

PEOPLE'S VOICE

CANADA'S
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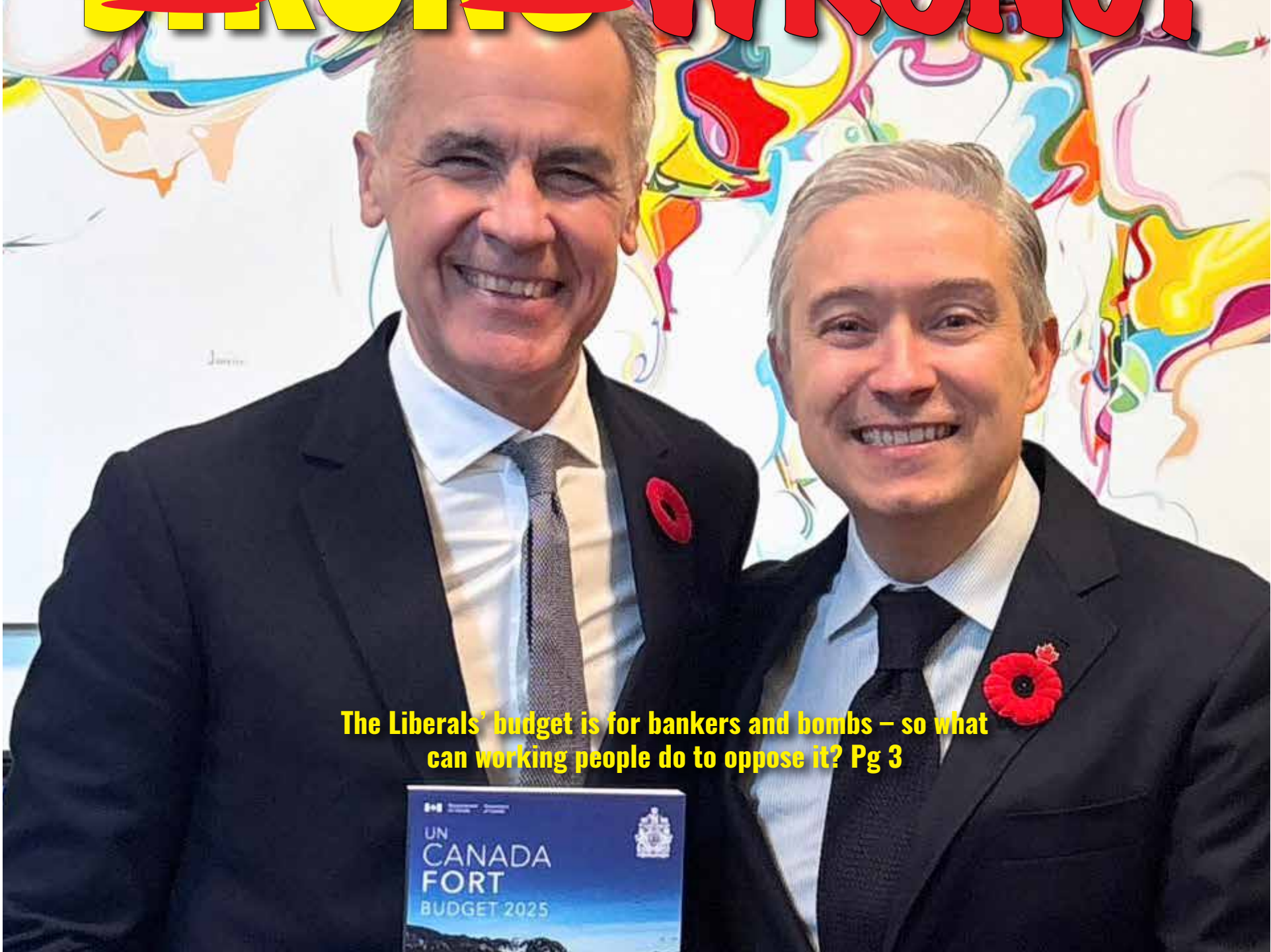
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OFL has chance to build fight against Doug Ford's pro-corporate blitz - Pg 3

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BUILDING CANADA ~~STRONG~~ WRONG!



The Liberals' budget is for bankers and bombs – so what can working people do to oppose it? Pg 3

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Pages from our past...

Canadian Tribune Vol 19 No 956 ~ November 21, 1955

Gravy for few, below standard pay for a million

MARK FRANK

Just 250 “big shots” together pocketed \$45.7 million in personal incomes – an average of \$182,000 a year, while at the other end of the income tax scale were 1,858,530 citizens paying taxes on incomes of \$3,100 or less a year – less than \$60 a week. This is what the latest 1953 Dept. of National Revenue “green book” on Taxation Statistics reveals.

Some 2,000 in the topmost registered brackets from \$50,000 to \$100,000 and over together gathered a total of \$154.7 million, more than what a fair-sized community of 76,120 taxpayers in the \$1,900 to \$2,000 a year group earned – an amount totalling \$148.1 million.

Trade unionists in current negotiations are citing an approximate \$80 a week minimum as the rate of pay that would be consistent with human decency. Yet hundreds of thousands of Canadians are obviously living under this minimum health standard.

Despite rosy reports about our GNP (gross national product) and the headlines recording new highs in 1955 company profits, there are these grim inescapable figures just released from Ottawa.

They show the seamier side of the capitalist economy – the one government apologists cover up. They reflect the truth of the Marxist proposition that under capitalism there is, despite what appears on the surface as a healthy development, a real internal and absolute deterioration of living standards.

Over 1,000,000 Canadians who filed income tax returns had incomes of \$2,400 or less – an average of less than \$46 a week.

Significant was the fact that where there are strong unions, as in Trail and Rossland, BC (Mine-Mill union) average income was reported at \$3,554 – the highest in the group of cities with over 5,000 taxpayers.

But where unionization was at a low level and where French-Canadian residents of Hull, Quebec are subject to lower pay rates than the rest of the country, there were the lowest annual incomes in the country, averaged at \$2,864.

Of the 3,389,350 taxpayers, 26 percent were making \$5,000 or over. Ten percent had \$10,000 or more. Only 7,310 were in the \$25,000-\$50,000 a year bracket. And a nice tight little community of 1,700 pulled in the gravy between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

Business and financial executives were in this big money section of the economy.

At the bottom of the list were nurses, averaging only \$1,883 – hardly a move in three years running. ■

Notes: The government no longer issues a “green book” with the kind of detail indicated in this article, but current data from Statistics Canada establish the truth of the author’s comment that “under capitalism there is a real internal and absolute deterioration of living standards.”

The 250 highest earners in 1953, representing just under 0.01 percent of taxpayers that year, had an average income of \$182,000 or around \$2.05 million in 2023 dollars. By contrast, the top 0.01 percent of earners in 2023 – around 2,900 people – had an average income of about \$7.7 million, or nearly three times that of the same bracket of the highest earners 70 years prior.

At the other end of society, over 1 million people, or around 6.7 percent of the population at the time, had annual incomes of \$2,400 or less in 1953 – equal to around \$27,000 in 2023. Contemporary government metrics for people living in poverty are very different (and often misleading) but the latest figures suggest that number was around 4 million people in 2023, or around 10.2 percent of the population.

No progress, no plan: What Canada's latest poverty numbers tell us



SAM DIBELLONIA AND TANIA OLIVEIRA

The latest poverty data confirms a grim trend: poverty continues to rise among almost every demographic group and in nearly every province and territory in Canada. More and more people cannot afford the basic necessities that we all need for a decent standard of living and a dignified life.

These findings come from the Canadian Income Survey (CIS), an annual cross-sectional survey that examines the incomes and demographic characteristics of a sample of people in Canada. Statistics Canada released the results from the 2023 cycle in May 2025.

Poverty continues to rise, returning to pre-pandemic levels

In 2023, roughly 10.2 percent of the population lived in poverty, representing about 4,000,000 people. This is up from 9.9 percent in 2022 and marks the third consecutive yearly increase.

Importantly, Canada’s overall poverty level is now nearly identical to what it was in 2019 right before the pandemic, when 10.3 percent of the population lived in poverty.

When the pandemic hit, governments stepped up in new and creative ways to protect the people who were most exposed to the economic shock. For example, the federal government introduced temporary measures such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. These efforts drove down poverty rates and housing insecurity during this time.

Sadly, the gains in poverty reduction and, ultimately, to people’s income stability, have been lost. This was and remains a policy choice. Governments could have explored ways to sustain more of these effective interventions, creating a permanently stronger social safety net for the people in deepest need. Rather than “build back better,” we’ve returned to the policy status quo, causing more people to struggle to survive on low incomes.

It’s also important to note that the average depth of poverty in Canada is increasing. In 2023, people experiencing poverty had average incomes that were equal to roughly two-thirds of the poverty line. In 2022 and prior to the pandemic, incomes were closer, on average, to the poverty line. In other words, more people are in poverty, and they are also in deeper poverty.

Child poverty is driving this trend

Compared to 2022, the 2023 poverty rate for children under age 18 grew at a faster pace than it did for other age groups. Child poverty increased from 9.9 percent in 2022 to 10.7 percent in 2023, a level of poverty for this group not seen since 2017.

What’s driving this trend is increasing poverty among children living in households led by lone-parent females. From 2022 to 2023, the poverty rate among this group increased by 2.4 percentage points, from 26.9 percent to 29.3 percent. These trends should be of great concern to pol-

icymakers.

Prior to the pandemic, child poverty was on a consistent downward trajectory year after year, including among children living in households headed by lone-parent females. This decrease has largely been attributed to the introduction of the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) in 2016. The recent uptick in child poverty suggests that the positive effect of the CCB is at risk of being eroded by high costs and a difficult labour market. Despite the value of the CCB being indexed to inflation, it is not keeping up with the needs of families, and lone-parent female households seem to be faring the worst.

Single working-age adults still face the highest poverty rates

Similarly, single working-age adults without children continued to experience high poverty, reaching a shocking 31.4 percent in 2023. While poverty for this group is not growing quite as fast as it is for children, more single working-age adults without children experience poverty in general – a trend that has been consistent since 2017.

The high rate of poverty experienced among single working-age adults is a reflection of the lack of income supports available to this demographic.

Poverty among seniors is down thanks to higher income supports

In contrast with children and working-age adults, seniors’ poverty has improved.

In 2023, only 5 percent of people aged 65 and older experienced poverty, a 1 percentage point reduction over 2022. Importantly, this is the lowest poverty rate experienced among seniors since 2015, except for the mid-pandemic low of 3.1 percent in 2020.

The decline in seniors’ poverty is likely the result of the recent 10 percent increase to Old Age Security (OAS) benefits for seniors aged 75 and older. While this increase began in 2022, it didn’t take effect until July of that year, meaning that the 2023 data would be the first year where the full impact of the increase is shown. Importantly, seniors’ benefits, such as OAS and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) for those with low incomes, grow with inflation, whereas most social assistance benefits don’t. This fact likely contributes to the widening the gap in poverty rates between working-age adults and seniors.

Disability poverty remains high but dropped slightly

The proportion of people with disabilities who experience poverty also improved in 2023, though very slightly. Compared with 2022, their poverty rate dropped by 0.3 percentage points from 12.3 percent in 2022 to 12 percent in 2023. However, people with disabilities are still more likely to experience poverty than those who do not have disabilities (12 percent vs. 7.7 percent, respectively).

The Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) may

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PARTY OF CANADA

The Communist Party of Canada, formed in 1921, has a proud history of fighting for jobs, equality, peace, Canadian independence and socialism. Our members are always active building our party and helping to strengthen the progressive movements on a range of issues across the country. To find out more, contact our central CPC office.

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“Building Canada Wrong”: Carney budget means war on the working class, militarization of the economy and a foreign policy of aggression

PV STAFF

Mark Carney's first budget followed through on promises made in last spring's Throne Speech: massive cuts to public services and social programs, huge increases to military spending and militarization of the economy, expanded oil and gas exports and the pipelines needed to do it, and a massive shift of wealth from working people to corporate monopolies.

Along the way, Ottawa is expanding mining and export of rare earth elements and other minerals while giving lip service to Indigenous rights under UNDRIP and cutting spending on Indigenous services, abandoning the environment, and cutting corporate taxes to the lowest levels in the OECD. It's also doubling down on xenophobia by cutting immigration including foreign students and temporary foreign workers, as well as toughening jail sentencing and access to bail.

