

PEOPLE'S VOICE

CANADA'S
LEADING
SOCIALIST
NEWSMEDIA

PRINTED BY UNION LABOUR IN CANADA
CANADA POST PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT #4001632

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The time for statements has long passed - Ottawa must take real action to end the genocide in Palestine! Pg. 2, 3, 4



AUGUST 1-31, 2025 | VOL. 33, #13 | \$2.00

CUTS?! NO THANKS! FUND PEOPLE'S NEEDS, NOT TANKS!



80 YEARS SINCE HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

Eighty years on, we remember the first nuclear bombing and recommit to peace and disarmament
pg.3

DOMESTIC "FREE TRADE" IS A NON-STARTER

Federal and provincial governments are driving to end interprovincial regulations, and we need to stop them
pg.7

GENDER EQUITY AND THE KEY ROLE OF UNIONS

A new report on maternity leave shows how far we still have to go to end gender discrimination
pg.8

FIRST NATIONS SLAM CARNEY'S SHAM SUMMIT

Twelve First Nations take on Mark Carney's "First Nations Summit" as an insulting sham exercise
pg.12

Pages from our past...

The Worker Vol 5 No 146 ~ August 8, 1925

Tremendous role of capitalist press in creating war psychology

Before the great war of 1914-18, workers were assured that a war of any considerable magnitude was impossible. Was not the Hague Peace Tribunal set up to prevent such a catastrophe? Were not the principles of brotherhood and goodwill being disseminated? And were not the Second International leaders passing anti-war resolutions?

But the war came just the same. And for over four years the working class, betrayed by their trade union and social democratic leaders, deprived of their industrial and political apparatus, were hurled into the holocaust of death to the tune of lying slogans such as a "fight for Democracy," a "war to end war," for "the self-determination of the peoples," etc.

How it was done

To many, the job of duping the masses into support of the war seemed impossible. But the capitalist class found it comparatively easy. They were in control of the State. And the State means more than parliament or the forces of coercion. The State includes all the means, methods and materials employed by the ruling class to perpetuate their rule, amongst which can be listed the manufacturing of "public opinion" and campaigns which have for their object the dethronement of mass reason and the transforming of peacefully inclined people into blood-thirsty atavistic animals.

The labour fakers

It was necessary to win the support of the Trade Union leaders, so their vanity, avariciousness, timidity and social climbing proclivities were played upon. Most of them did not need any urging – they wanted to be with the herd, particularly when emoluments, position and safety for their hides were assured.

The clergy came next. These hypocritical mouthers of "Peace" became recruiting agents and even peddled heaven as an inducement to workers to become murderers of their class.

The tremendous power of the press

But the greatest weapon of all in the hands of the capitalist class was the press. It did more than all the rest in working up the murder frenzy, in popularizing lying slogans, in lying about the origin and purpose of the war, in instigating terrorist acts against those who saw through their schemes and exposed their falsehood.

Preparing new wars

While some are attempting to lull the workers to sleep and minimize the danger of war, the preparation for another war on a vastly more gigantic and deadly scale goes feverishly on. British battleships are sent to the dominions to foster the war spirit. American battleships engage in mimic battles. The Canadian government follows in the wake of other governments and makes grants for military purposes.

The capitalist nations are striving to effect united military and naval action against the Soviet Union. Only their inability to compose their differences and their suspicion of each other prevents the consummation of the plot. ■

Media tries to soften people up for Carney's cuts, military spending hike



DAVE MCKEE

No sooner had Mark Carney announced his directive that all government departments – well, all except the military, the RCMP and Border Services – have to reduce their budgets by 15 percent over the next three years, then the corporate media began its campaign to soften people into accepting that such cuts were not only inevitable, but positive.

Sure, there have been plenty of articles about the ill effects of said reductions. These include interviews with public service workers and unions who (justifiably) fear massive job loss, pundits musing whether tax increases (for working people) could be used to reduce some of the cuts, and even the rare piece that connects (truthfully) the cuts to Carney's military spending hikes.

But despite this content, the overwhelming message pushed by the media is that these spending cuts are necessary, that we really have no option. Whether they invoke the bogeyman of Putin, Xi or Trump as the trigger, virtually all corporate outlets want us to believe that the real pertinent discussion isn't whether or not to cut, but how and where to cut.

Repeatedly, they remind us of how successful the Chrétien Liberals were in cutting spending and balancing the books back in the 1990s. They would have us believe that the Little Guy from Shawinigan not only did us all a kindness with his sweeping restructuring, but that it was even soothing!

Except, of course, that it's all hogwash.

True, the Chrétien government did balance the books. But it did it through rapid-fire savage cuts to social programs. In large part, this was done through Ottawa's unilateral reorganization of health and social transfers to provinces, which political scientist Michael J. Prince said "delivered ... sudden and deep absolute cuts in transfer payments to the provinces, [where] 1993 levels of federal spending on healthcare were achieved again only in 2004." Overall, the shortfall in cash transfers from Ottawa to the provinces during Chrétien's time is estimated to be over \$26 billion.

And let's not forget the Liberal's sacking of Employment Insurance. Previously called Unemployment Insurance, the program was renamed EI

and substantially changed in 1996. Notably, qualification requirements were severely tightened up and benefits were chopped, but workers still paid into the plan.

It was a brilliant ruse, really. Within just a few years, largely because of restrictive qualification requirements, EI built up a surplus of \$57 billion – equal to about 40 percent of Canada's total health spending at the time – which Ottawa then used to balance budgets and offer whopping tax cuts to corporations and the very wealthy.

Far from successful or progressive, let alone "kind," Chrétien's spending cuts left a legacy of a widening income gap, growing poverty and underfunded, crumbling services. The damage was so profound that the Liberal health cuts from the 1990s have been pinpointed as the events which left Canada unprepared to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. The cumulative effects of the EI reforms are shockingly and sweepingly harmful for workers' rights, poverty, gender and racial equity, physical and mental health, and union strength.

So, when the corporate media tells us that Carney's cuts can be implemented without much pain, because that's what Chrétien did, they're lying.

The problem is, a whole generation of working people has grown up without any memory of those days of austerity, let alone the level of program funding that preceded them. This means millions of working people don't have a frame of reference for assessing, rejecting and confronting the lies of the corporate media today – they have to be taught this history.

And that is the role of this publication. Against the corporate media's efforts to ideologically massage people into accepting Carney's spending cuts and his maniacal military spending hikes, People's Voice stands as a source of information that working people can trust and rely upon. By exposing the real dynamics behind government policies like these, and by agitating for and helping to organize resistance to them, we are a crucial part of the working-class struggle to defeat corporate power, to advance and win progressive reforms, and to build the movement for socialism.

We're ready for this fight – let's lean into it together!

Humanitarian organizations worldwide: Israel is starving Gaza, the blockade must be lifted!

More than 100 humanitarian and human rights organizations around the world including Oxfam, Doctors Without Borders, Save the Children and Amnesty International have called on governments to act urgently to open all land crossings with the Gaza Strip, restore the full flow of food, clean water, medicine, emergency supplies and fuel – through a UN-led humanitarian mechanism – and lift the blockade on the Strip while immediately approving a comprehensive ceasefire.

The call was issued on the two-month anniversary of the operation of the "Gaza Humanitarian Facility" program, which is controlled by Israel and the US. In the joint statement, the organizations warned that aid workers themselves are forced to stand in food lines, exposed to live fire, while the blockade imposed by Israel is causing mass starvation among the population. According to them, the stock of medicine and essential equipment has completely run out, and the health condition of the teams and colleagues is deteriorating before their eyes.

The organizations note that massacres at food distribution centers have become



routine. UN data indicates that by July 13, 875 Palestinians had been killed while trying to obtain food – 201 of them on the roads leading to aid centres, and the rest during the distribution. Thousands more were injured. It was also reported that the occupation army forcibly expelled almost 2 million people, as part of a mass evacuation order issued on July 20, pushing Gaza residents into an area less than 12 percent of the size of the Strip.

The World Food Program also warned that current conditions do not allow for continued operations.

Using starvation as a weapon against civilians is defined as a war crime. The organizations report that huge amounts of food, water, medicine, emergency supplies and fuel are being held in warehouses inside and outside Gaza, but are being prevented from reaching those in need. They accuse Israel of imposing bureaucratic and military restrictions that have created chaos, hunger and mortality.

Doctors also report a sharp increase in cases of severe malnutrition, especially among children and the elderly. Diseases

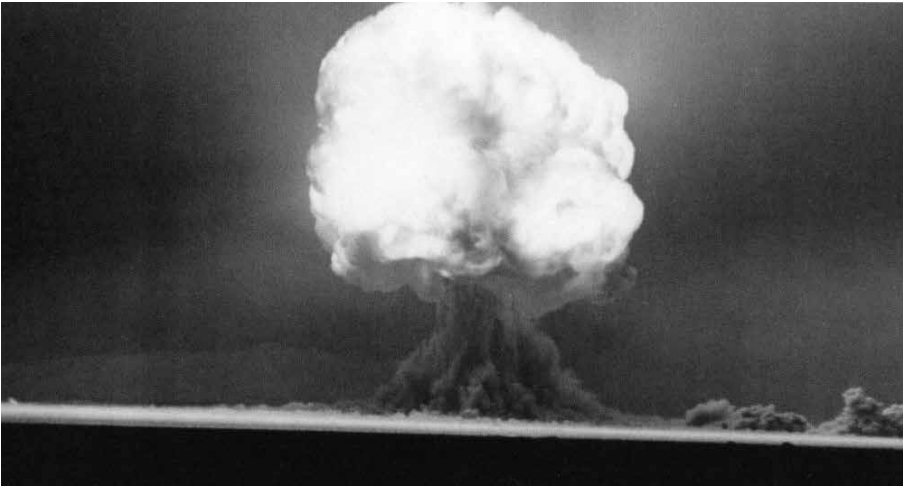
such as acute diarrhea are spreading, markets are empty, garbage is piled up in the streets, and adults are collapsing in the streets from hunger and dehydration.

The number of aid trucks entering Gaza does not exceed 28 per day – an amount that is not enough for two million people, many of whom have not received aid for weeks.

The organizations emphasize that the UN-led humanitarian system has not failed – it has been prevented from acting. Humanitarian agencies have the resources and capacity to respond, but they do not have access to the population, or even to their own staff. Two weeks ago, Israel and the European Union announced steps to expand aid, but according to the organizations, the declarations remain hollow in the face of the lack of change on the ground. "Every day that passes without a sustained flow of aid means more deaths from preventable diseases. Children are starving as they wait for promises that have not yet been fulfilled."

The organizations describe a situation in which Palestinians in Gaza move between

80 years later, the first nuclear weapon blast is not forgotten



The events in New Mexico 80 years ago are often neglected. Before the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the United States bombed their own people.

Trinity was the codename for the first ever use of a nuclear weapon. The plutonium bomb exploded at Alamogordo bombing range (later renamed White Sands Proving Ground) in New Mexico on July 16, 1945 was the same design as the one used a few weeks later against Nagasaki, which led to the deaths of at least 70,000 people. The bomb used to kill 140,000 people at Hiroshima was a uranium bomb.

The bombing in New Mexico was labelled a test, but this doesn't convey the destructive power and the harm the nuclear explosion unleashed on the people living in the vicinity – it was not an unpopulated region as often claimed and as portrayed in the 2023 film *Oppenheimer* – and the environment. Fallout from the explosion reached 46 states throughout the US and spread to Canada and Mexico.

In spite of expert medical advice, the government made no effort to evacuate people either before or after the explosion and some people even played in the white flakes that came floating down on them. People living in Tularosa 40 miles (64 kilometers) away were thrown out of their beds by the blast and ash fell for days which “got on everything, went everywhere, the soil, the water, ... everything they were eating or drinking in 1945 after the test was contaminated, but they didn't know it,” says Tina Cordova whose father was a child at the time but suffered a lifetime of cancers and died of the disease aged 71.

