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JAMES A. WILLIAMS, JR President International Union of Painters and Allied Trades; Chairman, AIL Labour Advisory Board
STEVE GREER Chief Executive Officer, American Income Life Division; President, AIL Labour Advisory Board
LORI PELLETIER Division Vice President, Public Relations, American Income Life Division; Executive Director, AIL Labour Advisory Board
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Dear Member,

NEW ZEALAND LABOUR NEWS

Woolworths Workers Walk Off Job Thousands of "underpaid, understaffed and undervalued" Woolworths workers in stores across the country walked off the job between 12:00pm and 2:00pm on 9 September in their first-ever national withdrawal of labour.

A central rally of more than 20 groups of workers from the Auckland Woolworths stores took place outside the Ponsonby store in Auckland, and thousands more from 190 supermarkets walked out in protest.



(FirstUnion Facebook)

First Union, which represents the employees, said they had been negotiating with the company for almost two weeks but hadn't reached an agreement. First Union National Secretary for Retail and Finance Rudd Hughes said they "sought a fair deal for workers but we're still miles apart from the company on the most basic issues of all - pay, safety and staffing."

Hughes said the company had offered "minimal wage increases below the rising household cost of living" and refused to address "systemic understaffing."

A Woolworths New Zealand spokesperson said in a statement that the company had "brought a strong offer to the table" in discussions with First Union. "This includes a wage rate increase for our store team between 6.8 per cent and 10.1 per cent over two years. Further, congratulations and tautoko to the thousands of #FIRSTUnion Woolworths workers who took strike action and walked out of supermarkets at midday. They're understaffed and underpaid but certainly under no illusions; they deserve a fair deal, and they're willing to fight for it - the 19 per cent increase we agreed in 2022. We are one of the leaders in pay for our sector. In the current challenging economic environment, our customers need us to provide affordable food. We have to balance increasing costs in our business so we can provide more value for our customers."

Woolworths workers voted last month to take three initial strike actions after negotiations fell flat. Those initial actions involved non-compliance with media and social media policies, wearing a strike sticker on work uniforms that said "underpaid, undervalued, understaffed" and, for members of 10 specific stores, handing out "receipt"-style flyers to customers in stores.



(FirstUnion Facebook)

"A lot of our team are really struggling week-to-week with the rising cost of living, and if you get an unexpected dentist's bill or car issues, plenty of Woolworths workers would be at a total loss," Michelle McKenzie, a duty supervisor at Church Corner Woolworths in Christchurch, said at the time.

In its statement, Woolworths also said it had a \$45 million programme underway to make its stores safer. Measures included team safety cameras in all stores, trolley locks, fog cannons and double-entry gates. The company was also looking at bringing in duress alarms for those working in isolated areas.

Improvements had been made to workers' benefits since 2022 in sick leave, bereavement leave, caregiver leave and to discounts.

Historic Win For Uber Drivers

A New Zealand Court of Appeal on 26 August dismissed a challenge by Uber to the landmark 2022 Employment Court decision against the international rideshare company that granted workplace protections to four Uber drivers.

The historic 2022 ruling found that Uber misclassified the drivers as contractors rather than employees and that they were entitled to full employment benefits under the law, including a minimum wage, leave entitlements, holiday pay, and the right to join a union.

Uber appealed against the decision in June 2023, which was rejected by the Court of Appeal last month, ruling in favour of the drivers.

In light of the decision, **FIRST Union** and **E tū** representatives demanded that Workplace Relations and Safety Minister Brooke van Velden immediately drop her plans to reform New Zealand's contracting law and prevent workers from being able to challenge their misclassification as contractors in the future through the Employment Court.



(E tū)

Of particular importance, the Court of Appeal has applied what it considers to be a more accurate analysis of section 6 of the Employment Relations Act -- reaching the same conclusion as the Employment Court in the original verdict. The Court of Appeal used the term "window dressing" to describe the terms provided to drivers by Uber regarding their employment conditions.

Calling the verdict "a tremendous victory for working people in Aotearoa New Zealand," **NZCTU** President Richard Wagstaff said, "The ruling proves why workers need access to justice, to challenge unscrupulous employers like Uber who are circumventing employment law by hiring people as contractors. The Minister must listen to the judgment of the Court of Appeal and recognise the rights of workers to have cases heard in the courts. There is now no excuse to pursue her unethical plans for contractor reform."

