

# PEOPLE'S VOICE

CANADA'S  
LEADING  
SOCIALIST  
PUBLICATION

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## KILL BILL C-39 PROTECT WORKERS' RIGHT TO STRIKE

"For a Labour Bill of Rights" – Pg 8

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# BC VOTERS HAVE CHANCE TO BLOCK THE RIGHT



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### Unity and action, now more than ever!

#### Entire working class aligned against Quebec's Duplessis

If the two recent labour conventions [see note below] truly hold significance, it lies in uniting workers who have suffered from Quebec Premier Maurice Duplessis's harassment and, more generally, from the wretched economic conditions in our province. There must be unity of action – at least in certain specific circumstances – between international unions and Catholic unions.

The fight against Duplessis's "open shop," against Duplessis's factory committees, against Duplessis's "reasonable wages," the fight against Duplessis's fascist corporatism, the fight against rapacious bosses and all those who – with the complicity of the authorities in Quebec City – violate every statute of our labour legislation, whether regarding wages, working hours or general conditions of insurance, health and safety, etc. These are all areas for joint action.

The Catholic unions have even raised the issue of "labour tribunals" knowing first-hand the valuable services such councils have rendered to the working class in Europe during the minor, everyday disputes between workers and employers. Why not, in this and every other respect, meet, confer, connect and take action?

Why not, too, embrace the idea of a genuine Workers' Party – one that, in the political arena, would unite and complement the workers' efforts to defend their economic interests?

The inexorable law of collective, unified action will assert itself sooner or later. It is best to grasp this right away.

To unite around a common platform, to clear away old-fashioned and petty differences, and then truly resolve to act in a modern way – that is to say practically – and we will very soon achieve true unity leading to great victory and ultimate success.

Lack of space compels us to shorten a recent statement by Julien Racamond, secretary of the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) in France – the most powerful workers' organization in the world (aside from the USSR, of course), with a membership exceeding 5,000,000. However, we will take the liberty of quoting Racamond briefly:

"We are not fighting against Christian trade unions, but against the trade unions created by the employers. Members of the confederated unions and members of the Christian unions are affected in the same way by the economic crisis. They suffer from the same wage cuts. They must fight together to improve their living conditions." ■

*Notes: The two labour conventions mentioned in this article are those of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada (TLC) and the Confédération des travailleurs catholiques du Canada (CTCC, Confederation of Catholic Workers of Canada). The TLC was organized on a Canada-wide basis and was overwhelmingly made up of unions that were based in the US. The CTCC was based in Quebec and represented about one-third of unionized workers in the province.*

*This article was written during Maurice Duplessis' first Union Nationale government, whose severe corporatist policies quickly attracted opposition from the labour movement. The Communist Party insisted that the key to confronting, resisting and defeating Duplessis and his policies was unity in action of the working class, starting with the organized labour movement.*

*Over the next two-and-a-half decades, the TLC merged with the Canadian Congress of Labour to form the Canadian Labour Congress, while the CTCC became secularized as the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN).*

*While confessional-based unions are no longer a feature of the labour movement in Canada, the struggle to build broad unity on a class struggle basis remains a central challenge.*

## Quebec election October 5: A campaign of empty promises or a campaign of hope?



ADRIEN WELSH

While Quebec's election campaign officially launched on August 27, the various parties deployed their troops long ago – in reality, we were in a "pre-campaign" phase since July 1.

Candidate announcements began trickling out last spring, and parties traded volleys and criticisms even before the parliamentary session adjourned. The CAQ (Coalition Avenir Québec) and Liberal Party leadership races offered a taste of the election to come, and broad policy announcements didn't wait for August 27 or the official unveiling of election platforms.

The Parti communiste du Québec (PCQ) was no exception: we have been hard at work since last spring. As early as May, our National Committee agreed on the core of our election program, establishing our five key areas of struggle as the focal points of our campaign.

More fundamentally, and even earlier – back in February – we determined that our campaign would not center on a "platform" but rather on perspectives for struggle.

Social housing, pay equity, jobs, accessible education, revitalized public healthcare, protection against Trump's tariffs, national equality and Quebec sovereignty, gender equality, international solidarity, lowering the cost of living – all these noble causes remain mere wishful thinking unless the power of corporate monopolies is clearly and concretely targeted.

Capitalist parties centre their campaigns on a platform, a sort of essentially empiricist document that gathers a hodgepodge of proposals, usually accompanied by figures designed to reassure the business establishment while remaining ambiguous enough to hook the voter. They promise everything, yet no one explains how these published commitments are to be achieved. They spend more time dabbling in shallow waters than taking on capital – on the contrary, they vie with one another over which one would be capitalism's best manager.

**Working people do not need empty promises. They do not need political managers acting as proxies for big business and the bosses. The working class is in dire need of hope, and that hope lies in our struggles.**

We sometimes might think politics is merely governance – a technical exercise rather than an art form where competing ideas, concepts and ideologies clash. Everything is designed to discourage anyone who might disrupt the status quo.

The Communist Party offers no promise other than struggle. We are not campaigning on a standard platform, but rather around five key perspectives of struggle. These align with the concerns of working people, 78 percent of whom fear impoverishment. They represent as many points of rupture with corporate monopolies and their power.

PCQ candidates are championing neither specific figures nor piecemeal demands. They are not dwelling on their personal backgrounds, and nor are they focusing narrowly on local issues.

We are not campaigning to govern; we do not

seek to integrate ourselves into capitalist politics. We campaign to raise working class consciousness and to build our Party. If, as a result, we succeed in getting a comrade elected, so much the better.

Our candidates do not hesitate to go beyond mere platform demands – they engage in this campaign by tackling the issues, moving from the big picture to the particular rather than the other way around. In an election where the stakes are dictated by Washington, Communists know better than anyone how to defend sovereignty, specifically the sovereignty of labour against monopolies.

We rise above the fray, the only candidates who do not merely recite a platform in a daze. We draw the necessary connections to challenge the power of the corporate monopolies, and explain the importance of that challenge.

Some will scoff that our campaign is idealistic – we respond that it is revolutionary.

The world is burning. Gaza lies in ruins, its population suffering a genocide while the West Bank remains under occupation and colonization. Iran and Ukraine continue to fall victim to a Western imperialism that is gasping for breath – and becoming increasingly violent – as it faces emerging powers seeking to wrest away its hegemony.

Here at home, destitution is so severe that people are reduced to living in tents. People struggle to put food on the table. A job is no longer enough to escape poverty. As the only way out, capitalism offers us a war economy that would further integrate us into the military-industrial complex that offers no guarantee of employment, but does guarantee destruction which could well be nuclear.

The far right is gathering momentum. Yet the response is to normalize it, to the point that "respectable" parties are adopting some of its rhetoric.

Working people do not need empty promises. They do not need political managers acting as proxies for big business and the bosses. The working class is in dire need of hope, and that hope lies in our struggles. Whether on the political, economic, social or democratic front, there is no question of appeasing capital – parasitic and exploitative as it is – or of domesticating or taming it. The goal is to deliver the final blow and bury it.

Voting for the Parti communiste du Québec on October 5 is an act of commitment to the struggle of labour against capital. It means energizing that struggle and driving forward the five points of rupture against the power of corporate monopolies. It means choosing hope and the future; for before, during, and after the elections, Communists will press on and continue the fight.

In the face of the increasingly violent offensive of capital, imperialism and monopolies, we will not yield; we will continue to reach out to all who want to end the barbarism of exploitation and oppression. We are neither at the table nor on the menu: we do not negotiate the weight of our chains – we fight for socialism to the very end.

With the Communist Party, the future is ours! ■

Adrien Welsh is National Secretary of the Parti communiste du Québec



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# High stakes for working people as Vancouver election comes down to the wire

## People's Voice calls for unity against mayor Ken Sim's right-wing ABC

PV VANCOUVER BUREAU

Another complicated Vancouver civic election campaign is entering the final stretch. When this issue of People's Voice reaches print subscribers, advance voting will be underway for municipal elections taking place here and across BC on October 17.

Veteran Green city councillor Pete Fry has emerged as the leading candidate for mayor in Vancouver, heading up an informal alliance of three parties backed by most of the labour movement and other progressive forces – COPE, One City and the Greens. Early polling gives a lead to these parties, but the race is far from over.

In some BC communities, far-right racists linked to the BC Conservatives are making a push to win seats on local councils and school boards. These efforts had a setback on September 20 when the party's leader Kerry-Lynne Findlay resigned in the midst of campaigning to win a byelection to gain a seat in the Legislature. After Findlay's caucus was deserted by at least a dozen MLAs, NDP Premier David Eby seized on the Conservative turmoil to call a snap election for October 24.

There are alarming ideological ties between the Conservatives and elements of the ABC party led by Ken Sim, which won a big majority of Vancouver city council seats in 2022. But there has been also a strong push-back against ABC and the Conservatives.

Mayor Sim and his party are regarded by many as openly corrupt pawns of big business. But even if they lose some votes this time, ABC could still win another majority thanks to divisions among opposition parties. Sim's tactic is to accuse his opponents of being "soft" public safety and drug use, and ABC is trying to manipulate the campaign by adding two "law and order" referendums on the civic election ballot. This hot button issue has been amplified for opportunist purposes by Eby's NDP, and the mayor's narrative does resonate beyond ABC's core voter base among higher-income home owners.

In this context, the mayor's declining popularity should have made it possible to cobble together a winning electoral alternative. But the combination of long-running subjective divisions among the progres-



VANCOUVER COUNCIL CANDIDATE SEAN ORR AND SUPPORTERS HAVE THE RIGHT FOCUS [PHOTO: FACEBOOK]

sive-backed forces, and some genuine policy differences, hindered attempts by the Vancouver and District Labour Council to broker unity on the ballot.

The process of finding a common candidate for the mayor's office got off to a contentious start. After months of jockeying, the only result was an agreement to limit the number of overall candidates for each party. But this step to reduce vote-splitting still left more total candidates than positions to be elected. Some new "opposition" parties also popped up to muddy the waters, although these are basically pro-business slates posing as populists – these include the Vancouver Liberals, who are mostly right-wingers rather than federal Liberals, and the pro-business TEAM which longs for a return to Vancouver's imaginary golden past.

After opinion surveys suggested that Fry was the only candidate with a chance to defeat Ken Sim, the One City and COPE mayoralty hopefuls withdrew by early September. Fry's resulting jump in the polls (15 percent ahead of Sim) appears to have lifted all three parties. If the vote were held now, one survey released in mid-September showed the Greens on pace to elect four councillors, COPE on course to elect three, and two from One City. Sean Orr, COPE's socialist incumbent on council, placed first overall in the survey. Only one ABC incum-

bent placed in the top ten.

Fry's big lead will be hard for Sim to overcome, but the council race could become much tighter with a small swing in voter preferences. If most supporters of the "progressive" alliance cast ballots for each other's candidates, they should win a majority on council. But if significant numbers "plump" by casting votes only for their favourite party, the more cohesive ABC voter base could still make a comeback.

In this complex scenario, People's Voice is urging unity by Vancouver's working class voters, especially trade unionists, low-income earners and tenants. As we stated in the 2018 and 2022 civic elections, that means voting for the strongest set of progressive candidates in order to defeat the right-wing parties. That means Pete Fry and candidates of the three parties backing his campaign for mayor.

