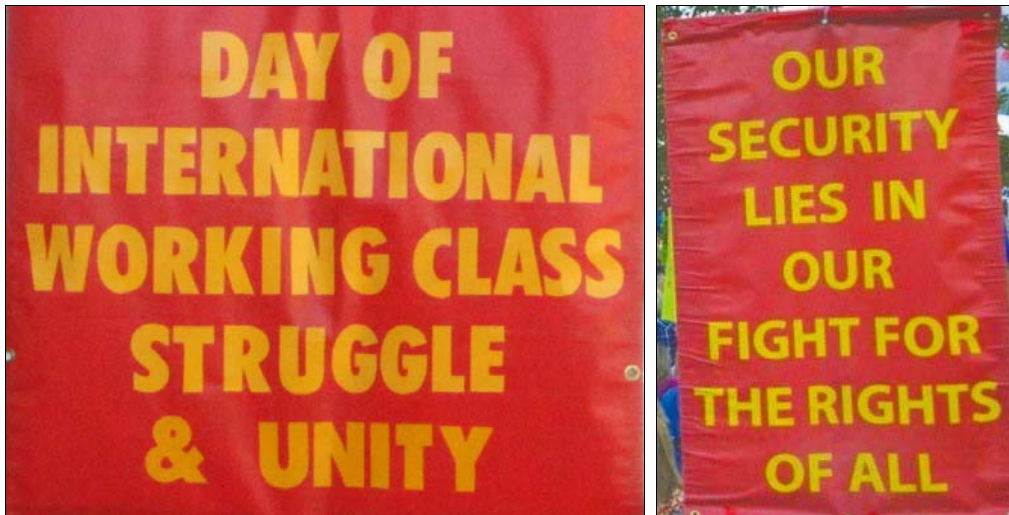




April 27, 2019 - No. 15

May Day 2019

Day of Working Class Unity and Struggle in Defence of the Rights of All



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May Day 2019

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**May Day 2019 -- Day of Working Class Unity and Struggle
in Defence of the Rights of All**

Workers Must Strengthen the Work to Advance Their Own Demands

- Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) -

*Hail May Day! International day of working class unity and affirmation
of the struggle for its rights, claims and emancipation!*

The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) sends its militant May Day greetings to the workers of Canada, Quebec and around the world. The working class is showing in deeds its

mettle and maturity in the battle for its rights, claims and emancipation. Working people are striving for their own empowerment in economic and political affairs. Workers are speaking out in defence of what belongs to them by right and increasingly using their own organized means of communication to express their views and opinions.

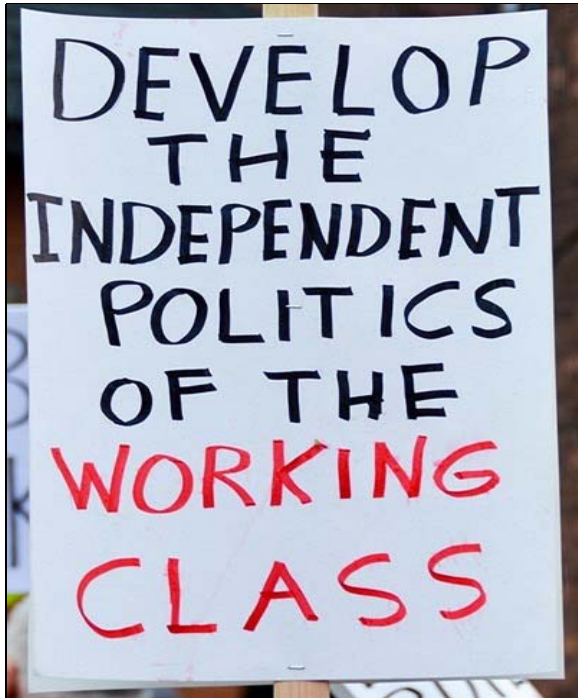


Montreal, May 1, 2018.

CPC(M-L) believes that the battle for empowerment is the key to the defence of rights, political renewal and to open a path to the emancipation of the working class.

Empowerment is centred on political renewal and requires independent thinking and organization of the working class. Without the working class building its own independent institutions with its own voice, media, thinking and analysis, it becomes easy prey for the financial oligarchy. To empower itself, the working class discusses amongst itself in its own organizations its demands, claims, and actions with analysis, setting its own agenda and line of march.

The working people have legitimate claims on the economy and society. Their claims clash with those of the ruling financial oligarchy but the workers' opposition is up to the challenge as long as it guards its independence of thinking and action and does not become embroiled in the acrimony and divisions of the ruling elite and line up behind one or another of their social bases and cartel political parties.



The workers' opposition is waging continuous battles to defend its rights against the anti-social offensive and pay-the-rich schemes of the ruling elite, in opposition to government anti-worker legislation and state court rulings denying workers their right to withdraw their capacity to work and organize other actions to defend their terms of employment. Workers are finding ways to meet head-on the arrogance, dictate and refusal of the global oligopolies to negotiate collective

agreements acceptable to those who do the work. Such is the case with working people everywhere rallying behind USW Local 9700, representing locked-out ABI aluminum workers in Quebec and their courageous 15-month battle with the global oligopoly Alcoa. The working class also fights for the rights of women and children, the striving of the youth for a bright future, and the people's claims for a healthy natural and social environment, and is in militant solidarity with the Indigenous peoples and their centuries-long struggle to assert in practice their hereditary rights.

Working people organized into their own workers' opposition are developing a consciousness of their own that emerges out of real life, synonymous with social change and free from preconceived notions. Their social consciousness gives workers the strength of mind to defeat the assault on them, especially from the liberal mantra to divide themselves according to the various factions of the financial oligarchy organized as cartel parties.



During this election year, the ruling elite are already putting enormous pressure on the working class movement to fall behind this or that cartel party and give up their independence of thinking and action. The mass media and others are spreading fear of a rise to power of the Conservative Party and insist the only thing working people can do is reduce themselves to supporting one or another of the cartel parties to "stop the right."

But workers have learned from the antics of the federal and provincial cartel parties that to join and follow them and become their voting cattle weakens and eventually destroys the struggle for their rights and claims. For the working class to give up its independence of organization, thinking and action, and come under the influence of either the liberal or conservative social base and the favoured cartel party of the moment spells death to its movement to defend its rights and claims and for political renewal and empowerment. To subsume itself into the cartel party electoral system reduces the workers' movement to a helpless, hopeless, humiliated state.

Organize and Fight for Empowerment and Political Renewal!

Workers must intensify their movement to empower themselves, not divide behind this or that faction of the rich under the pretext that one is better than the other. The independence of organizing, thinking and actions of the workers' opposition becomes a bulwark against the disastrous line of constantly responding to and following the agenda of the financial oligarchy and its so-called right-wing and left-wing cartel political parties.

Working people cannot afford to stay in the trap of "left" versus "right." What exists is a cartel party system within anachronistic liberal democratic institutions over which the people exercise no control whatsoever. The striving for empowerment is the present reality that working people must embrace, nurture and use to secure their future. Working people can turn things around by refusing the agenda set by the ruling elite and speak directly to those matters that concern themselves. Discussing and working out how to resolve the economic, political, social and



environmental problems in ways that favour working people and not the rich, and engaging in actions with analysis to strengthen their independent institutions and the fight to defend the rights of all will lead to a mass movement for empowerment and political renewal to build the New.

*Hail the Workers of all Lands Who Are Fighting to Open Society's Path to Progress!
Workers of all Countries, Unite!*

Supplement
Photo Review

• **Achievements of Workers' Movement Over the Past Year**

Matters of Concern to the Polity

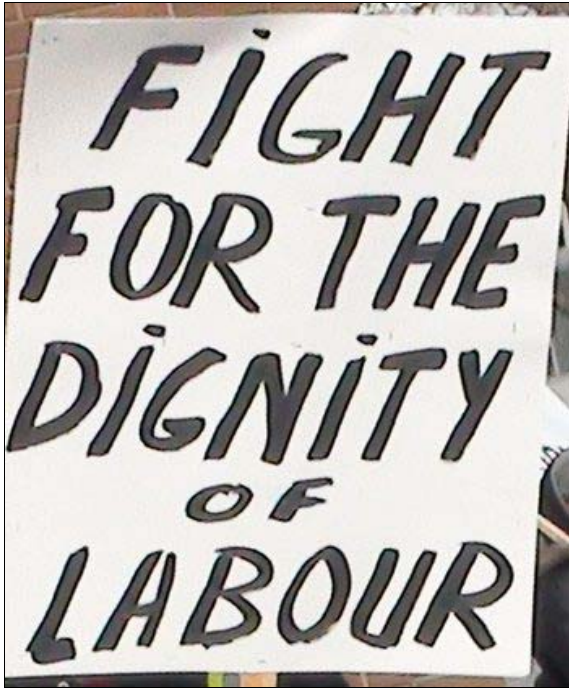
**Fight for the Rights of All Without Division,
Hierarchy or Privilege**



On this May Day, one of the ways workers across the country are defending the rights of all is by opposing the trafficking of human persons, sanctioned by governments at all levels in the name of either sorting out the problem of a shortage of skilled labour or supposedly supporting humanitarian causes such as providing work for refugees, or migrant workers and the like. The ruling elite who control the socialized economy and politics of the country have fashioned a state-organized hierarchy of rights throughout society. This division of rights is designed to perpetuate the power and privilege of the financial oligarchy and weaken the working class in its resistance to attacks on its well-being and security and to build the New.

