

# PEOPLE'S VOICE

CANADA'S LEADING SOCIALIST PUBLICATION



Solidarity window poster, Pg 12

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

PVONLINE.CA

MARCH 1-15, 2026 | VOL. 34, #4 | \$2.00

# BREAD AND ROSES PEACE AND JUSTICE



This International Women's Day, we reiterate our solidarity with women of the world in the struggle against war and militarism, and for full equality! Pg.3

## PV LAUNCHES OUR 2026 FUND DRIVE

Now, more than ever, the working class needs its own media - please support our fund drive and help us grow  
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## "CANADA DON'T BOTHER" BENEFIT

The Canada Disability Benefit was supposed to lift people out of poverty, but instead it is a sick joke  
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## LABOUR AND COMMUNITY GROUPS WIN BIG IN 'PEG

Winnipeggers rally to defeat proposed bylaw that would have banned protests, demonstrations and pickets  
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## JOB FOR THE BOYS - BUT WHAT ABOUT WOMEN?

In addition to fueling militarism, Carney's economic plan risks widening the job and income gap for women  
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Pages from our past...

Daily Clarion Vol 16 No 1426 ~ March 3, 1938

## Toronto agent linked with US spy network

### Action needed to curb Nazis

SYDNEY JORDAN

The arrest of three members of an international Nazi spy ring in the United States last week turn attention to the urgent need for a clean-up of the agents of foreign fascism overrunning Canada and throws the spotlight on Nazi agent Werner Haag, operating as the Canadian representative of the German State Railway with offices at 67 Yonge Street.

The details of the espionage plot that threw the United States into such a furor were first bared in 1933 in stories carried exclusively in the New York Daily Worker in the United States and in The Worker in Canada.

It is reported that federal investigators in the United States are checking the connection between this expose and the plot revealed last week, in which those arrested were charged with stealing American defense information for sale to an unnamed "foreign power."

The Nazi plot exposed in 1933, revolving about Werner Haag, who was then in the United States, tallies in detail with the one so sensationally brought to light by the American federal bureau of investigation and the military intelligence division.

One of the three spies arrested was accused of attempting to secure blank passports to be used by Nazi agents to enter the Soviet Union.

Following the widespread repercussions of his exposure, Haag hurriedly switched his headquarters to Toronto, where he has been operating since.

His presence here fits in with the belief, supported by many facts, that directives for espionage work and fascist activity for the whole North American continent are also routed through Canada.

Aside from Haag, foreign fascist agents dot the whole country. In Quebec especially they are as thick as flies and are intimately connected with the openly fascist movements such as Adrien Arcand's National Social Christian Party.

The bringing to light of the Nazi spy ring in the United States, following upon the boastful declarations of the fascist leaders in Quebec and Ontario, their open bragging about the fact that they have a military organization of their own and that they have supporters in government positions and on various police forces – this brings to the fore more sharply than ever the fact that further postponement of an investigation of fascist agents, espionage and activity is fraught with danger to the national well-being.

The federal government has the facts. It is in receipt of numerous demands from labour and all sections of the people that fascism be rooted out.

It can have no excuse for delaying action. ■

# The working class needs its own media now more than ever!

Support the PV Fund Drive and help us continue to grow

Dear friends,  
Just a few weeks into 2026, it's already clear that working people are in for the fight of our lives.

From Donald Trump's military attack on Venezuela and kidnapping of its president, to his fuel blockade against Cuba and risk of humanitarian crisis there, to his threat of war against Iran and more, US imperialism is rapidly becoming more bellicose. The Canadian government continues to support, either overtly or quietly, this escalating aggressiveness which sharply increases the threat of regional or even world war.

Here in Canada, Trump's trade war and talk of annexation have moved the question of sovereignty to centre stage, with federal and provincial governments all using it as a pretext for implementing "nation building" economic projects which funnel billions of dollars from working people to huge corporate monopolies while trampling Indigenous sovereignty, labour rights and environmental security.

Through this fog, People's Voice has consistently argued that sovereignty cannot be built by subordinating our foreign and military policy to an imperialist war machine, that in the face of this escalating imperialist aggression, the struggle for sovereignty – for the right of all peoples to determine their own future – is more important than ever. We know that this is not only a fight against US aggression towards Canada, but also against the complicity of the Canadian government.

We know what guaranteeing sovereignty means. It means an independent foreign policy based on peace, disarmament, solidarity and international cooperation. It means economic policies that are based on full employment, respect for Indigenous sovereignty, labour rights, and climate justice and environmental security. It means social and political policies that promote and guarantee full national, gender and racial equality.

Carney's federal budget, though, goes in exactly the wrong direction with its commitment to massive military spending, its sweeping public sector job cuts, and its accelerated drive toward privatization of critical public services including healthcare, transportation infrastructure and the postal service.

People's Voice continues to promote unity of the labour and social movements in action around policies that put people and the planet ahead of the war mongers and corporate profiteers. We press for a people's coalition that fights for expanded public ownership, housing for all, cuts to military spending, a nationalized auto and transportation industry, and fully funded programs like educa-

tion, childcare and expanded healthcare that includes universal dental, pharmacare and vision.

But to do this, we need to grow. We need to be able to publish more material, more frequently and on more platforms. We need to continue growing our print circulation while also expanding our digital reach. We need to be the educator, agitator and organizer that the working class is looking for.

This year, we have bold plans to achieve this growth. We are preparing a campaign to increase subscriptions by 40 percent. We are working to relaunch our PV podcast and expand our social media reach. And we are developing a larger network of writers and researchers to produce more of the quality analysis that can help build the working-class struggle.

And that's why we are asking you to help with our 2026 Fund Drive. We need to raise \$51,000 during this year's campaign, which pays for printing, distribution, developing our digital products, and more. With no government or corporate funding, we rely on readers like you.

Please donate by sending cheques payable to People's Voice to 290A Danforth Avenue, Toronto, ON, M4K 1N6; by sending an e-transfer to pvoicepayment@gmail.com, or by visiting PVOnline.ca/donate to contribute through PayPal.

The fundraising targets for each region are in the chart below – please donate today and help your area achieve its goal!

Because right now, the working class needs its own media now more than ever!

Thank you for your support.

For peace, solidarity and socialism,

Dave McKee, editor

Region	Fundraising target
BC	\$17,000.00
AB	\$4,000.00
SK	\$600.00
MB	\$2,700.00
ON	\$22,300.00
QC	\$2,000.00
NS	\$750.00
NB	\$750.00
NL	\$750.00
International	\$700.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$51,550.00</b>

**LET CUBA LIVE!**

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

1. Sign the parliamentary petition: [Tinyurl.com/Petition4Cuba](https://tinyurl.com/Petition4Cuba)
2. Donate to the CNC Hurricane Relief material aid campaign [canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/campaigns](https://canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/campaigns)
3. Call your MP to demand they stand up for Cuba! [ourcommons.ca/members/en](https://ourcommons.ca/members/en)
4. Get organized, find a local group at: [canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/cnc-member-groups](https://canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/cnc-member-groups)

**NO ECONOMIC WAR ON CUBA!**

Stay Informed

[canadiannetworkoncuba.ca](https://canadiannetworkoncuba.ca)

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# Stand up to the US blockade, and break the siege on Cuba: CANADA MUST SEND OIL AND AID!



In a statement released February 16, the Communist Party of Canada calls on the Canadian government immediately break its silence and take concrete action to defy Donald Trump's act of economic warfare against Cuba. The January 29 executive order, imposing a total blockade on fuel supplies to the island, is designed to strangle the Cuban people and create a humanitarian catastrophe. These actions are already escalating mass suffering in Cuba and are a direct challenge to the sovereignty of every country in the hemisphere.

"The so-called 'Donroe doctrine,' which asserts US domination over the Americas, must be defeated," said the Party leadership. "It is in the direct interest of working people in Canada to stand against it."

The situation in Cuba is very serious as a result of Washington's barbaric acts, with over 75 percent of the country's oil imports vanishing in a single month. Hospitals are running on generators that are now running out of fuel. Power blackouts lasting up to 16 hours a day threaten patient care and food preservation. Local agriculture is at risk of collapse, threatening to tip the island into famine.

The Communist Party, describes the situation as "the deliberate result of US policy – economic genocide designed to force political surrender through starvation and suffering."

**The Communist Party is calling on all trade unions and people's organizations to build a broad movement that forces the Canadian government to stand against US aggression and provide material support to Cuba.**

**"The defence of Cuban sovereignty is the defence of sovereignty everywhere. Let Cuba Live!"**

If people ask why the United States is punishing Cuba so brutally, the answer is that Cuba dared to exercise its right to self-determination. It kicked out US corporations and gangsters, eliminated extreme poverty and illiteracy, and built a socialist society that remains a beacon of hope. Despite more than 60 years of imperialist aggression, Cuba has provided free education and medical care to its people, achieving life expectancies that rival advanced industrialized countries.

For proving that working people can build socialism, Cuba is being strangled.

This blockade is a flagrant violation of international law. It constitutes unilateral economic coercion with extraterritorial effects, imposed without UN Security Council authorization and despite repeated and overwhelming UN votes calling for an end to the US blockade. It violates the fundamental principles of sovereign equality, non-intervention, and self-determination enshrined in the UN Charter.

Yet global financial institutions, intimidated by aggressive US sanctions enforce-

ment, have largely abandoned Cuba, costing the island at least \$130 billion by 2018 and many more billions of dollars in the last few years as the blockade has been tightened.

The Communist Party statement takes sharp aim at the Canadian government's silence and inaction in the face of this looming humanitarian disaster.

"Prime Minister Mark Carney declared at Davos that the era of accommodating coercion must end, calling for 'a new order that encompasses our values, such as respect for human rights, sustainable development, solidarity, sovereignty and territorial integrity.' He urged the world to remain 'principled in our commitment to fundamental values, sovereignty, territorial integrity, the prohibition of the use of force, except when consistent with the UN Charter, and respect for human rights.'

"While Carney's plainly hypocritical rhetoric was in fact aimed at repositioning Canada within the NATO imperialist bloc, his words resonated with working people who genuinely want a foreign policy based on peace and sovereignty. We must build a movement to make that vision a reality.

"The Canadian government's response so far has been a disgrace. When pressed in the House of Commons, Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand responded not by condemning US aggression or offering aid, but by saying that consular officials 'stand ready to support Canadians in need.'

"In the face of a deliberate humanitarian disaster, Ottawa's only concern was for Canadian tourists. Anand knows this is an illegal escalation. So far, she has chosen silence and complicity."

Canada has maintained diplomatic relations with Cuba for decades, against the wishes and pressure from the US government. Canadians visit Cuba more than any other Caribbean nation, and Canada is Cuba's second-largest source of foreign investment. The Canadian government must immediately condemn this act of economic terror, use all diplomatic means to oppose the blockade, and strengthen trade and cooperation to help Cuba withstand this assault.

