

PEOPLE'S VOICE

CANADA'S LEADING SOCIALIST PUBLICATION

PRINTED BY UNION LABOUR IN CANADA
CANADA POST PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT #40011632

PVONLINE.CA



PRIDE IS A FIGHT, NOT A FLOAT! Pg 4

JULY 1-31, 2026 | VOL. 34, #12 | \$2.00



Build Canada's economic sovereignty through public ownership of auto and steel, rebuilding manufacturing, and mass construction of housing and public infrastructure – Pg 2

CUBA'S EMERGENCY REFORMS

In the face of escalating US pressure, Cuba agrees to sweeping economic reforms - what do they mean?
pg.3

BC CONSERVATIVES TAKE A SHARP RIGHT

The election of Kerry-Lynne Findlay as leader of the BC Conservatives sends a warning shot to the left
pg.6

AUTO TALKS 2026 SOLIDARITY WITH UNIFOR!

Autoworkers have entered what they call one of the most consequential rounds of Detroit Three bargaining in decades
pg.8

WHAT NEXT FOR COLOMBIA AFTER ELECTION?

The June 19 presidential runoff was a big setback for the progressive forces, but they are poised to resist
pg.12

Pages from our past...

People's Voice Vol 1 No 4 ~ June 1993

Massive labour protest against NAFTA

In one of the largest protests ever on Parliament Hill, the labour movement served notice on Prime Minister Mulroney and his Tories to say goodbye. Working people were fed up, and at least 100,000 showed up with a clear message: any party that serves the corporations at the expense of workers, the poor or the many other groups present at the rally are not welcome in government.

The Canadian Labour Congress billed the protest as a way to channel frustration over free trade, persistently high unemployment, the widening gap between rich and poor, growing child poverty, the feminization of poverty, infrastructure decay, unfair taxation and the erosion of public services.

In a display of unity and historic meaning, CLC president Bob White held up the hand of Bobby Jackson, a surviving member of the great On to Ottawa Trek of 1935, which did so much to win unemployment insurance and other social programs and to defeat the Tories of that era. Great cheers greeted this start to the rally.

The Action Canada Network organized two caravans which in their cross-Canada journeys from each coast gathered thousands more petitions and messages on two huge banners. The banners were draped across the front fence of Parliament Hill, with their messages from the Westray miners in Nova Scotia, NAFTA protesters in BC and many others between the two coasts.

Among the many initiatives by groups taking part in the rally:

- Four buses of CUPE members from Dryden, Ontario, a 26-hour one-way trip, were among the 400 buses which brought protesters.
- A contingent of thousands came from the Quebec Federation of Labour.
- A tent set up by the Canadian Peace Alliance in the arrival area, highlighting concerns about high military spending.
- Two trains from Windsor and Toronto filled by different unions.

Organized with only eight weeks preparation, the rally showed the Canadian Labour Congress and its coalitions partners have massive support for demands to change the politics of Canada.

The protest was welcomed as "an important, galvanizing initiative" by Miguel Figueroa, Communist Party spokesperson. "The effort put in by countless organizers and the overwhelming response show once again the extent of public discontent with Tory policies. This rally has generated new momentum to defeat NAFTA and the corporate agenda, a momentum which must be built in the coming months and into the federal election."

The Communist Party organized one of the buses from Toronto and handed out thousands of "Put Canada Back to Work" leaflets to protesters. ■

No extension — out of the USMCA now!



Build Canada's economic sovereignty through public ownership of auto and steel, rebuilding manufacturing, and mass construction of housing and public infrastructure

In the face of the mandatory review of the Canada-US-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA/USMCA) approaches, working people across Canada are looking at a stark choice. The Carney government, after a hypocritical "elbows up" campaign and a grandstanding Davos speech about middle-power resistance, has now travelled to New York to declare that a "Canada Strong" will help "Make America Great Again."

This, alongside Carney's recent calling the US's illegal war on Iran "worth it" and his deafening silence on the Washington's strangulation of Cuba, demonstrates the Carney government's repeated attempts at capitulation to the Trump administration.

Canada and Mexico have formally requested a 16-year extension of USMCA. That would mean another 16 years of deepened dependency on US monopoly diktat. The Trump administration has refused to commit, demanding sweeping concessions that would gut Canadian sovereignty even further.

The US wants to eliminate supply management and destroy the livelihoods of Canadian farmers. It wants to eliminate cultural protections, including for French language content, and remove the insufficient taxes and regulations faced by US tech monopolies. It wants to scrap procurement policies that create decent local jobs and force Canada to accelerate the privatization of public healthcare, opening the door to massive US medical services and health insurance monopolies. It seeks to eliminate jobs in forestry. And it demands Canada remain in lockstep with Washington as it escalates its economic war on China, with the real potential of dragging Canada into a hot war.

But this push for extension is not simply the result of US pressure. Canadian monopoly capital is equally eager to strike a deal. Mark Carney's recent business trip to New York was the logical expression of the interests of Canada's ruling class. Canadian and US corporate monopolies share a common agenda: driving down wages, gutting environmental regulations, eroding democratic oversight and maximizing profit at any cost. For Canada's billionaires and their transnational partners, access to the US market is well worth sacrificing public healthcare and workers' livelihoods and even Canadian independence.

Alongside these corporate trade negotiations, the Carney government is quietly waging a parallel attack on workers' rights at home. Through a rushed, invitation-only consultation process that flew under the public radar, Ottawa is reviewing the entire Canada Labour Code with an eye to sweeping changes that unions warn amount to a fundamental assault on the right to strike. The Carney government's agenda is to weaken collective bargaining, curb strike action, and "Americanize" Canada's labour laws to benefit large corporations and the super-rich, all while claiming to stand up for Canadian workers against Trump.

Meanwhile, US tariffs are already causing mass devastation. The 25-percent tariff on vehicles assembled in Canada has led to an estimated loss of 6,500 direct autoworker jobs including 3,000 jobs at Stellantis. GM shut down its CAMI assembly plant in Ingersoll, laying off 1,144 employees. Another 700 jobs were eliminated by GM in Oshawa, not including the loss of supplier jobs. At Algoma Steel, 1,000 workers lost their jobs despite \$500 million in joint federal-provincial loans. The layoffs have already started, and many more are coming.

Over the past quarter-century, the working

class has been forced to finance the corporate monopolies that then cut jobs and outsource production. In the auto sector this can be tallied as high as \$79 billion in corporate welfare. Of that sum, \$57 billion was locked into tax incentives and production subsidies for the EV sector stretching through 2033, while an additional \$22 billion has been funneled into emergency bailouts, including nearly \$14 billion shoveled to the Detroit Three during the 2008 financial meltdown.

These are public funds that could have built a stable, publicly owned and democratically controlled auto industry with well-paying union jobs. Instead, we are left with closed plants and mass layoffs.

The Carney government's strategy is a doubling down on the failed policies that got us here. Pinning hopes on the USMCA review is a recipe for more disaster. This deal, like NAFTA before it, was never about fair trade; it is a corporate constitution designed to empower monopolies, pit workers against each other across borders, and systematically dismantle Canadian sovereignty and independence. With the current US government, this process accelerates dramatically. Deeper integration means increased attacks on democratic rights and complicity in escalating acts of aggression and wars around the world.

USMCA has already proven to be bad for workers. When USMCA was signed in 2018, official unemployment stood at 6 percent. After a brief pandemic-era dip to 4.8 percent in July 2022, unemployment has since climbed past its pre-USMCA level, hitting 7 percent in November 2024. Meanwhile, the employment rate fell from 62.5 percent in 2018 to under 61 percent by late 2023, a drop equivalent to roughly 380,000 additional workers without jobs.

If USMCA were truly designed to "stabilize and expand the economy and jobs," as its proponents claim, we would expect the opposite: more jobs, not fewer. Instead, even before Trump's tariffs, the data shows a deal that has delivered for corporations while leaving workers behind.

Instead of choosing between reactionary tariffs and massive job losses on the one hand, and submission to continental corporate free trade and massive job losses on the other, we must fight for Canadian sovereignty, for peace, and for an economy that puts steel and auto under public ownership and democratic control and rebuilds manufacturing, creating tens of thousands of well-paid and permanent value-added jobs in the process.

We need multilateral and mutually beneficial trade. For the Communist Party, genuine "mutually beneficial trade" means trade that serves working people, not corporate panels sitting in judgment over government policy. It must be based on full employment, environmental security, respect for Indigenous rights, and democratic national planning — with corporations barred from dictating the terms.

Fortunately, we have seen impressive and powerful fights against corporate free trade before. In the late 1980s, a broad people's movement — uniting labour, farmers, women's groups, environmentalists, churches, cultural workers and Indigenous peoples — rose up to fight Mulroney's original Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA. We lost that battle, but their fight showed the potential for a united fightback against the corporate agenda.

Today, faced with a new generation of attacks

■ MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL, PG 6





SolidNet.org

News, documents and calls for action from Communist and Workers Parties around the world

Indigenous solidarity: Honour the Treaties!



June 21 was the 30th anniversary of National Indigenous Peoples Day. We celebrate the long history of resistance against colonial oppression and reaffirm our solidarity with those on the front lines of Indigenous struggles to uphold the treaties and to oppose land and resource theft.

This year also marks the 150th anniversary of the signing of Treaty 6. Signed by Crown representatives and Cree, Assiniboine and Ojibway leaders in 1876, Treaty 6 is a sacred agreement outlining how First Nations and settlers would share the land, plants, air and animals. It is not a historic document; it is a living agreement with promises that remain binding.

Treaties were enacted by Britain and Canada under pressure from Indigenous resistance to colonial genocide. Essentially, they were agreements for nation building and an instrument for the sharing of the land base for Turtle Island. Treaties never surrendered land but were for shared agricultural purposes “from the depth to the tip of the plow”. We honour this anniversary and the ongoing struggle to uphold the promises of Treaty 6 and all treaties.

This is a period of renewed corporate offensive. Canada and provincial governments are launching new attacks against Indigenous sovereignty in order to strengthen the powers of capitalist dispossession. Under the guise of “national interest,” governments are fast-tracking corporate projects that violate Indigenous sovereignty, as seen with Mark Carney’s dangerous Bill C-5.

Passed with strong Conservative support in June 2025, Bill C-5 handed cabinet sweeping powers to fast-track “major projects” by sidelining Indigenous consent and environmental assessments. Some saw Carney as a lesser evil, but his government is attacking Indigenous rights as ferociously as a Conservative government would have done.

These regressive steps are intimately connected to Canada’s drive to honour the US and NATO demand to spend 5 percent of GDP on military expansion. The war economy demands accelerated resource extraction and the sacrifice of Indigenous title to fuel imperialist militarism. Illegitimate expropriation of Indigenous land is the historical foundation for Canadian capitalism, and continued control over Indigenous land remains a key pillar upholding monopoly capitalism in Canada.

Indigenous-led land defence movements are crucial sites of resistance to capital’s destruction of the natural environment, and this resistance is set to accelerate with the renewed push to militarize and make Canada an “energy superpower.” Monopoly capital uses “jobs vs. environment” rhetoric to pit workers against the rights of Indigenous nations to self-determination; this is a lie, as pipelines that violate Indigenous jurisdiction also lock workers into volatile, planet-wrecking jobs. A common enemy requires a common fight.

We salute the major advances and contributions Indigenous peoples have made, even in the face of growing assimilationism, in language revitalization, media, education, art, theatre and literature. However, while liberal sections of the ruling class in Canada allow or even celebrate Indigenous cultural achievements and reclamations, Indigenous economic and social rights lag behind.

There are still 38 long-term drinking water advisories affecting First Nations communities. The median individual em-

ployment income for Indigenous workers remains 18 percent less than non-Indigenous workers. Indigenous people face extreme overrepresentation in the criminal justice system with incarceration rates 10.2 times higher than non-Indigenous people.

