

December 7, 2019 - No. 30

Throne Speech Opens First Session of 43rd Parliament

**Failure to Provide Canada
with a Worthy Aim**

- Hilary LeBlanc -



- **The Antidote to Depoliticization Is to Speak in One's Own Name**
- Yvon Breton -
- **Low Level of Political Discourse and Destruction of Politics**
- Anna Di Carlo -

Alberta Government Intensifies Vicious Anti-Social Offensive

- **Oppose the Defamation of University of Alberta Lecturer Dr. Dougal MacDonald**
- **Statement of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) -**
 - **All Out to Defeat the Kenney Government's Attacks on Working People and the Social Fabric!**
 - **Kenney Government's Despicable Attacks on Teachers**
- Kevan Hunter -

Ontario Government's Anti-Social Offensive on Education Broadly Rejected

- **Teachers and Education Workers Hold Province-Wide One-Day Strike**

NATO Summit in London, England

- **Police Fail to Thwart No to Trump -- No to NATO Protest**
- *Terina Hine, Stop the War Coalition (UK)* -
- **Toronto Picket Against NATO Summit in London**
- **Canada's Military Spending and NATO Membership**

British General Election December 12

- **Boris Johnson's Nonsense about Representing the People vs Parliament**
- *Workers' Weekly* -
- **The Call for Real Change**

Throne Speech Opens First Session of 43rd Parliament

Failure to Provide Canada with a Worthy Aim

- *Hilary LeBlanc* -

The Trudeau Liberal Party government in power delivered its Throne Speech on December 5 opening the 43rd Parliament of Canada. As is the custom for the cartel parties in power, the Throne Speech talks in vague terms of what the government may or may not do.

A feature of the Liberal cartel party is its striving to demobilize the people from actively participating in politics and fighting to affirm their right to control the decisions that affect their lives. The Liberal Party insists that the people hand over their political rights to it and demobilize and disempower themselves from active political organizing and involvement.

The Throne Speech talks of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and that the government will deliver clean water, conclude the investigations into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and resolve other pressing issues. Within all these promises, it refuses to acknowledge that the consent, active participation and control of the Indigenous peoples are necessary when investigating and taking decisions on those issues that affect their lives. The Indigenous peoples demand control over their lives and territories, and nation-to-nation relations with Canada. They do not want the continuing oppression and suffocating paternalism of



colonialism and the *Indian Act* that enable the global financial oligarchy to steal their resources, ruin their lands and deprive them of the right to control their affairs and open a path towards a prosperous future.

In the same vein, the speech promises certain social programs and public services to Canadians yet gives no encouragement to the people, especially in Ontario and Alberta, who are actively fighting the anti-social offensive of their provincial governments. Concrete steps towards establishing the long awaited national daycare system are missing, which is a shameless situation in a modern economy. No mention is made of the grave inequalities, poverty and insecurity that are deepening in Canada because of the dictatorship and control of the global financial oligarchy over all political and economic affairs and the destructive trend of the rich becoming richer and the poor poorer. The Throne Speech ignores the priorities of the people to stop paying the rich and increase investments in social programs and public services.



The Throne Speech talks a lot about climate change but again refuses to acknowledge that to achieve any concrete steps on this front the people must have the power to take decisions that humanize the natural environment and to restrict the right of the monopolies to pollute. The Throne Speech turns the struggle to combat climate change into pay-the-rich schemes with handouts to the global auto monopolies to produce and sell "zero-emissions vehicles" and for "clean technology companies" to receive public funds to build their private empires.

The Throne Speech ignores the urgent need to make Canada a zone for peace and to take the country out of the aggressive military alliances with U.S. imperialism that have entangled Canadians in its war economy, constant wars and striving for world domination.

The people are increasingly not fooled by Liberal Party policy objectives and empty talk that seek to demobilize their organizing and actions with analysis to solve the economic, social and political problems as they appear in their concrete reality. The people want to be political and empowered to bring about democratic renewal and a new pro-social direction for the economy that favours them, to humanize the social and natural environment, and to make Canada a zone for peace.



The Antidote to Depoliticization Is to Speak in One's Own Name

- Yvon Breton -

The Speech from the Throne is a reminder of how outdated and in need of renewal the democratic institutions of Canada are. It is delivered from the throne of a condescending monarch by the Governor General, an anachronistic colonial office that represents the Queen of England, who is still formally the head of state in Canada. Of course it is just a form but the reason it is kept is that it helps to hide that the royal prerogative is exercised through the powers of the Prime Minister while the actual decision-making power lies in the financial oligarchy. It does not reside in the people, either in form or content.

This reality of who decides is reflected in the Throne Speech delivered on December 5 by the Governor General on behalf of the minority government, led by the Trudeau Liberals, that was brought to power on October 21. While the speech gives the broad orientation of the new government for the current parliamentary session, it is oblivious to the reality that Canadians have refused to give this government a mandate to do what it wants and especially to continue to do what the Trudeau Liberals have been doing for the last four years. On every issue raised in the speech, it says the Liberals will continue to do what they have been doing. The expression "the government will continue" is the content of almost every announcement and is repeated 19 times. The issue of how this minority government, led by a party that received less than 35 per cent of the vote cast, will make sure the measures it takes and the orientation it gives the economy and the country will represent what Canadians want is not addressed in the speech.



The Throne Speech declares that the October 21 election gave the cartel parties "a mandate from the people of Canada" to "fight climate change, strengthen the middle class, walk the road of reconciliation, keep Canadians safe and healthy, and position Canada for success in an uncertain world."