The problems that began in New Mexico set off a chain of events that led to 2000 so-called test explosions all over the world over the following decades. Communities exposed to radiation and having their land, air and water contaminated, causing inter-generational harm.

Recognition and restitution

The recent extension of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) to more people and the increase in compensation is a welcome step, but, unfortunately, it doesn't go far enough. Campaigners were looking for it to be extended to cover all of Nevada, Arizona, Montana, Guam and other places impacted by nuclear weapons testing.

The communities affected by nuclear test explosions all over the world, including in the US, have organized themselves and pushed for governments to provide healthcare, support and compensation for people they have harmed. These communities are also at the forefront of global efforts to abolish nuclear weapons through the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) that is the only treaty to mandate support for people harmed by nuclear weapons and the cleanup of contaminated environments.

Never again

Since the first use in New Mexico, nuclear-armed states have harmed countless people by exploding nuclear weapons to

test them. Every country that has nuclear weapons bombed people it had a duty of care for through their testing programs. The communities selected for these explosions were usually either colonized or Indigenous peoples and were given no choice.

Governments that have nuclear weapons don't care about the impact of those weapons on people, some of them even try to stop scientific research into how nuclear weapons harm people and the environment. If they cared about their people, they would not just support such research, they would eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

Melissa Parke, Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), notes of the New Mexico bombing: “This was not an empty desert, as some claim, it was home to Indigenous Peoples and other local communities made up of families, children, workers and farmers. There was plant and animal life and sacred sites. What we commemorate here was not some historical event of 80 years ago with little relevance to today. The Trinity explosion was only the beginning of the nuclear weapons story, and we're honoured to join together with everyone to write its ending.” ■

ICANW.org

Memory from Hiroshima survivor Setsuko Thurlow

“I was just 13 years old when the United States dropped the first atomic bomb, on my city Hiroshima. I still vividly remember that morning. At 8:15, I saw a blinding bluish-white flash from the window. I remember having the sensation of floating in the air. As I regained consciousness in the silence and darkness, I found myself pinned by the collapsed building. I began to hear my classmates' faint cries: “Mother, help me. God, help me.” Then, suddenly, I felt hands touching my left shoulder and heard a man saying: ‘Don't give up! Keep pushing! I am trying to free you. See the light coming through that opening? Crawl towards it as quickly as you can.’

“As I crawled out, the ruins were on fire. Most of my classmates in that building were burned to death alive. I saw all around me utter, unimaginable devastation. Processions of ghostly figures shuffled by. Grotesquely wounded people, they were bleeding, burnt, blackened and swollen. Parts of their bodies were missing. Flesh and skin hung from their bones. Some with their eyeballs hanging in their hands. Some with their bellies burst open, their intestines hanging out. The foul stench of burnt human flesh filled the air. Thus, with one bomb my beloved city was obliterated.” ■



Urgent appeal from Palestine for immediate action to stop the ongoing mass killing from military weaponry and systemic starvation

"Stop the Israeli-American war and to save the Palestinian people!"

The Palestinian People's Party, in the name of our people, political forces, civil actors and all segments of our society, addresses you – and through you, all those concerned – calling for immediate intervention and the exertion of maximum pressure through all available means to halt the genocidal war being waged against our people, especially in the Gaza Strip, by the fascist Israeli government and occupation forces, with explicit American support and cover, alongside European inaction and disgraceful international silence.

Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip, in particular, have been subjected for over 20 consecutive months to a brutal, comprehensive genocide. This has resulted in the killing of more than 59,479 men and women, and no fewer than 140,355 injuries since October 7, 2023 – not to mention the thousands of people missing under the rubble, detained or forcibly disappeared by the occupation forces.

The situation in the Gaza Strip – home to more than two million Palestinians – has become completely unfit for human life, due to a deepening and expanding catastrophe caused by ongoing mass killings and the widespread, total destruction of everything. This devastation is being carried out with various forms of American, Israeli and European weaponry. Additionally, systematic starvation is being imposed, alongside the tightening of the comprehensive siege on the Strip, preventing the entry of essential supplies needed by its residents and their medical and service institutions.

As a result of the widespread policy of collective starvation among the population – which has led to the emergence of diseases related to severe malnutrition, especially among children, women and the elderly – more than 90 percent of Gaza's population now suffers from food insecurity. Around 596,000 people have entered a state of full-scale famine, and 259 patients and 69 children have died due to hunger and acute malnutrition. This has led to the complete severing of their basic lifelines, in blatant violation of all principles and provisions of international humanitarian law, particularly

the Geneva Conventions of 1948, as well as all human rights instruments and laws.

We appeal to you – and through you to your governments, parliaments and peoples, as well as to all political parties, social movements and solidarity groups in your countries – to act swiftly and intensively, using your influence and capacities at all levels to urgently and firmly demand, and exert all possible pressure on governments around the world and on all international bodies and organizations, in order to:

1. Immediately stop the Israeli genocide being carried out against the Palestinian people and end all forms of aggression against them.
2. Lift the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip, both externally and internally, and put an immediate end to the systematic starvation policy targeting its residents. Open all land crossings and establish safe and permanent humanitarian corridors, while ensuring the delivery of essential, life-saving and humanitarian supplies to the population.
3. Compel the Israeli government to withdraw all its forces and end all forms of occupation in the Gaza Strip.
4. Ensure the operation of international and local humanitarian organizations, and provide protection for aid convoys, hospitals and medical teams within the Strip.
5. Guarantee that all aid and essential supplies for Gaza's residents are delivered exclusively through international bodies – particularly United Nations agencies, first and foremost the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) – and other recognized humanitarian organizations.
6. Call on the UN Security Council and the United Nations to provide immediate international protection for Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territories. ■

Palestinian People's Party
July 20, 2025

Aid groups: "Decisive actions must be taken" to save lives in Gaza

■ FROM PG 2

hope and destruction, waking up every morning to a harsher reality, with the damage not only physical – but also psychological. “Survival seems like a distant dream,” they write. “The humanitarian system cannot operate on the basis of empty promises. Aid workers cannot operate in impossible conditions or wait for political decisions that do not provide access.”

The call ends with a demand for the countries of the world: Do not wait for approval to act. Decisive actions must be taken – an immediate and stable ceasefire; the removal of all bureaucratic and military restrictions; the opening of all land crossings; ensuring access to all of Gaza; rejecting models of

military-controlled partition; restoring an independent humanitarian mechanism led by the United Nations; continuing funding for neutral and independent humanitarian organizations.

States must take tangible steps to lift the blockade, including stopping arms and ammunition transfers. The organizations emphasize that symbolic gestures are no substitute for the legal and moral obligation of states to protect Palestinian civilians and enable the effective flow of aid. “States can – and must – save lives before there are no more to save.” ■

Zo Haderekh

EDITORIAL

THE TIME FOR STATEMENTS TO ISRAEL HAS LONG PASSED

So, Canada has signed another joint statement urging Israel to end its war on Gaza.

“The suffering of civilians in Gaza has reached new depths.” “The Israeli Government’s denial of essential humanitarian assistance to the civilian population is unacceptable.” “Permanent forced displacement is a violation of international law.”

All true, without question. To read the quotes in the news, you’d think that the government had actually done something. But in reality, Ottawa and its mostly European co-signatories have said very little and committed to even less.

Issued 21 months – nearly two years – into Israel’s genocidal campaign that has murdered 60,000 Palestinians, wounded 140,000, forcibly displaced 2 million and brought 600,000 to the brink of systemic starvation, the joint statement is notable for what it doesn’t say.

Nothing about the duration of Israel’s attacks. No mention of overall deaths or displacement figures. Zero reference to Israeli occupying forces. Not one single use of the word genocide.

Furthermore, rather than concrete actions on behalf of the Palestinian people they (finally) express some concern for, the signatories merely mouth an enfeebled threat that “We are prepared to take further action to support an immediate ceasefire and a political pathway to security and peace for Israelis, Palestinians and the entire region.”

They don’t talk about sanctions or arms embargoes. They steer well clear of mentioning support for the International Court of Justice call for states to recognize the illegality of Israel’s presence and not support the occupation. They don’t even mention the possibility that they might consider expelling Israeli diplomats.

When it comes to Ukraine, politicians in Ottawa are tripping over themselves to be the first in line to denounce the (soundly debunked) Holodomor. Then, they race each other to the pulpit to condemn China for the (soundly debunked) genocide of Uyghurs in Xinjiang.

But faced with an actual genocide, one that has been continuing for nearly two years and that has been verified by the International Court of Justice, the best the Canadian government can come up with is the threat to maybe take further action.

Other countries and peoples have taken a different, more principled approach. South Africa initiated the case before ICJ which considered Israel’s actions in Gaza and determined that they constituted genocide. The Cuban president has led Palestine solidarity marches in Havana and has publicly demanded that “the genocide stop now.” Belize, Bolivia, Colombia and Nicaragua severed diplomatic relations with Israel while Bahrain, Chad, Chile, Honduras, Jordan, South Africa and Turkey recalled their ambassadors from Israel. And the Houthis in Yemen blockaded the Red Sea to prevent passage of Israel-linked ships until the war on Gaza ended.

The time for statements to Israel has long passed. Ottawa needs to take real concrete action that includes:

- Sanctioning all Israeli leaders and military personnel responsible for war crimes, including but not limited to the ongoing genocide in Gaza;
- Imposing a comprehensive, two-way arms embargo on Israel now;
- Cancelling the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement and ceasing all trade relations with Israel that maintain or contribute to the occupation;
- Prohibiting Canadian charities from financing activities associated with Israel’s occupation;
- Reversing all actions which have demonized and criminalized Palestine solidarity, including by rescinding all statements and decisions which equate criticism of Israel with antisemitism. ♦



IN BRIEF



PEOPLE'S VOICE welcomes your letters. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity, and to refuse to print letters which may be libellous or which contain personal attacks.

Roll on democracy!

If ever we get the chance to decide together our common future, we will not let any of us get a far larger part of the wealth and leave a large group with just enough to survive.

Of course, such a call for real democracy can hardly be understood these days, as everyone seems convinced, despite all evidence, that “representative democracy” is democracy. This has been repeated so many times, over such a long period of time, in the mainstream media that even several progressive forces are buying it.

I can already hear strong reactions: “Oh, but this real democracy is not possible today, we are far too many.” Nonsense! First, the technology is there; second, and more importantly, most decisions should be taken by the concerned people, directly or indirectly, not by absolutely everyone. Plus, we should realize that real democracy would eliminate a lot of issues raised by the actual absence of democracy in terms of peace, fairness and the environment.

Most of what we can do now is listening to the rich and powerful ones, laughing at us, despising us, protected by this fiction of democracy – the representative democracy. A time will come, I hope, for our own collective future and the future of our planet, that democracy, real democracy, will prevail. ■

**Bruno Marquis
Gatineau QC**

Link between imperialism and global instability

The Beloyannis Club of the Communist Party of Canada organized a peace demonstration to promote a policy of peace and solidarity between the peoples of India, Pakistan and Kashmir in the Parc Extension neighbourhood in Montreal on June 18. Speakers were invited from the South Asian community of Parc Ex, local labour

unions, the Mouvement québécois pour la paix and the Communist Party of Canada.

Speakers made links to the ongoing genocide of Palestinians and the Israeli attacks on Iran to point out the common thread: wars only cause pain and suffering for the masses and profit for the ruling class.

People in Canada need to see the link between imperialism and growing global instability.

The government recently accepted, with enthusiasm, Trump and NATO demands to increase military spending to 5 percent of GDP by 2035. The US doesn’t plan to just sit on their hands now that they have achieved this ludicrous financial goal for the military alliance. For the working class in Canada, this means we will be seeing the largest spending cuts to social services that most of us have ever experienced in order to advance US imperialism.

