

PEOPLE'S VOICE

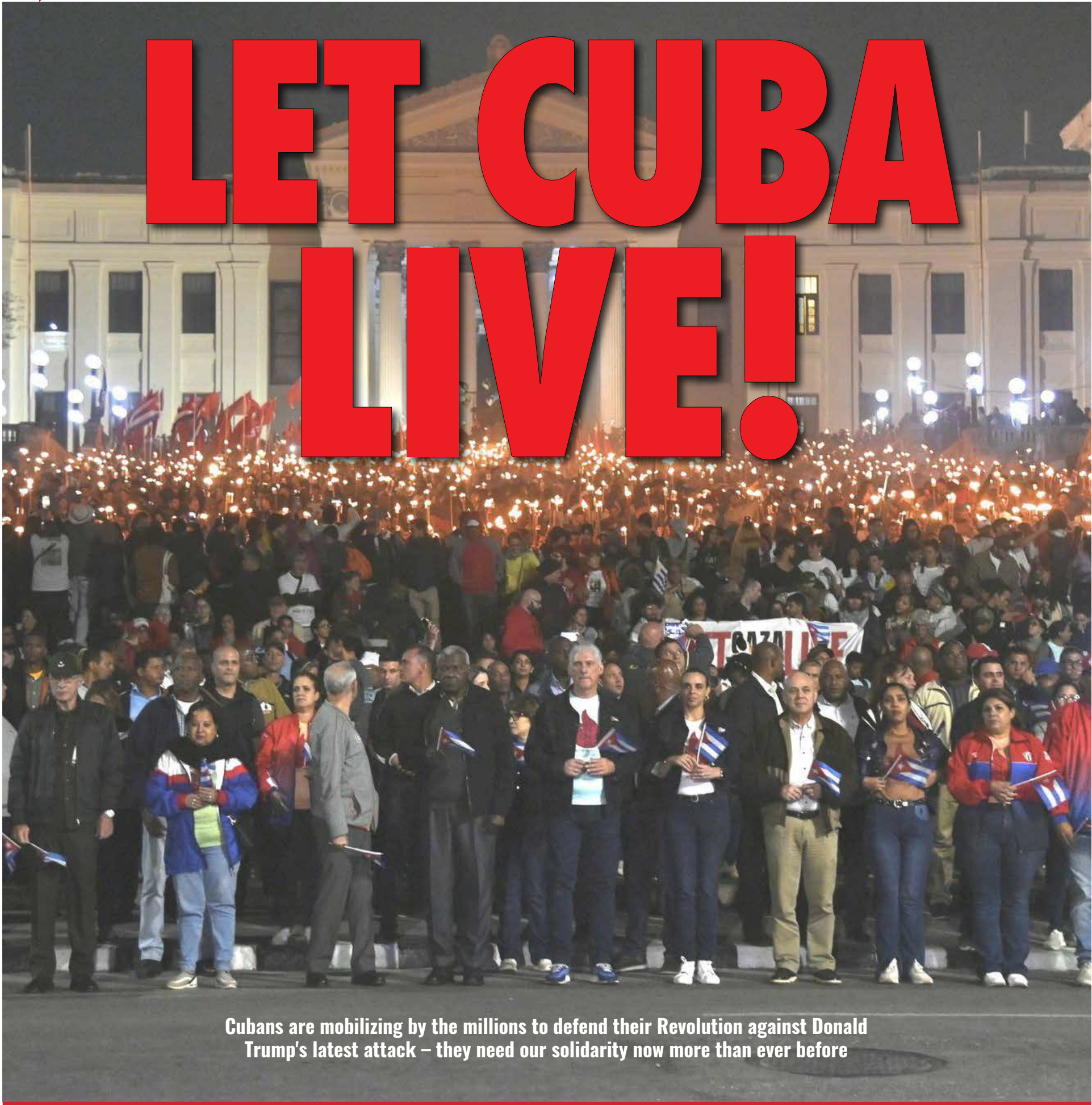
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CARNEY'S AUSTERITY HITS AGRICULTURE

Despite his talk of sovereignty, Carney's cuts are severely jeopardizing food security in Canada.
pg.3

ISN'T IT TIME WE HAD A PUBLIC GROCERY STORE?

As the affordability crisis continues to deepen, it's time to do for food what we've already done for liquor
pg.5

A TOUGH YEAR LOOMS FOR THE BC NDP

From its attacks on housing to its extraction industry policy, David Eby is digging a big hole for himself
pg.6

INTERNATIONAL UNIONS AND TRUMP'S ATTACKS

Canadian members of US-based unions are under attack, but is their leadership up for the fight?
pg.8

Pages from our past...

Pacific Tribune Vol 18 Nos 2 and 3 ~ January 16, 1959

Racial discrimination bared by three cases in BC capital

FRANCES SEDGWICK

On the surface, racial discrimination in Victoria seems almost non-existent, but a peek underneath the surface reveals a different picture.

Three serious cases of racial discrimination have come to public attention in the past two months.

Ajeet Bawa, a young Sikh and his wife were forced to move from their home on Westall Avenue because the neighbours objected to an Indo-Canadian in their neighbourhood.

Richard Wood, 24, was refused admission to a health club here because he is Black. He had attended Victoria High School and was active in sports all through school. After a public protest the club finally admitted him.

A Victoria-born and educated Chinese Canadian was refused entry to two private city clubs recently because of his "colour."

Grant King, 27, of 1666 McRae Street said that each time he visited the clubs he was with a regular member – on Christmas Eve the Eagles Club and on December 30 the Tillicum Club.

Fearon Woodburn, doorman at the Tillicum Club, was quoted as saying:

"All the clubs in town are same – the Union, the Pacific, the Elks. You have to give the members a little protection. They want to be able to sit down and have a drink without a Hindu or someone sitting next to them."

"Isn't it against the law to bar people in such a way?" King wanted to know. "Doesn't it violate one of our basic freedoms? Most people don't know just how much prejudice exists in this town. I never realized it myself until lately – and I don't like it."

The manager of the Tillicum Club said, "members must be white and over 21." New members are always asked to read the colour clause on membership over again "and they get the idea."

Peter Wong, chair of Victoria's Chinese Benevolent Association, commented: "It's a matter of education to get rid of these prejudices. People should be accepted on the grounds of what they are, not what colour they happen to be."

In protest against the colour bar in city clubs, Indo-Canadians in Cowichan sent a telegram to their society here asking that action be taken to combat racial prejudice. ■

Enforcing "international law" in a time of imperialist aggression

MANUEL JOHNSON

The deadly US military attack on Venezuela, which included kidnapping the country's head of state and his wife, constitutes a flagrant violation of the basic rules of international law, which aim to ensure the peaceful settlement of disputes and respect for the principles of sovereign equality of states, political independence of all states, and non-intervention.

Of course, it is nothing new for the United States to flout these rules – this is not the first time it has assumed the right to decide the fate of peoples and nations. That said, the Trump administration's latest actions represent a dangerous escalation that threatens not only Venezuela, but also the stability of the entire region and the future of international relations.

Trump makes no secret of this: he told the New York Times, "I don't need international law."

Principles of international law

The origins of modern international law, based on respect for the sovereignty of states, dates back to 1648 with the Treaty of Westphalia.



But it was not until the creation of the League of Nations, in Versailles in 1919, that a significant attempt at codification emerged. Unfortunately, the absence of important players on the international stage, including the United States, prevented that body from achieving universal scope, rendering the League of Nations powerless.

The Yalta Conference in February 1945 laid the foundations for a new international organization designed to guarantee peace. A year later, on the ashes of World War II, the United Nations was formed. Its founding charter – a crystallization of the balance of power achieved by the allies who triumphed over Nazi-fascism, including the USSR – laid the groundwork for contemporary international law.

■ ENFORCEMENT, PG 10

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2026

Celebrating resistance, fighting for full equality



MASS VANCOUVER DEMONSTRATION IN SOLIDARITY WITH BLACK LIVES MATTER [CREDIT: KIMBALL CARIQU]

This year, we celebrate Black History Month amid growing resistance to rapidly escalating threats to working people's hard-won social, political and economic gains, including equality rights for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC).

Echoing Donald Trump's right-wing attacks in the US, governments and corporations across Canada are rolling back DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) programs which exist to promote and defend equal opportunities and protections in the workplace. These attacks are part of an effort to undermine working-class unity and solidarity, by depicting equity as a threat to society rather than as a necessity for social advance.

Marginalizing DEI is also a mechanism to mute criticism of, and therefore maintain, the racial wage and employment gaps. A 2023 report from Statistics Canada showed that, while racialized people are generally more likely than their non-racialized and non-Indigenous counterparts to earn a bachelor's degree or higher, they have lower employment rates, poorer wages, and reduced pensions. Data from 2017 shows that racialized workers in Canada are paid an average of 30 percent less than white workers, with Black workers experiencing some of the largest gaps.

At the same time, the Carney government's program of drastically cutting public services and employment, while increasing spending on the military and security infrastructure, is both deepening inequality and escalating xenophobia and racism. A study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in October warned that deep cuts to the federal public service – from which the military and security departments are excluded – will disproportionately affect equity-seeking groups including Black people: "we can expect wider employment gaps, wider pay gaps and the erosion of access to critical employment benefits."

In response to these rollbacks and threats, resistance is growing. Across the country, labour organizations have signalled that anti-racism and defence of migrant rights are a priority, and they are moving into action with BIPOC organizations to expose the dangers of the current attacks and build opposition. This includes mobilizing count-

er protests to shut down anti-immigrant rallies, which overwhelmingly target Black and racialized communities.

Black people and organizations are often at the heart of this resistance, as they have been since the very earliest years of what is now called Canada. Remembering and celebrating Black history means acknowledging, learning from and supporting this ongoing struggle against erasure, inequality and oppression, and for emancipation, full equality and liberation.

This includes Marie-Joseph Angélique, who escaped from slavery in Montreal in 1734 but was captured and executed on a charge of arson which burned much of the city. It includes Black railway porters, whose combined struggle for labour rights and against racism led to the formation of the Order of Sleeping Car Porters in Winnipeg in 1917, the first Black labour union in North America.

It includes Black-published abolitionist newspapers during the 19th century, Viola Desmond's 1946 act of defiance in the Roseland Theatre, the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the 1969 student protest at Sir George Williams (Concordia) University. It also includes the movement against apartheid in South Africa, resistance to anti-Black police violence in Toronto and other cities in Canada, the Black Lives Matter movement, and so much more.

Black history is the history of Canada, and Black History Month is a key element of resisting Black erasure.

This month, the Communist Party of Canada reaffirms its commitment to uniting the working class on the basis of equality, and to helping build the struggle against racism. Inequality and the very idea of "race" are embedded in and replicated by capitalism. So, while we fight for immediate and radical reforms to confront and diminish social, economic and political inequality, we also build the struggle for socialism – for a society based on solidarity, equality and emancipation. ■

Central Executive Committee
Communist Party of Canada

LET CUBA LIVE!

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL

END TRUMP'S ECONOMIC WAR

FEBRUARY 22 @ 2:30 PM

USW, 25 CECIL STREET, TORONTO

Calling all peace-loving people to a People's Tribunal! We, the people, charge the U.S. government with economic starvation and violation of human rights!

Urgent alert: BUILD SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA!



CAM SCOTT

Since the successful overthrow of the US-backed Batista government in 1959, and for years of struggle preceding, the Cuban Revolution has been a beacon to the world. The lessons of Cuba can hardly be overrated, extending from the local to the international level with an integrity beyond reproach.

In every aspect of society, Cuba continues to model truly popular political participation, from the evolving mandate of the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution to the equitable redrafting of social and domestic responsibilities enshrined in the Families Code. If anything, the small island's socialist democracy has only deepened under duress.

Cuba's excellence can even make it difficult to impress upon the proverbial man-on-the-street just how asphyxiating the more than six decades long US blockade remains. In spite of remarkable urban agriculture, there are drastic food shortages; despite an ecological approach to public health, sanitation becomes a problem; and so on.

In the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, Cuba solidarity groups in Canada found ourselves advocating with the Southern Chiefs' Organization for Cuban doctors to attend remote First Nations in Manitoba at precisely the same time as we were fundraising to send sutures and syringes to struggling Cuban hospitals.

While heroic voluntarism and material scarcity are not in any way self-cancelling factors, the reality of the blockade produces a cognitive dissonance in the minds of many would-be supporters.