None of the measures outlined in the speech meet the demands workers, youth, women and Indigenous peoples have been formulating in their thousands in demonstrations and other actions across Canada. In the Canadian parliamentary tradition, the Throne Speech is really addressed to the other parties in the Parliament and the different sections of the ruling elite they represent in an attempt to create an understanding between them to maintain their control over power and resources to serve their interests for the coming period. This is the main feature of the December 5 Throne Speech from the minority government of Justin Trudeau.

Throne Speeches do not require a vote, as they only express the broad policies the government intends to pursue. According to some sources though, the Trudeau government intends to submit this Throne Speech to a vote in order to cement some kind of alignment with the NDP and the Bloc Québécois to prevent an election, which would presumably favour the Conservatives. In any case, even if it doesn't submit it to a vote, the first confidence vote is expected in the coming week on a financing bill that allows the continuation of the operations of the government.

Bloc Québécois leader Yves-François Blanchet announced immediately after the presentation of the Throne Speech that, if there is a vote, the Bloc will side with the government because, he said, "the wording on delicate subjects is vague" and this "allows us to make of it what we want." Specifically, Blanchet noticed that there is no mention of oil projects or pipelines which would make it difficult for the Bloc to support it. "The government knows very well which are the issues we cannot agree with," he added.

NDP leader Jagmeet Singh said that although the measures announced in the Throne Speech "are not good enough," the NDP is not closing the door to supporting it if the government "promises more." He said, "We need to talk, we need some firmer commitments, we need some real action to tackle the urgent problems that people are facing."

Some of the measures spelled out specifically to allow the Bloc and the NDP to support the minority government on major confidence votes include:

- Not mentioning anything to do with pipelines. The divide created on who is "against" and who is "for" pipelines has degenerated to an absurd level where even the mention of the word is a reason to vote for or against the government agenda. This is related to attempts to split the polity by presenting a caricature of workers in the western provinces who want oil pipelines and nothing else versus those in the rest of the country who cannot bear the thought of them.

- Mentioning specific measures suggested or previously championed by the other cartel parties such as: "lowering taxes for the middle class and those who need it most" and national pharmacare "so that Canadians have the drug coverage they need." This is something the NDP has been calling for and which Quebec is open to discuss since it already has a drug program.

- Mentioning broad measures on which everyone will agree such as: "a real plan to fight climate change;" "less gun violence" by "banning military-style assault rifles and taking steps to introduce a buy-back program" (municipalities that want to ban handguns will be able to do so); "dialogue and cooperation" between all regions of Canada; a commitment to work with others to develop a National Action Plan and a Gender-Based Violence Strategy; and reconciliation with Indigenous people as "a core priority for this government" which will "continue to move forward as a partner on the journey of reconciliation."



However, it is clear that the Liberals, having already determined what Canadians want, therefore have no need to address any of the issues and demands raised by working people in their battles against the anti-social offensive across the country, and will carry on in much the same way as they did during their first term. They will continue to pay the rich and implement budgets designed by those in the highest echelons of the financial oligarchy. They will continue to rule with impunity while paying

lip-service to the Indigenous peoples or to the workers with promises of tax cuts. The Liberal government has already made it abundantly clear with its irresponsible statements welcoming the murderous coup d'état in Bolivia that it will continue interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign nations to achieve regime change in favour of U.S. imperialist interests.

In other words, the Throne Speech confirms that working people have to continue to organize to speak in their own name, express their demands and concerns, and make it clear that neither the minority government nor a coalition of cartel parties in the House of Commons have a mandate to speak and act in their name.

Low Level of Political Discourse and Destruction of Politics

- Anna Di Carlo -

The Speech from the Throne, according to the authoritative text by Senator Eugene Forsey, is supposed to provide "the government's view of the condition of the country and the policies it will follow, and the bills it will introduce to deal with that condition." The December 5 Throne Speech did not address the condition in which the country finds itself, especially the deepening crisis of the political institutions, which have lost the ability to give rise to a government that is viewed as being based on the consent of the people. Far from it, the Speech from the Throne boasted that

the "parliamentary system is a bedrock of our stability." Addressing MPs and Senators, the government through its Throne Speech said their role in the democratic process is a privilege and responsibility, and expressed confidence that they, "embrace it, respecting the wishes and protecting the rights of all. Because we serve every single Canadian."

The Liberals claim that they can divine the "will of the people," which, the Throne Speech says, was to send a clear message through the election of a minority government that they want their parliamentarians to work together and "deliver on a plan that moves our country forward for all Canadians." This is then said to mean that "parliamentarians received a mandate from the people of Canada" to take up the most recent rendition of how the Liberals say they have been fighting climate change, strengthening the middle class, working for Indigenous reconciliation, and keeping Canadians safe and healthy. Their new mantra to excuse whatever they did or did not do during their first tenure in office is "there is still much work to do."



Recurring throughout the Throne Speech was the message that the government will continue with its schemes to enrich the corporations and follow the dictate of the financial oligarchs to make them competitive, expressed as "positioning Canada for success in an uncertain world." It will continue to "seek out opportunities for Canadian commerce, ingenuity and enterprise." In addition, the Speech made it clear that the government plans to continue its participation in undermining the rule of law and the sovereignty of other countries, because, it said, "Canadians expect their leaders to stand up for the values and interests that are the core of Canada's security -- democracy, human rights and respect for international law." It promised to renew its commitment to NATO, UN Peacekeeping and the rules-based international order and to continue the pursuit of a seat for Canada on the UN Security Council.