Indigenous communities across Canada have to live these statistics every day and are struggling for their equality, for their social and economic rights to be met. Many communities lack basic health services, while Treaty rights including the medicine chest clause, rights to an economic system, training, and agricultural tools are being denied.

We salute the Tssetsaut Skii km Lax Ha Nation, which is pressing its legal challenge against the massive KSM gold-copper mine in northwestern BC, as the mine’s tailings facility threatens salmon rivers and Indigenous jurisdiction.

We salute the Haida Nation for securing the historic 2024 “Rising Tide” agreement – the first provincial recognition of Aboriginal title – yet the BC government is now quietly retreating from its UNDRIP commitments and fast-tracking other resource projects without consent, using the Haida agreement as a symbolic shield while undermining broader Indigenous title rights.

We stand with Treaty 6, 7, and 8 First Nations who refuse to let provincial premiers rewrite history and attack their rights. We oppose Alberta Premier Danielle Smith’s attempts to use “Alberta separatism” to undermine Treaties that predate the province and still govern the land. Bills such as Alberta’s Bill 54 directly attack Treaty rights for the benefit of Big Oil, and First Nations leaders have rightly stated that Alberta is Treaty land and cannot separate without First Nations’ consent.

We salute all those fighting rising residential school denialism – survivors, families, and communities who continue to bear witness despite a coordinated backlash.

A recent editorial in the Globe and Mail downplayed the crimes of the residential school system and denialism is now moving from the margins into mainstream politics. Conservative MLAs in British Columbia have publicly questioned confirmed burials and survivor testimony, federal Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre has defended such candidates while opposing legislation to criminalize denialism, and the Senate recently voted down a proposal to add residential school denial to the Criminal Code, a move Indigenous leaders have condemned as a serious setback for reconciliation.

This denialism is part of the ideological justification for renewed attacks on Indigenous sovereignty.

This year it was reported what many Indigenous activists already knew: the RCMP had infiltrated Indigenous political organizations for decades, with 150 police officers placing hundreds of Indigenous people and 30 organizations under watch. We also learned that CSIS ran a countrywide “Native extremism” surveillance program from 1988 to 1999, labelling Indigenous activists as domestic extremists. We echo the call to establish an independent, First Nations-led federal commission of inquiry into state spying on Indigenous peoples, with full powers to investigate and mandate systemic changes in policing. We continue to call for the disbanding of CSIS and the RCMP to safeguard democratic rights.

■ SHARED FIGHT, PG 9

CUBA EMBARKS ON EMERGENCY REFORMS



“What is being debated here is the dilemma of how to continue the process of socialist construction”

C.J. ATKINS

State capitalism, socialist market economy, New Economic Policy – whatever term supporters or critics of the Cuban Revolution want to use, it’s clear that the emergency reforms being proposed in that country will bring major changes to its socialist system.

On June 19, Cuba’s National Assembly unanimously approved a sweeping package of 176 economic measures presented by Prime Minister Manuel Marrero in a nearly two-hour address to lawmakers. The package touches virtually every pillar of the socialist economy: private property, market pricing, labour law, banking and foreign investment.

It is an early look at what could be a historic transformation – but how and whether these measures get implemented, and who ultimately benefits, remains an open question.

What the reforms include

The scope of the changes is extensive, touching essentially every corner of the national economy.

Foreign investors will no longer be required to form joint ventures with the state, removing a longstanding requirement that kept the Cuban government as a mandatory partner in all outside investment. Private banks will be allowed to enter Cuba’s finance sector for the first time, ending decades of state monopoly.

General price controls – which the government admitted had failed to curb inflation and instead drove products into the black market – will be lifted and replaced with targeted subsidies for the most vulnerable.

On private property, the reforms mark a significant departure from past practice. State-owned properties may now be sold to “national and foreign legal entities and individuals, including Cubans living abroad,” according to Marrero’s presentation, and private real estate development will be permitted for the first time in generations.

Private companies will be authorized without any cap on the number of workers, opening up opportunities for those with capital to start and/or expand businesses. Cubans will also be permitted to own more than one business and hold equity stakes in multiple firms. New corporate structures including joint-stock companies will be allowed – arrangements common in market economies but historically absent in Cuba because the buying and selling of shares opens the possibility of capital concentration and wealth inequality.

In the labour sphere, private employers will now be able to hire freely, and direct import and export will be permitted without mandatory state intermediaries. Both Cuban and foreign investors will be able to acquire shares in formerly state-run companies. As Prime Minister Marrero told legislators, the measures formally recognize the market as “an instrument for the efficient allocation of resources.”

Blockade prompts change

The context for these reforms is unmistakable. Cuba’s GDP has contracted by at least 15 percent since 2020, and the United Nations’ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) projects a further 6.5 percent contraction by end of 2026, making Cuba the worst-performing economy in the region for the second straight year.

Power blackouts lasting more than 30 hours have become routine. Food, fuel, medicine and drinking water are in chronically short supply. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk has warned that “children are dying” because doctors lack access to basic medical supplies.

The cause of the immediate crisis is the Trump administration’s oil blockade – along with the 66-year-old US economic blockade generally. Following the US kidnapping of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in January 2026, the Trump administration cut off Venezuela’s oil exports to Cuba – a supply that had provided as much as 50 percent of its fuel needs.

Trump then signed an executive order threatening tariffs on any country that ships oil to Cuba, effectively extending the blockade globally. Only a single Russian oil tanker has reached Cuba since late January. The administration has also sanctioned Cuba’s national oil company and GAESA, the military-linked conglomerate with ties to nearly every sector of the Cuban economy, and pressured Visa and Mastercard to cut off payment services in Cuba in order to choke off international tourism revenue.

Speaking to the National Assembly just before the vote, President Miguel Díaz-Canel was pointed about what Cuba is up against: “What is being debated here is the dilemma of how to continue the process of socialist construction, which has suffered the longest blockade in history from the world’s greatest power.”

Yet Díaz-Canel also insisted the reforms were not simply a capitulation. “We are not doing this because of pressure from the Yankees,” he told lawmakers, stressing that Cuba was acting “sovereignly.”

“Had to be done anyway”

He acknowledged that many of these proposals had been debated internally for years – since at least the 2011 Communist Party congress – and that the government had been “postponing decisions it now deems essential for over 15 years.” The president said, “I believe this had to be done anyway, whether we were living this moment or not.”

Díaz-Canel repeatedly emphasized the need for the economy to grow, for the Cuban people’s material living standards to rapidly improve, and for socialism to take a hard, fresh look at its principles.

“Without wealth, there is nothing to distribute,” he said, highlighting that fact that achieving social justice requires the creation of material abundance first if it is

■ REFORMS ECHO LENIN, PG 10

EDITORIAL

PRIDE IS A FIGHT, NOT A FLOAT!

Celebrating Pride events this summer is not a question of corporate sponsorship or parade routes. It is a question of whether we understand Pride as part of the 2SLGBTQI+ movement's incomplete struggle for full equality. At a moment when far-right attacks are intensifying and provincial governments are using constitutional override powers to roll back hard-won rights, celebrating Pride means celebrating struggle itself.

Pride was born in the fightback against police brutality during the Stonewall raids of 1969 in New York and the Toronto bathhouse raids of 1981. Pride is rooted in resistance to oppression, and its spirit is reflected in a celebration of community solidarity, not a corporate parade.

This year, that resistance is urgently necessary.

While polls show that a clear majority of Canadians support equality, far right and fundamentalist groups are intensifying their campaigns against 2SLGBTQI+ communities. They are disrupting school boards, demanding book bans, attacking inclusive curricula and targeting drag storytimes. Hate crimes have risen for four consecutive years, stoked by reactionary politicians who scapegoat trans women in sports and public spaces. The Canadian Labour Congress reports that gender-diverse workers are 82 percent more likely to experience workplace harassment and 73 percent have faced sexual violence on the job.

Meanwhile, the attack on Charter rights is deepening. In late 2025, Alberta's United Conservative Party invoked the notwithstanding clause four times in two months to shield anti-trans laws from judicial review. This misuse of the Charter clause endangers all democratic and labour rights, in addition to those of queer and trans people.

But these challenges like these are not cause for despair – we know that our strength lies in solidarity, and that the majority who stand with us give us the power to push back.

Why are these attacks happening now? Homophobia and transphobia serve the bosses' agenda. Reactionary sections of the ruling class use anti-trans and anti-queer bigotry to divide the working class. They scapegoat trans people, immigrants, and racialized communities to deflect anger from falling living standards, the housing crisis, and wage suppression.

Patriarchy serves capitalism by enforcing rigid gender roles, segregating labour by gender, and driving women to overwhelmingly bear the burden of unpaid domestic work. Attacks on 2SLGBTQI+ people reinforce patriarchy by punishing anyone who defies these roles. That is why queer and trans rights are inherently unstable under capitalism. "Rainbow capitalism" offers superficial gains, but capitalism's logic tends toward reaction against any challenge to its gendered order.

There are many in the 2SLGBTQI+ community who understand the reality that capitalism and imperialism are ultimately incompatible with liberation. As such they reject pinkwashing, whether by police, the Israeli apartheid state or military recruiters at Pride.

Pride events this summer are an opportunity to build Cuba solidarity. Despite over 60 years of brutal US blockade, Cuba has provided free gender-affirming surgery since 2008 and, in 2022, enacted a Family Code that enshrines same-sex marriage, adoption, fertility rights and protections for 2SLGBTQI+ youth.

Pride events need to renew their political roots. There is still much to fight for: full legal protections for sexual orientation and gender identity, with strengthened hate-crime enforcement; repeal of discriminatory anti-trans laws and the expansion of Medicare to include gender-affirming care; fully funded inclusive education; employment equity; and cutting military spending to redirect funds to social services.

An injury to one is an injury to all – for full equality and socialism! ♦



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.

China's green power met all growth in electricity demand in 2025

China's renewable energy generation fully covered the country's increase in electricity consumption in 2025, marking the first time that all additional electricity demand driven by economic growth was met by green power, according to a report released on June 12.

The China Renewable Energy Development Report showed that the country's newly installed renewable energy capacity reached a record high in 2025, accounting for more than 60 percent of global additions.

Data from the report indicated that China's total installed renewable energy capacity exceeded 2,337 billion kilowatts by the end of 2025. New renewable energy installations accounted for 82.7 percent of all newly added power capacity nationwide.

Distributed solar power continued its rapid growth, with newly installed capacity exceeding 100 million kilowatts for the second consecutive year. The report said local consumption and utilization of renewable energy further improved across the country.

Renewable energy generation reached 3.99 trillion kilowatt-hours in 2025, up 9.6 percent year on year and accounting for 38.3 percent of China's total electricity generation. Both wind and solar power genera-

tion surpassed the one-trillion-kilowatt-hour mark for the first time, with each accounting for more than 10 percent of the country's total electricity supply.

The report noted that renewable energy is expanding beyond electricity generation into a wider range of applications, including industrial decarbonization, green transportation, zero-carbon industrial parks and ecological restoration.

Looking ahead, China is expected to maintain strong momentum in renewable energy development. The report forecasts that newly installed wind and solar power capacity will reach around 300 million kilowatts in 2026, while newly connected energy storage capacity is expected to exceed 50 million kilowatts.

The country will continue advancing the construction of large-scale renewable energy bases in desert regions, promote the coordinated development of clean energy and ecological conservation, and support the orderly expansion of offshore wind power projects, according to the report.

Renewable energy is expected to remain the main driver of China's green and low-carbon energy transition in the years ahead. ■

CGTN

Grassy Narrows River Run

Grassy Narrows secured a his-

toric ban on logging on their territory for the next 10 years and important promises to clean their river and build a Mercury Care Home. They have the longest-running blockade in Canadian history, which has helped foster Indigenous resistance across Turtle Island and saved 15 million trees from being cut.

But so much is still needed to right the wrong of mercury poisoning in Grassy Narrows.