The ruling elite have concocted categories of people based on state-determined criteria. These criteria divide the people broadly into citizens, permanent residents, temporary workers seeking permanent status, temporary workers with no right to seek permanent status, guest foreign workers, foreign students with and without the right to seek permanent status who pay huge sums to study in Canada and have the right to work while they study, undocumented workers in a state of legal or civil death, and others. The division of the people into these categories allows the ruling elite to super-exploit those accorded fewer rights. It deprives the people of a consciousness of what is happening which, in turn, seeks to divide and weaken the resistance of the working

class to defend all its members. To deliberately deprive people of a collective consciousness the society is divided between those who govern and those who are governed in the hopes of undermining the people's movement to open society's path for progress. It is by fighting for the rights of all and to humanize the natural and social environment that the people prevail.



While governments adopt and implement anti-people, anti-worker policies, the people reject being blamed for these policies and the claim that they are anti-immigrant or anti-refugee. It is not immigrants and refugees who are putting downward pressure on wages, working conditions or trampling on the rights of others. Dividing workers into categories is a state-organized tactic to treat workers as "things" which can be dehumanized so as to weaken and eliminate the workers' defence organizations, super-exploit certain sections and bring down the wages and working conditions of the entire working class. They are forms of paying the rich along with deregulating places of work to remove any social responsibility for the health and safety of workers and trampling on their right to have their own independent working class organizations at the workplace to actively defend their working conditions. To turn things

around in their favour, the workers' movement must not lose sight of the importance of the struggle to build the New where the rights of all are recognized by virtue of being human and guaranteed within a new constitution and modern forms of governance.

The ruling elite have vast experience in dividing the people and using various political and social categories to their advantage. Even a cursory review of immigration since the 19th century shows how tapping the international labour market and bringing migrants to Canada with variable rights serves the ruling elite both economically and politically.[1]

Imperialist globalization has now created a reservoir of hundreds of millions of migrants without legal or civil status in any country with many living in refugee camps. This pool of potential vulnerable immigrants within the global labour market is swelled enormously with millions more desperate for work and a future because of the violence and anarchy the big powers have unleashed on their beleaguered countries.

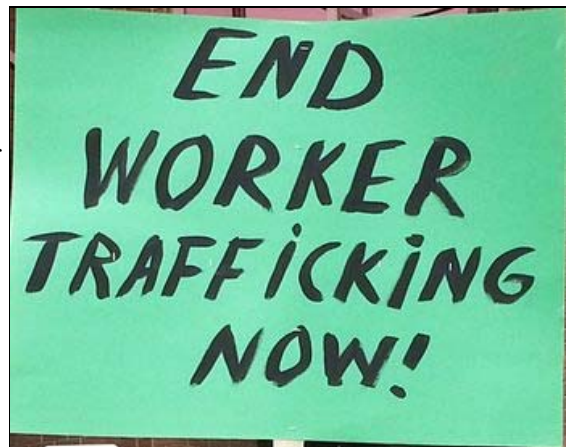
Canada, Quebec, the provinces and territories have devised an array of programs to tap into this international labour market and to bring workers to the country within a hierarchy of variable rights. The various categories have in common denying migrant workers and their family members their rights as equal members of the society and polity once living and working in the country.

The numbers within the categories are substantial and reveal the true soul of the ruling elite as undemocratic exploiters who view working people as means to defend and increase the private social wealth of those who own and control the socialized economy. The threat of expulsion and deportation hangs over the head of all migrants in degrees from permanent residents to temporary workers and students, and those classified as undocumented.

During any given year, over 300,000 immigrants are brought into Canada as potential or actual permanent residents said to have the possibility of becoming citizens. The total number of

permanent residents is said to be in the millions at any time. This pool of workers and their families is swept up into the socialized economy in one way or another. During the same year, over 200,000 migrants are accepted as temporary workers classified as non-permanent residents within various programs, with little or no chance to become permanent residents and citizens and who must leave after a certain time to return again if chosen or stay and become undocumented. Statistics Canada puts the total of non-permanent residents at just under one million in any given year. No official number of undocumented workers exists, with estimates ranging from 200,000 up to half a million at any given time.[2] Added to this are thousands of others seeking refuge from violence and anarchy who may or may not be accepted as immigrants. In 2017, 44,000 refugees were accepted as permanent residents. Hundreds of thousands more come to Canada as students paying large sums of money to do so. Some are allowed to work in various ways during their period of studies with a certain number allowed to apply for permanent residency.

The state-organized negation of rights of migrants opens the door for corruption and becomes the basis for human trafficking. The *Globe and Mail* may run horror stories and shed crocodile tears for the suffering of many migrants at the hands of human traffickers but the newspaper does not delve into the basis for this corruption in the state-organized denial of rights and the legal and constitutional order defending the privilege and alleged property rights of the ruling class.[3] Just as trafficking in African slaves would not have existed without state-organized racist chattel slavery in the United States so too human trafficking into Canada can only exist under the aegis of a state-organized denial of migrant worker rights where much of the immigration process itself has been privatized and abuse goes unpunished.



The foundation of the division of working people into a hierarchy of rights is the basic class division in Canada between those who own and control the productive forces and those who sell their capacity to work to acquire their living. The rights and privilege of those who own and control the productive forces and have amassed great social wealth are guaranteed under the right of property. So-called property right exists in contradiction with human rights and gives those with social wealth and positions of control of the socialized economy dominant rights and privilege as crudely revealed in the SNC-Lavalin affair, amongst the many other examples. The power of property right and class privilege is demonstrated in practice on a daily basis with state-organized attacks on working people and forms the basic constitutional and governing theory and practice of the ruling financial oligarchy.

The working class takes up the social responsibility to itself and society to put the full force of its organized power to defend the rights of all in the present and to build the New where the rights and well-being of all are guaranteed without exception or division. In the here and now, on the occasion of May Day 2019, let the workers declare that all programs that limit the rights of migrants who have entered Canada to live and work must be declared null and void. If the ruling elite who control the productive forces want migrants to come and work for them, they must not in any way deprive them of their human rights once here.

***Our Security Lies in the Fight for the Rights of All!
Blame the Rich and Not the People for Anti-Immigrant, Anti-Worker Policies and Laws!***

Notes

1. "150 years of immigration in Canada," Statistics Canada, modified May 17, 2018.
2. "Guest Worker Programs: Canada," Law Library of Congress, last updated July 30, 2015.
3. "False promises: Foreign workers are falling prey to a sprawling web of labour trafficking in Canada," *Globe and Mail*, April 5, 2019.



The Necessity to Organize as One Working Class in Defence of the Rights of All

Not a day goes by without Canadian workers being told that the economy is suffering from a shortage of available workers in various sectors. This lack of available workers in the Canadian labour market, we are told, could lead to a crisis in the economy, a recession or worse. Workers are bombarded daily by this propaganda. Several aims of the ruling elite can be surmised.

A key aim is to divert the working class from analyzing the causes of problems in the economy. An effort is made to deflect attention away from the root cause stemming from the contradiction between the socialized productive forces and their private control. The ruling elite in control of the socialized economy would never point fingers at themselves as the culprit causing economic problems. Instead, their self-serving aim and control compel them to turn problems against the human factor and make those who sell to them their capacity to work bear the consequences of the refusal of those in control to bring the relations of production into conformity with the already socialized productive forces. The actual producers, the working class, must gain control of the socialized productive forces and social product they produce if problems are to be resolved in ways that serve the working people.



The disparate cartels of owners compete with one another for their own private interests and feel no compulsion to look at the economy as a whole and plan production and distribution according to the needs of the people and economy. They use problems to their advantage in attacking the working class and also their competitors. Whether a shortage or surplus of workers poses itself as a problem, the working class suffers the consequence because the well-being of the working people is not the aim of the ruling elite.

Those in control view a temporary shortage of workers in this or that sector as an excuse to tap the global labour market for migrant or temporary workers. The term "temporary" in itself gives them an opening to deny those workers their rights under the hoax that they are not full and equal members of the Canadian polity once here and working. This creates a hierarchy of rights where instead of all people having rights by virtue of being human, certain people have only privileges,

which can be denied at the whim of those in control. This inequality and denial of rights causes increased exploitation, in particular of migrant and temporary foreign workers. This increased exploitation of some has a negative effect on the entire working class, bringing overall conditions down to a lower level.

In opposition, the working class sees rights as indivisible and equal for all. The security and well-being of working people lie in their organized fight to defend the rights of all.

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program

- Pierre Chenier -

The fastest growing category of migrant workers in Canada, as is the case worldwide, is the undocumented worker. Studies and statistics regarding these workers are rare. One study in 2011, funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, estimated that between 200,000 and 500,000 undocumented workers live in Canada. They are concentrated in Ontario, where they are employed mainly in construction, hospitality and agriculture.

