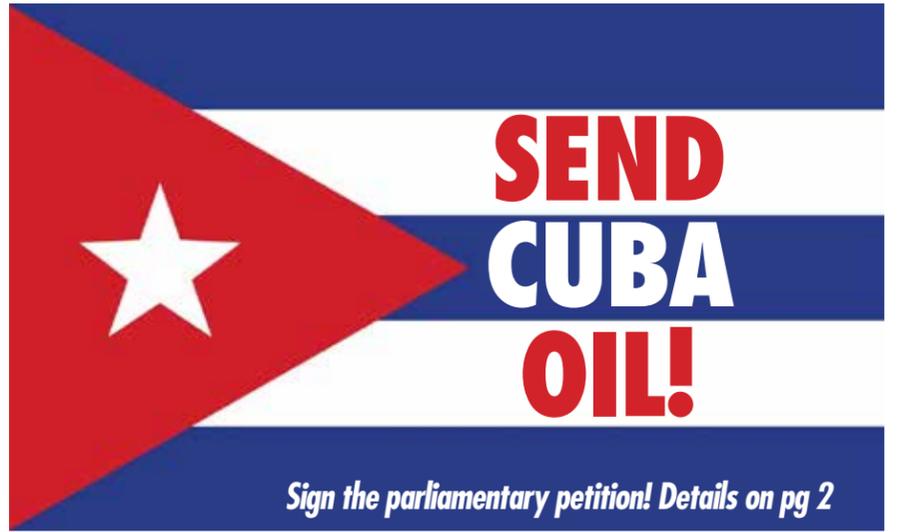


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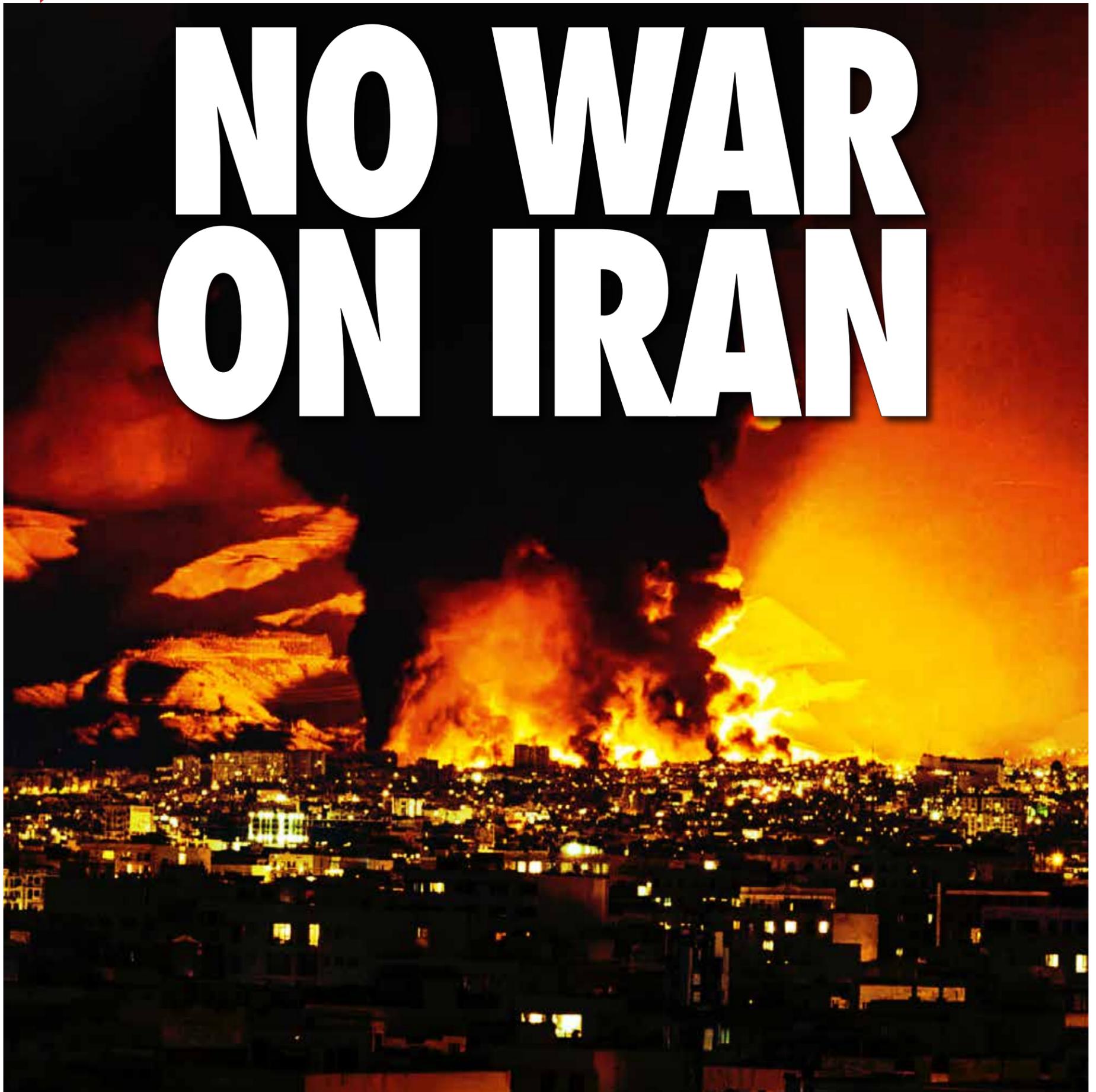
Sign the parliamentary petition! Details on pg 2

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NO WAR ON IRAN



KILL BILL C-9: DEFEND THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

In the face of increased militancy, the
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Pages from our past...

Daily Clarion Vol 16 No 1442 - March 22, 1938

Government must act on CNR layoff threat

HARRY BINDER

A. A. Heaps, CCF member for Winnipeg North, moving adjournment of the house this afternoon to discuss a "matter of urgent public importance," started a protest against threatened CNR [Canadian National Railroad] layoffs to which other members of the CCF group and Liberal members from constituencies as far apart as Halifax and Winnipeg has-tened to add their voice.

Thousands of CNR shopmen would be laid off in the next few days and in "many cases they will find themselves without means of subsistence," Heaps declared.

The government-controlled railroad had given to private companies order for thousands of dollars of worth of equipment which, he had been told, could have been produced in the railroad shops.

Municipalities, such as Winnipeg where the shops were located, could not afford to carry the men on relief, Heaps continued. It would be a very serious matter if the cities were burdened with additional relief costs.

The men should be continued at work, said Heaps, and if they had to go on relief the cities should be given extra compensation.

He was fearful that the railroad layoffs were the forerunners of similar large layoffs in other industries throughout the country and that an industrial slump was impending.

Railroad shopmen don't want relief, he asserted. They want work.

Between 500 and 1000 men would be laid off in Winnipeg, said Ralph Maybank, Liberal, Winnipeg South Centre. These would be junior men in the service who had not had much work in recent years and were bound to "reach the relief rolls immediately."

Leslie Mutch, Liberal, Winnipeg South, rose to express agreement with what had already been said. He joined with Maybank in urging that "something be done to avert a tragedy." The layoffs were particularly deplorable when there was plenty of work for the shops to do.

Prime Minister King stated the management of the railroad would surely not ignore the wishes of parliament and would take cognizance of the statements in the house.

Representatives of the railroad unions are now negotiating with the CNR board of directors. The management is insisting that work be rotated in a "stagger system" which would reduce all shopmen to four days a week. The unions are insisting that the 40-hour week be maintained.

J. S. Woodsworth scored the government for failing to stand behind the employees financially in the way the government had often assisted the bondholders. ■

Alberta Federation of Labour calls for pay equity legislation NOW



The Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) called on the Alberta government to mark International Women's Day on March 8 by committing to take action on pay equity through meaningful legislation. Alberta has the largest gender pay gap in Canada and yet the province currently has no legislation on pay equity nor does it have a policy framework to address the gap through public sector bargaining.

"The Alberta government already knows women earn less than men for the same or similar work," said Cori Longo, Secretary Treasurer of the AFL, "but we are the only province in Canada that has done nothing. We demand that the Alberta government address this long-standing inequality facing women and immediately take action to introduce and implement pay equity legislation in Alberta."

The Government of Alberta's webpage on "women's economic security" says Alberta women "earn less on average than Alberta men for the same or substantially similar work." The situation is worse in Alberta than anywhere else in Canada. According to data from Statistics Canada, in 2024 the average gender wage gap across Canada was 13 percent for core age workers (age 20 to 54), meaning women in Canada earn 87¢ for every dollar earned by men. In Alberta, the wage gap was 18 percent in 2024 – that's 40 percent higher than the cross-country average. Research shows

that if the gender wage gap was eliminated across Alberta, women in the province would earn about \$7 more an hour on average.

"Jobs done by women continue to be undervalued and underpaid," said Longo. "Alberta working women won't wait any longer. It's time for the government to act."

The Alberta Federation of Labour unanimously passed a pay equity resolution at its 54th Constitutional Convention in April 2025, which read as follows:

"Alberta is the only province in Canada to have done nothing to address the pay gap between men and women. We demand that the Alberta government address this long-standing inequality facing women and immediately take action"

"The Alberta Federation of Labour Will: Establish a Pay Equity Coalition to bring together unions, community organizations, and allies to advance pay equity in Alberta; to develop strategies, resources, and campaigns to address wage gaps

and systemic barriers to equitable pay; and to lobby the provincial government for comprehensive pay equity legislation, enforcement mechanisms, and accountability measures."

Since then, the AFL has established the Pay Equity Coalition that delegates called for. The coalition is co-chaired by Cori Longo, Secretary Treasurer of the AFL and Raj Uppal, President of CUPE Alberta.

"Canada is making progress on pay equity and we in Alberta can do the same if we make it a priority," said Cori Longo. "Boosting women's wages would bring more money to families and communities and strengthen our entire economy." ■

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
3. Call your MP to demand they stand up for Cuba! ourcommons.ca/members/en
4. Get organized, find a local group at: canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/cnc-member-groups

NO ECONOMIC WAR ON CUBA!



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CALL FOR MAY DAY GREETING ADS!

Our annual May Day issue, celebrating International Workers' Day, is a great opportunity to express solidarity with the struggles of working people across the globe for peace in the face of war, aggression and genocide; for jobs and incomes in the face of unemployment, poverty and income disparity; for socialism in the face of rising reaction.

As we've done for many years, PV is inviting unions and progressive organizations to take out May Day greeting ads to express working-class internationalism. These greetings form a rich display that tells the story of working-class culture, struggle and solidarity.

We have a range of sizes and prices available. The deadline for camera-ready ads is April 20; if PV is preparing the layout, the deadline is April 17.

This is such a critical time for solidarity. Make sure your movement purchases a greeting, by emailing peoplesvoiceeditor@gmail.com.

1 inch x 2 inches	\$25	4 inches x 4 inches	\$120
2 inches x 2 inches	\$40	4 inches x 5 inches	\$150
2 inches x 3 inches	\$55	6 inches x 4 inches	\$175
4 inches x 2 inches	\$70	4 inches x 7 inches	\$200
4 inches x 3 inches	\$90	6 inches x 7 inches	\$300

Cuban Health Minister: In the face of the energy siege, Cuba maintains the ethical imperative of healthcare

JOSÉ ÁNGEL PORTAL MIRANDA

MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH OF THE
REPUBLIC OF CUBA

In the complex landscape of contemporary geopolitics, economic figures often camouflage the real human impact underlying the decisions made by governments to achieve obscure political and economic objectives of domination in their relations with other countries – decisions that, on many occasions, put lives at risk.

Irrefutable proof of this reality are the tools desperately and cruelly used by the United States Government against Cuba, which increasingly heighten the risks and threats to the lives of our people.

What has historically been an economic, commercial and financial blockade for my country, lasting more than six decades, has recently mutated into a qualitatively different and quantitatively even more aggressive and inhumane phase: energy asphyxiation under false pretenses. Cuba suffers from the continuity of unilateral coercive measures with a massive extraterritorial impact on relations with all countries, and faces a systemic siege surgically designed to cause shortages capable of damaging and reversing our nation's social development and the quality of life of our population for the purpose of destabilization.

The unjust inclusion of Cuba on the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism, combined with the persecution of Cuba's commercial contracts with countries and companies to acquire fuel; the harassment, interception and confiscation of vessels carrying fuel; as well as the threats of sanctions – and in other cases their effective application – against shipping companies, have generated even greater pressure that transcends the economic sphere to enter the realm of basic human security.

In the health sector, this reality translates into permanent objective tension: the National Health System depends on a continuous supply of electrical energy and logistics that are today severely hindered.

The impact of the US policy of "maximum pressure" against Cuba is revealed starkly in the most sensitive indicators.

Behind the numbers are patients who suffer and families who wait for solutions that are sometimes delayed, or do not arrive at all, due to external factors that are the result of this progressive policy of strangling the Cuban economy by the United States Government.