Despite our attempts to explain the depravity and deprivations of the US blockade, many people walk away from our educational campaigns rightly convinced of the profundity of the Cuban example but without a sense of urgency as to the task of solidarity. Others have taken a mental average of the best and worst conditions since the Special Period in the 1990s and, for only the best reasons, fail to perceive dangerous changes in US policy which vacillates from week to week and year to year with potentially mortal consequences.

At the same time, strictly humanitarian campaigns concerning only worsening conditions risk shirking our responsibility to the Cuban Revolution and underrating its sovereign capacities. Plainly, we must continue to politicize this work because Cuba – even on the brink – remains one of the most humane societies ever created, and we carry the staggering burden of this realization every day.

Cuba has given us the horizon, and as the US escalates its illegal blockade to new heights of targeted cruelty, we must practically repay the credibility and inspiration that we borrow from this most important relationship.

Denunciation of a crime

In an infamous 1960 memo, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Lester D. Mallory recommended “a line of action [that would] bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government” in Cuba. This memo, concerning “The Decline and Fall of Castro,” would define the next sixty-five years of US policy towards Cuba, which includes every conceivable

form of aggression and subterfuge. For as many years, however, the US has failed to replace the revolutionary government of Cuba – and not for lack of trying.

Alongside covert acts of sabotage and direct military threat, the principle means of regime change has been a comprehensive unilateral blockade, denounced by the overwhelming majority of the General Assembly of the United Nations in annual resolutions since 1992. Because of this program of economic warfare, Cuba must operate without credit and independently of almost all existing financial infrastructure. According to a 2024 report by the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the cost of just eighteen days of blockade is equivalent to the annual maintenance cost of the entire National Electrical Power System – approximately \$250 million USD.

In 2023, an International Tribunal against the Blockade of Cuba took place in Brussels, placing testimony from dozens of experts before a European jury. Though symbolic and non-binding, these proceedings were published in a 2024 report entitled Denunciation of a Crime, which should be read in full. Upon consideration of the evidence, the judges rendered a solemn verdict:

“No blockade has been as comprehensive, long-lasting and brutal against a people as the one that the United States have maintained against Cuba. The blockade has resulted directly and indirectly in the loss of numerous human lives. The US has decided to maintain this blockade until the Cuban people decide to bow. The US are determined to maintain measures that are calculated to bring about in the long term the physical destruction at least in part of the Cuban people. Such an attitude could amount to a crime of genocide.”

Since this summit, the US has only increased its maximum pressure campaign. President Trump has promised a change of Cuban government to his base, including a traitorous section of Cuban-Americans, in no uncertain terms. In fact, it looks as if this prominent Miami lobby is effectively calling the shots. As US Secretary of State Marco Rubio flirts with further military action in Venezuela and calls for a new, US-compliant government in Cuba, Representative Carlos A. Giménez (whose wealthy parents left Cuba after Castro's land reforms) cautions tourists to leave the island “before it is too late,” promising to suffocate the country.

In a recent interview with right-wing journalist Hugh Hewitt, Trump boasted of his intensification of the blockade: “I don't think you can put much more pressure [on Cuba], unless you go in and wreck the place.” But no sooner had these words left his mouth than he began to entertain precisely such a scenario, offering on social media that he could make Marco Rubio the President of Cuba within a year. And with the illegal abduction of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro fresh in the headlines, Trump's bluster seems more like a blueprint.

Before recent US attacks, both at sea and on the city of Caracas, Venezuela was Cuba's largest oil supplier, responsible for approximately one-third of the island's energy needs. With this relationship choked off under military threat, the Cuban people looked

■ OVER SIX DECADES, PG 10



Carney's austerity agenda slices through the agriculture sector

OWEN SCHALK

On January 22, the Liberal government announced massive cuts to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the country's largest agricultural research organization. In accordance with Budget 2025's “ambitious savings plan” – in fact, its austerity agenda aimed at funneling public money into rampant militarization at the behest of Washington – AAFC has announced a 15 percent funding cut, the firing of 665 employees, and the closure of seven research facilities across Canada. Employees received no advance notice of termination.

Carney's austerity agenda makes Canadian agriculture – and all of Canada – less secure, and less sovereign. As the National Farmers Union (NFU) stated in their response to the cuts: “By closing the doors on agricultural research centres and research farms, and ejecting people who represent upwards of 10,000 years' worth of experience from the public service, Canada will be foreclosing on the discovery, problem-solving and knowledge-base that would have been created by these institutions, leaving us more vulnerable with fewer options.”

Ironically, this act of sabotage against Canadian agriculture occurred in the context of Carney's supposed plan to secure Canadian sovereignty from aggressive and expansionist US imperialism, and on the heels of his speech at Davos, in which he declared: “A country that cannot feed itself...has few options.”

Due to Carney's austerity agenda, three agriculture research and development centres across Canada will be forced to close within 12 months: in Guelph, Quebec City and Lacombe, Alberta. Also on the chopping block are satellite research farms in: Nappan, Nova Scotia; Scott, Saskatchewan; Indian Head, Saskatchewan; and Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. Some of these facilities have operated for over a century. The Lacombe Research and Development Centre, for example, is 119 years old.

Following the announcement of its closure, Lacombe Country Reeve John Ireland stated: “You cannot easily replicate 119 years of research history, specialized land, and long-term trials elsewhere. Once this site is lost, it's gone forever.”

Seventeen AAFC research centres will remain open, but the effects of Ottawa's funding slashes are startling. In fact, Carney's austerity measures will mark the end of 30 percent of Canada's publicly owned agriculture research centres.

Past research at the AAFC has contributed to improved seeding technology, fertilizer efficiency, crop protection strategies, food safety controls, pest and disease control, and sustainable production practices such as no-till farming. Such public research centres are a key component in Canada's agricultural productivity. Doug Miller, executive director of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association, has argued that every dollar invested in public wheat breeding returns between \$20 and \$33 to the Canadian economy.

The Liberal government's attack on Canadian agricultural research follows decades of sustained underfunding at the AAFC. In a report published last October, the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute

found that funding for research and development at the AAFC has fallen 21 percent since 1985, a decline that corresponds to the imposition of an earlier austerity agenda under Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

Agriculture is not the only victim. Carney, under the euphemisms of “fiscal discipline” and “workforce adjustment,” plans to slash 40,000 public sector jobs and create \$60 billion in “savings” in the next five years. This while promising to ramp up military spending to \$150 billion per year by 2035 – an increase of roughly \$125 billion from 2024 – all at the behest of Washington and NATO. The aim is clear: divert public funds from socially useful programs into the war chests of Western imperialism.

Across Canada, farmers' organizations have denounced Carney's cuts. The NFU described them as “disastrous.” Saskatchewan farmer and NFU board member Will Robbins commented: “I think [the cuts are] incredibly short-sighted and counterproductive to the agricultural centre, to the agricultural industry in Saskatchewan, to the long-term prospects for Canadian sovereignty... It's a step backwards and it's a huge loss.”

Ironically, this sabotage against Canadian agriculture occurred in the context of Carney's supposed plan to secure Canadian sovereignty

Aaron Stein of the Alberta Federation of Agriculture reacted: “You cannot talk about food security, climate resilience or export growth while firing the scientists who make all three possible.” Agricultural paper The Western Producer called the cuts “a serious blow to the sector.”

Some have noted the continuity between Carney's cuts and those of previous governments. As Tyler McCann of the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute said, “It is inevitable, if you don't invest, that at a certain point in time you will need to start to close facilities.” Dave Gehl, head of the Indian Head Research Farm, stated that previous cuts under Stephen Harper had caused “great harm” to the facility. He added: “What we need is a reversal, not an intensification of such austerity measures.”

Canadian agriculture has suffered from decades of pro-monopoly, anti-worker and anti-smallholder policies. These policies have raised production costs for small-scale operations, rendered land inaccessible to the majority, and hollowed out rural communities in the name of “farm consolidation.” The defunding of AAFC is the latest stage in this process.

Under capitalism, public research facilities are constantly under threat, as the profit-driven logic of capital and the state always pushes toward private accumulation and public disinvestment. A broad alliance of farmers and farm workers, unions, environmentalists, community activists and others is needed to oppose these cuts to AAFC, and to push for and win policies that preserve and advance farming in Canada, and protect the family farm and food security and sovereignty. Ultimately, only in a socialist Canada could food security and sovereignty be genuinely secured, freed from myopic profiteering and joined to the interests of the majority. ■

EDITORIAL

CANADA MUST ACT TO OPPOSE THE US ECONOMIC TERROR AGAINST CUBA

On February 10, interim NDP leader Don Davies stood in the House of Commons and challenged the Liberal government to take action against Donald Trump’s latest tightening of the US blockade against Cuba.

Davies noted that the US “has imposed an illegal blockade on Cuba for decades, crippling its economy and causing mass suffering to the Cuban people; now Donald Trump is cutting off fuel, risking humanitarian disaster.” He then asked if Mark Carney would “stay true to his words in Davos, uphold independent Canadian foreign policy, and support Cuba in the face of aggressive US imperialism.”

In response, Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand said that the government is “deeply concerned about deteriorating conditions in Cuba” and that consular official “stand ready to support Canadians in need.”

That’s right. In response to a question about a looming humanitarian disaster brought on by the deliberate policies of Donald Trump, the Canadian government said that its main – its only – concern was for Canadian tourists.

What a complete disgrace.

Anand should know that Trump’s January 29 executive order is a dangerous and illegal escalation that is designed to strangle Cuba by imposing a total blockade on its fuel supplies. She must realize that this latest act of economic warfare in a 65-year history of US aggression is driven by a singular goal: to destroy the Cuban Revolution that, 90 miles from US shores, proves workers can be in the driver’s seat and that another world – a non-capitalist world, a socialist world – is possible.

Surely, Anand recognizes that this policy constitutes a blatant violation of the sovereign right of nations to self-determination and development and will, as Davies had to remind her, create an acute humanitarian disaster. And there is no question that she understands that, by threatening punitive tariffs against any country that trades oil with Cuba, US imperialism is openly embracing blackmail, aiming to inflict extreme suffering on the Cuban people to force their political surrender.

Does Anita Anand know this? Of course she does.

She also knows that if Prime Minister Carney’s declaration at Davos, that it is time to stop accommodating coercion, has any meaning whatsoever, it is here. She must realize that Canada’s continued silence in the face of this brutal US aggression against Cuba exposes Carney’s rhetoric as resoundingly hollow.

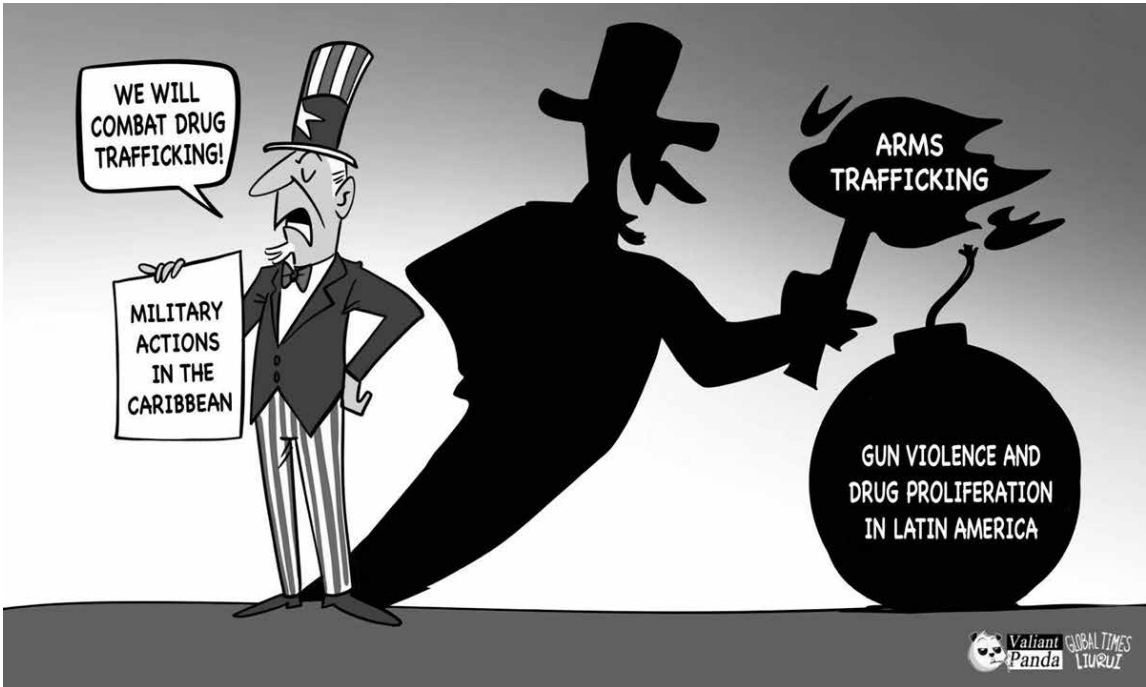
After all, a truly “principled and pragmatic” foreign policy demands that Canada immediately and unequivocally condemn this act of economic terror, use all diplomatic means to oppose the US blockade, and strengthen trade and cooperation with Cuba to help it withstand this assault.