Concrete action is required. Canada must ship oil to Cuba immediately, and it must work with other regional powers to break the siege. Ottawa must also reopen flights and restore the tourist industry, making it easy for Canadians to travel to Cuba and support its economy. These actions would encourage other governments to follow suit. The greatest risk is doing nothing, allowing the US to systematically destroy independent countries.

The Communist Party is calling on all trade unions and people's organizations to build a broad movement that forces the Canadian government to stand against US aggression and provide material support to Cuba. There are millions of Canadians with ties to Cuba who can be brought into the fight.

"The defence of Cuban sovereignty is the defence of sovereignty everywhere. Let Cuba Live!" ■



## IWD: Solidarity with women of the world in the struggle against war and militarism, and for full equality!

International Women's Day is a day of solidarity with women wherever they are in struggle around the world. Given the horrors that imperialism creates daily, this year on International Women's Day, we must raise our voices in support of those women facing its most horrendous consequences – Cuba, Palestine, Sudan, Venezuela, Iran. We must do everything in our power to block imperialism's drive – to war, to conquer and destroy, to bend to its will those who have chosen not to be its vassals.

Cuba, which has stood for over 60 years as a beacon of internationalism and solidarity with the peoples of the world is being strangled by an illegal blockade. Palestine, struggling for its national rights for over 70 years, is facing genocide. Sudan, in the midst of a foreign-fueled military conflict is suffering the world's greatest humanitarian crisis. Venezuela, another victim of economic warfare, has seen its president kidnapped and its oil claimed once more by the US. The people of Iran, also victims of economic warfare, are now facing the threat of catastrophic force by the world's most powerful military.

Desperate to hold on to the profit, power and privilege that flows from its domination of the world, imperialism becomes more dangerous, more barbaric, more determined to hold back the tide of humanity who prefer a better world, a better future. Most dangerous, most barbaric, most determined to rule despite nearly universal opposition, is western imperialism led by the United States which threatens everyone, friend and allies along with the rest of humanity.

The Communist Party of Canada stands with the women of these countries who so often are the victims of the violence of the war and the violence that comes with war, sexual violence. We stand with the women, their families, their communities, their countries. They need our support and the Communist Party will do everything we can to meet that need. We call on all those who do not want to see more death and destruction, who support the right of people and countries to live without foreign interference, to add their voices and their support to the growing opposition to the arrogance and brutality that these countries confront.

The Prime Minister of Canada, speaking at Davos, calls for the "respect for human rights, sustainable development, solidarity, sovereignty and territorial integrity." He talked about standing up to the "bully."

Fine words, but the actions of the Canadian government utterly fail to meet those goals. It is upon the Canadian government that pressure must be applied, to live up to its stated opposition to bullying and in support of sovereignty. Our government must come to the aid of Cuba, the people of Gaza, and the victims of violence in Sudan. They must condemn the violation of international law, piracy on the high seas, the use of and threat of use of violence against Venezuela and Iran. If those fine words are only about Canada's sovereignty, Canada's territorial integrity then the

world will know that Canada is hypocritical, unworthy of respect and unwilling to stand up to the "bully."

On International Women's Day, 2026 women in Canada must also confront the actions of the Canadian government at home:

- As it lays off public employees, it is estimated that 58 percent of the layoff will be women, 5.5 percent will be Indigenous, 8.3 percent will be disabled workers, and 26 percent will be racialized workers. In each of these cases, the percentage laid off exceeds the percentage of that category in the workforce. In other words, these layoffs will fall disproportionately on women and other workers who face discrimination in the workplace. This increase in unemployment will follow these workers into retirement as it reduces pensions perpetuating the correlation between these categories of workers and poverty in old age. It will also reduce the services to the citizens the government was elected to serve.

- As it talks about abandoning its commitment to \$10/day childcare – a stab in the back for working parents and working women most particularly.

- As it funds its military expansion with tax dollars so desperately needed by Canadian women, and Canadians generally, for healthcare, childcare, housing, education, climate remediation and so much more.

There is so much that Canada needs, but increased military expenditures – that do not feed us, nor provide housing, nor education, nor health care, nor transportation, nor environmental protection and do not produce much in the way of employment – is not one of them. Canadian women and Canadian communities deserve more and they deserve better.

On International Women's Day, 2026 the wage gap that reaps the corporations \$148 billion each year continues. We need to intensify the struggle to close it. The right to choose is restricted by lack of facilities in most parts of Canada outside the big cities. We need to fight to make it a tangible right not just words.

We oppose any attempt to use women's struggles for equality as a means of division. Democratic issues have to nourish each other and serve the unity of the working class and the people against monopolies. As such, we oppose reactionary measures such as Bill 94 in Quebec, imposed by the CAQ government which – under the false pretext of defending women's rights, Quebec's national rights and secularism – forces women teachers wearing the hijab to choose between their work and their faith. In addition to scapegoating, this maneuver attacks their right to work and installs division not only amongst women, but within the working class as a whole.

As we watch the growing attacks in the United States on the rights of women, starting with the right to an abortion, we must guard against the right-wing agenda that uses women's rights, trans rights, the rights of gender diverse people along with the rights of racialized and immigra-

# EDITORIAL

## NO RETREAT ON ARMS TREATIES!

On February 5, the New START nuclear arms reduction treaty between Russia and the United States expired. Despite Russian requests to renew it, Washington declined so New START becomes the latest nuclear arms treaty to retreat from the international landscape.

Negotiated in 2009 and signed into force in 2010, New START obligated the US and Russia to limit nuclear warheads to 1,550. With the treaty's demise, the media has lit up with speculation of a new nuclear arms race which could spread from Russia and the US to include the other seven nuclear-armed states, if not more.

In addition to more likelihood of their intentional use and more chances for accidents, building nuclear weapons incites non-nuclear weapons states to develop them. This includes Canada, where retired general and former chief of the defence staff Wayne Eyre recently opined that this country "shouldn't altogether rule out acquiring its own nuclear weapons."

There are now two remaining nuclear arms treaties – the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1970 and the Treaty to Prevent Nuclear War (TPNW) which came into force in 2021.

The NPT includes almost all the members of the United Nations and was ratified by the five states that held nuclear weapons at the time – Britain, China, France, Britain and the US. The four other states that have since obtained them – Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Israel and Pakistan – are not signatories to the NPT, although DPRK had previously signed it but later withdrew under sanctions and constant threats of aggression from the US.

One of the biggest critiques of the NPT is that it tolerates a "have vs have-not" regime for nuclear weapons. While Article 6 of the treaty requires nuclear-weapon states to negotiate complete disarmament of their stockpiles, the nuclear-armed states who are NPT signatories have never abided by it. Within this context, non-nuclear weapons states are increasingly tempted to acquire them as a deterrent to aggression and threats from foreign states, whether the threat involves nuclear or "conventional" weaponry. Critics see this as a dangerous slippery slope through which the NPT undermines itself.

The TPNW bans a comprehensive list of activities involving nuclear weapons, and is a powerful, concrete disarmament measure that people and movements around the world have mobilized to support. But it has been boycotted by all nine nuclear weapons states. Furthermore, non-nuclear allies of those same states – including Canada – opposed the treaty's enactment in the UN General Assembly.

This resistance to disarmament is spearheaded by the same NATO governments that are driving arms spending increases which would see Canada's annual military budget surpass \$150 billion. In the process, a small handful of oligarchs will make hundreds of billions in profits while the rest of us suffer from the loss of jobs, housing, healthcare, education and environmental security.

Working people should not accept this situation. The destructive danger of nuclear arms is reason enough to push back, but when we understand how that is intertwined with the worsening economic, social and environmental conditions around us, there is no excuse for not actively fighting for disarmament.

We need to integrate demands for working people's social and economic needs with demands for military spending cuts and a new foreign policy based on peace, disarmament and international cooperation. This kind of orientation is starting to develop in Canada, as labour and social movements increasingly call for Canada to de-link itself from US aggressions around the world.

The end of New START threatens a new nuclear arms race. It is now up to people's movements to unite and prevent that from happening. That includes pressing for international treaties that can really achieve comprehensive disarmament of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. ♦



## OF NOTE

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.

### Findings of People's Tribunal on the US blockade on Cuba

We have heard the credible testimony of witnesses representing various sectors of Canadian society, union leaders, students, clergy, academics, human rights, peace and solidarity activists as well as members of the Cuban community in Canada. They have testified about the well documented devastating effects of the 67 years of Unilateral Coercive Measures on Cuban society and its economy. The impact on healthcare, agriculture, water sanitation, transportation, trade, finance, etc. Virtually every aspect of economic activity has been impacted in these 67 years.

#### THE LAW

It is well established in international law that Unilateral Coercive Measures are a violation of international law. So much that the UN has created the office of the rapporteur against Unilateral Coercive Measures.

From its inception, the US blockade violates the principle of sovereign equality of nations, the prohibition of interference in the internal affairs of other states, and the related principles of equality and self-determination of peoples. It also violates Cuba's freedom of international trade and navigation, the prohibition of intervention established in customary international law, the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, as well as the provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the protection of freedom of trade.

International law holds that a blockade of fuel on a country is one of the most serious violations of international law when it causes severe suffering to the civilian population, restricts vital humanitarian aid or functions as a form of collec-

tive punishment.

A blockade that targets a general population rather than specific combatants, such as cutting off fuel to an entire territory, is considered a form of collective punishment, which is strictly prohibited under Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Under domestic Canadian law, a fuel blockade could also constitute crime against humanity under the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act S.C. 2000, c.24 which allows Canada to prosecute individuals for international crimes regardless of where they were committed.

#### THE FINDINGS

**67 years of Unilateral Coercive Measures – 64 years of Embargo/Blockade:**

The Tribunal finds that the United States is guilty of engaging in economic warfare against Cuba for over 67 years.

This Tribunal also finds the United States government is guilty of willfully ignoring for over 33 years the resolutions of the United Nations calling for an end to the illegal blockade on Cuba.

#### Fuel Embargo – Blockade:

The US Government, through its President's executive order of January 29, 2026 drastically escalated the blockade against Cuba by threatening countries that ship oil to Cuba with crippling sanctions. It also illegally seized an oil tanker heading to Cuba. All of this resulting in a stoppage of critical oil shipments to Cuba, causing extreme hardship on Cuban families, hospitals, schools, food production, transportation, etc. Such extreme actions constitute collective punishment and constitute crimes against humanity.

This People's Tribunal finds that the United States is guilty of committing crimes against humanity in Cuba that can be considered a form of genocide.

#### Economy:

This Tribunal finds that the US Blockade on Cuba has caused hundreds of billions of dollars in damages to Cuba's economy and society.