For Nureddin Abdurahman, one of the four drivers who took the original court case, the decision is about hope, saying, "This is a win for all working people. The day of corporates like Uber exploiting NZ workers is coming to an end! I'm grateful to the legal system for identifying an injustice to the working class and examining it properly. This will make a huge difference at a time where Uber drivers are still being mistreated by the company."

Mea'ole Keil, another of the original four Uber drivers, said he was proud that drivers took a stand against exploitation. "I'm ecstatic, over the moon, and very emotional. It's a relief. It's been a long journey, a long fight, and we want to thank the unions' legal teams for keeping the faith in us. For too long employers like Uber have exploited gaps in legislation to hide the true employment relationship and take advantage of workers unfairly – we had to take a stand and pray that the legal system would back us – it has."

FIRST Union General Secretary Dennis Maga said the Court of Appeal's verdict is heartening and



(NZCTU)

motivating for the drivers and unions against a backdrop of anti-worker reforms under the National Government, and it is key for politicians to read and understand the significance of this court case and the dismissed appeal.

"This will change the landscape of employment in Aotearoa for the decades ahead of us," said Maga. "This decision will ensure more workers are in secure jobs and not prone to precarious and exploitative misclassification by companies like Uber.

"We've already supported more than 1,000 Uber drivers to file and seek wage and holiday pay arrears in the Employment Relations Authority, and FIRST Union has initiated collective bargaining with Uber already. This work can now progress after being effectively on hold for this ruling."

Maga said FIRST Union would continue to progress backpay claims, encourage Uber drivers to join the union, and seek a Collective Agreement for Uber drivers in New Zealand.

Rachel Mackintosh, E tū National Secretary, said the decision shows clearly that Uber workers are indeed employees and are entitled to the rights and protections that cover all employees in Aotearoa New Zealand.

"The Uber model of employment is new, but the importance of workers' rights is not. We have legislation to stop exploitative employers taking advantage of precarious workers, and the courts have not accepted Uber's argument that they are somehow above the law," said Mackintosh.

"The decision is a real cause for celebration, not just for the affected Uber workers but for the whole Aotearoa workforce, as it confirms what E tū and FIRST Union have long argued – fundamental workers' rights are protected by law.

The court's ruling echoes other international courts in determining that Uber drivers are employees, not contractors or self-employed people, including in the UK (2021) and the Netherlands (2019). These courts found that Uber effectively controls drivers' hours and wages and that drivers are an integral part of Uber's business. As employees, Uber drivers are entitled to minimum wage, holiday pay, and other key workers' rights.

Govt Cuts Frontline White Collar Crime Fighters At Serious Fraud Office

"The 'tough on crime' Government," says the **Public Service Association** (PSA), "is forcing the Serious Fraud Office to cut funding and jobs, undermining the ability of the office to keep fighting white-collar crime which impacts thousands of New Zealanders every year."

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) has had its funding cut by 3.5% and is proposing a net loss of six roles across its Strategy and Prevention, Forensic Services and Legal teams. This equates to around 7% of its workforce.

"Fraud is rising fast, yet the Government promised to be 'tough on crime' so this just doesn't add up - fraud will only keep hurting more New Zealanders," said Duane Leo National Secretary for PSA Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi.

"The Government promised evidence-based decisions, but once again it's ignoring the advice of its own experts. The SFO told the new Minister last November that 'fraud and corruption increases during an economic downturn...History has also shown it is during these times that the SFO's value is most acute."

"The SFO also told the Minister that fraud and deception was the only offence type to see a significant increase year-on-year in the latest New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (June 2023). It's the fastest-growing crime type, impacting one in ten New Zealanders.



(PSA)

"These short-sighted cuts remove frontline roles, tasked with fraud prevention, and technical specialists whose expertise is needed to keep us one step ahead of increasingly sophisticated fraudsters," said Leo.

"These cuts will place all New Zealanders at risk. But this is par for the course from this Government which also gutted the specialist teams at Internal Affairs tackling criminals targeting children online and promoting scams. At a time when technology is fast advancing, including AI, fraud is becoming harder to detect, this is the time to invest more, not less in battling fraud and corruption.