The study also showed that many of the undocumented workers began their work in Canada as "documented workers," including through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), and had become undocumented because of the conditions of servitude and arbitrariness that are the trademark of this program. Among other things, many temporary foreign workers whose employment contract with an employer is broken, whether through the employer terminating the contract or the worker leaving the particular job due to untenable conditions, remain in Canada as undocumented workers.



Various governments present the situation facing temporary foreign workers as one governed by rules, unlike that of undocumented workers. They say, for example, that temporary foreign workers are covered by federal and provincial minimum labour standards laws, have access to many social programs and public services, and have a path to permanent residence, while undocumented workers, although working, are considered outside those laws and are criminalized as outlaws in a vulnerable state of lawlessness.

The objective conditions of servitude in which undocumented workers work are such that there are few official rules in force regarding their employment and living conditions, with most left to the dictate of the employer. This vulnerability to arbitrary dictate includes even documented workers within the narrow confines of the TFWP and associated programs. Their rights are subject to abuse, including their fundamental right to be equal members of the polity without living under constant threat of being deported.

The situation for foreign workers is marked by the arbitrariness of employers in Canada and the agencies, both Canadian and foreign, that recruit them in their country. Governments keep foreign workers in a vulnerable position and open to abuse by refusing to abolish their temporary status. Without their rights guaranteed, their dignity as workers is denied and their precarious status is maintained.

Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP)

The federal TFWP includes two subprograms: Live-in Caregiver Program and the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program. A range of other workers also belong to the general category of temporary foreign workers. The TFWP and the International Mobility Program (IMP) were one program until the Harper Government made the IMP a separate program in 2014.

Labour Market Opinion

Research conducted by the Economics, Resources and International Affairs Division of the Canadian government found that on December 1, 2013, there were 386,406 temporary foreign workers in Canada. Of these, 126,816 were subject to a labour market opinion, and 259,590 were not subject to a labour market opinion.



Employers who want to recruit temporary foreign workers in general must submit a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA), while employers who want to recruit through the IMP do not have to do this. The requirement for an LMIA is based on the charade that the TFWP is strictly intended to temporarily fill positions for which no Canadian citizen or permanent resident is available. This is a charade because foreign workers have been coming to Canada for decades to occupy positions in many sectors, such as agriculture, live-in caregivers, hospitality and food processing. The positions are not and never have been temporary, only the workers that fill those permanent positions are temporary. Their temporary status is an instrument to keep them vulnerable, in the lowest paid jobs, in the worst conditions and with their rights denied, and puts downward pressure on wages generally.

Employers who recruit workers through the IMP do not require an LMIA because the program, according to official propaganda, is intended to provide greater competitive advantages to Canada economically, culturally or otherwise. This includes, among other things, the mobility of labour under free trade agreements. The IMP, unlike the TFWP, includes an open work permit that does not bind the participant to a single employer. It also offers an easier route to permanent residence status precisely because it is seen as beneficial to Canada's competitiveness to keep those particular workers in the country.

Temporary foreign workers requiring an LMIA are contractually bound to a sole employer under conditions similar to indentured labour. The contracted condition makes it difficult to leave an abusive employer or dangerous job without being subjected to immediate removal from the country because when the contract is broken the worker no longer has a legal status under the rules of the LMIA.

Workers under an LMIA contract are vulnerable because if they complain, the job may be terminated by the employer, meaning they must leave the country. The action may well be done in silence because the workers are so vulnerable, with limited legal recourse. Dismissed workers must go through a new LMIA process, which takes months and is not assured, or return to their country, or become undocumented workers. To change employers, the worker must receive a new job offer from a potential employer, and have an LMIA approved. This takes between three and

five months but that is not the end of the process. The worker must then apply for a new work permit, which adds between three and six months. During this long period, the worker is not eligible to work or receive employment insurance or social assistance so may end up without income for many months. Remembering that these workers generally receive the lowest pay while working, the reality of their lack of income pushes many either into returning home or becoming undocumented workers.

Without Rights Guaranteed, Workers Are Vulnerable

The rule of law must apply equally to all without denial of rights to some and privilege to others. A basic human right is not to be considered temporary or illegal and subject to deportation or other arbitrary measures of a police power. The entire concept of temporary worker should be considered *ultra vires* (outside the law) and without validity within a rule of law based on a modern constitution that applies equally to all human beings without prejudice or privilege.

Examples abound of a contradiction between the actual conditions of temporary, migrant and refugee workers and the liberal democratic propaganda that says in words that all humans are equal and protected by a rule of law that applies to all without prejudice or privilege.



The status of temporary for workers selling their capacity to work to an employer accords, in practice, arbitrary power and privilege to the employer and subservience or voluntary servitude to the employees. Liberal democratic law and constitutions uphold this inequality and privilege through the accordance of superior rights to property, wealth and social status over the rights that people have by virtue of being human.

Many temporary workers live in employer provided or controlled housing. This arrangement gives employers substantial control over workers' food, space, sleep and social networks. Workers can be subject to intimidation and this situation reinforces the total imbalance of power between the employer and worker. Often no clear boundary exists between being on-duty and off-duty.

Examples abound of abuse by recruitment agencies, both public and private, and individual recruiters that have become a global system of human trafficking. The abuses include the charging of exorbitant fees, false claims and forged documents. Recruiters and employers often persuade workers to take loans from them and subsequently add interest and other charges for services or penalties for breaking arbitrary rules.

Charged large fees, workers are sometimes issued incomplete or blatantly fake documents, given false names of employers or non-existent jobs. In recent years, "release upon arrival" schemes have become more frequent. These are schemes where workers have no employer although names are on their papers or contracts. The workers are "released" from the phony contract upon arrival at the airport or recruiter's office in Canada. Sometimes such a scheme is openly offered to workers who are assured that it will be easy to find a real employer once in Canada. In many cases, the recruiters also keep such "released" workers in a workplace owned or arranged by the recruiter where they have to work for room and board while waiting for an employer who will hire them.

Temporary foreign workers pay income tax and sales tax and contribute to the Canada Pension Plan and the Employment Insurance (EI) regime. However, they are not entitled to regular EI

benefits for their periods of unemployment once their employment contract is terminated. Officially, they are entitled to other EI benefits, such as parental or maternity benefits, but these become almost impossible for them to access once their official employment contract is terminated.

Temporary foreign workers are supposed to be covered by minimum labour standards and occupational health and safety laws, but enforcement is an issue. Their vulnerable status makes it very difficult for them to insist that the employer respect the existing laws or to call upon the government to provide redress and official enforcement is reported to be unseen.

In theory, temporary foreign workers have the right to permanent residence status but no path to status exists within the program. They can acquire sponsorship from their employer, but usually the employer has no incentive to do so. The applicant must master an official language but usually their working conditions, including long hours without structured breaks, prohibit them from attending classes, if they exist in their region, or regularly fraternizing with English or French speakers through organized social or sports events.



The Live-in Caregiver Program does include a route to permanent residence, but caregivers, the vast majority of them women, are subject to a two-step immigration process that requires they enter Canada with temporary status and an employment contract but without their families. They must complete their contract before they can apply for permanent residence, which presents problems of what to do after the contract finishes. The program for permanent residence also includes a cap on applications, which is yet another restriction. This year, after sustained work by live-in caregivers and their supporters, the federal government announced two "pilot projects" to run over the next five years, that will allow those recruited in this category of workers to come to Canada with

their families. Once a caregiver has their work permit and two years of experience, it is said they will then have "access to a direct pathway to permanent residence." As well, a small window is presently open this year to retroactively provide such "access" for caregivers already in Canada who came to the country with the expectation that they could apply for permanent residency, only to find out later that this was not possible under the programs through which they were recruited.

In 2014, in the midst of mass media coverage of certain employers abusing the TFWP, the Harper government intervened in such a manner to create friction between Canadian workers and temporary workers. The government made a big deal of giving Canadian workers priority over temporary workers for available jobs. In the process, the government made the eligibility criteria for employment insurance even more stringent for all workers and further limited foreign workers' access to any EI benefits. A goal of all these programs, aside from providing cheap workers for employers, is to discourage unity of the working class in defence of its rights.

The federal government gradually reduced the percentage of eligible foreign workers relative to a company's total workforce to 10 per cent by 2016. According to the workers' defence organizations, as the percentage was lowered some temporary foreign workers who had arrived when the percentage was higher were suddenly fired and forced to work underground to stay in Canada. In response to the lower allowable percentage, certain regular employers of temporary workers campaigned to have the percentage relaxed. The Trudeau government complied, raising

the level to 20 per cent, a figure that still retains its arbitrariness as far as temporary workers are concerned as they become disposable when the percentage is exceeded.

The Harper government in 2014 also changed the rules so that the federal government may refuse applications for the hiring of temporary foreign workers for low-paid positions in the accommodation and food services and retail trade sectors in areas where the official unemployment rate is equal to or higher than six per cent. The Trudeau government has endorsed the change. Again, this pits workers against one another in that foreign workers are indirectly blamed for causing hardship for Canadian workers as competitors willing to accept low wages and precarious work. This perpetuates the imperialist consciousness that obfuscates the class conflict between the working class and a ruling financial oligarchy as the root of all the problems facing workers and the socialized economy, and why workers are routinely deprived of their rights and the economy suffers recurring crises and its basic problems remain unsolved.