#### FINAL DECLARATION

The results of these deliberations are clear and unequivocal: the U.S. state, and the Trump Administration in particular, has been found guilty of crimes against the Cuban people and Cuba's right to national self-determination. These policies and threats violate Cuba's sovereignty, violate the sovereignty of other countries and are a violation of the principles and foundations of international law. The U.S. sanctions against Cuba must not be allowed to stand.

This assembly urgently calls upon the Canadian government to publicly condemn Washington's imperial overreach, and to take immediate action to render humanitarian assistance to Cuba and her people in their hour of need. This should include the delivery of humanitarian aid in the form of food, medical supplies and the shipment of oil supplies.

We salute the tireless efforts of the Canadian Network on Cuba and its affiliates, and countless other organizations and individuals of conscience who have spoken out against these atrocities and have demanded that Ottawa act now.

As we adjourn these proceedings, let all of us here today – and all friends of Cuba across Canada – agree to spare no effort in expressing our solidarity by signing the Parliamentary Petition, by raising funds and materiel for emergency aid, and by pressuring governments at every level to address and combat the effects of the this humanitarian catastrophe befalling the Cuban people. ■

**Let Cuba Live! People's Tribunal February 22, 2026**

# PEOPLE'S VOICE

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

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Please send submissions (articles, photos, events, announcements) for our March 16-31 issue by **March 9** and for our April 1-15 issue by **March 23** to [peoplesvoiceditor@gmail.com](mailto:peoplesvoiceditor@gmail.com)

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# Chief issues open letter to Carney, highlighting hypocrisy of his stated "Davos values" as applied at home



## CHIEF LAURIE CARR HIAWATHA FIRST NATION

**A**aniin Prime Minister Mark Carney, Boozhoo. Atik Dodem, Ajijak Dodem, Mgizi Kwe Ndishnikaz, Laurie Nooswin, Minoomingaming Ndoonjaba, Michi Saagiig Anishinaabe Kwe Ndaaw, Gimma Hiawatha.

I am from the Hoof Clan, related to the Crane Clan on my mother's side. My Anishinaabe Kwe name is Eagle Woman. My English name is Laurie. I am from the Missis-sauga Nation and Chief of our community, Hiawatha First Nation.

I wish to acknowledge and commend your address at the World Economic Forum in Davos. Your remarks were delivered with clarity and confidence, and they presented Canada as a principled and forward-looking nation on the global stage.

That said, upon careful reflection, I must openly express our truth as one of the many Sovereign Nations within Canada, and as a First Nation. The values and narratives articulated in your speech do not fully align with the realities experienced by Sovereign Nations and First Nations Peoples in this country. While Canada is often presented internationally as unified and inclusive, this portrayal does not consistently reflect the nation-to-nation relationships, treaty obligations, and ongoing systemic inequities that shape our lived realities. This discrepancy between international representation and domestic truth warrants direct and thoughtful consideration.

At Davos, you told the world: "You cannot live within the lie of mutual benefit through integration when integration becomes the source of your subordination." First Nations in Canada have been living that lie for generations.

You also warned that "middle powers must act together because if we're not at the table, we're on the menu."

For First Nations, this is not rhetoric. It is policy. It is practice. It is lived experience.

We are not at the table where decisions about our lands, waters and economies are made. As a result, our territories are treated as the menu, allocated, leased, regulated and exploited without our consent, while we are invited afterward to manage the fallout.

We were told that integration would bring prosperity, security and shared benefit. Instead, it became the mechanism of our dispossession of our lands, our laws, our languages and our economies. Integration, as imposed by the Canadian state, did not lift us up. It subordinated us. It demanded our participation without power and our consent without control.

You warned that "a country that cannot feed itself, fuel itself, or defend itself has few options."

Yet Canada systematically denies First Nations the very capacity to do those things. Our communities live under long-term boil-water advisories in one of the most water-rich countries on Earth. We are blocked from developing our own energy resources while projects cross our territories without consent. Our food systems were dismantled

through policy, land theft and regulation, and then we are blamed for the dependency those actions created.

You said, "That's building a strong domestic economy. It should be every government's immediate priority."

Then this reality must be named plainly, the most fundamental ingredient of any economy is a land base, one rich in resources. Those resources are harvested, extracted and grown from that land. They generate work, commodities and revenue. That revenue builds a workforce and tax base that funds roads, infrastructure, schools and hospitals. That workforce then requires services and goods, expanding the economy further and creating more businesses and jobs. This is not abstract theory. It is the foundation of Canada's economy.

**At Davos, you warned against "the performance of sovereignty while accepting subordination." Prime Minister, this is precisely what Canada demands of First Nations – participation without power, consultation without influence, reconciliation without restitution. We are asked to stand politely at the edge of the room while decisions are made and then told we were included.**

That land base came from Indigenous Peoples. As stated by Lake Huron Regional Chief, Scott McLeod Shabogesis, "the Indigenous Nations of this land signed treaties to share our territories so that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples could prosper together from its richness. Instead, our Peoples were raped, murdered, removed, confined to reserves, thrown into residential schools and jails, marginalized from the economic benefits of our own lands and made the poorest Peoples in the country as a result.

"So, no matter what job or business one holds in this country, the truth remains, Indigenous Peoples have paid, and continue to pay, for Canada's economy every single day. No land base means no country. No country means no economy. No economy means no jobs. It is, in fact, that simple."

You said, "When the rules no longer protect you, you must protect yourself"

For First Nations, the rules have rarely protected us. Treaties are broken as a matter of convenience. Court rulings are delayed, appealed, or ignored until they lose force. International declarations are celebrated abroad and neutralized at home. When we act to protect our lands and waters, we are met not with partnership, but with injunctions, police forces and criminalization.

At Davos, you cautioned against "a world of fortresses," warning it would be "poorer, more fragile and less sustainable."

Prime Minister, Canada has already built a fortress on First Nations lands. Wealth is extracted at scale, while our communities remain systemically underfunded, overcrowded and constrained across all sectors. The

fragility you warned the world about is not theoretical. It is manufactured here through policies that prioritize speed and profit over consent, sustainability and justice.

You spoke of "risk management," "shared investments in resilience," and "positive-sum complementarities."

Yet when First Nations demand revenue sharing, jurisdiction, or equity in projects on our territories, we are told the risk is too high, the timelines too tight and the cost too great. Resilience is demanded of us but rarely invested in with us.

You described Canada as "principled and pragmatic," committed to sovereignty, territorial integrity and human rights.

First Nations ask a simple question, whose sovereignty? Our Nations were sovereign long before Confederation. Our territorial integrity has been systematically eroded. Our human rights are treated as negotiable, conditional, aspirational, but never foundational.

You said Canada engages the world "with open eyes," taking it as it is, not as you wish it to be.

Then apply that clarity at home. See that reconciliation cannot coexist with ongoing land dispossession. That partnership is impossible when free, prior, and informed consent is treated as a procedural checkbox rather than a binding standard. That sovereignty cannot be performed while control is withheld.

At Davos, you warned against "the performance of sovereignty while accepting subordination."

Prime Minister, this is precisely what Canada demands of First Nations – participation without power, consultation without influence, reconciliation without restitution. We are asked to stand politely at the edge of the room while decisions are made and then told we were included.

You called for "naming reality."

So let us name it. Canada speaks the language of values abroad while practicing expediency at home. It champions a rules-based order internationally while treating First Nations rights domestically as obstacles to be managed, delayed or overridden.

You concluded by saying Canada is "taking a sign out of the window."

We urge you to take another sign down, the one that tells the world Canada has moved beyond colonialism while continuing to benefit from it every day.

If Canada truly believes that those not at the table end up on the menu, then it must confront an uncomfortable truth, for far too long, First Nations have been deliberately excluded and consumed.

Anything less than structural change is not leadership. It is, in your own words, the performance of sovereignty while accepting subordination.

Prime Minister, I ask that you reflect on your speech and apply the same clarity in "naming reality" to Canada's relationship with First Nations Peoples in this country we all call home.

Miigwetch. ■

## Che Brigade still heading to Cuba, despite fuel blockade



**I**n the face of the US fuel blockade of Cuba, and the cancellation of flights from Canada, the Ernesto 'Che' Guevara Work Brigade, an annual project of the Canadian Network on Cuba, is still organizing to go to Cuba this year.

"The Brigade is still going!" organizer Tess Stuber told People's Voice. "We can no longer fly directly from Canada but that won't stop us – Cuba needs us now more than ever!"

The Brigade, first launched in 1993, brings hundreds of individuals from Canada and beyond to Cuba to learn about the country, work alongside its people, and witness the impacts of the US blockade. Organized in collaboration with the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), the Brigade offers participants a firsthand look at the achievements and challenges of the Cuban Revolution.

Despite media portrayals of Cuba as a failing state, the Brigade highlights the resilience of the Cuban people, who have thrived despite more than six decades of economic blockade, achieving remarkable advancements in education, healthcare and global humanitarian efforts.

The Brigade serves two key purposes: demonstrating Canadian support for Cuba's struggle to maintain its independence and providing Canadians with an opportunity to understand the dynamic realities of Cuban life. Brigadistas, as participants are called, are warmly welcomed by Cubans, who see their presence as a reaffirmation of the global importance of their revolutionary social changes. The experience fosters mutual understanding and solidarity, emphasizing Cuba's commitment to its revolutionary ideals and its impact on the world.

The Brigade encourages anyone interested in learning about Cuba and showing solidarity to join, regardless of prior involvement in Cuba solidarity work.

"This year's Brigade will fly into Havana on April 26 and return to Canada May 9/10 from Varadero," says Stuber. "Folks should register their interest on the Brigade website, at [canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/che-brigade](http://canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/che-brigade), to receive the information packet and details for our information webinar on March 15 at 4 PM Eastern time. They can reach out to the coordinator email, [CheVolBrigade@gmail.com](mailto:CheVolBrigade@gmail.com) for more information on booking flights." ■

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# Postmortem on the CDB: the "Canada Don't Bother" benefit

LENNY DEVEREUX

The Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) is now fully operational, and the results are in: a maximum of \$200 per month and over half of disabled people in Canada are excluded. Touted by Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities Kamal Khera as a "generational national program," the CDB fails to meet the federal government's promise to lift disabled people out of poverty.

With the introduction of Carney's upcoming war budget and a commitment to raise military spending to 5 percent of the country's GDP – an eye-watering \$150 billion – the most marginalized people in Canada are expected to foot the bill through ever-increasing austerity. This isn't a policy failure; for a system that does not care to end poverty, it's a policy success.

Provincial disability program payments are poverty wages. Taking the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) as an example, the maximum one can expect for their shelter allowance is \$497, and the maximum "basic needs" allowance is \$672 for a total of \$1,169. The average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Toronto last year was \$2,160. Even in Thunder Bay, the city with the lowest documented rental costs, a one-bedroom rents for \$1,420. The CDB's pittance of an extra \$200 per month will not enable a single person dependent on ODSP to pay their rent. For those pursuing rent-geared-to-income housing as a way out, waitlists of 11 to 15 years turn housing stability into a utopian fantasy.