On September 23, community members and leaders will travel 1,700 km from Grassy Narrows to Toronto to demand that Ontario and Canada:

- Compensate everyone in Grassy Narrows fairly for the mercury crisis
- End the pollution by stopping the Dryden mill and ending mining and nuclear waste plans that threaten Grassy Narrows
- Support Grassy Narrows in restoring their community and way of life from the damage that mercury has done.

On September 23 at 12 PM in Toronto, join Grassy Narrows at the River Run Rally and show the provincial and federal governments that Grassy Narrows is not alone and will not be forgotten. The last River Run brought 8,000 people into the streets.

Sign up to be part of this year's march: actionnetwork.org/events/river-run-2026 ■

PEOPLE'S VOICE

ISSN # 1198-8657 | PUBLISHED BY NEW LABOUR PRESS LTD.

CANADIAN PUBLICATIONS MAIL SALES PRODUCT AGREEMENT #40011632

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to our Toronto office:
290A Danforth Ave., Toronto, ON, M4K 1N6
416.469.2481

EDITOR: Dave McKee, peoplesvoiceditor@gmail.com

CIRCULATION: newlabourpress1@gmail.com

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD:

Ivan Byard, Kimball Cariou, Miguel Figueroa, Drew Garvie, Jeanne McGuire,
Elizabeth Rowley, Adrien Welsh

PVONLINE.CA

DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUES

Please send submissions (articles, photos, events, announcements) for our August 1-31 issue by July 20 and for our September 1-15 issue by August 17 to peoplesvoiceditor@gmail.com

CHECK YOUR LABEL! RENEW YOUR PV TODAY!

Please check the address label on the front page to see if it's time to renew.

Subscribers who find "26/07/01" on their label, for example, will have their subscriptions expire with this issue, JULY 1-31, 2026. Send your renewal today!



OPINION: Regulating social media means taking action to curb corporate power

RHIANNON MCGRATH

On June 10, the Liberal government introduced Bill C-34, the *Safe Social Media Act*, bringing in a long-heralded ban on social media for youth under 16, as well as regulations placed on AI chatbots.

The Liberals are responding to a global conversation about the impact of unrestricted social media access on youth. In late 2025, Australia instituted just such a law, putting responsibility for the enforcement of the ban on the social media companies, who face millions in fines for significant failures. Britain began enforcing age verification in 2023 with the Online Safety Act, France is set to ban social media for youth under 15 in September, and many other countries are exploring similar options.

Regulating access to online media based on the impact to mental health is presaged by moves by countries like South Korea and China in restricting the time frames in which people can spend playing online multiplayer games.

In Canada, the advocacy organization “Unplugged Canada” obtained over 40,000 signatures from healthcare professionals on supporting this move, and an Angus Reid poll showed 75 percent support for the measure. People in Canada have been abundantly aware of the dangers posed by an under-regulated internet since the 2012 suicide of Port Coquitlam youth Amanda Todd, resulting from cyberbullying and sexual extortion.

Numerous studies have shown that social media and AI have negative impacts on interpersonal relationships, as well as provide avenues for sexual exploitation and self-harm. The perpetrator of the recent Tumbler Ridge school shooting was shown to have “discussed” plans with ChatGPT, leading to criticism of US tech giant OpenAI for not reporting flagged interactions to the police. Teachers have argued for years that social media is distracting for students, and leads increased social pressures and bullying.

Investigations across the globe have shown an increase in anxiety and depression among teenagers since the widespread adoption of smartphones and social media around 2010, with some psychologists going as far as arguing that there is a causal link between the two. The Canadian Community Health survey reported that between 2009 and 2019, the percentage of people between 15 and 30 years of age who reported “excellent or very good mental health” dropped by 29 percent.

While proponents of age verification compare the process to showing your ID when buying alcohol or cigarettes, the methods of age verification on smartphones are much more fraught. Any method in which a corporation retains identifiable user data is liable to hacking. Face-scanning is a common method of age verification, but it is an imprecise and easily fooled tool which was shown to work poorly for Indigenous and racialized users in its Australian implementation. While many youth, parents and teachers have found relief in the ban in areas where it has been implemented, the use of VPNs and alternative applications – as well as simple abuse of phone settings – have allowed many youth to circumvent the ban.

A country-wide controlled approach to age would require a level of cooperation between the state and social media companies, to avoid fiascos like the implementation of

2023’s Online News Act, in which Meta opted to block all news on their applications in Canada rather than adjust to the governments payment attribution system. Approaches based on government online services – like the BC Services Card App, a two-factor authentication application acting as a digital version of the free public services identification card – could provide an alternative to outsourcing to a private company.

At the same time that the Liberals are recognizing the danger of AI use among young people, they are green-lighting the development of massive AI data centres controlled by profit-driven private monopolies like Telus, and entering contracts with the Trump-aligned, AI-based military and surveillance firm Palantir. The fear of surveillance is a major source of anxiety around the implementation of identity verification, and requirements placed on tech companies could push more young people’s identifying data into the hands of untrustworthy private organizations. The hastily adopted Bill C-22 forces companies to allow a backdoor for government agencies to intercept private communications, providing further justification for this anxiety.

Despite the appeals to common-sense, restrictions on what youth should be able to see on social media are politically motivated. Unmoderated online spaces serve as gathering areas for right-wing extremists, sexual extortion rings or illegal markets. Social media companies are reticent to self-moderate without threat of litigation, and a blanket ban on youth could be seen as a cop-out response to demands for regulation.

There are also real fears that reactionary governments could use content moderation controls to hide information about same-sex relationships or that challenge gender norms, although these fears have been weaponized by social media companies to prevent regulation: In 1998, when the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act was being debated in the US, social media companies argued that restricting internet access for youth over 12 could result in lack of information about abortion services. Since the overturning of Roe v. Wade in 2022, Amnesty International has reported the removal of abortion-related content on Instagram and Tik-Tok.

While there are legitimate concerns about the over-regulation of the commons, it is abundantly clear that social media, so long as it is controlled by monopolistic for-profit corporations, can never be “the commons.” The full impact of social media on young people’s mental health, and the benefits of increased regulation or outright bans, are still hotly debated topics.

Whether it is the danger of leaving spaces of digital interaction and expression in the hands of tech giants, or trying to coerce these companies to enforce politically charged restrictions through unproven means, the common issue is the profit-seeking nature of tech companies and the lack of transparent, democratic means by which to curtail them.

Workers in Canada should encourage regulation of (mostly US-owned) corporate platforms, looking to the successes and failures of other countries’ attempts to regulate social media for youth. Above all, we need to encourage a resurgence in in-person social and political networks that are independent of social media. ■

When three lives are more important than twenty thousand



HAZEM ALMASSRY

When three lives are more important than twenty thousand, the numbers seem disproportionate. But this pattern is ubiquitous. A few Israeli casualties can generate headlines, feature stories, social media campaigns and sustained public mourning. Yet, the deaths of over 67,000 Palestinians in Gaza – more than 20,000 of whom were children – only elicited diplomatic rhetoric, expressions of “hope for peace” and acknowledgments that “civilians on both sides are suffering.”

This is not a phenomenon unique to any one country; it is global.

Media outlets around the world produce detailed profiles of Israeli victims – their names, families and shattered dreams. Palestinian children are pulled from the rubble, counted as mere statistics. The images are there to confirm: small bodies, parents holding children who will never wake, systemic destruction, hunger used as a weapon. Yet the emotional response remains lukewarm, skeptical and detached.

Why does a handful of lives evoke more sympathy than 20,000 children?

Paul Bloom’s research on empathy offers part of the explanation. We react to specific individuals, not to statistics. A victim with a face, a story, a family triggers an emotional response, while 20,000 becomes an abstract concept. Empathy works like a spotlight – illuminating a specific target and leaving everything else in darkness. But this doesn’t explain why selective sympathy follows such predictable political lines, why the spotlight always falls on certain sufferings and never on others.

Israeli suffering is personalized, humanized and mourned. Palestinian suffering is abstracted, questioned and erased. This is not because of casualty figures, but because of whose suffering fits into existing frameworks, and whose suffering threatens those frameworks.

C. Daniel Batson’s research reveals how emotional responses are guided through group identity. It is no coincidence that people feel more deeply for Israeli casualties. Sympathy serves political positioning, reinforces narratives of democracy against terrorism, and maintains alliances that feel strategically necessary. Small democracies facing hostile neighbours see themselves in the Israeli story. This identification is deeply ingrained – technological progress, Western values and existential threats.

Palestinian suffering doesn’t fit into this framework. Acknowledging it means confronting uncomfortable questions: Is the state people identify with committing documented atrocities? It’s easier to frame Palestinian testimony as propaganda while treating Israeli testimony as objective truth.

I experienced this selectivity directly when my mother was killed by the Israeli army. My initial reaction consisted of brief condolences – a mother died, a son grieved, loss is universal. Then I gave interviews explaining how she died, linking her death to the occupation and systemic violence. I described Israel as a brutal oppressive system that made my mother’s murder possible, yet deliberately obscured any words of sympathy.

Some accused me of being an extremist. Not because I lied about her death, but because I politicized it, because I linked personal tragedy to systemic violence.

The moment I said what killed her, my grief became questionable. The result was empathy withholding, not empathy failure. Personal tragedy can trigger empathy across group boundaries. But political frameworks initiate defensive reasoning. If my mother’s death stemmed from systemic violence, it challenged the framework that justified the occupation. People don’t adjust the framework; they adjust their emotional responses, transforming acknowledgment of suffering into skepticism of the sufferers – this is the pattern followed by global media reporting.

When Israeli children are killed, they are children, innocent victims worthy of mourning, their deaths attributed to specific perpetrators. When Palestinian children are killed, they become “casualties” in a “complex situation.” Subjectivity is erased by the passive voice. Who killed them? Why? These questions vanish behind diplomatic rhetoric about tragic conflicts and cycles of violence.

The documents are there. Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the United Nations and numerous Israeli human rights organizations have documented systemic attacks on civilians, the deliberate destruction of essential infrastructure and the weaponization of hunger. These are not controversial facts hidden in propaganda, but facts verified by organizations generally respected by most countries.

Yet the mourning remains selective. This creates a hierarchy of suffering: Israeli suffering is significant because it reaffirms what people want to believe about their alliances and values. Palestinian suffering threatens these frameworks and is therefore minimized, questioned and ignored.

Most people who express grief for Israeli casualties are not consciously choosing to ignore the dead Palestinian children. The emotional infrastructure does this automatically; it directs sympathy toward allied groups and blocks sympathy toward outlying groups. Group identity creates a sense of moral clarity. People don’t experience prejudice; they experience the feeling of being the appropriate emotional response to justifiable suffering and dubious claims.

When people accuse me of being an extremist because I pointed out that the occupation killed my mother, they feel morally justified. They don’t feel guilty about suppressing Palestinian testimony. The framing protects itself by making exclusion feel like discernment, silence feel like prudence, and erasure feel like maintaining standards.

This makes it possible for you to see images of dead children and feel nothing, for you to read about destroyed hospitals and starving families and respond in a language that is problematic for both sides, for you to express more grief for a handful of lives than for twenty thousand – you are engaging in genocide denial. It is not intentional or deliberate, but functionally so.

Many countries face security threats, and that fear is real. But fear cannot be a justification for blind faith. Twenty thousand children. Not statistics, not an abstract concept. Each one has a name, a family, a life ended in violence.

The world cannot honestly claim moral clarity while refusing to see their bodies. ■

The author was born and raised in Gaza, Palestine

Election of new BC Conservative leaders is a warning shot to the left



KIMBALL CARIOU

Not many people were paying close attention to the contest this spring for leadership of British Columbia's fractious Conservative party. But that changed on May 30, with the narrow victory of Kerry-Lynne Findlay. A former cabinet minister in Stephen Harper's Conservative government, the new leader of the Official Opposition in BC has deep links with far-right, racist, white nationalist movements which are gaining traction across much of western Canada.