Currently, the surgical waiting list in the country has reached 96,387 patients, of whom 11,193 are children. With the current energy restrictions, these figures are increasing, forcing the National Health System to postpone non-urgent surgeries in order to prioritize oncological procedures and others that are life-defining.

Vulnerability is heightened in high-priority social programs; yet, despite being prioritized, they are not immune to the compounded limitations caused by the country's current energy situation.

For instance, the Maternal and Child Health Program is currently facing the challenge of ensuring follow-up for 32,000 pregnant women who require essential diagnostic ultrasounds. Likewise, the intermittency of refrigerated transport due to fuel shortages has hindered more than 30,000 children from receiving their vaccines in a timely manner, despite having the biological supplies available in our warehouses.

To this is added the care of 16,000 radiotherapy patients and another 2,888 who depend on hemodialysis – services that demand a level of energy stability that is currently very difficult to guarantee.

Nevertheless, despite these and other realities facing the National Health System, its operation is not in a state of collapse. The



response has not been paralysis, but rather a strategic reorganization based on resilience and resource optimization.

Among other actions, we continue to enhance the resolution capacity of Primary Health Care, strengthening the Family Doctor and Nurse Program, and utilizing tools such as telemedicine to ensure the vitality of basic services.

This capacity to respond rests fundamentally on the altruism, ethics, commitment and professionalism of Cuba's human capital, who do not live isolated from the country's reality. Our workers and students suffer at home from the same shortages and long hours without electricity as the rest of the people they serve; even so, they transform each day's challenges into new motivations to persevere and continue seeking alternative solutions to the lack of resources within the sector's institutions.

It is moving to see how, in provinces where 85 percent of neonatology specialists live outside the municipality where they work, extraordinary alternatives are being found to ensure that no newborn is left unprotected in the face of the transportation crisis.

The prestige of Cuban medicine has been forged through humanism and a sense of duty, not only within our borders but also in the 165 nations where Cuban health collaborators provide or have provided services for decades, as is the case in Mexico. Today, that same commitment is what sustains the National Health System, even under increasing pressure and the accelerated technical wear and tear of its infrastructure.

We feel with pride that Cuba is not alone, thanks to the solidarity we receive from the most diverse corners of the world.

The appeal we have made to the international community is not ideological in nature, but deeply humanitarian. Public Health is a fundamental human right that should not be conditioned by political disputes or the use of energy as an instrument of coercion.

When energy is lacking, it is extremely difficult to maintain essential services, and when that happens, it is the people – especially the most vulnerable – who bear the negative impact and pay the price for the risks of the tensions involved. Cuba will continue to adopt all possible measures to protect its population, which is currently suffering, more than ever before, the consequences of the cruel US policy of suffocation.

In the face of this reality, our request to the international community remains to show solidarity in addressing the real and objective scale of a criminal siege that threatens life itself. ■

Originally published in El Heraldo de México

To support Cuba, contact the
CanadianNetworkOnCuba.ca



No to the new imperialist war against Iran!

Communist Party calls for an end to Canada's complicity

Meeting as the US and Israel launched their illegal and reckless bombing of Iran, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Canada issued an emergency statement condemning the aggression as a flagrant violation of international law and the United Nations Charter, which risks catastrophic escalation.

This attack rests on false pretexts. The claims of Iran seeking nuclear weapons are the same kind of lies that have prefaced every imperialist war. The true objectives are control over the resources and trade routes of the region. This aggression was planned long in advance and cynically pursued even as purported negotiations continued.

The Communist Party condemns in the strongest terms Prime Minister Mark Carney's statement on Saturday expressing Canada's full support for this US-Israeli attack. Carney's claim that Canada is "not participating militarily" is a cowardly evasion. Political support for illegal aggression is the diplomatic cover that US imperialism seeks.

This exposes the hypocrisy at the heart of Carney's foreign policy. Weeks ago at Davos, he spoke about defending Canadian sovereignty against US threats. Today, he endorses Washington's violation of Iranian sovereignty. The Canadian government cannot defend its own sovereignty while facilitating the destruction of other

countries' sovereignty.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Iran in their just struggles against a repressive theocratic regime and in support of working people of Iran's fight for higher wages and living standards. Simultaneously, we reject the imperialist manipulation of these grievances. The Iranian people will not achieve liberation through US bombs. The right to determine their own future belongs to the Iranian people alone.

It is worth remembering at this moment that the rights and living standards of the people of Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria were not improved by wars and occupations waged by US and NATO imperialism, and millions were killed. It is also important to point out that the US government has no problem with having exceptionally close relations with theocratic governments and absolute monarchies with horrific human rights abuses, the most notable examples being Israel and Saudi Arabia, among a long list.

We demand that the Canadian government immediately condemn this attack and demand an immediate ceasefire. We call for an end to the escalation of military spending in Canada, and for the immediate withdrawal from NATO in order to resist the march to world war. We call for Canada to adopt a foreign policy, independent from the US, of peace and disarmament.

No war on Iran! ■

US-Israel war on Iran threatens to exacerbate the crisis in Sudan

The military aggression by the United States and its ally Israel on the Islamic Republic of Iran constitutes a blatant violation of the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter, an aggression against the sovereignty of an independent state, and a blatant attempt to impose imperial diktat outside of any international legitimacy or moral accountability.

Condemning this aggression is not a performative act of solidarity, but a steadfast and principled commitment to defend the right of the peoples to sovereignty and independence, and to reject the policy of "preemptive strikes" and domination by force.

This dangerous escalation is inseparable from the reality of Sudan, which today is torn by power division and continuing war, making it one of the region's most vulnerable to the effects of international conflicts. Imperial wars not only hit their direct targets, but they also turn other, fragile countries into arenas of political and economic oppression and blackmail.

While Iran has never been a key trading partner of Sudan, the effects of this war are not measured through direct exchange but by their structural impact on the global and regional economies. Sudan is currently the weakest link in an explosive regional equation – any widespread destabilization in the Middle East exacerbates its economic crisis through higher inflation, and undermines what remains of its political independence through increased foreign intervention

throughout the region.

The Red Sea, including the port of Port Sudan, forms a vital artery for Sudanese trade. Any military escalation between Iran and Israel, especially if maritime navigation is affected by closure of the Strait of Hormuz, will have catastrophic consequences. These include sharply increased shipping and insurance costs; a disrupted supply of key goods like wheat, fuel and medicines; and a spike in inflation which will be paid for by the people alone.

In the face of a depleted economy, a collapsing currency and semi-paralyzed production, any global increase in oil or food prices has an instant effect on living standards, deepening poverty and expanding the humanitarian crisis. This highlights the unfair nature of the global economic system in which wars are waged at the expense of the people.

Politically, Sudan is at the heart of a regional conflict involving competing forces including Iran, Israel, the Gulf countries and Turkey. The current escalation exacerbates Sudan's internal conflict and blurs the possibilities for an independent national solution.

The US-Israeli aggression against Iran also risks expanding the foreign military presence in the Red Sea. This increases instability related to ports, maritime passages and military bases, at a time when Sudan's state structure is collapsed and the country

■ SUDAN, PG 10

EDITORIAL

DEFEAT BILL C-9 DEFEND THE RIGHT TO PROTEST AND STRIKE!!

In the face of heightened struggle and increased labour militancy, the federal government is discussing legislation that severely clamps down on the right to protest and even strike.

Perversely called the "Combating Hate Act," Bill C-9 is a direct assault on fundamental democratic rights and is not at all designed to address the very real rise of hate.

Deceptively portrayed as an attempt to ensure public safety, this legislation would create new criminal offences around vaguely defined "intimidation" that would effectively constrain public gatherings outside of cultural spaces including administrative, social or sports facilities, educational institutions, and seniors' residences.

This effective criminalization of protest would prohibit gathering across large areas of every city in Canada, including many seats of government, and would limit the right of workers to take action at their own places of employment. It could even restrict the ability of Indigenous peoples to practice public ceremonies such as the Round Dance on their own lands.

Bill C-9 is clearly designed to be a legal complement to policies of austerity and militarism. Since October 2023, tens of thousands of people in cities across Canada have marched in solidarity with the Palestinian people. Thousands more are engaged in opposing the government's huge increases to military spending, and resultant cuts to public services and jobs. These protests are transforming public opinion and foreign policy.

The same period has witnessed a surge in militant action by labour, with a greater number of work stoppages and strikes since 2023 than in decades preceding. These actions have included illegal defiance of back-to-work orders.

Ottawa clearly wants a legislative weapon to beat back the threat of active labour and democratic movements, and anti-democratic legislation such as Bill C-9 is part of this active clampdown.

Bill C-9 has been opposed by the Canadian Labour Congress as a direct attack on Charter Rights and Freedoms, including the right to freedom of expression and assembly, and an open letter of concern by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association includes dozens of signatories. As it stands, the whole of labour and progressive social movements are united in their opposition to this anti-popular legislation, and a parliamentary petition (e-7222) is available to sign at ourcommons.ca.

But Bill C-9 faces unexpected opposition from the right as well, where a motley crew of libertarians, reactionaries and religious fundamentalists see themselves within its sights. Many of these elements recall the Government of Canada's 2022 invocation of the Emergencies Act against the Freedom Convoy, which a Federal Court of Appeal has confirmed violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

People's Voice opposed the Emergencies Act then, and stands by this still, but does so without endorsing the ultra-right's manipulation of widespread confusion amid a public health emergency.

Clearly, the Liberals have overplayed their hand, as Bill C-9 appears more controversial than anticipated. But this only means that opposition must increase. Any amended version of this bill must be defeated, given its clear attack on Palestinian solidarity and its foreseeable use against Indigenous land defence and organized labour.

If the government truly wished to combat hate, it would take meaningful action. It would ensure that Residential School denialism is explicitly included under anti-hate speech laws. It would enforce existing hate speech laws and prosecute white supremacist and neo-fascist organizations as criminal organizations. It would stop blaming immigrants for the housing crisis and instead raise wages and living standards, confronting the root causes of scapegoating created by capitalism's offensive. ♦



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.

CUPE SK lays out plan to get Scott Moe's budget deficit under control

With Scott Moe set to deliver another big debt budget on March 18, CUPE Saskatchewan, which represents 31,000 frontline workers across the province, has put forward its plan to get Scott Moe's budget deficit under control.

"Scott Moe's waste and financial mismanagement mean there are fewer resources to invest in health care, schools, and other public services," said CUPE Saskatchewan President Kent Peterson. "Stimulating local economies by boosting workers' pay, investing in training and education, and making sure communities have the public services they need are key to getting Saskatchewan's finances out of the ditch," he added.

The following must be top priorities if Scott Moe wants to get his budget deficit under control:

Stimulate local economies by signing a deal to pay health care workers more and stabilize the health care system;

- Redirect the millions of dollars currently spent on temporary employment agencies to fixing the health care retention crisis;

- Cap ballooning executive salaries and slash administrative bloat in universities, school divisions, and the Saskatchewan Health Authority – and invest those dollars into frontline services;

- Train Saskatchewan workers for the jobs we need in education, health care, and the trades by investing in post-secondary learning, and lowering tuition and programs fees.

- Commit to strong Educational Assistant (EA)-to-student ratios, setting Saskatchewan's young people up for success;

- Cancel high-cost privatization plans for long-term care in Estevan and Watson, and;

- Ensure financial account-

ability in the CBO sector by ensuring funding goes to where it should: frontline services and workers.

"Without health care, education, training, childcare, and all our public services, there would be no growth, no new jobs, no workers. In short, public services and frontline workers are not drains on the economy – they are the economy," said Peterson. "Scott Moe cannot cut and contract-out his way to prosperity. The only way to get Saskatchewan's finances on track and grow the economy is to invest in workers, fund public services, end exorbitant executive pay, and stop privatization in its tracks," he added. ■

China's solar power to exceed coal for the first time

China's installed solar power capacity is projected to surpass coal for the first time this year, solidifying its position as the world's premier powerhouse in the renewable energy revolution.

According to the "2025-2026 National Power Supply and Demand Analysis and Forecast Report" released by the China Electricity Council on Monday, the combined capacity of wind and solar power is expected to account for half of the country's total power generation capacity by the end of 2026.

Driven by Beijing's "dual carbon" objectives, the council anticipates that China will add more than 400 million kilowatts (400 GW) of new generation capacity in 2026 alone.

Of this total, new energy sources—primarily wind and solar—are expected to contribute over 300 million kilowatts, it said.

By the end of 2026, China's total installed power capacity is forecast to reach about 4.3 billion kilowatts. Non-fossil energy sources are expected to make up about 2.7 billion kilowatts of that total, representing

roughly 63 percent of the nation's entire power fleet.

In contrast, the share of coal-fired power is expected to continue its downward trajectory, falling to around 31 percent of the total capacity, the council said. ■

Maduro accuses US of sabotaging his defence

Venezuela's kidnapped President Nicolas Maduro has sought to have all the charges brought against him by the United States dropped.