There are 1.5 million disabled people living in deep poverty in Canada, according to Disability Without Poverty. Statistics Canada reports that in the last four years, deep poverty has risen over 45 percent. When disabled, working age people face poverty at 1.8 times the rate of their non-disabled peers, the idea of a Canada Disability Benefit was well-positioned to address this glaring gap. However, the federal government's inscrutable eligibility requirements stop two-thirds of them from receiving the benefit.

The betrayal was two-fold: in addition to being financially insufficient, it adds to the already existing labyrinth of bureaucracy



that disabled people have to navigate in order to survive. Many ODSP recipients begin their long march to government aid waiting on Ontario Works (OW), a program designed to support able-bodied people while they search for employment, and which provides only \$700 per month. One of OW's requirements is that recipients must log all their attempts at becoming gainfully employed. Of course, many disabled people remain completely unable to work, let alone enough to earn a livable wage. If you are disabled and looking to apply to ODSP, this detour through Ontario Works is completely inappropriate and a cruel waste of time.

Compounding the bureaucratic nightmare, according to Ron Anicich of the ODSP Action Coalition, is the fact that "46 percent of people applying to ODSP are denied – that's a lot of people with disabilities living on \$700 a month."

What happens when a disabled person's case is denied? Anicich continues: "Some go to the Social Benefits Tribunal (SBT). More than 90 percent of the cases get overturned, and those people end up on ODSP anyway. They force people to go through a tribunal system that is backlogged and underfunded."

The SBT takes on average three months to gather data from the disabled person and OW offices, have all parties meet before an arbiter, and make a decision. All the while, the disabled applicant is in limbo, left with

the impossible tasks of stretching \$700 a month to cover all their needs. The systems and programs that claim to help marginalized communities are instead enacting great and systemic financial abuse.

Finally, to be eligible for the CDB, one must first be deemed eligible for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC), one that few disabled people in Canada pursue because they do not meet the income threshold to benefit from the tax credit. In the lead-up to the CDB bill's readings, disability advocates saw this flaw and begged the federal government not to tie the benefit to the DTC, but their pleas were ignored.

Advocates sought "proxy eligibility" through existing provincial disability programs instead, hoping to lower the administrative burden on an already marginalized and disempowered population. Purposefully adding *more* red tape to disability income disbursement demonstrates Carney's aim to pillage social security to fund a war budget.

Does reading all of that make you tired? Imagine trying to navigate that with an intellectual disability, or chronic fatigue, or a disabling workplace injury that leaves you unable to sit upright for long periods of time, or an auditory processing disorder that prevents you from understanding what your caseworker is telling you on the phone, or any number of disabling conditions that prevent you from selling your labour power (at

an extra-exploitative discount) to a boss.

Yet this is the reality of disability poverty: even if a livable wage existed behind the red tape, those most in need of it are systematically excluded from accessing it. The claims that Canada is home to a robust social safety net and a strong welfare state dissolve into thin air.

The "Canada Strong" budget document claims that one of our "Canadian advantages" is our "resilience" including "a strong social safety net and stable institutions." Where is this strong social safety net? Where are the stable institutions for the most marginalized among us? Buried on page 20 of the budget is the only mention of disability or disabled peoples in the entire document: a small text bubble claiming that 465,000 Canadians "rely on" the CDB as a "vital social program" that the Carney government is protecting (and which is dwarfed next to the 7.5 million of the Old Age Security Program and Canada Child Benefit's 6 million). How can it be said that anyone "relies on" a payment that wouldn't even pay the groceries?

On the other hand, how many Canadians are lifted out of poverty by a military funded to the tune of \$150 billion?

It sounds like the set-up to a bad joke, but this is where Carney's austerity is taking us. The coffers of the Canadian public have always been plundered by capitalists in government to fund war and enrich themselves, leaving pennies for social programs. The 2025-26 federal budget is only the latest proposal outlining this theft: \$150 billion for militarism, \$110 billion for corporate subsidies, and a \$200 pittance tossed to disabled workers to pacify dissent.

But it does not have to be this way.

Disabled workers cannot afford to wait. Nor can the working class afford to be bystanders while the capitalist government declares war on its most vulnerable. The fight for a livable income is not a plea for reform but a front in the class war. The CDB debacle proves yet again that capitalism cannot and will not provide a dignified life. The same hands that cut disability support also slash wages and pensions, connecting the fight of disabled workers to that of the labour movement. We must therefore fight for "a guaranteed livable income for all." ■

## From Gaza to Cuba: How Canada remains the world's most tactful bystander

ANNE KAMATH AND UMER AZAD

The world is witnessing yet another manufactured humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in plain sight in Cuba. This crisis is not the result of any internal collapse or mismanagement. It is the deliberate outcome of United States policy, a policy of collective punishment designed to impose economic suffocation on an entire population to extract political change.

President Donald Trump has openly declared his intention to overthrow the Cuban government by year's end, meaning Washington is transforming its decades-old blockade into a full-scale siege. The Trump administration has absurdly designated the small, peaceful Caribbean nation as "an unusual and extraordinary threat" to the United States, weaponizing tariffs and economic coercion against any country that dares to sell oil to Cuba.

The consequences are immediate and impossible to ignore. Cuban authorities have announced that jet fuel will be unavailable at airports across the country starting this week, disrupting airport operations and grounding both domestic and international carriers. Canadian airlines have already announced contingency plans for flights to and from Cuba, assessing reroutes, suspensions and assistance for stranded travelers.

But aviation is only the most visible edge of a far deeper collapse. If Cuba's energy infrastructure fails, people will die. This is not a metaphor. It is inevitable. Without electricity, food cannot be grown, preserved or transported. Medicines cannot be produced, refrigerated or administered. Hospitals can-

not operate. Ambulances, incubators and ventilators will stop.

This deprivation is not at all incidental. It is intentional. Administration officials and the extreme right Cuban American political establishment have been explicit: the goal is to inflict suffering, to manufacture hunger, medicine shortages, and nationwide blackouts as instruments of regime change. Washington's intentions could not be clearer. The United States is attempting to strangle an entire nation into submission.

While the US pursues this deliberate campaign of suffering, Ottawa has once again chosen the path of procedural dithering, offering words instead of action. Canada's response, to no one's surprise, has been another Kafkaesque exercise in bureaucratic evasion.

When Senator Yuen Pau Woo asked officials from the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade what Canada is doing to prevent this potentially catastrophic humanitarian disaster in Cuba, the exchange exposed more absence than action. Pressed for specifics, the response was: "There are no specifics." The officials further conceded that "there is no humanitarian response plan for Cuba that I'm aware of," explaining that Canada's engagement has been framed as "more looking at the development context and not the humanitarian context."

In practice, this distinction functions as a delay mechanism. The government is "looking into the matter," as it so often does, deferring urgency behind the process while conditions deteriorate. The latency appears less accidental than structural. And, as usual,



no timeline has been offered, no indication of when this period of observation will end, or when statements will give way to action.

This pattern is not all new, nor is it confined to Cuba. It is, in fact, a continuation of a long record of calibrated restraint and strategic silence. Canada's response over the past few years has been consistent, predictable and deeply inadequate. By now, Canada has perfected the art of tactful bystanding, present in language, absent in consequence.

Ottawa has expressed concern, called for de-escalation, and urged all parties to respect international law, but it has avoided naming responsibility and evaded confronting its closest ally. Canada criticizes outcomes while refusing to challenge the very system that produces them.

This is simply appeasement dressed up as diplomacy. While statements are issued, the systems that produce these horrors remain untouched, leaving ordinary people, Pales-

tinians, Venezuelans, Iranians and now Cubans, to bear the consequences.

For the past two years, the United States has funded and enabled genocide in Gaza, where tens of thousands of civilians have been killed with US weapons, under US protection, with full knowledge that no meaningful consequences will follow. A recent Al Jazeera investigation revealed that US-supplied thermal and thermobaric munitions, burning at 3,500 degrees Celsius, effectively evaporated nearly 3,000 Palestinians, leaving no trace of their bodies, a stark illustration of unchecked barbarism.

And as we speak, Israeli authorities are reportedly preparing to execute Palestinian prisoners under mandatory death penalties in military courts for vaguely defined "terrorism" offenses, laws applied only to Palestinians.

■ OTTAWA'S SILENCE, PG 10

## Labour and community movements win big with victory over Winnipeg anti-protest bylaw

PV MANITOBA BUREAU

In a resounding win for all Winnipeggers, the combined force of popular movements and labour, of community organizers and concerned citizens, has defeated a controversial anti-protest bylaw within days of its first draft being made public.

On the morning of February 17, City Council's Executive Policy Committee (EPC) was greeted by a raucous demonstration against Councillor Evan Duncan's "Safe Access to Vulnerable Infrastructure By-law" – a sweepingly undemocratic draft released only one week prior without any public consultation, education or explanatory material whatsoever. Inside the gallery, more than one hundred and twenty separate delegations spoke against this anti-democratic escalation. By the end of the day, the bylaw was scrapped.

Intending to "prohibit nuisance demonstrations and intimidation of persons at or in respect of vulnerable social infrastructure," the bylaw proposed to create a one-hundred metre buffer around cemeteries, community and cultural centres, healthcare facilities, libraries, places of worship and all schools, with fines for violations ranging from \$500 to \$5000. This would place large swathes of Winnipeg – including all seats of government and constituency offices – off limits, essentially banning protest in more than a quarter of the city.

This attack on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including the right to freedom of expression and to peaceful assembly, doesn't come out of the blue. Duncan's failed draft borrows force from many such attempts at anti-protest legislation across the country, which have gained popularity against the backdrop of the Free Palestine movement and its massive mobilizations.

This isn't the first attempt at criminalizing protest in Winnipeg's recent history either. In 2021, Manitoba's Conservative government attempted (and failed) to push through Bill 57, which was meant to protect "critical infrastructure" in the wake of the Indigenous-led #ShutDownCanada movement. These connections are well understood, and despite the pretense of concern for vulnerable persons, City Hall's attack on democratic rights was instantly opposed as such by a chorus of Indigenous organizers, faith groups and labour councils.

In the face of this public outcry, Duncan visibly flailed and backtracked, withdrawing his support for the bylaw before the council vote had even begun. According to Duncan, the bylaw was never intended to ban protest but to protect "specified characteristics" of marginalized groups; but this was obviously not so. There are already laws against hate speech and violence on the books, and the proposed bylaw's criteria for "intimidation" was hopelessly vague.