The same section of the speech promotes the multilateralism said to be Canada's specialty: "As a coalition-builder, the Government will build partnerships with like-minded countries to put Canada's expertise to work on a global scale, in areas like the promotion of democracy and human rights, the fight against climate change and for environmental protection, and the development and ethical use of artificial intelligence."

The appeal for parliamentarians to find the way to work together is reiterated in the conclusion of the speech: "In this 43rd Parliament, you will disagree on many things. But you will agree on a great many more. Focus on your shared purpose: making life better for the people you serve. Never forget that it is an honour to sit in this Parliament. Prove to Canadians that you are worthy holders of these seats, and worthy stewards of this place."

No matter how much talk there was about parliamentarians working together to address the problems facing Canadians, the Throne Speech confirms the condition of the political process as one that can no longer perform its role of sorting out relations between electors and the elected or between rival factions of the ruling elite vying for power. After much hyperbole about Canada's Parliament being "one of the most enduring and vital institutions in the democratic world," in the end the last word came straight from the medieval era that gave rise to the process Canadians continue to be saddled with: in carrying out their duties and responsibilities, MPs and Senators are to let themselves be guided by Divine Providence.

The Need for a New Political Process Fit for the Times

The role being played by the political process is to destroy the very source of political power, the polity. This was clearly seen during the election that gave rise to the government. The competition among the members of the cartel of political parties vying to form a government lowered the level of discourse as never before. The concerns of the people, the actual conditions of work and living, were only raised and discussed by parties such as the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) that are intent on providing society with an aim on par with the demand of the times. This low level of discourse of the cartel parties was a mind-numbing factor contributing to the destruction of politics. The whole "campaign" served to leave the polity aimless, something no one can get on board with.

Furthermore, the election saw the use of defamation and dirty ops in another unprecedented assault on the polity. CPC(M-L) does not agree with the positions of Maxime Bernier and his People's Party but the "war-room" gratuitous attacks launched by a liberal media firm paid for by a conservative third party show the sordid level to which the politics of the country have been lowered. Similarly, the endless repetition of decontextualized comments by Elizabeth May to fit her persona into a stereotype that another party's campaign clearly thought would undermine the Green Party vote is without any honour whatsoever. The duplicity and corruption of these practices is such that the party and its leader who waged this campaign claim to stand with all those who are discriminated against but have no qualms about defaming their adversaries.



CPC(M-L) will never agree with such things. In contrast, its own call to humanize the natural and social environment by upholding the dignity of labour, defending the rights of all and making Canada a zone for peace provides an aim for the polity and the society. This is of utmost importance because the way matters stand in Canada, either the brutal dictate of the international financial oligarchy will continue to wreak havoc across the country -- which today is particularly vicious in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec -- or the people will take up the call for an anti-war government that provides Canada with a new direction for the economy, and for its foreign and domestic policy. This call provides an aim worthy of the Canadian, Quebec and Indigenous peoples because it rejects colonial injustice, unfettered exploitation of labour

deprived of all rights and wars of aggression and occupation abroad, all of which are carried out in the name of high ideals of peace, democracy and freedom.

Deliberation cannot take place so long as there is an executive with power over decision-making, as in Canada, which appeases the United States as the indispensable nation, with its nuclear weapons and the whole bureaucracy built around that, including elections. Canada is integrated into the U.S. war machine and NATO's Atlantic Council dictates the line of march for the government and Parliament, and has even taken over the "security" and policing of elections. In this situation, the conception of political deliberation about war and peace, crime and punishment, international trade and the national economy are blown right out of the water. Everything is centred on the rulers and their way of looking at the world, not that of the people and their concerns.

An anti-war government does have a political purpose and is sustained based on politics, on

informing and politicizing the people to be decision-makers. We, the people, do not want to destroy these massive human productive powers that the working class has produced. We want the working class to control them, so as to unleash that democratic personality of the New. This is the demand the times are calling for so that the path to progress is opened and the natural and social environments are humanized.

Rather than try to achieve power themselves, the people are told they must do "something else." As the 43rd Parliament opens, the "something else" is said to be to scrutinize the Throne Speech and speculate as to what they can expect from the government. At other times the people are told the "something else" is to ensure the government's actions do not violate the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* contained in the Constitution. Rather than empowerment of the people and organizing to achieve political power themselves, the role for the people at other times is reduced to building coalitions and advocating for whatever best new green deal package pops out of the woodwork or reducing the issues and problems facing the country to choosing between pipelines and the environment or growing the economy and protecting the environment or endorsing some new agreement with the U.S. and Mexico that promises to uphold "Canadian values." And to fight for those "values" globally, the people are egged on to applaud Canada's increasing participation in the NATO/U.S.-led wars of aggression under the hoax that those wars, interference in the sovereign affairs of others and violent regime change will bring those people to their senses to adopt "Canadian values" as their own.

The Throne Speech is part and parcel of a political process in the throes of a legitimacy crisis. It hopes to provide legitimacy to a process where none can be found but rather needs complete democratic renewal. The existing political process serves only to entrench an absolute power over the people who are thereby deprived of power. The times call out for empowerment of the people to build the New!

Alberta Government Intensifies Vicious Anti-Social Offensive

**Oppose the Defamation of University of Alberta
Lecturer Dr. Dougal MacDonald**

- Statement of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) -



***Dr. Dougal MacDonald is not a holocaust denier.
But what can be said about those who seek to defame him?***

In the matter of the defamatory accusations gratuitously levelled against Dr. Dougal MacDonald insinuating he is a holocaust denier, we state categorically that Dr. MacDonald is not now and never has been a holocaust denier. Dr. MacDonald has researched and, along with others, argues against the narrative of a genocide committed in Ukraine by the Soviet state. To equate this stand

with denial of the holocaust is socially irresponsible. It lowers the level of political culture and discourse to disinform public opinion about the real matters of concern to society. Such defamation seeks to disarticulate the fight raging in society, especially in Alberta, against the anti-social offensive launched by the Kenney government. Shame on those who repeat these defamatory statements without any regard for the facts or their own social responsibility.