Immigrant Workers Are an Integral Part of the Canadian Working Class

- Normand Chouinard -



In recent decades, particularly since the introduction of new neo-liberal arrangements and the globalization that has followed, the trucking industry has grown exponentially and now requires a large number of skilled workers. There are currently 3.5 million truckers in the United States and almost 200,000 in Canada, which is a considerable force within the working class. The free trade agreement between Canada and the United States adopted under Brian Mulroney's government in October 1987 and the Canada-United States-Mexico (NAFTA) agreement in March 1994 favoured the rapid integration of the Canadian economy to that of the U.S. Trade has progressively moved from the East-West axis to the North-South axis. The number of transportation companies that work across the border is significantly higher than those that are interprovincial, which is a clear indicator of the continued integration of the Canadian economy into the United States of North American Monopolies. In Canada, in the 1990s, the transportation industry was targeted for a series of deregulations aimed at making truck transportation more fluid and eliminating "paperwork." The direct consequence of this massive deregulation has been a deterioration in the working conditions and wages of Canadian truckers that has continued throughout the 2000s to the present day.

Talk of a labour shortage in the transport sector began in the early 2000s. The deterioration of the living and working conditions of truckers has had a real impact on the work force, which steadily decreased. Coupled with this is a growing need for new truckers to serve the needs of the monopolies, which together create the situation of "scarcity" of manpower.

As a result, the federal government has introduced programs to hire newcomers to this sector (as in all other sectors). Today, one out of every four truckers is a recent immigrant, half of whom come from India, particularly from the state of Punjab. According to the trucking industry magazine *Today's Trucking*, which conducted a study on these issues, twenty years ago only 1.8 per cent of truckers came from South Asia and most resided in the Vancouver area of British Columbia. They accounted for 18.7 per cent of the city's drivers, compared to 6.2 per cent for the Toronto area. By 2016, approximately one in five truckers (17.8 per cent) were of South Asian origin. In British Columbia, one in three truckers, 34.6 per cent, came from this region and one in four (25.6 per cent) in Ontario. In the two major cities of Vancouver and Toronto, South Asian truckers now represent 55.9 per cent and 53.9 per cent of all drivers in the industry, respectively.

An interesting statistic shows that of the 181,330 Canadian truck drivers listed in 2016, there are 58,985 whose birthplace is outside of Canada. In 1991, 7.7 per cent of drivers were immigrants, compared to 32.5 per cent in 2016.

Recently, the Canadian Trucking Alliance and the Quebec Trucking Association (ACQ), representing the major Canadian and Quebec transportation companies, called for the federal government to relax the rules of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and open up new opportunities for transport employers, claiming that this was required to meet the manpower needs caused by the shortage of drivers.

British Columbia has the highest number of drivers in the TFWP, 934 in 2017, followed by Quebec with 166 and New Brunswick with 108. According to the changes made by the Harper government in 2014, companies wishing to use the TFWP must follow the Labor Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) procedure, a procedure to prove that attempts to find Canadian workers have all been exhausted. The TFWP has a strong presence in other sectors of the economy, including agriculture and agri-food, but is only just beginning in the transportation sector. The reason is that the truck driving job requires a certain level of training and job skills before a driver can drive on the Canadian road network. It is one of the major demands of truckers, in their application for recognition of their trade by the federal government, that throughout the country new drivers be provided with full training.

Transport Minister Marc Garneau announced on January 21 that his government is committed to a national standard for basic training for commercial vehicles by 2020, but that its application will depend on the provinces to make it mandatory, that it will be the provinces that will set the standards and issue permits based on the new national standards. Currently only Ontario requires a minimum of 101.5 hours of mandatory training for new drivers. Garneau's decision comes after the reports of the investigation into the Humboldt tragedy, an accident involving a heavy vehicle which caused the deaths of a number of young hockey players in Saskatchewan, were released and these findings were the basis for his recommendation. "Canadians expect that people who receive their licences, as drivers of semi-trailers -- large vehicles -- should be properly prepared through training before they assume those duties," said the Minister of Transport at the annual meeting of the ministers of transport and road safety held on January 21 in Montreal. As for the Canadian Trucking Alliance, its President, Scott Smith, is satisfied with this new harmonization of federal standards and provincial application. "This announcement is an excellent example of joint industry and government work toward achieving positive results." The Quebec trucking association is moving in the same direction despite a different situation in Quebec where, although not mandatory, 615 hours of public training is available for new drivers.

Although at first glance this development seems positive for truckers, they are entitled to wonder whether it is connected in any way with the expansion of the TFWP requested by the monopolies and to be wary that this will have the effect of increasing the competition between truckers so as to block their demands for improvement of their living conditions and their wages, tantamount to a new deregulation without really being called that. Canadian and Quebec truckers who have struggled for years to remedy the last decades of deregulation by demanding that they receive more of the added value that they produce will not let their conditions worsen so easily. They recognize that recent immigrants or workers who come to Canada as temporary foreign workers are an integral part of the working class in Canada and Quebec and that the defence of the rights of all is the *sine qua non* condition of their victory. Any attempt to divide them between "them" and "us" will be fought hard and is doomed to fail.

March 21 marks the fifth anniversary of the Vancouver truckers' strike in which 500 Unifor union truckers united with the 1,500 truckers who are members of the United Truckers Association, workers of Punjab origin. Together, they defeated the Vancouver Port Authority, the Christy Clark government in British Columbia and the federal government of Stephen Harper and his infamous Minister of Transport Lisa Raitt. It was a great victory for Canadian truckers and today, in the context of a new offensive whereby migrant or foreign workers are hired with the aim of increasing the exploitation of truckers and preventing a new direction for the industry, the way forward for the workers is to defend the rights of all truckers in Canada, regardless of their national origin.



Vancouver truckers' strike, March 21, 2014.

Workers Detail Problems of the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

Justice for Migrant Workers has outlined the most prominent concerns raised by workers in the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program:

- Working 12-15 hours without overtime or holiday pay;
- Denial of necessary breaks;
- Using dangerous chemicals/pesticides with no safety equipment/protection or training;
- Being crammed into substandard housing with leaking sewage and inadequate washrooms;
- Overt racism from certain people, sometimes resulting in physical altercations;
- Acute pay discrimination between migrant and non-migrant workforce;
- Unfair paycheck deductions such as EI and other services, which they have little or no chance to access;



- Inadequate attention to concerns and other necessary services;
- Exclusion from basic human rights legislation, such as Health and Safety Legislation and most aspects of the *Employment Standards Act*;
- Prohibited from collective bargaining and joining unions;
- Inadequate representation in policy making and contract disputes;
- Unable to claim residency status or obtain educational opportunities for children despite extensive years of work in Canada;
- Lack of appeal process when employers repatriate workers to their home country;
- Barriers to essential services due to language and location;
- Lack of basic ESL training;
- Gender discrimination, including few opportunities for female workers and the fact that women are heavily controlled and disciplined in various ways by employers.

Forum Smashes Silence on Conditions of Work Faced by Immigrant Women



The South Asian Women's Rights Organization (SAWRO) organized a forum January 19 to discuss their conditions of work as immigrant women and how to defend their rights in light of the current Ontario government's passage of Bill 47, the *Making Ontario Open for Business Act*, and its other attacks on workers' rights. Some 50 people participated in the forum "A Community Response to the Attack on Workers' Rights."

The problems immigrant women face on arrival in Canada in finding work and providing for their families was addressed in the opening remarks, including the impact that the just-announced cuts to post-secondary education will have on those whose work is precarious. A Unifor organizer introduced a toolkit the union has produced as part of mobilizing its members against the PC government's retrogressive anti-social agenda.



In the course of the forum, the experience of working women in the community was presented through skits, a panel presentation, and a video produced by SAWRO youth, smashing the silence on the indignities faced daily by women and their families.

The common thread running through the forum, representing the experience of many, was the unacceptable choices which face families every day, to pay for food and other essentials or to pay their rent. The power that temp agencies and the employers that hire their services exercise over workers' lives, the havoc played in their lives by erratic work schedules, lack of appropriate and affordable daycare, low wages, including being paid cash at less than minimum wage, provided with no benefits and without access to Employment Insurance, maternity benefits and workers' compensation were brought out in the discussion. In addition, there are a limited number of temp agencies through which the women find work, meaning women who speak out on their conditions may be blacklisted and unable to find work.

One skit showed the experience of many immigrant women -- from the promises floated by recruitment agencies before they immigrated about Canada as the "dream country," through their "Welcome to Canada" and the humiliation of their post-immigration conditions. Their education credentials and professional work experience dismissed, they find themselves at the mercy of temp agencies and the employers they represent trying to cobble together enough hours of work to provide food and rent for their families.



The video presentation focussed on specific proposals drafted by SAWRO during community consultations to change the situation in their favour. The proposals include holding a public inquiry into the under-employment of skilled immigrant women, restricting the scope of operation of temporary help agencies, introducing economic disincentives to reduce chaotic work scheduling and providing access to fully subsidized childcare for low income workers.