President Maduro, who was kidnapped along with his wife Cilia Flores during an illegal US raid on 3 January, also accused the Trump administration of sabotaging his ability to defend himself. President Maduro's legal team said the case should be thrown out because the US government has blocked the Venezuelan government from paying the legal fees for both him and Flores.

In a filing to a Manhattan federal judge, President Maduro's lawyer, Barry Pollack, said that by blocking the funds from Venezuela, the Trump administration was "interfering with Mr Maduro's ability to retain counsel and, therefore, his right under the Sixth Amendment to counsel of his choice."

Pollack explained that any interference under the Sixth Amendment to the US Constitution requires the dismissal of all charges.

President Maduro and Flores have been detained in New York without bail since their kidnapping by US forces in a bloody military operation that killed 100 people.

The US alleges that President Maduro and Ms Flores were co-conspirators in drug trafficking.

President Maduro and Ms Flores deny the allegations and claim the prosecution is a manoeuvre to bring about regime change in Venezuela.

Both have maintained their innocence. ■

PEOPLE'S VOICE

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Communist Party meeting adopts plan to fight drive to war and austerity



DREW GARVIE

Meeting at a moment of escalating imperialist aggression including the launch of the illegal US-Israel war against Iran, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Canada met in Toronto from February 28 to March 1 at its first full meeting since the Party's 41st Central Convention in December. Committee members from across the country adopted a comprehensive plan to implement the convention's political direction and build resistance to the Carney government's war economy and austerity agenda.

The final Political Report warned that events since the convention have "tragically confirmed the warnings about the descent into imperialist barbarism and war." The report identified the root cause as "the sharpening of inherent capitalist contradictions," with US imperialism in decline resorting to "ever more desperate and violent methods to maintain its grip."

The Central Committee analyzed the strategic geopolitical reorientation that is currently underway, particularly the response of Canada to the relative decline of US hegemony. Prime Minister Mark Carney's Davos speech was not a rupture with imperialism, but a reorientation within it – as he put it, "if we're not at the table, we're on the menu." This "middle powers" project is a plan for Canadian and European imperialists to get a seat at the head of the table, not to abolish the table itself.

The Political Report makes note of this attempted diversification but warns that we "must not overstate these developments" and points out that "so far there has been no major rupture in the US-NATO camp."

The meeting strongly condemned Canada's diplomatic complicity in the February 28 US-Israel bombing campaign against Iran, noting that Prime Minister Carney issued a shameful statement of support for this aggression. The Central Committee demanded that Canada immediately call for a ceasefire, condemn this illegal war and rule out any participation.

A central focus was the intensified US blockade against Cuba, following the January 29 executive order imposing a total fuel blockade on the island. The Central Committee declared Cuba solidarity a Party-wide priority. "This is an act of economic war designed to starve the Cuban people into submission, to destroy the example of a socialist revolution."

With millions of Canadians having visited Cuba and many with direct ties, there is a very strong basis for building broad solidarity reaching the labour movement, peace organizations and the general public, demanding that Canada condemn the blockade and send oil and aid.

On the home front, the Central Committee analyzed the Carney government's consolidation of Bay Street support and its use of US tariff threats as a pretext for the "deepest austerity drive since the 1990s." The government's plan to triple military spending – to \$150 billion annually by 2035 – was exposed as a transfer of public wealth to arms manufacturers.

The government's claim that the Defence Industrial Strategy will create 125,000 jobs was thoroughly debunked, with the meeting

noting that "for every \$1 million invested in the military, only 7 jobs are created, compared to 14 jobs in healthcare and 20 jobs in education." The "buy Canadian" rhetoric was exposed as a sham by the deep integration of Canadian companies into the US military-industrial complex.

The Central Committee also addressed the dangerous illusion that massive military spending defends Canada from potential US invasion. "The massive increase in military spending was demanded by Donald Trump himself and NATO," states the Political Report, "which remains under the direct military command of the United States." In his first Oval Office meeting with Trump, Carney thanked the president for securing "unprecedented commitments of NATO partners to defence spending."

With working-class representation in Parliament virtually non-existent, the people's struggle is now almost totally in the extra-parliamentary arena. The Central Committee affirmed that the alternative to the corporate agenda is an anti-monopoly, anti-imperialist people's coalition demanding nationalization of key sectors, energy and natural resources; a full-employment economy; and robust education, health and social services funded by cutting the war budget and taxing corporations and the very rich.

Committee members noted a number of inspiring examples of resistance internationally. These include the February 12 general strike of 300 million workers in India and coordinated action by Mediterranean dockworkers to stop weapons shipments to Israel. This contrasts with Canadian labour's lack of mobilization against austerity and war spending. The upcoming CLC Convention in Winnipeg in May will be a critical battleground requiring important political and strategic discussions by labour.

Party organization and priorities

To assist with implementing the convention's direction, the Central Committee struck several new commissions. These will focus on specific areas of work including Cuba, peace and solidarity, gender equity and the trade union movement.

Urgent political priorities include fighting against the new war on Iran, all-Party mobilization in solidarity with Cuba solidarity, and preparing new campaign materials against the Carney government's war and austerity agenda. The committee also identified as immediate organizational priorities the subscription and funding drive for the Party press, relaunching the Party's "Vanguard" organizational bulletin, and organizing a conference to prepare for municipal elections in several provinces this fall.

The Central Committee also committed to strengthening organization in the Prairies and rebuilding in Nova Scotia. With the political situation volatile and the possibility of a spring federal election, the meeting prepared to run candidates capable of bringing the Party's program to working people, building on the 2025 campaign which saw the highest per-candidate vote since 1968.

"The period ahead is dangerous, but it is also filled with opportunity," the Political Report concluded. "Our task is clear: through disciplined organization and ideological clarity, we will build the Party capable of leading the working class to socialism." ■



Quebec needs a genuine new constitution, not the CAQ's opportunist sham

Against the backdrop of the rising profile of the Parti québécois, François Legault's push for a Quebec constitution has received a lot of discussion in English-speaking Canada. But there is a low level of understanding about what this means, especially to the working class and the struggle for socialism. *People's Voice* spoke with Quebec Communist Party leader Adrien Welsh, who shared his analysis of the situation.

PV: The National Assembly is currently debating Bill 1, The Quebec Constitution Act which was introduced late last year by then premier François Legault. Can you describe this legislation?

AW: About a year ago, then premier François Legault asked his Executive Council to prepare a "law of laws" that would defend some of Quebec's particular features. What emerged was this draft Quebec constitution, in the form of Bill 1.

All the drafting happened behind closed doors – neither the National Assembly nor the labour and people's movements were consulted, let alone a Constituent Assembly. It seems to me that if we are to "protect" Quebec's identity, such a fundamental law should be debated publicly. From start to finish, from content to process, this constitution is bogus and has no legitimacy. Although, it is also true that none of the constitutions that the people or nations in Canada have lived under has been developed through a popular, democratic process.

The Québécois people have fought long and hard for a democratic solution to the national question. Yet here we have Legault, a self-styled nationalist and former PQ minister, manipulating the people's democratic will into a text called "Quebec's Constitution" which really carves in stone the demands of monopoly capital.

The idea of a constitution may sound nice to many Quebecers who wish to see their "province" be understood a nation, but the bill delivers the opposite. It forbids any entity receiving Quebec public funding from contesting the legality of a law. It counterposes collective rights to basic individual human rights by placing the "rights of the nation" higher than the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, which is arguably broader in scope than its Canadian counterpart.

We shouldn't be fooled here. This sham of a constitution will mean more discrimination and more job losses – already a few hundred women in the education system were fired for wearing a hijab – all this under the pretext of "protecting Quebec." In the end, Quebec capitalists are getting richer at the expense of the working class. As a cherry on the sundae, the national question is not being solved at all, but it is being used by the ruling class for its own divisive interests!

What the bill really does is create a notwithstanding clause on steroids, reducing Canada to an empty shell in which each province can do whatever suits its particular capitalist interest. Instead of becoming Canada becoming the 51st US state, it will become 10 new states.

This shows why the Parti communiste du Québec (PCQ) is opposed to this sham of a constitution.

A Quebec constitution is something the PCQ has called for since 1965. What does such a process mean for the national question and the right of national self-determination?

The PCQ called for a Quebec constitution in the Manifeste from its 2nd Congress in 1967. But rather than serving the interests of monopoly capital, the PCQ's proposal for a constitution is a way to unite labour and democratic forces against it.

The national question in Quebec, as in all oppressed nations, has an anti-monopoly and anti-imperialist potential, so the task of communists is to mobilize the progressive elements while isolating the reactionary ones.

A genuine Quebec constitution would provide leverage in the struggle for a new, democratic Canadian constitution that guarantees the right to self-determination, up to and including the right to secession, for Quebec and all nations in Canada.

This is what the PCQ wrote in a brief submitted to the Special Committee on the Constitution of Canada in May 1971: "having thus established sovereign control over their own state in the matters of vital national interest [meaning a Quebec constitution], the people of Quebec will be in a position to compel negotiations as equals with representatives of English Canada to work out a new Confederal Pact, a new Constitution for Canada."

We see a Quebec constitution as part of the popular demand for a democratic solution to the national question, and a way to mobilize an anti-monopolist and anti-imperialist alliance.

But the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) government is doing the opposite, by using the national question to advance the class interests of monopoly capital. Theirs is a project that panders to separation and risks driving the working class – of Quebec, English-speaking Canada as well as Indigenous nations and peoples – into the arms of Trump or any other US president.

Can you be more specific about how the PCQ's proposal for a Quebec constitution differs from what the CAQ is proposing?

I should note here that the idea of a Quebec constitution is not at all as far-fetched as the media in English-speaking Canada suggests – after all, British Columbia has a provincial constitution. But our proposal is different in three major ways.

First, it is popular and democratic in that it would be developed through a democratically elected Constituent Assembly.

Second, it would not supplement or be based on Canada's current constitution but would rather be a democratic challenge to that document. It would call for a new constitution for all of Canada, one that recognizes the right of nations to self-determination up to and including secession.

Third, we fight for the national rights of Quebec, which are democratic. These are different from the current narrow-minded nationalist vision that defines Quebec and Quebecers in a narrow ethnic way. Our vision sees this process as a potential avenue for Canada to become an anti-imperialist

■ DEMOCRATIC SOLUTION, PG 12

Iran: From mass protests to co-optation and manufacturing consent for war

ROZHIN EMADI

Earlier this year, the Iranian people took to the streets to protest the country's dire economic conditions. These hardships have intensified due to US sanctions, which have contributed to a rapid surge in prices and the devaluation of the currency.

Soon, the protests grew into mass mobilizations against the severe economic difficulties millions of Iranians face, as well as against the country's political system which has long relied on brutal repression to silence those demanding change in hopes of building a more just society. Various segments of society rose up – from merchants and workers to students – demanding economic justice, democratic rights and an end to state repression.

Background to the mass protests

In previous years, Iranians had also mobilized for gender equality through the “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement, which led to some cultural changes within the country. For instance, women in major cities such as Tehran, Mashhad and Shiraz increasingly appear in public without headscarves. This widespread grassroots movement also generated mass opposition to Iran's morality police, making the compulsory hijab increasingly difficult to enforce in many areas. The Iranian state scaled back efforts to enforce its “hijab and chastity” law in 2024 because it feared widespread social unrest, demonstrating the power of people's movements to generate internal change within the country. However, women are still seen as inferior to men by law, so there is a long way to go to advance women's rights.

With that said, many believe that state repression and the violation of women's rights are the primary reasons the Iranian people have resisted the government. In reality, the Iranian working class also faces severe economic disparities and hardship due to capitalist exploitation by Iran's ruling class.

Today, 41 million Iranians (nearly 45 percent of the population) are considered “economically inactive,” while over 20 percent are unemployed. Notably, 40 percent of the unemployed are university graduates. Additionally, 30-35 percent of the population (between 25 and 30 million people) lives in absolute poverty.

Hossein Raghfar, a state-affiliated economist, has stated that around 10 percent of Iran's population currently suffers from malnutrition and hunger. He warned that if current trends continue, “the poor population” could reach about 40 percent of the total population. Furthermore, according to Iran's Parliamentary Research Center, approximately 30 percent of Iranians live in absolute poverty, while 6 percent – around four million people – live in extreme poverty. Raghfar also pointed out that, “on one side, poverty is growing, and on the other, a small but extremely wealthy class has emerged which is influential within the system and manipulates policymaking in its favour.”

Indeed, the richest 10 percent of the population holds more than 63 percent of the country's wealth, while the richest 1 percent alone owns 29 percent. Meanwhile, the bottom 50 percent of the population owns less than 4 percent of the wealth. Inflation has drastically increased the cost of living while wages remain low, particularly affecting food and housing.

In 2022, The Tehran Times reported that rent had increased by 40.9 percent in Tehran. Although the government later attempted to cap rent increases at 25 percent, Iran's Statistical Centre continued to report record-breaking increases, and the country's rental crisis reportedly peaked in October 2025. Over 65 percent of workers do not own their homes and are trapped in a rental market where even a small apartment can cost 10 million tomans per month, equivalent to the entire minimum wage.