Duncan is a vocally provocative Zionist, and represents the very area of the city where Liberal MP Ben Carr had previously proposed "bubble zone" legislation to protect an appearance by Israeli Defence Force veterans who participated in the genocidal siege on Gaza. "In my opinion, they want a bylaw to keep Palestinians and their supporters off the streets of Winnipeg," said Diane Zack, coordinator of the Manitoba-Cuba Solidarity



Committee. Many other delegations, including the Canadian Palestine Association of Manitoba, agreed.

Not only would the proposed bylaw have limited protest against war and genocide, but its expansive language would have stifled political action by labour. Clearly Duncan and others on the EPC meant to cleave labour from the social movements by adding an exemption for "lawful activities related to or pursuant to a labour dispute or collective bargaining." But the bylaw would nonetheless have impacted secondary pickets and solidarity actions by unions, and City Council ought to have expected a fight here too. "Labour is united on our stance against this proposed bylaw," said Melissa Dvorak, President of the Winnipeg Labour Council, in a February 16 release by community organizers.

The defeat of this anti-popular and legally dubious bylaw is a clear win and should be celebrated as such. But when we fight, the forces of repression fight back. Though the draft will not appear before council, a petulant Duncan spoke of a future, refined version of the bylaw; while Mayor Scott Gillingham and others looked forward to the passage of Federal Bill C-9, which proposes new criminal offences to "protect access to religious, cultural and other specified places."

The Canadian Labour Congress has already denounced this attack, which threatens any number of legal job actions. According to the CLC, Bill C-9 "opens the door to the criminalization of peaceful protest and collective action ... This is a direct attack on organized labour and freedom of association." At every level of government, politicians are experimenting with sweeping anti-protest legislation – using the language of accessibility to assert the rights of private property over the civil liberties of working people.

In Winnipeg, however, such an attempt failed. A glaringly unconstitutional proposal from a reactionary council, put forth without consultation, was crushed by quick movement and progressive opposition. And while a large group of organizers enlisted a breadth of opinion against the bylaw, the lesson is clear: The people united hold all power, and we should carry the strength gained from this local victory into the next battle. ■



## Toronto "war bank" bid threatens working people across Canada – it must be stopped!

J. BRUDNY

The Defence, Security and Resilience Bank (DSRB) is a war bank, a financial wing of NATO where governments pool tax dollars together with private capital to expand funding to the arms industry. Its purpose is simple: to enable NATO's member countries to hit the military spending target of 5 percent of GDP, equal to \$150 billion a year for Canada, at the expense of people's needs such as vital social services.

The minds behind this project are not nurses, teachers and other workers. They are the biggest banks and arms manufacturers in the world, such as JPMorgan Chase which served as a key advisor in the plan for a NATO bank. Just recently, JPMorgan announced investments amounting to \$1.5 trillion in the arms and critical minerals industries in order to "ensure the security" of the NATO bloc.

In other words, those who stand directly to gain from the drive to war are writing NATO policy.

JPMorgan boldly states that the goals of these investments span from reducing "excessive regulations [and] bureaucratic delay" to adjusting "an education system not aligned to the skills we need." Simply, JPMorgan is using targeted investment to strip away what limited democratic oversight of the economy is still left, in favour of direct governance by finance capital.

Coupled with this, JPMorgan is seeking reforms to the education system tailored to the needs of finance capital, particularly weapons and technology monopolies. JPMorgan isn't alone in this vision for the future, three of the five big Canadian banks – RBC, Scotia and CIBC – have all signed on to sponsor the DSRB, signalling their support for JPMorgan's vision.

As finance capital becomes increasingly reliant on war and genocide to solidify its influence and control of markets abroad, there is a parallel development of an offensive against democracy and workers here in Canada. The DSRB will play a key role in this offensive.

According to the policy paper drafted by NATO based on JPMorgan's insights, governments like Canada "spend too much" on healthcare and education. They argue that democratic budget processes are "too slow" and "too political" to meet NATO's needs.

Translation: when people demand housing, hospitals, and schools, it gets in the way of weapons contracts. So they want to bypass the public.

Instead of Parliament debating military spending openly, the DSRB will guarantee profits for private banks and arms manufacturers through a new financial machine designed to run above democratic control. They are telling us plainly: democracy is an obstacle to their profits.

We can also see that the DSRB is response to successful organizing efforts, such as Scotiabank's recent divestment from Elbit Systems as a result of a sustained BDS campaign. By using the DSRB as an investment mechanism instead of investing directly, private banks and corporations avoid public backlash and receive

cover from the smoke screen of a multi-national financial institution which will make "following the money" much more difficult.

So how will the bank work?

First, member states will provide paid-in capital. That means tax dollars are fed directly into the bank. Second, the bright minds at NATO propose using seized Russian assets as seed money. This is presented as clever accounting, but in reality, it deepens global instability and escalates a conflict between nuclear powers.

Using tax dollars from member states, the DSRB will offer low-interest loans to private corporations, thus expanding a dangerous cycle of militarism and violence on the public dime. Most importantly, the DSRB will underwrite risk for commercial banks. This means that if a private bank wants to lend to an arms company and the deal looks risky, the DSRB steps in to guarantee it. If profits are made, corporations keep them. But if there are losses, they are borne by taxpayers – meaning all the rest of us.

NATO and JPMorgan call this a "counter-cyclical safety net." This is a fancy way of saying that during economic downturns, when workers are losing jobs and governments claim there is no money for social programs, military spending will be locked in and protected by DSRB investment agreements.

Hospitals can close. Unemployment can skyrocket. But weapons contracts will be stable.

The goal is to secure a AAA credit rating so the bank can borrow cheaply on global markets even if many of the DSRB's member countries do not have AAA ratings themselves. In other words, the stronger states guarantee the debts of the weaker ones, so the entire NATO bloc can expand arms production and foment global military conflict.

These debt guarantees will surely come with stipulated concessions, allowing the most powerful NATO States to essentially determine the internal political and economic policies of weaker partners. This is just one of the many demonstrations of the unequal dependencies within the NATO bloc, which situates the US on top, while everyone else vies for position.

We can see the most extreme manifestation of these unequal dependencies in the dismemberment of Ukraine in the blender of imperialist war. NATO has made good on its promise to "fight Russia down to the last Ukrainian," which is currently resulting in state sanctioned kidnappings of military aged men in Ukraine in order to feed conscription.

While families are torn apart by this NATO-proxy war, the US recently signed ownership of Ukraine's critical minerals over to itself, laying bare the real motivation to continue the war. For those in the middle ranks of NATO, such as Canada, no amount of maneuvering between the US and EU can avoid such a fate, which is endemic to NATO's imperialist project.

With the ongoing drive to war as a backdrop, the Ontario provincial govern-

■ MYTH OF JOB CREATION, PG 11

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# LABOUR

## Pascan flight attendants' strike approaches fifth month

Twenty-one flight attendants at Pascan Aviation are approaching their fifth month on the picket line, making this one of the longest airline strikes in Canadian history.

The workers, members of CUPE Local 5490, began strike action on October 28. The main issues are wages, off-base residency, assignments and crew planning.

The strike has been prolonged due to Pascan's use of scabs. In spite of anti-scab legislation, the company is using other untrained employees to perform the struck work. CUPE says that people confirmed to the union that Pascan began approaching them in April 2025, asking if they wanted to replace the flight attendants.

In November, the union filed a police complaint against a manager for dangerous driving toward picketers at the Saint-Hubert headquarters.

## Oakville support workers continue strike for decent pay

Some 240 support workers at Central West Specialized Developmental Services (CWSDS) have been on the picket line since November 19, in their fight for decent pay.

The workers, members of OPSEU Local 249, provide specialized services, care and support to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The union says that workers are asking for fair wage increases to help address years of suppressed wages while cost-of-living skyrockets. The union has tabled wage increase of 12.25% over 6 years, averaging 2.04% wage increase per year, but the employer has proposed just 8.25% over 6 years, averaging only 1.38% in wage increases per year. Meanwhile, CWSDS CEO Patricia Kyle awarded herself a 10% annual increase.

## Lockout continues at Titan Tool & Die

Workers at the Titan Tool and Die plant in Windsor have been locked out since August, making it one of the longest automotive disputes in the city's history.

Titan continues to demand 15 pages of concessions that including a wage freeze, elimination of cost-of-living language, elimination of an annual lump sum payment, elimination of retiree benefits, roll-back of benefits, mandatory overtime, removal of seniority rights, and concessions around pensions.

The union, Unifor Local 195, has 27 active members in the plant and another 33 members on layoff. The workers maintain a regular picket line, with both active and laid off members participating and plenty of community support.

## Quebec Rio Tinto strike continues, despite company's closure announcement

Fighting for wages and against concessions, 181 steelworkers at Rio Tinto's Feret Titane metallurgical complex in Sorel, QC have been on strike since July.

The workers are members of USW Local 7493, and voted by 98% to reject the company's final contract offer. At the time, union representative Yves Rolland said they were sick of being taken for granted after years of losing ground on wages.

"From crisis to crisis, our members always find themselves being considered as an 'adjustment variable' on which the employer relies to maximize its profits. These workers are demanding to be paid according to their real contributions to this company, and they expect their fair share of the profits."

Rio Tinto is also demanding concessions, particularly around vacation time. In October, the company announced it was closing the complex, citing the strike as a factor in declining sales.

# Carney's military industrial strategy fails working people, but it paves the road for labour to fight for a plan of its own



JOBS AND CLIMATE JUSTICE MARCH IN TORONTO, 2015 [CREDIT: ROBERT VAN WAARDEN / PROJECT SURVIVAL]

CAM SCOTT

On February 5, Prime Minister Mark Carney launched a new automotive initiative before an audience of press and workers at the Martinrea facility in Vaughan, Ontario. In the day's statement, Carney played a pleasing tune – promising sustainability and independence, and to bring manufacturing back home.

This should interest workers at Martinrea, which maintains at least a dozen operations in the US Midwest. For a single morning then, Carney sounded faintly progressive – fulfilling long-standing and respectable demands for the production of a Canadian electric vehicle, and to distance the industry from a moribund United States. But this investment and its benefits are a small footnote to Carney's full industrial plan, which is almost wholly purposed at militarization and defence.

Carney's remarks in Vaughan even anticipate the ability of Canada's industrial capacity to transform itself during an arms race. "During the Second World War," Carney said, returning to a favourite theme, "the industry would quickly shift almost entirely to military production, producing more than 800,000 military transport vehicles and 50,000 tanks ... These feats were the result of Canadian determination and ingenuity – of an industry that adapted, pivoted and, when necessary, transformed."

## Up in arms

Surely enough, less than two weeks after his modest overtures toward the automotive industry, Carney launched his new Defence Industrial Strategy at a Canadian Aviation Electronics (CAE) facility in Montreal. (CAE is best known as a major supplier of arms to the IDF, even after Ottawa claimed to have ceased shipments to Israel.) This strategy "positions Canadian industry to take advantage of \$180 billion in defence procurement opportunities and \$290 billion in defence-related capital investment opportunities in Canada over the next 10 years," pledging to increase defence exports by half and to more than double arms revenues.