Findlay is not a member of the current Legislature in Victoria. But if a member of her caucus resigns, that would open the door for a byelection and a much higher public profile for a politician whose views closely mirror Donald Trump's MAGA movement.

In her victory speech, Findlay declared that she is guided by the ideas of "faith, family and freedom," a phrase frequently used by US Christian nationalists. The words eerily echo another slogan popularized by Adolf Hitler: "Kinder, Küche, Kirche" ("Children, Kitchen, Church").

Analysts who track Findlay's political trajectory warn that her slogans should not be dismissed as mistakes or misunderstandings. Her victory reflects the conscious strategy of fascist movements to seize on the opportunity created in 2024 by the implosion of BC's main right-wing, pro-corporate political party.

After governing for sixteen years under Gordon Campbell and Christy Clark, the defeated BC Liberals rebranded themselves in 2023 as "BC United" in hopes of ousting the NDP.

That strategy backfired spectacularly, allowing room for the rapidly growing provincial Conservatives to push BC United out of the 2024 election. By that point, the Conservatives had been largely taken over by the far-right, but they came perilously close to winning a majority in the Legislature. Divisions in their caucus over the blatantly racist views of some MLAs forced the ouster of leader John Rustad, and now the most pro-fascist elements of the party have Findlay to project their views.

Findlay's rise has been quietly welcomed by some NDP politicians, who calculate that she will be "too divisive" to win an election. That could allow the NDP to maintain its course under Premier David Eby, who has almost completely dropped any progressive social and economic policies in an attempt to appeal to centre-right voters. But analysts who study the rise of fascist and far-right "populist" movements in other countries point out that this approach by reformist parties like the NDP has often failed.

Those who dismiss Kerry-Lynn Findlay as an outlier should look next door. As in BC, the political right in Alberta went through a rebranding and an influx of MAGA-type members. The outcome was the election of US Big Oil shill Danielle Smith as premier.

Far from being an isolated force, Smith's backers are pushing their reactionary demands to the top of the political

agenda in Canada. In both provinces, anti-Indigenous hatred and bogus arguments about "provincial rights" are among the favoured political tools driving the rise of fascist movements.

But other ideological weapons are being used to whip up hatred and fear. Findlay's husband Brent Chapman – the Conservative MLA for Surrey South – is among those who cultivate a wide range of conspiracies and lies. Chapman's well-documented record includes promotion of the infamous lie that the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting was fake, the Quebec City Mosque massacre was "suspicious," that residential school deaths are a "massive fraud," that Palestinians are "inbred," and so forth. Some expect Chapman will resign so that Findlay can enter the Legislature.

Findlay's rise has been quietly welcomed by some NDP politicians, who calculate that she will be "too divisive" to win an election. But analysts who study the rise of fascist and far-right "populist" movements in other countries point out that this approach by reformist parties like the NDP has often failed.

Findlay herself has been exposed for insinuations about antisemitic conspiracy theories about George Soros and Chrystia Freeland. (She later called her postings on this topic "thoughtless" and never paid any political price.)

During the BC Conservative leadership race, she accused one opponent of conflict of interest – because he is married to an Indigenous woman. Her "faith, family and freedom" slogan is a conscious signal of her intention to attack reproductive rights, ban books, encourage violence against 2SLGBTIQ+ people, and dismantle the separation of church and state.

The next BC provincial election is scheduled for 2028. But nobody would be surprised if Eby found a convenient reason to go to the voters in the near future, banking on Findlay's extremism to bolster the NDP's flagging popularity. That would be a dangerous gamble, not to mention somewhat hypocritical for a premier who continuously retreats in the face of pressures by the far-right on "hot button" issues around crime, social equality and Indigenous rights.

Findlay's victory should be a warning that politics in BC needs far more vigorous intervention by progressive forces – Indigenous peoples, environmentalists, advocates for expanded funding of housing and childcare, the more activist elements of the labour movement – to expose and defeat the Conservatives and to put the NDP's feet to the fire around its own tilt to the right.

Otherwise, Canada's west coast could soon be governed by the most reactionary premier on Canadian history. ■

Photo: Kerry-Lynne Findlay X



Ontario must declare IPV an epidemic and take concrete action for systemic change

PV ONTARIO BUREAU

More than a year has passed since NDP MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam moved Bill 55, the *Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic Act*. The bill, which is itself a reintroduction of a bill the NDP introduced in 2024 but which died when the provincial election was called, requires the government to recognize intimate partner violence (IPV) as an epidemic and create a committee to consider the 86 recommendations of the 2022 Chief Coroner's Jury Inquest into the Renfrew County triple femicide in 2015.

Provincial governments in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador have already declared IPV an epidemic, as have over 100 municipalities in Ontario. But despite this surge in recognition, which is backed up by overwhelming scientific evidence, the Ontario government continues to resist making such a declaration.

Intimate partner violence is not an epidemic in the sense of communicable disease. Rather, it is a widespread and serious public health concern which has reached crisis levels, affecting millions of women and gender diverse people throughout Ontario. Declaring it an epidemic recognizes this crisis in a public way, but it also triggers specific systemic responses. These include:

- Coordinated emergency response from all levels of government
- Mandates for governments to dedicate sustained funding and public health resources toward prevention
- Concrete plans of action addressing the underlying causes and leading to systemic change
- Stronger protections for survivors, including improved and faster access to housing, healthcare, workplace leaves

and legal aid.

Doug Ford's Ontario government talks a lot about security and safety, and is now weaving those themes into his overall economic and political messaging. But the Conservatives' policies – increased police funding and weaponry, more prisons and longer sentences, criminalization of poverty and homelessness – are not what Ontario needs. They are certainly not what is badly needed by millions of women and gender diverse people, who regularly experience intimate partner violence or the threat of it.

It is long overdue for Ontario to declare IPV an epidemic and take concrete action for systemic change. Across the province, organizations for women's and gender equality, public health advocates, labour unions and many others are continuing the pressure.

Meeting June 20-21, the Ontario Committee of the Communist Party of Canada issued a special statement calling on the provincial government to:

- Immediately pass Bill 55, declaring IPV an epidemic and creating a committee to consider the 86 recommendations of the 2022 Chief Coroner's Jury Inquest
- Restore and expand funding and resources for crisis centres and transitional shelters and housing
- Fund sustained public education campaigns and school-based violence prevention programs
- Restore and increase funding for anti-oppression and equity-seeking programs and to accessible community legal clinics
- Ensure \$10-a-day childcare is implemented and accessible and move towards a provincial system of universally accessible and quality public childcare, free of charge. ■

Mutually beneficial multilateral trade with the world, and public ownership of key economic sectors

■ FROM PG 2

under USMCA, we must rebuild that movement, not to salvage a bad deal but to reject it entirely and build a truly independent Canada based on public ownership, workers' rights and genuine sovereignty.

The Communist Party of Canada demands:

Nationalize auto and steel industries. Public ownership means elected governments, not a private board of directors in another country, control the profits and direct the industry to meet the needs of working people across Canada.

Build a Canadian car and expand mass transit. A publicly owned auto sector should produce an affordable electric Canadian passenger vehicle and rapidly expand manufacturing capacity for municipal and inter-urban public transit, as well as light industrial vehicles.

Enact plant closure legislation with teeth. Immediately pass legislation requiring corporations to justify any closure or mass lay-off before a public tribunal with the power to prohibit closures and impose severe penalties.

Expand Employment Insurance. Raise EI benefits to 90 percent of previous earnings for the full duration of unemployment, and cover all the unemployed, to protect all workers from the growing capitalist economic crisis.

Withdraw from USMCA. End the "free trade" deals that sacrifice jobs and sovereignty. Pursue multilateral, mutually beneficial trade with the world. Reject Carney's war economy that fuels US and NATO wars and adopt an independent foreign policy of peace and disarmament, redirecting the billions wasted on militarization to social needs such as health, housing and education.

People across Canada have poured billions of public funds into these industries over decades. We ought to own them by now, and socialize their profits, not just their losses. No more bailouts and free trade. We need mutually beneficial multilateral trade with the world, and public ownership of key economic sectors to strengthen sovereignty and create jobs. ■

Central Executive Committee
Communist Party of Canada

Manitoba NDP funds air force base expansion over housing



CAM SCOTT

From the active solicitation of major pipeline proposals for the Port of Churchill to the expansion of Winnipeg facilities for advanced arms manufacture, Manitoba's NDP government has fully embraced Mark Carney's nation building strategy – in many ways leading the charge for the militarization of the Canadian economy.

In a June 22 press release, the Manitoba NDP announced a substantial expansion of 17 Wing Winnipeg – a Royal Canadian Air Force base at the city's international airport that specializes in air combat training and other operations. According to plan, this strategic project has the potential to bring 1,400 jobs to Winnipeg, and culminates in the construction of a new electrical substation owned and operated by the Department of National Defence.

Initial reporting doesn't include a timeline or clear breakdown of costs, but has already been repeated by most press as a desirable outcome for Manitoba workers. In characteristically self-promoting style, Premier Wab Kinew explained how this development in fact follows a progressive logic. "Saying 'no' to AI hyperscale data centres allows us to say 'yes' to nation-building projects like 17 Wing," he boasted in a news release – referring to his government's recent rejection of a controversial 141-hectare data centre in the community of Ile des Chênes.

This populist bait-and-switch offends on multiple levels. First, it was Kinew himself who initiated Manitoba's courtship of large data centres. In October of last year, he was still evangelizing for such projects, promising constituents that they would "see servers and data centres in Manitoba in the future." According to yesterday's Kinew, "Manitoba is ready to punch above its weight when it comes to the new AI frontier." What changed his mind?

Plainly, the temporary defeat of an ecologically disastrous data centre proposal was secured by a wave of criticism from environmental activists, farmers, hydro-impacted communities and others – yet Kinew has been all too happy to receive public praise for his newfound position. Some of these plaudits are surely strategic, originating from progressive lobbyists forced to deal with the vacillations of a notoriously fickle government.

Still, we mustn't give credit where it isn't due. Kinew's reversal must be re-narrated as the outcome of popular opposition, and crucially, evaluated in light of his own larger strategy, where every policy or press conference pays for the next bad idea.

For starters, it's apparent that the NDP has prioritized the Port of Churchill above all else, and Kinew likely sees this northern "nation-building" debacle as a significant legacy project. As the premier spends all of his political capital attempting to attract investment in a western pipeline, it could be that he simply can't afford the liability of another controversial development.

At the same time, Kinew asks us to understand this new investment in DND me-

ga-projects as a rerouting rather than reversal of his enthusiasm for big tech. This is mathematically dubious by his own public accounting, where the facility at 17 Wing is supposed to offer "a similar level of construction activity ...for one-fiftieth of the power allocation" – a footprint that would apparently have been exported to US markets anyway.

Clearly the 17 Wing expansion has little to do with the abandoned data centre, which US-based investor Jet.AI proposes to revisit soon. That said, the reckless profiteering that drives Canada's new military industrial strategy hardly differentiates between these frontiers, both of which conceal enormous transfers of wealth behind the optimistic marketing of a short-term construction boom.

But it's Kinew's own cynicism that attempts to popularize the militarization of Manitoba's economy on the coattails of a mass outcry against the data centres he himself had so recently championed.

Who does this benefit and how? In uncritical media coverage, the Winnipeg Construction Association touts the prioritized expansion of 17 Wing as a cash cow worth up to \$450 million in contracts. But after this initial push, the maintenance costs of such a facility are minimal.

Dollar-for-dollar, it is well-established that direct investment in public works poses far greater long-term benefits to any economy than the spillover effects of defence spending. The skilled trades required to sustain a military presence like CFB Winnipeg, where approximately 2,600 people are stationed, would equally attend any number of ambitious projects in green energy or housing, in which Manitoba remains sorely lacking. As it is, we've heard very little from the Manitoba NDP about housing of late – and jarringly, the 200 units anticipated by the Winnipeg Construction Association as a result of the CFB expansion significantly outpaces the paltry 215 social housing units promised in the NDP's 2026 budget.