In 2025, Iran's Minister of Labour announced a minimum wage of 10,399,000 tomans, which is more than three times lower than the minimum cost of living. Meanwhile,



GO-OPTATION BY MONARCHIST FORCES HAS HELPED MANUFACTURE DIASPORA CONSENT FOR IMPERIALIST WAR

government figures acknowledge that 96 percent of Iranian workers are employed on temporary or short-term contracts, leaving them without job security, pensions or protections. Iran also ranks 102nd in the world for workplace safety, with an average of 40 workers dying on the job each week. All the while, trade union activists and workers who have protested for better conditions have been attacked and jailed. This underscores the urgency of demanding freedom for political prisoners as part of solidarity with the Iranian people's struggles.

Drawing comparisons with Cuba helps show that that while sanctions have certainly contributed to Iran's economic difficulties, they are not the only reason the country's working class is struggling. Cuba has endured a US economic blockade for over six decades – the longest-lasting trade sanction in modern history. But despite severe economic hardship, the government there has attempted to maintain strong public services including widely accessible healthcare, education and housing. Cuba's socialist society prioritizes social programs that meet the basic needs of people.

Iran, by contrast, has implemented waves of privatization and market-oriented reforms. In 2006, the government announced plans to overhaul its free trade zones by expanding privatization, increasing exports and strengthening the private sector. As part of these reforms, 80 percent of shares in major public companies, worth roughly \$130 billion, were slated for sale to private and co-operative sectors. This also intended to align Iran more closely with the requirements of the World Trade Organization.

These policies contributed directly to greater wealth inequality and worsening economic conditions for the working class. It was these legitimate grievances and real hardships, combined with theocratic state repression, that pushed many Iranians to protest even at the risk of losing their lives.

Co-optation of the movement: Monarchist voices attempt a takeover

However, these mobilizations were soon co-opted by pro-imperialist and pro-Zionist forces. Outside Iran, the narrative began circulating that the Iranian people wanted to reinstall Reza Pahlavi as their “Shah,” and pro-monarchist voices within the Iranian diaspora quickly reframed the entire movement around Pahlavi.

Some even rejected widely used protest slogans such as “Woman, Life, Freedom” and “Free All Political Prisoners,” arguing that the only slogan that should be chanted is “Long Live the Shah.” Another slogan promoted by monarchist groups was “Make Iran Great Again,” a phrase clearly inspired by Donald Trump's MAGA movement.

Monarchist forces portray Iran under the Pahlavi monarchy as an ideal society to which the country should return, rather than the repressive, undemocratic and unequal society that it actually was.

The Pahlavi monarchy was installed by foreign powers in 1953 after the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh was overthrown in a US-British orchestrated coup d'état. This intervention was triggered by Mossadegh's move to nationalize the British-owned Anglo-Iranian

Oil Company (now BP).

As a result, Pahlavi was widely disliked because he was seen as a ruler who conceded to US interests while heavily suppressing his own people. With support from the United States, the Shah's secret police, SAVAK, inflicted widespread political terror – surveilling, imprisoning, torturing and executing political opponents, particularly members of leftist, communist and working-class organizations.

At the same time, poverty and illiteracy were widespread. A 1974 New York Times article noted that although oil revenues were flowing into the national treasury, “70 percent of the people are illiterate and 60 percent live at subsistence levels.”

Despite widely circulated images of wealthier women wearing Western clothing and miniskirts, the female literacy rate under the Shah was only about 35.5 percent. Many impoverished women in rural areas were deeply religious, and social inequality remained stark. Pahlavi himself openly expressed that women were not equal or as intelligent as men, demonstrating that this society was also not a safe haven for women.

Child labour was common, trade union activity was banned, and the cost of living was high. Although the Shah attempted to address some of these problems through his so-called White Revolution, the reforms failed to meet the needs of the population.

This failure led to mass mobilizations across Iranian society, religious and secular alike, which ultimately culminated in the 1979 Revolution.

After the revolution, there was a brief period during which various political organizations were able to mobilize openly and freely for the first time. Economic reforms were also introduced to redistribute wealth, including the nationalization of key industries, the creation of welfare programs, and policies aimed at reducing poverty in rural communities. These reforms contributed to rising literacy rates. Today, around 90 percent of Iran's adult population is literate, and women make up about 50 percent of university graduates, though many struggle to find jobs afterwards.

However, the Islamic Republic soon became violently repressive as well. In 1988, the government carried out mass executions of political prisoners, including thousands of communists and leftists. The country was further devastated by the eight-year war with Iraq, which resulted in around one million deaths and was prolonged by both countries' controversial acceptance of weapons from the United States to support their war efforts. By the 1990s, Iran was once again pushed into a severe economic crisis through privatization, the removal of energy subsidies, and the elimination of welfare programs.

Although Iran has been and continues to be a victim of imperialism, many Iranians have grown frustrated watching the Islamic Republic invest heavily in its military apparatus while neglecting the needs of its own people.

In the Iranian diaspora, the narrative that Iran was “great” under the Shah and that repression only began after the 1979 Revolution has convinced some that reinstating the monarchy is Iran's only path forward. Those who challenge this narrative are often

silenced, shamed or attacked.

Through these tactics, pro-monarchist forces outside Iran undermine the legitimate protests inside the country by reducing a broad mass movement to the ambitions of a single man who has lived outside Iran for more than 40 years and has little direct connection to the people currently struggling there.

Voices inside Iran have been largely ignored

In January, Tehran's Bus Workers' Union issued a statement titled “Workers Must Lead the Fight for Liberation, Not Authoritarian Forms of Power or Foreign States.” The union argues that true liberation cannot come from leaders imposed from above, foreign governments or rival factions within the state. Instead, it must come through solidarity, unity and the creation of independent worker organizations.

At the same time, university students protesting inside Iran carried banners reading “Death to the oppressor, whether Shah or Supreme Leader” and “No monarchy, no supreme leadership – democracy and equality.”

Contrary to monarchist talking points, it is clear that the most decisive force remains the working class, not Reza Pahlavi. Although labour's participation in these protests was somewhat limited, it was nonetheless significant. Strikes at the South Pars gas facilities, actions by maintenance workers in Zagros and Lorestan, and solidarity statements from teachers, truck drivers and oil workers all demonstrate the crucial role that workers play in leading a people's resistance movement in Iran.

If the Iranian working class organizes as an independent force, despite the challenges posed by the state's repression of organized movements, a political general strike led by workers could potentially bring down the regime.

As the Tudeh Party of Iran said recently, “The political system ruling our homeland is irreformable. Solidarity among different social groups – from workers, labourers and retirees to women, students, youth and merchants – against the aggressive policies of this regime, and efforts to organize coordinated, nationwide protest movements, can lay the groundwork for seriously challenging the regime and opening the path toward fundamental and democratic transformations.”

The Islamic Republic responded to the protests with brutal repression, killing thousands of demonstrators.

Manufacturing consent for war

Rather than focusing on supporting the just struggles of the Iranian people, diaspora networks and outlets such as Iran International promoted narratives that began to manufacture consent for war. Iranians were told that the only path to liberation would come through foreign intervention and, as a result, the Iranian diaspora's response to the current war is very different from the one back in June 2025. When the 12-day war between Israel and Iran broke out last summer, the Iranian diaspora did not organize a single pro-war rally. Instead, many people condemned the conflict and worried about their families back home.

Today, however, the situation has changed. Thousands within the diaspora now openly celebrate figures like Trump and Netanyahu as they strike Iran – bombing schools and killing more than 150 schoolgirls, bombing civilian homes and destroying thousands of residences, bombing oil refineries and releasing toxic chemicals and acid rain over populated areas.

It is painful to see so many people believe that Western powers will somehow treat Iran differently than the other countries they have bombed and destabilized across the region.

History shows the opposite.

In Afghanistan, US intervention ultimately strengthened the Taliban. In fact, forces that would later form the Taliban were originally armed and funded by the CIA in the 1980s to combat socialist forces in the

■ CONTINUED AT TOP OF NEXT PAGE

country that aligned themselves with the Soviet Union.

In Libya, US-NATO intervention helped create conditions for the rise of ISIS-Libya, which has actively participated in the enslavement, trafficking and sexual exploitation of migrants and refugees in the region.

In Syria, it contributed to the rise of extremist factions and eventually led to the Presidency of Ahmed al-Sharaa, a man who was once closely affiliated with al-Qaeda. And in Iraq, it resulted in half a million dead, economic devastation, sectarian conflict and the emergence of ISIS.

Meanwhile, in Palestine, the United States continues to arm Israel while the International Criminal Court strongly condemns Israel's genocide of the Palestinian people. Today, Trump's so-called "Board of Peace" seeks to reshape Gaza in its own image, constructing luxury hotels for the world's wealthy while continuing the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and displacing them from their homes.

All in all, these actions are just a few examples of US imperialism in one region. Across different regions and throughout history, a similar pattern of exploitation and oppression can be observed.

Imperialist wars do not liberate nations – they destroy them. Even US officials have openly suggested that regime change in Iran would benefit Western control over Iranian oil. Similar arguments were made regarding Venezuela's oil industry when Donald Trump suggested that the kidnapping and removal of Nicolás Maduro would allow the United States to regain access to that country's oil resources.

For this reason, Iran's independent labour organizations have repeatedly rejected foreign intervention. The Workers' Union of Tehran and the Suburbs Bus Company stated clearly that they "strongly condemn any propaganda, justification or support for military intervention by foreign governments, including the United States and Israel." Iranian teachers' unions have issued similar statements, calling instead for international solidarity and diplomatic pressure against the Iranian government. They warn that foreign military intervention would "destroy civil society, kill countless people, and provide the government with justification to intensify repression."

Shortly after the attacks of September 11, 2001, US General Wesley Clark revealed that Washington had plans to target seven countries in the Middle East, one of which was Iran. Under these constant threats and regional destabilization campaigns, Iran has dramatically expanded its military apparatus – in 2025, the Islamic Republic announced a 200 percent increase in its military budget. Iran's increasingly strong military apparatus is now also being used to heavily suppress resistance movements, and it is a military apparatus that the regime continuously justifies strengthening due to the constant and real threat of foreign invasion.

So, what happens next?

One thing is clear: a simple regime-change operation will very likely not happen. Using arguments similar to those used to justify the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the United States and its proxy Israel went to war with Iran despite this being a clear violation of international law and Iran's sovereignty.

The attacks were justified under the pretext that Iran is developing nuclear weapons, yet Israel has refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to which Iran is a signatory. Israel also refuses to submit to nuclear inspections, and it is Israel, not Iran, that violated the Atmospheric Test-Ban Treaty. As a result, the region now faces a clear and escalating war that is affecting peoples across the Middle East – this is anything but a quick and simple operation to remove the Islamic Republic.

Even after the death of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei at the start of the conflict, the leadership structure quickly replaced him, and many supporters rallied around the regime. Ironically, Trump himself stated that he would prefer someone from within Iran to take over the state rather than bringing in Reza Pahlavi, suggesting that the United States may be willing to work with forces



ANTI-WAR RALLY IN IOWA [CREDIT: AFSC]

within the regime that are more moderate than the hardliners.

Nonetheless, some reports suggest the US may attempt to arm Kurdish groups in the region as part of a broader strategy. However, organizations such as the Kurdistan Organization of the Communist Party of Iran have rejected this approach, stating that they do not want Kurdistan turned into a military front against Iran and don't see this as a path that will help free the people of Iran or Kurdistan. Such strategies risk triggering civil war and fragmentation, tactics NATO and the US previously used during the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

There have also been discussions about deploying US ground troops, which would escalate the war further and destabilize the entire region, though Iran's geography would make this quite difficult. Iran has already retaliated, particularly by targeting the infrastructure of the Gulf states and closing the Strait of Hormuz, threatening global oil markets and sending energy prices upward.

This all suggests that the US and Israel may be willing to tolerate or even accept an Iran left war-torn and in ruins, so long as their interests are preserved. On the other hand, perhaps their goal is periodic but perpetual war to further destabilize the region, making it more susceptible to imperialist exploitation as nations such as Iran weaken.

With all this said, in this dangerous moment, what is urgently needed is a broad international peace movement. The Iranian people cannot organize for liberation while bombs are falling on their cities. Alarming, Prime Minister Mark Carney has not fully ruled out military involvement in the region, making it even more important for people in Canada to build a strong anti-war movement and make clear that public funds should be spent on social services, not on war.

The voices calling for war are loud, especially among well-organized pro-monarchist and pro-Zionist groups in the diaspora, but the consequences of imperialist war will be felt across the entire world.