War and austerity are on the menu for the working class in South Asia just as it is everywhere else around the world. We must rally together and build the political power necessary to struggle for peace and prosperity. ■

**Clément Liu
Montreal, QC**

Mamdani gives oxygen to suffocated US political landscape

Zohran Mamdani is everything that the US political establishment finds too dangerous for its liking. He is progressive. He is an immigrant. He is young. He is Muslim.

His New York mayoral campaign has generated energy similar to Bernie Sanders’ campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. His message has reverberated across boundaries – he attacks billionaires and corporations and speaks of affordability, issues that directly impact the working class in New York City and beyond.

Donald Trump, in his all too

familiar social media rage, called Mamdani a “Marxist lunatic.” But Mamdani is neither a Marxist nor a communist and has never claimed to be one either. He calls himself a democratic socialist, and he speaks to the anger and frustration felt by progressive voices everywhere. As the working class struggles to make ends meet, the billionaire class has seen its wealth increase manifold. New York regularly ranks among the most expensive cities in the world, and Mamdani’s message here hits as hard as it should.

He was also aided by the fact that his closest rival, Andrew Cuomo, saw his political fortunes dwindle following one scandal after the other. This has not made him throw in the towel, with indications being that he might enter the mayoral race as an Independent despite losing the Democratic primary to Mamdani.

In more ways than one, Mamdani and Cuomo are polar opposites. One is a political novice; the other is a political veteran. One criticizes the genocide in Gaza and says he will arrest Nethanyahu if he comes to New York City; the other one says that if elected, his first foreign trip in the world will be to Israel. One has the working class funding his campaign; the other one has the backing of billionaires and giant corporations.

For Mamdani to achieve what he has done is an incredible feat. But at the same time, we need to remember Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, progressive candidates who, in the end, succumbed to the established capitalist machinery of the Democratic Party. There are already voices within the Democratic Party speaking out against Mamdani.

Mamdani has won over large swathes of New York’s working class. His real test begins now when his own party will attempt to bring him down. Hopefully he stands his ground and does not go out with a whimper like other progressives before him. ■

**Salman Zafar
Surrey, BC**

PEOPLE'S VOICE

ISSN # 1198-8657 | PUBLISHED BY NEW LABOUR PRESS LTD.
CANADIAN PUBLICATIONS MAIL SALES PRODUCT AGREEMENT #40011632

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Aug 18 and for our Sept 16-30 issue by **Sep 8** to peoplesvoiceeditor@gmail.com

What is behind China’s successful leadership in tackling the climate crisis?

GANESH TAILOR

We are living through the prime existential threat facing life on this planet. The climate crisis is an undeniable reality born from the inherent contradictions of capitalism. The profit motive and its ecological impacts in development are increasingly borne by the planet and its peoples. We are continually told of supposed “solutions” that are, in reality, nothing more than greenwashing and toothless accords meant to at best manage decline, and at worst open new carbon markets.

Despite the ruthless propaganda emanating from the worst offenders in Washington and Ottawa, the People’s Republic of China, under the leadership of the Communist Party, is demonstrating the superiority of centralized and long-term economic planning to tackle this global challenge.

Setting the record straight

We must first address a half-truth which continues to echo off liberal walls that China is the world’s biggest polluter. China indeed has the highest absolute emissions of any country. But that is the half-truth. The other half requires us to ask where these emissions come from.

The PRC, with a population over 1.4 billion, will unsurprisingly have high yearly emissions. On a per capita basis, however, China’s first-place position tumbles well below that of the US and Canada.

Neither can we omit the historical record of obscene fossil fuel emissions on which the US and its partners in imperialism built their empire. These advanced capitalist countries accumulated and continue to accumulate a vast climate debt to the order of 60-86 percent of historical emissions and therefore have a primary responsibility to lead and support sustainable transition.

Conversely, China’s development is recent and while its share of cumulative emissions has risen to between 1-15 percent, it has supported one-eighth of the world’s population and produced a large part of those emissions in its role as the “workshop of the world” which manufactures a significant bulk of goods consumed outside its borders. Emissions from these imports are embodied in the toys, tools and electronics we conveniently find on the shelves of the nearest store.

Judging China as identical or worse based on the absolute emissions of today obscures the West’s centuries of far harsher and cumulative damage.



Domestic and global green transition

Unlike the anarchy of production and pursuit of quarterly profits inherent to capitalism, China’s Five-Year Plans allow for the massive, state-led mobilization of resources with long-term sustainable goals in mind. These initiatives, necessary for the common good, have led to the PRC’s rise as the world leader in solar panel production and installation and its dominance in wind and hydroelectric projects, along with rapid expansions in electric vehicles and high-speed rail.

While admirable, these efforts cannot transform China’s energy landscape overnight. Coal, one of the dirtiest fossil fuels, still dominates the energy mix powering

China, along with oil. However, the recent and massive uptick in development and instalment of renewable energy cannot be ignored. Installing more wind turbines and solar panels than the rest of the world combined makes it a safe bet to predict a monumental shift in China’s energy use patterns.

Chinese infrastructure initiatives do not halt at their border. Through the Belt-and-Road Initiative, Global South countries have received loans to build green infrastructure and develop their sovereign economies without having to concede to structural adjustment or austerity programs, as infamously required by the IMF and World Bank. Instead, China has worked with Pakistan and Zambia to build solar farms, Ethiopia and South Africa to build wind turbines, and Laos and Ecuador to build hydroelectric dams – to name only a few. These projects enable partner countries to diversify their energy sources, especially away from fossil fuels, and strengthen their sovereignty through economic growth and stability.

Cuba’s energy sovereignty

The 65-year-long economic war waged by the US against Cuba has been a suffocating siege designed with explicit and genocidal intent. Cuba’s energy sector has been a primary target of US imperialist aggression, preventing access to fuel, technology and spare parts for its Soviet-era energy grids. The resulting struggle is borne by all of Cuba, with the people enduring blackouts and fuel shortages impacting homes, refrigerators, hospitals and production.

To bolster Cuba’s energy sector is a much-needed lifeline. China has not merely sold technology or provided loans; it has donated solar farms, along with at least 70 tons of power generator parts and accessories to aid in Cuba’s energy grid’s robustness. China has additionally provided significant financing for solar infrastructure, with projections for solar powering two-thirds of present-day Cuban demand by 2028.

Oil can be sanctioned. The sun? Not so much. Every megawatt of Chinese-built solar energy is a megawatt out of reach of the US blockade. These projects are building Cuba’s energy sovereignty from the ground up, diversifying sources and making it less dependent on fossil fuel imports which are many times halted by the US.

A stabilized power grid directly translates to a better quality of life for everyday Cubans. Solar farms reduce the frequency and duration of blackouts and free up foreign currency, otherwise spent on oil, to be spent on crucial resources like food and medicine imports. Partnership with the PRC in energy diversification away from imperialist-led fossil fuel hegemony bolsters Cuba’s ability to serve its people and continue defending its hard-fought revolution.

The only way forward: socialism

Capitalism created the climate crisis and is incapable of solving it. Capitalist solutions are built to turn a profit, not reverse climate change. The PRC’s strategy of long-term and centralized planning, along with strategic market utilization, shows Canada and the world a viable path forward. It is important to recognize China’s real advances where it is leading the world towards a necessary and timely green transition – this means rejecting the rabid anti-China narrative pushed by governments and media in Canada.

Combating climate catastrophe means fighting for a public-led and planned green transition in Canada that ensures job growth in the green energy sector. This can only be achieved by shattering the stranglehold power of fossil fuel and natural resource monopolies.

There is no future for our planet and humanity if it continues to be dictated by profit. We need sharpen the struggle for socialism – the only viable future is one that is planned, collective and internationalist. ■



Spain’s electricity crisis points to the failure and danger of privatization

RODRIGO LEÓN CORDERO

Informed prudence suggests that when the effects of a catastrophe are systemic, it can never be attributed to a single cause. In every perfect storm, various elements come into play. This is the case with the collapse of Spain’s electrical system in the spring.

On April 28, the electrical flow in Spain became unstable after two periods of oscillations, in the Iberian Peninsula and in Europe, followed by generation loss at three substations. This led to emergency activation of disconnect mechanisms to protect the grid, so that in just 5 seconds, 15 gigawatts vanished from the Spanish electrical system and the Iberian system decoupled from Europe. This caused a massive blackout, which lasted at least ten hours throughout Portugal and Spain.

The collapse has prompted several questions about a system which until then was believed to be robust. As noted earlier, there are several factors at play.

The private sector will not invest in infrastructure

The first issue is that the private sector has not wanted to take responsibility for the necessary investments in infrastructure to ensure the security of the electricity system. Energy specialist Alonso Romero states that the privatization of Red Eléctrica de España (Spanish Electricity Grid, with 80 percent private capital) created a situation in which no one wants to bear the additional costs of stabilizers to facilitate the use of solar energy in the system.

In a 2019 report, the National Commission for Markets and Competition recognized the need to change “obsolete regulatory standards” in order to introduce such stabilizing elements into the grid. However, only a pilot project was carried out, which warned of the “strong economic impact that this would have [on the sector].”

“The tragedy of the commons” is the idea that what belongs to everyone ends up being devoured and plundered by everyone. But as the electrical collapse shows clearly, when the commons is privatized, the consequences are catastrophic for everyone. In fact, the situation is even worse: with 15 gigawatts disappearing from the system, high-voltage infrastructure has been damaged and now needs to be repaired.

The second issue driving this crisis is greed, with Spanish President Pedro Sánchez himself pointing clearly at private operators. On the day of the blackout, the generating companies seem to have acted as a cartel for their own short-term interests, by choosing to not activate gas-

fired power plants which were offline at the time of the collapse. Even though the government subsidizes companies for the operation of these plants, and their engagement would have partially alleviated the collapse, there is evidence that the private operators concluded that this was not profitable enough and therefore left the plants disconnected them from the grid.

This seemingly intentional idling of available power plants during a blackout, for reasons of economic profitability, points to a key failure of privatization. Specifically, when a small group of private corporations has control over an entire sector, they are willing to risk letting the system fail because they are unable to see beyond their own profit.

All of this raises a series of questions that need to be answered: Who in such a competitive sector is going to invest the necessary money? What role should public and private entities play in developing the electrical system? The experts will analyze the recent crisis to extract all lessons and evaluate the technical feasibility of possible solutions. At the same time, the responsible agencies and administrations will need to be courageous and decisive to implement the necessary changes.

The blackout allows us to clarify a chain of past decisions that have contributed to the collapse of the system. The first is the privatization of this sector, which leads to higher costs for consumers, a lack of transparency and a significant environmental impact. The second is the reliance on large-scale power plants instead of combining them with connected local networks that generate electricity as close as possible to where it is consumed.

A final but not insignificant lesson involves the role of the public sector. It is true that the pursuit of profits in the shortest possible time is typical of the private sector, so it is understandable (although not justifiable) that there has been no long-term strategy. However, this crisis shows that the public sector has also been driven by short-term interests, by failing to fulfill its regulatory function.

One thing is clear: major decisions do not emerge only from individual governments, but they also arise from decisions in decades past which are rooted in a savage capitalist energy model.

It is time for change – the crisis demands it. ■

Originally published at elsaltodiario.com
Translated from Spanish and edited for length and context by PV staff

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BC Communist Party convention elects new provincial leader, charts plan to build

PV VANCOUVER BUREAU

Meeting in Vancouver over the July 5-6 weekend, delegates from Communist Party clubs across British Columbia held the Party's 45th BC convention. Delegates elected a new provincial committee, including Robert Crooks as leader.

Originally from Manitoba, Crooks has been a political organizer on the west coast since late 2023. During that time, he has been active in the Cuba solidarity movement and in community struggles. He was a Communist Party candidate in the Victoria region in both the recent federal election and the provincial election in October 2024.