Plainly, the NDP's most recent boon to investment capital poses almost no long-term advantage to working people. From both a practical and political standpoint, militarization is an unstable job creation strategy, committing whole regional economies to mercenary capitals and obliging industry-wide advocacy for a warring foreign policy in turn.

Moreover, 17 Wing is primarily a training facility, so most jobs immediately associated with its operations will be transient and in defence. And then what? Loren Remillard, president of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, told the Winnipeg Free Press that he simply hopes for military personnel to retire in Winnipeg and migrate to the private sector, thus buoying our economy – elliptically, irrelevantly and later.

Truly, the public sector is experiencing precisely the opposite dynamic under Carney's policies of armament and austerity. Presently, government employees face near-constant attempts at interdepart-

■ CYNICAL, PG 10



Ottawa is proposing to streamline environmental assessment: What does this mean for Indigenous nations?

JUSTINE KEEFER AND RIDHEE GUPTA

The federal government's recent proposal to overhaul the environmental impact assessment and permitting process for major federal projects represents a massive shift in federal environmental management. The proposal is made of a series of discussion papers, released in May 2026, that propose a suite of changes designed to streamline environmental assessment across the country.

The economic rationale driving these changes is undeniable. Canada's environmental assessment process has long been a concern for foreign investment, with proponents frustrated by delays and duplication of processes. This proposal for streamlining aims to increase predictability for investors, by setting legally mandated timelines. Proponents would have one year to submit finalized environmental assessment studies, after which the federal review and decision-making process would also be capped at one year.

The government argues this will provide the predictability and efficiency needed to attract capital for "nation-building" projects including pipelines, transmission lines and critical mineral mine sites.

However, for many Indigenous nations across Canada, this proposal is not just about changes to process. Environmental assessment processes are about power, consent and nations' fundamental relationship with the Crown.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent is not a box to check – the federal UNDRIP Act enshrines it as a right to a robust, good-faith process aimed at securing Indigenous consent

While the government frames these changes as pro-development and respectful of Indigenous rights, a closer reading of the proposal reveals a lack of consent for Indigenous nations, and authority for the federal government to unilaterally make development decisions. The promise of speed collides head-on with the reality of the Crown's duty to consult and accommodate and the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), as is enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the federal government's UNDRIP Act (UNDA).

FPIC is not a box to check. The UNDA enshrines it as a right to a robust, good-faith process aimed at securing consent.

The proposed changes to environmental impact assessment processes threaten to undermine the "robust process" that the Court demands under the guidelines of FPIC and UNDA. True consultation, as defined by best practices, requires "early and ongoing engagement in good faith" and a genuine intent to secure consent. It cannot be compressed into a one-year decision-making pipeline where the power lies with the government and the proponent, and Indigenous nations are left to assess the risks of a project that

has already been given a green light.

While current processes are certainly flawed, we must ask whether streamlining can be achieved while upholding Indigenous nations' constitutionally protected rights and rights to self-governance.

Crown Consultation Hub and pre-assessment approvals

To achieve the federal government's desired increase in investment, the proposal aims to create a more centralized and coordinated system. A new Crown Consultation Hub would be established within the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada to manage consultation with Indigenous nations on major projects. This replaces current processes, that often force Indigenous communities to engage in multiple assessment and engagement processes for the same project.

The government also proposes a one project decision model, where a single authority would be the primary decision-maker, also eliminating duplicate assessments. The proposal identifies the Canada Energy Regulator, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission or the Minister of Environment and Climate Change as potential single source authorities.

One of the most immediate and profound concerns lies in the proposal's potential to separate the decision to approve a project from the conditions under which it would be built. The government's vision of a "one project decision" could, in practice, mean that a project is approved in principle before the crucial details of environmental mitigation and Indigenous accommodation are fully settled. How can an Indigenous nation give free, prior and informed consent to a project whose impacts and safeguards are still unknown?

Federal Economic Zones

Another major area of concern is the proposal to create Federal Economic Zones. The government envisions these zones as pre-assessed areas where development can proceed quickly with a lower degree of project-level review. The idea is to reduce the need for separate assessments for individual projects within a designated zone.

This concept, however, fundamentally ignores the reality of cumulative effects. Landscapes are not static, and the impacts of multiple projects, built over time, can compound in ways that individual assessments cannot capture. By pre-approving development in an economic zone, the government risks creating a piecemeal approach to environmental management, and neglects adequate management of cumulative impacts to Indigenous nations' rights.

Override of environmental conditions

Perhaps the most egregious aspect of the proposal is the authority granted to ministers and the Governor in Council to override environmental protections. Under the new rules, the government could exempt specific projects from the jeopardy test for species

■ A CRITICAL JUNCTURE, PG 10

LABOUR

BC nurses reject tentative deal

Members of the BC Nurses' Union voted by 67 percent to reject the tentative agreement reached between the Nurses' Bargaining Association and BC's health employers. The deal was reached shortly after 51,000 registered, psychiatric and licensed practical nurses delivered a historic 98-percent strike mandate.

The BCNU says the high level of member engagement during this round of bargaining reflects the enormous pressures nurses currently face. "Across the province, nurses are providing care in increasingly challenging environments, often without the staffing, resources and supports required to meet growing patient care needs."

"For many nurses, this vote was about more than the terms of a collective agreement," said BCNU president Adriane Gear. "It is about having agency – about having the opportunity to make their voices heard and express their frustration, their tenacity and absolute resolve for change. Nurses care deeply about their patients and their profession, but they are also telling us that the conditions they are working under cannot continue."

Signal workers enter second month of strike at CPKC railway

Nearly 300 signals and communications workers at Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway (CPKC) have been on strike since May 31. The members of IBEW System Council No. 11 work across Canada, from Vancouver to Montreal on safety-sensitive work including installation, maintenance, testing and repair of CPKC's railway signalling and communications systems.

Key issues are wages, expenses incurred by employees in the service of the Company, and work-life balance issues arising from extensive on-call obligations and demanding schedules. Workers delivered a 96-percent strike mandate.

Two weeks into the strike, the union accused the railway of using contractors to do struck work, potentially contravening federal anti-strike legislation. A hearing was set with the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB).

Social service strikers crash Ontario premier's picnic

Across Ontario, roughly 4,000 community and social service workers represented by OPSEU have been on strike or locked out since May 25. They are fighting for wages and for urgent and necessary investments into the province's social safety net.

More than 850 of them turned out to Ontario Premier Doug Ford's signature annual "Ford Fest" event on June 19.

When Ford took to the stage, a mass of striking workers in purple shirts turned their backs on him in protest. The premier, who was drowned out by booing and chanting, sped off the stage, but the workers' action dominated news coverage of the event.

OPSEU president JP Hornick said the goal was to gather hundreds of workers to talk to constituents, hand out flyers and sign petitions to bring awareness to how community, health and social service workers have been on strike for five weeks now because it's a sector "where the funding has been suffocated" by the province.

Hornick said that the booing and chanting "was not planned. That was our workers just ... frustrated as hell. What we hope the premier took away is a very clear message that we are not content and we are not going away."

2026 auto talks highlight need for labour unity and solidarity



PV STAFF

On June 22, Unifor opened what it describes as "one of the most consequential rounds of Detroit Three bargaining in decades." The union has identified Ford as the first target where it will negotiate a contract to be matched through subsequent "pattern bargaining" negotiations at GM and Stellantis.

In the context of the EV transition, increased competition from "foreign" (non-Detroit Three) automakers, the USMCA review and, most dramatically, Donald Trump's tariff and trade war, autoworkers in Canada are experiencing mass layoffs and widespread uncertainty.

Unifor says that during negotiations it is "pursuing fair economic progress for its members, focusing on wages, income security, pensions, benefits and key workplace advancements – while also helping to secure stable ground for Canada's auto industry in an unstable industrial environment." The union's autotalks.ca website states that "Securing a fair deal for Canadian autoworkers means building on our historic gains and taking the challenges of

Trump's trade war head-on."

Without question, Unifor and its members are in an urgent struggle to save an industry that is critical to Canada's economy and to working people. This moment calls for the strongest active solidarity from across the working class.

But this moment also calls for the labour movement – not just Unifor – to think deliberately about its industrial strategy, with specific focus on the question of nationalization, public ownership and operation. This means labour needs to connect the economic and political aspects of class struggle.

Unifor's focus will understandably be on securing a strong contract with each of the Detroit Three automakers. But the union's own experience with those same corporations illustrates some of what it is up against.

In 2022, for example, the federal government and Stellantis signed a \$529-million contract which ostensibly bars the automaker from closing its Brampton, Ontario assembly plant before 2035. Yet the text carved out a generous exception: Stellantis may walk if circumstances beyond

its "reasonable control" make the facility "commercially unviable."

That vague loophole was all the corporation needed. In October 2025 it idled the Brampton plant, shifting production of the Jeep Compass to the United States and triggering the layoff of roughly 3,000 workers.

Addressing the membership, Unifor National President Lana Payne outlined the union's government advocacy efforts including its call for a tariff remission framework that penalizes automakers for reducing their footprint in Canada, and the need for a federal auto policy based on the principle that if you sell here – you build here.

These calls, which are echoed by other unions as well, could offer some respite from the current onslaught against autoworkers. But they need to be taken up in an active way, by the entire labour movement, if they are to be won.

The current existential fight for the auto sector is the time to show real solidarity with Unifor and autoworkers in their negotiations. ■

Carney's war economy won't solve Canada's mass unemployment problem, but it will certainly exacerbate it

CLÉMENT LIU

Since the end of 2024, the number of unemployed people in Canada has hovered around 1.5 million. The last time Canada had this many unemployed persons was during the 2008 recession. The unemployment rate today is at 6.6 percent, whereas it reached 8.7 percent in 2008.

Regardless of percentages, the number of people in Canada looking for work is high, and these numbers have been on an upward trend since 2023. A Bank of Canada report from October 2024 attributed the rise in unemployment to a slowing economy after a period of economic growth (post-COVID economic recovery). A few months after that report, new U.S. "Liberation Day" tariffs came into effect, and industries in Canada began laying off hundreds of thousands of workers.

Then Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tried to address the growing unemployment numbers by unfairly targeting temporary foreign workers and immigrants; now Prime Minister Mark Carney has intensified these policies. According to a CBC article published in May ("CBSA in Quebec enacting 'unprecedented' deportations, forcing family separations, refugee advocates say") 55 percent of all deportations in Canada took place in Quebec in the first four months of 2026. Families are



being separated by deportation just like in the United States, in an attempt to slow the crisis of capitalism.

Addressing the Economic Club of New York on May 28, Carney gloated about introducing "a Productivity Super-Deduction giving Canada the most competitive tax rate for new investment in the G7 – half the G7 average, and four percentage points below the United States." Recent StatsCan data indicates that corporate profits before taxes soared from \$340 billion during Q1 2025 to \$401 billion in Q1 of 2026.

Unsurprisingly, record corporate profits have not helped decrease the number of unemployed Canadians.

Stephen Fuhr, Carney's Secretary of State for Defence Procurement, was interviewed in a recent episode of CBC's The House podcast ("Canada's making it rain on defence. Who gets the money?") Responding to a question about the public support to meet NATO's 5 percent GDP for military spending by 2035 (roughly \$150

■ MINISTER HINTS, PG 9



Mass anti-NATO rally planned ahead of NATO Summit in Ankara

The Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) has called for a mass anti-NATO rally in Ankara on July 5, ahead of the NATO Summit scheduled to take place in the Turkish capital on July 7 – 8.

In its initial appeal, the party described NATO as an organization that has brought war and destruction to peoples around the world since its foundation and argued that the summit would further integrate Turkey into NATO’s military and political agenda. Calling on citizens to gather in Ankara’s Tandoğan Square, the TKP declared: “NATO means death and dishonor. Long live life, independence and socialism.”