Finally, a word to those in the Iranian community who feel confused or uncertain:

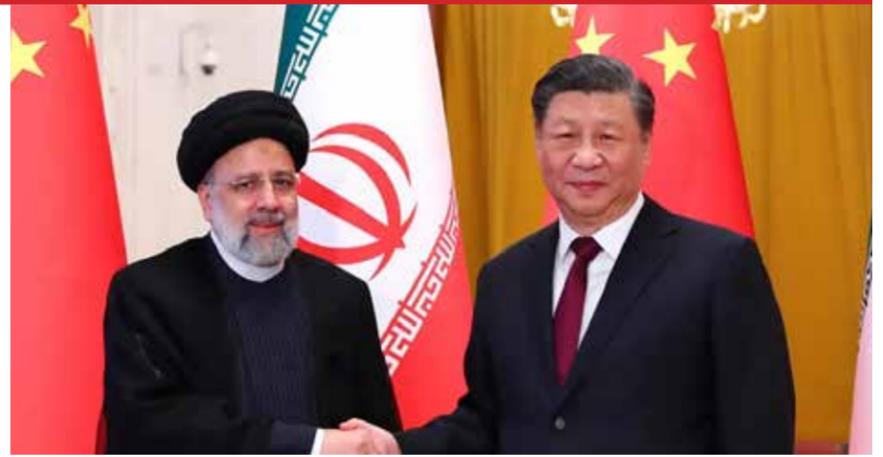
If you want the world to stand with the people of Iran, you cannot do so by advocating for war or by promoting divisive rhetoric. People will not rally behind movements that wave the flags of countries committing genocide; nor will they support calls to restore monarchy when "no kings" movements are rising globally. They will not want to stand with people who glorify Trump, a sexual predator responsible for using ICE to detain countless individuals and whose policies have directly led to the death of many. They will not want to support a movement that constantly criticizes others for standing up for Palestine rather than for them, one that focuses more on comparing different oppressions rather than building unity.

Instead, the Iranian diaspora must learn solidarity.

Despite facing decades of occupation, apartheid and violence, Palestinians have consistently expressed solidarity with struggles across the world – from anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America to civil rights movements led by Black and Indigenous peoples in Canada and the US. They did not ask why others were fighting different battles. They understood that all our struggles for justice are interconnected.

The Iranian people do not need bombs – they need solidarity.

Hands off Iran. ■



A strategy of chaos: imperialism targets Iran, but aims at China

JAD KABBANJI

The United States' lopsided conflict with China has long moved beyond simple trade wars to now focus on physical control of strategic flows. Recent months have seen much talk of competition over access to rare earth minerals, and now oil is back in the spotlight. This war of attrition over energy has one central objective: to restrict Beijing's room for development.

In this context, the US-Israeli war against Iran is, among other things, a lever used to paralyze China's vital supplies and weaken its industrial model.

Beijing's energy triangle threatened

Oil is now a key factor in the global balance of power. China, the world's largest importer of crude oil, has in recent years built its growth on energy partnerships with countries that refuse to bow to Washington's authority. These relationships, based on non-dollarized trade, have become the primary target of US sanctions.

Three countries illustrate this dynamic, which could be called the triangle of Chinese energy sovereignty. Data from the International Energy Agency shows that Iran sent around 90 percent of its crude exports to China in 2024. Venezuela saw three-quarters of its exports go to Beijing before the recent regime change, while Russia has redirected nearly 50 percent of its flows to China since 2022, making Beijing and New Delhi its main buyers.

These flows were not developed out of charity, but out of market logic to circumvent US hegemony. For Beijing, this meant securing strategic supplies at very competitive prices: discounts of \$5 to \$12 per barrel for Russian crude, and \$7 to \$8 for Iranian and Venezuelan crude. This strategic advantage considerably strengthened Chinese industrial competitiveness while offering these three countries a lifeline in the face of suffocation by Washington.

But military escalation in the Middle East now threatens this fragile balance that Beijing patiently built.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz and its consequences

Since February 28, this strategic landscape has been abruptly overturned. Israeli and US strikes against Iran, which killed Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, triggered an immediate response from Tehran. Iran's Revolutionary Guards carried out their historic threat: the Strait of Hormuz – through which approximately 20 million barrels of oil, or nearly 20 percent of global consumption, pass daily – is now virtually paralyzed. The Gulf oil monarchies that are subservient to Washington are suffering from Iran's retaliation and seeing their oil and gas facilities hit hard.

What's more, the Guards have warned that any ship attempting to pass through the strait will be "burned alive," with several tankers having already been targeted.

The consequences are immediate and measurable, with the markets reacting immediately. The cost of chartering a supertanker to transport oil from the Middle East to China has doubled compared to the period before the attacks, reaching record

levels. The Brent crude benchmark price soared and briefly exceeding \$115 per barrel, a threshold that had not been reached since the start of the war in Ukraine in 2022.

For China, the loss of Iranian flows – which accounted for about 13 percent of its maritime imports, or 1.38 million barrels per day on average last year – is not just a question of volume. It is the loss of leverage over global prices and a supply route outside of US control. More than 40 percent of the crude oil purchased by China transits through the Strait of Hormuz, and the world's major shipping companies are now avoiding this area due to the conflict.

While Tehran is the direct target, it is Beijing that is being aimed at.

Three fronts of the energy war against China

The longer this war drags on, the more pressure will be exerted on China. In the immediate term, Beijing can cushion the blow with its strategic reserves – around 900 million barrels, or just under three months of imports – but this buffer is only temporary. If the blockade of the strait continues, pressure will build through several mechanisms: soaring freight and insurance prices will permanently increase the cost of transporting all Middle Eastern crude oil; discounts on Iranian oil, which were a major competitive advantage for Chinese industry, are being phased out; and prolonged uncertainty over the security of maritime routes will force Beijing to constantly revise its supply plans, transforming a cyclical vulnerability into a systemic constraint.

But this isn't the only threat. The prospect of a resolution to the conflict in Ukraine, while seemingly desirable, holds a major pitfall for Beijing. Washington will inevitably seek to use any peace agreement to restore its influence over Moscow and normalize Russian energy flows to Europe, which would automatically reduce the share of Russian crude available to China on preferential terms. The competitive advantage afforded to Beijing since 2022 would be eroded – this wouldn't be the result of a deliberate choice on Moscow's part, but by the reorganization of markets imposed by US imperialism.

Washington is using two complementary levers: in the south, the war against Iran and the closure of Hormuz are stifling flows from the Gulf; in the west, the prospect of a negotiated peace in Ukraine is being exploited to divert part of Russia's crude oil to Europe.

Venezuela, the third pillar of China's energy strategy, is now effectively under Washington's control. Like Tehran, Caracas is enduring a hybrid war in which economic sanctions, attempts at political destabilization and military interference are used to exert US domination. Venezuela's oil infrastructure, once among the most efficient in the world, is now dilapidated because of a systematic blockade that prevents access to spare parts and foreign investment. Deprived of its energy sovereignty by decades of interference, the country is now reduced to the status of a

■ REAL THREAT, PG 11

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, rollback 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 Ferret 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.

Class struggle unionism: the urgency (and content) of organizing the unorganized



Reflections on COSATU's 40th anniversary hold lessons for labour in Canada

AWIWE RAPELANG MOHAPI

Forty years ago, in a Durban hall thick with cigarette smoke, the smell of sweat and defiance, and the certainty of coming confrontation, delegates representing half a million workers from 29 unions hammered together a federation that announced, without apology or equivocation, that the South African working class intended to fight simultaneously against racial despotism and capitalist exploitation.

They declared that the Black working class would no longer accept the lie that national liberation could be separated from economic emancipation.

That moment was the necessary, objective outcome of the sharpening contradictions of late apartheid: super-exploitation organized along racial lines had reached a point of absolute crisis where the reproduction of capital and the reproduction of the racially oppressed working class could no longer peacefully coexist.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was the organizational expression of that irreconcilability, the moment when the South African working class declared itself a class for itself, conscious of its historic mission.

Within two years it had mobilized millions in stay-aways and general strikes that repeatedly paralyzed the apartheid economy. The 1987 mineworkers' strike, the consumer boycotts, the rolling mass action of the late 1980s and early 1990s – these were not mere industrial disputes. They were acts of dual power that demonstrated, in practice, that the Black working class possessed the concentrated strength to bring the entire system to its knees.

Confronting new challenges

Today, forty years later, the objective conditions that demand revolutionary trade unionism are more acute and more explosive than at any moment since the negotiated settlement of 1994. Unemployment now devours entire generations: over ten million people, the majority of them young, Black and female, have been permanently expelled from the possibility of selling their labour power under conditions that allow human dignity. Inequality has reached grotesque, almost medieval proportions.

These are not temporary conjunctural difficulties, not the result of bad leadership or poor policy choices. They are the organic crises of capitalism itself – a crisis of over-accumulation, of profitability restored on the backs of the working class, of a bourgeois state that has exhausted its capacity to reproduce consent and now oscillates between repression and collapse.

Yet the federation that once shook the apartheid state to its foundations now often appears as a hesitant spectator, issuing press statements that denounce in the morning what its own alliance partner im-

plements in the afternoon.

The task, therefore, is to outline, in theoretical and practical terms, the road toward a renewed working-class offensive that is adequate to the gravity of the moment. The working class did not disappear. It has grown larger, more concentrated in new sites of exploitation, and more objectively powerful than ever before. What is required is not nostalgia, but clarity, courage and a plan.

The changing composition of the working class

The old sites of working-class concentration – large-scale mining, heavy industry, mass factories – have either contracted or been restructured through outsourcing, automation and labour brokering. Where 300,000 mineworkers could once bring the apartheid economy to its knees for weeks on end, today the same shafts employ fewer than half that number on permanent contracts, while labour-broker firms supply a precarious periphery paid a fraction of the wage and stripped of benefits.

Manufacturing has been hollowed out: the clothing and textile sector, once a bastion of militant organization with tens of thousands of organized workers, has lost more than 200,000 jobs since 1994. Entire industrial towns have been reduced to ghost landscapes of shattered factories and despair.

Simultaneously, capital has expanded massively into new spheres: retail, logistics, private security, hospitality, call centres, platform "gig" work, domestic labour and the sprawling informal survivalist economy that now absorbs millions who have been expelled from formal waged labour altogether. These are the sectors where the working class is today numerically strongest and, paradoxically, most atomized.

Crisis of trade union consciousness

Every major neoliberal restructuring since 1996 – the privatization of state assets, the deliberate "flexibilization" of labour markets, the austerity budgets that gutted public services – has been designed, announced, and implemented by ANC-led governments. At each turn COSATU's public response has oscillated between muted criticism delivered in closed Alliance summits or bilaterals and outright collaboration dressed up as "engaging to limit the damage." The federation has become, in practice, a transmission belt for policies that intensify the very exploitation it was formed to combat: casualization, wage suppression, the erosion of collective bargaining, and the systematic reconstruction of a massive reserve army of labour.

This political subordination has produced bureaucratic degeneration on a grand scale. Full-time officials, increasingly distant from the point of production and the daily lived experience of exploitation, have developed material interests sharp-

ly distinct from those of the rank-and-file members whose dues pay their salaries. Union investment companies, originally established to secure workers' pensions and death benefits, now manage portfolios worth tens of billions, tying the financial health of the organization to the profits of the same mining houses, banks, and retail conglomerates the unions are supposed to confront.

Shop-steward structures, once the beating heart of worker democracy and the transmission belt for revolutionary ideas, have in many workplaces become hollowed-out shells. Political education has been almost entirely abandoned. New shop stewards receive glossy manuals on labour law and negotiation technique, but rarely a single session on political economy, hardly an honest reckoning with the history of our class, and rarely a serious engagement with the burning necessity of socialism as the only realistic solution to the crisis we face. The result is a dangerous narrowing of horizons: from the grand, world-historic perspective of overthrowing capitalism and building a society based on human need to the parochial, defensive struggle to protect the conditions of a shrinking aristocracy of labour in the remaining "core" sectors. The federation looks inward when it should be looking outward; it defends the organized minority while abandoning the unorganized majority to the wolves.

Sectoral tasks and rebuilding working-class power

A genuine revival of militant trade unionism requires a ruthless focus on the sectors where the working class is today most numerous and most exploited.

Retail and logistics must become the new priority. The old model of plant-by-plant organizing is inadequate against corporations that manage labour through algorithms and dispersed warehouses. New methods are needed: comprehensive supply-chain mapping to identify the real points of leverage; simultaneous multi-site actions that hit the same company in every province on the same day; international coordination against the same multinational; and the use of consumer pressure and social-media amplification as secondary levers. A serious, sustained campaign to organize the million-plus workers in formal retail and e-commerce logistics would dramatically shift the balance of class forces nationwide.

Agriculture remains a strategic weakness that borders on disgrace. Eight hundred thousand farm workers and seasonal labourers – overwhelmingly Black, women and migrants – continue to live under conditions that differ only in degree from those their grandparents endured. Yet farm workers occupy a critical position in the reproduction of the entire working class (they produce the food we eat) and in the

■ CONTINUED AT TOP OF NEXT PAGE

export economy. Intensive rural organizing – combining workplace struggle with community-based campaigns around housing, water, electricity and resistance to evictions – is indispensable.