As part of the ongoing discussion with SAWRO members, a survey was circulated during the forum asking participants their views on the implications of Bill 47 and their views on the SAWRO proposals.



Live-In Caregiver Program -- Good Enough to Work, Good Enough to Stay!

- Diane Johnston -

Caregivers have long declared that if they are *Good Enough to Work*, they are *Good Enough to Stay!* They demand landed status upon arrival and to be treated as equal members of the Canadian polity with their rights respected and not abused. Within this broad demand they want an open permit so they are able to find other work and not be tied to one employer and constantly face the threat of deportation.

For over a century, Canada has been importing a workforce from other countries to work as "domestics." In the beginning, the workforce hailed mainly from Britain, including many "Barnardo Boys,"^[1] and other European countries. They came to work as nannies and housekeepers for families with great social wealth but also for higher paid professionals such as lawyers, doctors etc. As soon as they were able, the women and some men found other work.

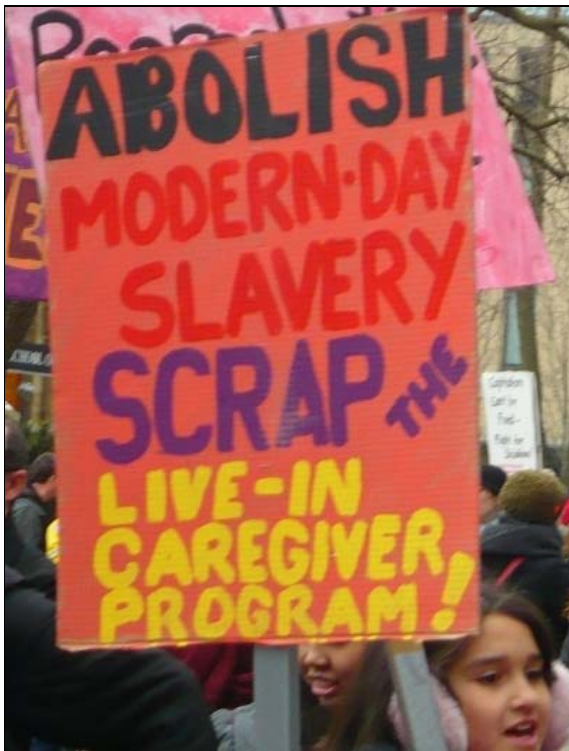
Government programs aimed at importing a workforce to work as domestics have succeeded one another since the mid-1950s. Tens of thousands of workers originating mainly from the Caribbean until the mid-1980s, and later from the Philippines, have been forced to abide by conditions akin to indentured labour. This includes live-in provisions at the employer's residence



and all that may imply in terms of time worked, work relationships, living conditions, isolation, abuse, and distance and separation from family members and their communities and society generally.

Many women from the Caribbean as well as from the Philippines who have worked in Canada as domestic workers were and are highly educated, with some of them trained teachers, nurses and administrators. They seek work in Canada because of the economic conditions in their own country where they are unable to find work or properly care for their families. Many who complete their training in the Philippines as teachers and nurses are then forced to work for some time as volunteers before being able to find work, if at all. Recruiters actively seek out these workers. Coming to Canada for many women includes the hope of providing a better future for their children. The majority send money home for family members.

A problem for these workers after coming to Canada is to be accepted as permanent residents. Under some programs, they are not even able to apply for permanent residency while working in Canada. This becomes a major problem as they must return home to apply without any guarantee of being accepted and no possibility to appeal a denial.



While working in Canada, caregivers pay taxes and contribute to the Canada Pension Plan as well as Employment Insurance but with little possibility to use those programs when needed. This arises from restrictions deliberately put in place but also workers' fear that receiving government entitlements will go against them in their application for permanent residency.

A requirement of the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), introduced in 1992, is that workers have to reside at their Canadian employer's home for a minimum period of two years before applying for permanent residency. In Canada, in 2010, over 35,000 workers were forced to live at their work premises.

The LCP also requires workers to undergo extensive study sessions before acceptance for work in Canada with some applicants forced to undergo a training program in the Philippines at their own cost. The education requirement at the

time was raised to that of a grade twelve Canadian equivalent. In the Philippines, normal high-school leaving is grade 10 so workers are forced to pay for additional studies as well as the training program.

Prospective employers have to complete a Labour Market Impact Assessment stating they are unable to find Canadians to do the work. The fee for this assessment is \$1,000 but waived for prospective employers earning \$150,000 or less.

Very often, women from the Philippines go through agencies to obtain work in Canada. The agencies charge somewhere in the vicinity of \$3,000 to \$4,000 to find a job for migrant workers. Sometimes, by the time workers arrive in Canada where they are supposed to work for two years before applying for permanent residency, the job they were supposedly hired for is no longer available. They then have to find other work very quickly with another Labour Market Impact Assessment having to be done. This creates problems for them as they become undocumented

and find themselves at the mercy of various state forces and private agencies.

The Harper government gave its rationale for the LCP in 2009: "The live-in requirement is a vital component of the LCP, given the continuing shortage of caregivers in Canada willing to live in the home of those they are caring for. There may be enough caregivers in Canada to satisfy labour market needs related to live-out care. Should the live-in requirement be eliminated, there would likely be no need to hire TFWs [temporary foreign workers]."

As stated, the live-in requirement was clearly and openly directed at migrant domestic workers, as workers in Canada mostly refuse to abide by such a demand. The Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse condemned the obligation on the grounds it breaches human rights considered fundamental, creating systemic discrimination. The International Labour Organization also opposes the requirement.

PINAY, the Filipino Women's Organization in Quebec, describes the work relations of live-in caregivers as personal dependencies where workers are trapped in situations similar to slavery. PINAY has long demanded the removal of the live-in requirement: "Due in part to the fact that the domestic work is carried out in private residences and to the LCP's strict requirement of the caregiver to live-in with their employer, LICs [live-in caregivers] are at an increased risk of exploitation, harassment and abuse within their workplace. The structure of the LCP creates the conditions for vulnerability, trafficking and forced labour experienced by various caregivers. It is essential to either abandon the live-in requirement or at least to make it optional, so that this exploitation may be addressed, and human rights abuses may be avoided."^[2]



The Harper government made changes to the LCP in 2014, which then became the Canada Caregivers Program (CCP). The CCP was introduced as a 5-year pilot program with two streams and ends November 2019. Thus far, the Trudeau government has said only that it is evaluating the pilot project.

The 2014 reform made the "live-in" aspect of the program optional with "employers now unable to dock expenses for room and board from a worker's compensation." However, the reality of low pay and sending money home means many migrant caregivers find it impossible to live outside the employer's premises.

The government also created two new categories for caregivers working in Canada on temporary work permits and seeking permanent residence. One pathway to permanent residence is for childcare providers. The other is for caregivers taking care of the elderly or those with chronic medical needs. The second pathway is a direct appeal to migrant registered nurses, practical nurses, nurses' aides and orderlies. Significantly, the Canadian government and employers are directly poaching skilled workers from an underdeveloped country without directly compensating that country for the value it expended in training those workers.

The two categories divide the program into skilled and low-skilled workers. With regard to the more highly skilled stream, the government is now appealing explicitly to have nurses, registered practical nurses, and other trained migrants apply for the program, which offers higher wages, and promises an easier passage to permanent residency and family reunification.



The lower skilled category has permanent residency dependent on the migrant workers' level of education, age, years of work experience and language proficiency, making it harder to obtain. The Harper government also placed a cap on each of the two categories, for an allocation of 2,750 workers in each stream.

The change in 2014 concerned the removal of the live-in requirement but not the abolition of such an arrangement in spite of the well documented negative effects on working conditions and relationships. Domestic labour in

private homes remains a sub-regime within the federal labour laws. In accordance with ILO Convention 189, if the employer and the worker both agree, the worker can live with the employer. The live-in status is thus left to an arrangement between a Canadian employer and a migrant domestic worker. The migrant worker remains under the obligation to complete the required 24 months of full-time work before applying for permanent residence with their work permit still tied to a specific employer and all the difficulties that may entail.

At the time of the changes brought in by Harper, the process to acquire permanent residence took three years plus the two years of prior work. Minimally, migrant caregivers could be separated from their children and spouses for five years and possibly more. Even after receiving permanent residency, workers have to apply to the family reunification program and prove they are able to provide for family members after their arrival in Canada.