But instead of opposing the blockade which destroys the Cuban peoples’ lives, Anand worries about Canadian tourists’ comforts. Rather than taking action to strengthen trade – and Canada could start by shipping fuel to Havana – the Foreign Affairs Minister puts consular officials on standby.

This moment is critical, and it demands a coordinated response from the labour and people’s movements across Canada. For decades, the Cuban Revolution has demonstrated to the world the deepest internationalist solidarity, sending doctors and teachers to countless countries while enduring a criminal blockade.

Cuba urgently needs our solidarity more than ever. The defence of the Cuban Revolution is a global class imperative, and our solidarity efforts must match the scale of this current threat. Now is the time to redouble our efforts to get the Canadian government to stand and defend Cuba’s sovereignty. Now is the time to affirm that people across Canada stand with Cuba against imperialist aggression.

Let Cuba Live! ♦



IN BRIEF

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

Support for social media ban misplaced?

In the February 1-15 issue, Ivan Byard writes of a "step in the right direction" while referring to the Australian ban on anyone 16 years old or younger accessing social media, and goes on to say it should be followed by a push for programs that provide offline social interactions, such as sports and arts.

This, I believe, is a case of putting the cart before the horse.

Kids and youth have flocked to social media in recent years, not out of blind adherence to capitalist demands, but rather out of necessity and desperation. Our society has spent the last three decades (at minimum) slowly stripping away the spaces, programs and sense of safety that children once had.

With the steady removal of playgrounds, parks and community centres, the creeping demands for more and more child-free spaces, the spread of "No Loitering" signs, and the seeming success of "Stranger Danger" propaganda, the options for kids to be able to gather and interact with each other has degraded nearly to nothing.

At the same time, the common demand for lower taxes has effectively destroyed organized community sports as an option for most families, and an increased demand for academic achievement has led to students having more homework than ever before, for little to no benefit.

It's also common for high school students to have jobs, so as to have some level of independence, closing off more time for them to spend with friends and peers outside of school or work.

Something that seems to get missed in these discussions is the fact that social media, with all its pitfalls, is often a lifeline for kids who are isolated or ostracized, especially in rural places. How many trans or queer kids have found relief

and connection, often for the first time, online? How many people of a racial minority grow up surrounded by racism, with no reprieve? How many kids with disabilities are essentially locked away from spaces and programs by inaccessible structures and systems? How many have been able to reach out to people in similar situations, to build connections and not be alone?

We cannot forget the cost of the sort of social isolation that can be experienced by young minorities.

Social media has a great many issues, and having it be the sole, or even primary, source of socialization is deeply unhealthy, and can expose anyone to toxic online communities and the whims of digital monopolies, not just children and youth.

However, to take the stance of "Protect the Children," to begin removing rights and access to things on the basis of sheltering kids borders on common reactionary talking points.

Rather than treating social media, and access to it, as the disease plaguing modern youth, we should view the heavy use of it as a symptom. Alienation and isolation are driving kids to online platforms. The first steps should not be banning the one outlet for socialization remaining to kids, but rather bringing the right to the city back to our youth, returning to them the public spaces that should never have been taken away.

These programs and spaces should be something we advocate first and foremost, long before we work to ban social media. Granting kids the right to exist, socialize, and play in the world, both as members of a family and independently, should be our first steps, and have the bans be a last resort. ■

Kyle Ford
Windsor, ON

Toronto peace groups launch campaign to shut down city's "war bank" bid

The Toronto Association for Peace and Solidarity (TAPS), Toronto World Beyond War and Davenport for Palestine have launched a campaign to shut down Toronto's bid to host the global headquarters of the newly announced DSRB war bank.

In November 2025, politicians of all stripes held a press conference in Toronto announcing their intent to solicit a new NATO+ war bank to the city – the Defence, Security and Resilience Bank (DSRB).

Present as part of the lobbying cohort were Premier Ford, Toronto's federal Liberal caucus (headed by MP Julie Dzerowicz and including MP Karim Bardeesy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry) and Mayor Chow.

The groups are calling upon elected representatives to reject this war bank, which represents another escalation of the Carney government's out-of-control military spending spree.

The campaign says the DSRB represents:

- (1) an unconscionable re-direction of public money away from social and public goods, and addressing the climate emergency;
- (2) a further shift in scarce resources to the bloated revenues and profits of war contractors and the financial industry;
- (3) an effort by Western powers to re-militarize society and define human security in military terms to further dominate the world market and the Global South; and
- (4) a deeply concerning intertwining of arms dealers and major investment banks.

The campaign is calling on people to refuse to let war profiteers prosper in Toronto while people around the world suffer.

To take action now, visit the TAPS website at peaceto.ca. ■

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End Canadian complicity with US aggression against the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean!



MANDEN MURPHY

Let's be clear: Canada is utterly complicit with US imperialist aggression against the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ottawa was complicit with the extra judicial killings in the form of missile strikes on marine vessels in the Caribbean. It was complicit with the US military strikes against Venezuela and the kidnapping of President Nicolás Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores. It was and remains complicit with the seizure of Venezuelan oil tankers. Through its silence and inaction, it is complicit with Trump's recent escalation of the US blockade against Cuba.

And Ottawa is complicit with the broader implications that these crimes engender: the flagrant breach of international law and an erasure of nations' just claims for self-determination.

But complicity, in this instance and as it pertains to the Canadian state, is not a matter of simply standing idly by as something monstrous unfolds but rather the direct participation in that monstrosity.

To understand how Canada is an active participant in US imperialism, we have to understand that Canadian foreign policy follows economics. Through the deep and comprehensive integration of the Canadian economy with the US economy, and with the US economy being roughly fourteen times larger than the Canadian economy, US interests quickly become Canadian interests. To put it more precisely, US interests quickly become Canadian business interests. Needless to say, these are not the interests of working people in Canada.

So, US foreign policy becomes Canadian foreign policy. When asked recently how the Carney government's policy towards the Global South differs from that of past prime ministers, Canadian Network on Cuba co-chair Julio Fonseca said simply, "they are all the same, copied and pasted from Wastington."

What's good for US business is good for Canadian business, and working people, students, disabled and retired folks can be damned. Moreover, these shared economic interests need to be backed up, and backed up by force in the event there be any threat to this US global hegemony.

This is why Canada has agreed to hit NATO's military spending target of 5 percent of GDP by 2035, estimated at \$150 billion annually.

This is why Canada is so hell bent on purchasing 88 F-35 fighter jets, to contribute its fair share to the binational military alliance known as NORAD.

This is why Canada invests an undis-

closed amount into the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance between the US, Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

This is why Canada participates in the US-led Operation MARTILLO to suppress "drug trafficking" in international waters in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Each and everyone of these initiatives is designed to enforce a geopolitical order that suits the US economy. This remains true even while the geopolitical tectonic plates begin to shift, as Western capital increasingly recognizes the volatility of US hegemony and seeks stabler markets elsewhere. To translate Mark Carney's Davos speech, the breaking of international law – or at least the way it is being broken by Donald Trump – does not benefit Canadian business in the ways it once did.

But are we to believe that Carney's overtures to Europe and for greater integration with its markets will somehow manufacture a more benevolent global economic order? Lets not for a second confuse capital's drive for stable markets as the ushering in of an era of peace. On the contrary, as the temporary peace between Western powers wanes, new inter-imperialist rivalries will emerge.

There is no denying that within this there may emerge new possibilities for the countries of the Global South to maneuver and for progressive and anti-imperialist movements to take root. But there are also great dangers and new risks of war, and Trump's January 3 aggression against Venezuela puts that into sharp focus. US hegemony is waning but it is not gone, and as it wanes it will become increasingly unpredictable and unstable.

In this context, solidarity with the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean – Cuba and Venezuela in the first instance, but also Colombia, Nicaragua, Brazil and elsewhere – is one of the most important fronts in the global struggle for peace. We must do what we can to encourage our friends, family, co-workers, unions and elected officials to appreciate that fact.

We need build a mass movement to demand a new, independent foreign policy based on peace, disarmament and solidarity, and which includes unilateral withdrawal from military alliances like NATO and NORAD. We need to press for a multilateral and mutually beneficial trade policy, instead of corporate trade deals like USMCA.

We need to act now, to demand an end to Canadian complicity with US aggression against the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. ■

Manden Murphy is co-chair of the Toronto Association for Peace and Solidarity



As the affordability crisis deepens, it's time for a public grocery store

RHIANNON MCGRATH

Vancouver's Downtown-Eastside residents were shocked to hear at the end of 2025 that the long-running family-owned grocery store Sunrise Market was put up for sale for \$4.5 million.

With Vancouver's city council, led by mayor Ken Sim's right-wing ABC Vancouver, gutting the long-held protections in the Downtown-Eastside Oppenheimer Official Development Plan against market housing, it is likely that one of the only affordable grocery stores in the impoverished area will be flattened and replaced by unaffordable condominiums.

Food monopolies like Loblaws and Sobeys continue to report record profits, while working people across Canada find it increasingly difficult to cope with ballooning grocery bills. With the sector lacking any incentive to stop squeezing its customers, the idea of publicly owned grocery stores is increasingly seen as the only logical answer to growing food deserts.

The Vancouver Food Justice Coalition has called for Sunrise to be considered as a "publicly owned food market, owned by all of us and no different than our publicly run community centres, schools or hospitals."

In his winning bid for mayor of New York, self-proclaimed "democratic socialist" Zohran Mamdani pledged city-run grocery stores in every borough. Around the world, from Mexico to Sri Lanka to various American states, publicly owned grocery stores are a common sight.

Since the news about Sunrise Market, Vancouver municipal political parties OneBC and the Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE) have endorsed using public funds to buy grocery stores to fight the cost-of-living crisis. In response, mayor Ken Sim said to CTV that "the city's job is filling potholes... not selling tomatoes. This is a ridiculous policy that I do not support."

In fact, most Canadian provinces al-

ready have precedent for stable, profitable, publicly owned businesses: the provincial liquor store. Crown Corporations like BCLiquor and Ontario's LCBO operate thousands of retail stores, serving millions of customers every year. Provincial liquor store employees are members of their provincial public sector unions, better paid and protected than many retail employees. In 2025, the BC Liquor Distribution Branch reported \$3.9 billion in revenue despite the global recession and US tariffs interrupting supply chains.

Provincial liquor stores act in competition with privately owned shops, pushing prices down in the form of "below government rates" sales pitches. In Perspectives Magazine, Canadian SHIELD Institute Director Vass Bednar credited Saskatchewan's publicly owned Sasktel for the province having Canada's lowest telecom rates, in another industry strangled by unchecked monopolies. Bednar recommends Ontario develop "an LCBO for groceries" in tandem with the existing Ontario Food Terminal to provide a provincial food distribution service.

Provincially owned grocery stores using this model could not only solve affordability issues in areas like Vancouver's Downtown-Eastside, but also resolve food deserts in Canada's north, where heavy government intervention is already required to maintain access to nutrition. A large country-wide buyer could prioritize bulk purchases from local food suppliers, encouraging the local food industry, reducing emissions resulting from transportation, and fighting the dominance of large corporate monopolies.

Whether it involves provincial takeover of the Sunrise Market as it is, or developing a new system of crown corporation grocery stores, government intervention through some degree of public ownership and operation is necessary to fight the market driven affordability crisis in areas like the Downtown-Eastside. ■



Sign the petition!

The Canadian Network on Cuba has a petition calling on the Canadian government to publicly condemn and refuse to support US aggressions against Venezuela, Cuba and other countries in the region, and to deepen economic ties, trade and assistance to Cuba.

The petition is being sponsored in Parliament by NDP MP Alexandre Boulerice.

So far, nearly 6,000 people have signed. Add your name today!

Visit canadiannetworkoncuba.ca for details.

Hands off Venezuela!

Hands off Cuba!



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Stormy year looms for British Columbia's NDP government

ROB CROOKS

As the next session of the BC Legislature prepares to convene on February 12, the NDP government faces serious challenges on a range of issues and still must rely on votes from two Green MLAs to adopt a budget.