"The Office told the Minister it was already 'lean and efficient' so how can it properly do its important work in the face of these cuts? This Government made a choice to put tax cuts for landlords, big tobacco, and higher income earners ahead of protecting New Zealanders from powerful and smart criminals who threaten us."



(FirstUnion Facebook)

Ambulance Workers Strike Over Funding

Hato Hone St John ambulance staff exercised two rolling 24-hour strike actions 20 and 24 August. More than 2,500 ambulance officers, members of **FIRST Union** and the **Amalgamated Workers Union New Zealand Inc** (New Zealand Ambulance Association division) voted to strike after nine fruitless months of bargaining with the Government for pay and funding for the service overall.

Unbeknownst to most New Zealanders, while the police are fully funded by the Government, and Fire and Emergency is funded almost entirely through levies on insurance policies, the Government only funds around 83% of Hato Hone St

John's costs through Health NZ and ACC.

Despite often being the difference between life and death for patients, New Zealand's ambulances still rely on donations, fundraising, and patient co-payments to make up the 17 per cent funding shortfall.

Hato Hone St John covers ambulance services everywhere in New Zealand except Wellington, Hutt Valley, and Wairarapa, which are covered by Wellington Free Ambulance. Wellington Free Ambulance also receives most of its funding from the Government but relies on around \$8 million in fundraising each year to keep its own services free.

Arrangements were made to minimise disruption to ambulance services and ensure that essential services remain available during the strike.

A Coalition Promise: There have been calls for New Zealand to switch to a fully-funded ambulance service for some time. Although it didn't go as far as promising a fully-funded model, New Zealand First did pledge to fund 95% of St John's costs in its pre-election manifesto last year.

The party managed to get a vaguer funding figure in its coalition agreement with National, with a promise to "renegotiate the Crown funding agreement with St John with a view to meeting a greater portion of their annualised budget."

When first announcing the strike, FIRST Union and NZAA said the coalition funding promise failed to materialize. "The strike vote came in the absence of any pay rise offer above 0% per hour from Hato Hone St John or confirmation from the Government that funding to the partially charity-funded service will finally be increased after failed coalition promises and a 'shameful' silence from Health Minister Shane Reti," they said.

Associate Health Minister Casey Costello said the Government's key role was around the funding of ambulance services and that they had received "significant extra investment recently...The joint contract that Health NZ and ACC have with St John and Wellington Free Ambulance currently provides \$384 million a year in total and over the past two years they've received \$148 million extra - nearly a third more.

"The Government contract with the emergency road ambulance providers runs from 2022 to 2026 and adjusts for inflation each year. Hato Hone St John has been informed of its funding uplift for 2024/25, which will be announced when it is finalised," said Costello.

Budget documents earlier this year showed the estimated additional support funding for emergency road ambulance services was static through to 2027/28.



(FirstUnion Facebook)

Back in May, Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said that Hato Hone St John did not want 100% funding. In response, FIRST Union National Coordinator for Ambulance Services Faye McCann called Luxon's comments "shocking."

"It was really shocking to hear the Prime Minister claim that St John doesn't actually want any more money from Government when we've been sitting at the bargaining table with them since December last year and have been repeatedly told that a wage freeze is in place because Government funding isn't sufficient for ambulance officers to receive any pay increase," she said.

Emergency medical technician Tom Bannan said paramedics didn't know what to believe. "We feel undervalued, we always seem to be fighting for more, even just to get the basics. Don't get me wrong, St John has some really good ideas but to push those forward, we need the Government to step up and come up with some funding," he said. "We get told St John has asked for 100%

Hato Hone St John said it had been working with Health NZ and ACC to secure additional funding to resolve outstanding bargaining claims, and that it supported the ambulance workforce's calls for a pay rise "within reasonable market movement, but the unions' ask is greater than the available funding."

Nurses' Bargaining Starts With Action For Safe Staffing

New Zealand Nurses Organisation Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa (NZNO) members employed by Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora kicked off bargaining for their 2024 collective agreement negotiations by taking action for safe staffing on 30 August.



(NZNO)

At the forefront were claims reflecting the needs of Māori nurses. Nurses and health workers across the motu took action to demonstrate that safe staffing will be the priority in this year's negotiations.

NZNO CEO Paul Goulter said cuts to healthcare are making the system worse for patients and for the health workers who provide care. "Te Whatu Ora needs to be doing everything it can to keep nurses in New Zealand and safe staffing is a critical part of this picture.