Instead of creating jobs this budget will destroy vital jobs and services across Canada that working people want and need, starting with 40,000 job cuts in the federal public service and the loss of services in every public sector. Instead of protecting public services, the budget paves the way to even more widespread privatization. While the Liberals say the budget will protect sovereignty, it will build a massive military industrial complex in Canada that is deeply integrated with the US – further weakening Canadian sovereignty and independence, and increasing the growing threat of war.

Carney's “elbows up” are visible in this budget and in his negotiations with Trump over tariffs and the future of manufacturing in Canada – but they're not aimed at Trump. They're aimed at workers and trade unions in Canada, who will pay the price for the prime minister's determination to renew the disastrous USMCA deal at any cost.

The budget shows that Ottawa has money to spend, and plenty of it – to the tune of \$140 billion in new spending. But the government's priorities are flipped in the wrong direction entirely.

There's nothing about poverty reduction – even through poverty levels continue to rise and currently 4 million people don't have enough to live on. There's nothing about housing – even though the housing crisis continues to deepen and widen, condemning millions of people to either paying all their earnings for shelter or having to live with inadequate shelter. There's nothing about nationalizing key industries, as a way to protect jobs and services against plant closure or relocation, or about a 32-hour work week to provide jobs and increase leisure time. Nor is there anything about rolling back prices on basic necessities like food, fuel or housing.

What there is, though, is a lot of public money heading to huge corporations to offset their expenses, minimize their risks and pad their bottom lines. Just how much money are we talking? The budget proposes more than \$110 billion in “productivity-enhancing investments” over the next five years, enough to reduce corporations' marginal effective tax rate by more than 2 percent and taking Canada to the lowest rate in the OECD.

There's also plenty of public funding heading into capital infrastructure rather than operating costs – so, your hospital still won't have enough nurses to reopen entire wards or ERs that have been closed, but at least there will be a shiny new private clinic next door where you can pay to get healthcare.

This is a budget for bombs and bankers, not working people. The big question is what to do about it. There is a massive basis of unity for building opposition, and that's what working people need to do now.

We need to build unity around resistance to this budget, right across the country. Every



effort to mobilize against it, to make it unimplementable needs to be supported. We need to form local anti-cuts committees that bring working people together in our communities, and then connect to one another through provincial and federal networks. Key to this is the role of local labour councils, who have the connections and the social and economic clout to lead efforts to forge ongoing and escalating action campaigns.

This is no time to sit back and pretend that we can wait until the next election – working people need to take a stand now. The efforts we make today will help build up the basis for a broader people's coalition that can continue the struggle over the longer term.

Today, we need pull ourselves together around a plan of resistance, which should include calls for:

- Expanded funding for public services and universal social programs – no layoffs and no privatization.
- Expanded services at Canada Post, including door to door delivery throughout the country, postal banking and a monopoly on final mile parcel delivery.
- A 75-percent cut to military spending, with funds re-directed to public services and social programs, with a goal of raising wages, incomes and living standards.
- An independent Canadian foreign policy of peace and disarmament, including withdrawal from NATO and NORAD and cancellation of warships and fighter planes.
- Withdrawal from USMCA now and a multilateral and mutually beneficial trade policy with the world.
- An economic policy that builds Canadian secondary industry and manufacturing, creating good, well-paid and permanent value-added jobs.
- A program to build affordable publicly owned and operated social housing across Canada now, combined with rent rollbacks and controls for all tenants.
- Nationalization of the auto and steel industries to build a Canadian car, public transit and transportation, and light industrial vehicles in retooled and new Canadian plants.
- Strong plant closure legislation that requires corporations to demonstrate just cause for layoffs, relocation and closures, at public tribunals with the power to levy fines, jail terms and to nationalize plants.
- Increasing EI to 90 percent of previous earnings, for the entire period of unemployment, for all unemployed workers.
- Outlaw Section 107 of the Canada Labour Code and the use of back-to-work legislation by federal and provincial governments against striking workers, while enshrining the right to strike, picket and organize in a Labour Bill of Rights in the constitution. ■



Doug Ford's corporate blitz demands a united, fighting response from Ontario Federation of Labour convention

PV ONTARIO BUREAU

The Doug Ford government has returned to Queen's Park with a new, anti-democratic playbook: govern by decree while the legislature is closed, then unleash a blitz of omnibus legislation to overwhelm opposition and ram through its corporate agenda. This is a conscious strategy to accelerate the transfer of public wealth into private hands while minimizing accountability.

The backdrop to this is a deepening economic crisis, the worst impacts of which are being offloaded onto working people. A generational youth unemployment emergency is unfolding, with rates hitting 13.2 percent for those aged 20-24. Ford's response? Blame the victims, telling young people to simply look harder for a job, even as Ontario led the country in job losses.

This callousness is the authentic voice of a government that serves capital, not working people. It is a government that uses performative stunts, such as banning speed cameras or dictating paper bag use at the liquor store, as smokescreens for the systematic looting of our common wealth.

And the looting is literal. The \$2.5-billion Skills Development Fund scandal, exposed by the Auditor General, reveals a patronage system where public money is funnelled directly to private, for-profit outfits that scored low on the program's own metrics. The game plan is to defund public institutions like colleges to the point of crisis, while diverting massive sums to corporate partners. This deliberate strategy precipitated the recent strike by 10,000 college support staff and remains unadressed.

Nowhere is the failure of this corporate welfare model more stark than in the auto sector. The betrayal by Stellantis in Brampton and GM in Ingersoll, sacrificing thousands of jobs, exposes billions in public subsidies as a sham. Auto monopolies have been gifted over \$28 billion with no binding job guarantees. Ford's theatrical rage at the plant closures is hollow; his policy of writing blank cheques to foreign monopolies is the direct cause of this vulnerability.

This fall, the corporate blitz at Queen's Park continues. *Bill 33, The Supporting Children and Students Act*, is a full-scale assault on public education. It forcibly reinstates failed police-in-schools programs, resurrecting the school-to-prison pipeline, and it brings back the core of the defeated “Student Choice Initiative” to bankrupt student unions and student organizations. This is a “right-to-work” style attack against the student movement.

Meanwhile, *Bill 60, The Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act*, remains a full-scale assault on tenants and democratic planning, despite the government being forced to retreat on its attack on rent control. The bill is, in essence, a “Faster Evictions Act” designed to make it easier and faster to push tenants out, creating a pipeline from the Landlord and Tenant Board

to the growing encampments. With one in four unionized workers being tenants, this is a direct attack on the working class, eroding wages won at the bargaining table and handing them over to landlords. This proves the agenda is not about solving the housing crisis, but about guaranteeing developer profits.

This convergence of attacks marks an escalation. These are not isolated issues but interconnected components of a single strategy: to transfer public wealth and political power to corporate monopolies.

The working class and its allies cannot afford to rely on opposition parties that have failed to present a credible alternative. The fightback must be built now through coordinated, escalating action in workplaces and on the streets in labour's own name.

Attempts to divide working people must be resisted. LiUNA's recent departure from the Ontario Federation of Labour, triggered by the federation's defence of public colleges and its criticism of Ford's corrupt Skills Development Fund, is a stark example of this “divide and conquer” tactic. Similarly, having Canada's largest private sector union, Unifor, outside the house of labour weakens labour solidarity at a critical moment.

Key task for OFL – unite labour around escalating action plan

The path forward is not to ostracize unions that have taken the bait, but to relentlessly pursue unity on the basis of a common, independent working-class political program rooted in class struggle unionism.

The seeds of this program include fighting for a Worker's Bill of Rights and a unified strike support strategy. Critically, the fight for jobs and economic sovereignty must be central. The call for the nationalization of auto and steel is not a radical abstraction but a necessary response to corporate betrayal. Working people and unions in Ontario need to throw their full weight behind the growing tenant resistance, endorsing and resourcing the Stop Doug Ford's War on Tenants campaign and mobilizing members for National Housing Day actions on November 22.

The fight to put people before profit is inseparable from the fight for peace and international working-class solidarity. Labour in Ontario must take up the fight against militarism, declare trade with apartheid Israel “hot cargo” in solidarity with Palestine, and call for Ottawa to reallocate massively ballooning war spending to people's immediate needs.

The key task for the OFL convention and leadership is to fuse growing rank-and-file militancy into a coherent, united, political force. The federation must come together with an escalating action plan that transforms isolated strikes into a coordinated political offensive.

Ford's playbook is clear. Labour's response must be clearer: an injury to one is an injury to all. It's time to unite and fight. ■

EDITORIAL

HOW ABOUT SOME DEMOCRATIC ELECTORAL REFORMS FOR A CHANGE?

At the end of October, Ontario's Conservative government announced proposed changes to the provincial election laws which would "strengthen and increase public trust in the province's electoral system."

Unsurprisingly, this publication finds itself once again at odds with the government's proposals, which are a further push in an anti-democratic direction.

Here are some real electoral reforms that we'd like to see implemented in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada.

First the ban on trade union donations to political parties should be lifted. Unions are not corporations, and applying the same rules against political donations places a serious limit on the ability of working people, who are the vast majority of the population, to participate fully in the electoral process. This is especially true in a class society such as ours, in which the political marginalization of the working class is a constant and growing feature.

Second, we need to shift away from the per-vote allowance to political parties. This relates to the partial reimbursement of campaign expenses for candidates who reach a vote threshold. It is problematic on a few different levels.

Providing an allowance on the basis of votes received overwhelmingly privileges the large parties who are able to run candidates in all ridings and collect higher province-wide vote counts. Smaller parties, who may have a loyal and generous individual funding base, will be doubly penalized by this approach. Furthermore, this funding model has already been proven in other jurisdictions to result in an increased gulf between those parties who are represented in legislatures and those who are not.

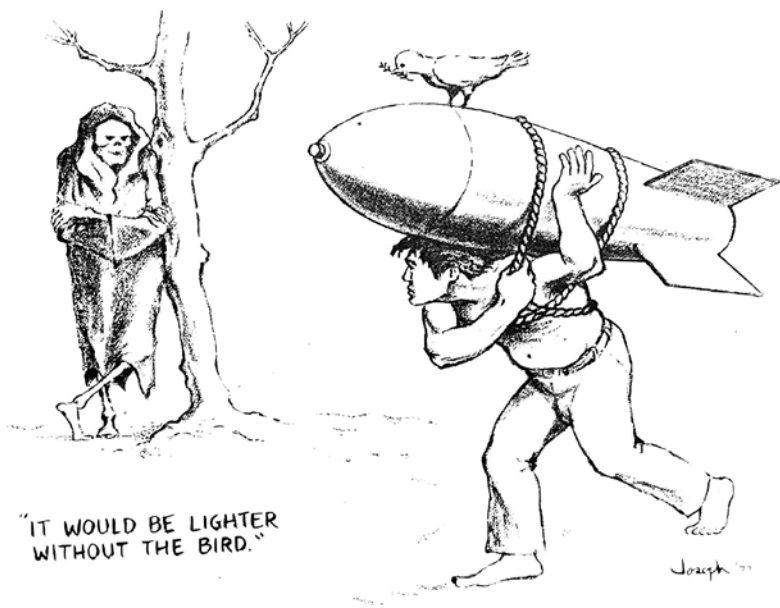
Beyond this, per-vote funding represent a further and very significant shift in political financing from the realm of donations from the public to greater state support to parties. We need to ask a basic question: Is democracy a function of a state bureaucracy or is it of the people? Political parties and movements emerge from the people, from their response to their lived experience. As such, it is the people who have the right to fund their parties and movements. Limiting that right and replacing it with a form of state funding that privileges the largest parties are mechanisms for diminishing democracy.

Third is to seriously reduce campaign spending limits. Without a doubt, the current high spending limits allow the largest and best-funded parties to buy elections by financially exhausting both their opponents and the public. Surely, any effort to "strengthen and increase public trust in the province's electoral system" needs to address the anti-democratic effect of obscenely high spending limits.

Fourth, free broadcasting needs to be regulated under the Election Finances Act. Media is key to campaigning, and unequal access to free-time broadcasting amounts very clearly to a form of donation or subsidy to the largest parties, and especially the parties represented in the Legislature. For this reason, broadcasting needs to be regulated under the Election Finances Act. This applies to the free-time party broadcasts, which should be the same for all parties, but which currently is only available to parties in the Legislature during the period in between elections.

