

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Greater Toronto Workers' Assembly</b> <b>Solidarity Platform</b></p>
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**Preamble:**

In the fall of 2008, the third great crisis of capitalism steadily brewed and then nearly boiled over. For a brief period of time, it was not just radicals that questioned capitalism – the ruling classes themselves were starting to question their continued hegemony. While a global meltdown did not occur, crises-within-crises became the new normal in capitalist relations, and has provided a key tool to the ruling classes for maintaining their control. This exposes the defining constitutive feature of capitalism: the formal separation of economics, the realm of the market, from politics, the realm of parliament and official state power. The new patterns of governance – punitive austerity, increased criminalization and militarized law enforcement, growth of far-right populist movements – are correlative but distinct social relations from the economic mechanisms of the capitalist market itself. As such, we must take the official domain of politics, seemingly separate from the domain of economics, seriously in the struggle against exploitation and oppression.

The objective of the Greater Toronto Workers' Assembly in developing a Solidarity Platform is to fight capitalist social relations on all fronts – 'political' and economic. Yet it is also to undertake a scientific analysis of the balance of forces, the capacities, both operationalized and latent within and beyond our organization. In turn, this must be examined against the context of the global conjuncture, of capitalist crisis and recovery, of imperialist rivalry and co-operation, and as well, how successful and unsuccessful various fightbacks have been in both the North and the South. In examining our own capacities, we can hone in on where we can make a contribution, either modest or profound. In examining the global context, we can see ourselves as part of an international struggle that unites the human race.

Over the past three decades Ontario, like Canada, has seen huge job losses in the public and industrial sectors and a steady deterioration in the availability and quality of social services and benefits such as health care, long-term care, education, legal aid, unemployment benefits, pensions, social assistance, and social housing. Under a series of neoliberal governments at all three levels, the rights of working people have come under attack. Our living standards, especially of those of us engaged in precarious or low-waged labour, have remained stagnant if not declined, while the opulent have amassed ever-greater wealth. Policing has become increasingly punitive against dissent. Indigenous persons, migrants, the working poor and marginalized continue to be targeted and criminalized. Right wing populist movements have come to govern while left wing spaces are fragmented.

As an anti-capitalist organization, the Workers' Assembly stands for a fundamental transformation of social relations. We stand for a solidaristic, associative society not of rule by a small minority of the rich, of exploitation, oppression and inequality but one based on social justice which gives priority to the needs and interests of the working class, the marginalized and the dispossessed. The Workers' Assembly has produced this Solidarity Platform in order to strengthen the capacities of action and analysis of working people, so as to bring us closer to the day when we end exploitation and oppression.

It is recognized that the Canadian state is constitutionally divided in a way that grants distinct powers on the federal and provincial level and that the provincial is further divided with the municipal level. This platform was designed by Workers' Assembly members through working groups, membership input, and the incorporation of demands from several social justice, community and trade union organizations to propose measures that apply to all three levels of government. The purpose of this platform is to provide a working class alternative to the platforms of existing political parties, and as such addresses transitional measures aimed to move us towards a truly democratic society that functions without exploitation and oppression. The positions taken in the platform are designed to strengthen the power of the working class. It is a living document subject to improvement. Help us improve it by getting involved in the Workers' Assembly.

In this view, we propose the following:

### **Economy**

*Principle: Democratic control of the economy.*

Transitional Demands:

- Public ownership, regulation and democratization of banks and financial institutions.
- Increase the minimum wage to allow wage earners to live above the poverty line, adjust the minimum wage yearly according to the cost of living.
- Reform of the taxation system to close loopholes, reverse corporate tax cuts and increase corporate taxes. Eliminate preferential tax rates for corporate capital gains and stock options.
- Implement a tax system to ensure that the wealthy pay a higher and just rate of taxation. Standardize these reforms internationally via treaties.
- No government interference in collective bargaining through back to work or unreasonable essential service legislation.
- Increased investment in the democratization of the arts, including an expanded social safety net for artists.
- The banning of the use of scab labour.
- Work with unions and communities to develop good green jobs by developing the infrastructure to produce green energy alternatives and other socially useful enterprises.
- The development of publicly owned green energy alternatives.
- Retool existing unproductive facilities into democratically controlled socially useful enterprises.
- Give agriculture workers the right to collectively bargain.
- Card check certification to increase levels of unionization.
- Free, accessible and massively expanded public transportation. Transform existing infrastructure to make it accessible for the disabled.
- Review and reform of employment standards and occupational health and safety legislation to make them more worker friendly. Real inspection and enforcement of such legislation. Education programs informing workers of these rights.
- No privatization or use of public private partnerships.
- Facilitation and recognition of the right of precarious workers to collectively organize along sectoral lines.
- Protected right of workers to form democratic system of worker assemblies to direct economic policy.

### **Income Security**

*Principle: Universal right to basic quality of life.*

Transitional Demands:

- Universal daycare.
- The development and funding of widespread drop-in childcare facilities.
- The merging of the CPP and private pension plans into a universal public pension plan to ensure the ability to retire for all in comfort and dignity.
- Lower the qualifying hours for EI, an increase in the collection period and an increase in benefits.
- Effective rent control.
- Universal wage paid by the state for all unpaid domestic labour.
- The right to collectively bargain for all domestic workers, farmworkers and artists.
- Increase funding to and expansion of social housing.