The tactical problem is that everyone has ten votes for council, while the three parties have a total of 13 candidates on the "at large" ballot. There is no perfect answer to this problem; it's a reality that various segments of the anti-ABC alliance will make different choices for city council.

The PV Vancouver Bureau is presenting our views on who Vancouverites should consider supporting. Events over the final couple of weeks may lead to some changes in such lists, but the important task is to cam-

paign for those we support:

Vote Pete Fry for mayor, despite our occasional differences on some issues.

We are endorsing ten names for City Council, most of whom are backed by the Vancouver and District Labour Council. These include the four candidates for COPE, the most consistently pro-working class party in Vancouver history – Sean Orr, Solomon Yi-Kieran, Chloe Leslie and Devyani Singh. Three Green candidates are on our list – trade unionist Annette Reilly, anti-poverty activist Stephanie Smith and former Parks Commissioner Camil Dumont. We urge your support for One City incumbent Lucy Maloney and two others from One City – Iona Bonamis and Caitlin Stockwell.

After difficult discussions about the nine Vancouver School Board (VSB) trustee positions, we are endorsing the four COPE candidates, a group with very strong records on public education at a time when the provincial NDP government has failed to provide adequate funding: incumbent trustee Suzie Mah, plus Derrick O'Keefe, Gwen Giesbrecht and Melanie Cheng. We also support three of One City's excellent candidates – Steve Cardwell, Sherry Breshears and Rory Brown. Finally, we are backing the two Green candidates, who have strongly distanced themselves from the dismal record of Janet Fraser, the previous VSB chair who was a Green Party member. Alisha Masong-song and Julie Strilesky of the Greens have strong progressive platforms, although they are not endorsed by the VDLC.

Before October 17, we will say a few words about the Park Board race in Vancouver. ■

### Vote Salman Zafar in Surrey!

PV also strongly urges our readers and friends in Surrey to help the city council campaign by Salman Zafar, the only truly progressive candidate on the ballot in that city.

His campaign includes focusing on affordable housing, calling for 33,000 new housing units and a rent freeze for 4 years. He is also pushing for free buses in Surrey.

Readers can reach out to Salman by email at [salman4citycouncil@hotmail.com](mailto:salman4citycouncil@hotmail.com). ■

## EXCLUSIVE: Rubio used trade war as threat to force Ottawa's support for blockade against Cuba

DAVE MCKEE

Peoples Voice has received reports that during the recent failed trade negotiations between the United States and Canada, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio offered the Canadian government a trade deal in exchange for Ottawa's support for the blockade against Cuba.

Specifically, Rubio sought Ottawa's promise to vote against the annual United Nations General Assembly resolution condemning the US blockade of Cuba. Every year since 1992, the UNGA has voted overwhelmingly to demand an end to the nearly seven-decades-long economic blockade of the island and its people.

On every single occasion, Canada has supported the motion, joining the vast majority of the world's governments in calling on Washington to end its economic, commercial and financial embargo.

But in an alarming move, Ottawa abstained from a UNGA vote in July, for the UN to open a special debate on intensified US economic sanctions and the blockade against Cuba. On that occasion, there were several reports that Washington was pressuring countries around the world, including with tariffs and other trade penalties, to vote against or abstain the motion.

The current reports are the first concrete indication that the US has directly used economic and financial threats against Canada



to coerce support for the blockade. It marks an alarming escalation of Washington's willingness to hold sovereign countries and their peoples under threat of economic pain in order to advance its seven-decades-long campaign to overthrow the Cuban Revolution and deny the Cuban people's sovereignty.

Coming on the heels of Canada's abstention in July, these developments increase concern that Ottawa may shift its longstanding position in support of the Cuban people and Cuba's sovereignty. Under the conditions of US economic threats, such a shift would also mark a surrender of Canada's state sovereignty.

In a hopeful sign, PV also received unconfirmed reports Global Affairs Canada

(GAC) denied Rubio's "request" and insisted that Canada will not change its position opposing the blockade of Cuba at the October UNGA vote.

Whether or not Ottawa did deny Rubio, the fact remains that the line of the Mark Carney government to this point has been largely to spout pro-sovereignty bluster while enacting policies which directly undermine Canada's independence from the US.

Cuba solidarity organizations in Canada are certainly aware of this, and they are mobilizing in response. The Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) has launched an important new campaign aimed precisely at pressuring

■ KEEP PRESSURE ON OTTAWA, PG 10

### Eby's opportunism

In the middle of a municipal election, BC premier David Eby has called a provincial election for October 24 hoping to benefit from disunity in the right-wing forces in the wake of the short but disastrous Conservative Party leadership of Kerri-Lynn Findlay.

Speaking to People's Voice just after the election call, Communist Party of BC leader Robert Crooks said:

"The governing NDP's failure to meaningfully curb the housing and affordability crises, their abandonment of \$10-a-day childcare, their attacks on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIPA), the near collapse of the province's healthcare and the endless subsidies to the extractive industries have left progressive voters disillusioned with the New Democrats.

"On the other hand, the Green Party have been reinvigorated by their young leader Emily Lowan and are threatening to spoil Eby's plans to strengthen his party's majority."

The Communist Party of BC will be the only working-class party campaigning on an anti-monopoly platform for jobs, housing, social programs, affordability, Indigenous rights and an end to the publicly funded corporate feeding trough.

People's Voice will have more coverage and analysis of the BC election online and in our next print issue. ■

# EDITORIAL

## DEEPEN THE FIGHT FOR TRUTH AND JUSTICE

This issue of People's Voice arrives just after Truth and Reconciliation Day on September 30.

It is a moment when we need to ponder the violence of colonialism and the ways it continues to reverberate through our society and institutions.

For over a century, Canada pursued Indigenous policies whose goal was to eliminate Indigenous governments, undermine treaty rights and cause Indigenous peoples to cease to exist as distinct nations and peoples. Central to this genocide was the residential school system, funded by the Canadian state and operated by churches.

From 1825 until 1996, some 150,000 children were forced into these institutions, where they suffered from disease, malnutrition, isolation, racism and violence. Many died as a result. Nearly 3,000 unmarked graves have been discovered, and the number continues to grow.

This genocide was not incidental. Capitalism in Canada was built on the seizure of Indigenous lands and the attempted destruction of Indigenous people as distinct nations and peoples. The economic plunder of Indigenous land and resources filled the coffers of the Hudson's Bay Company, the North West Company, and many land and railway companies.

Today, in the face of a major capitalist offensive to secure new resources and sources of profits, federal and provincial governments are launching new attacks on Indigenous sovereignty, as well as on environmental regulation and labour rights.

Governments and the corporate monopolies they represent are using "sovereignty" and "national interest" as pretexts for fast-tracking profiteering megaprojects like new oil and gas pipelines, fossil fuel transportation infrastructure and mining projects, that all deeply impact Indigenous peoples and their territories.

Legislation like federal Bills C-5 and C-39, as well as a range of similar bills at the provincial level, violate Indigenous rights in the drive for corporate profit. They deliberately sweep aside Indigenous peoples' right to free, prior and informed consent as prescribed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a declaration that Canada forcefully opposed.

In the face of this corporate assault, which is coupled with the Carney government's war economy that serves NATO's arbitrary 5-percent GDP military spending target, there is a surge in residential school denialism. This racist and reactionary ideological weapon is used to justify fresh attacks on Indigenous sovereignty.

This publication continues to stand with Indigenous peoples and progressive organizations and movements across the country, in demanding the full implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry's Calls for Justice. Federal and provincial governments must allocate adequate resources to Indigenous-led investigations to uncover the full historical truth about residential schools.

We reiterate our call that residential school denialism be included under anti-hate speech laws and prosecuted as such.

We stand with the labour and social movements and millions of people across Canada, in extending our deepest sympathies to all Indigenous survivors of the residential school system, to their families, and to the communities that continue to suffer the ongoing trauma of Canada's genocidal policies. We honour the memory of the thousands of children who never returned home.

People's Voice fights for the liberation of oppressed nations in Canada, including Indigenous nations – First Nations, Métis, Inuit – as well as Acadians and Quebec. We fight for a socialist Canada that is based on national equality, an equal and voluntary partnership in which all nations have the right to self-determination, up to and including secession.

We pledge to redouble our struggle for truth and justice, which remain the prerequisites for reconciliation. ♦



## 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.

### UN officially accuses US of war crimes in Iran

There are reasonable grounds to believe the United States, under the leadership of the Trump administration, has committed war crimes in the illegal bombing of Iran, one of which targeted a children's school in the city of Minab and a sports center in Lamerd, according to experts with the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The bombs in question were used in two separate strikes that reportedly murdered 178 civilians, including women and children, at the beginning of a joint military operation between the US and Israel.

In February of this year, what began as any other day in the city of Minab, Iran turned bloody when munitions likely fired by the United States Armed Forces struck Shajareh Tayyebbeh school, devastating the Iranian people and sparking a military response from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

"Following the United States and Israeli attacks on 28 February, the mission found reasonable grounds to believe the United States committed the war crime of launching indiscriminate attacks resulting in the loss of life or injury to civilians or damage to civilian objects," the UNHRC experts said in a statement.

While the Trump administration accused Iran of the bloodshed, fragments recovered at the scene indicate that a US Tomahawk Land

Attack Missile was used in the bombing – munitions that Iran does not utilize or possess.

To date, the United States has not confirmed the allegations, nor released the findings from the Pentagon regarding its investigation into the unauthorized war and subsequent bombings in Iran that initially killed 178 people, 26 of them being adult teachers – the rest children. Many argue that the continued denial of any wrongdoing and challenging the credibility of the UN's findings is a reflection of the same tactics used by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) under the leadership of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

After the bombing in Manab, a second strike occurred hours later that targeted the Shahid Haj Khalil Naimi Cultural and Sports Complex in Lamerd, also in Southern Iran, killing 22 people. The final death toll and reported casualties included the murder of four children and varying degrees of injuries to over 100 people.

The Trump administration faces several legal hurdles regarding the war in Iran, including Rep. Thomas Massie putting Secretary of War Pete Heseth on notice with articles of impeachment, prompting the Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson to send everyone home until after the midterms. It is still unclear whether the impeachment will succeed, but the early send-home could signal the kind of trouble the administration faces.

Recent polls make it clear that public approval of Trump and the Republican Party is sinking. This has resulted in the party becoming more defensive and subsequently offensive in its posturing, attempting to control the narrative surrounding hot-button political issues such as genocide in Gaza, Trump's illegal kidnapping of the president of Venezuela and more, leaving many to speculate if this is the end of the Trump regime that has consistently taken its insecurities out on the working class and oppressed people of the United States. ■

**R. L. Richards**  
People's World

### Sign the petition calling on Ottawa to oppose the US blockade at UN vote!

In the lead-up to the annual United Nations General Assembly vote condemning the US blockade of Cuba, over 3,000 people have signed the Canadian Network on Cuba petition calling on Ottawa to reiterate its vote against the blockade.