Furthermore, lack of regulation allows the private broadcast consortium to determine which parties and candidates will have access to election debates and discussions that they cover. In every instance, this consortium has restricted access and participation to the large parties represented in the Legislature. Access to free broadcast media must be equal, or it constitutes an unfair donation and subsidy.

Political financing rules have an enormous effect on democracy and democratic participation. Rather than partisan maneuvers, working people need a consultation process that is broad, inclusive and comprehensive, that engages all people in the province, and that points toward legislative proposals that can expand and deepen democracy. ♦



IN BRIEF

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

High praise for housing analysis

Jay Brudny's article, "Gentrification: a powerful weapon for corporate profiteering in housing" in the November 1-15, 2025 issue of People's Voice is a fine example of Marxist analysis, exposing the deeper political economy of the housing crisis in urban areas.

The article locates the beneficiaries (developers, real estate investment firms and landlords) and the victims of gentrification, while highlighting its class dimensions.

The article transcends the usual liberal and social democratic panaceas of incentivizing developers and landlords by advancing a people's program that removes private property and profiteering from the provision of proper shelter for all. ■

Greg Godels
Pittsburgh, PA

Discussions on fascism continue

It is strange to see Nicos Poulantzas' name cited favorably in the PV. Poulantzas, an academic and self-described "Marxist," used his Marxism to undermine and attack Marxism and the USSR.

David Lethbridge ["Defeating fascism means recognizing its different forms, building the left, and mobilizing a mass united fight" – September 1-15, 2025 issue] has written a long article which describes fascism but does not say why the ruling class turns to fascism.

The ruling class decision to turn to fascism is not willy nilly. They would prefer to maintain bourgeois democracy. They only turn to "terrorist dictatorship" when they feel an existential threat from the left such as in Germany and Spain in the 1930's and Chile in the 1970's. No ruling class turns to fascism in

face of a threat from the right. Fascism is invoked only if the threat is existential and from the left.

There is no existential threat from the left in the US today. Mischaracterizing the threat of fascism leads to great errors in policy. Fascism, as Lethbridge says, requires the broadest front of all those threatened by and opposed to fascism. In order to get such broad unity (think lowest common denominator) left forces, especially communists, have to give up their demands because the anti-fascist right won't unite under "advanced demands." While this strategy has validity when dealing with real fascism, it has no validity in the current situation in the US. It is an absolute mistake for communists to give up their demands in today's situation. What is in fact needed more than ever now are the advanced demands of communists. ■

Walter Tillow
Louisville, KY

Response from author

Walter Tillow's letter begins by referring, disparagingly, to Nicos Poulantzas as a "self-described 'Marxist'." and finds it strange that he is "cited favorably in the PV." Poulantzas was a member of the Communist Party of Greece (Interior). If he is cited in a discussion about fascism, it is because he did in fact make substantial contributions to Marxist theory by elaborating on the concept of "exceptional states" – capitalist states that were exceptions to the classical model.

It would be sectarianism of the worst stripe if we ignored the contributions of those that we did not fully agree with. Must we agree only with ourselves? Must we brand as heretic those whose perspective differs from our own? We can learn from others as we grow and deepen our own analyses. The great river of Marxism has many tributaries.

Tillow writes that I do "not say why the ruling class turns to fascism." This is, again, entirely inaccurate. I go into depth describing and discussing the position of Dimitrov and Togliatti and the Communist International, a position that continues to stand the test of time. The essence of this position is, of course, that capitalism turns to fascism when it is threatened from the organized left.

But the question that the article puts forward is this: Can fascism arise under conditions which differ from those which held almost a hundred years ago in the 1920s and 1930s?

The Stroessner regime in Paraguay (circa 1950-1985) is instructive in this regard. A haven for Nazis on the run such as Mengele, the regime in Paraguay was entirely fascist under any possible description and yet there was never any threat from the left. It is a perfect example of an "exceptional state."

What is happening today in the US does not resemble Paraguay, nor does it replicate Germany in the 1930s. It has, unsurprisingly, its own unique features. But the steady march towards fascism cannot be ignored or dismissed.

Tillow asserts that the organization of a broad unity of opposition to the Trump regime must necessarily lead to communists giving up their own demands and sinking to some hypothetical "lowest common denominator." This is not at all true. We can most certainly unite with others in a common struggle without for one moment giving up our own demands. We have done so in the past under other circumstances, and we can do so now.

Indeed, what other options do we have other than mass organization, mass opposition and mass unity? ■

David Lethbridge
Salmon Arm, BC

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Highlights of the 49th Convention of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians

GLENN MICHALCHUK

Successive generations of Ukrainian immigrants have come to Canada to make it their home. They also formed their social, cultural and political organizations to participate in Canadian life. The oldest of these is the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians, first known as the Ukrainian Labour Temple Association when it was founded in 1918. The ULTA was formed by the first wave of Ukrainian immigrants at a time when Ukraine was yet to emerge from the ruined empires of World War I.

During its long history the AUUC has withstood numerous attempts by the Canadian state to eliminate it as a voice of the progressive Canadian Ukrainian community. The organization has prevailed and continues to chart a path in representing the progressive Canadian Ukrainian community.

On the Thanksgiving long weekend of October 11, 12 and 13 the AUUC held its 49th Convention in Winnipeg at the Ukrainian Labour Temple. The Labour Temple is a national, provincial and municipal historic site owing to its architectural significance, the role it played in housing the progressive social and political activity of the Canadian Ukrainian community from 1918 to the present day, and that it was an organizing site during the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike.

The convention opened on with a land acknowledgement given by Winnipeg Branch Vice President Emily Halldorson. She described the role and relationship of the AUUC in its ongoing response to the important work of truth and reconciliation with First Nations. She then introduced knowledge keeper Robert Falcon Ouellette who is of Cree, Metis, French and English descent. He was invited to open the convention in the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, and he brought a very positive energy with his



reflections, drum song and a smudge with convention delegates.

Following greetings from Winnipeg Branch President Mykola Hedrich, the convention heard from National President Glenn Michalchuk. Noting that the convention “comes at a time of profound historic shift in the world” he outlined some of the significant developments of the present period and how they impact all organizations who are concerned with building progressive movements for change.

On the question of Russia’s war in Ukraine Michalchuk noted that the influx of refugees from the war requires special attention as does responding to the ongoing war. “They have their own particular needs and concerns which the AUUC needs to learn about and address. It is important that this convention will have a session on Ukraine. It will begin what I believe will be important work for the AUUC in the coming period and will build on the positions the AUUC has developed.”

Following the reports and discussion,

delegates and observers gathered for a banquet which featured a keynote speech given by noted journalist and author Cecil Rosner. His talk “Holding Power to Account” spoke to the difficult state of journalism. He noted the concentration of media and its transformation by social media giants such as Facebook and Google, which have undermined trust in journalism. He also focused on how journalism is often manipulated to present distortions that favour the interests of the powerful.

Rosner concluded by emphasizing that “the first obligation for any journalist is to find and report the truth, and not be afraid of where that search will lead. Holding powerful interests to account should be the objective of all journalists.” Following his talk the evening concluded with performances by the cultural groups of the AUUC Winnipeg Branch including the Festival Choir, the dance group Zirka and the Winnipeg Mandolin Orchestra.

The session on Ukraine, which opened the day October 12, featured Dr. Ivan Katch-

anovski from the University of Ottawa. He has gained considerable national and international attention for his work on the Maidan uprising and in particular his investigation into the Maidan Massacre which shows that the perpetrators were not government forces but those of the far right.

The topic of Dr. Katchanovski’s talk was “The Russia-Ukraine War and the Future of Ukraine.” He gave detailed information explaining the root causes of the war, the positions of both Ukraine and Russia on the war, its current developments, and the most likely outcome for the Ukrainian nation.

The talk was valuable for delegates, observers and members of the general public who attended. The AUUC has maintained that the war could have been averted had the necessary steps been taken to implement the Minsk Agreements – an emphasis on diplomacy and the need for Western governments to recognize the obvious danger of pushing for Ukraine membership in NATO to the detriment of Ukraine’s own security. Thus, AUUC has consistently called for diplomacy and negotiations. Judging by the number and quality of the questions in the discussion that followed, Dr. Katchanovski’s talk added important analysis to this discussion.

Following reports by the National AUUC’s standing committees and its cultural organizations, there was a separate meeting for youth observers attending the convention. The 49th Convention again invited youth observers as part of planning for a new generation to become active in the work of the AUUC, and youth presented a summary of their discussions to the convention. The final day of convention held elections to the leading bodies of the AUUC, as well as that of its national leadership. ■

Glenn Michalchuk is National President of the AUUC

The Alberta system: Busting unions and bribing victims

ALI KHAN

Whenever the opportunity arises, Danielle Smith’s government will always show Albertans her apathy towards their well-being.

The E. coli outbreak last fall in six day-cares happened due to her government underfunding the already understaffed public health inspectors, but did she listen to the concerns of parents and target the root of the issue? Of course not – she gave a one-time “compassionate payment” of \$2,000 dollars for each child enrolled in an affected day-care.

Does this money remove the trauma of knowing the system to which you entrust your children during the day cares so little about their well-being? It may not even amount to parents’ losses from missing work to care for their sick child. Yet many unaffected people could look upon the situation from afar and believe all is resolved.

Now Smith is using the same trick to bribe parents into conflict with Alberta teachers, knowing fully well that her government is the reason teachers are striking to begin with. She is hoping parents will tire of the strikes and therefore be happy with any solution as long as it comes quick.

This playbook is not new, to those who know what to look for, so let’s examine Smith’s October 27 letter to Alberta parents, and see exactly how she hopes things will resolve.

1. Smith will set your house on fire, only to call the fire-department to claim she saved you

For years now, the government has happily underpaid the educators expected to impart curiosity and educational guidance to our next generation. They watched idly



as classrooms became overcrowded, teachers became overworked, and parents became stressed as grades started to slip.

Once teachers chose to take a stand and strike, Smith continued to allow Albertans to suffer while she donned a cape to paint herself as the hero when her government legislated away the teachers’ right to protest.

2. “Urgent warnings” are what teachers have been giving since before they began to strike

Smith claims that “education experts, parents and community leaders” sent her “urgent warnings” regarding the long-term effects on students. The “critical opportunities like extracurriculars, and university

preparation” are what she has taken away by removing any incentives for teachers to go beyond what they are paid for.

Teachers understand the consequences of striking – they chose to lose wages and stand on principles for more than just wage increases. If it were only wages, they would accept a higher pay increase instead of advocating for smaller classes and more facilities.

Instead of negotiating in good faith with the teachers, Smith’s intentions have been brought to light by her actions.

3. Fill parent’s pockets with empty promises (and a little bribe as extra)

Parents may have noticed a measly \$30-a-day payment from the UCP for each

day the teachers were on strike, using the money they saved by not paying striking teachers. The Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA) president noted that is “almost twice as much as teachers are paid to teach those same students in their classrooms.”

In reality, the ATA is trying its hardest to work with the government, but the teachers overwhelmingly reject the crumbs being offered. Smith’s goal is to always put those fighting for better conditions in suffocating positions – she has repeatedly cut funding to necessary public services and used the pain felt by Albertans in the aftermath to pit us against one another.

This bribe to parents is designed to use the parents themselves as the agents of strike breaking, to bear the mark of scab as they are expected to educate their children for that pay. Yet everyone, including Smith herself, knows very well that no learning was being achieved whether parents took that payment or not – the premier’s actions prove as much, given the cancellation of exams.

The bottom line is that Smith’s letter to parents is more a declaration of contempt to every Albertan who hopes for a better future, than it is a promise to fundamentally change the system which creates these problems. Her goal is to exhaust us, make us uncertain about the future so any form of certainty is welcomed, however insincere.

We cannot allow the government to pit parents against teachers, both of whom want the best outcomes for the children they care for. Parents’ frustration is real, and their anger is justified. We need to harness that energy into solidarity with the striking teachers, and solidarity for a future our children deserve. ■

UCP assault on Alberta labour runs parallel to attacks on trans rights



JUSTIN CYR

The Alberta government has launched an unprecedented legislative assault on the province's labour movement, invoking the notwithstanding clause to forcibly end the massive, weeks long teachers' strike that has closed schools across the province, and impose a new contract on union members.

The crisis escalated dramatically during the week of October 20, as over 51,000 members of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) entered their third week of a full-scale walkout, the first province-wide teachers strike in Alberta's history. The United Conservative Party (UCP) government under Premier Danielle Smith introduced Bill 2, the Back to School Act. The bill, passed in the early hours of October 28, unilaterally terminated the strike and imposed a binding arbitration process that teachers' unions decry as rigged.