The outgoing provincial leader, Kimball Cariou (photo below), was elected as one of a new five-member BC executive, along with three other comrades who are active in trade unions and other people's movements.



The convention debated and amended two key documents – a political resolution which analyzes the impact of the economic and social crisis facing the working class and Indigenous peoples of BC, and an organizational report outlining the Party's plans to build on membership growth over the last several years. Reflecting a major change in membership demographics, most of the delegates were in their 20s to 40s, with only two of 15 members of the new provincial committee over the age of 45.

The political report focuses mainly on



the BC situation, especially the failure of the NDP government of Premier David Eby to follow up on some gains achieved by the labour and social movements after the defeat of the former right-wing Liberals in 2017. The trend in recent years has been to halt any real progress on major issues – housing, childcare, social assistance, etc. – as the Eby government yields to pressures from big capital, especially real estate developer interests and the natural resource extraction and export sector. Even the province's powerful public sector trade unions face an uphill battle in upcoming bargaining over new collective agreements.

One particularly alarming aspect of this trend is the rapid move away from the previous timid steps towards reconciliation and cooperation with First Nations in the province. Similar to the shifts by the new Liberal federal government, measures by the NDP here to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples have been shelved since the declaration of the US tariff war.

Communist Party clubs are increasingly involved and visible in struggles around these and many other issues. Look for Party tables and displays this summer and fall, including at Pride festivals, the People's Voice Walk-A-Thon on August 24 at Bear Creek Park in Surrey, Labour Day celebrations, and Main Street Car-Free Day in Vancouver. ■

Communists launch cross-Canada campaign against Carney's massive militarization and deep federal cuts

DREW GARVIE

This August, the Communist Party of Canada launches a major cross-Canada campaign against militarism and austerity, mobilizing for Labour Day and the International Day for Peace on September 21. Tens of thousands of leaflets and posters will be put to use across Canada, exposing Prime Minister Mark Carney's dangerous twin policies: a \$150 billion yearly military budget (the highest since WWII) and brutal 15-percent cuts to all public services.

Carney's plan – to hike military spending to 2 percent of GDP by 2026 and 5 percent by 2035 – squanders public wealth on fighter jets, warships and the US "Golden Dome" missile project. Simultaneously, his government imposes the deepest austerity cuts in modern history, slashing tens of billions from public services. All federal departments have been charged with reducing spending by 15 percent over three years, with half of that coming next year, except the RCMP, the Department of National Defence and Canada Border Services Agency.

These cuts dwarf Stephen Harper's 10-percent reductions and echo Jean Chrétien's 1990s dismantling of social programs, which sparked today's crises in healthcare, housing and inequality.

The CPC campaign, anchored by the slogan "Peace & Prosperity, Not War & Austerity!" which the Party used in the spring's federal election, highlights that a 75-percent reduction in military spending could fund any of the following annually: 330,000 social housing units, 3,000 primary schools, 40 hospitals or 1.3 million living-wage jobs.

"This isn't about defence," states the campaign leaflet. "It's a massive subsidy to arms dealers serving US and Canadian monopoly interests in controlling markets overseas. Meanwhile our communities crumble. We desperately need housing, schools, hospitals and good jobs – exactly what this war budget steals from us. The



capitalist class chooses war and profits. We choose peace and people's needs."

Carney's agenda exploits Trump's tariff threats to impose policies even Brian Mulroney and Stephen Harper couldn't implement. It was the Liberal government of the 1990s that seriously restructured the Canadian state into its current neoliberal form, but unlike Chrétien's cuts, which reduced military spending, Carney combines austerity with unprecedented militarization.

The Communist Party stresses the urgent need to rebuild Canada's peace movement, linking war spending to heightened risks of nuclear and world war, the acceleration of climate collapse, and the militarization of Canadian society emboldening far-right political forces.

The CPC demands immediate cancellation of military increases, reversal of all austerity cuts, withdrawal from NATO, and massive new social spending to expand health, housing, education and jobs. ■

Sign up for action alerts and campaign updates at communist-party.ca

Advocates mobilize to make cyclist safety a priority for Winnipeg City Council

GANESH TAILOR

Recent decisions by Winnipeg's City Council have made it clear that the city's streets are designed for vehicle speed, not community safety. Council has repeatedly ignored calls from as many as 48 delegates to reduce the speed limit to 30 km/h and immediately implement a pilot bike lane on Wellington Crescent. These calls follow the unfortunate killing of cyclist Rob Jenner last year by a speeding driver, while many more are killed across the city in preventable deaths every year.

Bike lanes and speed limit reductions are not luxuries – they are just as much safety devices as seatbelts, guardrails and helmets. Instead of working in favour of the safety of residents, councillors voted for a 220-day delay so they could conduct consultations with property owners. That is 220-days (minimum!) of unsafe conditions for cyclists to commute to work, school or wherever else they need to be. The committee's decision here demonstrates the privileged position afforded to property owners, many who don't live in the area, to the detriment of community safety.

Consultations are fine – so long as there is data to present. But how can real-world data be collected if not from the immediate implementation of pilot bike lanes? Seasonal speed limit reductions have already resulted in greater safety and use by cyclists. The data is in. These reductions are needed year-round.

Most recently, cyclists organized to sit-in

on the final decision by City Council. With the successful organization and instruction by organizers from Bike Winnipeg, a sea of red shirts worn by cyclists and allies filled Council chambers. Even then, councillors could be seen texting and scrolling on their phones while two delegates spoke, including Wendy van Loon, the wife of the late Rob Jenner. Janice Lukes, Chair of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works, walked out as the subsequent delegate spoke.

With the repeated delays, ignoring of delegates and residents, and generally arrogant attitude, councillors' goal seemed more than ever to be killing public support for the bike lane pilot project. While one councillor proposed an amendment to move up construction, Council ultimately voted the amendment down, maintaining the 220-day delay.

Organizers are not giving up. Bike Winnipeg implored attendees afterwards to keep the momentum going and the conversation alive at the monthly Critical Mass Winnipeg group bike rides which meet on the last Friday of every month at 5 pm in Central Park. A pilot bike lane is immediately needed and is the only way critical data can be obtained and used to fine-tune a long-term, sustainable, and safe solution for community well-being on Wellington Crescent.

Cyclists in Winnipeg – and everywhere – deserve safety. Bike lanes and speed limit reductions are key elements of making that a reality. ■

Health coalitions ring alarm bells, reject government plan to expand military budget

On July 17, ahead of the gathering of First Ministers and the Council of the Federation, health coalitions from across Canada issued a joint statement saying that governments claiming to prioritize the economy while dismantling public healthcare have "lost their moral compass."

"We remind our political leaders that the economy exists to serve people, not the other way around, and the economy is more than militarism and private sector projects," read the statement signed by (Alberta) Friends of Medicare, BC Health Coalition, Canadian Health Coalition, Nova Scotia Health Coalition, Ontario Health Coalition and PEI Health Coalition.

"If a person falls ill or is injured and cannot access healthcare or mental healthcare, there is no economy for them. If a 70-year-old goes to a private clinic and is forced to use their life savings and pay thousands of dollars for their surgery, what chance do they have to get out of poverty for the rest of their life? If a person has diabetes and cannot afford their insulin and supplies, what economy is there for them?"

"We urgently remind our political leaders that access to universal, comprehensive public healthcare is a core foundation of any just economy. Any governments that claim to prioritize the economy while ignoring the collapse of health care have lost their moral compass."

The health coalitions bluntly warn that Canada's public healthcare system is in open crisis, and specifically point to un-



derfunding and privatization as the main factors.

"Runaway privatization is taking funding and staff away from public healthcare services. Staffing shortages are a national catastrophe, forcing emergency departments to close and leaving health care workers with impossible workloads while patients wait longer and suffer more. Private clinics are violating the Canada Health Act, charging patients hundreds to thousands of dollars for surgeries and diagnostic tests in illegal user fees and extra-billing.

"Seniors can't access the care they need. Mental health and addiction services are underfunded, subject to privatization and cuts, or are simply unavailable. Millions still do not have access to family medicine. The implementation of the first

Domestic “free trade” is not the path to independence

CAM SCOTT

Since taking office in March, Prime Minister Mark Carney and his government have ushered in an astonishing range of US-compliant, deregulating policies – all under cover of an “elbows up,” patriotic agenda. Whether dismantling a range of ministries pertaining to disability, labour and gender equality, pledging \$150 billion a year to military expansion, or scrapping the digital services tax on multinational tech giants, Carney’s government has been a blessing to the Trump GOP as well as the forces of reaction and austerity at home.

Amid these dangerous policy turns, much has been written of Carney’s pledge to comprehensively deregulate interprovincial trade. This free market bait-and-switch was initiated by a range of right-wing provincial governments, eager to offset losses from trade with US regions, and largely portrayed in the media as a benefit to small businesses. But the decades-old demand to bolster continental integration with domestic free trade originates with transnational monopolies, and is a straightforward fulfillment of US priorities during the present, soon-to-be overstated, trade war.

According to a June 30 press release from Internal Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland, the government has now eliminated all 53 federal exceptions to interprovincial free trade. These barriers, mostly pertaining to procurement of goods and services, follow the passage of *Bill C-5, the One Canadian Economy Act* on June 26. Together, these announcements make good on Carney’s post-election pledge to remove all interprovincial trade regulations by Canada Day. This bill grants the federal government unprecedented power to rush development across the country, effectively bypassing democratic protocol and Indigenous participation for the sake of “the national good.”

As Freeland removes federal exceptions for financial entities, commercial land development and transportation services, and Carney proposes to rush resource-intensive development projects, it’s clear that there is much more at stake here than the interaction of provincially run liquor stores with microbreweries, or any number of other petty interests used as cover by proponents of unlimited free trade.

As noted, the removal of trade regulations has been a longstanding, stated goal of Canadian and US monopolies. But now, in an ingenious turn, the media representation of this demand has been delegated to small businesses, owner-operators and independent farmers, among other hard-pressed interests.

This conceals the true nature of such summary deregulation, which threatens food security, labour law, healthcare and Indigenous sovereignty at once. The fact that these deregulating moves implicate so many areas of life at once, from the issue of marriage licenses to timber harvesting rights, smacks of concealment and deceit.

Who is driving these demands? For many years, “interprovincial trade barriers” were a pet obsession of a small company of policy wonks, accountancy firms and provincial Chambers of Commerce – hardly a popular concern. Against the backdrop of Trump’s tariffs, however, the lifting of interprovincial trade restrictions has become a matter of consensus across all major parties and jurisdictions.

Carney’s pledge to deregulate interprovincial trade only chases the resolve of premiers across Canada, who have embarked on their own negotiations and still hold most of the decision-making power with respect to domestic trade. Since April 2025, Ontario Premier Doug Ford has signed memoranda of understanding with multiple provinces, pledging to “unleash the province’s economy.” These measures are part of *Bill 2, the Protect Ontario through Free Trade within Canada Act*. As one expects, the act boasts of increased labour “mobility” and reduced



“red tape,” essentially redescribing the market conditions under which workers and small producers are forced to cast an ever-wider net for opportunity as a space of personal freedom.

In fact, many unions across the country have raised the alarm at this kind of language. Both the Manitoba Nurses Union and the Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals have voiced concerns about the interaction of increased labour “mobility” with the deteriorating conditions of the province’s healthcare system. A 2024 survey of MAHCP members revealed that two out of three health professionals were already considering leaving their jobs, and relaxed licensing requirements across jurisdictions could facilitate flight to private healthcare providers outside of the province.

Manitoba’s own *Bill 47, the Fair Trade in Canada Act* doesn’t address labour mobility, to the chagrin of the Chambers of Commerce. Rather, this legislation concerns the mutual recognition of standards and certification across multiple jurisdictions, which means that a good or a service that meets one province’s standards will be treated as if certified in Manitoba.