"Nurses are taking a stand because they know it is patients and whanau that suffer when our health system is underfunded, and staffing gaps are not filled.

"When nurses look to Australia, they not only see better pay but also better working conditions in the form of safe staffing ratios. Nurses don't want to work in hospitals that are continuously understaffed and under-resourced."

Among the numerous countrywide activities was a rally by Northland health workers held outside the office of Health Minister Shane Reti in Whangārei. Whangārei delegate Sacha Young said this was a prime opportunity to show the minister how the local people feel about recent changes in health.

"He's our local MP, so he's accountable to us. We need to remind him that we are not seeing improvements in the health system since he's become the health minister."

Young is upset that once again workers are forced to include safe staffing in bargaining with the employer.

"We would expect that would be a given. It's sad that decade after decade we have to keep fighting to be safe in our workplace."

Health workers and the public want to see changes, and they are hoping to see commitment from Te Whatu Ora during this bargaining process, said Young.

Scrapping Pay Parity Bad Move

Changes announced by the Government around removing pay parity for some early childhood teachers represent an attack on all teachers' right to pay parity and do not address the real reasons for the current crisis in early childhood education, says education union **NZEI Te Riu Roa**.



(NZEI Te Riu Roa)

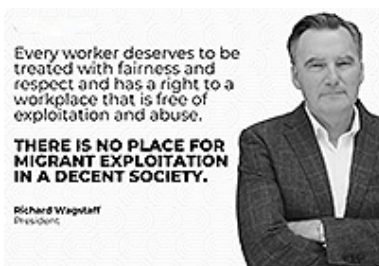
NZEI Te Riu Roa National Executive Representative Virginia Oakly said removing pay parity for relievers will impact on the quality of teaching young children and babies receive, and it only highlights the Government isn't listening to kaiako, parents, and whānau about what's desperately needed to improve conditions in the sector.

"All teachers deserve to be paid fairly, regardless of whether they are permanent or relieving teachers," said Oakly. "These changes in no way address the underlying reasons for the teacher shortage: poor teacher-child ratios, workloads that are too high for an already over-burdened workforce, and the ongoing difficulties to secure learning support for children who need it."

"All of this leads to poor teaching conditions for kaiako and impacts on the learning conditions of tamariki, resulting in people leaving teaching roles for relieving work or other work outside the sector."

Relieving teacher and NZEI Te Riu Roa member Alex Owens said like teachers, relievers are also specialists, often with decades of experience behind them. "Qualified relievers are essential, and they need to be recognised for the vital contribution they make to children's education and the teaching teams they step into."

"The Government's real intentions are becoming clearer by the day – to further degrade working and safety conditions for early childhood kaiako and tamariki in their care, completely ignoring all the evidence about what's needed to create positive learning environments in the critically important first-1,000 days of a child's life journey, and instead putting business interests at the heart of their decision-making."



(NZCTU)

President Richard Wagstaff.

Human Rights Review Confirms Migrant Worker Exploitation

The **NZCTU Te Kauae Kaimahi** is calling on the Government to take immediate action to end migrant worker exploitation in Aotearoa following the release of the Human Rights Commission review of the Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) scheme.

"The report provides compelling evidence that workers are being exploited as a consequence of the AEWV policy settings and that a few tweaks to the system won't work – it requires a fundamental overhaul," said NZCTU

"Workers are currently losing pay, living in poverty, and sliding into an informal economy where they are exploited with little or no pay and long hours, and are being verbally and physically assaulted. Workers have been repeatedly denied access to union representation and have failed to have their rights upheld."

"These policy settings are completely in the Government's hands – so it could end that exploitation if it chose to. The CTU is calling on the Government to respond immediately to the findings of this report, meaningfully consult with migrant workers, community groups, and unions, and set out how it will implement the recommendations."

"The report repeatedly cites strong Government and business relationships with unions as an effective means of supporting migrant workers and preventing their exploitation. Regulations must ensure that unions have rights to access workplaces to bring unjust practices to light.

"There must be proper resourcing for the parts of Government responsible for labour rights, migrant exploitation, and prosecuting employers who don't play by the rules.