International anti-NATO meeting in Turkey’s capital

The party has declared July 4–12 an Anti-NATO Summit. As part of the week’s activities, an international meeting will be held on July 4 in Ankara, bringing together parties from NATO member states and across Europe. A significant number of parties have already confirmed their participation.

“Don’t even think about it!”

The Central Committee of the TKP later issued a statement in response to reports suggesting that extraordinary security measures could be imposed in Ankara during the summit and that the anti-NATO rally might face restrictions. Referring to NATO as “the world’s largest terrorist organization,” TKP warned the authorities: “Don’t even think about it!”

According to the statement, the party is closely monitoring attempts to turn Ankara into an “open-air prison” because of a planned anti-NATO demonstration. The TKP argues that the summit is being used to deepen Turkey’s integration into NATO’s plans and accused both the government and the mainstream opposition of aligning themselves with the alliance.

“The capitalist class that rules over this system, the AKP government [referring to the right-wing the Justice and Development Party led by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan] and the bourgeois opposition that praises NATO at every opportunity may be

happy that Trump, the number one person responsible for all these massacres, will be coming to our country,” the statement said.

Referring to recent military attacks in the region, the TKP stressed that “US-made bombs dropped on the peoples of Palestine, Lebanon and our neighbor Iran are still burning in the memory and conscience of our people.” While the ruling class may see the summit as an opportunity to secure “new agreements and new assignments,” the party argued that “this country does not consist of them and their collaborators alone.”

The statement then shifted its focus to public opposition to NATO and US influence in Turkey. “There is no people in this country who will bow before the plans of the United States, plans that would trample our independence and send our people to death for its own interests,” the TKP declared.

It added that “millions in this country stand wholeheartedly with the peoples of Palestine and Iran against Israeli and US brutality,” and that there is a people that “feel shame at the presence of US and NATO bases on the soil of our homeland.”

Calling on people to join the demonstration, the party argued that it is the duty of working-class patriots, republicans, revolutionaries and communists “to welcome NATO as it deserves” and “to stand up to this imperialist banditry with a major mobilization in Ankara.”

The TKP emphasized that the rally should not be seen as an event belonging solely to the party. “This rally belongs not only to TKP,” the statement said, “but to all honorable citizens of our country and to everyone sincerely engaged in the struggle against imperialism.”

The statement concluded with a call for unity against imperialism and collaboration: “Join us to raise together the banner of our country’s independence. Join us to stand together against collaborators and imperialist bandits.”

“This country is ours.” ■

Voice of TKP

Shared fight of working class of all nations in Canada

■ FROM PG 3

The Communist Party fights for a socialist Canada where all nations are part of a truly equal and voluntary partnership. We stand for the liberation of Indigenous peoples and all other oppressed nations, including Acadians and Quebec. All Indigenous nations must possess the right to self-determination, up to and including secession.

The struggle for Canadian sovereignty and independence – against corporate free trade deals and military integration with the US and NATO – is bound up with the struggle for sovereignty and self-determination of Indigenous nations.

The Communist Party calls to:

- Uphold UNDRIP as binding law, ensuring Indigenous rights to full, free, prior, and informed consent over all development, including full implementation of BC’s DRIPA and reversal of all provincial measures that circumvent Indigenous consent.
- Enact all Calls for Justice of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls inquiry and all Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action; replace the pattern of deliberate funding lapses with a permanent, Indigenous-led funding framework that fully implements all recommendations.
- Establish an independent, First Nations-led federal commission of inquiry into state spying on Indigenous peoples and political organizations.
- Eliminate the "second-generation cut-off" from the Indian Act and implement a "one-parent rule" to allow Status Indians to pass on legal identity to their children.
- Repeal all anti-protest, anti-picketing, and “critical infrastructure” laws that criminalize Indigenous land defence and attack labour rights.
- Launch a massive public investment program to end the housing, water, and health-care gaps on-reserve and in northern communities, funded by progressive taxation on corporations and the wealthy.
- Support and fund Indigenous proposals to protect and enhance Indigenous languages and cultures.
- Enforce Indigenous Treaty fishing and hunting rights; end the seizure and removal of Indigenous children into state care.
- Include Residential School denialism under anti-hate speech laws.
- Allow Indigenous nations to enact public ownership and democratic control over their resources to ensure an economic base for self-determination.
- Act now for the just settlement of land claims, including natural resource-sharing agreements, without requiring the extinguishment of inherent Indigenous title.
- Adopt a new constitution based on the equal and voluntary partnership of all nations in Canada: Quebec, First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Acadians and English-speaking Canada, guaranteeing the protection of Indigenous inherent rights, including the right to consent over any change in their constitutional status.

Working people of all nations need to take up the demands of Indigenous peoples across the country. The working class across Canada, of all nations, has a shared fight. We fight for a people’s coalition of Indigenous peoples, workers, women, students, 2SLGBTiQ+ people, immigrants and other people’s movements – united against the shared enemy: monopoly capital.

Honour the treaties! ■

Central Executive Committee
Communist Party of Canada

Minister hints that war economy means Canada needs to engage in military conflicts

■ FROM PG 8

billion) with the government’s clear vision for keeping the support by reducing unemployment, Fuhr said this:

“If we parlay this big spend into stimulating the Canadian economy, ... people can see, hey, my dad used to work at a car plant in southern Ontario and now he’s working at building armored vehicles or aircraft or ships.”

He also stated that it would be hard to maintain public support for growing military spending “if it’s just about planes on the ramp, boats in the harbor, tanks in the field,” hinting at the need to be involved in future military conflicts.

It’s also this increased military spending that has caused the layoff of tens of thousands of public sector employees.

The Communist Party of Canada has often cited research on job creation policies to expose this fraudulent strategy. Each million dollars spent on the military only creates 5 jobs compared to the same investments in healthcare which would create 9 jobs or 13 jobs in education. It’s quite clear where we should be investing given the state of hospitals, schools and their services, roads and many other areas.

This historically high number of unemployed people is exactly what Carney needs. His “plan to stand up to Donald Trump and build a stronger Canada” is essentially to militarize it and in order to do that he needs to restructure the economy. Let’s not be blind to the fact that it was Donald Trump himself who demanded NATO allies increase their military spending to 5 percent of GDP.

Canada is expected to spend at least \$150 billion annually on military expenditures by 2035 as part of this NATO commitment. The government will claim to have created hundreds of thousands of jobs.

But that spending will only benefit the ruling capitalist class, and it will come at the detriment of the working class who will still face higher overall unemployment, on top of sweeping and enduring cuts to social programs. ■

Combined defence of peace, social rights, democratic freedoms and national sovereignty

■ FROM PG 12

identifies the immediate challenge to involve transforming this electoral setback into organizational capacity, political initiative and the accumulation of forces. The history of the people’s movement shows that democratic advance is not a straight line, but rather the result of prolonged struggle, resistance and building unity. The significant political and social growth achieved in recent decades must be seen as a strategic advance that needs to be preserved, defended and pushed forward.

The new situation demands combining the defence of peace, social rights, democratic freedoms and national sovereignty. Within this framework, it is essential to strengthen the unity of the Historic Pact and expand the Alliance for Life into a broad democratic and opposition front that can unite the people’s, democratic and progressive movements around a common program.

Nothing built during these past years has been lost. Democratic progress remains, as well as a powerful social and political force ready to continue fighting for change. The best response to the challenges ahead continues to be greater organization in every region, stronger political unity, and a more mobilized populace. ■

MAKE AN INVESTMENT IN CANADA'S LEADING
WORKING-CLASS PUBLICATION!

PVONLINE.CA/DONATE

PEOPLE'S VOICE Subscription form

Please make cheques payable to People's Voice and mail to 290A Danforth Ave, Toronto, ON, M4K 1N6. For digital payments, please see instructions below.

\$40 one year: ☐ \$20 one year low-income: ☐ \$80 for one year (print) outside CAN: ☐

Please specify type of subscription: ☐ print ☐ digital (email)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TEL: _____ EMAIL: _____

Prefer to pay electronically? E-transfer to pvoicepayment@gmail.com or use our PayPal link at [PVonline.ca](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?url=https://www.pvonline.ca)

Translated from Spanish by PV staff

Reforms echo Lenin's use of the New Economic Policy

■ FROM PG 3

to have any meaning.

“The challenge is to produce in these conditions, create wealth, and then distribute with social justice and fairness, not egalitarianism,” Díaz-Canel said, declaring that the Cuban economy had to get rid of its flat wage system.

With only the smallest of pay differences between workers of different qualifications and responsibilities, the president said there was not enough material incentive to encourage people to exert more effort or strive to advance themselves or their workplaces. His message was that harder work has not come with a reward, and moral incentives alone are not enough to keep people motivated long term.

Acknowledging that paying workers flat wages supplemented by rations and subsidies was an inherently bad practice, Díaz-Canel admitted that these were distortions of socialism and have to be changed regardless of the external pressures Cuba faces.

“There are obstacles that don’t stem from outside or from blockades. There’s sluggishness, bureaucracy, regulations that stifle those who want to produce, and decisions we’ve delayed. What depends on us must be changed by us, and we need to change it now,” he asserted.

Marrero echoed that the reforms “do not constitute a deviation from our socialist project; on the contrary, they respond to its development” and attempt to improve it. He mentioned the efforts of former President Raúl Castro to update Cuba’s economic and social model: “not to be dogmatic or inflexible, to banish the mechanical association between socialism and egalitarianism, and to recognize that socialist planning does not exclude, but must incorporate and regulate the rules of the market.”

Castro, facing a US criminal indictment for the 1996 downing of a Brothers to the Rescue plane, participated in the session via video conference and sent a written letter to the Communist Party Politburo and the National Assembly calling the measures “beneficial” and urging their rapid implementation.

More like Lenin?

Some commentators – including Cuban opposition leader Manuel Cuesta Morúa, who called the package “belated Chinese reforms” – will be quick to compare these changes to China’s post-1978 “socialist market economy” or Vietnam’s Đổi Mới (“renovation”) of the 1980s. Those comparisons have some surface validity: In each case, a Communist Party-led government introduced market mechanisms, private ownership of capital and foreign investment while maintaining political control and limiting capitalist participation in the affairs of state.

But a more apt historical parallel may be Lenin’s New Economic Policy (NEP), launched in Soviet Russia in 1921. Then as now, the situation involved a state with a severely underdeveloped industrial base, cut off from the world economy by hostile powers actively working to strangle it. Lenin was explicit that the NEP was a retreat into “state capitalism” – allowing private trade, foreign concessions and market mechanisms – as a necessary survival measure to rebuild the material base from which socialism could eventually advance.

The difference, and it is a crucial one, is that Lenin had already beaten back foreign military invasions and domestic counter-revolution (largely) before launching the NEP. Cuba is being forced to make these concessions precisely while under a brutal external assault.

The Trump administration has been explicit that its goal is regime change, with Secretary of State Marco Rubio openly stating that removing Cuba’s socialist government is a precondition for lifting the embargo under the 1996 Helms-Burton Act. Cuba is not experimenting with state capitalism from a position of stability; it is doing so with a gun to its head.

Who will invest – and at what cost?

This raises the central uncertainty hang-



ing over the entire reform package. The US controls much of the world’s financial system and has demonstrated willingness to sanction any third party that does business with Cuba. Even a partial relaxation of restrictions would likely require either China or the US to make a major move on investment.

The most optimistic scenario for Havana likely involves Chinese companies investing in substantial portions of the Cuban economy – in mining, energy, tourism infrastructure and agriculture. China has long-term strategic interests in strengthening its relationships with Cuba and in the Caribbean region and has some experience navigating around US sanctions.

But this approach would not lift the US blockade, and whether the government of China would be willing to absorb the financial and diplomatic costs of even deeper engagement with Cuba in the current climate remains to be seen.