This is certainly expeditious, but global environmental lobbies and corporate watchdogs have repeatedly flagged how mutual recognition between trading partners often entails a general regression to the least stringent labelling practices for a given commodity. Mutual recognition, writes the Corporate Europe Observatory, is “trade-speak for lowering standards.”

For a clearer accounting of just who benefits from such policy – and it isn’t workers – we should look to its loudest champions. Revealingly, Ford’s “Protect Ontario” act opens with an approving citation of the MacDonald-Laurier Institute, a right-wing think tank long purposed at the deregulation of domestic trade. Since its formation in 2010, the MLI has published extensively against trade regulations, arguing that any restriction on the free movement of goods and services in Canada infringes the constitutional rights of capital.

For many years, MLI has lamented on record that provincial momentum in the west can’t suffice to create a country-wide free trade zone, calling for federal intervention and leadership. Today, Trump-by-way-of-Carney seems to have delivered beyond their wildest fantasies.

The instigating role of MLI lobbyists is evident throughout the Protect Ontario Act, which uses popular suspicion of tariffs to portray existing regulations as already punitive. “Statistics Canada’s modelling estimates suggest that internal trade barriers are equivalent to an almost 7 percent tariff,” the Act claims, which cheaply commends Ford’s own mercantilist bluff before the US as well as his present designs on domestic markets.

Amid a cost-of-living crisis, this exploits the commonsense idea that, as tariffs are absorbed by consumers at market, fewer licensing costs for owners and greater competition will be transparently reflected in prices. This consumer appeal is extremely limited, however, where monopoly prices permit no such relief.

■ INTERPROVINCIAL REGULATION, PG 10



DEMOCRACY DISMISSED: Ford’s school board takeover is an attack on public education and local democracy

PV ONTARIO BUREAU

In a sweeping attack on public education and local democracy, Doug Ford’s Ontario government used the last day of school, June 27, as the opportunity to seize the province’s four largest school boards: the Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board and Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board.

Education Minister Paul Calandra claimed that the move was an act of fiscal responsibility, citing “mismanagement” at each of the four boards. But the fact that the provincial government deliberately and quickly liquidated the democratically elected boards – including by seizing trustees’ mobile phones and blocking their email, effectively preventing them from communicating with the constituents that elected them – shows Calandra’s comments to be a cynical smokescreen.

The real plan is to accelerate the Ford Conservatives’ drive to defund, dismantle and privatize Ontario’s public education system, while simultaneously imposing a regressive and narrow-minded “back to basics” ideology. The government and its right-wing allies have weaponized this slogan to undermine progressive curriculum; gut funding for a well-rounded education including arts, sports and vital support services; and marginalize communities and organizations calling for equity and inclusion.

The takeover also sets the stage for the sweeping sell-off of school lands and buildings, further transferring public wealth to the private sector.

The groundwork for this power grab was laid by Bill 33, the Supporting Children and Students Act, granted the education minister sweeping and undefined authority to override local decision-making under the guise of “public interest.” But appointing provincial supervisors is nothing less than an anti-democratic manoeuvre that strips democratically elected trustees of their mandate, their pay, and their ability to represent their communities.

Progressive politicians and movements hold considerable influence at the local level, and this action against local school boards is designed to target and silence opposition. It is a continuation and escalation of Ford’s many other attacks on local democracy, including slashing the size of Toronto City Council during a municipal election campaign, introducing “strong mayor” powers, and overriding local governments’ abilities to decide on bike lane infrastructure within their municipalities.

The school board takeovers follow a pattern seen under past right-wing governments, including the 2002 takeover of the TDSB by the provincial Conservative government of the day. Ford’s moves also align with the dangerous trend in provinces like Nova Scotia and Quebec, where elected boards were abolished entirely.

The result of school board abolition is a bureaucratic, unresponsive system that is detached from community needs, where parental concerns are ignored and deci-

sions lack public oversight. However, it is a situation which suits right-wing provincial governments well, as they do not have any local opposition to their defund and privatize agenda.

The government’s narrative of “mismanagement” is a diversion from the real crisis, which is the deliberate and systemic underfunding of public education by consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments. The Ford government alone has cut a staggering \$6.3 billion from education since 2018, when adjusted for inflation and enrolment growth. This engineered scarcity – creating larger classes, gutting special education supports, leaving infrastructure to crumble resulting in sweltering classrooms, and forcing the cancellation of essential programs – is the root cause of the deficits boards face.

The provincial funding formula itself is fundamentally flawed, failing to cover the actual fixed costs of running boards. This was explicitly confirmed by the Ontario Auditor General in 2024. Even the PricewaterhouseCoopers report on the TDSB, commissioned by the government, found no wrongdoing and only challenges stemming from inadequate funding. History repeats itself because the core issue remains unaddressed: inadequate, inequitable funding forces boards into impossible choices, and when trustees, reflecting community aspirations, refuse to make catastrophic cuts to student well-being, they are punished.

This takeover is a key tactic in the Ford government’s broader assault on public services and democratic rights. It follows a standard right-wing playbook to defund, destabilize, demolish democracy and privatize: first, starve public institutions of necessary resources; second, blame the resulting crisis on local administrators; third, seize control and eliminate local representation to silence dissent; and fourth, open the door for private interests.

The TDSB’s vast real estate holdings are a prime target for this privatization push, facilitated by the Ford government’s previous legislation, which streamlines school property sales. This follows a restriction on closures of schools during a cut of funding repair, meaning that there are properties which have languished for years vacant and are no longer repairable at all. Indeed, the government will be “forced” to sell them – likely at a discount.

As a result of the takeover, the minister has the power to direct what properties and assets to sell, how much to sell it for, and also who to sell it to during.

The Ontario Conservatives and Mark Carney’s federal Liberals both plead poverty while presiding over obscene wealth concentration. There is endless money for militarism and war, corporate handouts, subsidizing private spa developments at Ontario Place, and buying out beer monopolies so that retail monopolies can privatize beer and wine sales, but never enough for children’s classrooms, for healthcare, or for social housing. This exposes the lie of austerity: money exists, but it is delib-

■ NEED TO MOBILIZE, PG 10

LABOUR

Care workers approaching 4th month of strike

Twenty-five care workers at the Villa Colombo facility in Toronto are approaching their fourth month on the picket line. The members of CUPE 5525 went on strike May 28 after first contract negotiations broke down.

Key issues include sick day provisions and benefits for part time staff members. Villa Colombo did not meet with the union bargaining team for weeks, and has hired scabs to perform bargaining unit work during the strike.

During a solidarity picket organized by CUPE Ontario, provincial Secretary-Treasurer Yolanda McClean called for the employer to return to the table. “We are putting Villa Colombo on notice that continued disrespect to these striking workers will not be tolerated. CUPE 5525 has the full support of all 230,000 CUPE Ontario members ... we are also ready and able to ramp up the pressure if needed.”

Abbotsford Rogers strike continues as bargaining resumes

After weeks of delay and inaction, Rogers Communications is finally returning to the bargaining table with striking Abbotsford technicians from USW Local 1944.

“Workers have been clear as Rogers’ last offer was overwhelmingly rejected,” said Local 1944 President Michael Phillips. “The company needs to come to the table ready to move off their entrenched positions and bring forward a contract that respects the value of our members’ work.”

The striking technicians in Abbotsford are asking for equal treatment with their counterparts in Vancouver and Langley, where the work, responsibilities and customer expectations are identical.

As the dispute enters the one-month mark, Rogers continues using managers, including some brought in from outside the province to perform the work of striking union members, a tactic that undermines the spirit of federal anti-scab legislation and meaningful collective bargaining.

Alberta teachers closer to strike

Alberta teachers have delivered a 95-percent strike vote to their union, the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA).

Key issues are large class sizes, increasing classroom complexity, dwindling supports, and wages that do not account for these challenges or keep pace with inflation.

The union says the strong strike vote sends a clear message: “We are united, we are determined, and we will no longer hold up a crumbling public education system.”

ATA president Jason Schilling said, “For too long, teachers have been proping up a system that is under-resourced and overburdened. We are expected to do more with less every year. The government needs to act now, because Alberta’s kids can’t wait. The future of public education – our future – depends on it.”

Quebec ferry workers continue strike actions

Faced with little progress in contract negotiations, workers at the Matane-Baie-Comeau-Godbout ferry in eastern Quebec continue to hold strike actions. The next action is scheduled to start at the end of July and continue until August 3.

The workers, who are members of the CSN union, have been without a collective agreement since April 1, 2023. They voted by 90 percent to authorize the union with pressure tactics including an unlimited bank of strike days.

Key issues are improved wages and working conditions.

Unions are key to fighting gender discrimination in the workplace and society



POSTAL WORKERS STRIKE FOR PAID MATERNITY LEAVE IN 1981

Report on maternity leave shows pattern of job loss, reduced wages and denied promotions

JEANNE MCGUIRE

A report issued in June gives statistical weight to what many women already know – that becoming a mother can lead to unemployment or reduced earnings. The report, released by Moms at Work and legal firm Hudson Sinclair LLP that specializes in employment issues, documents a host of problems that women who take maternity leave confront.

Based on a survey of 1,390 women who took maternity leave during 2022 and 2023, the report highlights the fact that 15 percent of them lost their employment during their leave. This happened even though Canadian law stipulates that women who take maternity leave have the right to return to work in the same position they held prior to leave, or one of similar responsibility and remuneration.

A further 26 percent reported reduced earnings after their leave ended, and 25 percent were denied promotions. More than 15 percent were reassigned undesirable duties.

There are two key takeaways from the report: the problems in the maternity leave system and the problem of employer abuse of employees who take maternity leave.

The law in Canada gives women the right to 17 weeks of maternity leave (distinct from parental leave), but only 15 weeks of maternity benefits paid under the Employment Insurance (EI) plan. Under EI, women receive 55 percent of their wages while on maternity leave. Officially, this plan offers job protection during the leave so that the returning mother has the right to their position upon return to work – or one of similar responsibility and equal in pay.

Fifty-five percent of wages is inadequate for many households, particularly considering the fact, as the report notes, that 30 percent of women are the primary earner in family. Indeed, some would be the only earner in a household in today’s employment market.

A further problem, and one particularly serious given that the report highlights 15 percent of women losing their job during their maternity leave, is that workers’ right to employment insurance for job loss can be lost during leave. The result for those women who do lose their jobs while on leave or even shortly thereafter is that they are now, in fact unemployed but with no right to EI benefits.

The problem paying for maternity leave through EI is that maternity is not

unemployment; maternity is leave from employment for medical or family reasons, and it needs to be separated from EI.

The report calls for a new, standalone plan that provides, instead of maternity leave, parental leave with a shorter wait time and benefits based on income rather than hours worked. It also calls for the benefit amount to be 100 percent for 9 months, 75 percent for 12 months or 60 percent for 18 months, available for either parent.

While the report does not call for it, it would seem logical that such a standalone agency for parental leave could also be made responsible for enforcement of the law regarding the right to return with no loss of position or wage level. A simple phone call to the agency should then be enough for the agency to advise the employer of the requirements of the law.

That would help address the issue of employer failure to meet their obligation to return mothers to their previous position at their previous wage. As it stands now, if your employer fires you, lays you off or ends your contract, your only recourse is to get yourself a lawyer and launch a civil action against them.

In the midst of looking after a new baby and now having to find a new job, many do not have the energy, time, financial resources or emotional stamina required to go through such an ordeal. If you were cynical, you might conclude that the employer is counting on many employees, facing such an effort, to not pursue their rights under the law.

Critical role of unions

The authors of the report and the organizations that commissioned it are to be congratulated for highlighting the problems that women and their families face with respect to maternity leave in Canada – the problems with the plan itself and with the employers who violate the law with respect to return to work.