"Concerns about the potential for human trafficking are confirmed in this review and the need to implement modern slavery legislation. Unfortunately, we have a Prime Minister and Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety who have said modern slavery is "not a priority."

"Every worker deserves to be treated with fairness and respect and has a right to a workplace that is free of exploitation and abuse. There is no place for migrant exploitation in a decent society," said Wagstaff.

NZ Meat Workers Union Comes To Aid of Wairoa

The **New Zealand Meat Workers Union** raised \$100,000 to help the residents of Wairoa following the devastating June flooding of the town.

In July, NZ Meat Workers Union organisers Mike Paltridge from Feilding and Mike Mucalo from Hastings drove to Wairoa to personally deliver the news that the union members had donated \$100,000 to support the town's Wairoa Give a Little recovery account.

The donation was collected from the entire NZ Meat Workers Union members in regions such as Otago, Southland, Canterbury, and the North Island. It equated to around \$7 per union member and was in recognition of the strong ties the union has to the Wairoa community, with a large number of members employed at the Affco Wairoa plant.

The National Executive of the union expressed sympathy for the situation Wairoa is facing and had watched in dismay at how the latest flooding tragedy unfolded. The donation is to help those who have the greatest need in the hope of alleviating the dire situation in Wairoa's hardest-hit areas.

Wairoa Mayor Craig Little was thrilled with the contribution, which will be split to acknowledge those impacted by the Cyclone Gabrielle flooding and the June flooding.

"Thank you so much to the union and the members for this generous support. To know that union members throughout the country have been thinking about Wairoa and donated money to help us is quite overwhelming. We know there are union members in Wairoa who have been impacted by these flooding events. On behalf of our community, thank you so much for your thoughtfulness and your donation, which will be used to help our people recover," said the Mayor.



(Wairoa Mayor Craig Little accepts a donation of \$100,000 from NZ Meat Workers Union organisers Mike Paltridge and Mike Mucalo)

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR NEWS



(VOA)

United Nations: Workers See Dramatic Fall In Share Of Global Income
Geneva. As reported by Voice of America

Workers have seen their slice of the global income pie shrink significantly over the past two decades, swelling inequality and depriving the combined labour force of trillions, the U.N. said Wednesday. The **United Nations International Labour Organization** said that the global labour income share — or the proportion of total income in an economy earned by working — had fallen by 1.6 percentage points since 2004.

"While the decrease appears modest in terms of percentage points, in 2024 it represents an annual

shortfall in labour income of \$2.4 trillion compared to what workers would have earned had the labour income share remained stable since 2004," the ILO said in a report. The study highlighted the COVID-19 pandemic as a key driver of the decline, with almost half of the reduction in labour income share taking place during the pandemic years of 2020-2022. The global crisis exacerbated existing inequalities, particularly as capital income has continued to concentrate ever more among the wealthiest, it said.

"Countries must take action to counter the risk of declining labour income share," Celeste Drake, the ILO deputy director-general, said in a statement. "We need policies that promote an equitable distribution of economic benefits, including freedom of association, collective bargaining and effective labour administration, to achieve inclusive growth and build a path to sustainable development for all."

Deepening inequality: The ILO stressed that technological advances, including automation, were a key driver of the declines in labour income share. "While these innovations have boosted productivity and output, the evidence suggests that workers are not sharing equitably from the resulting gains," the U.N. labour agency said.

It voiced particular concern that the artificial intelligence boom risked deepening inequality further. "If historical patterns were to persist... the recent breakthroughs in generative AI could exert further downward pressure on the labour income share," the report said, stressing "the importance of ensuring that any benefits of AI are widely distributed."

The ILO found that workers currently rake in just 52.3 per cent of global income, while capital income -- earned by owners of assets like land, machines, buildings, and patents -- accounts for the rest. Since capital income tends to be concentrated among wealthier individuals, the labour income share is widely used as a measure of inequality. It also helps measure progress towards the U.N. sustainable development goal aimed at significantly reducing inequality between and within countries between 2015 and 2030.

"The report indicates slow progress as the 2030 deadline approaches," ILO said.

The report also emphasized the stubbornly high incidence of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). Since 2015, the global percentage has slipped slightly, from 21.3 per cent to 20.4 per cent this year. But there are major regional differences, with a third of youth in Arab states and nearly a quarter in Africa falling into the NEET category. The report also highlighted a large gender gap, with the global NEET incidence among young women standing at 28.2 per cent — more than double the 13.1 per cent seen among young men.