"The UCP is not interested in negotiation; they are interested in capitulation," ATA President Jason Schilling stated from the picket line on October 17. "This bill strips us of our fundamental Charter right to strike and forces a so called 'solution' that ignores the core issues of classroom complexity and crumbling infrastructure."

The union points to the government's own appointed arbitrator having a mandate that excludes critical non-monetary issues, effectively nullifying teachers' demands for enforceable class size limits and guaranteed support for students with complex needs.

This attack on labour rights runs parallel to the government's continued juridical war on transgender Albertans. Here, the UCP has proposed a three-pronged assault involving the legislative areas of education, sports and health.

The *Education Amendment Act* requires children under age 16 to have parental consent if they want to change their names or pronouns at school. The bill would also require parents to opt in for their children to be taught about sexual orientation and sexual and gender identity at school. The legislation also restricts any kind of curriculum that teaches about gender diversity.

The *Fairness and Safety in Sports Act* bans transgender athletes from competing in leagues not designated co-ed, and requires school and sports organizations to report eligibility complaints.

The *Health Statutes Amendment Act* prohibits doctors from treating people under 16 seeking transgender treatments such as puberty blockers and hormone therapies. The court proceedings, which began in September 2025, have been overshadowed by Premier Smith's pledge to use the notwithstanding clause in the Constitution to reinstate the laws should the court strike them down.

The UCP's coordinated offensive is a textbook example of neoliberalism in practice. The attack on transgender rights through legislation and the notwithstanding clause serves a critical ideological function of fomenting a reactionary cultural struggle. The state, composed of and acting in the interests of the capitalist ruling class, seeks to divide the working class – this manufactured "culture war" is a smokescreen designed to obscure the material degradation of labour, the public sphere and the rights of marginalized communities. The systematic underfunding of education and healthcare, which creates new markets for private capital to infiltrate, simultaneously disparages and disciplines the workforce.

These moves reveal a government acting as the political foot soldiers of capital, using coercion to suppress a unified working-class challenge to its agenda.

Yet, the historic unity and resolve of the teachers' strike have pierced Danielle Smith's thinly veiled ideological facade. Faced with a disciplined, popular challenge from a key segment of the organized working class, the UCP have undermined their alleged democratic principles.

Any government that undermines or abandons the project of improving public school education in the face of difficulty is undermining and abandoning the alleged principles of democratic rights and freedoms they proclaim to uphold. The use of the notwithstanding clause to override Charter rights – be it freedom of association for workers or the flagrant violation of human rights of transgender youth – demonstrates that the legal superstructure of the capitalist state is ultimately subordinate to the real forces which employ them, which is to maintain the power of the ruling class and suppress any threat to its agenda of austerity and privatization.

Its inability to rule through the consent of the masses, as shown by massive public support for the teachers, forces it to rely on lawfare and raw, juridical force. The struggle of teachers for manageable classrooms is materially and politically linked to the struggle of transgender people for bodily autonomy, healthcare workers fighting to maintain a public healthcare system and the urban public's fight against the UCP's deliberate attempts to cut funding for public transit.

All are resistance movements against the same neoliberal agenda. The path forward lies in the recognition that an injury to one is an injury to all. The state's class warfare against workers and those who are the most vulnerable in society can be defeated by the collective, organized power of a working class that sees its common enemy and fights with unified solidarity. ■

What does the fight against Trump look like for working people in Mexico?

In a wide-ranging interview with **Tim Pelzer** for *Peoples Voice*, Communist Party of Mexico (PCM) leader Pavel Blanco condemned the anti-immigrant policies pursued by both the Trump administration and the Mexican government, talks about sovereignty and independence, and touches on the role and nature of the drug cartels in Mexico.

"The issue of immigration is increasingly international and has two reasons: wars and the barbarity of capital, as well as reasons of work. In the case of immigration to the US it has a work-based reason and a class character – they are workers looking for better work conditions that do not exist in their own country."

Despite Trumps orders that Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers apprehend and deport 11 million Mexican and Latin American immigrants working in the US, the flow of immigrants from Mexico, Central and South America to the US keeps on increasing, remarked Blanco.

He said current Democratic and Republican governments have pursued an-

ti-immigrant policies that the current and previous Mexican governments have embraced under US pressure. "President Claudia Sheinbaum has militarized the border and accepted flights of Mexicans being flown back to Mexico. We reject the common anti-immigrant policies of the US and Mexican governments."

Blanco is especially critical of the Mexican government for taxing the remittances – the largest source of US dollars for the country, more than oil exports – sent back by immigrants to their families in Mexico, "which has negative repercussions for the conditions of life for the people of Mexico."

He said the PCM supports the mass protests of Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles and other cities.

Blanco is also critical of the way the Sheinbaum government is addressing Trump's tariff war against Mexico. "There is a dissociation between the rhetoric of Sheinbaum for sovereignty and her practice of allowing major concessions to the US in economic areas, permitting extradi-

■ DIVERSIFICATION, PG 10

CNC launches Hurrican Melissa relief campaign for Cuba

On October 28, the Canadian Network on Cuba launched its hurricane relief campaign to raise funds to provide material aid to Cuba in the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa, which has devastated its eastern provinces. Cuba deals with an additional set of complex and unjust obstacles due to US sanctions, which make it extremely difficult to import basic necessities, and Cuba is the sole affected country after this hurricane that has not been offered aid from the United States.

Please consider donating funds and encourage your organizational members, networks, friends and family to donate any amount if they are able, as Cuba urgently needs this assistance in its recovery from this catastrophic natural disaster.

Every dollar donated provides critical material aid to help Cuba rebuild and pro-

vide food and medical care to the communities affected. Follow the progress of this campaign via updates on Canadian Network on Cuba social media.

To send donations to the CNC's Hurricane Melissa Relief Campaign:

E-transfer to:

donate@canadiannetworkoncuba.ca

In the message section, please indicate what donation is for (Hurricane Relief), your first and last name, and your email address.

Cheques payable to:

Canadian Network on Cuba
PO Box 99051 - 1245 Dupont St.
Toronto, ON
M6H 4H7

Liberals' "fix" to Bill C-2 is still racist legislation that needs to be blocked!

CAM SCOTT

On October 8, Liberal Minister of Public Safety Gary Anandasangaree introduced Bill C-12, The Strengthening Canada's Immigration System and Borders Act.

This new legislation closely resembles the controversial Bill C-2, tabled this summer, which the Migrant Rights Network described as greasing the gears of a massive "deportation machine." According to Anandasangaree, the new bill "carves out the more contentious elements of Bill C-2" in order to rush through the larger part of its sweeping immigration reforms.

Like its predecessor, Bill C-12 grants unprecedented powers to individual ministers as well as law enforcement. According to the Canadian Immigration Lawyers Association, "Bill C-12 shifts core immigration functions into a national security framework, bypassing the established legislative structure." This anticipates the termination of thousands of applications, from those solicited by business incubators and visa brokers to compelling refugee claims by asylum seekers.

Despite Liberal authorship, this aggressive immigration regime seems to fulfill a longstanding goal of the Conservative and People's Parties, whose explicitly xenophobic policy proposals use immigration as a scapegoat for everything from housing shortages to emergency room wait times.

This may seem like an about-face by the Liberals, but right-wing attempts upon Trudeau's "cult of diversity," to quote the bigot Maxime Bernier, miss the fundamental continuity of Canada's immigration strategy, where apparent policy reversals are only seasonal expressions of capitalist imperatives. In fact, Canada's solicitation of short-term labour contracts from abroad and its harshly prejudicial vetting of migration along class lines and by region are two sides of the same coin.

Naturally, immigration controls expand and contract capital's access to labour, and quotas are set by sector with intent to profit by the many geographical displacements that capitalism commands. Accordingly, most political contests over immigration in imperialist countries are between competing blocs of capital and their official representation. As such, they must be understood with reference to tensions between regional and transnational monopolies, or as ideological effects of the formal distinction between financial and productive enterprise.

While the right often opposes immigration in a narrow appeal to a geographically sedentary "old stock" identity formation, representing smaller concentrations of inherited or self-earned wealth, liberals in power tend to use the racializing turns of migrancy to discipline labour as a whole, drawing from a legally precarious reserve army to grow the productive forces in spurts. (As Marx wrote in his notes on national competition between workers, "the wages of 1000 workers of the same skill are determined not by the 950 in employment but by the 50 unemployed.")

A clear example of this dynamic is Canada's Temporary Foreign Workers Program, introduced in the 1970s and expanded to resemble a system of indenture under both Harper and Trudeau. As a CUPE brief on migrant workers in the public sector explains, the TFWP is "systematized, racist and exploitative" by design: "Wealthier nations, like Canada, have set up temporary foreign worker programs for the benefit of employers, who are able to maintain low wages for workers whose rights cannot easily be protected."

The Conservatives have campaigned extensively against the TFWP in recent years, but for all the wrong reasons and without mention of the hideous working conditions faced by permit holders. Rather, Poilievre and his peers blame a wide variety of phenomena on "cheap foreign labour," demanding "Canadian jobs for Canadian workers" instead. This racially coded advocacy eagerly duplicates the phony workerism of MAGA in the US, but has become a talking point of both Conservative and Liberal parties north of the border.



Migration and wages

Does migrant labour suppress wages, as the right wing likes to claim? The simplest and correct response is no, not as such – but weakened legal protections for any segment of the workforce will surely have this effect, and migrant labour is uniquely vulnerable.

Where actual jobs for migrants are concerned, the Liberals and Conservatives have mastered a good cop-bad cop routine corresponding to the fluctuations of the labour market. In a typical year, Liberals solicit migrant labour on behalf of hyper-exploitative Canadian firms, and from the further effects of this abusive funnel, the Conservatives weave a narrative that blames immigration – that is, immigrants themselves – for the labour conditions they endure.

While right-wing populists scapegoat immigrants for a general lack of work or stagnant wages, economists broadly agree that immigration enriches the host country. (That so few workers benefit from this wealth is another, more important fact.) Studies from the National Bureau of Economic Research in the US and the Bank of Canada rosily describe how rapid growth of the productive forces by way of immigration effectively controls inflation and enables growth amid recessionary conditions.

Even so, TD Bank's chief economist has praised Liberal crackdowns on immigration, claiming that the cancellation of work permits has helped control Canada's already alarming unemployment rate – more than 7 percent this October. But this argument is entirely circular where those workers turned away would otherwise have plugged gaps in a collapsing class arrangement, or faced even greater difficulty finding work.

Deleting the legal status of a section of the unemployed doesn't prevent job loss in the slightest, particularly where most recent immigrants to advanced capitalist countries find themselves performing informal tasks for which there is very little domestic competition. This "complementary productivity" has a stabilizing effect on wages elsewhere administered, where competition mostly transpires between immigrants of similar experience.

As regards wage pressures, the Bank of Canada notes that the lower compensation of non-permanent residents can be seen to "soften" growth, but irrelevantly in light of spillover effects between industries, where employment in a comparatively low-waged agricultural sector, for example, necessarily corresponds to increased activity in trucking and retail. All told, the lateral competition that employers use to drive down wages is an intra-class phenomenon that would only affect those workers born in Canada whose English conversancy or certification is comparable to that of recent immigrants.

Artificial antagonisms

Clearly immigration grows the economy, and the real problem is the uncertain benefit of capitalist growth to most workers – includ-

ing a reactionary section who perceive the proceeds of their labour to be horizontally dispersed rather than vertically appropriated by the ruling class. This false perception only benefits employers, and Marx wrote powerfully of how antagonism between workers becomes a weapon in capitalist hands.

But if immigration enriches the economy, why is the right wing of the ruling class, including the Carney Liberals, so against it? Sheer racism cannot be underrated as a cause, where lineal concentrations of wealth project ideologies of white supremacism and national chauvinism. But don't closed borders contradict the globalizing rule of capital? Why in a crisis does this class rally a racial or national base to its defence?

Plainly, the right doesn't intend to stop the abuse of immigrant labour, but to deepen a class cleave between legal statuses, relegating more and more people to temporary or transient residency as they move towards an investor-based immigration system, recruiting capital rather than workers. This is a sure way to circumvent the labour standards and social wage of core economies, which are the hard-won legal victories of working-class movements.