The Conservative opposition remains badly fractured, posing no immediate threat and having no clear frontrunner in their current leadership race. But Premier David Eby's razor-thin hold on power could be shaken by unexpected byelections, or a loss of his party's restive support base. There was a hint of that scenario in early January, when the well-organized \$10 per day childcare movement (led by long-time NDP supporters) issued a stinging rebuke of the government's abysmally slow record. The group issued a public letter calling Eby to account, signed by a wide swath of prominent labour and childcare activists, but it remains to be seen if the 2026 budget will ease the critical shortage of childcare spaces.

Recriminalizing healthcare issues

On another front, the government has ended the three-year pilot project that decriminalized the possession of 2.5 g of illegal drugs for personal consumption. Eby has been distancing himself from harm reduction policies in the name of "safety" and in favour of expanded police powers for some time now. However, some critics are not convinced that the program should have been cancelled. In an interview with CBC, the province's former chief coroner Lisa Lapointe referenced the government's own reports to Health Canada in showing that addiction services were being accessed more often, that policing had become more equitable and that drug-related deaths had "decreased substantially."

Nevertheless, the government has instead opted for an increased reliance on "involuntary care." Bill 32, passed in early December, amended BC's Mental Health Care Act to shield healthcare workers from liability in delivering involuntary care. The bill effectively pits the rights of workers against the rights of healthcare patients. Experts have pointed endlessly to the research that demonstrates the counterproductive impact of involuntary care. Increases in involuntary care are also coming at a time when voluntary care isn't readily available. A year ago, 1,771 youth were on a waiting list for voluntary treatment and there's no reason to believe that the situation has meaningfully improved since then.



Attack on affordable housing

At the root of these problems is the lack of affordable housing and adequate healthcare services in the province. According to the BC Union of Ambulance Paramedics, 250 hospitals and emergency rooms had to close temporarily in 2025 due to staffing shortages. In White Rock and Kamloops, hospitals have drastically reduced OB/GYN services. The BC Nurses Union holds the shortage of 5,000 nurses in the province responsible for increased violent incidents experienced by staff.

Despite news about lower housing costs, affordable housing is faring no better. Vancouver's mayor and crypto currency enthusiast Ken Sim and the overwhelmingly pro-developer city council have shredded protections for single-room occupancy units and supportive and affordable housing in Canada's most impoverished neighbourhood, the Downtown East Side (DTES). City bylaws mandating developments in certain blocks to include 60 percent social housing have been gutted in an apparent attempt to draw condo investors back into the area.

All of this comes at a time when thousands of tourists are expected to visit Vancouver to watch FIFA World Cup games in June. In the run up to the 2010 Olympic games, when the current premier was the executive director of the BC Civil Liberties Association, he warned the city was making it easier for police to "remove homeless people from high-visibility tourist areas." FIFA's deal with the city will likewise give security forces similar extraordinary powers. A memo leaked from Ken Sim's office last spring indicated the city's plan to "re-unify"

Indigenous people, who make up one-third of DTES residents, with their "home communities."

Urgently needed funding for childcare, schools, healthcare staff and housing is going towards reinforcing carceral solutions. That funding is also being used for public subsidies to attract private investments into BC's extractive sector.

Accelerating the extractive agenda

Mark Carney's recent visit to China and Eby's to India show both the prime minister's and the premier's desire to increase exports of fossil fuels, metals and minerals to Asia by way of BC ports. Eby expressed disappointment in November at not being included in the pipeline discussions between Alberta premier Danielle Smith and the prime minister. The pipeline would run to the northern port in Prince Rupert, where a tanker ban is currently in place. Eby has defended the tanker ban, citing his fragile agreements with Coastal First Nations that would be jeopardized by such a project. The tanker ban is a federal agreement, however, and Carney's recent visit to Prince Rupert to meet with Coast First Nations may signal that he is prepared to play the bad cop to Eby's good cop.

Coastal First Nations have repeatedly expressed their intention to oppose lifting the tanker ban, an opposition they reiterated to Carney in Prince Rupert earlier this month. Environmental protection is their first and foremost concern, but Gitga'at First Nation spokesperson Art Sterritt also rejected any notion of First Nations people benefiting from a pipeline. "There are no jobs in this," he said. "There are no jobs in pipelines."

There are no jobs in tankers."

Last year's federal Bill C-5 and the provincial Bills 14 and 15 were synchronized attacks on the rights of Indigenous nations to self-determination. Carney is hoping that removing barriers to extractive projects will strengthen his promotional campaign to sell Canada to the world as an "energy powerhouse." Eby has repeatedly expressed his intentions for BC to play a major role in diversifying resource exports and neither he nor Ottawa will let Indigenous rights won through decades of struggle get in the way.

Eby spoke to the Natural Resources Forum in Prince Rupert upon his return from India. There, he attempted to assuage investors who may hesitate to place their money in BC because of the confusion caused by his own government over Indigenous land rights. Eby doubled down on his reactionary plan to amend BC's Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People in the wake of the BC Supreme Court ruling recognizing the Cowichan nation's historical right to a parcel of land that covers part of the Vancouver metropolitan area. The decision has been attacked with campaigns of misinformation and fearmongering over private property. Eby has been one of the most vocal in criticizing the "overreach" of the BC Supreme Court, implying that his government should have the final say, not the law.

The fightback

The ongoing crises of capitalism and the uncertainty caused by the erratic flailing of the weakening empire to our southern border is leading to an accelerated transfer of public funds toward subsidizing private investors. This is being accompanied by mass unemployment, a roll back of rights and advancing repression for the peoples of Canada.

But these attacks are also being met by an increased fightback. In late 2025, the BC General Employees Union (BCGEU) had 25,000 public employees go out on strike for 8 weeks. Looming strikes this year by transit workers, teachers and healthcare workers could show who really runs this province.

As always, the ruling class will try to make the working class pay for their crisis, but they will be met with steadily increasing militancy in the labour and people's movements.

Rob Crooks is BC leader of the Communist Party of Canada

Tariffs, monopoly capital and the ongoing crisis in the forestry industry

LÉO BOIVIN

Former employees of the Graphic Packaging plant in East Angus, Quebec began receiving unemployment benefits as a Christmas gift from their former employer, which decided to cease cardboard production at its plant in the small town on the outskirts of Sherbrooke. This latest closure in a sector already weakened by "free" trade agreements heralds a qualitative change to come in the crisis in the forest products sector.

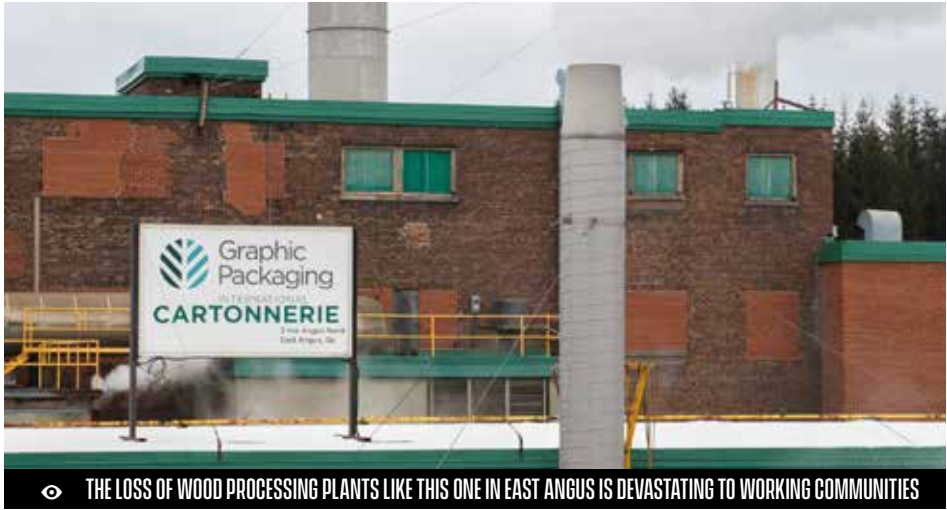
Much has been written about the Trump administration's unilateral tariffs, especially those targeting forest products (those targeting lumber, among others, can reach 45 percent). The risks of job losses, closures and a decline in working conditions were already keenly felt in a region with a rich history of value-added production in the pulp and paper sector. The now confirmed closure of the East Angus plant means the loss of jobs for more than a hundred workers, some of whom have worked there for over 40 years. So many good union jobs disappearing into thin air.

Unionization rates in the forest products sector have been steadily declining since the 1980s. The loss of yet another industrial union is a heavy blow to the labour movement.

But what is currently being exacerbated by the tariff crisis involving the United States is only the continuation of a general trend toward the concentration of industrial capital and its weakening vis-à-vis the corporate giants south of the border. In just 20 years, the number of primary wood processing plants has fallen by 56 percent while wood consumption per plant has increased significantly: the average volume consumed per plant has risen from 116,548 m³ in 2012 to 188,370 m³ in 2023, an increase of 62 percent. The total volume consumed in Quebec, meanwhile, has barely changed during the same period.

And those plants that remain open are becoming larger and larger: the number of sawmills with a supply guarantee of between 0 and 100,000 m³ has fallen from 210 in 2012 to 93 in 2023. In contrast, those with a supply guarantee of more than 500,000 m³ increased from 20 to 30 over the same period. The case of the East Angus mill is yet another example of capital concentration in the forestry industry, which is rapidly heading toward a crisis.

In an interview with Radio-Canada, the prefect of the Haut-Saint-François Regional County Municipality, Robert Roy, stated that US-based Graphic Packaging had decided, despite its current profitability, to consolidate its operations in the United States. This



highlights the harmful effect of both free trade, which allows US industrial capital to set up in Quebec, and the Trump administration's tariffs which are forcing its rapid repatriation. These factors, which have been in the background for the past few decades, are intensifying and coming to the surface, but their effects are qualitatively the same.

While the prefect is calling on the government to provide aid (in the form of public funds to an already profitable company) to boost production, something else is needed to stabilize the situation and reverse the crisis looming over the forest products sector.

A systemic solution is needed to reverse the crisis in the forest products industry, which has been ongoing since at least the 1980s.

Quebec communist newspaper Clarté noted last year that "life outside Quebec's major centers (Montreal and Quebec City) is becoming increasingly precarious due to the concentration of the Canadian and Quebec service economy around the major centers of capital. [...] The effect of 'mono-industry' in medium-sized regional cities [means that] residents who do not live there are often left

ICE out of Minneapolis!

As racist state terror intensifies, so must cross-border solidarity



PV MANITOBA BUREAU

On January 6, the White House ordered 2,000 additional Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers to Minneapolis. Following a year of record ICE funding and escalating state terror, the Twin Cities were targeted for the “largest immigration operation ever.”

The January 7 murder by ICE agents of Renee Nicole Good – a white US citizen involved in growing networks and grassroots initiatives defending migrant communities from ICE – is further confirmation that the attacks on migrants are a pillar of a larger war targeting racialized people, progressive forces and the entire working class in Minneapolis and in the US.

As this war increasingly relies on brute force by law enforcement agencies effectively acting as paramilitary forces with functional impunity from the government, resistance has intensified in turn. This interplay between repression and resistance played out in flashpoints in Los Angeles, Chicago and Charlotte last year. Now, Minneapolis has once again been thrust into centre stage in the struggle against the racist state terror that is so integral to US capitalism.

In Minneapolis, ICE has been forced to confront the resistance infrastructure built since the uprisings of 2020, themselves part of a longer lineage of peoples’ struggles that have shaped the Twin Cities. From the militant labour movement that produced the 1934 general strike to the history of Indigenous resistance that led to the founding of the American Indian Movement in 1968, patient and dedicated organizing by progressive forces in Minneapolis has played a major role in shaping US political life. This legacy includes decades of organizing against racist policing in the city, where the police murder of George Floyd in 2020 sparked the largest protest movement in US history.

With masked, armed ICE agents routinely using brute force to arrest migrants, citizens, Indigenous people, children and adults alike from their homes, cars, workplaces, schools, mosques and beyond, grassroots resistance grew quickly.

Good’s death was a catalyzing moment as these forms of resistance exploded into a sustained, militant, mass mobilization demanding ICE out of Minneapolis.

This shift was not merely spontaneous. Rather, peoples’ organic desire to protect their neighbours from ICE terror was consciously and deliberately built into a potent political force as the organizational infrastructure developed in the wake of George Floyd’s murder was reinvigorated, built upon, and adapted to siege conditions.