However, they did not address an important mechanism for addressing these problems – unionization. They cannot be faulted for this failure; it was not the purpose of the study, which wanted to draw attention to a given injustice that many are facing.

There is only one reference to unions in the report, pointing out that only 36 percent on non-union mothers received employer provided top-up during maternity leave.

There are, unfortunately, no statistics available on the percentage of union moth-

ers who do receive a top-up, but a quick internet search returned the following: “unions usually include a top-up of anywhere from 75 percent to 90 percent.”

Without a top-up, parental leave is unpaid leave for up to 63 weeks (71 weeks if it is shared between the parents). The internet search on union benefits indicated that many union agreements include paid parental leave for up to 52 to 57 weeks.

Moreover, no union would allow its members to have their legal right to return to their previous position violated. I remember, as a shop steward, representing a young mother who was a part-time worker. When she returned to work, she was told her previous position was now filled by someone else and the employer had decided to keep the new employee in the position, implying that they liked the new employee better than the one who was returning to work. When I pointed out that we were not interested in how they felt about the new employee and that the law stated that the employee on maternity leave had the right to return to her previous position, they went off to discuss the matter. When they came back, they informed us that they had “decided” that they would allow the returning mother her previous position.

I must admit to taking some delight in correcting their statement to let them know that they had not “decided” anything, that they were doing merely what the law required of them.

This very useful report by Moms at Work and Hudson Sinclair has given weight to demands that women have raised concerning inequities and injustices they face in the workplace with respect to maternity leave and the right to return to work following leave. They have offered useful proposals for how the problem could be addressed via legislation.

Everyone knows that winning advances via legislation is a difficult and often lengthy process. Unionization, while in many cases also difficult, does offer a possibly faster route to benefits, often better than what would be achieved via legislation. Moreover, unions are one of the major forces pushing for social programs that benefit its members as well as the rest of society.

The more people in unions, the more unions there are, the more unions with women prepared to fight for their rights, the better our chance of winning new legislation to right this wrong. ■

15%

of women who take maternity leave lose their jobs while on leave

26%

of women returning from maternity report reduced earnings

25%

of women workers are denied promotions after their maternity leave

Out of the Cold shelter workers hold public rally in Halifax after mass terminations



Upwards of 200 people attended a rally on July 15 at Province House in Halifax, to show solidarity with 42 Out of the Cold (OTC) community service workers who were fired without notice on July 8 by the Nova Scotia government. The government also shut down operations at the housing shelter.

The workers and their union, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 2, are calling on the Tim Houston government take three steps: First, require the new service provider to offer employment to the existing experienced workers that have fostered relationships with residents; second, respect the workers' collective bargaining agreement; and third, meet with the workers to plan a transition that will keep the community safe, respects workers and the needs of the people living in the Out of the Cold facilities.

Julie Brown, SEIU Local 2 member, was an OTC employee until the mass termination last week. "The actions of the provincial government to abruptly close Out of the Cold are appalling," she said. "The sudden and unexpected closure that took place last Tuesday was undignified for our team and residents we serve. There was no need for it."

On July 8, Houston's government left 42 workers jobless without notice as it suddenly shut down Out of the Cold operations. OTC had been running two modular supportive housing sites, one on Cogswell Street in Halifax and the other on Church Street in Dartmouth. At the time of the abrupt closure, 60 residents were being housed.

Carlo Cininni was a Resident Support Worker at the Dartmouth site and had been at OTC since June 2023. He was enjoying a day off, unaware of the events unfolding at his workplace. "The Dartmouth site was given only 15 minutes to vacate the premises. Some of my colleagues were threat-

ened with arrest if we went past that time. My colleagues were told that they could not say goodbye to clients. It was a traumatizing experience for my co-workers."

The workers are not refuting concerns around mismanagement, but say that if mismanagement was the concern, this is not the way to go about fixing the situation.

"As a Union, we were actively invested and organizing towards improving the workplace," said Local 2 member Carlo Cininni. "I am proud of the work we did."

"What message is the government sending about how it values workers and the most vulnerable in the province by abruptly laying off unionized housing workers during a housing and cost-of-living crisis?"

"We were helping keep people off the street, indoors and providing a safe space for clients," said Austin Hiltz, a Resident Support Worker at the Halifax site since June of 2022. "Workers shouldn't be punished for what the Houston government says is mismanagement."

Many at the July 15 rally work in nearby shelters and supportive housing efforts. Amongst them was Shannon Power, an employee at Welcome Housing and a member of SEIU Local 2.

"Our message to the government-bosses that trampled on the livelihoods of 42 working families is simple: We are a union that fights back!" Power also announced the launch of a Workers' Council that unifies housing workers within SEIU to organize powerfully, together.

Although the OTC board published a statement saying that they will do everything to ensure that workers are fully paid for hours worked, vacation pay and severance, workers have not been provided concrete information. No one has spoken to them about what is happening with their health benefits or if there is a client transition plan. ■

AFL calls Danielle Smith's Alberta Next panel a "wolf in sheep's clothing"

As Alberta Premier Danielle Smith kicks off her controversial Alberta Next panel tour, Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) president Gil McGowan says the initiative is a "wolf in sheep's clothing."

"It's clear that the real purpose of Danielle Smith's Alberta Next panel is the exact opposite of what she says it is," says Gil McGowan. "She says it's an effort to defuse growing separatist sentiment in Alberta. But what Smith is really doing is providing yet another platform to magnify the grievances of her separatist base – who in no way, shape or form represent the views of the majority of Albertans. Saying you're addressing separatism when you're actually adding fuel to the fire isn't just disingenuous, it's downright Orwellian."

McGowan adds that the Alberta Next initiative is the latest example of how the United Conservative Party (UCP) government is giving Albertans what they don't want, while ignoring what they actually do want.

"Albertans want a healthcare system that works. They want well-funded schools, colleges and universities. They want profitable corporations to pay their fair share of taxes, to help repair our crumbling infrastructure. They want wages that keep up with inflation. They want a strategy for affordability, especially when it comes to housing. They want a real plan for diversifying our economy in a world threatened by climate change. They want strength, not appeasement when dealing with Trump."

"These are the things Albertans really want to see from their government. But, instead, we get the Alberta Next side show. It's more political theatre from the UCP when what we really need is a responsible government; one that governs in the interests of the whole population, not just its narrow political base. The Alberta Next panel is not a solution – it's an example and an illustration of what's wrong with the Smith government." ■



Lethbridge care home fires union bargaining team during negotiations

KIM SIEVER

Based out of British Columbia, Chantelle Management oversees the operation of the Edith Cavell Care Centre in South Lethbridge, Alberta where they employ about 100 members of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE).

These workers include licensed practical nurses, healthcare aides, and those employed in the kitchen, laundry, housekeeping and maintenance departments.

Their last collective agreement expired in November 2024, but it wasn't ratified until the previous year, which left only one year remaining in their new contract. That contract wasn't ratified for 3 years after the previous one expired.

Even though their most recent collective agreement has already expired, they met with the employer only last month to begin bargaining, 6 months after the expiry date. They sent out the bargaining survey only in February.

According to the update from the workers' bargaining team, they expected the first bargaining session to focus on non-monetary items, which is a common practice as they are easier to agree on.

However, Chantelle Management surprised those representing the workers by

not only tabling monetary items, but including rollbacks. Yes, you read that right: they want to pay these workers less than they're already making.

Here's what they proposed: lower reporting pay, lower overtime rates, smaller flex spending account, less sick time and sick time benefits, fewer hours between shifts, and no more banked overtime for time off in lieu.

These workers got only a 4 percent raise in their last contract, and that's over 4 years with a wage freeze in the first year. And that's on top of two more wage freezes in the agreement previous to that one.

Giving these workers 3 years of wage freezes and below-inflation increases and then asking them to accept even less pay or benefits is insulting.

But, to make matters worse, the bargaining team for these workers reported that they both were laid off by Chantelle Management. The bargaining team members have filed grievances and plan to continue to negotiate on behalf of the workers. They also negotiated the last collective agreement.

The next bargaining session isn't until September. ■

AlbertaWorker.ca

BCFED: Injured workers should be first in line for compensation board "surplus"

Improving benefits for injured workers and strengthening workplace safety should be the Workers' Compensation Board's top priority in using its "surplus," BC Federation of Labour (BCFED) President Sussanne Skidmore said July 17.

The WCB – known by many as WorkSafeBC – announced July 14 it would use \$570 million from the Accident Fund to keep employer premiums frozen for the ninth straight year. That brings the total diverted from the fund for subsidizing employer premiums to \$3 billion since 2019.

"The so-called surplus in that fund was built on the backs of injured workers, with the deep cuts the BC Liberals and John Rustad made to benefits and pensions when they were in government," Skidmore said. "Instead of billions of dollars in handouts to employers, the WCB should be making up for that lost ground."

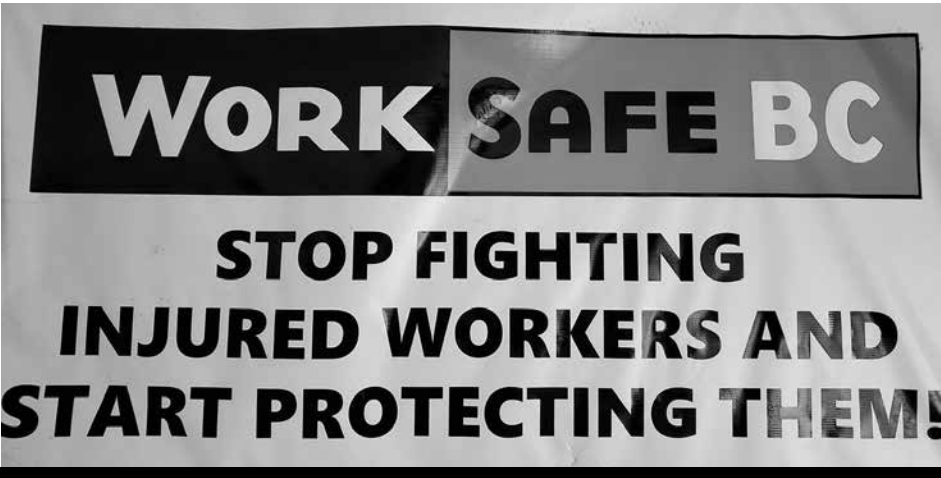
"Employers are paying less now than

they did a decade ago," BCFED Secretary-Treasurer Hermender Singh Kailley pointed out.

"How is it that the WCB somehow can't afford to treat workers with psychological injuries fairly, can't afford to restore pensions and can't afford to put more into workplace inspections and enforcement – but can afford to keep employer premiums artificially low?"

"Businesses make it sound like they're contributing to the fund out of charity," Skidmore said. "But this is the deal they made decades ago so injured workers would give up the right to sue them."

Skidmore called on the WCB Board of Directors to reverse the premium decision. "If the fund really has more than the WCB needs to meet its commitments, they should invest that in making workers safer and treating injured workers more fairly." ■



Health and social funding being diverted to military spending

■ FROM PG 6

phase of pharmacare (drug coverage for all) has stalled.”

The coalitions also note that in the midst of the healthcare crisis, Ottawa is diverting billions of dollars into new military spending to meet priorities set in Washington and corporate boardrooms.

“We reject expanding war budgets and gutting regulatory protections while patients and healthcare workers are left to beg for care. We demand adequate funding for public healthcare, action to safeguard and uphold the Canada Health Act, an end to rampant privatization schemes and deregulation of public interest protections led by the governments in Ontario and Alberta, and true public solutions to the crisis.

“Now is the time to stand up for public healthcare and the values it represents: equity, compassion, dignity and care for all.