What is the aim of those repeating such defamatory statements? Why are they attacking a professor of science known for his integrity as a teacher, a trade unionist, and defender of the workers, Indigenous peoples and all those fighting for their dignity and freedom the world over?

Dr. MacDonald is born and bred in Alberta. His family fought in the anti-fascist World War II contributing to the democratic personality that emerged, which was codified in the verdicts of the Nuremberg Trials and the international rule of law espoused by the United Nations in its founding Charter. Based on his family tradition and that of the Alberta and Canadian working people, in addition to being an educator, Dr. MacDonald became a worthy researcher and journalist to settle scores with the old conscience of society so as to open a path for progress today. In this regard, one of the fields where he developed specific knowledge deals with the workings of the Nazi propaganda machine both prior to and after World War II directed against the Soviet Union and the anti-fascist resistance fighters led by the communists. He shows how those directing the Anglo-American Cold War against the peoples of the world as far back as the 1930s appropriated and spread Nazi propaganda.

Following the collapse of the former Soviet Union, he has opposed the resurgence of Nazi propaganda in the United States, Canada, the Ukraine and throughout Europe. All those who suffered profound losses at the hands of the Hitlerites are rightly concerned about these developments, as are all who stand today for peace, freedom and democracy.

The defamers' insinuation that Dr. MacDonald is a holocaust denier is an attempt to isolate him by arousing contempt in those who do not know him. However, to defame those forces that fight for freedom and progress is itself a Hitlerite *modus operandi* which must not pass. This truth is not lost on Canadians, Quebeckers and the Indigenous peoples who are struggling to deal with the problems they and society face, and are confronted with disinformation or slanders to undermine the fights they are waging.

"A defamatory statement is a false statement of fact that exposes a person to hatred, ridicule, or contempt, causes him to be shunned, or injures him in his business or trade. Oral defamation is a slander whereas printed or published defamation is a libel." (*Oxford Dictionary*)

Words spread gratuitously through official state media and other channels can cause harm, which may even be irreparable to the individuals being defamed. But the deeds of those spreading the defamatory statements are also a matter of public record. To think that the people can be silenced in the face of such outrageous defamation as that directed against Dr. MacDonald is to deny that what goes around comes around.

Some in authority are appealing to the public to oppose the hate speech of holocaust deniers. They do this in the name of defending democracy, human rights and the national interest and security of the country against enemies. A problem arises when those same people in authority who claim to oppose hate speech insidiously promote fear and hatred not only against Dr. MacDonald but against trade unionists, teachers and any forces fighting the anti-social offensive which those same authorities in power have unleashed against the people and society.

We intend to discuss these and related pertinent matters with the public for purposes of arousing opposition to the defamation of Dr. MacDonald and others. Clearly, when the state, its institutions, media and those in authority do not defend the individual, the individual has no recourse but to

appeal to public opinion to defend not only her or his right to conscience and speech but, by doing so, defend the collectivity of rights as well.

Speak out in opposition to the defamation of Dr. MacDonald. Send him messages and letters of support at DMD@cpcml.ca.

On behalf of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist),

*Peggy Askin
Barbara Biley
Anna Di Carlo
Pierre Chénier
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Steve Rutchinski
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All Out to Defeat the Kenney Government's Attacks on Working People and the Social Fabric!



Rally organized by the United Nurses of Alberta at the legislature in Edmonton, November 20, 2019, against attacks of Kenney government.

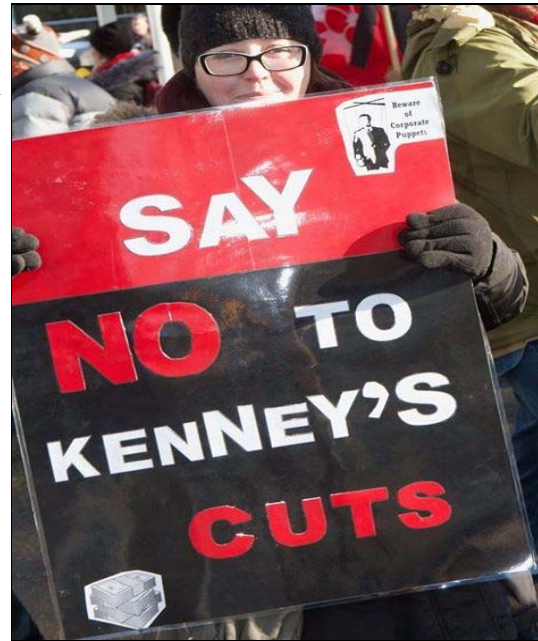
In what many describe as military shock-and-awe tactics, the Kenney government in Alberta has launched a flurry of attacks on working people and the social fabric of the province. Declaring he has a so-called mandate to destroy social programs and public services, fire public sector workers *en masse*, steal the people's pensions, violate the right of working people to negotiate their terms of employment and tear up already signed collective agreements, Kenney's United Conservative cartel party government is on a rampage.