This resistance infrastructure includes rapid response networks with patrols at schools, mosques and other targets for ICE raids, witness and response practices, food and supply deliveries, transportation arrangements, and networks to support the relatives left behind after ICE abductions – all coordinated in networks made up of many formal and informal organizations.

This infrastructure is expanding in real time as new organizers are trained in non-violent direct action, with the director of organizing and growth at the Minnesota AFL-CIO reporting they have trained more than

1,200 people over six weeks.

On January 23, this resistance infrastructure produced a massive show of power in the ICE out of Minneapolis: Day of Truth and Freedom. This day of action saw tens of thousands of people take to the streets on a cold winter day under the directive of “no work, no school, no shopping.” This mass mobilization demonstrated the movement’s organizational capacity as immigrant rights organizations, faith groups, organized labour, socialist parties, abolitionist organizations, climate justice organizations and more united behind the core demand of ICE out of Minneapolis.

The next day, ICE murdered Alex Pretti, an ICU nurse and a union member acting as a legal observer. This galvanized further outrage in the streets and nationwide, putting the indispensable role of organized labour in this resistance into stark relief.

The January 23 day of action was endorsed by dozens of trade unions and working-class organizations, including the AFL-CIO Minneapolis. Despite not being in a legal strike position, these unions promoted the day of action and pledged to protect workers’ rights.

Amalgamated Transit Union 1005 President David Stiggers captured the stakes of the resistance to ICE for the working class: “Working people cannot stand aside while our neighbors are terrorized and our families are fractured, because those are our families. Those are our neighbors. They are us.”

On January 30, the resistance scaled up to a national day of action. Reprising the call for “no school, no work, no shopping” and the demand to abolish ICE, many thousands took to the streets in hundreds of actions across the country, this time endorsed by thousands of organizations including union locals, migrant rights’ organizations, faith groups and many more.

The power of the resistance can be seen at the level of official politics. Minnesota-based Democratic figures have issued fiery denunciations of the Trump regime and sued the federal government in an attempt to end ICE’s siege. Nationally, the Democrats are also pursuing impeachment of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Kristi Noem. Senate Democrats were threatening to shut down the government contingent on what they have called “common sense reforms” to ICE operations, but they have agreed to extend DHS funding for another two weeks of negotiation.

Faced with growing street-level resistance and national outrage, the Trump administration has been forced to recalibrate its operations. On January 27, the federal government announced the withdrawal of some ICE forces from Minneapolis, including Border Patrol commander Greg Bovino. The withdrawal of 700 ICE agents from Minnesota in the first week of February must also be read in relation to the strength of resistance forces.

These developments come with their own potential dangers: Democrats’ proposed reforms aim to curb the violent excesses of ICE operations while preserving the core of the administration’s anti-immigrant crack-down. Amid this tactical retreat, Trump’s

■ MINNEAPOLIS, PG 12



No More Loopholes Bill heads to vote this month

Campaign calls for Day of Action on Feb 17 to pressure MPs

ROMY SUGDEN

After being introduced in September of last year, Vancouver East MP Jenny Kwan’s Private Members Bill C-233 goes to vote later this month. The bill, officially titled *An Act to Amend the Export and Import Permits Act* but colloquially known as the No More Loopholes Act, seeks to bring Canada to compliance with the Arms Trade Treaty by eliminating administrative loopholes that allow Canadian-made weapons and parts to be sent around the world via the United States.

Due to immense pressure on the Canadian government to cease direct arms exports to Israel, most of the direct export permits have been paused. As a result, then Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly in September 2024 stated that Canada “will not have any form of arms or parts of arms be sent to Gaza, period.” Current Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand has doubled down on this equivocating, insisting that Canadian-made weapons and parts would not “fuel this conflict in any way.”

In opposition to such phony rhetoric, Kwan’s sponsor statement at the second reading of the bill noted that in 2019, when the Canadian government acceded to the Arms Trade Treaty, it “did so with great fanfare, promising to uphold the highest standards of transparency, accountability, and peace. What we were not told is that the 2019 amendments left open a gaping

loophole ... a giant and open back door for weapons, components and explosives to flow freely from Canada to the United States and then onward to some of the most brutal conflicts in the world.”

A mere day before, a report authored by several activist organizations clearly outlined how these loopholes have been exploited. The report found that F-35 fighter jet components manufactured in Canada – specifically in Mississauga, ON by Honeywell and Cyclone Manufacturing; Kitchener, ON by Magellan Aerospace; and Laval, QC by Heroux Devtek – were being sent first to Lockheed Martin Aeronautics in Fort Worth, TX, then on to various Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Elbit manufacturing and distribution centres, and eventually to Israel.

The report notes that these four manufacturers “represent only a fraction of the more than a hundred Canadian F-35 suppliers.”

Canada also serves as a transit corridor in the military-industrial complex supply chain. Port Saguenay in La Baie, QC a key hub for explosives arriving from Poland on the way to US munitions factories, with the completed munitions then used to carry out the genocide in Palestine.

But what exactly are these loopholes? When Canada acceded to the Arms Trade Treaty, it omitted two articles and amend-

■ CANADIAN-MADE ARMS, PG 11

Solidarity with the Iranian people includes both supporting the protest movement and opposing foreign interference

SALMAN ZAFAR

This isn’t the first time US imperialism has come for Iran. This is, however, likely the first time in a long time Washington can taste some success.

Iran is not a left leaning state by any stretch of the imagination. Yet it continues to offer some resistance to America and Israel’s hegemonic designs in the region.

Iran has many legitimate problems. The economic crisis has reached breaking point and the country’s Islamic regime is repressive and reactionary in many ways. They have committed numerous human rights violations, many of which are documented.

But that is not why the Western powers are so enthusiastic over the prospect of watching the regime collapse. This is not the reason Trump has repeatedly threatened to attack Iran if the country sees more violence against protestors.

The reason the US and Israel want Iran to crumble is, quite simply, so they take down another country that refuses to tow their line. The irony that accompanies Trump’s threat of invasion is visible for all to see: this is the same man whose domestic Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) recently murdered two innocent people in broad daylight in Minnesota. Yet the same man threatens another

country over their conduct with protestors.

Israel also watches gleefully and provides unreserved support to the protestors challenging the Iranian regime. Why shouldn’t it? The man being propped up as Iran’s next head of state, Raza Pahlavi, is close friends with Benjamin Netanyahu and cheered on when Israel attacked Iran in 2025. Pahlavi himself is based in the United States and has not set foot in Iran for almost 50 years. Yet his dreams of one day lording over Iran with US and Israeli support continue.

Pahlavi’s most vocal support comes from significant numbers of Iranians who now call foreign countries home. His support at home in Iran is difficult to gauge, but is unlikely to be as overwhelming as it is amongst the Iranian diaspora. Large chunks of his supporters fall within the standard umbrella of Western liberalism, under which women’s rights are reduced to a choice of clothing alone, Israel is considered a beacon of progress, and Islam is deemed backward. Pahlavi’s support also encapsulates large sections of Western society with standard opinions of “West = Civil. East = Barbaric.”

It is no wonder that the flags of Israel and Imperial Iran are flying side by side at many of these protests. Removing the Is-

■ IRANIAN PEOPLE, PG 11

LABOUR

BC dairy milk testers approach third month of strike

Dairy milk testers in BC have been on strike at testing provider Lactanet since November 25, 2025. The workers, members of the BCGEU, have been working without a contract since September 30, 2023 and took strike action after 20 months of bargaining.

The union wants increases to mileage compensation that covers workers' costs of driving their personal vehicles to farms throughout the province, to pick up samples for testing.

Lactanet milk testers in BC are currently paid \$0.41 per kilometer. In comparison, the Canada Revenue Agency uses \$0.72 per kilometer for work travel using personal vehicles.

"Many of us milk testers work second jobs to make ends meet," said Jack van Dongen, chair of the workers' bargaining committee. "We're not trying to get rich doing this job, but it's not reasonable or sustainable for us to pay out-of-pocket for travel expenses, especially since that's not the industry norm."

LTC workers in NS vote to strike

Workers from Northumberland Hall long-term care home, represented by CUPE 5018, have voted 94% in favour of a strike mandate, bringing the total number of CUPE long-term care homes voting to strike to 30.

CUPE 5018 joins the other long-term care workers in fighting for better wages and improved recruitment and retention, along with other changes to bring their collective agreement in line with other Shanex-operated long-term care homes in the province.

"Everyone keeps asking me if it's all about the money, if that's the only thing we care about, but the reality is the government's refusal to invest in the workers who keep long-term care running is the reason the sector is struggling," explained CUPE Long Term Care Coordinator Tammy Martin. "Adding beds and building new homes won't help if there is no one left to provide care. The solution is simple: pay the workers what they're worth. Start there."

Unlimited general strike at Kruger in LaSalle

Workers at the Kruger plant in LaSalle launched an unlimited general strike on January 12. The 150 workers are members of the CSN union, and are fighting for improved wages.

"We deplore Kruger's categorically refusing to go any further, despite the union's numerous proposals to break the deadlock. The impasse persists on the issue of wages," says Benoit St-Cyr, president of the Kruger LaSalle Employees Union-CSN.

"It seems increasingly difficult to obtain fair wages at Kruger without resorting to a strike," said Kevin Gagnon, president of the Fédération de l'industrie manufacturière-CSN.

The LaSalle strikers are receiving solidarity from their colleagues at other Kruger plants, including the Crabtree plant which workers struck for a month in 2024.

"It's important for people who work at Kruger to stand tall and hold their heads high. We showed that in Crabtree in 2024, and now it's our colleagues' turn in LaSalle," said Patricia Rivest, president of the Lanaudière-CSN Central Council. "We give them our full support and invite other Kruger plant unions to do the same."

"INTERNATIONAL UNIONS" AND TRUMP'S AGGRESSION AGAINST CANADA



TEAMSTER LEADERS RALLY IN SUPPORT OF TRUMP'S FILM TARIFFS [CREDIT: TEAMSTERS LOCAL 399]

Donald Trump's policies have sparked an increased discussion in Canada about the issue of sovereignty. But what does sovereignty mean for the working class, including within the labour movement? In this article, excerpted from a longer one at MLToday.com, long-time US union member and leader Chris Townsend discusses the question of "international unions" and what they mean for workers in Canada in the context of Trump's actions.

Trade unionists sometimes daydream about cross border solidarity among unions. Once in a while, we can practice it. Corporations routinely operate in different countries, and the governments they control likewise promote their agendas across borders. It is one of the greatest aspirational goals of working people – the ability to confront bosses regardless of national borders. Marxists understand this cross-border goal reflexively, harkening back to the admonition: "Workers of all countries, unite!"

But too often it seems the best that trade unions can do is to offer rhetorical support to allied forces engaged in some battle or another with a common foe abroad. One key aspect of international labour solidarity seems however to be forgotten quite commonly in the US: the "international union" phenomenon.

This is the nearly unique situation in which huge numbers of workers in Canada belong to trade unions headquartered in the United States. Upwards of 25 percent of all union members in Canada today belonging to one of these "international" unions (IUs), which have their headquarters, most elected leaders and virtually all control centred in the United States. These unions are overwhelmingly older private sector unions, and are largely clustered in the building trades, manufacturing and a few other traditional sectors. With the more recent advent of all-Canadian unions and the large growth of public sector unions, the IU slice has shrunk but remains key in the overall labour movement in Canada.

"International" but not internationalist

It is key to grasp that the "international" label should never be confused with "internationalist," as in practice virtually none of these US-based unions have ever seen their roles in some larger political context, and certainly not in a left or socialist one.

Notable exceptions would be the spread into Canada of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the early 1900's, along with the later Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) union expansions into Canada in the 1930's and 1940's. And while the anti-communist purges of the 1940's and 1950's played out differently in Canada as opposed to the US, most international unions were eager partners in countless employer and government campaigns against left forces inside the Canadian labour movement.

The question of a union with members in Canada, but headquartered in the US, seems non-existent to most in the US labour movement today. The leadership of the dozens of international unions prefer it that way, taking quiet care to never encourage or inflame what they view as the "nationalist" feelings of their Canadian dues-payers. But the question of Canadian autonomy and possible independence is alive and well, never far below the surface – on the north side of the border, at least.

Given that the Canadian members in all of the IUs comprise only far-less-than-majority fragments of each union's overall membership, there has developed an intrinsic understanding that while the Canadian members might exit the US parent union, by themselves they are incapable of winning control of the entire union. This has quietly condemned the Canadian sections of the IUs to perpetual second tier status in many ways.