- The payment of an ‘empty homes tax’ for those private properties deliberately kept unoccupied.
- Increase funding to income security programs as to put users above the poverty line.
- Improve access to disability support programs and welfare with increased flexibility to eligibility and other application processes.
- Free universal access to high-speed world wide web and email.

### **Immigration**

*Principle: The right to work and services for all people regardless of citizenship status.  
International working class solidarity.*

Transitional Demands:

- The right to public services for all people regardless of immigration status.
- Equal status and protection for all workers regardless of immigration status, including the right to collective bargaining.
- End to temporary workers programs and replacement with “good enough to work good enough to stay” legislation.
- An end to immigration detentions.
- Police force and any other service provider to be prevented from sharing information or in any way assisting with immigration enforcement.
- The implementation of an inclusive regularization program for non-status people that does not discriminate against working class/poor applicants.
- Expansion and community control of settlement services.
- Immediate asylum and assistance provided to those displaced by war (including deserters), disaster, persecution due to trade union activity, political activity, or discrimination (based on gender, sexuality, “race,” disability).

### **Education**

*Principle: Universal right to lifelong education.*

Transitional Demands:

- Increased funding to education to meet social need.
- An end to the growing role of the private sector in public education.
- Provision of school breakfast program to be sourced to local organic farmers where possible, from k-grade 12.
- No state funding to religious schools of any denomination.
- Roll back and eventually eliminate tuition fees for post-secondary institutions.
- Universal grants as opposed to selective student loans to assist post-secondary students.
- Forgiveness of outstanding student loan debts.
- Development and encouragement of lifelong learning adult education programs.
- Introduction of labour studies into public school curriculum.
- Expansion and investment in library system and community centres.
- Increased funding to publicly owned and democratically controlled media.
- Protect the right to academic freedom and free expression for teachers and students in schools, colleges and universities.

## **Health**

*Principle: Universal right to quality healthcare.*

### Transitional Demands:

- Expansion and increased funding to healthcare to meet social need (including, ambulance, hospital, primary care, home care, elder care and public health).
- An end to the growing role of the private sector in healthcare. No privatization of healthcare and elimination of P3's.
- Expansion and increased role of publicly funded health research and development.
- Elimination of user fees.
- Socialized dental, vision, pharmaceutical and mental healthcare.
- Universal right to free and clean drinking water.

## **Justice and Human Security**

*Principle: Elimination of the economic and social roots of crime.  
The right to security and access to justice for all.*

### Transitional Demands:

- Ongoing police accountability forums incorporating councilors, community representatives, tenant association representatives, youth organizations and community workers to set police priorities and to hold police accountable to community. Forums will develop and facilitate ongoing police training.
- Real civilian oversight of police and prison system. Democratically run and community controlled body with powers to investigate and prosecute.
- Regular audits of police detention centres and prison system to ensure against human rights violations.
- The development of community restorative justice schemes that allow community input into addressing community based crime in order to increase community cohesiveness.
- Protection of the right to public assembly and demonstration free of harassment, assault, arbitrary arrest or violence by police, private security or provocateurs/police agents. Immediate investigation and if called for prosecution of those violating such rights.
- Increased investigation and prosecution of so called "white collar" crimes and institutional corruption with increased penalties for both.
- Legalization of marijuana.
- Regulation and taxation of marijuana production and distribution.
- Investment in and expansion of harm reduction programs to address drug abuse and addiction (including safe use sites and counselling).
- Decriminalization of sex trade work for sex trade workers. Protection for sex trade workers from those who force or coerce them into sex work or to obtain their earnings.
- Increased services for the health and safety of sex workers, including services that provide assistance for those who want to exit the trade.
- Increased investment in programs for at risk youth.
- Increased investment in legal aid. Increased coverage and universal access.
- Increased funding to women's shelters and rape crisis services.
- An end to imperialist military interventions.

## **Democratic Administration**

*Principle: working class self-determination and democratic control of governance.*

### Transitional Demands:

- Formation of community based democratic bodies to make land use/ planning decisions which cannot be overturned by unelected bodies.
- Eradication of patronage appointments to the judiciary, government bodies and the civil service.
- Reduction of ward sizes to make councillors more accessible and accountable to their constituents.
- Direct discussions with indigenous nations with the aim of indigenous self-determination and autonomy.
- Respect the results of a referendum in Quebec on the basis of a simple majority (50% + 1).
- A proportional approach to voting systems.
- The minimum age to vote and stand in all elections to be lowered to sixteen.
- Future elections to be held on fixed dates and over Saturday and Sunday to maximise voter turnout.
- Democratic transformation of all governing bodies and institutions including the development and implementation of constituent assemblies made up of neighbourhood, workplace and campus assemblies with decision-making powers.
- Any major changes to services must be approved by democratic assemblies.

*\*Note: The Solidarity Platform is a work in progress. When it was first ratified members noted that it required ongoing work and assessment particularly in the areas of ecology and indigenous nations.*

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