,000 people on a waiting list for social housing. Ford's proposed subsidy plan would use taxpayers' money to offer private landlords guaranteed rent.

TONY RAMDEEN, CUPE LOCAL 416

“I’VE WORKED IN SOLID WASTE COLLECTION for 6 years. My job is to drive the truck that picks up garbage in parks, civic centres and recreation centres across Toronto. I love my job and remember getting to know the garbage guys who worked in my neighbourhood when I was a kid. They were part of the community in a way and my grandmother always taught us to respect them. If garbage is outsourced and becomes private, it won’t be accountable to the public anymore.

As a city worker with less than 10 years seniority, I would lose my job if garbage collection is outsourced west of Yonge Street, which is what the Mayor wants. I’m in the same boat as 300 other city workers who would lose their jobs immediately if this plan goes through, but it’s pretty obvious that if all of it eventually ends up going to a private contractor, then it will affect close to 700 workers. The retirees are not going to be replaced either, which means the workload is just going to keep growing.”



NELIA BETTENCOURT, CUPE LOCAL 79



“I’M A HEAVY DUTY CLEANER at 53 Division of Toronto Police Service. I wash the floors, steam the carpet, clean the cells and washrooms, pick up garbage and more. I’ve been doing this for 9 years. We work as a team of three cleaners and we are there every day, and we are all almost like family to each other. There’s a familiarity and trust we’ve developed and that’s important, especially in a police station where there’s sensitive information and security issues. If the work gets privatized, there could be a different person on different days and it wouldn’t be the same.

Before I moved to Toronto, I worked with a private cleaning company where I only made \$11 an hour and got only five hours a day with no benefits. That’s how they made their money. I had to work two jobs. Now I have a decent wage, benefits, and more job security. Unfortunately, if the Mayor outsources cleaning to a private company, I will be let go. It scares me to think about how I would support my son’s medical expenses with no job and no benefits.”

WHAT’S NEXT?

THE MAYOR HAS proposed a plan to outsource garbage pickup west of Yonge Street. On May 17-18, City Council will vote on this plan and if it goes through, services could get contracted out as early as June 2012. Outsourcing of cleaning may be on the agenda soon after. What can you do? Contact your Councillor and let him or her know that public services should remain public.

In case you forgot, it was CUPE 416 that worked with environmentalists to lead the fight for organics diversion and the green bin program. Also, nobody has come up with independent, conclusive evidence that shows that outsourced waste collection is more efficient or less costly than the service provided by public workers. The fact is that private waste collection is dominated by multinational conglomerates whose profit goes elsewhere while workers are paid less here.




AFTER A
LIFETIME OF WORK

RETIREMENT SECURITY

for everyone

LABOUR'S PLAN FOR PENSION SAVINGS REFORM





**Expanding the
Canada Pension Plan**
THE BEST WAY TO HELP CANADIANS
SAVE MORE FOR RETIREMENT.

 Canadian Labour Congress
Congrès du travail du Canada

canadianlabour.ca

RETIREMENT SECURITY FOR EVERYONE.

People deserve to retire in dignity after a lifetime of work. As we have seen, companies like U.S. Steel and Nortel want to take away the pension benefits of current workers and retirees. Pension rights are under attack in Canada. At a Special Meeting on March 3, 2011, we kicked off the next phase of Labour's pension campaign. Stressing the importance of defending pensions, retirees at the meeting shared their experience with failed RRSPs. The pension campaign calls upon the federal and provincial governments to expand the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and increase the Old Age Security (OAS) and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) for all retirees

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