The other scenario – and arguably the more likely one given Washington’s leverage – is that these concessions become a lever for Trump to extract political and economic gains. That could mean waiving portions of the blockade in exchange for allowing US corporations to begin acquiring companies, resources, mines, hotels and resorts.

In some cases, this would effectively allow descendants or successors of pre-revolutionary owners to repurchase assets nationalized after 1959 – a backdoor restoration that the Cuban government has long resisted as a matter of principle and that many Cubans would regard as a betrayal of the revolution itself.

Many US corporations and wealthy Cuban exiles in Florida are no doubt hoping for a USSR-style collapse in Cuba – the complete overthrow of socialism, including mass privatizations and sell-offs of public property. The leadership of the Cuban government and the ruling Communist Party, however, have made clear that they intend no such outcome.

An early look

Nothing is settled yet, though, and it will take time for reforms to play out and yield results. Díaz-Canel himself warned that “equally or more important than the approval of these transformations is their proper and timely implementation,” acknowledging the gap between legislative approval and real-world change.

It is not yet clear through what mechanisms, or on what timetable, the 176 measures will take effect. Many questions remain unanswered. The session ended, though, with Díaz-Canel turning to Fidel Castro’s iconic slogan: “¡Socialismo o muerte!” – “Socialism or death!”

What is clear is that Cuba is betting that measured doses of capitalism can save socialism – a wager Lenin made over a century ago under very different circumstances. Whether the Cuban leadership can navigate the profound contradictions that bet involves, while resisting the pressures that could turn a tactical retreat into a permanent transformation, is the defining question of the months ahead. ■

A critical juncture for Indigenous-Crown relations

■ FROM PG 7

at risk if it is deemed in the “public interest.” The Minister of Environment and Climate Change could also adjust impact assessment conditions in exceptional circumstances.

These are not minor procedural tweaks. They represent a fundamental weakening of Canada’s environmental protections at a time when biodiversity is collapsing and climate change is accelerating. The language of “exceptional circumstances,” “when needed” and “public interest” is dangerously vague, leaving room for broad interpretation.

Now is the time to strengthen protections, not to create loopholes that allow them to be suspended in the name of economic growth. Overriding environmental protections now, for short-term economic gain, is not just short-sighted; it is a betrayal of our collective responsibility to ecosystems and communities.

A new way forward

The government’s stated goal of making the environmental impact assessment and permitting process more efficient is necessary. The current system is flawed, creating uncertainty for proponents and consultation fatigue for Indigenous communities. However, streamlining cannot be an excuse for reducing environmental protections. Efficiency should be about increasing the quality and coordination of assessments, not eliminating them, or neglecting Crown responsibilities to Indigenous nations and the environment.

The federal government’s proposal represents a critical juncture for Indigenous-Crown relations and environmental governance in Canada.

Certainty for investors comes from Indigenous nation buy-in. To advance major projects within a shorter timeframe while respecting Indigenous rights, the government must move from a model of consultation with Indigenous nations to one of genuine co-development. This can be done by supporting Indigenous-led Impact Assessment processes. This means respecting Indigenous nations’ rights, laws and knowledge, building in consent, and including environmental protections as a core management principle.

Supporting Indigenous-led Impact Assessment upholds federal goals of reconciliation, climate protection and promises made under UNDA, while also streamlining and legitimizing environmental assessment; meeting the federal goal of investor certainty and economic growth. ■

Cynical, wasteful plan

■ FROM PG 7

mental solicitation and active recruitment for fast-tracked careers in defence. According to a directive from last year, the DND plans to swell its reserves to include more than 300,000 public servants, supplementing Carney’s capital projects with human resources cribbed from the very sectors he proposes to slash.

The NDP plan for CFB Winnipeg perfectly follows this vision, boasting of an enhanced role for Manitoba in Canada’s rapidly bloating defence network and hardly stopping to elaborate upon its proposed benefits. This is a cynical, wasteful plan at the outset – and as Carney’s military spending spree mounts to the detriment of public services and jobs everywhere, working people of conscience must join forces to refute such faulty logic and false promises. ■

WHAT’S LEFT

VICTORIA

SATURDAYS | CUBA SOLIDARITY

11 AM every Saturday at Mt. Newton overpass on Pat Bay Hwy, Saanich. Banner drop with Victoria Friends of Cuba, against the US genocidal blockade.

VANCOUVER

JULY 26 | PUENTES DE AMOR RALLY

1 PM at the corner of Commercial and Broadway. Join CCFA Vancouver for monthly action calling for an end to the US blockade of Cuba.

WINNIPEG

JULY 26 | END THE BLOCKADE

1-2 PM at the intersection of Portage and Main. Join the Manitoba Cuba Solidarity Committee for monthly action calling for an end to the US blockade of Cuba.

TORONTO

JULY 4 | NO WAR ON CUBA

1 PM at Christie Pits Park. Join Cuba solidarity groups in opposing the blockade and calling on Ottawa to send aid and oil now.

TORONTO

JULY 25 | MONCADA DAY

6 PM at the USW Hall, 25 Cecil St. Celebrate Moncada Day with dinner, live music, speakers and more. CCFA Toronto. Tickets \$20

TORONTO

JULY 26 | END THE BLOCKADE

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

OTTAWA

JULY 17 | CUBA SOLIDARITY PICKET

4:30 PM at the US Embassy, 490 Sussex Drive. Join Ottawa Cuba Connections for monthly action to call for an end to the blockade.

OTTAWA

JULY 26 | PUENTES DE AMOR RALLY

11 AM at the Cuban Embassy, 338 Main St. Monthly action in solidarity with Cuba, calling for an end to the blockade and the return of the Guantánamo base.

NEW LABOUR PRESS

YOUR SOURCE FOR
PROGRESSIVE BOOKS.
MAGAZINES & PERIODICALS

NEWLABOURPRESS.CA

A clear picture of capitalism's defects and the need for socialism

Understanding Capitalism
Richard Wolff
Haymarket Books (2025)

REVIEW BY TIM PELZER

US Marxist economist Richard Wolff, host of the popular YouTube channel “Democracy at Work,” is a leading critic of capitalism. His penetrating new work explores the systems’ flaws, myths and empty promises.

Capitalism’s champions insisted that it would end the inequality of wealth and power associated with slavery and feudalism, but these promises were never fulfilled. “Capitalism, they insisted, would bring about liberty, equality and democracy,” writes Wolff.

In reality, he notes, a handful of billionaires and shareholders decide what is produced and how profits are allocated, while workers are never consulted. Conflict occurs in the workplace because employers keep wages low, and this is resisted by employees.

“Marx argued capitalism failed to deliver on its promises because in place of the master/slave and lord/serf dichotomies it installed the employer/employee system. The capitalist organization of the workplace is the main barrier to fulfilling the noble goals of capitalism’s original champions.”

Wolff is a big advocate of worker-run collective enterprises, and he critiques socialist and communist movements for not going beyond the employer-employee relationship. He writes that the Scandinavian socialist parties proposed more control over the private sector or state ownership in some cases, while the former and current socialist countries “replaced private capitalists with state officials while leaving unchanged the internal organization of enterprise: the employer/employee structure inherited from capitalism.”

The capitalist economy is highly unstable and experiences an economic crash or recession every 4 to 7 years. Millions lose their jobs, and rates of alcoholism, drug abuse, family violence, suicide and mental health problems surge. “The scars on lives left by capitalism’s constant cyclical downturns run deep,” notes Wolff.

Capitalism is an immoral system. Companies will automate production and lay off half of the workforce to produce the same amount of output to increase profits. The unemployed workers and their families suffer the loss of wages, and the employer is not held responsible. But instead of creating destitution, the new automated machinery could have been used to reduce the work week for workers with no cuts in pay, giving them more time for family, hobbies and relationships.

The system’s advocates falsely equate capitalism with human freedom. Billionaire Elon Musk is free to do what he wants, enjoy life, go where he wants – his freedom is reliant on the resources he has. However, most working-class people do not have the same resources or, consequently, the same freedom that Musk enjoys. As Karl Marx pointed out, inequality is inseparable from capitalism.

One of the myths of capitalism is that competition between rival companies is the norm, disciplining sellers to charge the lowest prices and ensuring workers higher wages. However, according to Wolff, “the goal of competition is to end competition.” Winners gain market share and losers are driven



out of business. This leads to fewer firms that establish monopolies which dictate higher prices for the goods and services on which we depend.

Another myth that Wolff identifies is the notion that capitalism, driven by competition and the profit motive, is more innovative than other economic systems. He notes, for instance, that the US government and military partly developed computers because US corporations would not take the long-term financial risks of developing the technology themselves. Pre-capitalist societies such as Rome, Greece and medieval Europe made many breakthroughs in industry, agriculture and military technology. The former Soviet Union developed a cutting edge defence and aerospace industry, while socialist China is well known for its innovative products in the high-tech sector.

Wolff contends that profits have also “incentivized destructive innovations such as cigarettes, alcohol, asbestos, toxic pesticides and junk food.”

The widely promoted view that capitalism reduced poverty and created prosperity for millions over the last 200-300 years is not supported by evidence. Capitalists opposed poverty-reduction measures such as minimum wage laws, unionization of the workforce, reduction in the work week and day, public health insurance and occupational health and safety. The increase in living standards “happened despite the opposition of capitalists,” writes Wolff. Poverty was reduced because of struggles of the poor, aided by working-class and anti-capitalist organizations.

He also points out that the country that experienced the greatest reduction in poverty was socialist China, which was the poorest country in the world when the Communist Party took power in 1949. In much of the Global South and other places, capitalism left many countries mired in poverty and underdevelopment.

Wolff’s work offers a clear picture of capitalism’s defects, written in plain language that average people can understand. He reminds us that capitalism is a dead-end system for humanity, that needs to be replaced with socialism.

“We can do better than capitalism, just as people like us long ago insisted that they could do better than slavery, feudalism, monarchy and so on.” ■

Anti-Cuba parliamentary petition co-opts language of humanitarianism

CAM SCOTT

Defamatory petition comes on heels of strong CNC campaign

Earlier this year, the Canadian Network on Cuba initiated Parliamentary Petition e-7082, calling for the Canadian government to reject and condemn US aggression and sanctions against Venezuela and Cuba; end its support and complicity in activities that threaten peace, security, and sovereignty; and to strengthen economic ties and trade with Cuba.

While this petition was written in the immediate aftermath of the US kidnapping of Venezuelan President Maduro and First Combatant Flores, it quickly became a tool in defence of the Cuban people after Donald Trump’s total fuel blockade of January 29. Through social media, print leaflets and multiple nationally coordinated days of action, the CNC directed thousands of people to this urgent campaign.

On May 8, the petition was presented in the House of Commons by MP Alexandre Boulerice with 12,296 confirmed signatures.

The enthusiastic engagement with this political campaign confirms a towering wave of support for Cuba, which is also conveyed by the Network’s monthly containers of energy supplies, food and medicine to the island. The impact of this material aid campaign, which remains inescapably political insofar as it confronts the consequences of the barbaric US blockade, has been powerful to witness.

On June 8, a new parliamentary petition on Cuba appeared, cloaked in a language of concern for the Cuban people. But that’s not all. Written in a language of extreme suspicion, this petition equally calls into question the very premises of Cuban sovereignty and casts doubt upon the tireless work of Cuba solidarity. While its author notes the severe humanitarian crisis facing Cuba, they go on to cite the unfounded “concern that state-controlled systems in Cuba can divert resources away from those most in need.”

Accusations of corruption are notoriously wielded against the Cuban government by reactionary forces in order to hasten political “reforms” on the island, and to downplay and obfuscate the effects of a barbaric US blockade. If anything, this false, and flimsy, narrative of government corruption is a form of denialism, faulting the delivery mechanisms by which aid is distributed rather than an illegal, unilateral blockade and sanctions system that legal observers have described as genocidal in intent.