This vote is particularly important this year, with the US government escalating its attacks on Cuba and pressuring other countries to oppose or abstain during the UN vote in October. Please visit [canadianetworkoncuba.ca](http://canadianetworkoncuba.ca) to sign the petition and request a lawn sign. ■

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Please send submissions (articles, photos, events, announcements) for our October 16-31 issue by **October 5** and for our November 1-15 issue by **October 19** to [peoplesvoiceditor@gmail.com](mailto:peoplesvoiceditor@gmail.com)

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Gitksan leader Gwii Lok'im Gibuu and Wet'suwete'en hereditary chief Na'Moks [Photo: PBI Canada]

# The forces of K-N-O-W: Indigenous leaders speak against Carney's Privatization Summit

AMANDA BERINE

At Canada's two-day Canada Investment Summit to sell-off of public assets in the federal government's massive global equity privatization drive, protestors gathered to voice opposition in downtown Toronto. Among the protesters were Indigenous leaders, some who had come from clear across the country to speak and lead oppositional gatherings.

The CEO summit brought billionaire heads of some of the world's richest investment, wealth and pension funds to Toronto. Thousands showed up to protest on September 14, showing their opposition to the selloff of public infrastructure and resources, and to forced megaprojects including mining and pipeline projects.

While people in Canada are promised trillions of "investment" dollars, the country's water, airports, farmland, telecommunications infrastructure and many other resources are being quickly parcelled off to private equity firms, most US.

The following excerpts are from speeches delivered by Gitksan leader Gwii Lok'im Gibuu, and Wet'suwete'en hereditary Chief Na'Moks at the Resistance Concert in Toronto's Grange Park, the day before the mass protest where both leaders also spoke.

## Gwii Lok'im Gibuu (Jesse Stoeppler):

Dini' ze', Ts'akē ze', Skize, Hawsim Simgiigyet, Sigidim Haana'nak (male hereditary chiefs, female hereditary chiefs, respected leaders). My name is Gwii Lok'im Gibuu, my taxpayer name is Jesse Stoeppler. I belong to Wilp Spookw, we're a Gitksan and Wilp House.

You've also taken a lot of time out of your day, listening to many smart people, guiding us through many workshops, bringing clarity to what's actually taking place. What's being done with public resources. Your resources, our resources. And over the next two days this place is going to be full of the richest CEOs and decision makers of this country and around the globe.

They are meeting and they are making deals, and they're auctioning off all of these resources, all coming from the places that we call home. They're not paying for it. They're using your taxpayer and ratepayer money. And Canada wants to talk about economic Indigenous reconciliation.

I had an opportunity to meet with the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, and I asked him straight up, "What does reconciliation mean to you?" And he just looked at me with a long face. Shrugged his shoulders – he didn't know, he didn't have an answer for that. That's his job. He's getting paid with your money to answer that one simple question right?

I'm sure many of you have followed along for the last six years, and had some exposure to the violence that was brought onto Wet'suwete'en territories, with the construction of the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline. That is exactly what happens when Indigenous people say no. When we have title and we have rights, that means we also have the option to say no. That is connected to true power, to sovereignty. Yet the people that did so were criminalized and dehumanized. This is also

done using your and our public resources.

We're seeing a corporate takeover of this country called Canada. It's being militarized, and it's happening at lightspeed right now. So now we've learned something about projects of the "national interest" – PONIs. Sounds like a Trojan horse to me.

A couple of these projects, one would be Phase 2 of LNG Canada. That is the same project connected to the Coastal Gas Link Pipeline. It's meant to double capacity. At the current state LNG Canada is not equitable. From an economic perspective, it's a disaster. The only way this keeps functioning is because this government will subsidize the living shit out of it with your and our money. And over about 17 years we've been fighting the very same projects many times over. Coastal Gaslink is one of them, and that is because private equity has not had the certainty connected to these projects to commit long term with offtake agreements.

For us as Gitksan, for many other Nations, we're facing another project called Ksi Lisims [LNG floating liquified natural gas project]. That's another Terminal – it's connected to the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission pipeline, roughly 800 kilometers long, spanning through many many different sovereign territories. And this project, also for 14 years, has tried to get off the ground but couldn't because there is no certainty. And at the blink of an eye, in about a year, the legislative framework at the horizon in Canada has changed so drastically that this government created, manufactured, certainty for investors by continuously de-risking projects that private equity had no interest in, ever.

You hear about other PONIs connected to hydroelectric dams, to transmission lines. This is all support infrastructure, and industry connected, to larger scale projects like LNG Canada, like Ksi Lisims, like so many other mines that are designated with the same PONI. Who pays for all of those? Oh right, it's us again. Ratepayers and taxpayers. Billions and billions of dollars.

Can you imagine what we could do in our communities if we had, let's say 30 billion, 50 billion dollars available at the blink of an eye? Can you imagine what would happen to our healthcare system, to education? It would make healthier happier and smarter people. And that's not what they have in mind with their decision-making.

But thankfully, all of you show courage, and you use your voice. And I recommend you use your rights. We're not talking about private equity, we're talking about public resources. You have a long list of rights connected to that, and you need to use them. When you see bullshit you need to call bullshit.

## Wet'suwete'en hereditary Chief Na'Moks:

I don't mean to offend anybody, but I'm going to repeat what the politicians said when they said they would put through a pipeline. They said "as a whole" there would be no damages. Well I'm going to respond back with a Wet'suwete'en accent. I said, you "assahole" you lied to me.

So when they came at us with CIRG,

■ OUR OWN MONEY, PG 7

## OPINION

# Public grocery stores: good intentions, but do they miss the real target?



CLÉMENT LIU

Zohran Mamdani's winning campaign for New York mayor last year featured a major campaign promise to provide municipal grocery stores, which would be funded by the city in an effort to combat the rising cost of groceries. Progressive politicians in Canada have been inspired by this idea and have been quick to announce similar promises in their attempt to fight the cost-of-living crisis.

Mamdani's administration has announced that the city will cover the costs of building the grocery stores, as well as rent and property taxes for each location. Third-party operators will provide the services to the public while respecting the city's regulations.

Toronto's city council also approved a pilot project in March with very similar parameters.

Toronto's largest food bank, Daily Bread Food Bank, made an announcement welcoming the city council's interest in addressing rising food costs but warned them of the limits of this solution, noting the 3-5% percent profit margins on food items as a key factor. According to the DBFB, "even if a city-run grocery model eliminated these margins entirely, this would translate to approximately \$40-\$73 per household per month in maximum theoretical savings (or \$11 to \$18 per person per month), and likely less once operating costs are considered."

City governments are right to take measures that confront the cost-of-living crisis, but there are definite limits to what they're able to achieve with the budgets and political levers that they have.

Another consideration is the response from the existing grocery store giants, who will be unwilling to share their profits with publicly owned stores. There is a real possibility that the eventual operators of mu-

nicipal grocery stores will be associated with these corporate monopolies, who will inevitably profit from this well-intentioned project.

At more senior levels of government, both Québec solidaire (QS) and the federal NDP have both chosen to emulate Mamdani's popular policy by pushing forward promises for public groceries at the federal and provincial levels.

In fact, in the current Quebec provincial election campaign, QS's first stated solution to combat the cost-of-living crisis in its platform is building a network of fifteen non-profit public grocery stores. The party claims this would reduce grocery bills for Quebec families by 10 percent, or an average of \$2500 annually.

QS parliamentary leader Ruba Ghazal was asked during a Radio-Canada interview how they would reach the 10 percent reduction target when Canadian grocery monopolies currently operate on profit margins of 3 percent. She simply stated that the reduction would come "by removing the profits," before the interviewer repeated that it would mean only a 3 percent reduction and pressed her for a clearer answer. Ghazal then stated that the government is capable of replacing intermediary costs in the supply chain, a proposal absent from their platform, and they would explore other opportunities to reduce costs. She concluded that the new public grocery network would introduce more market competition and help bring grocery prices down.

But this is the same capitalist logic that has been used to destroy our public services, and has caused the increase in costs.

The idea that competition lowers costs is one of the major contradictions of capitalism. The "free market" has led to the formation of monopolies in almost every

■ PUBLIC GROCERIES, PG 10

# CP of Denmark warns that Greenland deal cements military build-up in Arctic

The forthcoming agreement between Denmark and the United States will not make the people of Greenland feel safer. On the contrary, it will cement the military build-up in the Arctic and increase the risk that Greenland will become a front line in a conflict between great powers.

The people of Greenland do not have the same interests as the United States, NATO or the Danish government. When the Danish Prime Minister, with the support of the Danish Parliament, speaks and acts on behalf of the entire Realm without equal involvement of the people of Greenland, a colonial power structure is perpetuated.

Greenlanders and Danes need the same things: welfare, security and a clean environment. Billions spent on military build-up and war could instead be invested in healthcare, education, welfare and the protection of nature.

At the same time, the great powers' in-

terest in Greenland is also about control over the country's strategic location and natural resources.

Whether it is American or Chinese capital does not change the fundamental problem: the people of Greenland themselves must have decisive influence over the country's resources and future.

Greenland already bears the legacy of decades of American military presence and pollution. Experience shows that a military presence does not automatically mean security, nor does it guarantee that the damage will be cleaned up afterwards.

The Communist Party of Denmark calls for solidarity with the people of Greenland and for opposition to further militarization of the Arctic.

Only socialism can secure peace. ■

# Grassy Narrows: Justice delayed is justice denied!



## Governments must act now to close the mill, clean the water, compensate the people

### PV ONTARIO BUREAU

For six decades, the people of Grassy Narrows (Asubpeeschoseewagong) First Nation have suffered through a deadly mercury poisoning crisis, the result of nine tons of mercury that was dumped upstream from their territory by the Dryden pulp and paper mill in the 1960s.

Mercury levels in the Wabigoon River have remained dangerously high ever since, with no notable decrease since the 1980s. The toxin has contaminated the river's fish supply, a key source of food for the community, and can be passed from mothers to babies. This has created a crisis which spans generations, with an estimated 90 percent of the people of Grassy Narrows suffering from mercury poisoning. Since mercury bioaccumulates over time, the effects of the poisoning will continue for several generations even after full restoration and clean up.

Decades of government denial, neglect and pandering to corporations have only worsened the situation. In 1975, the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources declared that the mercury dumping has caused "no real damages" to the First Nations peoples. In 1984, the provincial environment minister said that the Wabigoon River was cleaning itself, and insisted there was no need for the government to intervene.

A year later, the Ontario government did see the need to intervene – but on behalf of the Dryden mill, whom it indemnified along with all future owners against claims relating to the mercury poisoning. This action was specifically to protect the corporation from litigation brought against the mill by the Grassy Narrows and Islington First Nations, seeking compensation for damages from the contamination.

The provincial government has continued to grant clearcutting licenses to forestry monopolies and allow the Dryden mill to pollute the river with emissions including sulfate which generates the highly poisonous methylmercury.

Furthermore, the federal and provincial governments are fast-tracking their economic development priorities – which include AI data centres, critical minerals mining, and a proposed nuclear waste disposal site upstream from Grassy Narrows – which further places corporate interests ahead of Indigenous rights and escalates the threats to Indigenous land and resources, including water.

### Six decades of struggle

While the past six decades have been a period of suffering for the people of Grassy

Narrows, they have also been a period of struggle to be properly compensated for the mercury crisis, to regain their self-determination and control over their traditional territory, and to recover and restore their culture.

Utilizing a range of tactics ranging including letter-writing and petitions, meetings and speaking tours, legal efforts, protests and direct action, they have won important victories. Among the successes are a ban on logging on their territory for the next decade and government commitments to clean the river and build a Mercury Care Home. Their struggle includes the longest-running blockade in Canadian history, beginning in December 2002, to block the logging road and stop logging on their land.