Capitalism cannot do without migrant labour as such, and the racial ideologies that call for movement restrictions are themselves an output of the imperialist system that ensures the necessity of migration for millions of workers. Clearly, xenophobic policies including Bill C-12 do not intend to repopulate informal economies with domestic labour, but to control and repress a flexible global reserve.

Take the example of an unsuccessful application for permanent residency. For months of suspense, the applicant generates surplus for Canadian firms, only to have their case declined before such time as they might benefit from healthcare or any service provision. The temporary appearance of the undocumented worker in the imperial core is then a spatial hiccup in a textbook extractive relation, where Canadian firms profit by the underdevelopment of a global periphery in domestic workites as well.

If anything, Bill C-12 proposes to intensify this turnover, rendering broad swathes of the global working class susceptible to police tactics and legal terror. This includes the ICE attacks taking place in the US, and as Migrant Canada reports on workplace raids by the Canada Border Services Agency, it's chillingly clear that Bill C-12 is part of a continental plan – even originating from Trump's demands for stricter immigration controls on both sides of the border.

A global "War on Drugs"

Of course, the ruling class and its ambassadors can't come out and say this. So how does Bill C-12 propose to justify these exceptional powers? The legislation itself doesn't speak of labour or demography, though it will certainly be enforced in strict accordance with economic imperatives and along racial lines.

Rather, it justifies the cancellation of thousands of permits by a summary criminalization of migrancy, drawing on the language of a global War on Drugs.

In its own words, Bill C-12 intends to "combat transnational organized crime, stop the flow of illegal fentanyl, crack down on money laundering, dismantle criminal networks, and improve the integrity of our immigration system." As Trump and Rubio carry out extrajudicial strikes on alleged smuggling vessels in the Caribbean, boasting of their intent to attack "drug routes" in Venezuela, this language seems to flatter a US plan to transform the domestic "War on Drugs" into a blueprint for military intervention and regime change.

Of course, the US War on Drugs has always been international in scope, where illicit trade shadows the imperialist world-system. Illegal drugs have been used at arm's length to destabilize countless countries and economies, and the narcotic infiltration of both urban and rural communities across the US and Canada follows a similar pattern.

Here too the state uses prohibition to shrink and expand the labour force, where criminal organizations and law enforcement alike target marginalized communities as markets for drug commodities. And as Trump repurposes the infamous detention centre at Guantánamo Bay in order to house deportees, the continuity of both the War on Terror and the War on Drugs with anti-immigrant policies is more apparent than ever.

Solidarity in kind

Attempts to portray immigration as a vector of terror or crime are as old as capitalist social formation, and legislation such as Bill C-12 exploits the worst associations in its attempt to construct a subject worthy of crackdown. That said, the bill hardly concerns drugs, even to the extent that the enforcement strategies it recommends are bound to fail amid a serious crisis of lethal supply. While C-12 modifies the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and other pieces of legislation pertaining to illicit economies, the larger part of its permissions pertains to the mass cancellation of immigration statuses, from foreign study permits to asylum claims, without specifying any cause at all.

Immigration Minister Lena Diab has already spoken of the bill's intent to "address the unsustainable growth" of Canada's population, and with specific reference to imperialist wars and encroaching climate crisis. By this government's own account, the "War on Drugs" from which this legislation follows is entirely beside the point of a demographic strategy by which to restrain the working class in a deepening crisis.

Plainly, Bill C-12 is not concerned with either "national security" or the fortunes of legally enfranchised workers. Rather, this act fulfills longstanding plans to further weaken labour and to divide the class by fear and iso-

LABOUR

WestJet flight attendants fight unpaid work

CUPE 8125, representing WestJet flight attendants, has launched a public campaign to draw attention to the issues of unpaid work and disrespect in the airline industry.

The campaign, UltraExtraBasic.ca, exposes how flight attendants at WestJet are still not paid for all the time they spend keeping travellers safe, and calls for an end to unpaid work in the airline industry.

The union has recently entered a new round of collective bargaining and is calling for an end to the unfair treatment of cabin crew. They are also looking for meaningful improvements to working conditions that reflect the professionalism and dedication of their members.

"WestJet flight attendants go above and beyond to keep passengers safe and comfortable, yet they aren't being fairly compensated for their time," said Alia Hussain, President of CUPE 8125. "This campaign is about respect, fairness, and restoring dignity to our people and our profession."

Locked out hotel workers pass two years on line

The lockout of UFCW Local 1400 members at the Heritage Inn Hotel in both Saskatoon and Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan has passed the two-year mark.

Prior to the lockout, the union had tried for months to bargain a new collective agreement, but hotel owners chose instead to take a hostile stance. They demanded that workers accept a contract that stripped away earned benefits like vision and dental coverage, and then locked them out.

UFCW says that last year, the situation at the Saskatoon hotel took a tragic turn when a worker lost their life in a preventable workplace incident.

The union is asking the public to contact the hotel and urge management to end the lockout and treat the workers with respect.

Primary care workers in North York strike for first contract

Primary care workers at North York Family Health Team (NYFHT) have been on strike since October 20, fighting for their first-ever collective agreement. The workers provide comprehensive care for over 95,000 patients at all stages of life, from mental and physical health to chronic disease management.

The employer received additional government funding earlier this year meant for retention and recruitment but is using it to make up for their own financial mismanagement.

The union, Ontario Nurses' Association, is asking for the public to tell the NYFHT Board of Directors to redirect those funds to fair wages and settle a fair collective agreement. The union is also encouraging members of the public to join workers on the picket lines.

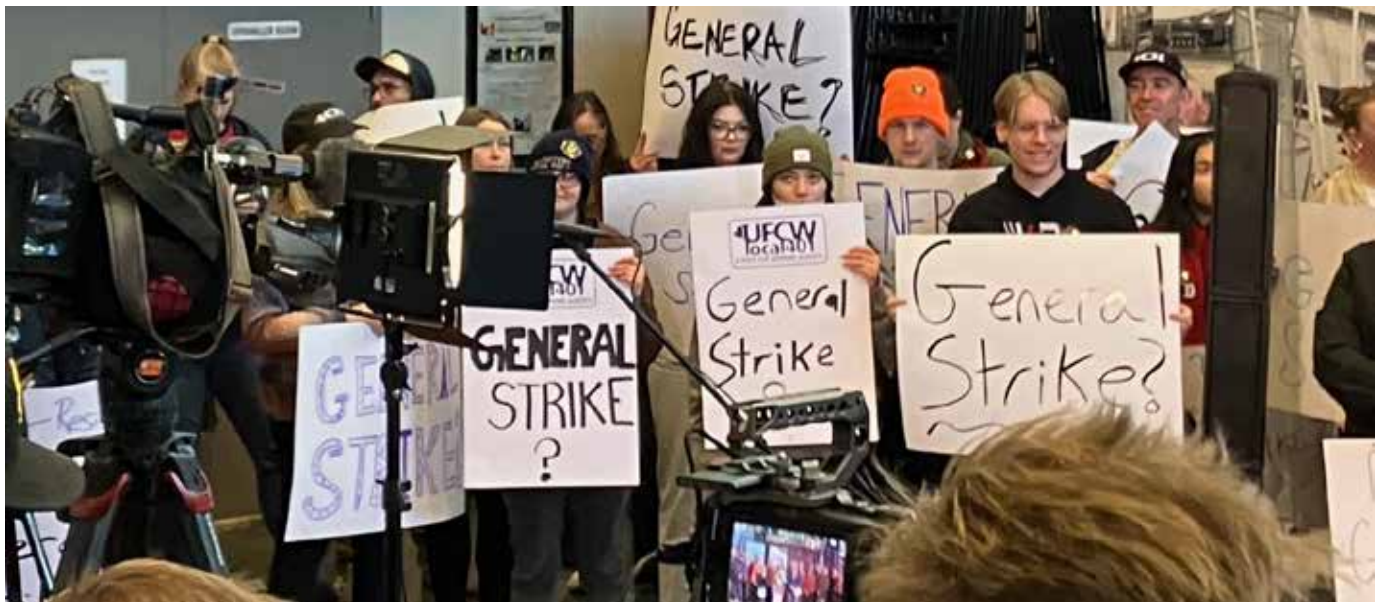
Charlottetown water workers still on the picket lines

CUPE Local 830 water and sewer workers in Charlottetown have been without a contract since December 2022. They have been on strike since July 29, fighting for decent wages and job security. They are being scabbed by an external private business.

Meanwhile, private company Island Coastal continues to do their work, in a move the union calls "a blatant act of strikebreaking [in which] taxpayer-funded public services are being handed to private, for-profit companies."

Local 830 is calling on people to boycott Island Coastal and its affiliated businesses including several golf clubs, BJ's Truck Centre and Island Hydrovac Services.

Alberta Federation of Labour building united fight against UCP — will it be enough to bring down the government?



JEREMY ABBOTT

Alberta teachers struck for 22 days from October 6-22 before the United Conservative Party (UCP) government used the notwithstanding clause to break the strike on October 27.

Throughout the strike the province did not meet with the bargaining team, did not propose any new offers, and continued to viciously attack teachers and students.

The strike was about demanding wage increases for teachers who have only seen a 5.75 percent wage increase in 10 years. The strike was against the privatization of Alberta's education system. The strike was against exploding class sizes which have resulted in the neglect of students in the classroom.

The UCP's decision to force teachers back into classrooms through Bill 2, The Back to School Act has the broader trade union movement concerned about the impact on collective bargaining and democratic rights, and since the back to work legislation went through, fights have been waged on multiple fronts.

A recall campaign has been initiated against Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides, and concerted efforts have been made to build unity between broader civil society and the labour movement through the Alberta Federation of Labour's Common Front.

On October 29 the Alberta Federation of Labour hosted a press conference chaired by AFL president Gil McGowan and Canadian Labour Congress president Beate Bruske to explain labour's response to the UCP's unprecedented actions.

McGowan told reporters: "The Government of Alberta is using its legislative majority to steamroll over the opposition using the notwithstanding clause to sidestep the constitution and the courts... We will use all of the tools at our disposal to make Danielle Smith and the UCP pay for what they are doing to our teachers, our public education and our democratic rights."

"General strike if necessary..."

Labour's response is threefold, beginning with campaigns intended to mobilize members to oppose charter schools and stop the encroachment of privatization in the public education system. The second element is to run recall campaigns against UCP cabinet ministers to diminish the size of the government's caucus. The third component is to educate members of unions affiliated with the Common Front about its priorities and engage in local conversations around the possibility of a general strike. Labour's goal is to build unity among workers, with the aim of toppling the UCP government.

Bruske added some context by discussing Ontario premier Doug Ford's 2022 use of the notwithstanding clause against education workers, and the different response from unions at that time. She noted that unions in Ontario had already been

prepared to go out in solidarity strikes, whereas in Alberta this is not the case. The response from the Canadian labour movement, however, is the same and solidarity actions across Canada will be warranted for such a blatant disregard of the bargaining process. The success of this response requires broad support from civil society and coordinated actions from the labour movement as a whole.

History shows that it is not enough to topple a government — it must be replaced. Workers' demands must become political demands, with the intent of building worker power and replacing the rotten capitalist class with worker control.

As the work of organizing over 350,000 workers in the AFL's 24 unions unfolds, and as whispers of militancy, general strikes and worker power turn into shouts, there is potential to awaken the sleeping giant of the labour movement across this province.

Through the Common Front, the AFL has created what it calls a "workers' agenda" for the province. It intends to establish a basis of unity in action through shared demands on governments and politicians, creating internal strategies to build worker power and bargaining and strike solidarity. The common denominator of all of these priorities is the need for worker action and unity built through organizational efforts at the base level of every union local, as well as organizing workplaces without union representation.

Labour's response to Bill 2 is a positive development but this strategy is in its early stage. McGowan expressed this by stating, "not necessarily a general strike, but a general strike if necessary."

This comment shows the unease some Common Front unions have in the face of organizing a quick response to the sweeping implications of Bill 2. Organization requires worker militancy and leadership that will not be co-opted into turning labour's demands into a "go out to vote" or "anything but the UCP" campaign. Working people need to be in the driver's seat.

As the work of organizing over 350,000 workers in the AFL's 24 unions unfolds, and as whispers of militancy, general strikes and worker power turn into shouts, there is potential to awaken the sleeping giant of the labour movement across this province.

Labour-community solidarity is key, starting with students

Part of this awakening involves building active solidarity between labour and its allies, key among whom are students, who are outraged by the UCP's anti-worker and anti-student agenda.