Thousands Of Hotel Workers Strike Across U.S.

United States. As reported by CBS News

Ten thousand hotel workers across the U.S. went on strike beginning 1 September, with employees at major chains including Marriott and Hyatt walking off the job in cities including Boston, San Francisco, San Jose, and Seattle. The strike came as millions of Americans traveled over the busy Labor Day weekend.



(Unite Here)

The **UNITE HERE** union, which represents more than 40,000 workers, has been locked in contract negotiations with several big hotel chains, including Hilton, Hyatt, Marriott, and Omni.

In a statement, the union said it is seeking higher wages, fairer workloads and the reversal of pandemic-era job cuts. Some hotel workers must take on a second job to make ends meet, even as room rates have hit record highs and hotel chains are booking billions in annual profits, UNITE HERE claims.

"Since COVID, they are expecting us to give five-star service with three-star staff," said Elena Duran, a server at Marriott's Palace Hotel in San Francisco for 33 years. "A couple weeks ago, we were at 98 per cent occupancy, but they only put three servers when we used to be a team of four or five. It's too much

pressure on us to go faster and faster instead of calling in more people to work."

The strikes were scheduled to last up to three days at each of the hotels, according to the union, which is urging travelers to avoid eating, sleeping, or meeting at any hotel where workers are striking.

Michael D'Angelo, Hyatt's head of labour relations for the Americas, said the company's hotels have contingency plans to minimize the impact of the strikes. "We are disappointed that Unite Here has chosen to strike while Hyatt remains willing to negotiate," he said. In a statement before the strikes began, Hilton said it was "committed to negotiating in good faith to reach fair and reasonable agreements."

"She Usually Won." Remembering Jane McAlevey, 1964–2024

United States. As reported by The Nation's Katie Miles

The Nation's strikes correspondent believed that no one is coming to save us but us. And that we are enough.

"When I was in my early 20s, I lost a union campaign for the first time. I was organizing *carwasheros* in New York City -- workers who often laboured for 70 hours a week, and sometimes more, in horrifically unsafe conditions for less than minimum wage. At this particular carwash, I hadn't prepared the workers to build an organization capable of withstanding the immense fight their employer would put up against them.

The workers were righteous, and their boss was in violation of city, state, and federal laws. But it didn't matter. The workers began crumbling under pressure, fighting with each other, breaking along the racial and national divisions their boss encouraged.



Jane McAlevey (*Alice Attie*)

Without strong enough organization, the workers stopped their campaign before an election ever took place. They had believed they could improve their lot collectively, and now they had been proven wrong. I had set them up for defeat, and I was crushed.

Shortly after things fell apart, I called Jane McAlevey, sobbing. She picked me up off the proverbial floor, and after we hung up, she sent me a text message that I still have saved on my phone: 'Class struggle is not easy. It is, however, urgent and ongoing.'

It's odd to talk about losing in a remembrance of Jane -- after all, she usually won. But I think it matters, because part of what Jane taught is that winning is not inevitable, and neither is losing.

Jane was obsessed with winning and teaching others to win. She understood that losing is actually worse than keeping the status quo, that there is no moral value in being on the right side if you lose, that there is no romance in defeat. She taught us that if we do the work necessary to win, we will learn to win more. She took the successful methods that a long tradition of organizers has used for decades and figured out how to systematically teach them to thousands of people around the world (another thing that Jane taught us: scale).

This spring, as Jane entered hospice, college students around the country bravely stood together and occupied their campuses to demand divestment from genocide. Watching them, I thought over and over about what Jane taught me: that good organizing breaks open our world.

When we build unshakable unity and solidarity, we see ourselves and each other differently, capable of courage and power we could have never imagined before. It's easy to think that when the right time comes popular movements are inevitable. Jane's life work was teaching us that there is no need -- and no time -- to wait around for the perfect moment to come. Through diligent work, we can create the moment. We can build solidarity and organization that takes us to the moment we need. Jane's life work was coaching us in how to create the conditions necessary to win, so that we could feel the power of unity and

come back for more.