Carney had soft-launched this strategy months ago, practicing its rationale aloud in his highly publicized speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos. Once again one reads of how "the international rules-based order is fading," such that Canada must streamline procurement and invest in aerospace, cybersecurity, rearmament and other apocalyptic trends in order to defend our sovereignty and that of "trusted allies" – the latter of which is notably unnamed amid shifting allegiances. This epithet recurs meaninglessly through-

out Carney's speeches, as if to placate all sides of a budding rivalry.

Here too Carney speaks of Canada's changing role in a "fractured and darker world," appealing to a general anxiety in order to push an arms race between declarations of war. This appeal seems to have worked, and for all the obvious insufficiency of this plan before cascading crises of housing and healthcare, the press has largely greeted his announcement as a job-creating strategy rather than a harbinger of deep austerity. In an interview with CTV, for example, Minister of Industry Mélanie Joly boasted that the annual investment in defence was "pretty much three times the national daycare program."

Beyond this falsely optimistic portrayal, Carney's moves were celebrated by industrial mavens, no doubt expecting large wealth transfers to their respective firms or sectors. The Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries praised Carney's "clear, accountable vision," while CAE executive Matt Bromberg crowed over the rapid acceleration of high-tech production. And while first statements largely focused on finished goods and personnel, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce wrote to commend the government on its determination to supply allies with "defence-critical" minerals, clearly anticipating a deregulatory boon to mining companies.

According to Heather Exner-Pirot, Director of Energy, Natural Resources and Environment at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, Canada's abundance of critical minerals makes for a distinct advantage within NATO supply chains. In her words, "Canada is well placed to be an arsenal of democracy on the raw materials front" – particularly in the case of a deepening trade war with China, which overwhelmingly commands the market in rare earth commodities. And although Carney's nearly apolitical pragmatism seems to have turned a page in Canada-China relations, even anticipating joint investments in electric vehicles, this remark from the MLI is an important reminder that, particularly in the world portrayed by Carney after Davos, there are no allies after all – only passing interests.

## Middling power

In the same breath as he launched the Defence Industrial Strategy, Carney spoke of his intent to "broker a bridge" between the European Union and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). This ambition was widely interpreted as an oblique provocation of the US, whose withdrawal from the earlier Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement precipitated the formation of the CPTPP in the first place.

Given China's past interest in the CPTPP, as well as European trade deficits with China, Carney's moves have the potential to substantially exclude the US from all manner of future trade deals.

This would be quite the flex on behalf of a "middle power" bloc were it so simple. But many defence industry commentators have puzzled over the fine print of Carney's imperative to "Buy Canadian," noticing the extent of North-South corporate integration and the uncertain criteria by which the "Build-Partner-Buy" framework determines when to work with unspecified allies to fill contracts. As USMCA negotiations proceed apace and the US Supreme Court rules against Trump's tariffs, it's likely better to think of Carney's market diplomacy as an expensive bluff, anticipating continental reintegration and on preferential terms.

For all of Carney's emphasis on building a sovereign industrial military, he hasn't yet advanced a foreign policy separate from US priorities. Since the start of 2026 alone, Canada has been a perfect accomplice to US aggression throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. The only reason why Canada isn't on Trump's nakedly imperialist "Board of Peace" is because of Carney's "you-can't-fire-me-I-quit" fit of eloquence in Davos last month. Plainly, there's no indication at the level of policy that Carney intends to embark upon a sovereign, let alone dissenting, path among familiar powers.

In fact, Canada's defence-based accumulation strategy is not so defiant or singular. On February 6, Trump announced his own "America First Arms Transfer Strategy," intending to support domestic reindustrialization through US-based supply chains. And as both Canada and the US only pretend to divest from one another, the European Parliament is days away from publishing its own Industrial Accelerator Act (IAA), obliging made-in-Europe procurement in key sectors that compete with China. The IAA has little to do with defence by comparison, but here too we can see how industrial protectionism works to ratchet up capitalist rivalry on a global scale.

In Carney's own language, "strategic autonomy" means precisely this: having the strength to be a "partner of choice" among imperial powers. At Davos, Carney asked the world to judge Canada not by "the strength of our values, but the value of our strength" – acting both diplomat and dealer as he boasted of rapidly deregulating and diversified opportunities in energy and minerals, finance and logistics, arms and AI. This newly unveiled strategy confirms not just the cynicism of Mark

■ CONTINUED AT TOP OF NEXT PAGE

Carney's vision, but the sheer ambition. And at this point, the new order that he promises feels far more dangerous than what we leave behind.

### The fight ahead

But Carney's sleek politics have laid the groundwork for a massive fightback, consolidating as he speaks. So long as the extractive toll of Liberal strategy runs afoul of Indigenous rights and title, new modes of land-based resistance are assured, as are new solidarities. And as Carney's gutting of government services provokes the public sector, labour is preparing a confrontation of its own.

In Carney's lip service to the auto workers of Vaughan, we can hear the outline of a program for true sovereignty, only as farce. As US hegemony and its power blocs come to pieces, we should as forcefully propose a vision of Canadian independence based on public ownership and full employment, sustainable development and multilateral fair trade, and a foreign policy of peace and disarmament.

This is precisely what the Canadian Labour Congress needs to be discussing at its convention in Winnipeg in May. In preparation for that gathering, union activists involved with the Action Caucus are promoting resolutions calling on the CLC to engage affiliates, provincial federations and labour councils in a cross-country campaign to mobilize all workers – including those in non-affiliated unions and unorganized workers – in the struggle for trade policies that truly put workers first. Such a campaign would call for Canada to get out of corporate trade deals like the USMCA and to pursue mutually beneficial trade policies with the world, to create well-paid value-added jobs outside of global trends toward militarization, and to respect Indigenous rights and environmental protections at every stage of development.

It may be Carney's specialty to see the private opportunity in rupture; but it's ours to imagine something wholly different. The Defence Industrial Strategy is a massive misallocation of resources that will impact almost every area of life in Canada, but Carney's hubris has prepared a popular opposition of unseen scale – and all the cheerful reporting in the world can't stop the year of movement ahead. The CLC and its affiliates, including workers everywhere, must take the lead in this fight. ■

## OFL denounces post-secondary funding plan

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) is calling on premier Doug Ford to immediately reverse planned changes to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), warning the governments planned changes will increase student debt and restrict access to post-secondary education (PSE).

"Ontario's post-secondary system has been pushed to the brink by years of underfunding," said OFL President Laura Walton. "Doug Ford's recent funding announcement acknowledges this reality, but it does not repair the damage or stop the government from shifting costs onto students and workers already struggling with an affordability crisis across the province."

The OFL says Ontario's per-student funding remains below the Canadian average and overall public investment is still lower than 2018 levels.

"This is not an historic investment, it's a partial restoration after years of declining investment, now is the time to invest heavily across all pathways to education."

The OFL has grave concern with the government's planned OSAP restructuring and warns that shifting aid

■ PSE FUNDING, PG 10

# Women workers are left out again as Carney's war economy plan delivers "jobs for the boys"

JUDY HAIVEN

In Canada, 120,000 to 138,000 people work in assembly and parts manufacturing in the automobile industry. Women make up only 23 percent of the auto assembly work force, and from 17-33 percent of jobs in parts.

28,000 Canadians work in the lumber industry. Just over 17 percent are women.

More than 1.6 million Canadians work in the construction industry. Only 13.6 percent are women. Why are there so few women in these industries?

Just over 81,000 Canadians draw a paycheque from working for the 600 or so private firms that manufacture weapons, armaments, bombs, armoured vehicles and ammunition. Divided into three groups: there are a) STEM professions such as engineers, scientists and technologists; b) production workers and c) corporate functionaries such as managers and administrators.

In total more than 73 percent of all the jobs in the defence manufacturing industry currently go to men, and only 27 percent (about 22,000 jobs) go to women.

### Women drastically under-represented

In 2022, statistics for Canada's defence industry show that in the three categories, women were drastically under-represented.

Although the Carney government wants to boost private sector defence jobs, if current trends continue, only 17 percent of the quality, high paying jobs in defence such as in STEM occupations will go to women.

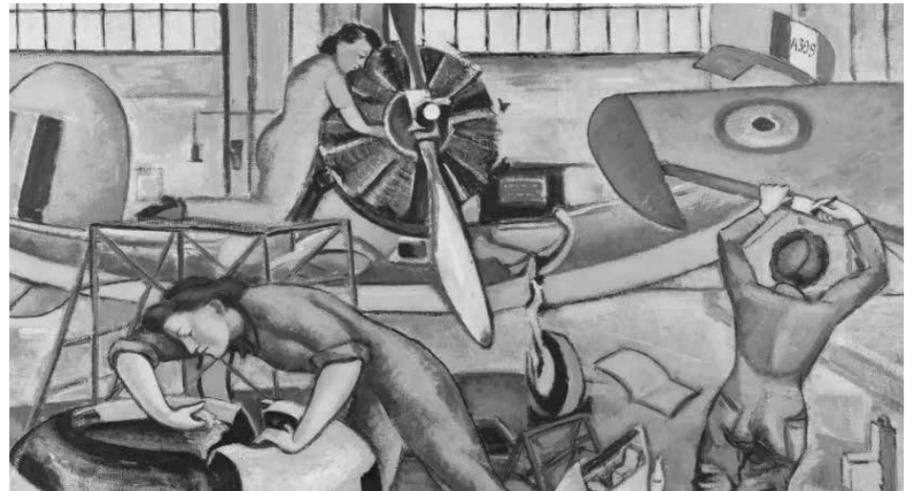
What's worse is that the PM announced the creation of the Defence Investment Agency (DIA). This business-friendly boondoggle is supposed to expand the production of weapons and other armaments and basically sell them to the Canadian Armed Forces – estimates are that 70 percent of the production will stay in Canada. In 2022, 63 percent of Canadian defence industry exports went to the US.

There has been criticism of our government using this as a "back door" to sell parts, weapons and armoured vehicles to Israel for its genocide in Gaza and the West Bank. Currently the government is not allowed to sell weapons to Israel, but it continues to do so through some loopholes. In April 2025, PM Carney revealed for the first time that "goods for Israel's Iron Dome missile defence system are exempt from the Liberal government's pause on military exports to Israel."

The government wants to shore up SMBs (Small and Medium Businesses) in the war industry by spending \$357 million early in 2026 in regional defence investments across Canada and giving more than \$4 billion through the Investment Initiative program. Our government will make loans and venture capital available to SMB firms to "scale up" Canadian defence capability. And to sell armaments and war toys to our "friendly" allies" in Europe for example. But they are producing more and more weapons too.