The fight also includes the regular River Run, a massive grassroots effort during which Elders, leaders and community members travel 1,700 km from Grassy Narrows to Toronto, to demand action and justice. On September 23, they were joined by allies and supporters in calling on the Ontario and federal governments to:

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

Many labour and political organizations have publicly stated their solidarity with the people of Grassy Narrows in this struggle. These include the Communist Party of Canada (Ontario), whose provincial executive stated on September 21: "We support their just demands and reiterate our call for governments at all levels to immediately adopt legislation and policies which fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) including the right to free, prior and informed consent."

"At a time when Doug Ford and Mark Carney are using 'divide and conquer' tactics to facilitate state and corporate encroachment on Indigenous land and theft of resources, the struggle of the people of Grassy Narrows stands as an example of the degree of unity and solidarity to confront and defeat colonialism and capitalism."

Justice for Grassy Narrows! ■

Photo of 2024 River Run: SEIU

# "Our own money, to destroy our own country, to destroy all of our planet"

### ■ FROM PG 5

now called CRU (Critical Response Unit) they brought in mercenaries, they burned us out of our homes, arrested us. The arrested us out on the territory, and wouldn't even give us the dignity of being in a vehicle like a truck or a van. They put us in dog kennels and then they brought us into jail. Arrested our women.

And somehow they thought if they would dehumanize us, then they could get away with what they were doing. Well, unfortunate for them we had allies such as yourselves, and being Wet'suwete'en, when we say no we mean no.

So after all the violence they did manage to get the pipeline in. And it's operating at 30 percent. We actually cost them between eight and ten billion dollars by just stalling it. And they thought they'd burn us out, throw us in jail. Well to me that's a compliment because we're Wet'suwete'en – that is our land. We never signed a treaty with anybody. There's not one document that has our signatures on it. The only document that I've signed since being Chief Na'Moks, is an MOU with BC and Canada, reinstating the Supreme Court of Canada decision of 1997 that said we are the authority on the land, we have the jurisdiction, and we will control what happens on our land.

When we get to confront them, at this gathering they're having, it lets them know that they don't have the freedom that they think, to destroy water, air, land and the very future of your children and grandchildren. You have that power. Don't let them ever try to convince you that you don't have that power.

If you think about the way that they're taking public money, to enhance these projects that they're going to try to put on the market tomorrow, you have that right to say no. At one time they called us "the forces of no." I agree, but you spelt it wrong – we're the forces of K-N-O-W. We know where the damage is coming.

So when you gather as you have been and move the way you are moving, they have to listen. When they think that they can take the resources that you actually own, the air that you breathe, the water that you drink, and say they can put a price tag on it and sell it to foreign governments, we've experienced that. And you know what we're still here and so will you.

I think about the projects they have happening right now and who's willing to buy it, and who's influencing it. If you have [the US] leading this whole here market, that they're fighting and talking about deficits, you've got to remember the biggest deficit that Canada has currently is a moral deficit, it's not financial.

When we stand together and we use our voices properly and we let 'em know that the power really is within each and every one of you, don't let them over-talk you. Don't let them say be quiet. They tried it with us. We had to face CIRG. They created that; we were the template. Then they sent in the mercenaries.

And the very fact that they think that's how they're going to exercise power, that's a last resort. That means they have nothing except violence. And with violence they should be held accountable.

Us as hereditary chiefs we're accountable to our people. There will never be a for sale, for lease, or for rent sign on my forehead, because this blanket says we've gotta stand up for each other. We've gotta stand up for our law – L-A-W: Land, Air, Water – and we have to do that today.

When Prime Minister Carney, when they held that meeting to announce Bill C-5, you know they came up with that Bill C-5 in five days. That's all it took for them. And they say it's law. So basically looking us in the eyes and telling us that we're criminal because we're not following the law. We are – we're following the law of humanity. We're following the law of this planet. And we're



following the law that will help our children and grandchildren survive. Their law is criminal, not me.

You think about Coastal Gaslink Pipeline that is in our territory now. We've stalled it so much that again, it's only operating at 30 percent and then they're going to take your money, and they're going to make it into Phase 2. At one time I believe the number was 350 shiploads per year. They're shipping out 50, and a number of them were coming in loaded and was only a photo op for them to leave, because they wanted to say that on Canada Day they had a shipment. Well yeah that shipment was loaded, and all it did was get tied to the dock and left with exactly what it came in with.

You know when Carney and his carnival are done, and they're going to be making all of these announcements, about what is sold and all these investments that are coming, the only thing that's making it sweet for them is them taking your hundreds of millions of dollars, moving into the billions of dollars, of your money that you don't have a choice in putting. You go to work; that money comes out of your check automatically. You can't say no.

When you stand up and tell them what truth is. When you tell 'em why you live and why you do what you do, they don't comprehend that. They only comprehend the world of money.

Quite often they'll say that I'm insulting them; I'm telling them the truth. I don't have to do anything but tell the truth. When you tell the truth you should never ever be afraid of anything. Because they are gonna use fear as a weapon. They're gonna make us dependent on their decisions. We're in a democracy where they're supposed to listen to us. You remind them of that, by coming together and listening and talking, sharing knowledge.

And the greenwashing they're doing is just absolutely unbelievable, where every time you turn around here's this project – oh it's going to be in the best of Canada, these projects are going to be bringing in billions and billions of dollars to the Canadian public. It doesn't. It goes to those rich people – all of them are foreign investors.

If you ever hear anybody talk about "Indigenous owned project," they're only using the name. They say it's Indigenous owned. No it's not, it's just a label. The companies that came to our territories with guns and burning our homes are the same that are back in the southern provinces. But they're expanding now to the world market.

So I want to thank you all again for coming here. I wanted to tell you where we are today. What we had to endure, because I don't want you to endure what we did. I know over three decades ago when I went to the tar sands, the Elders in the community of Blue River looked at me and they said, "you know what, you're next." I didn't believe it.

Look where we are today. Our own money, to destroy our own country, to destroy all of our planet.

Stay strong. Stay pure, and you are so right. Misiyh, Misiyh. ■

JOIN THE FIGHT! BUILD THE STRUGGLE!



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# Sudan: From crisis to the depths of the abyss



The following report, sent to *People's Voice* from the *Economic Committee of the Sudanese Communist Party*, illustrates the gravity of the crisis in Sudan and highlights the urgency of the struggle to end the war and rebuild the country.

Sudan today faces the gravest economic and social crisis in its modern history. This is the result of the interaction between the war and a structural economic crisis accumulated over decades of failed policies, the absence of balanced development, the weakening of the productive sector, corruption, and dependence on a rentier economy and taxation rather than on a productive economy.

The war has deepened this crisis by draining resources into armed conflict instead of directing them towards production and development. It has destroyed infrastructure, disrupted agriculture and industry, contracted trade, and transformed the country into a war economy while famine and food insecurity have continued to spread.

This situation has also led to the collapse of state institutions, rising unemployment and poverty, and a severe contraction of the economy. Among the clearest manifestations of this economic collapse is the absence of an Auditor General's report on the annual budgets of banking institutions, whose details are not disclosed. The war has brought most economic activities to a halt, particularly industry and agriculture, while most productive sectors have ceased operating. Exports have collapsed, imports have contracted, and inflation and unemployment have risen sharply.

### Grave economic situation

- In 2023 and 2024 alone, Sudan lost approximately 43 percent of its real GDP cumulatively as economic activity came to a halt across large areas of the country.
- According to the latest estimates of the Central Bureau of Statistics, 82.8 percent of the population now live below the poverty line, alongside the widening spread of food insecurity.
- Inflation has remained among the highest rates globally, exceeding 200 percent during previous periods, while prices continue to rise at rates far exceeding the growth of incomes.
- The Sudanese pound has lost most of its value. The exchange rate of the US dollar on the parallel market rose from approximately SDG 1,100–1,300 during 2024 to around SDG 2,900–3,200 by mid-2025, an increase exceeding 150 percent within a single year. By August–September 2026, the dollar had surpassed the SDG 6,000 threshold. This has directly increased the prices of imported goods and the cost of essential commodities and imports.
- The customs exchange rate for the dollar has been raised several times since the beginning of 2024, reaching more than SDG 3,900 in August 2026. This

- has further increased the cost of living.
- Public revenues have fallen sharply – by approximately 80 percent – while the authorities have increasingly relied on fees, levies and charges whose burden is ultimately borne by citizens and producers.

The most dangerous aspect of the crisis, however, is the complete collapse of the purchasing power of wages. The salaries of civil servants, teachers, healthcare workers, engineers, labourers and pensioners now cover only a tiny proportion of a family's basic needs. Estimates of living costs indicate that an average income may cover no more than 8–10 percent of household requirements. This means that the cost-of-living gap has exceeded 90 percent, forcing millions of families to reduce their consumption of food, medicine and education and to depend increasingly on debt or assistance.

This crisis is not solely the result of the war. It is also the outcome of economic policies based on compliance with recommendations imposed by donors and the policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, without transparency and with the Sudanese people bearing the consequences.

Among these issues is the approximately US\$66 billion in debt announced by donors. This requires transparency and a thorough review to determine how these debts were spent, who benefited from them, and whether the Sudanese people benefited from the conditions attached to the agreements under which they were granted.

There must be an end to the continuous submission to such policies, together with a comprehensive review of these debts and their burdens. A government that fails to disclose how debts exceeding US\$66 billion were spent cannot continue imposing further austerity policies hostile to development. This includes reviewing and cancelling those aspects associated with the programs of these institutions – including, for example, the social and economic recommendations connected with the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) program – that undermine national development.

Clear examples include the relinquishment of national resources such as gold, gum arabic and copper, as well as the dismantling of electricity infrastructure.

There has also been an infringement upon the country's sovereign rights through the exploitation of Sudan's share of water by water-scarce countries in the region to support desert agricultural projects.

Another manifestation is the organized, systematic and repeated encroachment on mining sites at a time when the borders between the two countries have not yet been demarcated, as occurred recently with attacks on miners, their vehicles and their production under Egyptian claims that the miners had crossed the border.

Public-sector institutions have been sold under the banner of privatization, while productive sectors have been denied support.

This has deprived the public treasury of important sources of revenue and expanded reliance on taxes, fees and indirect taxation, whose cost falls disproportionately on the poor and those on limited incomes, while simultaneously widening the scope for corruption.

A number of monopolistic security-sector companies operate without disclosing sufficient information about themselves, their activities, their borrowing, the way their revenues are spent, or their contribution to state revenues and public finances. These arrangements must be replaced by transparent structures subject to state institutions and public financial accountability.

War and displacement have also expanded the informal sector, particularly among women, who increasingly bear responsibility for their families and face daily pressures to secure livelihoods amid disrupted agricultural production, displacement and weakened humanitarian assistance. The distribution of such assistance itself has been affected by manifestations of systematic corruption in areas of conflict.

There has also been a relinquishment of state sovereignty over its territory and latent natural wealth in Hala'ib, Shalateen and Abu Ramad.

Other manifestations of these policies include:

- Increasing prices under the pretext of removing subsidies.
- Expanding levies, taxes and fees imposed on producers and citizens.
- Neglecting agriculture, industry and national development projects.
- Weakening oversight of the gold and foreign-exchange markets.
- The absence of transparency and accountability in the management of public resources.

The war has become a means of exhausting the country's resources while ordinary people alone pay the price of economic collapse. Public health and education services are deteriorating, unemployment is worsening, the gap between incomes and prices is widening, and migration and displacement continue to increase.