Jane had an ability to hone in on power and strategy like no one else. She understood that we need to know who we are fighting, exactly how much power it will take to beat them, and how we will get there. For those of us who were lucky enough to work closely with her, she showed us what that looked like on a daily level. She taught me to always think: What am I doing right now to build power? What will I do tomorrow to build power? What will I do next week to build power?

A quick survey of the current state of our world -- increasing inequality, unchecked corporate power, climate catastrophe, systematic racism, rising fascism, the list goes on -- is enough to tell us that the moment we are in is urgent. The good news that Jane taught us is that between us, we have enough to win, if we organize well. Because Jane believed, more than anything, in the agency of ordinary people to take action and win. Jane taught that regular people can act together to change our lives. And that if we don't, we're screwed. No one is coming to save us, but us. Luckily, we can be enough.

A decade after experiencing a campaign falling apart, I've been fortunate to be part of many successful, world-opening fights, learning from Jane and many others -- fights that fundamentally shifted the balance of power, fights that showed us how the world can be different, and how much more we can win. I don't know that I will ever accept Jane being gone. I do know, though, that her words will continue to guide me forward. Class struggle is not easy. It is, however, urgent and ongoing."

Canada's Far-Right Is Targeting South Asian And Sikh Canadians To Incite Anti-Immigrant Hate

Canada. As reported by PressProgress

Anti-hate experts and researchers say Canada's far-right is shifting its focus to spreading conspiracy theories and sowing hate towards South Asian and Sikh communities in Canada.



(PressProgress)

In recent weeks, many far-right Canadian influencers have ramped up attacks against Canadians of South Asian origin -- particularly Sikhs -- telling them to "go back to their country," while blaming immigrants for societal ills, like unemployment or housing. Others have taken to filming or photographing people without their consent and encouraging their followers to do the same while spreading misinformation and harmful narratives about immigrants.

Peter Smith, journalist and researcher with the **Canadian Anti-Hate Network**, says there has been a visible increase in content targeting of South Asians in Canada. "There is definitely a trend within the far-right spaces, particularly in Canada, of targeting South Asian communities and individuals for derision. They are making them the focus of a lot of anti-immigrant narratives and we're seeing the phrase, 'they have to go back' being deployed a lot."

Smith says the far-right in Canada has honed in on the South Asian and Sikh community as their latest target. "I think the far-right in Canada excels when it has kind of an issue du jour and that, unfortunately for South Asian communities, they have kind of become it for the last little bit. Last year there was a heavy focus on 2SLGBTQ+ events, particularly at libraries, not to say that that has gone away by any extent, but there's kind of these peaks and valleys of what is the central focus of Canada's very broad far-right and they've been finding a lot of success with these anti-immigrant narratives."

"I think there's a real kind of inherent danger whenever we see the demonization of a large group of people, in particular whenever you see the demonization of particular communities," said Smith.

In the midst of social media posts targeting specifically turbaned Sikh men, a hate crime was reported to police in Peterborough, Ontario on July 26 after a man alleged he was spat on and "had his turban knocked off and stepped on." Similar incidents have been reported in recent months by the World Sikh Organization.

"Sikhs are a very visible community due to their articles of faith, which makes them easy targets for hate attacks," WSO President Danish Singh said in a statement. "We are seeing hateful messages targeting Sikhs online generated by ultra-right-wing groups in Canada, but these are being amplified and promoted by Indian nationalist social media accounts."

"What seems to have emboldened the racism though, is the efforts of far-right organizing and pseudo-media to politicize the hate, entwining it with debates about immigration and national security. Through this, Canadian Sikhs seem to have become the symbol of all that the country's racists oppose." The GPAHE also reported that hate speech, extremism and slurs directed at South Asians doubled on platforms like 4Chan between 2023 and 2024, while on Donald Trump's platform Truth Social, hate speech and slurs against South Asians increased over 250 per cent in the same time span.

Far-right influencer Tommy Robinson, who was recently arrested on immigration charges in Canada during a Rebel Media organized tour, was one of the first prominent online figures to spread disinformation about the attack on social media, circulating conspiracy theories about Muslims and immigrants. The alarming trend mirrors tactics being used in Canada.

Smith says that many far-right figures are convinced that "they're being replaced," and are responding to that threat in many ways, adding that the language being used is "militaristic" and could lead to potential escalation. "That is what it could lead to when you have people talking quite in military terms about a 'coming war.' The response to war is hostility."

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