The working people have demonstrated in practice their mettle in refusing to accept these attacks as the new normal and have organized a resistance movement that is growing by the day. Workers refuse to accept the dictate of the financial oligarchy and its political flunkies over those affairs

that affect their lives. The modern world cannot be governed in a one-sided manner with the working class sidelined from having a say on the important economic, political and social decisions that concern and affect the people, nature and society. The consent of the governed is required on all important matters. The people are showing that they will not be idle when representatives of the financial oligarchy trample on their rights and modern principles and wreck what the people have built. The working people are determined to solve in ways that favour them the economic, political and social problems that have emerged with the development of the modern productive forces.

Working people and the trade union movement are not fooled when Kenney attempts to divert their opposition towards false targets he derides as "useful idiots" or to debate with him events of long ago no matter how provocative he may become. The events and personalities that matter are active in the present and are judged through their actions in the here and now. Either they stand with the people in defence of their rights and well-being and their determination to build a better life or with those such as Kenney who are trampling on the rights of all and pushing society down into darkness.

Kenney and his reactionary ilk serving the financial oligarchy cannot turn the working people against themselves with straw men because their thinking, interests, social consciousness and organizations are in contradiction with his thinking, interests, anti-social consciousness and organizations.



Protest outside United Conservative Party convention in Calgary, November 30, 2019, against the Kenney government's anti-social offensive.

The more Kenney attacks working people, social programs and public services the more resistance

the people will mount in defence of their rights. In this battle, the more people defend their rights the more they will develop their voice and plans for democratic renewal, empowerment and a new pro-social direction for the economy. The modern democratic personality of the people emerges irresistibly as they take up the defence of their rights and the rights of all.

Kenney Government's Despicable Attacks on Teachers

- Kevan Hunter -



Education rally, Calgary, November 29, 2019.

As Alberta teachers, students, and parents are stepping up their resistance to attacks on public education, the Alberta government and its allies in the media have escalated their campaign to throw mud at educators, threaten them, and spread disinformation about what takes place in Alberta classrooms.

In Question Period on November 27, the United Conservative Party (UCP) MLA for Calgary-Fish Creek, Richard Gotfried, asked the Education Minister about a Grade 10 Social Studies test that a parent had sent him, with "deeply concerning anti-oil and gas rhetoric," and what he characterized as "radical left-wing ideology."

Education Minister Adriana LaGrange, who was obviously prepared for the question, said that it was deeply troubling. "Our educators have a duty to tell the truth about our responsible energy industry. We said that we were going to take politics out of the classroom, and that's exactly what we will be doing," she stated in the Legislature.

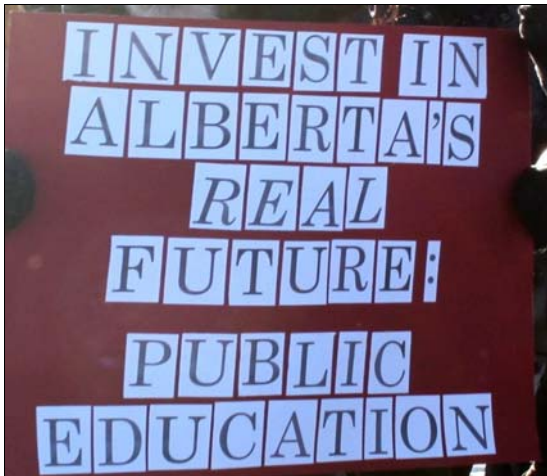


In a column published in the *Calgary Herald* and *Edmonton Journal*, former Wildrose Party leader Danielle Smith picked up where LaGrange left off. Apparently, the same anonymous parent had also sent her a copy of the Grade 10 Social Studies test. After a diatribe against communism, the Soviet Union, and "public school social studies teachers [who] seem to lean toward Marxism," Smith said "This is not education. It's indoctrination. And it's got to stop." She concluded that rather than saving the 300 Calgary public school teachers who are set to be laid off, school boards

should start firing teachers whose methods are not to her liking.

Far from Alberta teachers being the problem, the Minister of Education is clearly the one who is unfit to carry out her position. The Grade 10 Social Studies curriculum states that students are expected to understand different points of view regarding globalization, including environmental perspectives.[1] This is precisely what the questions at issue are designed to test. Students should be able to associate a particular argument with a broader political position, and to understand different perspectives on issues, such as those held by workers, business owners, Indigenous peoples, governments and environmental groups. As others have pointed out on social media, the Minister's suggestion to "get politics out" of a course dedicated to studying political issues is as absurd and laughable as "keeping chemistry out of science" or "keeping exercise out of physical education." If the Minister cannot tell the difference between being asked to understand someone else's point of view and being told what to think, not only should she resign, but perhaps she should re-take high school social studies.

Normally, at the very least, an education minister would be expected to be informed about the curriculum that students are supposed to be taught, as it pertains to the issue at hand. But this is the new normal, where the aim is to provide a pretext for the wrecking of public education, as well as to threaten and try to silence teachers and any opposition.



Since its inception in 2017, the UCP, and before that its predecessors, the Progressive Conservatives and the Wildrose Party, have been spreading disinformation about public education, teachers, and their organization, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA). In 2013, a slight drop in scores on a standardized test of math skills in OECD countries was used to suggest a crisis in math education, with newer "inquiry" and "discovery" teaching methods used by teachers being blamed.[2][3] This also served to divert from the reality of increasing class sizes due to the ongoing failure to adequately fund education.