“Canadians overwhelmingly support our public system. It cannot wait. It’s time for governments to listen – and act.” ■

Need to mobilize to defend public education, local democracy

■ FROM PG 7

erately diverted from the public good to private profits and imperialist aggression.

This takeover is a wake-up call. Defeating this attack requires a united movement in the streets and communities, building a broad coalition of all defenders of public education and democratic rights – students, parents, education workers, unions and communities. Working people need to organize around the call that society’s wealth be used for people’s needs: fully funded public education, healthcare, housing and social services.

Such a mobilization can be built around the demands to:

- immediately reinstate democratic school boards and fully restore elected trustees’ powers;
- reverse the \$6.3 billion in cuts and address critical needs like class sizes, special education, crumbling infrastructure and diverse programs;
- introduce a new, needs-based funding formula to deliver adequate, stable and equitable funding from provincial general revenues to guarantee quality education for all students;
- end the "balanced budget" legislation which requires public entities like school boards to implement cuts, despite systemic underfunding, or face provincial takeover; and
- halt the fire sale of public school lands and buildings, recognizing schools as vital community hubs requiring massive investment to clear the \$16.8 billion repair backlog and provide stable capital funding for safe, accessible, green schools. ■

Interprovincial regulation generally receives strong public support across country



QUEBEC DEMONSTRATION IN DEFENCE OF SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

■ FROM PG 7

The removal of trade regulations remains a compelling labour and safety issue as well. Polls suggest that people in Canada overwhelmingly support interprovincial regulation such as supply management when asked about farmers’ livelihoods or food security, and only begin to express concern when polled about prices as a single issue.

Such leading questions continue to conceal what is at stake in these deregulating moves, and the dismantling of supply management remains a stated goal of US negotiators and MacDonald-Laurier wonks. Since the 1970s, Canada’s system of supply management in agriculture has been a crucial bulwark against US domination, helping to ensure Canadian food sovereignty and guaranteeing a market and an income to producers of dairy, poultry and egg commodities.

As the National Farmers’ Union explains, supply management is based on three pillars: production discipline ensures that farmers produce only what the market requires; cost-of-production pricing guarantees a fair income to farmers; and import controls stabilize supply. These controls entail a schedule of Tariff Rate Quotas, which applies high tariffs to competitive imports in food stuffs above a certain threshold, ensuring that domestic markets aren’t threatened by unlimited free trade.

For the time being, supply management has been left intact by the government’s sweeping deregulation, but it isn’t for lack of ambition. Negotiations over NAFTA and USMCA seized bitterly upon the issue of supply management, which the US hoped to dismantle in order to open up Canadian markets for US imports. As recently as last month, the MLI was publishing tirades against supply management, claiming that this “anti-competitive production model results in higher prices” for Canadians. Their argument is deceptive on several levels, most notably in its claim that deregulation should increase dairy production on the prairie, where the brunt of production is presently assigned to more populous eastern provinces.

Nothing in the rationalization of quotas requires the dismantling of supply management in general, however. If anything, the opposite is true and the NFU continues to advocate for an equitable distribution of quotas between new farmers and growing markets. It’s sleight-of-hand at best to argue that a new regional distribution of quotas requires the scrapping of planning altogether, or that free markets would bring about this result.

Worse still, the MLI argues that supply management “hurts lower-income households” by blocking free competition in dairy. It’s simply outrageous to blame income guarantees for the impact of price-gouging grocery monopolies on household budgets. The same capitals who made enormous profits during a cost-of-living crisis are set to benefit from the new relaxations on trade.

Real action on the cost of living will require more regulation rather than less, and still more stringent price controls on all necessities. This angle is an obsession of far-right politicians like Maxime Bernier, who routinely pits farmers against workers in his faux-populist rhetoric.

Still more audaciously, the MLI report claims that supply management in dairy “jeopardizes the health of young children, who require ample amounts of calcium for proper bone growth.” In fact, the borderless supply-and-demand system that MLI and other liberalizers prefer would certainly result in an influx of milk from the US, laced with artificial growth hormones.

Finally, the report concludes, supply management excludes Canada from future free trade agreements – and it’s true that Trump has recently reaffirmed that supply management makes Canada a “very difficult country to TRADE with.”

Trump is lucky to have found such eager accomplices in Canada’s present governments, both federal and provincial, and a Carney-led realignment with US objectives is virtually assured. Perhaps there is no clearer sign of this eventuality than the federal Bill C-5, rushed through the Senate in time for a country-wide holiday.

At a glance, the first half of the act facilitates a province-led deregulatory spree, key aspects of which are discussed above. The second half intends to “enhance Canada’s prosperity, national security, economic security, national defence and national autonomy by ensuring that projects that are in the national interest are advanced through an accelerated process,” with lip service to Indigenous rights after “investor confidence.” Under cover of a push for sovereignty, this legislation permits mining and energy companies to completely circumvent any meaningful environmental assessment or Indigenous consent as they break ground and markets.

In Manitoba, the Southern Chiefs’ Organization (SCO) has condemned the lack of consultation, noting that the ability for the government to fast-track “nation-building projects” before adequate review poses a serious risk to the duty of government to consult with First Nations, who “are uniquely positioned to advocate for the health of the environment for today and for future generations.”

The Chiefs of Ontario convened an emergency rally to oppose the bill, warning that “the government is rushing the bill through the legislative process at an unprecedented speed – granting just two days for committee debate and amendments in the Senate and the House of Commons.”

The Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations, spanning much of Alberta and Saskatchewan, noted “the sweeping powers it grants cabinet, and the risk it poses to constitutionally protected treaty rights.”

Between strong opposition from First Nations, organized labour and agricultural producers, it’s apparent that the lifting of interprovincial trade regulations is far from the panacea that mainstream commentary depicts. Rather, the gloating of right-wing think tanks should be taken for a clear sign that these policies are only the fulfillment of longstanding, carefully laid plans for unrestricted continental free trade.

As all levels of government conspire to secure this outcome, it falls to a people’s coalition to re-narrate and defend the premises of public ownership, of planning, and of Indigenous title against these sweeping attacks. However it is sold to people in Canada, free trade has never been a path to independence. ■

WHAT’S LEFT

VANCOUVER

SUNDAYS | GAZA SOLIDARITY RALLY

2 PM at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Join Palestine solidarity groups every Sunday to protest Israel’s siege of Gaza.

VANCOUVER

AUG 9 | RADICAL LABOUR HISTORY

7 PM at the Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Dr. Discussion on "Depression Era Organizing" as part of Radical Labour History of BC Summer Series.

VANCOUVER

AUG 31 | PUENTES DE AMOR RALLY

1 PM at the corner of Commercial and Broadway. Cuba solidarity rally with CCFA Vancouver.

REGINA

AUG 6 | HIROSHIMA-NAGASAKI DAY

7 PM at the Regina Public Library (downtown branch) Room CE - 1. Commemoration of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Sponsored by Regina Peace Council. For more information call Ed at 306 718 8010.

WINNIPEG

AUG 31 | END THE BLOCKADE

1-2 PM at the corner of River and Osborne. Join the Manitoba Cuba Solidarity Committee for monthly action calling for an end to the US blockade of Cuba.

TORONTO

AUG 6 | HIROSHIMA-NAGASAKI DAY

4:30-9 PM at the Peace Garden in Nathan Phillips Square. Commemorate the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

TORONTO

AUG 12 | PEACE TRIVIA!

7 PM at Blood Brothers Brewpub, 165 Geary. Peace trivia night in support of the People’s Hearings on Military Spending organized by the Toronto Association for Peace and Solidarity. Entry \$10-40 sliding scale.

TORONTO

AUG 31 | END THE BLOCKADE

1 PM at the US Consulate, 360 University Ave. Join CCFA Toronto and other solidarity activists for a monthly picket against the US blockade.

HAMILTON

AUG 8-10 | PRIDE

Pier 4 Park. Celebrate Pride and stand up for 2S/LGBTIQ+ rights. Join the Communist Party and PV contingents.

OTTAWA

AUG 17 | CUBA SOLIDARITY PICKET

1:30 PM at the US Embassy, 490 Sussex Drive. Join Ottawa Cuba Connections for monthly action to call for an end to the blockade and the return of the Guantanamo base to Cuba.

OTTAWA

AUG 31 | PUENTES DE AMOR RALLY

11 AM at the Cuban Embassy, 338 Main St. Monthly action in solidarity with Cuba.

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SAT AUG 9 7PM
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SAT SEP 13 7PM
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Book is first English-language publication of Cuban leader's speeches

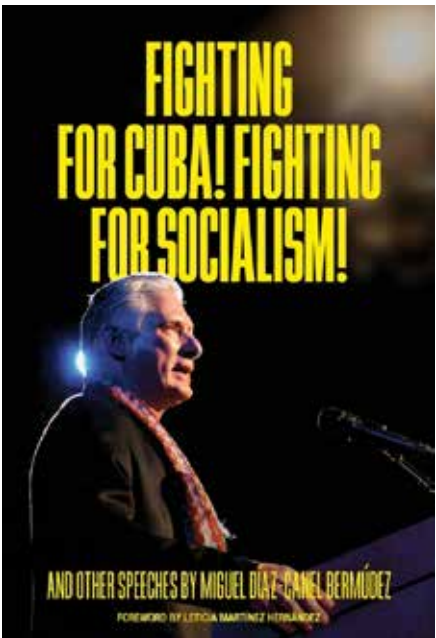
Fighting for Cuba! Fighting for Socialism!
Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez
1804 Books (2023)

REVIEW BY STÉPHANE DOUCET

As many readers will no doubt be aware, Miguel Díaz-Canel is the president of the Republic of Cuba as well as the First Secretary of its Communist Party. This small book, more of a pamphlet really, collects five of Díaz-Canel's speeches from September 2023: one from the Havana summit of the Group of 77 (G77) and China, and four from his subsequent visit to New York at and around the General Assembly of the United Nations.

It's a bit odd to review a book published in October 2023, but while President Díaz-Canel has been in office since 2019, this is the first and only English-language publication of any of his speeches or writing. It marks a very particular moment in time – one which, despite being not yet two years ago, seems so distant – as just one month after these speeches, the world was rocked by the October 7 attacks and the ensuing genocide in Palestine. Geopolitics has not looked the same since, but this collection of speeches gives us a glimpse back into that time, through the very particular path of the Cuban president.

First off, any set of speeches by a top leader which take place over such a short period of time will contain some repetition, and unless the editors were to take some significant liberties, these are rather inevitable. That said, one can glimpse the main messages which Díaz-Canel is putting forward: the indefensibility of the current global economic order which concentrates extreme poverty in the "South" (the expression he uses the most), the opposition to the US blockade of Cuba, and the value of Cuba's socialist system which



values social progress over profit and exploitation.

Three speeches are from more formal settings with world leaders and two are "among friends," notably at the Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center. The difference in tone and political slant is obvious, which to a certain degree shows the difference as well as the continuity between Cuba's role in international multilateral politics versus within the Left more broadly.

Ultimately, this collection is quite short and leaves the reader wanting more: more about Cuba, more about its socialist model, more about its current problems and its strategies to address them, more about Cuban internationalism.

Credit to the publishers for being the first to publish Díaz-Canel in English, and here's hoping for much more to promote Cuban socialism and Cuba's leadership on the world stage. ■



Bill C-5 called "another attempt to erase distinct inherent rights"

■ FROM PG 12

Chief Tuccaro of Mikisew Cree Nation said, "Mikisew won the Supreme Court case for the duty to consult. We are here to remind the Prime Minister that without meaningful consultation there is no consent."

"We are deeply disappointed with how this meeting is being organized and the continued disregard for our Treaty relationship. Our Treaties are not symbolic – they are internationally recognized agreements between sovereign Nations. They were not signed to be overridden by shifting political agendas or so-called national interests," stated Chief Saddleback from Samson Cree Nation.