As Dr Philippe Lagassé, a professor of international affairs at Carleton University and a specialist on Canada's defence procurement system notes, France is now the world's second largest arms exporter (next to the US). France sells arms to various dictatorships and other brutal regimes. The other option, as Lagassé put it somewhat provocatively, "let's say you don't want to be full France. Let's say you want to be Sweden." That is also a problem, as the Nordic country sells military equipment to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Pakistan – some with questionable to abysmal human rights records.

In the federal government's report Canada's Defence Industrial Strategy, the government says that NATO has earmarked 10 out of 12 critical raw materials found in Canada as critical to defence. And that the G7 Critical Mineral Production Alliance insists that Canada has to stockpile critical minerals including nickel, cobalt, zinc, aluminum, potash and more niche minerals such as indium,



graphite, germanium, gallium and uranium.

### Critical minerals mining – jobs for women?

Carney has already put into place a Critical Minerals Plan that invests \$116 billion in mining and infrastructure. Here are its three major planks,

- Canada Nickel's Crawford Project in Timmins, Ontario will see "responsible mining" of nickel for batteries and steel. The government insists, "The project will attract \$5 billion in investment and create thousands of new careers, securing Canada's place at the forefront of the clean economy."

- Nouveau Monde Graphite's Matawinie Mine – Saint-Michel-des-Saints, Quebec will mine graphite for supply chains. The promise is "It will create over one thousand new careers and draw \$1.8 billion in investment."

- Northcliff Resources' Sisson Mine in Sisson Brook, New Brunswick will produce tungsten – a critical mineral in steel production, defence and industrial uses "while creating hundreds of new careers."

Government papers draw attention to hiring and training First Nations' peoples and youth, but nothing about jobs for women. Reminds me of the now dust-gathering 2014 tome, *Now or Never: an urgent call to action for Nova Scotia*, a report by a blue-ribbon provincial committee about shepherding Nova Scotia to enter the future. In 243 pages that touched briefly on youth employment and focused on immigration and increasing tourism, there was not a single mention of women.

Critics stressed at the time that the *Now or Never* Report did not pay attention to income inequality, access to housing and quality jobs, transportation or the well-being or health of Nova Scotians. The report was predicated on building and expanding. That is more or less Carney's plan today, which calls for the creation of 125,000 new jobs to build weapons and a pro-war economy.

### Women at work in war industries

There are two considerations when it comes to women and work in weapons manufacturing. First, do women want to work in industries that produce weapons of destruction, that further wars and genocides – such as Israel's genocide of Palestinians in Gaza?

A recent research report by a coalition of anti-war groups called Arms Embargo Now, found Canadian weapons manufacturers exported 47 shipments of military-related components to Israel between October 2023 and July 2025. Yet Canada is a signatory to the Geneva Conventions and Arms Trade Treaty that obligates us to prevent genocide.

But from October 2023 to June 2025, Canada has sent more 421,000 bullets to Israel, including 175,000 sent in April 2025. Canada has transported 391 shipments of Canadian-made bullets, military equipment, weapons and aircraft parts to Israel. We in Canada are directly and indirectly responsible for the murders of more than 75,000 Gazan civilians – including 50,000 killed or injured children.

A joint report by Oxfam and Action on Armed Violence in October 2024 found the Israeli military had killed more women and

children in Gaza than in any other conflict around the world in the past two decades. Do women want to work in the arms industry – does anyone?

A second consideration about women and work is that manufacturing arms amounts to jobs for the boys. Engineering, assembly, transportation, construction, mining – these are all heavily male-dominated fields and workplaces. PM Carney and his buddies are building a vast war industry in Canada that promises to be very lucrative for the 600 manufacturers.

But what about women and work? Was it always thus?

- 60 percent of minimum wage earners are women – 57 percent in Nova Scotia
- 56 percent of women in Nova Scotia earn less than \$20 an hour
- 60 percent of precariously employed professionals are women; precarious work includes part-time, contract, seasonal or other types of precarious jobs
- whether in full or part time work, women earn \$0.89 an hour to every dollar men earn
- when employed full-time, women still earn on average \$0.90 an hour to every dollar men earn – the statistics are much worse for women who are racialized, Indigenous or disabled.

### What woman still wants to work in the CAF?

What will three new mine sites offer women workers? What jobs will women have in bullet and weapons manufacturing? For the last 30 years women have made up fewer than 25 percent of manufacturing jobs. Will that change with an increased arms manufacturing, and an expansion of the Canadian military? In the last decade there have been more than five major reports on sexism, sexual assault and rape against thousands of women in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).

There have also been a number of class action suits by hundreds of military women who were harassed and/or raped while serving in the Canadian military. In 2021, more than a dozen senior officers (about half of the 48 senior-most officers in the entire military) – were charged with "sexual assault, questionable behaviours, or conduct deficiencies of a sexual nature (the latter formulation has recently replaced the term 'sexual misconduct' in the CAF)."

The reports note that more than one quarter of women in the Canadian Armed Forces have been sexually assaulted at least once during their careers. In 2022 for instance, 34 percent of women in the Regular Forces experienced sexualized or discriminatory behaviour by coworkers.

Stop: Read that paragraph again if you missed the absolutely unbelievable amount of abuse of women. Something tells me that women in the defence industry and in the military are not welcome. ■

Judy Haiven's blog is available at [judyhaiven.substack.com](http://judyhaiven.substack.com)

## IWD 2026: Together, working people can be the solution!

■ FROM PG 3

tion communities as a false explanation for the problems created by capitalism – growing poverty, unemployment, lack of housing, growing inequity and a bleak future.

These are the problems that working women face, these are the problem the working class faces. We must answer this agenda with a program that addresses the causes, the policies and decisions of capitalism. We are not the cause, but together, working people can be the solution.

The Communist Party of Canada stands for what working women need and deserve. On International Women's Day, 2026 we pledge to be part of furthering the struggle for women's equality and to achieve what women in this country need, what this country needs, and we call upon and will work with all those who want a future where our needs not those of the corporations and their minions are what drives the policies of our country.

Solidarity with the women of the world! Solidarity with the struggle for women's equality! Unite to halt the drive to war and militarism! ■

Communist Party of Canada



## PSE funding inadequate

■ FROM PG 9

from grants to loans will increase debt and disproportionately harm low- and modest-income students, racialized and Indigenous students, students with disabilities, and those in rural and northern communities.

The OFL is calling on the provincial government to:

- Raise per-student funding to at least the Canadian average;
- Reverse tuition increases, and provide adequate direct funding across the post-secondary education sector;
- Restore OSAP to a grant-based model;
- Ensure transparent and equitable funding allocation to all pathways to post-secondary education; and
- Strengthen public institutions rather than rely on more privatization schemes. ■

## Ottawa's silence cannot buy Canada safety

### "Must send food, fuel, medicine to Cuba!"

■ FROM PG 6

And yet Canada, despite claiming to have imposed an arms embargo, continues to supply ammunition and weapons parts that fuel this violence. Canadian factories produce fighter jet components, explosives and munitions that flow through US channels directly into the assault, sustaining the machinery of death while Ottawa issues carefully worded statements of concern.

This silence is not confined to Gaza. After the United States launched strikes on Iranian nuclear sites, Ottawa responded with bland calls for calm and diplomacy. Still, it deliberately refrained from directly condemning Washington's military action, instead echoing cautious G7 language about negotiation without even naming the US role in the escalation.

And when the US carried out large-scale strikes in Venezuela and captured its president, Canada's official statement did not even bother to mention the United States, and instead offered abstract calls for all parties to "uphold international law" while leaving Washington's unilateral intervention unchallenged.

In each case, Ottawa paid lip service to restraint while leaving raw power untouched, exposing how Ottawa's posture has consistently privileged diplomatic caution over moral accountability.

Although recently, it did seem that Canada's posture might be shifting, tellingly, not because of mass civilian deaths abroad. The change came only when US military adventurism edged closer to home. Prime Minister Mark Carney's warnings about a collapsing rules-based international order only came after the US threatened Greenland, a territory tied to NATO allies and Arctic stability. Only then did Canada speak clearly about sovereignty, coercion and the dangers of unchecked power. The timing is telling. It suggests Canada perceives the risks of impunity only when they threaten Western interests or its own proximity, while the devastation inflicted on others remains effectively invisible.

Even then, the response has remained largely rhetorical.

And now, as the humanitarian catastrophe looms in Cuba, Canada appears to be relying on verbal gymnastics to maintain political correctness while avoiding meaningful action. Even though, on paper, Ottawa opposes US sanctions and the blockade, in practice, it offers no condemnation, no advocacy and no protection for ordinary Cubans facing hunger, blackouts and collapsing hospitals.

Suffice it to say, Canada has by now perfected the role of silent bystander to nearly an art form.

Today, the mechanisms that enable atrocity, impunity, exceptionalism and allied silence are on full display and fully operational, and Cuba is simply the latest victim. To call the United States' behavior "outside the spirit of international law" would be a grotesque understatement. Washington treats international law as optional, shielding mass

civilian slaughter through diplomatic vetoes, launching unilateral strikes with impunity, and sustaining devastation through overwhelming military support.

Canada is not responsible for US actions. But it is responsible for its response to them.

Ottawa has deliberately hidden behind bureaucratic loopholes while allowing Canadian-made weapons components and ammunition to move through US supply chains and into Israel, insulating itself from accountability while profiting from the machinery of war. Carney's government has offered no clear or urgent plan on Bill C-233, legislation intended to curb Canadian arms exports where there is a risk of war crimes. The bill continues to hang in limbo, while Canada remains embedded in US military supply chains. Canadian-made F-35 components and ammunition continue to flow to the United States, where end-use accountability effectively disappears. Simultaneously, Canada continues to export armoured vehicles and security equipment to US agencies, including ICE, an institution that has detained Canadian citizens without explanation, due process or urgency.

When Canada's response to ICE's documented brutalities of its own citizens is so plainly inadequate, it comes as no surprise that its response to US aggression abroad is equally hollow and insufficient. None of the countries affected by the US aggression – Palestinians, Iranians, Venezuelans, Cubans, or others subjected to unilateral force – believe that Canada is in their corner in any meaningful way. None. Canada's response serves no protective function at all. It is a calculated performance of concern, engineered to evade moral obligation without disrupting US power.

If Canada genuinely wants to make a difference, it can start with something simple and immediate: sell essential goods to Cuba – food, fuel and medicine. Not statements. Not carefully worded press releases. Tangible relief that keeps lights on, shelves stocked and patients alive.