In 2016, Wildrose MLA Leela Aheer, now the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women, began agitating for the public release of the names of 400 teachers involved in redesigning Alberta's curriculum (aspects of which have not been updated since the 1980s). This demand and the baseless accusations that the curriculum review was being done in secret were continued by Jason Kenney during his time in opposition as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and later the UCP. Following the provincial election, the government arbitrarily ripped up the agreement giving Alberta teachers a leading role in curriculum development, and created a new curriculum review panel dominated by fans of private, charter, and faith-based schools, none with any teaching experience in this century.[4]

Claiming to take politics out of the classroom is a diversion. There is a modicum of truth in this assertion, because what the UCP stands for cannot be called politics. Rule of the financial oligarchy through the use of arbitrary or police powers is not politics. Saying, in the manner of George Bush, that either you are with the UCP and Jason Kenney or you are the enemy and anything you say *ipso facto* has no legitimacy, is not politics. It is dictate. The Minister of Education is using state power to try to divide the polity on the basis of ideology, and demand teachers concede, for example, that the only opinion which can be discussed concerning the environment is that Alberta has a "responsible energy industry." It is also aimed at discrediting the resistance which is developing to the cuts to education. None of this is succeeding.

This latest attack also appears to be fodder for the agenda debated at the UCP policy convention which took place from November 29 to December 1. Policy 15 states that the Alberta government should "implement an education 'voucher system' that will provide for equal per-student funding regardless of their school choice." The disastrous effects of voucher systems in the United States are well documented and must not pass. Their impact is to create two tiers of education, one system for those with the means to access private and charter schools, and one for everyone else.

In standing up for the honour and dignity of their own profession, teachers are defending their rights, those of their students, and the interests of our society. By continuing to step up our resistance, to speak in our own name, to present our concerns publicly and connect with all those forces engaged in defending public education, we will be a force to be reckoned with.

Notes

1. The Grade 10 Social Studies curriculum, last updated in 2005, can be found [here](#). The most relevant sections are on pages 21-25.
2. In 2013, Canadian students ranked 13th among OECD member countries. If Alberta were compared to other countries in the OECD, it would have been in 11th place, down from eighth place in 2009.
3. For a discussion of "inquiry" teaching methods and the important distinctions between "discovery" and "inquiry," [see here](#).
4. For more on the changes to curriculum review in Alberta, [see here](#).

(Photos: TML)

Ontario Government's Anti-Social Offensive on Education Broadly Rejected

Teachers and Education Workers Hold Province-Wide One-Day Strike



Picket line outside the Toronto District School Board offices, December 4, 2019.

On Wednesday, December 4, members of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) who work in K-12 and adult education in Ontario engaged in a province-wide one-day strike.^[1] Pickets were set up outside schools, school board administrative offices and the constituency offices of Premier Doug Ford, Education Minister Stephen Lecce and Progressive Conservative MPPs around the province.

Since November 26, high school teachers and support staff represented by OSSTF have engaged in a limited withdrawal of services affecting only government or school board initiatives, held information pickets outside working hours and given out flyers in their communities explaining their stand against the government's cuts.

In addition to closing high schools for the day, many public boards also closed their elementary schools, with some Catholic boards also closing schools, as OSSTF represents support staff in a range of job classes in the English and French systems. Even if their schools were closed, teachers represented by other unions, including the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) and Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA), and support staff represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Ontario Public Service Employees' Union, Unifor and other organizations, were required to report for work. While CUPE had announced its members would not cross OSSTF's picket lines, on December 2 the Ontario Labour Board ordered CUPE to inform its members that refusal to cross a picket line could constitute participation in an illegal strike and be subject to discipline, fines, penalties and prosecution, given that CUPE has a signed collective agreement in effect.



That did not stop members of CUPE or the other unions from showing solidarity with their striking colleagues, with many bringing their flags and joining OSSTF's picket lines before starting work or on their lunch breaks.



ETFO provincial executive in solidarity with OSSTF strike action.

Parents, union members from different sectors and others who appreciated the stand being taken by teachers and education workers came out as well to add their voices to the demand that the government reverse its damaging cuts to education. Those who participated in or visited the picket lines frequently remarked on the high spirits and camaraderie that prevailed. This was also in evidence in the many photos and videos posted on social media from towns and cities all around the province. No doubt contributing to the upbeat mood was the confidence people felt that they were fighting for a just cause and that standing together to let the government know that *No Means No!* was the right thing to do.



Ontario Parent Action Network rally in solidarity with teachers and education workers as OSSTF strike deadline approaches, Toronto, December 3, 2019.

Since then the conciliation process OECTA had been engaged in with the government has broken down, with the conciliator filing a No Board report on Thursday, December 5. As a result, Catholic teachers, who last month voted by over 97 per cent in favour of striking if necessary, will be in a legal strike position as of December 21.

In a statement OECTA President Liz Stuart said, "As has become abundantly clear this week, Ontarians recognize the Ford government is not listening to their concerns, or treating publicly funded education with the respect it deserves. This 'no-board' should serve as another wakeup call for Premier Ford and Minister Lecce that it is time to get their act together. Our Association has two days of bargaining scheduled this week, and two more next week. We sincerely hope the government's negotiating team will come to the table with a mandate to abandon the cuts and reach an agreement."

The Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens, representing teachers in Ontario's French language schools, will hold a strike vote later this month.

Pembroke



Kingston



Bancroft



Pickering



Belleville



North Bay



Espanola



Sudbury



Thunder Bay



Manitoulin



Keswick



Richmond Hill



Toronto, Jarvis Collegiate



Toronto, George Harvey, CI



Etobicoke, Premier Doug Ford's Office



Etobicoke, Lakeshore Collegiate



Mississauga, TL Kennedy



Mississauga, Cawthra Park SS; Mississauga, John Fraser SS



Peel Region



Woodbridge



Orangeville



Milton



Guelph



Waterloo



London



Tilbury



Kingsville



Windsor



Windsor, Elementary Teachers' Solidarity



Note

1. "Workers Hold One-Day Province-Wide Strike," *Workers' Forum*, December 4, 2019.