On October 30 students from across Alberta walked out of class to protest the government's Bill 2. In Edmonton, over

1,000 students from high schools across the city participated in a rally outside the provincial legislature. This was followed up by another rally for disability rights, opposing the cuts to the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program and the UCP's plans to implement a separate program which would force AISH recipients to reapply for income and medical support.

Throughout the protest, students shared stories of overpacked classrooms with limited teachers, of enduring the cost-of-living crisis, and of how friends and family have been navigating cuts to disability programs. The atmosphere was supportive and militant with students spontaneously standing up and speaking in solidarity with their teachers, demanding better pay, building more schools, and increased investment in public education.

Jasper Place High School Isaac Ilhard stated, "I have been able to have a lot of good talks with my friends about what's going on with the teachers and overall, the consensus is this is going to impact us, this is going to impact teachers, this could impact every person across Alberta if Danielle Smith doesn't stop with these constitutional rules and taking away our rights. All of us as students kind of realize that we need to band together to get through this."

Ilhard said concerns are mounting in his school, especially for grade 12 students who have graduations coming up and among students on sports teams who have had their fall season stripped away from them, about the effort that will be required for students to catch up after missing month of school.

Class sizes of under 30 students are unheard of, with most classes ranging between 35-40 students and no educational assistants. This leaves students feeling helpless to ask questions, and unable to get support to succeed in a learning environment. Another student described the large class sizes by saying, "it's kind of a mess and a terrible idea in general."

Throughout the speeches of the rally a common thread followed every student who went up to the microphone was, "Why is public education treated as a cost and not an investment?" Youth need education in order to reach a future worth living for. Cuts to public education have been wreaking havoc on the future for youth not only in this lifetime but for generations to come.

Young people spoke with enthusiasm about the Alberta Federation of Labour announcement made one day prior, of bringing forward a workers' agenda that could unite the demands of not only unionized workers but also students and Albertans with disabilities fighting for the right to live.

The rally cry across Alberta right now is that public education must be funded and that workers' rights cannot be trampled on. Unity and solidarity are building in the student and worker movements in the province, and there are many struggles ahead. ■

BC's Bill 31 a pretext for US takeover of Canada's minerals

ROBERT CROOKS

On October 20, BC Premier David Eby introduced *Bill 31, The Energy Statutes Amendment Act*. The legislation is being touted as a necessary measure to speed up “nation building projects” in the face of threats to Canada’s sovereignty from US President Donald Trump.

When looked at in the larger context of Canada’s economic restructuring, however, the bill appears to be more about serving US imperialism than resisting it.

The immediate objective of Bill 31 is to fast-track the construction of the North Coast Transmission Line, which will transmit hydro electricity from Prince George west to Terrace, and then north to Bob Quinn Lake on the border of Alaska. This line is designed to attract investments into “critical mines, port expansions and LNG and resource development.”

In general, the bill will fast track the expansion of public energy infrastructure in northern BC by exempting large scale projects from having to seek approval from the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC). The BCUC is the body that would otherwise determine whether or not a project proposing to connect to the electricity grid is in the public interest. The bill will also eliminate the requirement of public consultations.

Addressing the anti-democratic aspects of Bill 31, Eby confidently proclaimed that the next election will decide whether or not his party made the right choice. “We are making the decision as a government that this is in our public interest,” the BC Premier said. “We will be held accountable for that decision by voters. But to my mind, there is no debate with this.”

This proposed legislation would be a complement to Bills 14 and 15, passed earlier this year to circumvent the requirement for informed prior consent from Indigenous nations and to override the need for environmental assessments.

Bill 31 will also cut some of the startup costs for resource extraction projects. BC Hydro’s current regulations state that the cost of the “basic transmission extension” will fall on the customer. In other words, companies must pay for connecting their business to the public electrical grid. These upfront costs are meant to keep Hydro rates low for the average BC resident. Eby wants to eliminate them to attract investment, essentially to subsidize corporations at the expense of working people.

The first two thirds of constructing the North Coast Transmission Line is estimated to cost taxpayers \$6 billion, up from \$3 billion a few months ago. The cost of the final phase has yet to be announced.

Eby’s rationale for these subsidies to private companies is that these projects will have an outsized impact on the provincial economy. Citing a report released by the Mining Association of BC, the advocacy organization for private mining companies in the province, Eby claims that the North Coast Transmission Line will create “approximately 9,700 direct full-time jobs, contribute nearly \$10 billion per year to GDP and generate approximately \$950 million annually in public revenues for the province and municipal governments.”

The Mining Association of BC has been pushing for this kind of deregulations for a while, including public investment into “electrical infrastructure.” Its president, Michael Goering, was quoted in the province’s press release for Bill 31. “The North Coast transmission line,” he said, “will strengthen Canada’s position as a leading global supplier of critical minerals and metals.”

Supplying the Department of War

The announcement of Bill 31 comes at a time when the United States government is looking to Canada, among other countries, to secure mineral sources necessary for the development of technology, especially military technology.

On October 6, the US Department of War (formerly the Department of Defense) pur-

chased a ten percent stake in Trilogy Metals, which has mining operations in northern Alaska. On October 1, the US Department of Energy announced a five per cent stake in Lithium Americas, which mines in Nevada. Both companies are based in Vancouver.

Another Vancouver-based mining company with assets in BC could be next.

Defense Metals owns the Wicheeda mine located 80 kilometres north of Prince George. The mine is advertised as a “reliable, Western-aligned supply of vital minerals, reducing reliance of foreign sources.” According to Defense Metals President and CEO, Mark Tory, Wicheeda is one of the world’s most significant deposits of rare earth minerals.

Defense Metals received \$853,825 from the federal government to conduct a feasibility study in May, and is planning on completing a final feasibility study in early 2026. Notably, BC Hydro received \$25 million in that same round of federal grants, to do their own technical assessment of the North Coast Transmission Line expansion.

Defense Metals has assured its potential investors that “there is momentum within the Government to accelerate the permitting process, especially in BC where the Wicheeda project is located.” Mark Tory has had favourable meetings with David Eby and traveled alongside Prime Minister Mark Carney on a trade mission to Germany in August. Tory was also invited to participate with Energy and Natural Resources Minister Tim Hodgson in a roundtable on how the Canadian government can support expanding mining projects in BC.

It’s not only Canadian governments that are interested in Wicheeda mine, however. “US authorities” have also “expressed an interest in supporting the Company as it develops the project.”

In fact, Defense Metals has close ties to the current US government. Mark Tory has bragged about the support they receive from the Republican party and said they are “open to any potential funding” the United States might offer. Two of Defense Metals advisors include Andrew Leland, a former engineer with Lockheed Martin and Karl Wagner, who spent 29 years with the CIA before becoming the head of global security at Tesla.

In a press release from Defense Metals announcing his hiring, Senior Vice President of Corporate Development, Avi Mahdavi emphasized that the company is in an “excellent position at a time when Canada and the US are accelerating their plans to secure the domestic supply of these critical minerals.”

Canada’s economic direction

In November, the Foreign Ministers of the G7 will meet in Ontario. This meeting will surely follow up on the discussions that were held in June’s G7 leaders meeting in Alberta regarding the need for securing rare earth minerals in the face of growing economic trade tensions between China and the United States, and the escalating drive to war.

While value-added manufacturing jobs are flying out of the country, federal and provincial governments are positioning Canada to be a leading exporter of raw materials. Carney has already been making supply chain agreements with NATO allies Germany and Britain. Defense Metals also boasts about the proximity of Wicheeda to the Prince Rupert port to Asia, although CEO Mark Tory has clarified that they won’t be shipping to China.

In the context of David Eby and Mark Carney both having used US tariffs and the spectre of deteriorating economic relations with the Trump administration as a smoke-screen to push deregulation, you might expect that investments from the US government into Canadian mining might be a cause for concern. You’d be wrong.

“The fact that an ally of ours chooses to make an equity investment into a Canadian company whose sole asset is in the United States, I don’t think that bothers us at this time,” Mister Hodgson said.

“That’s capitalism in action.”
I couldn’t agree more. ■



Ottawa must take action to oppose Trump’s aggressions in the Caribbean!

The Communist Party of Canada has issued a strong statement condemning Donald Trump’s provocations in the Caribbean and calling on Ottawa to take a stand against them.

The actions have quickly moved from deployment of US naval forces to the coast of Venezuela, to several murderous military attacks against marine vessels under the false pretext of “fighting narcoterrorism,” to Trump’s public authorization of CIA covert operations in Venezuela including the capture or murder of President Nicolás Maduro. Washington has also expanded the scope of its provocation to include Colombia whose president, Gustavo Petro, Trump has now sanctioned for alleged drug trafficking.

This dangerous escalation of US military interference follows years of economic sanctions against the people of Venezuela. The goal of this campaign is to destabilize the country and gain further control over Venezuela’s rich energy reserves. Washington’s broader objective is to weaken and eliminate progressive and patriotic movements and governments throughout the Latin America-Caribbean region and, ultimately, socialist Cuba.

Trump’s actions have brought condemnation from countries around the world, particularly in the Global South and especially in Latin America.

However, the Canadian government has remained silent on the escalation and the dangers it represents. In fact, the Department of National Defence stated weeks after the US began airstrikes against “drug

boats” that it will still continue its operation with the US Coast Guard to capture drug smugglers in the Caribbean. That program, called Operation CARIBBE, engages the Canadian navy and air force in stopping suspected drug boats and taking any detainees to the US for prosecution.

Ottawa’s actions are nothing short of endorsement and support for Trump’s attempts to justify forced regime change in Venezuela, through military provocation and extra-judicial executions. By supporting the US actions in the Caribbean, Canada is engaging in lawless behaviour in violation of international treaties governing the rights of all states to sail in international waters without restraint (specifically, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea).

The Canadian government must reverse its position on Washington’s aggression against Venezuela and other countries in the region. This instance is another example among many of the need for an independent Canadian foreign policy based on peace, disarmament, respect for sovereignty and international cooperation.

Ottawa must withdraw all Canadian military from Operation CARIBBE and any other military operations in Latin America and the Caribbean, and call for respect for sovereignty and international law.

The Communist Party reiterated that it stands in unwavering solidarity with the peoples of Venezuela and the entire region, who alone have the right to freely identify the course of their own development. ■

Unifor holds protest in front of François Legault’s office, says local purchasing starts with the government

Unifor members, including workers from the PACCAR plant in Sainte-Thérèse, gathered in front of Quebec premier François Legault’s office on October 31, to demand immediate support measures and a clear directive to prioritize local purchasing within the public sector.

This mobilization comes on the heels of the earlier announcement that 300 workers at the PACCAR plant were being laid off. These latest layoffs come after 175 members were laid off in July and another 250 jobs were lost in December related to the closure of the evening shift. In less than a year, the total number of layoffs now stands at approximately 725.

Unifor is calling on the Quebec government to immediately use the tools at its disposal to prioritize the purchase of trucks manufactured in Quebec by state-owned corporations, ministries, municipalities, police forces and other public agencies in order to stabilize production and preserve industrial know-how. These measures would help to quickly replenish PACCAR’s order book and protect jobs.

“The message is simple: the government must act now,” said Unifor Quebec director Daniel Cloutier. “If we lose sales in the United States, we must do everything in our power to replenish our order books here through local purchasing and targeted support measures. Every day counts if



we are to prevent long-term job losses. We must protect the precious industrial know-how that we have built up over decades.”

Unifor is also urging the federal government to follow the example of the automotive sector and implement reciprocal import quotas in Canada for Paccar’s Kenworth, Peterbilt and DAF trucks. This measure would allow trucks manufactured in Quebec to compete in public procurement markets. ■

Political will needed to end poverty

■ FROM PG 2

help alleviate the depth of poverty among people with disabilities, but it is not nearly enough to significantly reduce poverty among this group. The impact of the CDB may also be reduced thanks to access barriers, limited eligibility, and potential claw-backs from other income security programs.

Racialized people, Indigenous people and immigrants saw their poverty rates increase again in 2023. Among these populations, Indigenous people experienced the highest poverty rate at 17.5 percent, whereas racialized people saw their poverty rate grow the fastest since 2022, rising from 13 to 14 percent.

While the experience of poverty can vary significantly depending on where you live, most provinces saw poverty increase in 2023. Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan led the pack at 12.9 percent, while Quebec once again had the lowest poverty rate at 7.4 percent.