In February of this year, live-in caregivers and those assisting them in their fight for their rights succeeded in having some changes made to the LCP that favour these workers and their families. The Trudeau government announced two five-year pilot programs that it says will "allow caregivers to come to Canada together with their family and provide a pathway to permanent residence." The pilot projects are said to provide "Open work permits for spouses/common-law partners and study permits for dependent children, to allow the caregiver's family to accompany them to Canada." The government also stated that these workers will also be given "greater flexibility to change jobs quickly." These measures only address future workers, not the thousands who are already in Canada, some of whom were not properly informed that their work and positions would not provide them a means to achieve permanent residency. To that end, the government also announced a three-month window, from March 4 to June 4 of this year, called the "Interim Pathway for Caregivers" through which current live-in caregivers may apply for permanent residency with criteria modified from that of the current programs.[3]

Notes

1. From 1868 until the 1930s, 100,000 children were sent from Great Britain to Canada as cheap labour. Two-thirds of them were under the age of 14, many who had been taken by the state as "Home Children" when their parents would or could no longer take care of them. Thousands of these boys were sent to work as indentured labour on Manitoba farms. Their minimal wages were given to the agencies responsible for their trafficking. Some were forced to sleep in barns, others were beaten. One of these farms was the Barnardo Industrial Farm near Russell, Manitoba, named after Dr. Thomas Barnardo, who in the name of high ideals founded an organization that pioneered the trafficking of these British youth to Canada. An estimated 50 agencies were involved in this labour trafficking scheme to send children to Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

2. From Summary, PINAY Submission for the Universal Periodic Review on Canada.

3. For more information on these latest changes, see "[Coalition of Migrant Care Worker Groups and Allies Continue the Landed Status Now! Campaign](#)," Peggy Morton, *Workers' Forum*, March 7, 2019.

Broad Support for Bolivarian Venezuela's Right to Be Resistance to U.S. Unilateralism and Defence of the Rule of Law



Activists defend the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, DC, April 24, 2019.

The past week has seen countries and people confronting the increasingly arbitrary, unilateral and illegal actions of the U.S. imperialists by speaking out and acting in their own names to say *No!* to it.

It began on Tuesday, April 23 at a meeting of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States in Washington, DC, where the U.S.-led attempt at regime change once again fell flat -- two months to the day after U.S. puppet Juan Guaidó's "humanitarian aid" fiasco at Venezuela's borders. Then on April 24, the first ever International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace was celebrated by the United Nations at the request of the 120-member Non-Aligned Movement. Over two days, the UN General Assembly was a platform for demanding adherence to the rule of law and condemning the unilateral coercive measures and other forms of unlawful warfare engaged in by the U.S. in particular against the peoples of Cuba, Iran, Venezuela and Syria, but also others.



Meanwhile throughout the week vigorous actions in defence of the Bolivarian Revolution and the constitutional government of Venezuela were carried out by activists in the U.S. who have taken on the task of protecting the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, DC, from illegal takeover by Juan Guaidó's coup forces with the assistance of U.S. police and secret services, in violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

Attempt to Impose Illegitimate Venezuelan Representative Roundly Opposed at Organization of American States

At the April 23 meeting of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS), the main items on the agenda were a presentation by Gustavo Tarré -- the opposition figure appointed by the U.S. via its puppet Juan Guaidó to "represent Venezuela" at the OAS -- and consideration of "Plans for the Democratic Reconstruction of Venezuela." Tarré was imposed as the "special representative of the National Assembly of Venezuela" before the OAS by an illegal process at an April 9 meeting of the council, despite it being known to all that on April 27 Venezuela would be leaving the OAS of its own volition.^[1] The meeting was just one more provocation by the coup-plotting Secretary General Luis Almagro and the U.S. Ambassador to the OAS who conveniently occupies the rotating presidency of the Permanent Council at this time.

Despite the acquiescence of Canada and others in the Lima Group who have shown they will countenance and even lead all manner of illegal activity to further the aim of regime change in Venezuela, there would be no smooth sailing for the U.S. and its appeasers as they tried to use the occasion to take one last kick at the can before Venezuela finally left. One by one the representatives of 13 member states took the floor right after the meeting was called to order to register their rejection of Gustavo Tarré taking Venezuela's seat given that he did not represent the country's constitutional government and his "appointment" as Venezuela's "permanent ambassador" openly violated all international norms, including the OAS Charter and rules of procedure.

Defying the pressure and blackmail that the small Caribbean island states in particular surely faced from the U.S. and its Lima Group, they and others declared that they considered the April 9 resolution null and void and without legal effect. All of them reserved their rights not to accept actions or decisions taken by the Permanent Council or any of its committees while it remains in place. The countries that expressed their objection to what was taking place included almost all those who had voted against or abstained on the contentious resolution that seated Guaidó's envoy.

The representative of Uruguay said it was up to each country to decide which governments of other countries it recognized, that the OAS was not entitled to do that and warned that if it upholds the resolution it will fall foul of international law. Surinam said it objected to the selective application of procedural rules and that negative precedents were being set against multilateralism, international law and international relations. Bolivia said the resolution attacked the good faith of members states and the foundational principles of the OAS and UN Charters.

Tarré's "presentation" was little more than an arrogant attempt to discredit everything that had been said about the illegality of the process by which he had taken over Venezuela's seat, as well as to divide those who had taken a stand against it, and drive a wedge between all of them and the government of Nicolás Maduro, which he spent most of his time slandering. Eventually he got around to saying that the reconstruction of Venezuela would require international cooperation and that the OAS would be a good body to coordinate that.

At least four of the countries that spoke out against the illegitimate representative being seated reportedly walked out before he spoke. Such was Tarré's inauspicious debut thanks to all those who rose in defence of the rule of law.

On April 27, there will be a march in Caracas to celebrate Venezuela's exit from the OAS in a spirit of "good riddance!"

Note

1. See "Selling or Saving the Soul of the OAS," *TML Weekly*, April 13, 2019.

(MPPRE Noticias)

Non-Aligned Movement Calls for Reaffirmation of Fundamental Principles of International Law and an End to Unilateral Coercive Measures



On April 24-25 the United Nations General Assembly held a high-level plenary session to mark the first International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace. April 24 was chosen to coincide with the date of the Bandung Conference held in 1955 that laid the foundations for what would become the Non-Aligned Movement. In her opening remarks, Fernanda Espinoza, President of the General Assembly, said the world is increasingly polarized and fragmented and that going forward, the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace will be an opportunity to assess the UN's contribution to humanity.

Jorge Arreaza, Minister of the People's Power for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) of which Venezuela is *pro tempore* president, said the world faces numerous complex emerging threats to international peace and security which demand that the international community address them through the frameworks of multilateralism and international law. Saying there cannot be double standards in international relations, he expressed grave concern over the growing trend of unilateralism and arbitrary measures that undermine the UN Charter and international law. He appealed to the international community "in this house of multilateralism" to achieve peace, sustainable development and human rights, and to spare future generations from the scourge of war.

Then speaking on behalf of Venezuela, Arreaza said the role of the UN has been highlighted because it is the maximum expression of multilateralism, because as indicated in the preamble of its founding Charter, it brings together all "the Peoples of the United Nations." It is not a club of friends, he said, but a forum for everyone. "That is why we cannot fail to insist on this occasion on the need to reaffirm the full validity of the basic principles of international law, all contained in the Charter of the UN: equality of rights and self-determination of peoples, abstaining from the use or threat of the use of force, and non-intervention in matters that are essentially the internal jurisdiction of States," stated Arreaza.

He went on to denounce the fact that the President of the United States used the UN as a platform last September to announce unilateral coercive measures against Venezuela and other countries in violation of the principles and aims of its Charter. More recently, he said Mike Pence, speaking at the Security Council, not only presumed the right to unilaterally impose sieges to make people suffer, but to impose the dictatorship of the United States on the United Nations, and shamelessly give orders to member states to ignore the credentials of other members with full rights like Venezuela. Arreaza said Venezuela sympathized with countries like Cuba and Iran, who are being subjected to unilateral, arbitrary measures that seek to make the peoples of their countries suffer and to bend the will of their governments.

According to reports, a couple of dozen delegates from Lima Group countries walked out during Arreaza's speech to show their shameful support for the U.S. attempted coup against Venezuela.

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said he came to make the case that collective diplomatic efforts are no longer the prudent option, but rather the only solution.

He denounced the fact that despite 14 reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency validating Iran's commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action -- a multilateral accord enshrined in UN Security Council resolution 2231 -- the U.S. unlawfully withdrew from it. He then mentioned what he said were just a few of the unlawful unilateral policies of the current U.S. Administration towards his country or the region: the extraterritorial imposition of domestic legislation; flouting of international accords and International Court of Justice orders; arbitrarily designating Iran's armed forces as 'terrorist'; breeding radicalization through reckless and pointless never ending wars; shielding terror-sponsoring clients from their war crimes; and recognition of illegal and racist annexations.

As if this were not enough, Zarif said, the U.S. also punishes those who seek to fulfill their obligations under Security Council Resolution 2231 -- which calls for normalization of economic relations with Iran.

To defend multilateralism, he said it was imperative to deny the U.S. any perceived benefit from its unlawful actions, and to forcefully reject any pressure it brings to bear on others to violate international law and Security Council resolutions. He said in rejecting unilateralism, all UN member states had a responsibility to collectively hold any government to account for the consequences of any lawlessness.

Speaking for Cuba and associating herself with the NAM statement, Ana Silvia Rodríguez voiced her strong rejection of the strengthening of the 60-year U.S. blockade against Cuba and its newly imposed unilateral coercive measures, calling them a flagrant violation of international law and the United Nations Charter. She also said that solidarity with Venezuela is a right of Cuba as a sovereign State and also a duty, and that no threat of reprisals, ultimatum or blackmail by the United States would divert Cuba from its internationalist stance.