In his autobiography, *Hard Bargains, My Life on the Line*, Bob White details the intolerable situation that developed as the Canadian section of the United Auto Workers (UAW) repeatedly caught the US-based auto union leadership undermining and selling out its Canadian members to favour US employers and members in the highly integrated cross-border auto industry. White led the Canadian Auto Workers' secession from the UAW in 1985.

"Good enough" is a dangerous standard today

Some US-based unions have operated with respect and sensitivity to their Canadian membership, unevenly at times, but with select unions making significant efforts to bring them on more-or-less equal terms into the overall life of the union. But with completely different political situations, structures and cultures, not to mention completely different legal arrangements for the functioning of unions, real and sustained efforts are required for any US-based union to truly serve their Canadian membership in full and authentic ways.

Failed versions of international unions have commonly exhibited the tendency to impose unpopular edicts on unhappy members in Canada, by a US leadership primarily interested in collecting dues and maintaining control at any expense – and by any means. There are also incidents of IUs so utterly incompetent and nonfunctional that the Canadian section was compelled to seek autonomy or even separation merely to engage in ordinary trade union functions.

The second Trump term now ushers in a new and increasingly dangerous phase of malignant US imperialism. His sudden turn against Canada – and on other previously cooperative and subordinated regimes – launches the IU phenomenon into a new phase of importance. Canadian members of US-based unions face a new and gigantic question: are the US leaders

of their unions doing something, or anything, to oppose the new Trump onslaught on Canada? On them? And for that matter, what are the Canadian leaders of these same international unions doing?

The Trump regime is openly declaring its intention to impose American hegemony on Canada – with or without the consent of people in Canada. This invigorated imperialist aggression and land-grab planning presents an expanded and urgent challenge for the Canadian members of the US-based unions. This includes unions that even recently might have been viewed as "good enough" by their members in Canada on general questions of autonomy and union functioning.

Canadian members of the IUs now face an exponentially critical new test. What might have been a satisfactory situation yesterday, with a US-based union functioning and delivering adequate results, is today woefully unprepared to resist the Trump assault. Or even to fully understand it.

Trump openly boasts of his desire to break-up Canada so it can be incorporated directly into the United States, on terms only benefiting the US. His Greenland territorial grab is merely a peripheral rehearsal for the real prize – Canada. He attacks Canada with a blizzard of political tariffs, damaging unilateral actions, slander and certain conniving with business tycoons, all aimed at eventually profiting from Canadian and resources and working people.

One can also be certain that Canadian allies of Trump – political, corporate, media and military – are well underway with their contemptible preparations to deliver Canada to him.

Trump has already placed the massive US military, intelligence, corporate and media apparatus unashamedly in the service of big business, as best evidenced by the Venezuelan oil grab. Working people on both sides of the Canada-US border dare not ignore this pivotal moment.

Where are the international union leaders?

Where are the leaders of the US-based international unions as this unfolds? Defending their Canadian members from these attacks automatically places these union leaders in opposition to Trump aggression, although the record will reflect that most of said unions have so far sought a "hideout" strategy. It is as if they hope that the Trumpzilla beast will strut by, engrossed with its own path of destruction, enabling the union to somehow escape notice or detection. While a contemptible and cowardly course, it at least offers a logic for the defense of the US membership.

But what of the Canadian members? Are they not in even greater danger across the board? Trump's aggression is sure to escalate as his first year of performance can attest, with incorporation of Canada

■ CONTINUED AT TOP OF NEXT PAGE

into the US as one of his stated goals. With no brake in evidence on his widening illegal conduct, good sense alone would dictate that Canada need take seriously the threat presented by Trump. Canada's historic subordination to the massive US military and intelligence machinery makes this particularly worrisome.

The stakes for Canadian workers cannot be greater. The working class in Canada would be dragged backwards 100 years on all fronts should such a scheme succeed. US workers have already lived this experience, and the devastated and impoverished condition of the American working class offers a clear blueprint for what awaits its counterpart in Canada.

It seems apparent today that the US-based international union leaderships have presented only fragmented and scattered resistance to Trump and Trumpism, or none at all. There is scant evidence of any real planning for resistance, and what can be discerned is promulgated for the defense of the members in the US.

There is no evidence that the AFL-CIO intends to rally affiliates, or the IUs to ally with the labour movement in Canada in defence of all workers. There is also stark evidence that a number of IUs have accommodated Trump at times, been reluctant to denounce even his worst acts, and are seeking in some cases to curry favor with the malignant president for some hoped-for favour.

With this in mind, Canadian members of these unions should have little reason to hope that their US-based leaders will pursue much of a course opposing Trump's attacks aimed at them.

Sounding the alarm

Knowledgeable observers of the international union reality are aware of their recent history at least, and some of their shortcomings and limitations as well. They are for now a fact of labour movement life, and have their impacts – good and bad – on the Canadian side of the border.

But the increasingly dangerous and deranged Trump era offers no possible benefit to the Canadian members of these unions. The risks in the IU realm are disproportionately borne by Canadians. As a longtime trade union leader from the US, I sound this alarm bell for unionists who are likely unaware of this historical oddity, and I raise the obligation to play our part in remedying the inadequate functioning of the IUs. Serious joint US-Canadian trade union opposition to Trump and his minions is long overdue.

The new situation might cement further the unity between the US and Canadian sections of an international union, or may dissolve it once and for all. Many disparate forces and histories are at play, and the course for each individual IU is likely to be left to them. At minimum, a discussion of this cross-border trade union reality is in order, with the left playing, as always, the informed and constructive role.

Our watchwords must be: "Workers of all countries, unite!" Working class unity and principled class struggle ideology is the way forward in this moment, and we must reject in the labour movement inaction, opportunism, self-serving scheming, accommodation with the aggression, and pandering to Trumpism and US imperialism – here and abroad. ■

Alliance representing 32,000 telecom workers calls for action to stop offshoring of jobs



Almost 20,000 jobs outsourced

A new alliance of unions representing 32,000 telecommunications workers is denouncing the offshoring of thousands of Canadian jobs by major telecommunications corporations.

The Canadian Telecommunications Workers Alliance – a coalition of CUPE, Unifor and the United Steelworkers – is sounding the alarm about this growing crisis and demanding legislation from the federal government to protect Canadians' jobs, privacy and the security of Canada's telecommunications infrastructure.

Over the last ten years, almost 20,000 jobs in the telecommunications sector have been outsourced abroad to the United States, India, the Philippines, Egypt and others.

Canada is not only losing thousands of jobs, but the offshoring of services is putting Canadians' data in danger, as large telecommunications companies use subcontractors abroad who aren't subject to Canada's rules and protections, and entrust them with instant access to Canadians' personal data.

The telecommunications sector is an essential sector for Canada's security and sovereignty, and a vital component of the country's infrastructure. "Canada, simply put, would not function without it," said the Alliance. "We cannot allow it to be compromised by increasing foreign operational control."

"In this moment where our economy and our sovereignty are facing real threats, we should be doing everything possible to protect good jobs in Canada, rather than rolling over and letting big telcos hollow out our communities and ship livelihoods overseas," said Mark Hancock, National President of CUPE.

"We cannot build a resilient economy while shipping essential work overseas. Offshoring telecommunications jobs isn't just a blow to workers; it undermines our digital sovereignty. We are standing together to demand the federal government protect Canadian jobs and ensure our critical infrastructure is operated and secured by Canadian workers," said Lana Payne, Unifor National President.

"Telecommunications is critical national infrastructure. When jobs in this sector are offshored, it doesn't just hurt workers – it weakens accountability and puts Canadians' privacy at risk. Protecting good telecom jobs in Canada is inseparable from protecting our data, our security and our digital sovereignty," said United Steelworkers National Director Marty Warren. ■



FTQ convention shows Quebec workers ready for a fight but lacking leadership and organization

IGOR SADIKOV

At the end of November, 1,500 delegates gathered in Quebec City for the triennial convention of the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ – Quebec Federation of Labour).

Organized within the context of the CAQ government's anti-union attacks, the convention showed Quebec workers' desire for a militant fight. It also revealed the federation's difficulty in rising to the occasion, since its current political horizon is limited to "social dialogue" and class collaboration.

Delegates voted on more than 70 resolutions, mainly in response to the social and sectoral setbacks of recent years. They denounced cuts and the trend toward privatization in the health, education, public transportation and energy sectors. They expressed support for the campaign to expand postal services and for massive investment in social housing. They condemned the rollbacks of union rights and deregulation in the construction industry, as well as the discriminatory impacts on access to employment arising from the ban on religious symbols.

However, the vast majority of the resolutions voted on were limited to piecemeal demands on the government and lobbying. They were not part of an action plan that would guide mobilization and challenge the balance of power with the ruling class.

In the face of Bill 89 (now Law 14) and Bill 3, which attack the right to strike, union democracy and political activity, there is unanimous agreement on the need for extraordinary mobilization. But for the union leadership, and a lot of delegates, this mobilization is primarily aimed at winning electoral promises. So, the convention rolled out the red carpet for the leaders of the opposition parties and applauded them during a panel discussion, despite their ob-

vious contempt for unions and their refusal to commit to repealing all of the CAQ's reforms affecting union rights.

This stance betrays a political vision in which the role of the union movement is not to fight against employers, but to collaborate with them in a "social dialogue" with the state as mediator. It's a vision whose aim is obtaining just enough concessions to appease the working class and maintain "social peace." As Magali Picard, the FTQ president re-elected for a second term, summed it up so well, "I'm tired of being angry." She forgets that social gains are the product of the balance of power that existed at a particular moment in history, and that the ruling class will not hesitate to go on the offensive as soon as it has the means to do so.

At present, capital is fighting the downward trend in the rate of profit, and the generalized crisis of the imperialist system is reflected in intensified competition between states. This leads to wars at the international level, followed by austerity and the militarization of the economy in Canada. This is the moment for class unity and international solidarity.

Reflecting this, convention delegates voted on resolutions in solidarity with Palestine and demanding a solution based on international law. However, they defeated a resolution to freeze Canadian military spending on the pretext that it generates jobs in the arms industry. This reveals a disturbing inability to understand that the militarization of the economy is intrinsically linked to cuts in public services and social wages, and contrary to the common interests of the working class.

Delegates discussed the continuing decline in union density – the result of declining manufacturing sector, increased employer offensives, and an inadequate legal framework regarding sectoral cer-

■ LABOUR UNITY, PG 11

AFL report: Alberta separation would be bad for workers and the economy

A brief released by the Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) on February 14 says that separation would be bad for working people in the province.

The report was released as Alberta separatists are collecting signatures until May 2, as part of their campaign to have a referendum on separating from Canada. Noting that a separate Alberta would need to overcome a complicated, multi-year process of separating from Canada and then negotiate with Indigenous nations, it lists several economic, political, and logistical reasons that separation would be bad for Alberta workers and the economy.

Challenges for the new landlocked country would include lost access to international export markets, economic instability and decreased global influence, financing new infrastructure and institutions, and replacing the many workers, businesses and related tax base that moves from Alberta during the separation process.

The paper also notes that Alberta's access to pipelines across Canadian and US territory may not be automatic and may require negotiating trade deals. The cost of

pipeline access may go up because Alberta's export dependence would grant Canada or the US leverage in the negotiations.

A separate Alberta would need to import many consumer goods including groceries, which would likely mean much higher consumer prices. Alberta workers are already struggling to pay for groceries, housing and other necessities.

The brief warns that many workers and companies would leave Alberta before it became an independent country. This would require the province's universities and colleges to train more workers in many occupations and sectors that are critical for Alberta's economic success.

Finally, the report concludes that workers in Alberta would face sharply reduced public pensions and services, as a result of lost fund-sharing agreements within Canada. In 2025-2026, major Canadian federal transfers to Alberta included a \$6.6 billion Canada Health Transfer and a \$2.1 billion Canada Social Transfer.

The Issue Brief, prepared by AFL director for research and political action Ian Hussey, is available at afl.org. ■

SAT FEB 21 1:30PM LIBRARY PLAZA

PEACE NOT WAR
FUND PEOPLES NEEDS
NOT IMPERIALIST GREED

RALLY & MARCH TO CBC & BACK

Military spending is rising while our schools, hospitals, libraries and public services are being cut. Join us to stand with people across the Americas because an injury to one is an injury to all. Demand funding for healthcare, housing, libraries, and the services we all need to live well not more imperialist war.

Logos: VDLIC, codev, ILPS, and others.