The economic crisis Sudan is experiencing today is therefore no longer merely a fiscal or monetary crisis. It has become a comprehensive crisis of livelihoods and human survival, threatening the very existence and well-being of millions of citizens.

The figures and facts demonstrate the depth of the crisis. The Sudanese economy contracted by approximately 29.4 percent in 2023 and by an additional 14 percent in 2024 – among the largest contractions experienced by any economy in the world in recent years.

Public revenues also collapsed, falling from approximately 10 percent of GDP in 2022 to less than 5 percent during 2024 and 2025. This has severely undermined the state's ability to finance basic services such as healthcare, education, water and electric-

## China's photovoltaic power capacity overtakes coal-fired power for first time



China's installed photovoltaic (PV) power capacity has surpassed coal-fired power capacity for the first time, making PV the country's largest power source by installed capacity, the country's National Energy Administration said.

China's installed PV power capacity reached 1.286 billion kilowatts at the end of July, edging past the coal-fired power capacity of 1.285 billion kilowatts, according to the administration.

"This marks a milestone in China's green and low-carbon energy transition," said Liu Zhiqiang, an expert from the China Electricity Council, adding that the country's new power system, with new energy as the mainstay, is taking shape at an accelerated pace.

By the end of July, PV power had accounted for more than 30 percent of China's total installed power generation capacity. Measured by newly added capacity, the share rose to over 40 percent in the first seven months of 2026, underscoring the rapid expansion of the PV sector.

China has built a complete PV industry chain covering research and development, design and integrated manufacturing. Technological advances, including repeated breakthroughs in PV conversion efficiency, have helped drive continuous upgrades and swift cost reductions.

China's speedy development of PV power and other forms of new energy is also making a positive contribution globally.

With the world's largest and fastest-growing renewable energy system, the country supplies over 80 percent of PV modules and 70 percent of wind power equipment around the world, assisting the green transition in many countries.

In particular, amid uncertainties in global supplies of energy and key raw materials, China's growing new energy capacity helped it meet domestic energy demand while contributing to the stability of global energy markets and supply chains, experts said.

Installed capacity, however, does not equate to actual power generation. From January to July, PV power generation totaled 802.4 billion kilowatt-hours, accounting for 13 percent of the country's total electricity consumption.

"PV power is highly intermittent and volatile due to day-night cycles and weather conditions, with utilization hours far lower than those of coal-fired power. In the short term, coal-fired power will remain a major source of support for the power system in China, serving as a backstop for power system security," Liu said.

China is now moving to strengthen the role of renewable energy in ensuring a secure and reliable power supply. Several energy plans for the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-2030) have set out specific measures to better integrate renewable energy into the power system.

For example, the country aims to achieve around 6 trillion kilowatt-hours in annual renewable power generation by 2030, with wind and PV power generation expected to exceed 4 trillion kilowatt-hours.

China will strive to make PV power more predictable and dispatchable through continued technological innovation and diversified applications, including integrated PV-storage systems and PV hydrogen production, Liu noted. ■

# LABOUR

## Workers at AmeriSteel Manitoba Metals strike for fair wages

USW Local 8740 members at Gerdau AmeriSteel Manitoba Metals' recycling operations in Selkirk, Manitoba went on strike on September 11 after months of bargaining failed to produce a new collective agreement.

The workers rejected three separate offers from the employer, each time by 92 percent, and delivered a 92 percent strike mandate at the end of July.

The main issue is wages, with the employer trying to buy off workers by offering a \$1,800 signing bonus but no decent pay increases.

"The recycling plant supplies the feed that keeps the mill running, yet our USW Local 8740 members are paid significantly less than their USW-represented colleagues working just across the fence at the mill," Phil Hayden, USW Staff Representative.

"We have members who have worked at the recycling plant for 40 years, reached the highest-paying classification and are still earning \$9 to \$10 an hour less than a newly hired labourer at the mill. That gap speaks for itself."

## Social services workers in ON making gains, but 8 locals still on the line

Four thousand community, social and health services workers in 24 different locals of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union began strike action 17 weeks ago, fighting for decent wage increases.

As of press time, 16 locals had settled new deals while 8 remained on the picket lines.

OPSEU reports that, through unity and with a militant "Worth Fighting For" public campaign, workers are setting a "historic wage standard" across their sectors.

Victories include wage increases that are higher than the norm over the past decade, pensions for part-time workers, and additional wage increases to catch up casual workers.

The union notes that these gains are particularly important and meaningful in the sector, which relies heavily on part-time and precarious work.

The locals are also bargaining for aligned expiry dates, so that they can bargaining together in the next round, with even greater coordination and collective strength.

## SGS Minerals workers strike for first contract, decent wages

Lab and prep techs at SGS Minerals in Prince Rupert, BC began strike action September 9, after unanimously rejecting the employer's final offer and voting 100 percent in favour of a strike.

The workers organized with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 505 in November 2024 and have been working for nearly two years to reach a first contract with SGS, a multi-billion-dollar transnational corporation.

The key issue is wages. Local 505 says that the workers earn less than the area's living wage of \$24.90 per hour and have received only a 30-cent wage increase over the past eight years. They earn over \$10 less per hour less than other SGS employees in Prince Rupert, doing comparable work.

The union says that, in addition to being intransigent over wages, "the bosses even tried a final last offer end run around Local 505 with a direct referendum. The bully tactics angered our workers so much that they unanimously voted for strike action days later."

# Stop Bill C-39: Unity and struggle needed to defend the right to strike and stop the corporate drive to deregulation and privatization!



DREW GARVIE

The Carney government's Bill C-39, the *Building Canada Strong Act* is a 246-page omnibus attack on the working class, Indigenous rights and the environment. It rewrites collective bargaining in the Canada Labour Code, guts federal environmental assessment, weakens the *Species at Risk Act* and *Fisheries Act*, and creates sweeping new powers to designate "regions of national interest."

Sold as a response to tariff threats, it is a Trojan horse for the corporate agenda of deregulation and privatization.

At the centre of the labour changes is an expansion of Section 107 of the Canada Labour Code. It already allows the minister to "take any measure" they think is likely to maintain industrial peace. In practice, a single minister can email the Canada Industrial Relations Board to end a legal strike and impose binding arbitration, without Parliament debating or voting.

Over the last two years, Section 107 has been used against Montreal and west coast dockworkers, CPKC and CN rail workers, Canada Post sorters and carriers, and Air Canada flight attendants. In every case, the CIRB ordered workers back and broke the strikes in all but the Air Canada strike, where workers defied the order.

Bill C-39 doubles down on Section 107. It leaves the existing language and adds supposed criteria: the minister must consider a special mediator's report and be of the opinion that a strike adversely affects the "national interest." The minister "may" consider the economy, social disruption and freedom of association. But these are not real guardrails – the minister must only "consider" the report, not follow it, and it is still left entirely up to the minister's discretion.

The message is clear: employers can avoid serious bargaining and wait for a friendly government to shut down a strike. The recent history of Section 107's use has shown that this interference in collective bargaining encourages employers to provoke a strike or a lockout. This has emboldened boss' across the board and has shown that all workers inside and outside the Canadian Labour Congress, beyond federally regulated jobsites, must defend the right to strike.

## The right to strike is in the "national interest"

The government justifies these changes with the premise that they are necessary to stop strikes. But strikes are the main tool the working class has to advance its interests.

In 1872, Toronto printers struck for the nine-hour day. They were arrested, but the struggle helped win a shorter workday that became the norm. In 1945, Ford workers in Windsor struck and won the Rand Formula, establishing union recognition and dues checkoff across Canada. In 1981, postal workers struck for 42 days and won paid maternity leave, the first federal union to do so, benefiting workers far beyond

CUPW.

Strikes have won weekends, health and safety laws, public services and equality rights. Strikes are not an obstacle to the "national interest" unless you are speaking from the vantage point of the capitalist class who is solely interested in increasing profits.

Bill C-39's "regions of national interest" are a direct attack on Indigenous sovereignty, democracy and environmental protection. The bill would allow any area to be designated a special zone where approvals are "streamlined," construction can begin before federal permits are granted, and companies can pay offset fees if their projects harm fish habitat. It imposes one-year time limits on assessments and lets ministers waive conditions meant to protect the environment.

As Environmental Defence warns, this would make it practically impossible to meaningfully consult Indigenous communities on major projects, which is constitutionally required. The David Suzuki Foundation calls it a "feeble framework" that steamrolls nature protections.

It is not true that labour rights, environmental protections and Indigenous sovereignty are getting in the way of the national interest. They are getting in the way of immediate corporate profits. Appeals to the right to strike being in the "national interest" are subjective. Which class's interests? Advancing labour, environmental, and Indigenous rights is in the interests of the vast majority who need higher wages, better living standards, and real equality.

If Carney were genuinely committed to defending Canadian sovereignty, he would reduce corporate influence and expand public ownership. He would bring key sectors like auto under public ownership, expand healthcare and education, and build social housing to create jobs. He would also withdraw Canada from USMCA and NATO – the main institutional ties to US imperialism, which is growing more violent to the point of threatening annexation.

## A threat to all workers

Bill C-93 directly affects workers in federally regulated industries and sectors – these include air transportation, ports, rail, telecommunications, uranium mining and processing, and postal services. Together, this represents 1.4 million workers in the private and public sectors.

However, the threat that this legislation represents extends to all workers. Throughout the country, provincial governments are already moving to limit workers' right to strike and, in the process, severely curtailing their ability to bargain.

In Ontario, Doug Ford's Conservative government famously invoked the notwithstanding clause in 2022 to pass the *Keeping Students in Class Act* which pre-emptively criminalized job action by 55,000 education workers. Alberta's United Conservative Party government of Danielle Smith did the same to teachers last year, when she used the clause to pass

Bill 2, the *Back to School Act* which forced an end to a three-week provincial teachers' strike.

Also last year, Quebec's CAQ government passed Law 14, formerly Bill 89, which allows the provincial government to force striking public transit workers into arbitration and continue working for the public's "wellbeing."

These attacks are not limited to conservative parties – on September 1, Manitoba's NDP government moved to declare Dynacare laboratory workers an "essential service," stripping them of their right to strike and bargaining power.

Carney's Bill C-93 will establish a new – and much lower – federal standard that provincial governments will eagerly try to match or drive down further.

## Unity and struggle to defeat C-39

The way forward is struggle, based on unity inside the labour movement and with a people's coalition that includes everyone who has something to lose from the Carney agenda.

That means Indigenous nations who have seen attacks on consultation over mining and pipeline projects affecting their territories. It means everyone who understands the need for a just green transition in the face of expanding carbon emissions and extractive projects being expedited to feed the war economy. It means seniors who are disproportionately affected by the rapid privatization of healthcare.

It means students whose accessibility and quality of education are under attack by provincial governments across the country. It means immigrants whose rights are being rolled back and who are told that working in Canada gives them no path to stay. And it means many other sections of working people that are under sharp attack and experiencing rapidly declining wages and living standards.

Recent history shows these rights can be reclaimed through struggle. When Air Canada flight attendants defied a Section 107 order, stayed on the picket line and forced the employer back to the table, they proved that unity and militancy can win. We need escalating action and organization across the country, to stand in solidarity when it is time to defy strikebreaking action by government.