Rodríguez asked that the newly proclaimed day not just be taken as a simple celebration, but as a reaffirmation of the collective duty and responsibility to preserve peace.

Wael Al Khalil, speaking for Syria, also associated himself with the NAM statement, and said a culture of peace can only come about through respect for international law and the United Nations Charter. However he said there were some powerful states attempting to dominate the organization to exploit it for their own purposes, creating colossal and tragic challenges for humanity, similar to those posed to the UN at its founding. Pointing to the disregard for Security Council resolutions, he said multilateralism is coming under attack to the greatest extent ever since the founding of the United Nations due to pressures being applied in international relations and in the application of legal resolutions, all to prevent peace being achieved. He said the Syrian people

continue to pay with their blood because of interference and military aggression, terrorist wars as well as direct and proxy wars. He also denounced the imposition of illegal unilateral coercive measures and the creation of illegitimate coalitions that destroy infrastructure and assets of many developing countries.

Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, associating himself with the Non-Aligned Movement, said multilateralism has always been under attack by those who believe might should triumph over right, who are ready to sacrifice long-term interests for short-term political gains, who forget the lessons of history and are seeking to erode the rule of law. International consensus regarding the question of Palestine remains the only basis for peace, he said, yet, no measures have been taken to ensure the implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions or to hold those violating them to account. Despite the shortcomings of the multilateral system that they feel in the flesh, the Palestinian people continue to have faith in multilateralism and their commitment to international law as they struggle for freedom, dignity and the end of the occupation, he stated.

More than 70 delegations participated in the debate. The U.S. was not among them.

After the two-day session ended, Minister Arreaza delivered a press conference at the UN to explain in detail the multi-faceted war the U.S. is waging against the people of Venezuela, saying it was time to launch a campaign to denounce the devastating effects of the unilateral, illegal, and arbitrary blockade it has imposed on Venezuela. Among other things, he said, "Do you know the cost of paying the salaries of our staff at the United Nations, or in Canada, or in Europe? We owe them five or six months of salary." He explained that it is not that the government does not have the money, but that its funds have been blocked and kept by the correspondent bank used for such transactions.

Arreaza also announced that a NAM ministerial meeting is planned for July in Venezuela to further advance their project to uphold international law and the UN Charter and that discussions were taking place with another group of countries subject to sanctions on how to overcome them.

Also on April 25, the over 60 countries that first came together in February on the initiative of Venezuela and a number of other countries as the Group of Countries in Defence of the UN Charter, International Law and Peace held a meeting at the UN.

That evening, Arreaza and Samuel Moncada, Venezuela's Permanent Ambassador to the UN, addressed a livestreamed meeting organized by activists in New York City where they discussed how Venezuelans were coping with the economic war of attrition being waged against them by the U.S. They emphasized the importance of taking practical measures to counter the information warfare the U.S. is waging against Venezuela, diplomacy to ensure it cannot kick Venezuela out of the UN in order to label it a "rogue" state deserving of being bombed, and continuing the work to stop the U.S. from launching the actual "hot" war it is preparing for.

The next day, in an obviously vindictive move, the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control, a financial intelligence and enforcement agency of the Treasury Department, added Jorge Arreaza and a judge in Venezuela's judiciary to its sanctions list.

(MPPRE, UN.org, PressTV, Prensa Latina)



Venezuela Strongly Rejects U.S. Unilateral and Illegal Coercive Measures Against Its Foreign Minister

- Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela -

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela strongly rejects the imposition of unilateral and illegal coercive measures announced today by the U.S. government against the Venezuelan Foreign Minister and a Judge of the Republic, as part of the failed strategy of Washington that seeks to intimidate, defame and persecute high officials of the Venezuelan State, in a systematic plan that seeks to undermine the institutions, the Constitution and the laws of the Republic, aimed at bringing about a change of government favourable to their interests.



Jorge Arreaza, Minister of the People's Power for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, at UN.

With these new measures, the Trump Administration seeks to silence the voice of Venezuela in the world and, at the same time, hinder the independent, sovereign and legitimate administration of Justice in the country.

The inadmissible inclusion of the Venezuelan Foreign Minister in the infamous OFAC list follows his appearance at the United Nations, where his denunciation, using concrete figures and examples of the serious effects the criminal U.S. blockade against Venezuela has had on human rights, made a big impact.

Equally unacceptable is the inclusion of a Judge of the Republic in said extortive list, through which the United States government seeks to prevent the prosecution and punishment of the crimes of carrying out a coup d'état, sabotage, terrorism and conspiracy against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, a clear confession on its part of its instigation and protection of such acts.

Just like on previous occasions, such measures will only strengthen the will of the patriotic civil servants, loyal to their oath to serve the people, and the dignity of an entire Nation that has decided to be irrevocably free.

The Bolivarian Government demands once again the immediate cessation of the multi-faceted aggression and calls on the international community to take urgent action to respect the Charter of the United Nations in its fundamental principles and purposes, and thus stop this obsessive imperialist attack against the sovereign people of Venezuela.

(Caracas, April 26, 2019. Translated from original Spanish by TML.)

U.S. Activists Vigorously Defend Venezuelan Sovereignty and the Rule of Law in Washington, DC

For the last two weeks a growing number of U.S. anti-war, peace and justice activists calling themselves the Embassy Protection Collective, spearheaded by the women's anti-war group CODE PINK and Popular Resistance, have been living and working around the clock in the Venezuelan Embassy in Georgetown with the permission of the government of Venezuela. The

vigil began April 13 after opposition forces facilitated by U.S. authorities forced their way into the Venezuelan Consulate in New York and took it over, doing the same to two Venezuelan military attaché buildings in Washington, DC. The aim is to prevent coup forces and U.S. authorities from doing the same with the embassy. The embassy building is owned by the Venezuelan government and is a protected international compound that is considered sovereign Venezuelan territory under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Based on this the activists have made it clear that any forced entry and arrest of persons inside the embassy would be unlawful as they are in the premises as tenants and guests of the owner. They have also said that they are prepared to stay as long as it takes to protect the embassy until a mutually satisfactory arrangement has been reached between the U.S. and Venezuelan governments, for which the Venezuelan government has expressed appreciation.

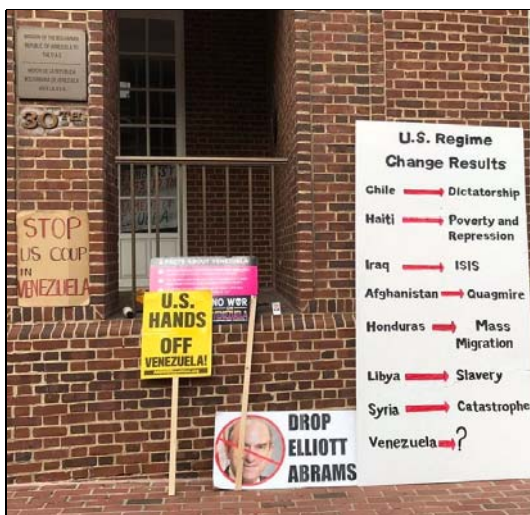


In addition to painting murals and making large banners to adorn the embassy walls, the collective has been holding rallies, press conferences and teach-ins with invited speakers to educate the public about issues related to Venezuela and other pressing concerns. On April 25, a member of CODE PINK stood up on her chair with a sign saying "No Coup in Venezuela" and denounced Elliot Abrams as he spoke to the Atlantic Council on "Venezuela after Maduro" until she was dragged away, shouting at him: "You should not be in charge of the future of Venezuela. How dare you orchestrate a coup in

Venezuela! How dare you impose sanctions on Venezuela that harm the Venezuelan people! How dare you, in the name of the American people, overthrow the government of another people!" "Guaidó was elected by nobody! Maduro was elected by six million people. The UN recognizes Maduro as the elected president of Venezuela!"

A special call-out was made by activists guarding the embassy for all those who could, to come to Washington on the weekend of April 27-28, saying: "We are making history -- each one of us can make a difference. If you are retired, if you have vacation time, if you can take the weekend off, if you have any availability please make it a top priority to come to Washington, D.C. this Saturday and Sunday and join the Embassy Protection Collective in this historic struggle to defend the sovereignty and independence of the people of Venezuela."





DPRK and Russia Hold Summit in Vladivostok

Leaders Agree to Secure Peace and Security on Korean Peninsula and for Peoples of the Region

The Supreme Leader and Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Kim Jong Un and the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin held a one-day summit at Vladivostok, Russia on April 25. Vladivostok is just north of the 17- kilometre border the DPRK shares with Russia at its north-eastern point. The one day summit expressed the desire of the two leaders to boost and strengthen ties for mutual benefit and work together as friends and neighbours to secure peace and security on the Korean Peninsula DPRK and Russian media report.

The Summit took place at the Far Eastern Federal University on Russky Island. The two leaders held a short press conference and then held a private meeting where they informed each other of the situation in their countries and had an exchange of views on how they can enhance bi-lateral relations and further strengthen the long-standing fraternal relations between the two countries, media report.