"Bill C-5, the so-called 'One Canadian Economy Act,' is yet another attempt to erase the distinct inherent rights, treaties and jurisdictions of First Nations under the guise of national unity. This bill undermines our sovereignty, disrespects our inherent rights, and continues the colonial pattern of imposing decisions without true Nation-to-Nation dialogue," said Chief Cattleman from Montana First Nation. ■



Camp Naivelt celebrates a century of tradition and community

Camp Naivelt, meaning "New World" in Yiddish, was founded 100 years ago by the members of the United Jewish People's Order (UJPO) to provide a summer retreat for working-class Jewish families. Over the decades, Naivelt has grown into a vibrant community where generations have gathered to celebrate Jewish culture, creativity and progressive values. For many, Naivelt is more than just a summer camp – it's a place where lifelong friendships are formed, memories are made, and traditions are passed down.

Naivelt is honouring this incredible legacy with a culminating celebration on the weekend of August 23-24. The celebration will include a series of exhibits, performances, music, food and activities for people of all ages and backgrounds, bringing together Naivelters to celebrate and reflect on the journey of this beloved camp. As well, a commemorative anniversary booklet will be created as a memento of this milestone. ■

For more information, please contact naivelt100@winchevskycentre.org



Moncada, the Spark

GEORGE GIDORA

Before the dawn had broken,
before the sun burned through July's haze,
a handful of hearts marched
into the lion's den;
and into history.

They did not go for glory.
They did not go for death.
They went for *dignidad*,
for land, for bread,
for books in children's hands
not rifles on their backs.

Santiago slumbered in carnival dreams,
but in the shadows,
in borrowed uniforms,
they moved like whispers
through sleeping streets.
120 brave
against a thousand guns
and centuries of silence.

They did not win the battle.
They lost the building,
lost comrades to bullets,
to torture rooms,
to the silence of blood-soaked walls.
But they won something larger...
a pulse and a people.
A heartbeat in the soil of Cuba
that could never be buried.

Fidel stood before judges,
not to plead for mercy
but to indict... to the world.
"History will absolve me,"
he said;
and history did not forget.

They came with hope
wrapped in courage,
and though they failed that morning,
their fire lit the mountains,
the sugarcane fields,
the voices of the poor.

Moncada was not an end,
but the beginning of a storm,
a fuse to a dream
that empires could not drown,
that bullets could not silence,
that a blockade could not starve.

Still today,
amid embargoes and lies,
Guantanamo's stolen soil,
the voice of Moncada echoes.
In every raised fist,
in every child's lesson,
in every flag sewn with truth.

Moncada lives.
Not in marble,
but in movement.
Not in mourning,
but in *mañana*;
the promise of a people
who never stopped fighting.

La lucha continua!

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Twelve Treaty Nations condemn Carney’s sham “First Nations Summit” on development bill



In response to Mark Carney’s July 17 “First Nations Summit,” designed to expedite implementation of his One Canadian Economy Act that will trample Indigenous rights in order to fast-track select developments, twelve First Nations issued the following joint statement condemning the summit as a dangerous, stage-managed effort to manufacture a false picture of First Nation consent.

As descendants of Peoples who entered into peace and friendship Treaties with the Crown to allow for the Queen’s subjects to live in our territories, we reject this national stage managed gathering, referred to as the “First Nations Summit” being organized by Canada. Last minute invites, last minute agendas, last minute speaking times – all designed to give the Queen’s subjects the idea that we agree. This is a lie. It is manufactured to paint a false picture.

Lack of respect for our Nations

The entirety of Bill C-5, known as the *One Canadian Economy Act, 2025*, was rammed through Parliament and the Senate without the free, prior and informed consent of rights-holding First Nations, as required under international law. A divide and conquer tactic is evident and at play with how Canada is organizing this First Nation Summit. Canada continues to rush processes, limit information, and make unilateral changes to agendas delivered by third parties or lobby groups. As a result, Chiefs are restricted to limited time on complex constitutional regulatory issues. Of notable concern, the Chiefs are also denied the presence of our advisors and councils.

The Privy Council Office (PCO) has informed Chiefs that only they may attend, excluding subject matter experts and expecting leaders to respond on complex issues in a limited time frame, if at all. Meanwhile, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), an unregistered lobby group, has been guaranteed time that would be better allotted to rights-holding First Nations. Chief Phyllis Whitford of O’Chiese First Nation stated, “we have continued to express publicly, and specifically to government paid Indigenous organizations, that they do not represent us. They have no mandate to do so.”

Violation of Treaty rights

“Our Treaties, established on a nation-to-nation basis with the Crown, are rooted in the principles of mutual respect and coexistence. We did not cede our rights to land and resources; rather, we agreed to share the land while retaining our inherent sovereignty,” stated Chief Sheldon Sunshine of Sturgeon Lake

“The entirety of Bill C-5, known as the One Canadian Economy Act, 2025, was rammed through Parliament and the Senate without the free, prior and informed consent of rights-holding First Nations, as required under international law. A divide and conquer tactic is evident and at play with how Canada is organizing this First Nation Summit.”

Cree Nation. Canada’s actions undermine these Treaties and disregard its legal and moral obligations owed to our Nations. The result of the Prime Minister’s Office pushing the One Canadian Economy Act, without First Nation involvement, will end with lengthy court battles, investor insecurity, and an embattled regulatory mess. It is not a streamlined process because our Nations will not allow our lands, resources and waters to be turned into deserts to enrich Canada while continuing to impoverish our future generations.

Lack of free, prior and informed consent

The federal government is attempting to override our sovereignty. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) wrote to Canada in a letter sent December 13, 2019, that our right to FPIC [free, prior and informed consent] must be respected. Canada has been in continuous violation of international law regarding our rights. This needs to stop.

Call to action

We demand:

1. Immediate cessation of unilateral actions: All plans and discussions related to the exploitation of resources within our territory or the takeover of our lands must halt immediately.
2. Respect for our sovereignty: Governments must recognize and uphold our inherent rights, sovereignty and jurisdiction over our lands and resources, and stop using one-stop-shops in place of true consultation.
3. Meaningful engagement: All future discussions impacting our territories must involve our Nations directly, ensuring FPIC is obtained in accordance with our protocols and international standards.

We stand united in defense of our lands, rights and sovereignty. We will not tolerate any actions that undermine our Treaties or disregard our rightful place as sovereign self-determining Nations. Nothing about us, without us.

This statement is issued collectively by the leadership of the undersigned Treaty Nations in response to recent political developments threatening our sovereignty and rights. The undersigned Treaty

Chiefs make the following statements:

“Canada needs to come to the table to meet with our Nations if they want to bring honour to the Crown. Coming to Ottawa for a poorly coordinated meeting with last minute unilateral changes will not be a hug fest,” said Chief Lameman.

“As we prepare for the summit on Bill C-5, it’s critical to remind Canada that meaningful consultation cannot be reduced to mere notification or superficial engagement. Kehewin Cree Nation has never consented to the NRTA [Natural Resource Transfer Agreements negotiated between Canada and the three prairie provinces in 1930], an agreement imposed without our free prior and informed consent, undermining the sacred Treaty relationship. Our inherent rights clearly define our willingness to share resources only to the depth of a plough. Any projects or initiatives proposed on our sovereign territories must genuinely benefit our Nation, respect our sovereignty, and acknowledge our original jurisdiction over all resources beyond that depth. We expect Canada to honour these commitments, not through symbolic gestures, but through tangible actions rooted in genuine partnership and respect,” stated Chief Watchmaker.

“We did not give our free, prior and informed consent. We did not cede and surrender our land and resources – they were stolen, and we are here to remind Canada they are not for sale for Canada’s national interest,” stated Chief Pete.

“*Bill C-5, the One Canadian Economy Act* denies our right to self-determination and our own First Nation economy. Does the legislation create a parallel economy or are we being subsumed into this legislation?” stated Chief Mykat.

Chief Whitford from O’Chiese First Nation said, “There should be real work done with our Nations instead of a performative spectacle at the national capital to make it appear like our Nations agree with this sham process.”

Chief Desmond Bull from Louis Bull Tribe said, “Louis Bull Tribe is a sovereign Nation. Our inherent rights bestowed by the Creator were never surrendered. These rights will never and can never be extinguished.”



Message to Scott Moe: Search the Regina landfill!

PV SASKATCHEWAN BUREAU

The City of Regina landfill sits behind a fence in the distance. About a kilometre away, the Regina oil refinery bleeds smoke into the air, while freighters and tankers speed past an encampment at the corner of Fleet and McDonald. Close to the intersection is a sign that reads: “HER REMAINS NEED TO BE LOCATED.”

The sign is a call for help to local authorities to find the body of Richele Bear, a Gordon First Nation woman who was murdered in 2013 by “Regina’s first serial killer.” But the sign has another meaning as well – it is a call to action.

Richele’s mother, Michele Bear of Standing Buffalo First Nation, says that her daughter’s body is in the Regina landfill. For two weeks, Michele has been on hunger strike in protest of the lack of response from Regina Police Services, Regina City Council and the Saskatchewan Party and Premier Scott Moe. Michele vows to continue her hunger strike until her daughter’s body is found.

“I have to sacrifice myself for justice – that shouldn’t be the way”

Family, friends, local activists and allies have been visiting the encampment to bring provisions like tobacco and water, set up tipis, and provide moral support for Michele as she searches for Richele’s body.

Richele’s murder is a symptom of a society that is plagued with a history of colonial violence. In a report released by Statistics Canada in 2023, over a ten-year period from 2011 to 2021 femicide accounted for 1,125 of reported murders in Canada. And even though Indigenous women are only 5 percent of the population, they are 21 percent of the victims of femicides in Canada at a rate of 1.7 per 100,000. It is easy to read statistics like this and overlook the fact that each number represents a mother, daughter, sister, aunt, friend or loved one that is no longer with us due to their gender and/or racialization.

The numbers also hide the horrific ways that the bodies of Indigenous women are discarded and desecrated. In western Canada, the use of landfills to cover-up the murder of Indigenous women has become too common.

Over a two-year period from 2022-2024, families and activists in Manitoba advocated for the search of landfills after the murder of three women by a serial killer. The actions culminated in the encampment known as Camp Morgan and the blockade of the Brady Landfill. After an injunction was issued, police brutally removed the encampment.

The pressure from activists, both locally and across the country, pushed the Manitoba provincial government to act. And in March 2025, the bodies of Mercedes Myran and Morgan Harris of Long Plain First Nation were found.

The situation in Saskatchewan is no different. In August 2024, the Saskatoon Police Service found the body of Mackenzie Lee Trotter at the City of Saskatoon landfill.

Given the history, it is not unlikely that Richele Bear is buried in the Regina landfill. Yet the Saskatchewan Party refuses to look.

Ultimately it is up to Scott Moe to give access to Regina Police Services to search the landfill. If the landfill in Saskatoon can be searched, so can the landfill in Regina. But, given how reluctant the Saskatchewan Party is to spend money on anything important, it is no surprise that their real concern is probably the cost it would take to search for Richele.

“They think Native People are garbage. Native People are not trash,” says Michele Bear. How long will it take for the government of Saskatchewan to act? How long will Michele Bear have to starve for this government to do something?

The time is now. Scott Moe and the Saskatchewan government need to make good on their word and “respond to the issues raised by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.” Michele Bear has been waiting 12 years – she deserves to lay her daughter to rest. “I believe there are other Native women buried in that landfill. I’m standing here for all murdered and missing Native women.”

When asked what she wants people to know about her struggle, Michele was clear: “I want people to know that this is what Native People have to do to bring justice for our people.”

Activists in Regina will continue to stand with Michele Bear until Richele is found. ■

Update: This article was written before July 11, when Michele Bear ended her hunger strike after 22 days. Tipis will remain on site for the foreseeable future. The fight against colonialism and the capitalist system in Regina continues.