(Photos: TML, OSSTF, OSSTF Districts 3, 9, 10, 18, 19, 28, EFTO, H. Giroux, A.C. Healey, T. Watt, R. Judd Archer, J. West, @whitewater24, V. Stobey, Dee YYZ, H. Bischof, UFCW, S. Kinzett, J. Burne, PSSP Halton, M. Frost, C. Fusco, M. Hradowy, S. Srdanov, P. Caccamo.)

NATO Summit in London, England

Police Fail to Thwart No to Trump -- No to NATO Protest

- Terina Hine, Stop the War Coalition (UK) -



London, December 3, 2019.

Thousands assembled on Tuesday evening [December 3] to join the No to NATO protest as NATO leaders came together for the 70th anniversary NATO summit. For a U.S. President to visit the UK in the middle of a General Election campaign is unprecedented and protesters came out in force on this cold December evening to make their feelings known. Not only were anti-war protesters braving the cold but also a large contingent of NHS workers along with doctors and nurses, to make it clear that the NHS is not for sale.

Rousing speeches were given as the crowd assembled in the late afternoon. Reiner Braun from the International Peace Bureau and Medea Benjamin from Code Pink gave an insight into how NATO is perceived in Europe and the U.S.; representatives of the Kurds in London protested against [Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdogan's recent atrocities against the Kurds, while Tariq Ali and Lindsey German of Stop the War spoke of Trump and the so-called Special Relationship. Kate Hudson (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) told of the devastating impact and escalating cost of nuclear weapons. Speaker after speaker made it clear how NATO is a force for war not peace and how much Trump and all he stands for is reviled by the British public.



The demonstration began in Trafalgar Square and aimed to march down the Mall to Buckingham Palace in time for the arrival of the NATO leaders attending a reception with the Queen. At least that was the plan. In reality, police action inhibited the march and the assembly of the protest. By refusing to close the roads at the assembly point at Trafalgar Square, and twice blocking the route as thousands poured down the Mall, the police succeeded in preventing the protesters from greeting the Queen's guests as they arrived.

Held for forty minutes on the Mall, mounted police announced to the marchers that they were being kept back for their own safety; in reality it was blatantly clear that crowd safety was the last thing on the police's mind. The crowd was penned into a small, narrow space, repeatedly told to 'stop pushing' although it was hardly possible to move, and when one protester became panicked she was jeered at and mocked by the police officer from whom she sought assistance. Once the 'danger' of being in the line of sight of passing dignitaries had passed, the protesters were allowed to continue to the Palace, to be met by even more police and the handful of Trump supporters who had been permitted to greet their hero.

Not to be deterred, the protest continued and protesters waited for the reception to end so they could make their voices heard. They may not have seen or heard the protest on their arrival at the Palace, but with the drums, trumpets and whistles of the protesters, the NATO leaders could not fail to [notice] it on their departure.

Back at Trafalgar Square, the R3 Soundsystem -- Dance Music Against Trump -- was in full swing with dancers blocking the road and music echoing down Whitehall throughout the Trump-Boris Johnson meeting at Downing Street. GloSticks, *Dump Trump* and *No to Nato* placards were held high and thrust in the air in time to the beat. This was Trump's third visit to London and the third London welcome he has received. Hopefully it will be his last.



Glasgow, Scotland



Edinburgh, Scotland



(December 4, 2019. Photos: Stop the War (UK), CND, Another Europe, Keep NHS Public, S. Bell, L. Cooper, Independence Live, Scrap Trident)

Toronto Picket Against NATO Summit in London



A lively noon hour picket was held on December 3 outside the NATO Association of Canada headquarters in downtown Toronto, to stand with the tens of thousands of protesters gathered in London to oppose the NATO Summit held in that city and call for the abolition of NATO. The Toronto action was organized by the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace and included activists from the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist Leninist), Bayan Canada and others who shouted slogans, passed out information and called for the end to NATO which for 70 years has been involved in war and aggression around the world in service of Anglo-American imperialism.

The participants shouted slogans such as *No to NATO!*, *Get Canada Out of NATO!*, *Not a Cent to NATO!*, *End the Wars that Destroy the Environment!*, *Canada Needs an Anti-War Government!*, *Make Canada a Zone for Peace*, *NATO Out of Latin America* and other similar slogans calling for the banning of NATO from different regions of the world. Many people expressed support for the action as they walked or drove by, giving a thumbs up or raising a fist.

At the end of the event, Tamara Lorincz from Canadian Voice of Women for Peace thanked everyone and the organizations that have taken part each month for the previous twelve months. Tamara said she had organized these monthly pickets outside of the NATO Association of Canada office during its 70th anniversary year to point out the work that this organization, which receives funding from U.S. weapons manufacturers, is doing to justify NATO's agenda in Canada and to subvert the Canadian people's demand that Canada stand for peace in the world. She pointed out that tens of billions of dollars are being contributed to promote and justify militarism and war in Canada by the Canadian government, including contributing to the NATO budget. This money could be used instead to address the pressing social needs of the people in Canada and invest in protecting the environment. She called on everyone to step up their work in the new year to demand the end of NATO as the protesters in the London Summit were doing at that very moment. Tamara called for the Trudeau government to stop interfering in the affairs of other countries and build peaceful relations with them.

The participants expressed their resolve to step up their work to oppose NATO and contribute to making Canada a Zone for Peace.



(Photos: TML)

Canada's Military Spending and NATO Membership

Canada is a member of the aggressive military alliance called NATO. The U.S. is the dominant member of NATO and demands and directs the military alliance to serve its striving for world domination and contribute to the U.S. war economy.