The public sector must be transformed from a defensive rearguard into an offensive battering ram. Nurses, teachers, municipal workers, and state administrators control the essential services without which capitalist reproduction grinds to a halt. Coordinated action – a national public-sector strike that closes every school, every clinic, every garbage truck and every traffic light – can pose the question of power in the sharpest possible form. Such action must be linked to community demands for water, electricity and decent housing, turning the public sector into the material base for workers' and community power.

Platform and gig workers represent the frontier of contemporary exploitation. Here capital appears to have achieved total atomization, with the worker reduced to an individual entrepreneur competing against millions of others. Yet even the most seemingly isolated Uber driver is part of a networked system whose smooth functioning depends on thousands of individual acts of labour. Log-book campaigns that expose the real earnings after costs, coordinated logoffs that paralyze the app at peak times, and the creation of alternative worker-controlled platforms – these are the embryos of new forms of organization that correspond to new forms of exploitation.

Toward political independence and the socialist horizon

The central political conclusion is inescapable: the working class cannot advance its interests decisively while remaining tethered to a capitalist government. The ANC administers a state that is structurally committed to the reproduction of capitalist social relations within the constraints imposed by global finance capital.

The task is not to rescue the Alliance but to reconfigure it – through mass working-class action that demonstrates in practice the irreconcilable antagonism between labour and capital.

The 2026 local government elections offer a concrete terrain for the first decisive steps. Instead of once again mobilizing workers to vote for the party that implements austerity, freezes their wages, and privatizes their services, COSATU should support the contestation of municipal power by left-wing working-class organizations and community-based structures advancing a clear program.

The objective conditions for a working-class offensive have rarely been riper. Capitalism is in organic crisis: stagnant growth, collapsing infrastructure, a ruling party whose electoral support is fracturing, and a generation of young workers facing permanent exclusion from waged labour. The ruling class is divided and increasingly authoritarian. All that is missing is the subjective factor, a trade union movement that understands itself not as a "social partner" but as the conscious detachment of the working class preparing to overthrow the system.

Forty years ago, COSATU proclaimed that the future belongs to the workers. Today that future must be seized, not begged for in boardrooms, not postponed until after the next election, but fought for in every workplace, every township, every delivery van, and every checkout queue. The unorganized millions await their vanguard. The question is whether COSATU will rise to become that vanguard once more.

Power to the working class – organized, conscious and merciless! ■

Excerpted from a longer article published in *African Communist*



CN ordered to reinvest in Transcona and restore union rail work

Unifor has won a major arbitration ruling ordering CN to reinvest in the Transcona Wheel Shop, compensate affected workers and return rail work to in-house production in Canada after violating the collective agreement.

"This ruling is an important win for Unifor members and for the future of union rail work across the country," said Unifor National President Lana Payne. "CN was found to have violated the collective agreement after work was pushed out of Transcona instead of being protected and maintained here in Canada. The ruling forces real reinvestment, restores core union work and sends a clear message that companies cannot erode Canadian industrial capacity without being held to account."

The case stems from CN's decision to close the Wheel Shop, Traction Motor Shop and Air Brake Shop, located in Winnipeg Manitoba, in May 2020 during the pandemic and then contract out work normally performed by union members. The arbitrator found CN violated the collective agreement by failing to properly notify Unifor, failing to consult the union before moving ahead, and undermining the union's ability to protect its members' work. He also found those violations were serious, not just technical, and left the question of remedy open until a later ruling. That ruling came on March 3.

"This decision matters to workers, families and the future of good jobs in Transcona," said Gavin McGarrigle, Unifor Western Regional Director. "Transcona workers never stopped fighting for this work. The order to rebuild Wheel Shop production, add bargaining unit jobs and keep this work here at home is about protecting livelihoods, preserving skills and community pride."

In the supplementary award issued on

■ UNIFOR, PG 10

Steelworkers blast Conservative bill as hypocrisy after MLAs claimed to support workers

The United Steelworkers union (USW) is condemning the BC Conservative Party after it introduced legislation that would undermine Project Labour Agreements and threaten good-paying union jobs across the province – just one day after the party told Steelworkers it supports workers.

March 5, USW members met directly with the BC Conservative caucus, where Conservative MLAs spoke at length about the importance of unionized, good-paying jobs and claimed they were allies of labour who were fighting to protect workers.

The next day, those same Conservatives introduced legislation attacking the very agreements that protect wages, safety standards and opportunities for local workers.

Steelworkers say the move exposes a stunning level of political hypocrisy. "This is nothing short of a betrayal," said Mike Duhra, Assistant to the USW Director for Western Canada.

Project Labour Agreements and Community Benefit Agreements are widely recognized as proven tools for delivering major infrastructure projects safely, efficiently and with a highly trained local workforce.

The USW is joining calls for the BC Conservative Party to immediately withdraw this legislation and engage in honest, transparent dialogue with workers and labour organizations about how to strengthen good jobs and build a stable future for BC's economy. ■

WFTU calls Solidarity Week with Cuba, with actions planned globally ~ April 6-12

There is no doubt that the aggressive and warmongering nature of imperialism is manifested in its most stark and most undisguised way today.

The massacre and genocide of Palestinians in Gaza by the murderous Israeli state with the open support of the US, NATO and the EU, and their allies; the attacks against Lebanon, Syria and Yemen, and the aggressive war against Iran; the invasion of Venezuela by the US army and the kidnapping of President Maduro and Cilia Flores are actions that remind us once again how ruthless imperialism can be in order to promote the economic and geostrategic interests of monopoly capital and the dominant circles of capitalism.

In this framework of imperialist aggression, the US is also escalating its attack on socialist Cuba. Despite repeated decisions of the overwhelming majority by the UN General Assembly and global outcry, the US not only does not lift the illegal and immoral embargo aimed at strangling the Cuban economy, but it is escalating it. Under the ridiculous pretext that Cuba is a country that supports terrorism, they are imposing a total blockade on oil supplies and condemning the Cuban people to conditions of absolute energy poverty, with all the harsh consequences that this has on the living and working conditions of Cuban workers.

The working class and the people of Cuba face with pride and dignity the economic strangulation and unbearable challenges, refusing to submit to the will of the imperialists. They refuse to abandon the revolutionary path they have freely chosen.

The people of Cuba are resisting and are not surrendering. But now more than ever, they need the solidarity and support of all progressive people and, first and foremost, they need the solidarity and support of the international class-oriented trade union movement.

Solidarity in today's circumstances cannot be limited to statements and demonstrations of support and condemnation of US imperialist aggression. Cuba also needs the immediate practical and material support of

the international progressive movement in order to withstand and overcome the difficulties created by the imperialist blockade.

The Secretariat of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), in a recent joint meeting with the leadership of the heroic Workers Central Union of Cuba (CTC) and the Regional Office of Latin America, discussed the situation in Cuba and was informed of the measures being taken by the leadership and the popular movement in Cuba to address the difficulties. Taking into account the situation, the WFTU Secretariat decided to issue an urgent appeal to all members and friends of the WFTU around the world to intensify to the maximum extent possible their actions of solidarity and support for the Cuban people in their difficult struggle for survival.

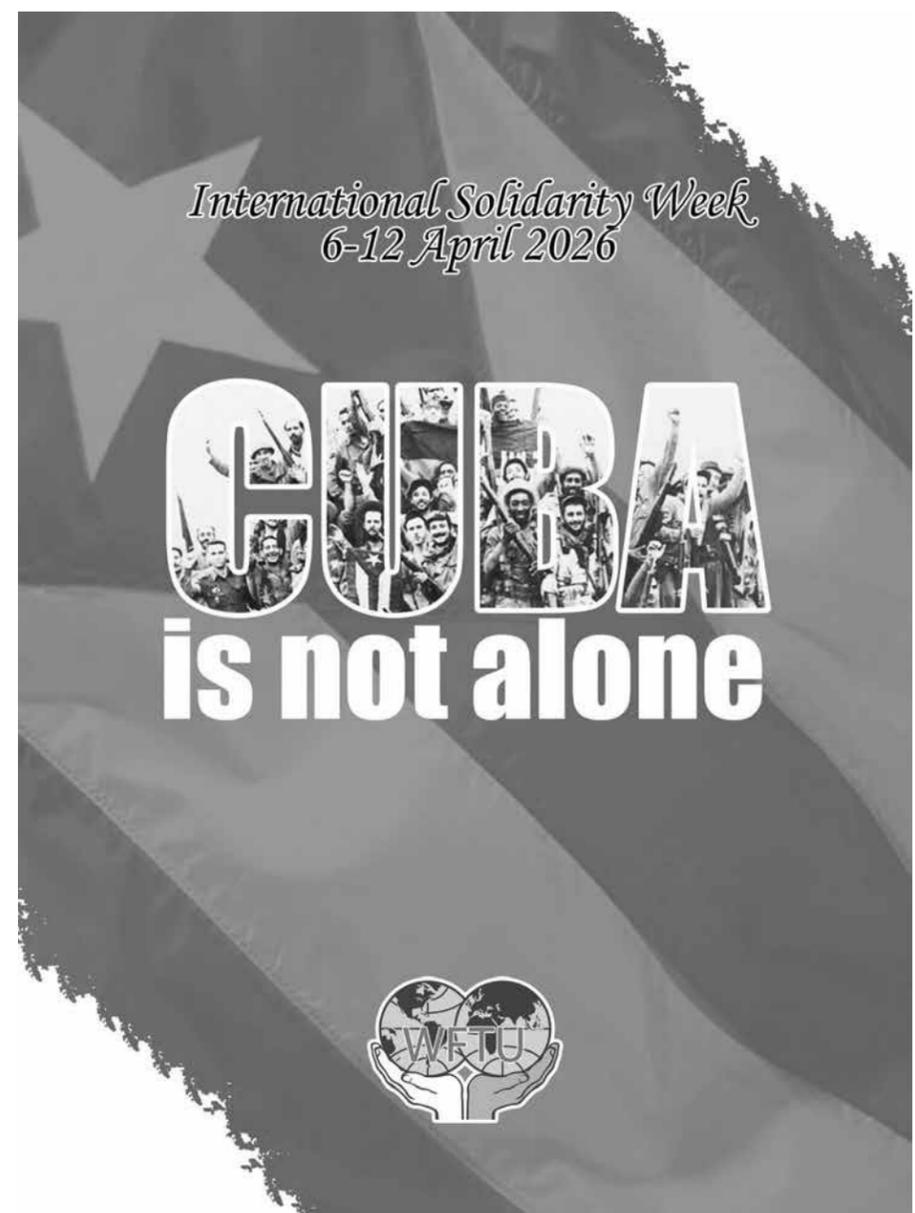
It is particularly important to ensure that the message of class solidarity and support for socialist Cuba reaches workers in factories and worksites, offices and shops, everywhere in workplaces, and becomes a priority for workers.

To better coordinate solidarity actions so that they are as effective as possible, the WFTU has decided to declare an International Week of Action from April 6 to 12 in solidarity with and in support of the people of Cuba. During this week, we call on all members and friends of the WFTU in all countries around the world to organize events and demonstrations of solidarity and condemnation of US aggression. These events should, as far as possible, be organized outside US embassies.

The WFTU calls on all members and friends to participate in an international campaign to collect money or other useful materials, such as medicines and medical supplies, to provide material support to the people of Cuba.

The money and other materials collected by WFTU member organizations will be channeled through CTC Cuba to provide relief to Cuban workers in businesses and workplaces where the lack of electricity and fuel has created very serious problems.

Hands off Cuba! Cuba is not alone! ■



Sudan facing all-out explosion: SCP

■ FROM PG 3

is governed by gunpower rather than the people's legitimate will.

Even prior to this, the Sudan war – about to enter its fourth year – had devastated the economy, paralyzed society and driven millions into displacement, hunger and insecurity, making any additional external shock a sure recipe for an all-out explosion.

The alarm bells are ringing: There is no sovereignty without a stop to the war; there can be no protection for the economy and no national resolution without a radical internal solution that ends the armed conflict and reclaims the democratic civil state.

In international law, the right of peoples to determine their fate and the sovereignty of states over their territories are not selective slogans, but principles that do not permit contradiction or division. Sudan – like Iran, Palestine and the rest of the region's peoples – is targeted by imperialism, and salvation will only be achieved by breaking from this path and fully aligning to the will of the people, for a just peace and true independence. ■

Sudanese Communist Party

Defence of Eastern Slopes an opportunity to build broad coalition

■ FROM PG 12

In the case of the Eastern Slopes, both logging and mining projects threaten the health of the waterways, but the local population has not been passive.

A proposal to log in Kananaskis Country, a region synonymous in many people's minds with pristine wilderness and the value of tourism, was met this fall with the blockade of logging roads and construction of a protest fence to block access. A renewed threat of a Grassy Mountains coal mine, which had been blocked in 2021 by a broad group of forces representing Indigenous peoples, ranchers, tourist industry and environmentalists, has sparked a petition campaign available at saveourslopes.ca.