Kim Jong Un and President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin

The more than two-hour long private meeting was followed by a formal meeting between the DPRK and Russia. Besides Chairman Kim, the DPRK side was represented by Ri Yong Ho, Foreign Minister of the DPRK and Choe Son Hui, First Vice-Foreign Minister. The Russian side was represented by President Putin, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Trutnev, Deputy Prime Minister and Presidential Envoy to the Far East Federal Region Dimitri Peskov, Russian Ambassador to the DPRK Alexander Matsegora and other officials.



Chairman Kim Jong Un introduces DPRK delegation to President Putin.

Official DPRK and Russian media report that President Putin welcomed Chairman Kim and his delegation to the Russian Federation and affirmed the deep friendly relations between the two countries and peoples. Chairman Kim also expressed thanks for the invitation extended by President Putin. He expressed hope that DPRK-Russia relations will be strengthened in all fields

and that more formal and informal exchanges can be undertaken for mutual benefit. Both sides agreed to revitalize the work of the DPRK-Russia Intergovernmental Committee for Cooperation in Trade, Economy, Science and Technology and take it to a higher level.

Media reports indicate that front and centre of the formal talks was the need for peace on the Korean Peninsula.



Chairman Kim gave his opinion that DPRK-U.S. relations had soured because of the "bad faith" and "unilateral" stand of the U.S. expressed at the Second DPRK-U.S. Summit held February 27-28, 2019 in Hanoi. He expressed concern that on account of the U.S. high-handed stand, relations between the two countries may worsen. Chairman Kim assured President Putin that the DPRK is taking all measures to prepare for any eventuality.

Both sides agreed to step-up their efforts to secure peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and for the peoples of the region. They agreed "to enhance and promote timely communication and tactical collaboration between all parties concerned." At the end of the talks, "Chairman Kim cordially invited President Putin to visit the DPRK at a suitable time in the future which the President warmly accepted."

Following the meeting between the DPRK and Russia, President Putin hosted a state banquet in honour of Chairman Kim. "Toasts and speeches were given by President Putin and Chairman Kim to celebrate long standing relations between the two countries and peoples and to the success of the work that lies ahead to build stronger ties." The banquet was followed by a cultural performance.

Chairman Kim Jong Un remained in Vladivostok to visit various sites of interest till Friday, April 26, before returning home.

(Korean Central News Agency, TASS)

Results Will Sharpen Internal Contradictions

- Dougal MacDonald -

The 2019 Ukrainian presidential election was held on March 31 and April 21 using the two-round system. A surprising total of 39 candidates ran for president on the ballot. Since entry into the campaign costs a non-refundable \$90,000, speculation was rampant that some candidates were nothing more than straw men put forward by various factions of the rich simply to drain votes away from their opponents.

In the first round of presidential voting, no candidate received an absolute majority of the votes. Actor/comedian Volodymyr Zelenskiy, whose only political experience is acting on a popular TV show, received 30 per cent of the first vote and incumbent president Petro Poroshenko received 16 per cent. Former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko came a close third.

A second round of voting was held on April 21 between the top two candidates, Zelenskiy and Poroshenko. Zelenskiy ran under the banner of the Servant of the People Party, named after the TV show he stars in, while Poroshenko ran as an independent. Following the second voting round, the Ukraine Central Election Commission declared Zelenskiy the resounding winner with 13,541,528 votes or 73.22 per cent of the votes. Poroshenko received 4,522,320 votes or 24.45 per cent of the votes cast. The overall voter turnout was calculated as 62.8 per cent.

Compared to other European countries, the Ukraine president, who is directly elected by the people, has a great deal of power. He or she can veto Parliament, commands the military, heads national security, appoints one-third of the judges, represents the Ukraine internationally, and leads foreign policy. The president appoints the prime minister, with the consent of the Rada (parliament). While in office, the president is immune from prosecution.

Role of the Oligarchs

The presidential election revealed once again how real power in Ukraine is held not by the people but by about a dozen businessmen or billionaire "oligarchs." The oligarchs, who have a combined wealth amounting to a fifth of the country's gross domestic product, constantly battle each other for increased profit and political power, using the Ukrainian people as their cannon fodder. Some of them have close connections with the European Union while others are more tightly linked to Russia.

The oligarchs became rich after the so-called fall of communism in 1991 by helping themselves through "legal" and illegal means to valuable government assets belonging to the Ukrainian people which they made into their own private property. Poroshenko is one such oligarch who emerged from these battles over the spoils. His main financial interests are concentrated in the confectionary company Roshen and the all-news TV Channel 5. He also has business holdings in the manufacturing, agriculture, and financial sectors.

Zelenskiy is not an oligarch in his own right but he is strongly backed by the third richest man in Ukraine, Igor Kolomoisky, who owns the TV station which broadcasts the program that Zelenskiy stars in, Servant of the People. Kolomoisky owns major interests in metals, energy, aviation, and media, including Burisma, Ukraine's largest private gas firm. Hunter Biden, son of former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden who just announced he is running for the Democratic nomination for U.S. president in 2020, sits on the Burisma board.

Dueling Oligarchs

Poroshenko and Kolomoisky have carried on a long-running feud which broke out after Poroshenko first became president in 2014 through the U.S.-backed parliamentary coup. In the 2010 election, most of the oligarchs supported Victor Yanukovych who became the new president.

At the end of November 2013, Yanukovych rejected a pending trade agreement with the European Union which would have allowed European monopolies to grab Ukraine's crucial energy markets, calling instead for closer ties with Russia. Yanukovych then signed several agreements with Russian President Vladimir Putin on December 17 that would reduce by a third the cost of Russian gas sold to Ukraine. Russia also agreed to lend \$15 billion to Ukraine on easy terms.

The agreements with Russia led to the U.S.-backed parliamentary coup that removed Yanukovych on February 22, 2014 and, eventually, to the appointment of EU-friendly Petro Poroshenko in June. Between November 2013 and February 2014, Poroshenko had actively and financially supported the U.S.-backed Euromaidan protests against Yanukovych's government to advance his own economic and political interests. In March 2015, President Poroshenko sealed a deal with the International Monetary Fund, controlled by the world financial oligarchy, giving Ukraine a \$17.5 billion, four-year loan and firmly tying the country to U.S. and European interests for years to come.

The feud between oligarchs Poroshenko and Kolomoisky began with a dispute over Kolomoisky's control over two state-owned energy companies, UkrTransNafta and Ukrnafta, which was only resolved by U.S. threats to undermine Kolomoisky's overseas interests. Then in 2016 the Poroshenko government nationalized Kolomoisky's Privatbank, Ukraine's largest bank. The government also persuaded the UK to freeze over \$2.5 billion of Kolomoisky's overseas assets. Kolomoisky now lives in exile in Geneva and Tel Aviv.

The links between Zelenskiy and Kolomoisky are numerous, although Zelenskiy insists he is a "free agent." Zelenskiy is Kolomoisky's employee and Kolomoisky's TV station gave Zelenskiy free air time to campaign politically. Investigative journalists report that Zelenskiy made at least 13 visits to Kolomoisky in exile prior to the presidential election. The two men also share the same lawyer. Finally, Kolomoisky has stated on more than one occasion that if Zelenskiy wins the election he will return to Ukraine from his exile.

What Lies Ahead?

Ukraine has become one of the poorest countries in Europe even though propped up by billions of dollars from the West aimed at keeping it under Western control. Ukraine's numerous problems include economic instability, corruption, cuts to social services, a nine-fold hike in the price of gas heat, intermittent shooting wars, killings of innocent civilians, street demonstrations, foreign intrigue, and the passing of state laws favouring one bloc or the other. Since 2015, an estimated 1.3 million Ukrainians have left the country seeking work elsewhere.

To give one example of corruption, Poroshenko promised when elected to end corruption but he has been exposed not as its opponent but as a participant in it. The Panama Papers released in April 2016 showed that contrary to his pledge when he took office in 2014 to sell Roshen, Poroshenko had instead set up an offshore company in the Virgin Islands and moved his company there just after being elected. The move potentially saved him millions of dollars in Ukrainian taxes. Another Panama Papers revelation was that while president he had spent half a million dollars on a secret family vacation to the Maldives in 2017.

The reactionary forces give a number of bogus reasons for the problems now facing Ukraine: the

communist past, the Russian present, the personal failings of whoever happens to be president, and so on. But these are all diversions. The real root cause of the many problems in Ukraine remains the private takeover of the state by the oligarchs. Poroshenko, Kolomoisky, other oligarchs, and their backers in Europe, Russia, the U.S., and Canada are all playing out their private economic battles in Ukraine to the detriment of the Ukrainian people.

While they make themselves out to be Ukrainian patriots with only the people's interests at heart, the only goal of the oligarchs is to further enrich themselves by trying to mobilize popular support for their front men for their own private interests. The oligarchs looted the peoples' state assets to initially enrich themselves and they are continuing on the same path now that they have increased their economic and political power. The recent election of Zelenskiy will not improve conditions for the people by any means but will only sharpen the fundamental contradictions continuing to tear the Ukraine apart.



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