We need a Labour Bill of Rights that would enshrine the right of all workers to take strike action. Carney is riding high after walking away from an unpopular tariff deal. Bourgeois political forces, including most Conservatives, the corporate media and the CBC are united around his government. But this government is forcing through a massive blitz of deregulation, privatization, austerity, and militarization.

We need to draw a line in the sand and break with the self-appointed Captain Canada. Stop Bill C-39! ■

Drew Garvie is Leader of the Communist Party of Canada

# WFTU calls for International Day of Action for Dockworkers, October 30



The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) has issued a call to its member organizations and trade unions around the world to mark October 30 as the International Day of Action of Dockworkers.

The WFTU notes that this mobilization, the second dockworkers' day of action it has mobilized, is taking place at a critical time, "as military conflicts are spreading and war fronts are dangerously expanding and becoming interconnected, from Ukraine to the Middle East. The murderous state of Israel, with the support of the US, the European Union and NATO, continues its crime against the Palestinian people and escalates its military aggression against Iran and Lebanon, increasing the danger of an even broader conflict."

The international labour body, which represents more than 105 million workers in 133 countries worldwide, notes that there is an economic basis for war and aggression:

"Behind the various pretexts lies the conflict among powerful capitalist states, and the confrontation between the Euro-Atlantic bloc of the US – NATO – EU and other imperialist centres over markets, energy, raw materials, trade routes and control of strategic infrastructure.

"Imperialist wars are not a departure from the 'normal' functioning of the capitalist system. They are the continuation of exploitation and competition by other means. Billions are being spent on armaments and the war economy, while wages are squeezed, social spending is cut, health-care and education are commodified, and exploitation reaches extreme levels, with exhausting schedules, including 13-hour working days and work seven days a week.

"The peoples have nothing to gain from wars and the antagonisms of the imperialists. They are called upon to pay for profits, wars and the consequences of a new capitalist economic crisis, to sacrifice themselves for interests that are alien to their own, while business groups claim ever larger shares of the spoils.

"Ports, railways, airports and transport infrastructure as a whole are being turned into critical hubs for the movement of weapons, ammunition, military equipment and troops. Workers are being pressured to become cogs in the war machine and accomplices in crimes against the peoples.

## CUPE board says union will defy Bill C-39

The national executive board of the Canadian Union of Public Employees passed a unanimous resolution on September 23, vowing to defy the Liberal government's Bill C-39 limiting the constitutional right to strike.

In a press release, the union noted that the right to strike is a protected right under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and that this right was affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada in 2015. "The jobs minister – under this government or any other – does not get to pick and choose whether that right is respected in this country."

CUPE National President Mark Hancock warned that "the Prime Minister has a mandate to defend Canada against Trump – not to run roughshod over our constitutional rights. Gutting Canadians' Charter rights will not make us stronger against Trump

"Dockworkers have already proven that, through organization, collective struggle and coordinated internationalist action, they can prevent ports from being turned into staging grounds for war. They can block the cargoes of death that fuel the Israeli state's slaughter of the Palestinian people and the spread of war throughout the Middle East."

On February 6, workers held strike actions in 20 ports across 7 countries. In May, trade union organisations from 35 ports met in Istanbul to form a coordination network which now encompasses more than 40 ports across the Mediterranean and Europe, with the participation of organisations from France, Greece, the Basque Country, Turkey, Morocco and Italy. The slogan of this network is: "Dockworkers Do Not Work for War."

Trade unions around the world will hold a new round of militant actions and strikes on October 30. The WFTU says that the common slogan of "Ports for Peace – Jobs with Dignity" links the struggle against imperialist war with the fight for bargaining rights and good collective agreements, wage increases, stable employment, shorter working hours and substantive health and safety measures.

The campaign is also linked to opposition to privatization, subcontracted and temporary employment, and the use of automation and artificial intelligence to eliminate jobs and intensify exploitation. The WFTU insists that technological and scientific progress must serve to reduce working time and improve workers' lives, not to increase profits for corporate monopolies.

"The experience of dockworkers has wider significance for workers in the metal industry and shipyards, railways, energy, telecommunications, transport and logistics. These sectors connect ports, industrial zones and military infrastructure and can play a decisive role in the common struggle against imperialist war and exploitation.

"October 30 can mark a major new step in the international militant coordination of the working class. From port to port, in every workplace and sector, from country to country, workers are sending the message that they will not choose between the camps of their exploiters, will not become cogs in their war machine, and will not sacrifice their lives and rights for the profits of the monopolies." ■

– it will make us weaker. The government should scrap this unconstitutional legislation, protect our rights and freedoms, and make corporations bargain fairly."

The union described Bill C-39 as "an unprecedented attack on the ability of working people in Canada to negotiate their way to better wages and a better life – giving corporations even more power by taking away our right to free and fair collective bargaining."

CUPE National Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick said that governments cannot legislate labour peace. "Legislating away our constitutional right to strike will not prevent us from using the full power of our union to defend our members. With the affordability crisis, workers need the protection of unions and their right to fight for a better life now more than ever." ■



# Hospitality workers' union organizes to take on tech giants ... and win

CAMERON HARRISON

When most people think about automation in the workplace, they think of robots replacing workers. The reality, as a new report from UNITE HERE shows, is more complicated. Technology can replace jobs, but it can also transform them. Under capitalism, however, that transformation is usually designed to squeeze more value out of workers while giving us less control over our work.

But as in all things, there's another possibility. When workers have control over the tools that we collectively produce, technology can be shaped to serve our needs and make our jobs and lives easier, and not just increase corporate profits.

The report from UNITE HERE, co-released with the AFL-CIO Tech Institute, draws on interviews with union leaders, workers and academic researchers. It offers insight into how workers and their unions can go on the offensive against automation – not by fighting a losing battle to stop its implementation, but by winning the power to shape it and use it for our collective interests.

The hospitality industry, which UNITE HERE largely represents, has long been at the top of lists predicting automation-related job loss, the report states. Rather than mass layoffs, however, most technologies deployed in hospitality have transformed how work is done rather than eliminated it entirely. The problem is that without worker input, new technology often makes jobs harder, more stressful, decreases staffing levels, and increases overall exploitation.

Consider hotel housekeeping. Housekeepers spend their shifts pushing loaded carts over carpet and carry the industry's worst injury record. Traditionally, housekeepers worked from a paper list and set their own pace and order, shifting between lighter stayover rooms and heavier checkout rooms depending on what they found when they arrived.

Then came an app that fed them one room at a time and dictated the sequence. VIP rooms jumped the queue regardless of where they sat on the floor, so workers found themselves retracing hallways and doubling back on elevators, still pushing the heavy carts. The app "stripped them of a whole set of control and autonomy," said Culinary Union research director Zach Poppel.

"It was basically putting a smartphone in the hand of a housekeeper as a way to give assignments," said UNITE HERE Local 226 organizing director Johanna Dalton.

Rather than trying to bargain over specific technologies one by one – a losing game in a rapidly changing industry – the union took a different approach, what the report calls "bargaining to bargain."

In 2018, contracts covering nearly 100,000 hotel workers were set to expire.

The union fought for, and won, contract language that created a process it calls "mid-cycle bargaining." Under the new language, management must give up to six months' notice before deploying new technology, provide the union with information about what it does, and negotiate before implementation.

The contract language also defined technology broadly. It covered everything from robots to software, apps and AI, and required management to negotiate over both "labour-replacing" and "labour-transforming" technologies. Additionally, it included job capture language ensuring new jobs created by such technology would remain in the bargaining unit, require employer-paid training, and include recall and severance protections for any displaced workers.

Naturally, the hotel bosses resisted these demands. As former UNITE HERE President D. Taylor recalled, "I don't think it was a coincidence that the last issue settled in Las Vegas, as we geared up for a strike, was technology, and the last issue in the Marriott strike was technology."

That Marriott strike lasted over 100 days across seven different cities in the US. The workers eventually won. By the end of 2019, the union had expanded technology rights to about 25 percent of its overall membership. Today, that figure is roughly two-thirds, now under union president Gwen Mills.

Bargaining is only one part of the fight, however. The union also partners with academic researchers to study how new workplace technologies actually affect workers in their everyday lives, as well as working directly with tech-developers to build tools that benefit and serve workers.

The results are impressive. In Las Vegas, housekeepers gathered their own data to win back the right to plan workflows for their rooms. Delivery drivers at a major tech company turned a monitoring system into a safety program, with coaching and joint review of routes and workloads taking the place of disciplinary action. And when casinos rolled out automated drink dispensers, cocktail servers documented the bartending work they were still performing, thereby securing the largest arbitration awards in the union's history and making the machines a losing proposition for the companies.

"When technology controls workers, they don't feel good, they get burned out," said Mirtha Rojas, a UNITE HERE member in Las Vegas. "When workers control technology, they feel more confident and more respected. But to win that respect, the workers have to stand up. We have to take what we know and turn it into power."

The union argues that any serious bargaining over technology has to start with understanding what the technology actually does and how it reshapes the job. That

■ TECHNOLOGY, PG 10

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

PVONLINE.CA/DONATE

# Filipino migrant community discusses concerns about Alberta referendum regarding immigration

HANS ZARATE

On August 15, dozens of members of Edmonton's Filipino community attended a forum on the upcoming Alberta referendum. Their main concerns were the five questions on the ballot regarding immigration:

1. Do you support the Government of Alberta taking increased control over immigration for the purposes of decreasing immigration to more sustainable levels, prioritizing economic migration and giving Albertans first priority on new employment opportunities?

2. Do you support the Government of Alberta introducing a law mandating that only Canadian citizens, permanent residents and individuals with an Alberta-approved immigration status will be eligible for provincially funded programs, such as healthcare, education and other social services?

3. Assuming that all Canadian citizens and permanent residents continue to qualify for social support programs as they do now, do you support the Government of Alberta introducing a law requiring all individuals with a non-permanent legal immigration status to reside in Alberta for at least 12 months before qualifying for any provincially funded social support programs?

4. Assuming that all Canadian citizens and permanent residents continue to qualify for public healthcare and education as they do now, do you support the Government of Alberta charging a reasonable fee or premium to individuals with a non-permanent immigration status living in Alberta for their and their family's use of the healthcare and education systems?

5. Do you support the Government of Alberta introducing a law requiring individuals to provide proof of citizenship, such as a passport, birth certificate or citizenship card, to vote in an Alberta provincial election?



The October 19 referendum has faced significant backlash as it also raises the question of Alberta's separation from Canada. If it passes, it will have a significant impact on the province's large Filipino population and other migrants who are non-citizens or permanent residents.

One of the attendees, who was diagnosed with Stage 4 ovarian cancer, fears the possibility of losing access to public healthcare. Other temporary residents are worried about their children's future education.

During the discussion, participants emphasized collective action and educating the public on this matter. They are also calling for solidarity and unity across communities, as well as spreading awareness that this not only affects migrants, but Canadian citizens as well.

The forum was hosted by Migrante Alberta, a grassroots Filipino organization that advocates for the rights of migrant workers and undocumented individuals. ■

## Public groceries part of the solution, but there's more

■ FROM PG 5

key sector of the economy; these monopolies are then able to control the market and prices to their benefit, including by pushing workers' wages down. In Canada, for example, three grocery monopolies control 80 percent of the market.

In terms of the high cost of food, a network of public grocery stores is a big part of the solution, but more is required. Specifically, we need to confront the power of corporate monopolies.