These threats are also an opportunity for Indigenous nations, environmentalists and labour activists to come together with ranchers, farmers, the tourist industry and downstream local communities, to recognize an overall pattern of submission to corporate interests throughout the province, and to push back with healthier alternatives.

The Communist Party – Alberta is calling for a program of full employment through public ownership of resource companies, the phasing out of fossil fuels and development of alternate energy (Alberta is abundantly supplied with both sun and wind), a just transition where every energy sector worker is guaranteed their wages and a job through the transition, diversification of the economy and fully funded health, education and other services. ■

Kinew sidesteps Indigenous, environmental concerns in pursuit of profit

■ FROM PG 12

devour an equivalent amount of energy to hundreds of thousands of homes, almost half of which would go towards the centre's water cooling system alone.

This is an ecologically devastating project, and its impact must be measured alongside the irrelevance of this industry to any vision of common prosperity, as well as its profound indifference to working people. Kinew optimistically projects the creation of 1000 jobs, but the engineering and electrical trades required during construction are no part of the centre's daily upkeep. (Most data centres of this scale employ fewer than 100 personnel once operational.)

AI poses serious ethical and economic concerns, and the government's solicitude of big tech passes over crucial questions concerning the regulation of AI, let alone the necessity of worker control over its implementation per sector.

The major developer of this data centre is Las Vegas-based firm Jet.AI, alongside Canadian partner Consensus Core. Such investment is difficult to square with the economic nationalism that both Carney and Kinew espouse, though this dissonance indicates the reality of their industrial boosterism. No doubt the US-dominated field of AI is eager to partake of funds from Carney's "Canadian Sovereign AI Compute Strategy," which intends to grow data centres as well. And while Jet.AI's initial offer is from private coffers, its stated intent is to attract interest from "hyperscale tenants" in Canada, subsidized from federal investment in tech.

Manitoba is primed for this kind of project for many reasons, both infrastructural and spatial. According to Jet.AI CEO Mike Winston, "the combination of power, redundancy and buildable scale here is extremely hard to replicate." Once again, Kinew intends to leverage these natural and regional advantages before investors, notwithstanding the overwhelmingly negative benefit of this development to Manitobans. And while the proposed data centre is sure to be one of the more egregious examples of this approach to land use, it is only one among many.

Can you dig it?

In nearby Springfield, Alberta-based Sio Silica is once again hoping to push through a sand mining operation posing serious risks of contamination to the eastern aquifer. This proposal had already been rejected by the NDP in 2024 yet has returned amid the present flurry without any change to the proposed location or method of extraction, flouting the Clean Environment Commission and attempting to circumvent a full assessment.

Both Kinew and Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation Minister Jamie Moses have enthusiastically championed the Lynn Lake Gold Project, owned and operated by Alamos Gold.

But for all the touted benefits to Marcel Colomb First Nation, Alamos Gold has a terrible record, globally and locally. Their Turkish subsidiary has seen enormous protests over deforestation and waste, and their projects in Mexico faced down mass opposition to the destruction of protected archaeological sites, as well as a deadly cyanide spill in 2016. Just last year, Manitoba Conservation investigators determined that Alamos Gold's own negligence started the 85,000 hectare wildfire that evacuated the whole of Lynn Lake, destroying dozens of homes.

In southwestern Manitoba, the Deep Sky Corporation has announced a direct air capture (DAC) facility, with the happy endorsement of the NDP and far too little scrutiny. Direct Air Capture is a controversial carbon removal technology, using chemicals to extract CO2 from the air. The technology itself is new and unreliable, as noted by Climate Action Team Manitoba in a recent report. What's more, it is widely regarded as an industry hoax, forestalling more significant action to reduce emissions and consuming obscene volumes of water and energy at the same time. Founded by ex-executives of Hopper and Airbnb, Deep Sky is not set to accept provincial funding, but has already set the government to lobbying on its behalf, with Kinew pledging to shift regulations so that the firm can receive federal tax credits.

A new direction

These are only a few examples of Kinew's plan to make Manitoba a "have" province, and of how Carney's industrial strategy downloads onto its provincial exponents. Plainly, not one of these capital-intensive projects poses any long-term benefit to workers, nor to the communities where these mammoth developments appear. Instead, the Manitoba NDP continues to pursue a policy of aggressive deregulation and corporate prospecting amid Carney's version of the same – all while greenwashing their contribution to a federal war budget of unprecedented scope.

Kinew's pet projects on behalf of investors cannot be understood, let alone defeated, as a discrete series. Rather, his plans must be viewed as a strategic commitment to unfettered free trade and market caprice, to soaring military spending and the foreign policy that it pursues. In this light, there can be no mistaking him for anything but what he is – a Carney Liberal in progressive clothing, and a threat to peace. ■

Unifor expects CN to increase "real investment", create lasting union jobs

■ FROM PG 9

March 3, the arbitrator ordered CN to reinvest in and modernize the Transcona Wheel Shop, restore Wheel Shop production to levels that meet or exceed pre-shutdown levels, and hire at least 20 new bargaining unit employees as part of the startup. While the award does not require CN to reopen the Air Brake and Traction Motor Shops, it does require CN to bring 85 percent of heavy bad order locomotive work back in-house in Canada, with the majority of that work remaining in Transcona.

"Unifor will now focus on ensuring CN fully implements this award. That means pressing the company to deliver its startup and operational plan within 30 days, follow through on modernization and hiring commitments, and restore in-house rail work as ordered. We will be watching closely to make sure CN follows through on its obligations and that this decision leads to real investment and lasting union jobs in Canada," continued Payne. ■

WHAT'S LEFT

VICTORIA

MAR 28 | MICHAEL PARENTI

7 PM at 10A-620 Judah St. Screening of Parenti's lecture on the threat of US imperialism. Snacks, drinks, Books. Proceeds to benefit People's Voice.

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 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 19 | LES FEMMES ET LES SYNDICATS

18h 30, UQÀM, salle à confirmer, panel sur le mouvement des femmes et le mouvement syndical à l'UQÀM, organisé par la cellule Jeanne-Corbin du PCQ. Pour plus d'informations, écrire à pcqpc@gmail.com.

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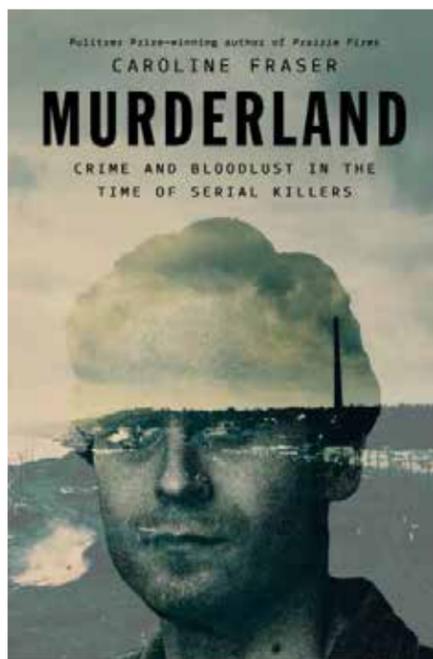
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A forensic examination of capitalism's pathological superstructure

Murderland
Caroline Fraser
Penguin Random House (2025)

REVIEW BY JENNIFER DRINKWATER



Though it is not explicitly a political novel, Caroline Fraser's *Murderland* has a narrative that exposes and critiques the inherent dysfunction and structural violence of late capitalist society. From a Marxist-Leninist viewpoint, the work can be read as a forensic examination of how the material base, the capitalist economic system, generates a superstructure (encompassing law, ideology and social relations) that is fundamentally pathological.

Law enforcement and the legal system are portrayed not as neutral arbiters of justice, but as instruments of the ruling class. Their function is to manage the symptoms of social breakdown (crime) in a way that maintains the existing property relations and social hierarchy, rather than addressing the root causes. Corruption or systemic failure within these institutions is therefore a predictable feature, not a bug.

Fraser's history traces how forensic science, from fingerprinting to ballistics to DNA, was not developed in a vacuum but was systematically funded, standardized and deployed by the state (primarily the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover). This transformed local, often chaotic, investigations into a centralized, technologically-driven arm of state control. The book shows how the state invests immense resources in solving individual murders while largely ignoring the structural conditions that produce them.

The very creation of the American Forensic System is part of the 20th-century expansion of the law-and-order state. Fraser's narrative shows how high-profile, media-sensationalized cases (like the Lindbergh kidnapping) were used to argue for more funding, more centralized power for the FBI and more technological tools, solidifying a punitive rather than a socially transformative approach to social harm.

Murderland serves as a critique of the capitalist mode of production and its superstructure. It demonstrates how the system's internal contradictions generate a social landscape of pervasive violence and moral corruption, where crime is a symptomatic expression of deeper class antagonisms and where the official organs of the state exist to preserve the conditions that make such a "Murderland" inevitable. The alienation endemic to capitalism is reflected in the perpetrators' psychologies. The isolation, despair and nihilistic violence that permeate the story are products of a society that reduces human relationships to transactional exchanges and fragments social bonds.

Fraser identifies the Interstate Highway system as a critical environmental factor: It created a nation of transients, allowing killers to hunt across vast jurisdictions, exploit police communication gaps and escape easily.

Fraser also argues that heavy metal exposure from manufacturer Tacoma American Smelter and Refining Company (ASARCO) was a contributing factor in the development of these serial killers in this era. She notes

that they are linked in extensive medical literature to neurological damage including increased aggression and impulsivity, reduced impulse control and poor executive function, cognitive deficits and emotional instability, psychosis and violent behaviour.

In the mid-20th century, exposure was widespread. Lead was ubiquitous in gasoline (leaded exhaust), house paint and plumbing until the phaseouts of the 1970s and 80s. Urban and industrial areas, the epicentres of the "Murderland" landscape, had the highest atmospheric lead levels. Mining and metal manufacturing were major industries in the Pacific Northwest and in addition to lead, there were high levels of arsenic as a byproduct of copper smelting.

The post-war generation in this area was, from childhood, bathed in an unprecedented soup of neurotoxins which created a sub-population with potentially damaged frontal lobes, the brain's seat of judgment and impulse control. Fraser suggests that cultural narcissism and alienation could have been biochemically intensified in vulnerable individuals.

Heavy metal exposure acted as a hidden amplifier within the "Murderland" ecosystem. It did not create the cultural or infrastructural conditions, but it could have biologically primed a generation for higher levels of violence and dysfunction.

The serial killer, in this view, is not just a product of a broken society, but potentially of a physically poisoned one. The most violent outliers may have been those who suffered a perfect storm – psychological alienation, combined with the social opportunity provided by highways and anonymity, and potentially exacerbated by neurological damage from an environment saturated with lead and other toxins.

"Murderland" is not a natural place but a social one. It is a product of specific historical and environmental conditions. The environment is therefore the entirety of modern America in that era – its physical layout, its cultural psyche and its institutional weaknesses. Serial killers are portrayed not as mythical monsters emerging from a vacuum, but as predators who evolved to exploit the specific terrain of their time. ■

Real threat of third world war demands mass action

■ FROM PG 7

semi-colony and cannot freely dispose of its resources or significantly increase its production.

Beijing is exploring ways to circumvent this multi-pronged offensive, including through supply agreements in yuan, accelerated development of the Arctic route, and strengthening of its strategic partnership with Pakistan to secure a land corridor. In addition, China has asked its refiners to suspend fuel exports in order to prioritize the domestic market, a sign of supply tensions. But these alternatives, which are costly and time-consuming to implement, cannot replace the Middle Eastern pillar of its energy security overnight, especially since 57 percent of China's maritime imports still come from the Middle East.

Silk Roads, fragmentation and planned suffocation

What is revealed for all to see is a system that, in an effort to maintain itself, creates chaos to strangle China. By attacking Venezuela and Iran and maneuvering to neutralize Russia's advantage, Washington is not seeking peace – instead, it looks to reorganize the flow of oil to its advantage.

Beyond the current conflagration, the US strategic objective for the Middle East is clearly emerging: the balkanization or, given the local context, the Lebanonization of nation states. This planned fragmentation aims to create permanent chaos through the lever of ethno-communal civil war.

Recent events confirm a deliberate desire to destabilize Iran by stirring up the secessionist ambitions of its oppressed minorities, while deploying armed groups from among them – equipped and financed by Washington – to wage a ground war in addition to US-Israeli air strikes.

The aims behind fragmentation are not limited to weakening recalcitrant states. It also operates like a brake on the autonomous development of nations and, more specifically, is a major obstacle to China's New Silk Roads project. Also called the Belt and Road Initiative, this project relies on massive investments in infrastructure and transcontinental trade. As such, it requires a stable geopolitical environment and strong nation states capable of guaranteeing the security of economic corridors and the sustainability of agreements.