Moreover, it implicitly accuses the material aid efforts of solidarity groups such as the Canadian Network on Cuba of defrauding donors and participating in the very conditions we are trying to break.

Since 2021, the CNC has sent 21 containers of aid including food, medicine and Eco-Flow generators. The value of the

goods sent since the total fuel blockade of 2026 alone surpasses \$1,000,000 CAD. All of this aid is coordinated through the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), a hub of international solidarity and one of the latest targets of Trump’s comprehensive secondary sanctions. As these sanctions attempt to criminalize foreign nationals for sending material aid to the island, the insinuation of ineffectiveness or corruption quite actually doubles down on a direct threat from the US government.

So what does this new, faulty parliamentary petition demand? Beneath this heading, its author calls for the delivery of aid through non-governmental bodies “that reduce reliance on centralized state control” and for assurance “that any Canadian assistance or economic engagement includes clear safeguards, transparency measures, and reporting to prevent diversion through state-controlled entities.”

Never mind the paternalistic presumption that Canadian observers know better than the government of Cuba – that is, to be clear, a government comprising the Cuban people – how aid ought to be distributed. This deregulation would effectively strengthen the underground markets that service deepening inequality amid a punishing blockade, helping to fulfil a stated goal of US economic aggression. (We could also add that Canada is hardly in a position to grandstand regarding aid, having sent hardly anything to Cuba since the total fuel blockade began in January.)

Bluntly, this is not a simple humanitarian petition addressed to a people in crisis. Rather, this parliamentary petition repeats dangerous “regime change” rhetoric and flies in the face of the sovereign right of nations to determine their own domestic affairs.

In Cuba, real decision-making powers devolve to the municipalities, where popular agency exerts meaningful influence over all facets of life. This agency is restricted not by the Cuban government, but by a criminal blockade that proposes to suffocate a people in order to replace their political system. No society is without its problems, but the primary difficulty facing the Cuban people is a barbaric, decades-long blockade condemned as such by the entire world.

True friends of Cuba must disregard this new petition as an attempt to defame and obstruct the Cuban Revolution, as well as the global solidarity movement it inspires. In principle, this petition repeats the logic of the US blockade and of recent escalations against Cuba whilst purporting to help.

Once more, those deeply engaged in Cuba solidarity must continue to insist that foreign aid cannot be used to extort changes in a country’s political system, as we use this disappointing occasion to repeat our demands: that Canada oppose the US economic war on Cuba, and deliver fuel and relief to its people without condition. ■

JOIN THE FIGHT! BUILD THE STRUGGLE!



COMMUNIST PARTY OF CANADA

416.469.2446 | info@cpcc-pcc.ca | communist-party.ca

NO WAR ON CUBA!

International Week of Action

1pm July 4th 2026

Christie Pits Park

Call for an End to Trump's blockade and for Canada to send aid and oil to the people of Cuba. End the siege now!



JULY 25TH @ 6PM - 10PM

MONCADA DAY CELEBRATION

25 CECIL STREET, TORONTO

TICKETS \$20

- LIVE MUSIC
- GUEST SPEAKERS
- BBQ PORK DINNER
- REFRESHMENTS & DESSERT
- CASH BAR
- RAFFLE PRIZES

RESERVE YOUR TICKETS BY E-TRANSFER: CANADIANCUBAFRIENDSHIPASSOCIATIONTORONTO.COM



LATIN AMERICAN & CARIBBEAN SOLIDARITY NETWORK
CANADIAN-CUBAN FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION TORONTO
JULIAN GUILBERTO GOMEZ ASSOCIATION OF CUBAN RESIDENTS IN TORONTO



The US-Iran ceasefire agreement and the people's ongoing struggle for a lasting peace



In Iran's contemporary history, there has rarely been a period when the country has been in such a state of suspense and uncertainty. Although an initial agreement has been reached between the Islamic Republic and the Trump administration, there is still a long way to go before a lasting peace can be achieved to protect Iran's national interests.

Iran is still neither at war nor in a lasting peace; it is not on the path to reform, and there are no signs of the regime's imminent collapse. The society, economy and politics are in a political limbo. Internal conflicts among the government's own forces in the post-Ali Khamenei era, the unclear status of the newly appointed "Supreme Leader" and the escalation of conflicts over reaching an agreement with the Trump administration indicate a situation in which everyone talks about the crisis, but no one offers a clear perspective for exiting from it.

In recent weeks, we have witnessed the escalation of dangerous military conflicts that could reignite a full-scale war against Iran. First, there was Israel's criminal aggression on Lebanese territory, which was a clear violation of the ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel. This was followed by Iran's retaliatory missile attack on Israel in defence of Hezbollah. Then the criminal and racist Israeli regime bombed Iranian cities. And finally, we witnessed the widespread aggression of US imperialism on Iranian soil, bombing several cities in the country and targeting the country's economic and civil infrastructure.

In the midst of these clashes, Trump threatened to attack Iran much harder and seize Iran's oil resources. However, after the world expressed concern and condemned Trump's position, and considering the adverse consequences that the long-term closure of the Strait of Hormuz would have had for the world economy including the US itself, Trump, claiming that the leaders of the Islamic Republic had been in contact with him and were serious about peace, announced that the principles of a general agreement or understanding with the Islamic Republic to end the war had been finalized and that an agreement or memorandum of understanding between the two countries would be signed soon.

The events of recent months have shown once again that the Islamic Republic is facing a series of internal and external challenges, each of which alone can endanger the stability of the ruling political system.

Iran's economy is going through one of the most difficult periods. Chronic inflation, devaluation of the national currency, increase in poverty and unemployment, and the spread of social inequality have had a negative impact on the daily lives of millions of hard-working Iranians. The concern of many families is to provide and secure the minimum necessities of life for survival.

In such circumstances, the resumption of social and trade union protests in recent days was not far-fetched. Workers, pensioners, and high-school students have once again taken to the streets to protest the state

of their wages, working and education conditions, and livelihoods. Although these protests have not yet turned into a nationwide and coordinated movement, their persistence and expansion show that social dissatisfaction with the anti-people theocratic regime has not only not diminished, but has become embedded in the fabric of society.

The important point is that a lot of these protests are no longer motivated by purely economic demands. Behind the demands for higher wages or improved social services is a deep distrust in the ability of the ruling political system to solve the country's problems.

The situation is no different in the arena of foreign policy. The strategy of the so-called "active resistance," which had been the basis of the Islamic Republic's regional policy in recent years, is now facing serious doubts. The regime continues to emphasize maintaining its regional influence, but the economic and political costs of this approach have been increasingly criticized and questioned. Although the military conflicts with Israel have at times stirred nationalist sentiments in some sections of society, this has not, on the whole, reduced the crisis of public acceptance and legitimacy for the regime.

In recent weeks, we have also witnessed serious signs of disagreement and division within ruling circles. Of course, divisions among government factions do not necessarily mean a deep and immediate crisis in the political power structure, but they do indicate that there is no clear consensus among them about the future direction of the country. The hardliners and forces close to the Revolutionary Guard and repressive institutions emphasize the continuation of current policies while others, concerned about the future of the regime, call for some kind of re-evaluation of domestic and foreign policies.

Perhaps no institution has benefited from this situation as much as the Revolutionary Guard. Over the past two decades, this institution has transformed from a military force into a major and decisive player in the country's economy, politics and security apparatus. The continuation of regional crises and the escalation of tensions with the West have greatly contributed to this transformation.

Historical experience has shown that political systems are more likely to suffer from their inability to manage internal crises than from external pressure. Suppressing popular protests may temporarily prevent the spread of unrest, but it cannot eliminate the roots of discontent that result from the regime's anti-people policies, widespread and systematic corruption in government institutions, and the continued climate of widespread repression and oppression.

In addition, the younger generation, which constitutes the majority of the population, has specific demands that reflect the conditions and social developments in the world today. Widespread access to information, communication with the outside world and changing social values have caused this generation's expectations of the regime and society to change.

At the same time, the Islamic Republic has shown over the past four decades that it has a significant capability for survival and adaptation to circumstances. The regime has repeatedly faced serious crises and has been able to continue its rule with violent and bloody repression.

The fundamental question is not whether there is a crisis or not; the crisis is obvious. The real question is whether the regime can save itself despite all the serious internal and external challenges. The answer to this question will determine not only the fate of the Islamic Republic, but also the future of millions of Iranians.

When the threat of war looms large, democratic demands are marginalized. Any political criticism is labelled as "undermining national security." Any social protest is labelled a "security threat." In such an environment, "security" replaces politics and "survival of the regime" becomes the code name for the policy of violent and widespread suppression of people's rights.

The invasion of Iran by US imperialism may have helped to preserve the ruling political system to some extent, but this does not mean that the accumulated problems of society have been solved. Poverty, corruption, unemployment, discrimination and the lack of basic freedoms will not disappear with "security" measures.

Today, Iran needs more than ever a lasting peace and the formation of an inclusive and democratic social movement, a movement that can transform the diverse demands of workers, women, students, teachers, pensioners, intellectuals and all progressive political forces into a common project for fundamental changes.

The weakness of Iran's left and democratic forces lies in their fragmentation. The regime has been able to suppress or contain each movement separately, because no lasting link has been formed between these movements. But the future of Iran depends on overcoming this fragmentation. Today, the main issue is to create a democratic alternative that has a clear demarcation with both domestic tyranny and foreign intervention, and can organize the people's struggle against both.

A society that has fought for freedom, justice and human dignity many times over now needs unity, organization and a progressive, shared vision more than ever. The future of the country will not be determined in the negotiating rooms of world powers, nor in the calculations of security apparatus. What will determine the future of Iran is the ability of social forces to transform public discontent into a democratic project and a joint, nationwide struggle with the people frustrated with oppression and deprivation. ■

Editorial from Nameh Mardom, Central
Organ of the Tudeh Party of Iran

(Edited for space)



In the wake of electoral setback, Colombian left calls for united popular resistance

On June 21, Colombians voted in the presidential runoff election between progressive Historic Pact – Alliance for Life candidate Iván Cepeda [photo] and the far-right's Abelardo de la Espriella. In one of the tightest elections in the country's history, de la Espriella won by less than 1 percent. The following editorial from the socialist weekly *Semanario Voz* discusses the way forward after this setback.

The results of the presidential runoff election are a political setback for democratic, progressive and left forces, but not a strategic defeat for the people's movement. More than twelve million Colombians voted to continue the process of progressive change. The narrow electoral margin highlights the dispute between two antagonistic national agendas and a struggle for the country's political leadership.

To analyze this situation, we need to look beyond the electoral arena and place it within the context of the continental geopolitical struggle. The Trump administration's endorsement of the far-right candidate signifies Colombia's reincorporation as a subordinate ally to the United States' strategy in Latin America.

This scenario poses serious challenges to national sovereignty, regional integration and the possibility of independent development. The threat is fueled by hate speech and expressions of anti-communism that seek to legitimize authoritarian policies, justify violence against the people, and discredit any proposal or program for social transformation.

Compared to more than two centuries of domination by traditional ruling elites, four years of progressive government is not enough time to consolidate a new political and cultural majority. Although millions of people benefited from the expansion of rights and social policies promoted by the Gustavo Petro government, many of these sectors did not express that support at the polls.

The left was unable to counter the right-wing narrative, spread using deceit and misinformation, about concerns related to security and the economy. This allowed the right to present itself as the alternative for order and stability – the right wing challenged the prevailing norms and managed to gain influence in sectors that benefited from the change.

The main lessons here are the need to strengthen grassroots organizing, engage in deeper dialogue with the people around their concerns, and develop contemporary communication strategies.

The significant support for the Cepeda – Quilcué ticket demonstrates that there are solid foundations for progress. But it also confirms that electoral mobilization must be accompanied by permanent organization, political training and the building of social networks – this is the terrain upon which leadership is forged, democratic hegemony is consolidated, and future victories are prepared.

The Colombian Communist Party

■ COMBINED DEFENCE, PG 9