This means, in the immediate, nationalizing the grocery giants – as well as other corporations which control the agro-food industry – and operate them under public ownership and democratic control. Not to compete with existing private corporations, but to take them over entirely and run them in the people's interest.

Achieving this kind of change requires a struggle for immediate reforms – lower food prices – that is combined with an anti-capitalist struggle against corporate power.

Ultimately, the cost-of-living crisis is a product of capitalism itself, which means that truly guaranteeing food security and other basic necessities and rights requires an economy that is planned according to the needs of the people – that is, socialism.

This matters, because if progressive politicians don't understand the necessity of breaking with capitalism, the reforms they promote – however urgent, meaningful and well-intentioned – will remain tenuous and susceptible to distortion, manipulation and outright reversal by capitalism's most powerful economic forces, the corporate monopolies. ■



## Technology not a neutral tool, but workers are not powerless against it

■ FROM PG 9

means workers must be at the bargaining table since they know the existing workflow and can spot problems before they arise.

Under capitalism, technology is not some neutral tool. In class society, it is developed and deployed to serve the interests of the class who ultimately owns it – in this case, to increase profits, reduce labour costs, and tighten control over the working class. That's why the same technologies that could make work safer and easier, including shortening the work week, often end up making it harder and more stressful instead.

But, as the UNITE HERE report shows, workers are not powerless in the face of technological change. By organizing our coworkers into unions, getting involved in the bargaining process and using our collective power, we can force the bosses to give up total control over how new technology is implemented and win legitimate protections against both unwanted surveillance and job loss.

"UNITE HERE shows what has been true since the dawn of the labor movement – unions have the power to influence how technology is used in the workplace," said Lauren McFerran, executive director of the AFL-CIO Tech Institute. "Our hope is that the UNITE HERE model can assist other unions in confronting the challenges presented by AI and other technology head-on and bargaining for a better future."

"We live in a time when the richest people in the world are looking to further consolidate their wealth and power, and they are using tech to do it," said UNITE HERE president Gwen Mills.

"If you listen to Silicon Valley, tech is always perfect and inevitable, and those of us who raise concerns are anti-progress," she said. Mills credited Taylor with recognizing nearly a decade ago that without worker input, innovation would simply enrich billionaires at working people's expense.

"We still have a long way to go to achieve technological innovations that uplift all humanity rather than benefit a few, but I believe that we have a model of how to get there." ■

People's World

## WHAT'S LEFT

### VICTORIA

#### SATURDAYS | CUBA SOLIDARITY

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

### VANCOUVER

#### OCT 25 | PUENTES DE AMOR RALLY

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

### EDMONTON

#### OCT 24 | PARTY BANQUET

5 PM at the Ukrainian Hall, 11018 – 97 Street. Annual fundraising banquet for the Communist Party. Special guest: Party Leader Drew Garvie.

### WINNIPEG

#### OCT 25 | END THE BLOCKADE

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

### TORONTO

#### OCT 25 | END THE BLOCKADE

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

### OTTAWA

#### OCT 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.

### OTTAWA

#### OCT 25 | PUENTES DE AMOR RALLY

11 AM at the Cuban Embassy, 338 Main St. Join solidarity activists for a monthly action calling for an end to the blockade of Cuba.

### MONTREAL

#### OCT 5 | ELECTION NIGHT RALLY

7 PM at the Greek Workers' Association, 5359 avenue du Parc. Join candidates from the Parti communiste du Québec in celebrating the campaign and watching the returns.

## Keep pressure on Ottawa to continue opposing US blockade at UN vote

■ FROM PG 3

Ottawa to maintain its vote in favour of the UNGA resolution condemning the blockade. The campaign includes lawn signs and, most notably, a parliamentary petition sponsored by Winnipeg MP Leah Gazan.

Speaking to Peoples Voice, one CNC campaigner said that they welcome the news of Ottawa apparent intention to continue to supporting Cuba, but they are determined to build the strongest campaign and apply maximum pressure on the government between now and the vote in October.

"We welcome these unconfirmed statements from Global Affairs, but we will only know that Canada is continuing to support Cuba and oppose the blockade when we see the results of the October vote. Besides that, there is much more that Ottawa needs to be doing to support the Cuban people during this incredible escalation of the US blockade and the real threat of war.

"In addition to opposing the blockade, Canada needs to deepen and defend economic and cultural exchanges between Canada and Cuba, enforce the Foreign Extraterritorial Measures Act which protects Canadian corporations who do business in Cuba against United States sanctions, lift Canada's advisory against non-essential travel to Cuba and expand opportunities for tourism and trade."

To sign the petition, request a lawn sign and help with the CNC campaign, visit [canadiannetworkoncuba.ca](http://canadiannetworkoncuba.ca). ■



**FIGHT BACK NOW!**  
**SHUT DOWN ALBERTA**  
**OCTOBER 17-18**  
**FIND YOUR LOCAL ACTION AT AFL.ORG**

# Memoir reflects author's commitment to end the silence about violence against women

**Rise After Silence**  
Dr. Anne Aspler  
FEMPOWER Publications (2026)  
REVIEW BY HELEN KENNEDY

Anne Aspler had a remarkable childhood. She was sexually abused by her father at age five, resided with her fundamentalist Pentecostal mother who was living with schizophrenia, and taken into foster care. Her father was convicted and jailed for assaulting three women.

Nevertheless, Aspler managed to survive her early years, go on to complete her master's at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Diseases, intern at the World Health Organization in Geneva, get a Diploma in Tropical Medicine in Peru and complete a fellowship in Harvard before becoming an emergency physician, speaker, singer and brain health expert.

*Rise After Silence: An ER Doctor and the Patients who Healed Her* is a memoir that details her remarkable journey to overcome her ACE (Adverse Childhood Experience) score through her interactions with her parents, her partner and her ER patients.

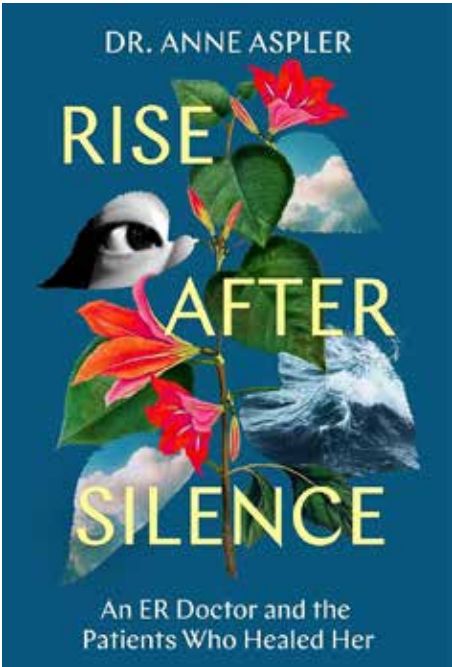
Aspler's childhood experiences delayed the onset of adolescence. In a relationship with her supervisor, she declares that she is "finally living my teenage dream, just at age 26." The experience, which ends, of course, in heartbreak, begins her journey toward adulthood.

One of the traumas she must overcome is her fundamentalist Christian upbringing in Edmonton. She admits that faith carried her through childhood; once into her medical training, she studies her "latest bible: *Tintinalli's Emergency Medicine Manual*." Throughout the memoir, Aspler refers to additional substitute bibles, including *Why Men Love Bitches* as a secular dating manual, *The Joy of Burnout* when workaholic meets alcoholic, and *The Six Stages of Parenthood* upon the birth of her first daughter.

When visibly pregnant, a shopkeeper asks if she is reading *What to Expect When you're Expecting*? What Aspler is reading – *The Story of Jane Doe: A Story about Rape* and a series of rape culture classics as she tries to understand her father's convictions. She knows she is having a daughter – "a girl with a vagina, a girl who will always be at risk in a world filled with people like my father."

There is humour throughout, which relieves the intense pressure in conveying her childhood experiences.

After being dumped by her boyfriend, he drops into her yoga class. She notices him when in the Downward Dog position and runs out of the session. The motif of yoga picks up



at the end of the book with a poignant moment as Aspler and her husband share a deeply unifying yoga session that symbolizes her growth and acceptance of her childhood trauma. The instructor's final question, "how far can you reach?" suggests there is much more in Aspler's life to accomplish.

But what are the answers?

Accompanying her father to an AA meeting, the repeated mantra she hears is "secrets make us sick." Aspler's breakthrough moment is the realization that once we know the secrets of our childhood, we must speak up, because "silence makes us sick."

And speak up she does. From penning an editorial about the *Blessings from Schizophrenia*, to recording and launching an album dedicated to women who have been abused to becoming a much-respected speaker on Intimate Partner and Domestic Violence and brain health, Anne becomes an advocate for survivors and opens a dialogue on how to end violence against women.

One of the closing scenes is with her father, who had already given his daughter permission to write about his actions. After Aspler speaks at a community forum about her childhood, which her father watches on YouTube, he sends her a note demanding that she cease and desist. After a brief deliberation, buoyed by her growing awareness and need to speak up, she delivers a one-word answer: NO!

Her answer echoes the growing consensus of the survivor community, NO means NO and mirrors her own commitment to speak up and to end the silence about violence against women.

*Rise After Silence* will be published on October 6. Visit [riseaftersilence.com](http://riseaftersilence.com) for book release events across the country. ■

# 18-year-long campaign continues to call for removal of Israeli wine from BC liquor stores

KIMBALL CARIOU

For the last 18 years in Vancouver, the Canada Palestine Association and a wide range of the historic group's allies have waged a continuous campaign to demand removal of Israeli wines from BC's liquor stores.

While the campaign has also targeted ScotiaBank and other corporations with close connections to the genocidal Israeli regime, many of its frequent weekend picket actions have focused on liquor stores. Several times a year, dozens of participants gather at a BC Liquor Store outlet, carrying banners and placards, urging shoppers to boycott Israeli wine, and to share this sentiment with the provincial government which could easily ban the offending products.

They often point out that the NDP literally took Russian vodka off the shelves in one afternoon at the start of the Russia-Ukraine

war in 2022. But despite decades of wide international condemnation against Israel's violent attacks against Palestinians, wines produced in Israeli-occupied territories in the Golan Heights of Syria or in the occupied Palestinian West Bank are still for sale in British Columbia.

During the latest picket action in early September, at a BC Liquor Store at Cambie and 8th in Vancouver, boycotters entered the store en masse to sing solidarity songs and to look for the Israeli wines. It was interesting that, unlike in the past, they could find none on the shelves. It's difficult to guess if that has any deeper meaning.

The campaign urges supporters to contact Premier David Eby or Attorney General Niki Sharma to raise the boycott demand.

For more information, look online for the Canada Palestine Association, at [cpavancouver.org](http://cpavancouver.org). ■

# Honesty, intimacy and a deep commitment to the struggle for a better world

**The Other Side of the Tracks**  
Elizabeth Rouble Hill  
Wet Ink Books (2026)  
REVIEW BY SUSANA HURLICH

Elizabeth Rouble Hill calls *The Other Side of the Tracks* a memoir of her childhood, but it is much more. Focusing on her life from childhood to her election as a public school trustee in 1988, it provides an intimate account of a life shaped by family, class, politics and the struggle for peace and justice.