This is inextricably linked to the energy issue – the Silk Roads are also oil and gas routes, and the stability they require is the very condition for the security of supply that underpins China's industrial power. The permanent instillation of chaos in the Middle East, Central Asia and elsewhere therefore has the collateral (but nevertheless desired) effect of countering China's influence, weakening its partners and compromising the returns on investment of its infrastructure projects.

By fragmenting nations, US imperialism isn't just closing trade routes. It is methodically suffocating Beijing's access to strategic resources, whether through direct war (Iran), sanctions (Venezuela) or coercive diplomacy (Russia).

The spiral of war

This offensive isn't limited to China. Cuba, which has been subjected to a criminal blockade for more than six decades,

suffers the consequences of this economic war on a daily basis. Every barrel of oil that struggles to reach the island, every blackout that paralyzes it, is a direct consequence of the same logic that today seeks to destroy and massacre the Iranian people.

The power cuts in Havana and the strikes on Tehran come from the same hand – the hand of imperialism, which does not hesitate to starve entire populations to preserve its domination.

NATO, the armed wing of US-led imperialism camp, was among the first institutions to support the bombing campaign against the Iranian people. On March 2, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte described the offensive as "crucial" and welcomed the elimination of the Supreme Leader, stating that "we are all better off without him."

Officially "uninvolved," the military alliance nevertheless assumed the role of a logistical platform: without the French bases in Istres, without British reinforcements in Qatar, without the "facilitation" of European allies, the US campaign would not have been possible. The interception of a missile targeting Turkey served as a pretext for strengthening NATO's defenses, transforming a war of aggression into a threat against which the Alliance must "protect" itself.

As it did in Yugoslavia and Libya, and as it is doing on Russia's doorstep, NATO is once again acting as the cop of the world in the service of US interests, trampling on the sovereignty of nations and international law.

The case of Canada perfectly illustrates this contradiction and the pressure exerted on allies. On February 28, Prime Minister Carney gave his "unequivocal support" to the US strikes before acknowledging a few days later that he had supported them "with regret," judging them to be potentially "contrary to international law." Foreign Minister Anita Anand even had to delete messages referring to a "diplomatic solution," a sign of internal tensions.

When asked on March 5 about Canada's possible military involvement, Carney refused to rule it out, saying that this country would stand "shoulder to shoulder with its allies" if necessary. Behind the scenes a Liberal MP speaking on condition of anonymity expressed his fear that Washington would invoke NATO Article 5 (the mutual clause) to drag Ottawa into an unwanted conflict. This mixture of overt support, discreet regrets and powerlessness sums up the position of Washington's allies – willing hostages to an imperialist strategy that they ultimately endorse.

The war of aggression against Iran that has set the Middle East ablaze, the tightening noose around China, and the reinforced blockade against Cuba form a coherent whole. By turning hunger and energy into weapons of war, methodically destabilizing entire regions, and multiplying threats and coups d'état, US imperialism is plunging humanity into the abyss.

The threat of a third world war is no longer an alarmist prophecy – every day, it becomes a little more our present, and we are called to act now. ■

Jad Kabbanji is president of the
Mouvement québécois pour la paix

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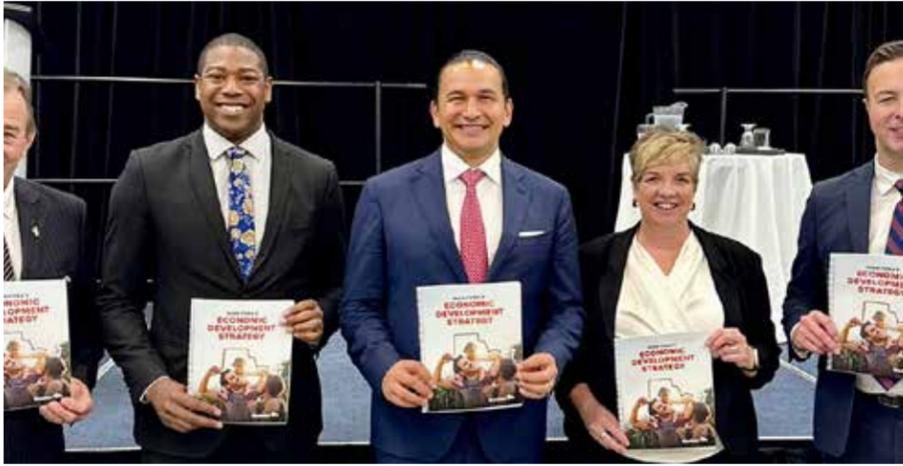
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Workers and communities to pay dearly as Manitoba NDP digs into war economy



CAM SCOTT

By now, the significance of Ottawa's Defence Industrial Strategy ought to be clear. Under cover of a movement for sovereignty, Prime Minister Mark Carney has embarked upon a thorough transformation of Canada's economy, to the benefit of select capitalists with a stake in mining and military technology.

Equally clear is the austerity ahead, as the public service faces massive layoffs and the government attempts to recruit interdepartmentally to national defence.

But these trends didn't begin with Mark Carney, however efficiently he has made his reputation from them in the present trade war. In many ways, the "nation-building" spree of Carney's industrial strategy was anticipated by the premiers, whose coordinated campaigns for interprovincial deregulation and domestic free trade put a clear set of demands before the present Liberal government.

Before either Trump or Carney had won their most recent elections, Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew was busy organizing trade missions to the US and attempting to open a provincial office in Washington to facilitate the export of Manitoba's critical minerals. And months before the Liberal pledge to more than double its tithe to NATO, Kinew was calling for Canada to increase its defence budget in order to preemptively placate an incoming Trump administration.

Today, Kinew's wishes appear to have been granted, and with hardly any questions from his base. The deregulation of domestic trade is a crucial aspect of the Defence Industrial Strategy, which Minister of Industry Mélanie Joly presented to the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce at a Magellan-sponsored keynote last week. As the federal government promises quick procurement through new domestic supply chains, provinces are lining up for contracts in tech infrastructure, aerospace and the mining of critical minerals. And in Manitoba, the provincial NDP anticipates a number of high-profile capital projects as part and parcel to this strategy.

Port of Churchill

In a March 5 interview with CBC, Kinew was enthusiastic about the potential for a NATO-activated Port of Churchill. "I know that the federal government has decided to lean into Churchill," he boasted. "They're really looking at defence spending and defence spending is going to be one of the big ways we promote our economy. I think (Joly's) message effectively here is: Manitoba businesses, Manitoba workers, let's figure out a way for you to pivot towards defence, then you can figure out how to bring more resources and more opportunity into Manitoba."

Joly confirmed as much while in Winnipeg, emphasizing the significance of Manitoba's role in the F-35 supply chain by way of firms such as Magellan and noting the potential of Churchill as an oil shipping hub. Although its facilities only operate during the summer at present, Ottawa continues to eye

the Port of Churchill as a site of geostrategic interest due to its location between Canada and Europe. Just this month, Churchill's Arctic Gateway Group, a partnership of Indigenous and northern communities, signed an agreement with the Port of Antwerp-Bruges International – one of the busiest logistical centres in the world.

The NATO Association of Canada has identified critical minerals as "the key to meeting Canada's NATO contributions" in the Carney era, and the EU as "the clearest path for cooperation to push forward this industrial development." Canada has reserves of all twelve "defence-critical" minerals identified by NATO for use in heavy artillery, and actively produces ten of these already. The Port of Churchill would then function as a key conduit for these exports, and a strategic asset in the military conquest of the Arctic.

While the Port of Churchill has not yet appeared on the federal government's list of projects of "national importance," Carney and Kinew have already pledged more than \$262.5 million to the development which will include improvements to railway infrastructure, a significant critical mineral storage facility, and a wide range of aerial and atmospheric surveillance technology.

Developing Churchill for the sake of NATO supply chains poses an existential risk amid inter-imperialist competition for control of the Arctic. Whatever Kinew and his corporate allies claim, this cannot be reconciled with sustainable development goals or Indigenous sovereignty.

The goal of transforming Churchill into a year-round hub for the export of energy products has captured the attention of Western Energy Corridor, a group of energy and pipeline executives who wish to construct a crude oil pipeline between Alberta and Churchill, as well as an oil export terminal at the northern port. Such infrastructure would violate the rights of any number of Indigenous peoples along the path of its construction, regardless of its short-term benefit to those communities placed at its terminus.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith has previously praised Kinew's openness to a northern pipeline, using the same language as their coordinated assault on interprovincial trade regulations. "This is what a Team Canada approach looks like," she wrote last year. "Provinces and their Premiers supporting other provinces in getting their products to market."

Data mining

That's not all that Team Canada is doing on the ground in Manitoba. In the community of Île-des-Chênes, an historically Métis enclave in the rural municipality of Ritchot, Kinew has vocally supported a controversial proposal for the construction of a sprawling AI data centre, covering more than three hundred acres of arable farmland. This hyperscale development would be one of the largest such facilities in the world and would

■ KINEW, PG 10

Attack on Eastern Slopes the latest threat to communities in Alberta

PV ALBERTA BUREAU

The devastation caused by tar sands development has received a lot of national and international attention, but the same pattern threatens to play out further south in Alberta, in the Eastern Slopes. There, both mining and lumbering threaten a fragile ecosystem and the livelihood of whole communities.

This is the region on the eastern side of the Rockies, which is the source of the major rivers running through southern Alberta, Saskatchewan and beyond. This water system is vital to the agricultural sector and to human life far beyond the slopes themselves. The current provincial government is playing the same role as every other government for the past seventy years – complete surrender to the short-term profit maximization of giant, mostly foreign, multinational corporations, with ultra-low royalty and tax regimes, weak environmental oversight and publicly subsidized infrastructure.

This consolidates an economy built on resource extraction, with no component of building secondary industry. The employment arises mostly during the construction phase, with very few permanent jobs. The environmental devastation will far outlast the jobs, however, and the cleanup costs, if it even happens, are shifted onto the



public. The issue of orphan wells, where local municipalities with lower budgets are expected to pick up the significant cost and ranchers can't even access their land, shows how real these dangers are.

At the same time, the refusal to take the public's rightful share from ownership of the resources results in chronic government underfunding to the tune of many billions. This in turn fuels the conservative program of cutting and destroying Medicare, public education and all the other services that working people need.

■ DEFENCE OF EASTERN SLOPES, PG 10

Democratic solution to national question is key to struggle for socialism

■ FROM PG 5

force.

What forces in Quebec are opposing this law?

Unfortunately, there is little to no opposition to this sham constitution. True, Québec solidaire opposed the fact that Indigenous people were refused entry in the National Assembly; but in doing so doing, they signaled their objective support for the bill.

None of the political forces in the National Assembly are opposed. None of the labour centrals dare to voice opposition. The same goes for the student movement and the different democratic movements.

Unfortunately, many people hope that once Legault is gone, his policies will be gone as well. But this can't be further from the truth. CAQ's measures will not be dismantled – the PQ and QS themselves hope for independence, while Liberals and the far right look forward to continue using them to benefit state monopoly capitalism in Quebec.

The only opposition is that of the Communist Party. We are the only ones to actually propose a new constitution for Quebec, one that is democratic and forces Canada to establish a new pact between nations of the country, one that is based on an equal and voluntary partnership.

What does the national question mean for the working class and the struggle for socialism?

For the working people throughout Canada – whether Quebec, Indigenous, Acadian or English-speaking Canada – the national question is fundamental. People might think that a referendum has nothing to do with the other nations, but it involves all.

Canada is vulnerable in the face of the United States, and anyone who thinks that separation is the best way to strengthen the fight against US imperialism understands nothing from the basics of the struggle. An independent Quebec would not only force

the working class of our nation to become subordinate to US, but it would have the same impact on the working class in the rest of Canada. Talk about internationalism!

Particularly in this current context of increasingly aggressive US imperialism, the working classes of Quebec and the other nations in Canada have a lot in common in the face of state monopoly capitalism and imperialism. However, for them to fight together, they need to be united on an equal footing – we cannot struggle together if we are divided by oppression. This is the importance of a Quebec constitution – a genuine and democratic one that will allow for a new and equal partnership among all the nations composing this country.

How does this affect the PCQ's role in the upcoming Quebec election?

Heading toward the election in October, many people see the main danger as being a potential referendum leading to Quebec's separation. But really, the main danger is the status quo and those who defend it.

Legault wants a sham of a constitution that will consolidate the power of monopoly capital, both from Canada and from Quebec. Through Bill 1, he is trying to consolidate his anti-democratic policies such that that no other political party will dismantle them once elected.

This is why the Parti communiste du Québec will run 10 candidates in the next elections. We will not be the "anti-CAQ party" – we be the party, the only party, to attack state monopoly capitalism. Campaigning with the call for a genuine Constituent Assembly will allow us to build bridges with progressive forces in our common struggle against imperialism, for peace and sovereignty.

Sovereignty for Canada can only be realized through the sovereignty of Quebec and the other oppressed nations and people in the country – and the reverse is also true. And this points to the necessity for a new constitution. ■

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