Of note, poverty rates in 2023 were higher than they were before the pandemic in six provinces, with the highest increase seen in New Brunswick (11.6 percent in 2023 vs. 9.9 percent in 2019).

Beyond the poverty line: Food and housing insecurity are also worsening

Unfortunately, in 2023, many more people reported that they experienced some level of food insecurity compared to 2022. In particular, 19.1 percent of people lived in households that reported they experienced moderate or severe food insecurity, an increase of roughly 2.2 percentage points from 2022 (16.9 percent) and 8.3 percentage points from 2019 (10.8 percent).

Unlike poverty measured by the Market Basket Measure (MBM – the official poverty line for Canada), the proportion of people who reported experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity increased for everyone examined – no family type or age group reported greater food security in 2023. Of note, people in lone-parent households reported the highest increase in feelings of moderate or severe food insecurity compared with 2022, suggesting that food costs are hitting these families the hardest.

Although the CIS doesn't report on housing insecurity, Statistics Canada tracks the number of people in housing need in both the Census and the biennial Canadian Housing Survey (CHS), the results of which recently came out for 2022. Housing need is a measure that is closely related to poverty, since for lower-income people, housing costs often make up a larger proportion of their budget compared to the rest of the population.

In 2022, the share of households who experienced core housing need had returned to levels seen before the pandemic (11.6 percent in 2023 compared to 11.3 percent in 2018), though there was much more going on below the surface. Core housing need is a complex metric, but it's overwhelmingly driven by a lack of affordability. Of the households in the provinces who experienced core housing need, just over 88 percent faced challenges affording their housing.

Like in previous years, renter households were the most likely to experience housing need, with more renters in market housing facing affordability challenges compared to other renters. And like the CIS, the CHS data showed that lone-parent families, especially when led by women, and unattached single

adults, had higher rates of core housing need compared to other family types.

Although the federal government has previously committed to cut chronic homelessness in half by 2030, and housing need by 530,000 households by 2027-28, the CHS data shows that we are not making significant progress towards meeting these goals.

We know the solution to poverty

As poverty in Canada continues to track in the wrong direction, it's clear that the status quo is not working. Recent and planned investments in the income security system are nowhere near enough to reverse current trends and permanently lower poverty rates.

The good news? Progress in seniors' poverty shows the way forward: income supports. The trajectory of poverty closely matches that of government transfers. For reasons explored above, seniors saw higher median transfers in 2023 and experienced a corresponding decrease in their poverty rate. The other groups pictured in the figure saw slight decreases in government transfers, and their poverty rates ticked up.

This is an oversimplification of the dynamics of poverty, but it tells us about solutions that work. The challenge is mustering up the political will to act.

Above all, it's clear that Canada needs a new poverty reduction strategy that weaves together various policy solutions and sets us on a credible path to achieving our 2030 poverty reduction targets. Just as the former government's National Housing Strategy was grounded in the human right to adequate housing, a new poverty reduction plan should be grounded in the human right to an adequate standard of living – a right Canada committed to nearly 50 years ago. Such a plan will also require a holistic approach, with specific goals and accountability mechanisms related to food insecurity, housing need and homelessness.

The big picture: Nation-building includes social infrastructure

While governments at all levels are quick to invest in physical infrastructure in the face of economic headwinds, too often they neglect our equally important social infrastructure that can help to meet economic goals.

Investing in more support for those in greatest need is often portrayed as a tax that damages our competitiveness. But rising poverty, homelessness and food insecurity are economically damaging and have multi-generational repercussions on our long-term productivity. This works through a myriad of channels, from poorer health and lower education outcomes, to less of a willingness to take entrepreneurial risks.

Here's a big idea with both economic and social dividends: let's end poverty and homelessness in Canada.

The latest batch of data from the CIS is just one of many examples of evidence that shows us what we already know: we need to build a stronger Canada from the bottom up. Thinking big means not settling for this continuing decline – it means setting our sights on ending poverty and homelessness, and recognizing that every person has a right to an adequate standard of living. ■

Edited from a longer report by the Maytree Foundation from May 2025

Stage set for plunder by foreign capitalists

■ FROM PG 12

ernment has ostensibly defended Palestine against Israel. However, it has consistently avoided taking the necessary steps to fully follow through on this stance. For example, not halting trade with Israel undermines symbolic gestures such as demanding FIFA ban Israel from international football tournaments.

Although the government has claimed for over a year that trade between Turkey and Israel has stopped, it is known that this does not reflect reality, as trade continues through indirect channels, and ship traffic from Turkish ports to Israeli ports is ongoing. Israel also continues to receive a significant portion of its oil from Azerbaijan, through a pipeline that passes through Turkey. The AKP government has done nothing to date to shut off this pipeline.

Now there is a desire for relations to normalize again. Even though it is not yet clear how the plan will be implemented, discussions are already underway about resuming Turkish Airlines flights to Tel Aviv, which had been suspended after October 7. Before October 7, Turkish Airlines and other Turkish airline companies operated more than 10 flights a day between Istanbul and Tel Aviv. Istanbul was Israel's gateway to the outside world.

Now, as Palestine is attempted to be turned into a new colony, we find ourselves at a point where capitalists are engaging in plunder, and establishment politicians are striving to gain prestige in the new period. Trump repeatedly asserts that he has ended numerous wars, and made no secret of his expectation to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. This prize has become so meaningless over the decades that if Trump were to actually receive it, no one would have been surprised. But another person, who is a complete tool of imperialism was awarded.

All these attempts are aimed at defeating the Palestinian resistance. However, we have seen for decades that resistance is part of the Palestinian spirit. Even if it sometimes suffers setbacks, it cannot be broken. The struggle will continue until Palestine is free. ■

Voice of TKP

Solidarity starts with refusing racist distinctions

■ FROM PG 7

lation; to erode due process and expand surveillance over all working people, starting with the most vulnerable.

Refusing the racist distinctions enshrined in capitalist law requires careful attention to the differences that make up our struggle, and the common cause for which we fight. Migrancy is an essential condition of proletarianization, where one is forced to sell one's labour-power as one can. The difficulties faced by refugee and migrant workers may be greater than those faced by their domestic counterparts, as are the distances traversed – but this is a difference of degree and not kind.

The class strategy that produces legislation such as Bill C-12 must be opposed as such – which starts with a refusal of antagonisms within the global working class. As civil liberties associations and human rights advocates continue to oppose this cruelty, organized labour must take up its share of the struggle. And as Canada's ruling class bets on the parochial self-interest of workers, we must draft deeper solidarities in order to protect our neighbours and to confront the forces of imperialism as they appear at home. ■

WHAT'S LEFT

VANCOUVER

NOV 30 | PUENTES DE AMOR RALLY

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

WINNIPEG

NOV 30 | END THE BLOCKADE

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

TORONTO

NOV 22 | CUBA AND AFRICA

9:30 AM to 6 PM at William Doo Auditorium, 45 Willcocks St. Symposium commemorating 50 years of Operación Carlota.

TORONTO

NOV 27 | CPC WINTER BANQUET

5-9 PM at East End United Church, 310 Danforth Ave. Join Communist Party members and supporters for food, drink, speeches, games and prizes at this great event. Tickets \$50 (includes dinner). Info@cpc-pcc.ca.

TORONTO

NOV 30 | END THE BLOCKADE

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

OTTAWA

NOV 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

NOV 30 | PUENTES DE AMOR RALLY

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

Profit motive puts shareholders interests over working-class roots

■ FROM PG 11

was a product of the colonial system whose actions alleviated some of its harshness, even as he ultimately upheld its structures.

Shock fact: from 1799 to 1939, Guinness was Ireland's largest private employer. Today, however, the brand is owned by Diageo – a British multinational created in 1997 through the merger of Guinness plc and Grand Metropolitan.

In the process, Guinness's once-vaunted worker welfare – housing, healthcare, pensions – was phased out by the late 20th century. Diageo's record since has been one of cost-cutting, brewery closures and job losses. It even sat on the board of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), helping to shape corporate-friendly tax and liability laws, before quitting under public pressure in 2018. What was once a paternalistic brewery at the heart of Dublin is now an anti-working-class multinational that prioritizes shareholders. ■

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Guinness: From working-class pub favourite to right-wing moneymaker

JENNY FARRELL

Fun fact: Guinness, the quintessential Irish drink, exported around the world, originated in the working-class pubs of early eighteenth-century London. Known as porter, this dark beer was invented as an affordable, nutritious and consistent alternative to the custom-mixed blends patrons often bought. Its name came from its immense popularity with London's dockworkers and market porters. Brewed with charred malt and extra hops, porter was durable enough for long sea voyages, making it a perfect commodity for Britain's naval empire.

When this popular London import reached Dublin, it was an instant success. Arthur Guinness, who had bought a disused brewery at St. James's Gate in 1759, was not the first local porter brewer – Dubliners like James Farrell, guided by the London-trained brewer John Purser, were already producing it by the mid-1770s.

Guinness adapted quickly, brewing porter from 1778, dropping ales by 1799, and from the 1820s, his successors were marketing stronger versions as "stout porter" and later simply "stout." At any rate, by 1779 Arthur had secured the lucrative Dublin Castle contract, ensuring his brewery's growth. Guinness's real legacy was copying porter on a large scale.

Born 300 years ago, Arthur Guinness (1725-1803) was a man of indigenous Irish roots whose family had converted to Protestantism. Though not part of the privileged elite, he belonged to a striving middle class that used education, strategic marriages and commercial acumen to advance within British colonial society. He identified as a Protestant Irish patriot – supportive of Catholic emancipation and loyal to Ireland – yet remained a pragmatic businessman who worked within the system to achieve success.

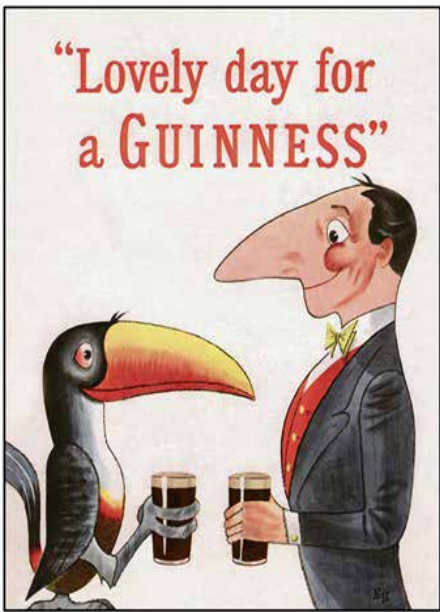
His life unfolded against the backdrop of the Penal Code, a comprehensive system of oppression designed to enforce the colonial control that subjected the Catholic majority to political powerlessness, economic strangulation and social humiliation. Laws barred Catholics from voting, owning valuable property, receiving an education or practicing their faith freely, reducing them to wretched serfdom. This crucible of oppression forged a resilient, underground Irish identity, with clandestine resistance groups, culture and learning preserved in secret by hedge-schools and priests.



Guinness's commercial ambitions were constrained by England's ruthless colonial policy, which systematically dismantled Irish manufacture, trade and industry through targeted legislation, such as the notorious Wool Act and others. Prosperous Irish exports like wool, cattle and manufactured goods were deliberately stifled to eliminate competition, crippling the economy and enforcing subservience.

A corrupt and unrepresentative Irish Parliament, controlled by a landed oligarchy and English patrons, served as a mere instrument for London's will. The result was an economic structure designed to depress the vast majority of the population to bare subsistence, where tenants and labourers survived on a precarious diet of potatoes while producing food and raw materials for export. Famine was frequent. As Jonathan Swift's savage irony highlighted, this system allowed landlords to "devour" the people, creating a nation perpetually on the brink of starvation.

Swift, a key figure of the Enlightenment,



employed reason and satire to lampoon the colonial system as cannibalistic – most famously in *A Modest Proposal* (1729 – and outlined the imperative of an indigenous Irish economy in works like *The Drapier's Letters* (pamphlets published between 1724-25, the most famous fourth letter: A Letter to the Whole People of Ireland). Writing under the pseudonym of a simple shopkeeper, he created a relatable national hero who galvanized public opinion against exploitative measures such as William Wood's inferior copper coinage. Swift thereby contributed to forging a national Irish identity, appealing across class and sectarian lines to a "whole people of Ireland," united against a common oppressor. In *Gulliver's Travels* (1725), Swift even anticipates a successful revolution in Ireland. This is seventy years before the United Irishmen!