ANTI-IMPERIALIST

MOVIE NIGHT

MON FEB 16

RED GATE, 1965 MAIN ST

DOORS 6:00PM
MOVIE 6:30PM

BY DONATION, \$10 SUGGESTED
ALL PROCEEDS GO TO FUNDING FUTURE EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

SHOWING: THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED
A 2003 Irish documentary examining the April 2002 attempted coup in Venezuela, focusing on the role of private media, the peoples movements that erupted, the brief interim government, and Hugo Chávez's return.

Logos: VDLIC, codev, ILPS, and others.

Enforcement must come through solidarity

■ FROM PG 2

porary international law.

Article 1 of the UN Charter defines the organization’s goals, including “to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples.”

Article 2 establishes the sovereign equality of states, denounces the use of threats and coercion, and reminds that no state has the right to interfere in the foreign affairs of another.

The third point of Article 2 stipulates that all UN members “shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.”

Furthermore, the fourth point of the same article prohibits the use of force against another nation: “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.”

So, it does not take a degree in international law to understand that invading a member country of the United Nations, removing its head of state with the avowed aim of taking control of its oil and installing a government of one's choice, is completely contrary to these principles.

The only exception to the principle of non-use of force provided for in the Charter is in cases of self-defence against aggression by another state (Article 51). This is what identifies the Palestinian resistance against its occupier, Israel, as legitimate under international law.

It is understandable, then, that such a world legal order would be considered problematic by imperialism, as it hinders its freedom to prey on others.

The International Court of Justice

The principles are clear, and the US vi-

to Mexico for assistance amid fiery rhetoric from President Claudia Sheinbaum. Not a week later, however, Mexico’s state-owned oil company Pemex appeared to cancel shipments to Cuba under US threat. Sheinbaum has since defended this interruption as a “sovereign” decision, pledging humanitarian aid to Cuba instead. But whatever is happening behind the scenes, this retreat bodes ill.

Since Mexico’s reversal, Trump has declared a total blockade of fuel to Cuba, imposing harsh tariffs on countries that supply oil to its government and threatening a naval blockade to ensure this result. This is a policy of collective punishment, weaponizing power outages and acute shortages against the Cuban people.

Cuba’s Soviet-era power grid requires a continuous supply of oil to run, and down two significant suppliers, onlookers claim that Cuba may have less than two weeks of fuel remaining. The island has been plagued by rolling blackouts for the past year, exacerbated by the impact of Hurricane Melissa – but a shortage of this severity threatens starvation and death. Hospitals will lose power entirely. Water service and sanitation will cease to operate. Food will spoil. All production will halt.

Florida Representative María Elvira Salazar has since offered that starving children are simply the price that the US must pay to “free Cuba forever.” This level of candor is alarming, but not atypical of the US anti-Cuba lobby, who have been planning such an operation in sadistic detail for their entire lives. Plainly, the present cruelty is an outcome of sixty-seven years of counterrevolutionary strategy by the US ruling class and the exiled scions of Batista-era collaborators.

That being true, these traitors and reactionaries should already know what they’re up against. To quote a recent statement by the Revolutionary Government, Cuba “is a

olations are established beyond any doubt – but there is a problem with the lack of effectiveness of international law.

In 1984, Nicaragua sued the United States at the International Court of Justice, for its military and paramilitary actions undertaken to overthrow the Sandinista government that had been in power since the 1979 overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship, an ally of Washington.

The Court issued an order requiring the US to cease all military and paramilitary actions against Nicaragua. The order was not complied with. The US invoked its “right to self-defense,” but the Court rejected this argument and issued a final judgment concluding that the United States had violated its obligations under international law.


This damning judgment would have forced the US to compensate Nicaragua for all damages caused by its violations, but in 1991, before the hearings on reparations could be heard, Nicaragua withdrew its claim. After more than a decade of war, sabotage and economic strangulation, Washington succeeded in getting a Nicaraguan government elected that was friendly to its imperialist interests.

Forty years later, we see that Trump has invented nothing new; he is simply following in the footsteps of his predecessors. He admittedly is more vulgar and transparent, but the objectives – paving the way for monopoly domination – remain the same.

In the absence of effective mechanisms to enforce international law, only solidarity, internationalism and the organized resistance of the working class can guarantee a future based on dignity and self-determination for all the peoples of the world. ■

Clarté

Translated from French by PV staff



country of brave and combative people. Imperialism is mistaken when it believes that economic pressure and the determination to cause suffering to millions of people will break their determination to defend national sovereignty and prevent Cuba from falling, once again, under US domination.”

Since January 3 and throughout the present crisis in the region, the Cuban people have flooded the streets of Havana in this spirit of national defence. On January 28, marking the 173rd anniversary of José Martí’s birth, President Miguel Díaz-Canel led thousands of students and workers in an annual torchlight march to commemorate their national hero and the independence that he represents [photo above]. This year, however, the simple gesture of raising a flame in the dark assumes a profound significance.

No matter how the forces of imperialism choose to proceed, they will never have faced an adversary such as this. And as Cuba continues to light our way, we must do everything in our power to bolster their numbers abroad. Another world depends upon this outcome, and there is no time left in which to wait and see. ■

For information on Cuba solidarity work in Canada, contact the Canadian Network on Cuba at canadiannetworkoncuba.ca

Nationalized program needed to rebuild forest products industry

■ FROM PG 6

behind."

The centralization of capital is the source of ruin in these regions. The solution cannot be to rewind the tape and play the same movie again, as the prefect suggests. To achieve equal development of the regions, emancipation from the United States and an improvement in the standard of living across the country, there is an urgent need for a program of massive reindustrialization under public and democratic control, and a forestry program for the benefit of working people.

Failure to do this would mean devastating consequences for working people, but also for small business owners, investors and industry. ■

Clarté
Translated from French by PV staff

Labour unity and independent political action are key

■ FROM PG 9

tification, subcontracting and dependent “self-employed” workers. The solutions proposed included mobilizing around expanding access to unionization, organizing workers without formal certification, and creating workers' centres to reach out to non-unionized workers.

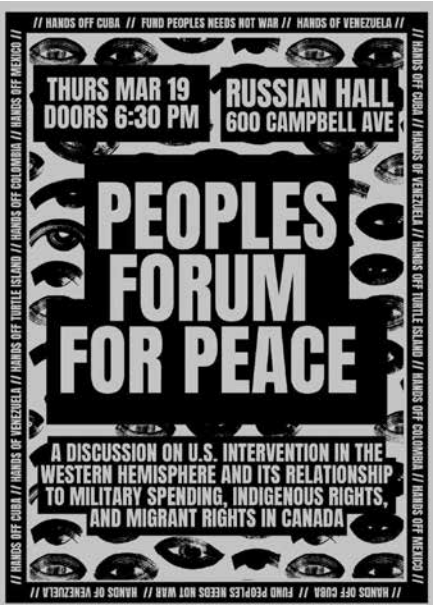
These are promising avenues, so long as aren’t limited to service provision rather than uniting unionized and non-unionized workers around a program of action in the broader interests of the working class.

The task of progressives within the union movement is to promote independent mass political action around policies that break with the power of big business. The labour movement must become a central force in the struggle for public and democratic control of key industries, for Canada’s withdrawal from NATO, and for its liberation from US imperialism.

The division of Quebec unions into several separate federations can make this task more complex, as it dilutes the weight of progressive forces across each of the labour bodies. But this structural plurality is not a fundamental obstacle to unity in action, as demonstrated by Common Front struggles and numerous joint mobilizations.

Everywhere, the goal is to organize the energy and fighting spirit of the working class to build a real struggle against the bosses. ■

Clarté
Translated from French by PV staff



WHAT’S LEFT

VANCOUVER

FEB 21 | RED BOOKS DAY

7 PM online and at the Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Dr. "Dialectical and Historical Materialism." For info and Zoom link, email epcbcoorganizer@gmail.com.

VANCOUVER

FEB 21 | PEACE NOT WAR RALLY

1:30 PM at Library Plaza. Rally and march to fund people's needs, not imperialist greed. March will go to CBC and back.

VANCOUVER

FEB 22 | PUENTES DE AMOR RALLY

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

WINNIPEG

FEB 22 | 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

FEB 17 | ARMS EMBARGO NOW

5:30-7 PM at various subway stops. Day of Action in support of No More Loopholes Bill. For info, 416-469-2446.

TORONTO

FEB 22 | 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.

TORONTO

FEB 22 | PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL

2:30 PM at USW Hall, 25 Cecil St. Join Cuba solidarity activists in charging the US with violating human rights for its economic war on Cuba.

TORONTO

FEB 22 | 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.

OTTAWA

FEB 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

FEB 22 | PUENTES DE AMOR RALLY

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

MONTREAL

MAR 4 | IWD EVENT

6:30 PM at 5359 avenue du Parc. Celebrate International Women's Day with special guest Dominique Daigneault, former president of CSN Montreal Council.

Bad Bunny's Super Bowl performance was a call to resist imperialism



JULIO MARTÍNEZ MOLINA

Just one week after his very strong statements at the Grammy Awards, Puerto Rican urban artist Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio (Bad Bunny) once again took a jab at imperial power, at the Super Bowl halftime concert.

His words, proudly expressed in Spanish – along with the symbols used in the show's design – have gone around the world, winning the sympathy of an ever-increasing number of people who deplore the fascist turn of the US under the administration of Donald Trump.

And they received their best reception, of course, from those almost 668 million Latin Americans, peoples towards whom the current Yankee government does not hide its contempt in any way and whom it humiliates through racist, eugenic and Malthusian policies, in the pure Third Reich style.

Latin Americans represent a special target (nine out of ten arrests by Immigration and Customs Enforcement – ICE – are against them) of the barbaric hunt for migrants, with raids, arrests and mass deportations.

No one is spared from the belligerence, arrogance or disdain of Trumpism for the peoples of Latin America; not even Yankee colonies, like Puerto Rico, which has suffered – and continues to suffer – continuous power outages for many years, a phenomenon described by Bad Bunny in his song “El apagón” which he sang at the event.

The singer was the Trojan horse that entered the very heart of the US cultural system, through a 13-minute performance whose exploitation of Puerto Rican – and, by extension, Latin American – symbolic capital is a lesson in response to the cultural war that is being unleashed on our peoples with increasing force.

These thirteen minutes were underscored by a dominant phrase displayed at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California: "The only thing more powerful than hate is love." These ten words are a declaration of resis-

tance against those who ushered in this dark era of US politics, marked by the most primal hatred of difference, of the continent's Indigenous peoples, their histories, their customs and their idiosyncrasies. It is an era marked by hatred for the very people who gave their sweat and lives to build the US, where 68 million Latinos live today.

The chorus of the song "Lo que le pasó a Hawai" – from the album *Debí tirar más fotos*, which won a Grammy for Album of the Year and is one of the most politically charged tracks on the album – was performed by Ricky Martin at the Super Bowl, and goes: "They want to take away my river and my beach too. They want my neighborhood and for Grandma to leave. No, don't let go of the flag or forget the lelolai. Because I don't want them to do to you what happened to Hawaii."

It is also very significant that so many millions of people listened to that song on Super Bowl Sunday because, more than a reference to Puerto Rico, such an anthem represents a continental warning about what can happen to any of us if we do not unite, integrate, defend our cultural heritage and resist the attempts of Trumpism to dominate the world.

We must believe in human improvement, as well as artistic improvement. Although the author of this commentary published angry articles in the past about the lyrics of the Puerto Rican reggaeton artist, today he must acknowledge that the artist's political awareness is truly commendable and highly worthy of emulation.

This is especially significant, given that it arises from a representative of a sector of the music industry largely subservient to hegemonic power and cultural colonialism. Amidst so many pro-imperialist reggaeton artists, cowards and traitors to the core, Benito Antonio stands as an example of courage and foresight. ■

Granma

Canadian-made arms are exported to many conflicts

■ FROM PG 7

ed a third. The omitted Article 4 states that parts and components that could be used in the assemblage of a convention arm shall be required to meet the same standards and prohibitions as the completed arms themselves. The omitted Article 6 states that parties to the Treaty shall not authorize the transfer of completed arms, munitions or parts and components that would violate international law, the Charter of the United Nations, or “in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Convention of 1949, attacks directed against civilian objects or civilians protected as such, or other war crimes.” Article 7 was amended to remove reference to Article 6, weakening the export assessment criteria.

In response to concerns made by “industry stakeholders” during the debate period, oversight of trade to the US was limited via an exemption, and a new “General Export Permit” was created which allowed Canadian exporters to bundle goods, thereby eliminating the need to file individual permits which would then require individual approval.

The No More Loopholes Bill seeks to close these loopholes by eliminating the country exemption, disallowing general permits for military goods or technology, and requiring more thorough tracking of exports.