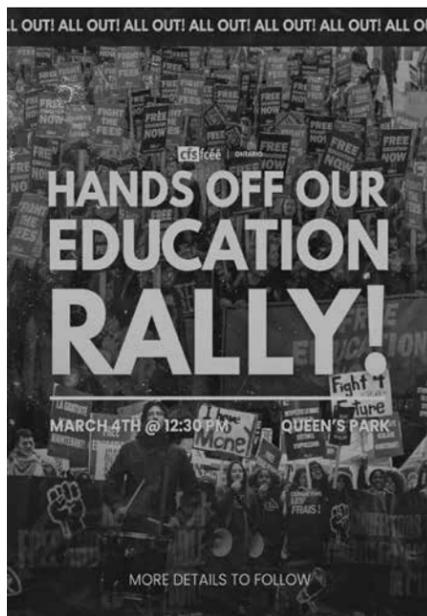
Yet, as so often before, Ottawa may retreat behind another polished, empty statement while taking no meaningful action.

Ottawa's approach is built on a reckless assumption that Trump's chaos is governed by strategy, that US volatility is calculable, and that Canada will somehow remain exempt. That illusion has already collapsed. The same contempt for international law has now extended to Greenland, with explicit annexation threats aimed at allies.

If Canada continues to hedge, appease and delay rather than act on principle, it should not expect any support when its own sovereignty is challenged. Silence does not buy safety. It only invites escalation. If Canada does not adjust its course, it may find that when threats strike closer to home, there will be no one left willing to stand alongside it.

Take action for Cuba! Take action for Palestine! ■

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## WHAT'S LEFT

### VANCOUVER

MAR 13 | UNCLE SAM'S AGGRESSION

7 PM at the Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Dr. Join peace activists for a discussion of "Uncle Sam's Aggression Across the Western Hemisphere." For info and Zoom link, email van\_peacecouncil@mail.com.

### VANCOUVER

MAR 19 | PEOPLE'S FORUM FOR PEACE

6:30 PM at Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Ave. Discussion on US interventionism and its relation to military spending, Indigenous rights and migrant rights in Canada.

### VANCOUVER

MAR 22 | PUENTES DE AMOR RALLY

12 PM at the corner of Commercial and Broadway. Cuba solidarity rally with CCFA Vancouver. End the blockade! Send oil now!

### WINNIPEG

MAR 22 | END THE BLOCKADE

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

### TORONTO

MAR 4 | RALLY FOR EDUCATION

12:30 PM at Queen's Park. Join the Canadian Federation of Students in rallying for post-secondary education in Ontario. Grants, not loans! Stop tuition hikes! Hands off students' fees!

### TORONTO

MAR 6 | SOCIALIST IWD

7-9 PM at USW Hall, 25 Cecil St. Anti-imperialist celebration of International Women's Day with speakers, performance, refreshments and banner making. For info, 416-469-2446.

### TORONTO

MAR 22 | END THE BLOCKADE

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

### OTTAWA

MAR 17 | CUBA SOLIDARITY PICKET

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

### OTTAWA

MAR 22 | PUENTES DE AMOR RALLY

11 AM at the Cuban Embassy, 338 Main St. Monthly action in solidarity with Cuba. End the blockade! Send oil now!

### MONTREAL

MAR 4 | IWD EVENT

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

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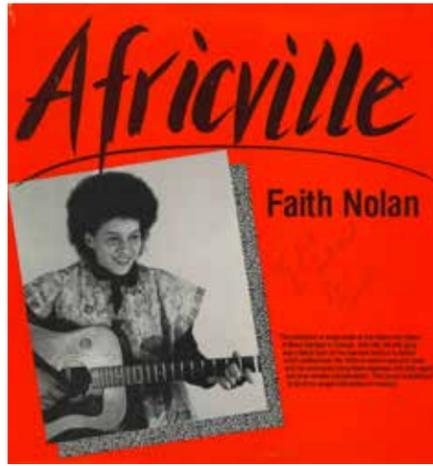
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# On its 40th anniversary, Faith Nolan's debut album remains an essential listen

**Africville**  
Faith Nolan  
1986

REVIEW BY DAVE MCKEE



Forty years ago, Faith Nolan released her debut album, *Africville*. Recently, she made her catalog available through online streaming services, and that's a good thing because it makes this album available to a wider and newer audience.

Musically and politically, *Africville* has earned landmark status with its blend of blues, folk and jazz sounds, powered by Nolan's powerful vocals and uncompromising lyrical chronicle of the struggles of Black people, and Black women in particular.

The album opens with the title track, which recalls the historic Black community in Halifax that faced profound and intentional neglect from the city for 150 years until it was demolished in 1969, and its residents removed in garbage trucks. It was an act that continues to symbolize systemic anti-Black racism in Canada. Against the superb piano playing of Kingsley Etienne, Nolan, who lived in Africville for a time, sings of former residents whom she encounters and finds struggling with their displacement, isolation and loss of community.

The song's chorus poses the question, "What happened to Africville?" and sets the perfect stage for rest of the album, which investigates that question from a historical and systemic point of view.

In answering her own question, Nolan sings of Josiah Henson, who was born into slavery in Maryland and escaped to Upper Canada in 1830. He became a leader of the Black community in what is now Ontario, and founded a settlement and trade school at Dawn (near Dresden, another historic Black community) for other people who had escaped slavery. "I got something brand new on my mind," sings Nolan. "I got freedom to help my people to survive."

In "Child of Mine," which also features her engaging and energetic rhythm guitar, she reminds us how deep Black history is in Canada: "When did we come here? Child of mine, child of mine. Three hundred years ago is a long time. Child of mine, child of mine. This is our country – this is our home." In doing so, she also exposes the terrible conditions – including slavery – under which the Black people who first arrived in this land lived and struggled against.

This writer's favourite song is the *a cappella* "Marie Joseph Angelique," about the Madieran woman who was enslaved in New France in the 1700s and brutally executed after escaping her enslaver, under a charge of arson. The haunting piece showcases Nolan's amazing vocal powers, which deliver to the listener all the rage and sorrow, despair and hope that Angelique's life represents.

Bridging the gap between generations, Faith is joined by a children's choir on "Mary Anne Shadd," which celebrates the 19th century anti-slavery activist, teacher and lawyer. Shadd was also the first Black woman publisher in North America and the first woman publisher in Canada, establishing the weekly Provincial Freeman newspaper in Windsor

in 1853.

Nolan's harmonica and slide guitar come to life beautifully in "Nobody Knows My People," which roots the singer's experience and identity within that of Black people collectively, and challenges us to do the same. "Nobody knows my people, they don't know about me," she declares, leaving the listener to consider more fully the relationship between individual and community within our society.

Accompanied by congas and backup singers, Faith invites us all in the upbeat "Emancipation Day" to celebrate the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire in 1834. "All over Canada, Black people shout: 'Hallelujah, hallelujah, I'm free now, no doubt.'" This is followed up by the jazzy "Edith Clayton," which hails the celebrated Nova Scotia basket maker whose technique incorporated those of African and Mi'kmaq women and represents the power of unity. "Weave on, Sister Clayton," sings Faith. "Stop the war and stop the hatin!"

In a very personal song which makes the connections between gender, racialization and class, and which also bridges the generations of Black experience portrayed on the album, Nolan relates her experience as an industrial worker in "Box Factory." It's a heartbreaking song in which she sings of being exhausted after long shifts, of difficult relationships with co-workers, and of the threatening presence of the overbearing boss.

Just as it started, the album ends with a question in the form of the superb "Regina." It's about a single mother on welfare who struggles to make ends meet and kills a white man who assaults her. The song asks, "Regina, why did you kill that man?" before diving into realities of poverty, patriarchy, racism and intergenerational trauma from 400 years of slavery. Nolan's guitar chops really shine in this up-tempo jazzy number, whose militancy perfectly bookends the opening track's question, "What happened to Africville?" and drives us to understand that the "answer" to Africville lies in struggle.

So much more could be said about *Africville*. It is a moving album. It recalls an ongoing history of pain and oppression, but also of solidarity and struggle. It's a powerful listen in the period heading out of Black History Month and into International Women's Day, but it's an essential listen any day of the year. ■

# Myth of job creation used to justify war bank

■ FROM PG 7

ment put together a bid to host the DSRB here in Toronto – it is over 100 pages long, detailing tax breaks and other incentives to be given to the bank if Toronto is selected as the host city. In the report, we are told that military spending creates jobs and boosts the economy.

Even if this were true, we would reject it, because prosperity built on destruction, the deepening of Canadian imperialism, and the militarization of the economy is not prosperity that working people, or any people of conscience for that matter, can accept.

But it's not true.

Military spending channels public money into corporate coffers. It does not circulate through communities the way healthcare, housing or education spending does. Weapons systems are capital-intensive, secretive and dominated by a handful of giant firms, the majority of which are based in the US.

Carney, Ford and Chow have all echoed claims that this war bank scheme will create thousands of jobs, but this is highly dubious. A study just released by Brown University in Rhode Island demonstrates that military spending is inefficient for job creation. The study, an update on a report from 2023, shows that military spending – including both government defence spending and various private military industries – produces an average of five jobs per \$1 million in spending, including both direct jobs and jobs in the supply chain.

By contrast, thirteen jobs are created for every \$1 million in education spending – nearly three times as much employment. Healthcare spending creates 84 percent more jobs than military spending, while infrastructure and clean energy create from 24 to 64 percent more.

Even on the government's own terms, the DSRB fails. It will not solve the hous-

ing crisis. It will not lower grocery prices. It will not strengthen public healthcare. Rather than providing more of what workers need, the result of this NATO war bank will be a wealth transfer of billions of dollars from working people to multinational arms corporations guaranteed by the government, while locking Canada into permanent war footing.

But the DSRB is not inevitable.

It depends on public consent, quiet media coverage and the assumption that we will not notice. Therefore, we must expose it. We must oppose it. We must demand that public wealth serves people's needs, not the profits of banks and arms manufacturers.

Whereas the DSRB represents a deliberate attack on democracy and the working classes – both at home and abroad – by finance capital, the working class and all people of conscience in Canada must respond with a broad, anti-monopoly, anti-imperialist alliance. This alliance must be comprised, first and foremost, of the peace movement and the labour movement, united with all those who are being squashed by the drive to war.

If the DSRB finds its home in Toronto it will create a long-term link between the city, its workers and NATO-imperialism. This poses serious roadblocks for the peace and labour movements to advance an agenda based on class struggle, anti-imperialism and internationalism, which is desperately needed to stave off the drive to war. Therefore, our demands must be clear:

**NO WAR BANK IN TORONTO!  
CANADA OUT OF NATO!**

The author is a member of the steering committee of the Toronto Association for Peace and Solidarity



Peace and solidarity activists held a filibuster and rally outside MP Julie Dzerowicz's office in Toronto's Davenport riding. The action was part of continued efforts to push MPs to vote 'yes' on the No More Loopholes Act.

The vote has been delayed until March 13 giving more time to ramp up efforts and increase the pressure on parliamentarians.

To get involved, visit: [armsembargonow.ca/nomoreloopholes](http://armsembargonow.ca/nomoreloopholes)

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