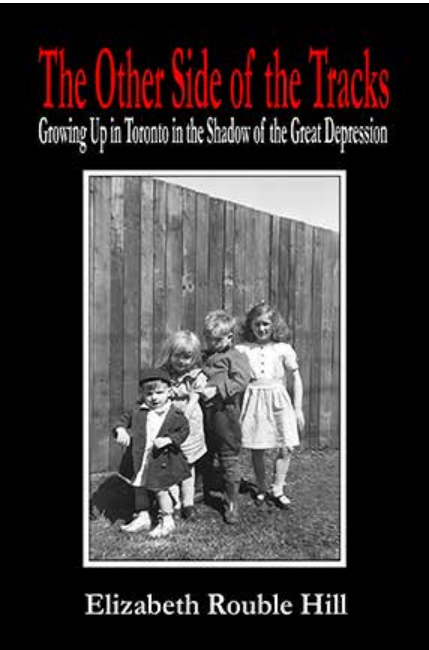
Four interrelated themes run throughout the memoir. First is Hill's growing consciousness of the world and the choices that shape her political life. Second is the historic period in which she grows up, aptly captured by the subtitle, *Growing Up in Toronto in the Shadow of the Great Depression*. Third is her recognition that the extraordinary can be found in the ordinary. Fourth is the poetry woven throughout the memoir, revealing another dimension of her thoughts, feelings and political reality.

Hill's parents were deeply influential. Her mother, a lifelong fighter for women's rights, encouraged her daughter to believe that girls could do anything. At the age of eleven, Hill wrote to the Toronto Star arguing that girls should have the same opportunity as boys to study manual training rather than being restricted to home economics. Her mother also sent Hill and her brother to bring coffee to striking railway workers, teaching her early what ordinary people can accomplish through collective action.

Her father, a carpenter, unionist and skilled worker with little formal education, was equally important. Through him, her mother and family friends, Hill learned about inequality, poverty, workers' exploitation, socialism and peace. These lessons became practical commitments. She joined the Socialist Youth League in high school, participated in protests and marches, and later fought inequities in the educational system as an elected school trustee.

The memoir also captures the political climate surrounding her family: economic insecurity, the unequal relationship between landlord and renter, and the anti-communism of the Cold War years. Yet Hill's politics are never separated from everyday life.

Perhaps the book's greatest strength is its ability to find the extraordinary in the ordinary. Hill celebrates family, neighbours, friends and workers, showing how seemingly small acts can become part of a larger struggle for dignity and justice.



There is gentleness and humility in the way she invites us to witness her development as a political activist. There is no sloganeering and no contempt for those with whom she disagrees. Instead, politics goes hand in hand with love and faith in people's capacity to improve their lives and the lives of others.

Hill's poetry reinforces this vision. A poem accompanies every chapter, extending the memoir's emotional and political landscape.

For readers seeking a memoir characterized by emotional and intellectual honesty, intimacy and a deep commitment to the struggle for a better world, this is it. ■

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# Ending the war is an urgent first step toward economic and social justice for Sudan



■ FROM PG 7

ity. Inflation has remained at extremely high levels, producing an unprecedented erosion in the purchasing power of wages and incomes. Cumulatively, prices increased by approximately 848 percent between 2023 and 2025. To illustrate the scale of this deterioration, a basket of goods that cost SDG 100 before the war would now cost approximately SDG 948. Poverty has also expanded dangerously. According to the latest official report issued by the Central Bureau of Statistics, the poverty rate has reached 82.8 percent. These indicators have had a direct impact on citizens' living conditions. The cost of food, housing, transportation, medicine and energy has risen to several times the average wages of employees in both the public and private sectors. Meanwhile, salaries have lost their real value as a result of the collapse of the exchange rate of the Sudanese pound and the continuous rise in prices. Millions of households have therefore been forced to reduce food consumption, borrow money or depend on humanitarian assistance.

### War and the collapse of production

The rise in the exchange rate of the US dollar and the deterioration in the value of the Sudanese pound are not the result of a single factor. They reflect the interaction between the war and the collapse of production and exports, the budget deficit, monetary expansion, weak foreign-exchange reserves and enormous demand for foreign currency. The situation has been further aggravated by the fact that the Sudanese economy has increasingly become a war economy. Sudan is experiencing one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Approximately 19.5 million people face acute food insecurity, while hundreds of thousands live in catastrophic conditions approaching famine in some areas. Estimates indicate that more than 40 percent of the population suffer from food insecurity. The continuing expansion of hunger is linked to the war, insecurity, disruption of agricultural production, displacement and difficulties in delivering humanitarian assistance. The crisis has therefore ceased to be merely economic. It has become an existential crisis threatening citizens' right to food, work, healthcare, education and a dignified life. These figures demonstrate that the situation requires an immediate end to the war and the adoption of a national economic program that restores production to the centre of economic policy, directs state resources towards essential services, production and development rather than financing the war economy, and raises wages to levels commensurate with the cost of living.

### The war economy and corruption

Since April 2023, the war has created a parallel economy in which military interests, commercial networks and smuggling networks intersect. Gold has become the

clearest example of the transformation of a national resource into a source of war financing rather than a source of revenue for the public treasury, while transparency and public oversight have deteriorated dangerously. According to the available data, Sudan's gold production reached 70.15 tonnes in 2025, while officially recorded exports amounted to only approximately 14 tonnes. This means that around 56 tonnes of gold did not enter official channels through the Bank of Sudan. Gold has become one of the most important sources of financing for both sides of the war. Its revenues are used to purchase weapons, fuel, ammunition, drones, aircraft and other military supplies. The problem, however, extends beyond smuggling. It also involves the absence of public information and institutional oversight over revenues, expenditure, contracts and resources. Under wartime conditions, off-budget expenditure expands and public financial resources and assets become vulnerable to organized plunder without accountability. The war is also being used as a cover for passing questionable agreements and projects. One example is the announcement of the commencement of the Wadi Al-Hawad Project, despite opposition from local communities and their insistence on their rights to the land. The same applies to the Sudanese-Saudi Coordination Council, through which arrangements are being conducted away from public scrutiny to grant long-term economic, investment and strategic concessions involving land, agriculture, ports and natural resources. The danger becomes even greater when de facto authorities use the state of war and their lack of democratic legitimacy as justification for taking far-reaching economic, investment and strategic decisions. The same concern applies to military and strategic agreements. In February 2025, the Sudanese Foreign Minister confirmed that a final understanding had been reached concerning a Russian naval base on the Red Sea, under an agreement dating back to 2020 that would allow a Russian presence of up to 300 personnel and four warships. What is happening today is an integrated war economy based on using the war to tighten control over resources, reduce civilian oversight, facilitate gold contracts and smuggling, collect funds outside official channels and finance military operations. We therefore affirm that any discussion of economic reform and social justice will be meaningless unless it begins with ending the war, recovering looted public funds, holding those responsible for corruption accountable, restoring state resources to public control, and rebuilding the economy on the foundations of production, democracy and development. Our struggle is, at its heart, a struggle for bread, work, human dignity and democracy. It is a national struggle to restore peace and build an independent economy that places the Sudanese people at the centre of the development process. ■



# The current situation in Syria and the struggle for unity and sovereignty

IBRAHIM AL-HAMID

On September 12, the Peace Academy in Germany held a seminar discussing the current Syrian situation, its expected near-term developments, and the role assigned to the Unified Syrian Communist Party (USCP). The symposium hosted USCP Secretary-General Najm al-Din al-Kharit, who presented a political analysis of the developments in Syria and the challenges and transformations surrounding it, in addition to anticipating the most prominent developments and expected possibilities during the next stage. He also discussed the political and national role that the Unified Syrian Communist Party can play in light of these developments. The symposium witnessed a remarkable and diverse attendance, including a number of cultural, social and political figures, representatives of civil society organizations, and a select group of intellectuals and opinion leaders interested in Syrian and Arab affairs. The geographical diversity of the attendees was also noteworthy, with participants from Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and several European countries, which lent the symposium a rich and multifaceted dialogue. The interventions and discussions addressed a number of issues related to the Syrian reality. Most notable were the political, social and economic challenges, the requirements of the next stage, the importance of strengthening the language of national dialogue, and consolidating the role of political and civil forces in searching for visions and paths that contribute to achieving stability and peace and protecting the unity of Syrian society and its future. The symposium also provided an open space for exchanging opinions, raising questions, and discussing diverse viewpoints in an atmosphere characterized by seriousness, respect and openness to differing opinions. This intellectual and political diversity contributed to enriching the dialogue and highlighting the importance of gatherings that bring together thinkers, experts and civil society activists within free and responsible spaces for discussion. This seminar comes within the framework of the role that the Peace Academy in Germany seeks to play in organizing intellectual, cultural and dialogue events and meetings, and opening channels of communication between different currents and personalities in a way that serves the culture of peace and understanding, and promotes the values of dialogue, respect for pluralism and freedom of opinion and expression. Najm al-Din al-Kharit stressed the importance of adhering to the unity of Syria, both its land and people, and the necessity and importance of holding a comprehensive national dialogue conference for all Syrians. He stressed that Syria should be a civil, democratic state for all Syrians, based on citizenship, pluralism and dialogue. The Secretary-General pointed to the danger of colonial projects targeting Syrians' national identity through the occupation of parts of their land, the sowing of discord and division, and the incitement of strife among members of society with the aim of fragmenting and tearing it apart. He stressed that confronting these projects requires the unity of all loyal patriots to restore free national decision-making and

full sovereignty over all Syrian territory. "Today, we are in dire need of formulating a comprehensive national identity for all Syrians, while celebrating diversity and pluralism. This will only be achieved when every Syrian feels – we all feel – that Syria is a homeland for all Syrians, through a social contract (constitution) that guarantees genuine and equal citizenship, political and democratic pluralism, and effective participation. "This contract must also define the identity of the national economy, whose main objective is comprehensive and sustainable development, and social justice that ensures the fair distribution of the country's resources and wealth, both among regions and among the members of society." The Secretary-General addressed the economic and living conditions, and the daily suffering of the toiling and poor masses as a result of the exorbitant cost of living and the series of price increases for basic commodities, especially energy sources. He pointed to the increasing deterioration in all services, which will increase the levels of social tension. He also reviewed the position of the Syrian Communist Party on the Kurdish issue, stating that without a just solution that guarantees the Kurds' citizenship rights, Syria will not be stable. He further said that resolving this issue is an integral part of resolving the entire democratic issue in Syria, and the Kurds should obtain their full rights, foremost among them the right to citizenship and equality guaranteed by the constitution. He stressed that the national, cultural, religious and regional diversity among all components and spectrums of the Syrian people is a factor of richness and abundance that should be respected because it lays the foundation for the new Syria that we aspire to. In response to a question regarding the role of the Unified Syrian Communist Party, he pointed out that this long-established party, despite going through periods of rise and fall and being subjected to various pressures, has remained steadfast in its fundamental principle: a party for the people and the homeland. That is, defending the homeland, its independence, sovereignty and unity, and fighting for the economic, social and democratic causes and demands of the popular masses. As he was an integral part of the Syrian national movement, today he participates with all national forces and figures who aspire to freedom, justice and equality in their tireless struggle to defend the homeland, for the sake of the causes of the people of the homeland, and for the sake of building Syria as its people want it. At the conclusion of the meeting, participants expressed their appreciation for the importance of continuing such seminars and dialogues, as they represent an opportunity for rapprochement, exchange of ideas, and reading political and social developments objectively and responsibly. They stressed that constructive dialogue remains one of the most important ways to reach common visions that contribute to building a more secure, stable and peaceful future for the Syrian people and the region in general. ■