Opponents to the bill have claimed it will strengthen the US manufacturing industry and chase jobs “out of Canada and into the arms of Donald Trump.” They also suggest that it would prevent Canada from fulfilling NATO commitments and undermine the “special relationship” with the US – a country whose leader is posturing at using economic force to subjugate Canada.

Critics say that additional administrative oversight is unnecessary red tape, and that the problem of Canadian weaponry in Israel has already been solved.

But the evidence refutes such assertions. Not only in Gaza, but in Sudan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and of late, Minneapolis, Canadian-made arms, vehicles and munitions are the tools of war, oppression and genocide.

The Arms Embargo Now campaign has called for a Day of Action on February 17, asking people across the country to educate their neighbours and compel their MPs to vote yes to sending the No More Loopholes Bill to committee.

We must end Canada's complicity in the machines of genocide. ■

Photo on page 7: Greenpeace Canada



Iranian people alone have the right to determine their future

■ FROM PG 7

lamic Regime and installing a Western puppet like Pahlavi will give Israel and the US an open field in the region. One by one, they have taken down governments that dared to question them, from Syria to Iraq to Libya to now Iran. The aim for Iran is exactly similar to what they had in place for the others – complete and utter destruction and domination.

This is why there is a large organic protest taking place in Iran that challenges the government and at the same time is completely against any sort of foreign intervention in the country.

Any sort of regime change that takes place within Iran needs to be dictated by the Iranian people themselves. Not Western stooges living thousands of miles away stoking the fires of discontent for their own selfish motives.

This is why it is urgent to defend the Iranian people – both through solidarity with their struggle against the government and by vehemently opposing any foreign intervention in Iran's domestic affairs. ■



Remembering Parenti through a sampler of his work

CALLUM K AND C BARTHOLOMEW

Michael Parenti's *Blackshirts and Reds* remains his most popular and unyielding work. It frames the rise of fascism as a reaction to Marxist-Leninist workers' movements, offering a materialist history that is both accessible and uncompromising. Crucially, this analysis of fascist reaction runs parallel to Parenti's critique of contemporary socialist models, where he posits that exhaustion and siege are tools used by capitalist nations to force ideological revision and concession. A vital, polemical work, it provokes necessary reflection for modern movements and any practicing theoretician.

Against Empire is, in many ways, a complement to *Lenin's Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. It investigates US imperialism as a product and tool of finance capital, demonstrating how the working class pays for the enrichment of transnational corporations and the empowerment of the surveillance state. Parenti also asserts that democracy, progressive change and the gains fought for by the working-class are not fixed, nor are they

protected by institutions or legal checks and balances. To endure and develop, they must be fought for.

As a textbook, *Democracy for the Few* may be less accessible than many of Parenti's other writings. Despite some minor flaws, however, this book remains one of the most comprehensive analyses of how American government and institutions function. It exposes the class reality of political power in so-called liberal democracies, revealing the many ways in which the US system is designed to serve the interests of capital and imperialism while suppressing the needs and demands of the working-class.

US Interventionism, the Third World, and the USSR: This roughly 90-minute lecture is an excellent analysis and takedown of US imperialism from the Western invasion against the Bolshevik Revolution all the way up to the Reagan administration. The lecture concludes with a commentary on Cuba which, while succinct, remains beautiful and inspiring. ■

Guardian (Australia)

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BC's return to criminalizing addiction

On January 14, the Government of British Columbia announced it would end its decriminalization pilot project, choosing to not renew the federal exemption to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

The decision reverses a core policy approach to the toxic drug crisis sweeping BC and all of North America that, since 2023, removed criminal penalties for the possession of small amounts of illicit substances for personal use. The provincial government's stated rationale, as expressed through Health Minister Josie Osborne, was that the pilot "has not delivered the results we hoped for," specifically citing a lack of measurable decrease in stigma and an insufficient increase in people seeking treatment.

Minister Osborne and Dwayne McDonald of the BC RCMP emphasized that addiction remains a health issue. The Ministry of Health stated that the provincial government will shift focus to strengthening other parts of the care continuum, including treatment and harm reduction services. The BC RCMP supported the move, noting that "police officers can fully enforce and focus on the most serious offences within the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act" and that, "police will continue to apply a measured approach to our enforcement efforts."

The province's decision not to seek a renewal of the pilot project is a culmination of a process that was systematically undermined from its inception.

While the pilot began on January 31, 2023, its core purpose was gutted just over a year later when, on May 7, 2024, the federal government approved the province's request to exempt public spaces from the decriminalization exemption. This amendment effectively restricted decriminalization to private residences, further marginalizing unhoused people who use drugs and increasing the risk of isolated, fatal overdoses as they were pushed away from safer, public overdose prevention services.

Furthermore, the province's failure to mount an effective public education campaign set decriminalization up for misinterpretation and failure, paving the way for the predatory media narratives and right-wing political campaigns that ultimately sealed its fate.

A closer examination reveals this formal end of decriminalization to be a profound step backwards for people living with addiction, prioritizing a political moment over the evidence of public health authorities and collective well-being. The rhetoric used by Minister Osborne highlights the true shift in the subject of enforcement, stating "in 2023, we launched a pilot program to decriminalize people who use drugs."

Withdrawing the exemption from the decriminalization program is the province taking steps to re-criminalize people who live with addictions and who need the support of a holistic system to reduce toxic-drug deaths. By withdrawing the exemption to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the province is actively choosing to re-criminalize individuals living with addiction, contradicting its and the RCMP's assertion that substance use is a health matter.

Ending decriminalization is a return to a failed model where enforcement is misapplied to a medical need, undermining the pilot project's original intent to reduce the deadly stigma that drives people to use alone.

As the First Nations Health Authority rightly stated in their response to this announcement, "decriminalization was meant to address the stigma and discrimination that surrounds those who use substances." This



goal of decriminalization is a goal the government has now abandoned in favor of political narrative management.

This reversal is not grounded in the pilot project's outcomes. Advocates like the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition found that data reported by the government to Health Canada showed that the pilot had promising early signs: offences and seizures had decreased, core health service utilization was stable or increasing, and there was no spike in substance use disorders. The Canadian Drug Policy Coalition argued that the government is ignoring their own evidence, capitulating to a moral panic fueled by right-wing politicians and sensationalized media.

The end of decriminalization is an attempt to deflect from the government's failure to address the root systemic drivers of the crisis such as poverty and unaffordable housing, a lack of access to mental health supports, non-existent low-barrier on-demand treatment, and unrealistic treatment and detox wait times. The end of decriminalization scapegoats a necessary pillar of public health addictions policy for broader austerity measures.

The impact of this decision will fall most heavily on people who use drugs, and "disproportionately [so] on First Nations people, communities and families" as the First Nations Health Authority identified. The FNHA, a health system partner to the provincial government, stated that they were not consulted on this decision.

People living with addiction will once again face the immediate harms of being the subject of re-criminalization, including the fear of police interaction, increased barriers to housing and employment, greater aversion to accessing life-saving resources such as overdose prevention sites, and elevated risk as they and their addictions are pushed into hiding.

This change betrays the trust of advocates, service providers, health partners, and communities who supported decriminalization as a primary pillar of a compassionate, evidence-based response to toxic drug deaths. As per the BC Coroners Service announcement in 2024, "for British Columbians between 10 and 59, unregulated drug toxicity is the leading cause of death, accounting for more deaths than homicides, suicides, accidents and natural disease combined."

To move forward, we must forcefully reject this return to the criminalization of individuals and reaffirm that substance use is a health issue.

The Communist Party of British Columbia demands and fights for policies centred on saving lives, including significant investment in a regulated and accessible safe supply program, on-demand and low-barrier treatment, deep investment in education, and true harm reduction. We must challenge the stigma that the end of decriminalization so dangerously reinforces. ■

Communist Party of British Columbia



Minneapolis: the power is in the streets

■ FROM PG 7

ostensibly constructive talks with Mayor Jacob Frey and Governor Tim Walz could result in a negotiated compromise between the Democrats and the Republicans that undercuts the powerful movement demanding the abolition of ICE. The administration's withdrawal of 700 ICE agents is owed in part by saying increased cooperation between federal forces and Minnesota's own law enforcement agencies, such that the anti-migrant crackdown could be carried out with a "softer touch," to use Trump's words.

Nevertheless, each of these developments demonstrate the movement's role in shaping reality on the ground. Make no mistake: the power is in the streets.

The view from Canada

Winnipeg is a sister city of Minneapolis. Like Minneapolis, the city has been shaped by Indigenous and working-class struggles that have reverberated across the country. Social, economic and political ties between the two cities are strong, and people in Winnipeg have watched the events of Minneapolis in horror and in search of ways to support. The Manitoba Nurses Union lit a candle and issued a statement commemorating the life and sacrifice of Alex Pretti, while businesses and communities have raised funds to support on-the-ground organizations in Minneapolis.

The escalation of racist state terror, the momentum of popular resistance in Minneapolis, and the related dangerous international situation calls for deepening ties between progressive movements across this geography.

Campaigns against ICE collaborators in Canada are growing as well. Vancouver-based billionaire Jim Pattison was quickly forced to reverse a real estate deal with the US Department of Homeland Security by popular pressure, including a statement from UFCW 1518 on behalf of workers at the Pattison-owned Save-On-Foods.

The Arms Embargo Now coalition, which came together to demand Canadian divestment from Israel's genocide in Gaza, has called attention to a \$10 million contract between ICE and Canadian arms manufacturer Roshel, who have committed twenty armoured vehicles to the US agency. As footage circulates of ICE barreling through ranks of protesters in tank-like machines, it is imperative that we make (and break) these trade connections, by pressuring the government to reject all export permits to companies supplying ICE.

At the same time as we are watching ICE's rampage in the US, anti-migrant racism is on the rise across Canada and has been embraced by the Carney Liberals. Our movements should be clear-eyed: the siege of Minnesota is a possible outcome of the anti-migrant politics growing in Canada at this very moment.

Expanded and intensified exploitation of migrants has been a key pillar of accumulation and class warfare by the Canadian ruling class in the neoliberal era. Now, as the whole of Canadian politics shifts to the right, we are seeing these heavily ex-

ploited migrant communities scapegoated for a cost-of-living crisis caused by this same ruling class.

The distance from Minnesota to Manitoba doubles as a corridor for hundreds of refugees facing deportation from the US. These dangerous passages peaked during Trump's first administration; but discriminatory immigration policy, coupled with disastrous foreign intervention, ensures that someone will always be willing to make this journey.

Many of those migrants who risked their lives to make a refugee claim in Canada had previously arrived in the midwest from East Africa and Somalia, where thirty years of US interference has contributed to a permanent state of civil war. (According to the Council on Foreign Relations, Trump carried out more bombings of Somalia than the Bush, Obama, and Biden administrations combined last year alone.)

Minneapolis is home to the largest Somali community in the US, and Trump's compulsive rants against this diaspora have paved the road to the present ICE attacks. Our politicians may reject this racist rhetoric – but when Trump spent the early days of his second term demanding that Canada fortify the border against such refugee claimants and further crack down on immigration, our provincial NDP and federal Liberals all-too-happily obliged. Among other dangerous reforms to Canada's immigration system, Bill C-12 – currently working its way through the Canadian Senate – reinforces the Safe Third Country Agreement with the US, which denies refugees who arrive in the US to apply for asylum in Canada on the assumption that the US is a "safe" country for refugees.

At present, there are five ICE field offices operating in Canadian cities with the full cooperation of local law enforcement, and Migrant Canada continues to report on surprise workplace raids by the Canada Border Services Agency.

Rather than retreat into a complacent "this-could-never-happen-here" Canadian chauvinism, working-class and social movements in Canada must take the worsening conditions south of the border as an opportunity to redouble our solidarity with, and defence of, migrant communities. Let us learn from the lessons of resistance in the Twin Cities and build organizational power strong enough to prevent the far-right, anti-migrant forces in Canada from getting anywhere near the positions of power that would enable such an escalation here. Let us learn from the powerful mobilization we are witnessing, and from the years of dedicated, humble, behind-the-scenes organizing that has made it possible.

If the Trump administration sees Minneapolis as a testing ground for repression and paramilitary violence, it must also be read as a test for the forces of resistance. As we write, a popular movement against ICE is shaping reality on the ground in Minnesota, and has shifted the balance of forces in the process. As a result, the outcome of this domestic siege is far from guaranteed. Working people everywhere can learn from the powerful example of unity on the streets of Minneapolis. ■



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