Both Swift and Guinness were part of the Protestant establishment, but their approaches diverged significantly. Swift acted as a critical conscience, railing against colonial rule. Guinness, by contrast, embodied the benevolent patriarch. His philanthropy – providing healthcare, supporting hospitals like the Meath, co-founding Ireland's first Sunday School, and in later generations offering pensions and housing – was both genuine in its care and pragmatic in its design. A healthy, loyal workforce was a productive one. While Swift shamed the elite for failing Ireland, Guinness offered a model of paternalistic care within the existing system, providing private solutions to public problems without challenging the underlying inequalities.

Guinness practiced patriotic pragmatism. He opposed the Penal Laws and supported freer trade and legislative independence for the Irish Parliament in the 1780s. As a member of the "Kildare Knot," a provincial branch of the larger Order of the Friendly Brothers of St. Patrick, which adorned itself with green ribbons and Irish emblems, he identified firmly as Irish. Yet, he used networking, council membership and influence within the system – reform, not revolution. He did not support the United Irishmen's epic uprising in 1798; his vision was one of gradual electoral reform. He benefited from the very system that generated the grievances behind the rebellion, and his progressive ideals remained sentiments rather than catalysts for change.

Guinness's philanthropic efforts were rooted in the Protestant ethos of "good works." He made significant loans to charitable institutions, refused repayment, and served as unpaid treasurer of the Meath Hospital for decades. Subscribers to the hospital could send patients for treatment, a practice that benefited his workforce and foreshadowed the brewery's later formal clinics. This approach combined charitable intent with enlightened self-interest, fostering goodwill and social respectability while addressing genuine need within the constraints of the time.

Arthur Guinness's legacy is thus dual: He

■ PROFIT MOTIVE, PG 10



Diversification and independence are key to path forward for Mexico

■ FROM PG 6

tions, and allowing US police and military officials in Mexico's territory. It is really ridiculous that her major appeal for sovereignty is defending the US-Mexico-Canada Free Trade Agreement (USMCA), when a government concerned with sovereignty should propose a break with this inter-state imperial agreement."

Blanco said the USMCA has only strengthened US, Canadian and Mexican monopolies, not translating into improvements for the working classes in the three member countries.

"Sheinbaum also talks of the Second Floor of the Fourth Transformation which consists of 'nearshoring,' so that Mexico occupies the place China did in the manufacture of merchandise that North America requires, but which does not point to scientific or technological sovereignty."

He said there has been no advance for Mexico under the governing social democratic National Regeneration Movement (Morena) since former President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador took power in 2018.

"Both governments of Lopez Obrador and Sheinbaum have pursued anti-worker, anti-popular, anti-Indigenous and anti-immigrant policies. We do not consider it positive that Mexico as a capitalist country tries to improve its position within the imperialist system at the cost of the hyper-exploitation and precarization of the working class, in order to increase profits for monopolies and the ruling class.

"The government has not improved public healthcare, education, housing, culture or labour conditions. It is a joke, the

increase in the minimum wage, when inflation has shot up.

"What communist, revolutionary or democrat can say that there are positive traits in the neoliberal or social democratic management of capitalism? Is there a capitalism that is less bad or that is better?"

When asked if the PCM advocates that Mexico join the BRICs – the economic and political alliance that is challenging US hegemony – Blanco said, "it is urgent that Mexico diversify its economic relations with the rest of the world and end its dependence on certain spheres of commercial and economic exchange with the US." However, he added that "Mexican communists do not propose that we choose between the imperialist band led by the US and emerging capitalist countries led by China."

The war between the well-armed drug cartels and the Mexican army rages on without any end in sight. Asked what needs to be done to bring peace, Blanco said that "capitalism and the drug trade go hand in hand. The drug trade would not flourish at its current levels without the complicity of the Mexican state and the US government that has encouraged it. There are signs of links with former and current [Mexican] governments with the cartels."

Blanco goes as far as calling the drug cartels "the militia of the right-wing parties" [by which he means PRI, PAN and Morena]. "To finish with this monster, and with the barbarity of hundreds of thousands of dead and disappeared, it is necessary to bury the capitalist state. Workers revolutionary power is what will finish that scourge." ■

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Sudanese communists denounce RSF massacres, call for solidarity with Sudanese people



WOMAN SEARCHING BURNT REMAINS OF SHELTER IN DARFUR, SUDAN [PHOTO: UNICEF]

The Sudanese Communist Party issued a statement on October 29 denouncing the horrifying massacres being committed against civilians in the cities of El Fasher and Bara, as well as in other areas of Kordofan and Darfur. The Party also calls for international solidarity with the Sudanese people in their ongoing struggle for democracy and progress.

“The Rapid Support Forces continue to perpetrate systematic violence against unarmed civilians: field executions, arbitrary arrests, looting and destruction of property, mass displacement, and forcing residents to flee... and more, as documented and confirmed by reports from the United Nations, human rights organizations, and the media.

“This hellish, systematic violence is the result of all the wars our country has endured, marked by barbarity and the failure to bring perpetrators to justice. Impunity has never been an exception; rather, it is a central reason for the recurrence of these crimes. The ongoing absence of accountability has recreated an environment that allows the return of war crimes and genocide against the populations of cities and villages as soon as the regime’s forces retreat, as seen in Bara and El Fasher.

“What we witness today is an extension of a policy entrenched since the first Darfur massacres. Therefore, confronting these crimes requires immediate and firm accountability for all those responsible for issuing and executing orders.

“We also emphasize that the failure to secure unarmed civilians, and the withdrawal of the army from the steadfast city of El Fasher for months in the face of the Janjaweed militia, is an irresponsible act deserving condemnation and accountability. The primary and most important duty of the army is to protect citizens and the homeland, not to protect itself.

“We always affirm that what is happening is not merely a military struggle for power; rather, it represents a complex scene of conflict between the parasitic wings of capitalism within the country over power and resources. These forces have amassed their wealth and privileges through corruption and the exploitation of power to loot resources, using armed conflict and terrorism to reinforce their dominance.

“The war is, at the same time, a regional/international/imperialist scheme aimed at weakening the Sudanese state and creating conditions for disintegration and division to deplete the capabilities of the people, the wealth of the country, and violate national sovereignty. This political and economic dimension (local, regional, and international)

of the conflict places a doubled responsibility on the international community to intervene immediately to stop this war and these massacres.

“We call on the peoples of the world, and their democratic organizations, foremost among them the communist and labour parties, as well as human rights organizations and the conscience of the entire world, for international solidarity with the Sudanese people who are suffering alone and steadfastly in the face of a brutal war entering its third year without a horizon for resolution or end... We call for popular movements around the world in the streets, through writing in newspapers, on social media, or other means for the immediate cessation of the war in Sudan and solidarity with our people.

“We also call for transforming “soft statements” and formal appeals into practical steps to protect civilians, open humanitarian corridors for the population, deliver aid, and conduct neutral and independent investigations into all war crimes in our country. The criticisms and condemnations issued by international and human rights institutions must be followed by concrete actions: imposing political, economic, and diplomatic sanctions on the perpetrators of violations, banning the export of weapons and logistical support to the criminals, and referring the crimes to independent international and local judicial mechanisms.”

The Party is making three immediate demands:

1. An immediate ceasefire, the declaration of a humanitarian truce, and a complete opening of humanitarian corridors to El Fasher and other areas of Darfur, Bara, and all of North and South Kordofan, ensuring the protection of aid convoys.
2. A quick, independent and transparent international investigation into war crimes, and holding accountable all who committed, ordered or contributed to these crimes.
3. Urgent action from the peoples of the world, its democratic forces, and human rights organizations to pressure states and international bodies to halt any support or political or military complicity with the parties responsible for the violations.

The Party is also calling on the country’s progressive and democratic forces to unite to escalate peaceful mass struggle and develop political initiatives aimed at stopping the war, seizing power from the de facto governments in Port Sudan and Nyala, and returning to the path of the revolution to build a civil democratic state that safeguards human rights and achieves social justice. ■



Trump, Turkey and the project to colonize Palestine

MURAT AKAD

Turkey and many other Islamic countries are among the international partners of the project to make Gaza into a new labour hell spearheaded by the United States. This project has aroused the appetite of capitalists in many countries.

Although it does not officially bear such a name, the plan referred to in the imperialist press as Trump’s Gaza peace plan – which in fact aims to transform Gaza into a modern colony – has received international support. The plan first came to attention on the last days of September.

On September 23, as the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) was meeting, a meeting was held in New York on Trump’s initiative, hosted by him and the Emir of Qatar. During the meeting, attended by 8 Islamic countries including Turkey, Trump presented a proposal called “principles for peace.” The countries attending the meeting expressed their great satisfaction with the ongoing talks. The President of Turkey, Tayyip Erdoğan expressed similar views.

Later, at the press conference held following an in-person meeting between Trump and Netanyahu on September 29, the plan, which was named the Trump Plan and included certain concrete steps, was announced. What was announced was not a peace plan but a colonization project.

The countries which attended the meeting on September 23, despite stating the need for clarifications regarding certain topics such as the timetable for Israeli withdrawal and the neutralization of Hamas, eventually expressed their support for the plan. Turkey also argued that some of the articles were against Hamas and Gaza.

However, those who had objected quickly fell silent, and all countries which participated in the process began doing everything in their power to ensure the implementation of the plan. It is clear that the meeting in New York, rather than discussing the contents of the plan, instead focused on what those countries could do to implement the plan.

The role of the Turkey’s AKP government

Erdoğan had an additional meeting with Trump in Washington DC, which he travelled to after the UNGA. The discussion covered various topics, but it was not fully revealed how the Gaza issue was addressed. Erdoğan stated that the meeting was successful in this respect, as it was with other topics.

Trump’s remarks and the subsequent steps taken by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government revealed Turkey’s role in the plan. Trump said that alongside Egypt and Qatar, Turkey also had to convince Hamas regarding the plan. Erdoğan later confirmed this. The AKP government was, in effect, assigned this task. One of the journalists closest to the government reported that following news suggesting Hamas would reject the plan, Trump called Erdoğan and urged him to focus on the issue, saying, “I’ve done a lot

for you. Now I need you to do this.”

It remains unclear what exactly Trump “did” for Erdoğan. Tom Barrack – a businessman who is the US Ambassador to Turkey and Special Representative for Syria – gave an important hint on this matter before the Trump-Erdoğan meeting, and stated that the US had provided Erdoğan with “legitimacy.”

This means that the US administration is giving the AKP, whose support in the country is steadily declining, a kind of “lifeline” and signaling its preference for the continuation of this rule. One of the returns expected for this support appeared to be persuading Hamas to accept the plan.

In the days following Hamas’s decision to agree to negotiations over the plan, The Wall Street Journal published an article claiming that Turkey, Qatar and Egypt had pressured Hamas by warning that, should it reject the plan, they would withdraw all support. Hamas’s subsequent announcement that it would accept the plan on the condition that certain points be negotiated, and its decision to remain at the table, indicated that Hamas had indeed been “convinced.”

Investments to “New Gaza”

The future envisioned by the US for both Gaza and the West Bank is definitely not the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state. According to current projections, Gaza will be rebuilt and transformed into a tourism hub – a kind of “free zone.” An international body will be established to manage this process, with Trump at its head. His deputy will be “Bush’s poodle” Tony Blair, one of the old guards of imperialism.

The implementation of this plan is stirring the appetite of imperialist circles. One of the goals of imperialism’s interventions in the Middle East is to turn the region into a cheap labour paradise where borders are blurred, nation states are dissolved, and resistance is broken. Such a goal naturally excites capitalists in the region. Gaza will be the first example of this.

Turkish capital also calculates that it will play a role in the restructuring of Gaza. From this perspective, the government’s desire to see the war end and a new phase open in line with the plan is entirely understandable. Numerous examples from the past had already demonstrated that the AKP prioritized the brotherhood of capital over the brotherhood of religion.

The AKP government had to tolerate certain tensions with Israel while opening up such an arena for Turkish capital. These tensions have been evident for a long time. On the other hand, for a more profitable future for capital, the two countries need to achieve a kind of “peace.” Turkish capital has been pursuing this for a long time. As may be recalled, relations were rapidly normalizing before October 7, 2023, and an Erdoğan-Netanyahu meeting was imminent. With October 7, these plans were disrupted.

Over the past two years, the AKP gov-

■ STAGE SET FOR PLUNDER, PG 10



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