All members of NATO are committed to spend two per cent of their annual Gross Domestic Product towards their own military. NATO headquarters estimates the Canadian government spends 1.31 per cent of its GDP on the military. For 2018, this amounted to CAD\$29.206 billion. The Canadian government said its military spending is moving towards the two per cent target.

NATO -- in particular the United States -- wants Canada to meet the target of two per cent of GDP immediately. For 2018, two per cent of Canada's GDP was \$44.589 billion.

Aside from expanding the aggressive capacity of NATO with greater member military spending, the increased amounts would further feed the U.S. war economy. Military equipment, in particular the expensive items such as warplanes, missiles and tanks are required to meet NATO standards. The U.S. sets those standards and in large measure they can be met only through the purchase of U.S. military equipment.

The discrepancy in annual military spending in Canada between the actual 1.31 per cent and the demanded two per cent was \$15.383 billion in 2018. The U.S. imperialist war economy wants that increased amount to be spent on big ticket items such as the U.S. made Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jet that Canada has not yet purchased.

Not meeting the agreed target of two per cent in military spending explains in part the anger of the U.S. President towards NATO members that he denounces as "delinquent" or, in Canada's case, "slightly delinquent." The U.S. President represents the interests of a dominant section of the U.S. financial oligarchy and the country's war economy and striving for world domination.

Membership in the NATO aggressive military alliance is not in the interests of the people or economy of Canada, the U.S. or the world. Canada should immediately withdraw from NATO and all military alliances with U.S. imperialism, cease all purchases of U.S. military equipment and take measures to extricate the Canadian economy from the U.S. war economy and make Canada a zone for peace.

British General Election December 12

Boris Johnson's Nonsense about Representing the People vs Parliament

- *Workers' Weekly* -

In calling this General Election, Boris Johnson declared that the problem facing the British people is that they are not represented by the Parliament. This is in fact true. According to the logic which underlies the British parliamentary tradition, the election of members of Parliament makes them representatives of the person of state, the Queen of England. The person of state rules over the people. In other words, the democracy is divided between those who govern and those who are governed. The role of the citizen is merely to put an "X" on a ballot during an election to indicate that they authorize someone else, over whom they exercise no control, to speak in their name.



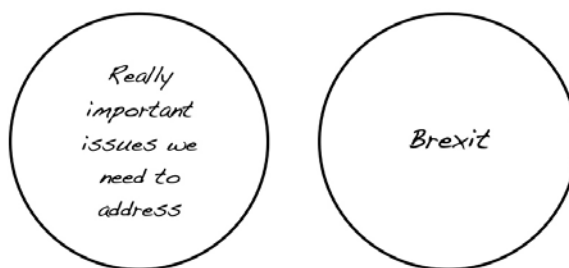
Large demonstration against the government in Parliament Square, London, September 9, 2019.

But, of course, this is not the problem Boris Johnson is addressing when he declares that this election is about "the people *versus* Parliament." Far from proposing how the people can be vested with the decision-making power in such a manner that they can speak for themselves, he claims that Theresa May's coalition with the Democratic Unionist Party and then his own minority government were "firmly on the side of the people." The very suggestion that his government's use of prerogative powers to get rid of dissenting voices represents "the people" is too ridiculous to deserve comment. Everyone knows that a Boris Johnson government is in the service of the wealthy and that it is incapable of sorting out the contradictions within the ranks of the wealthy to get their cake and eat it too. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the needs of a British economy that serves the British people.

But Boris Johnson's assertion that his government represents the people is not only untrue; it makes a mockery of what the parliamentary relationships are supposed to be. The government is understood to be in a relationship with the whole Parliament and the whole Parliament is where the decisions are presumed to be taken based on the claim that the House of Commons is its main component. The Parliament is an ensemble -- all its parts taken together in which each part is considered only in relation to the whole. To pit one component of the relationship against another, serves what purpose does Mr Johnson suppose?

How is it that the government claims to be separate from the Parliament, which is said to represent "the Commons"? Is the government not supposed to be an integral part of "the Commons"? Clearly, Mr Johnson is speaking nonsense. He is not coherent, which is par for the course. But his admission that the House of Commons does indeed exclude the "common people" also reveals the truth of the matter -- the government is not governing with the consent of the governed. This is a serious problem which requires first-rate attention. Imagine the current Parliament as a musical ensemble. Far from being in harmony, most instruments are literally at war with one another. The sounds coming out of it are so harsh, dissonant and cacophonous that nobody wants to hear them.

Venn diagrams for our times



Murphy

Of course, the fact that the Parliament is an ensemble and must be considered as such does not mean we support the existing ensemble. In no way does it address the serious problems facing the polity at this time. Furthermore, despite the disharmony and discord, the media pundits and cartel parties present it as "normal," as something the people have to put up with. Far from activating the people to take control of the situation, everything is done to distract attention from the real problems people face and providing them with viable solutions. The future is made to look very bleak, which is what happens when the political imagination is not directed at what is taking place in the present.

So long as what are called the democratic institutions are not on a par with the requirements of the conditions today, the needs of the people and the serious problems they and the society face will increase. The fundamental question of whom this democracy represents will continue to block any way out of the impasse which exists today because the role of the people is reduced to that of being spectators and authorizing others to speak in their name. The call for change must be directed towards change in this relationship between people and Parliament.

Workers' Weekly is a publication of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

(November 30, 2019. Photo: WW)

The Call for Real Change



The striving of the people is indeed for real change, as the Labour Manifesto proclaims. However, how does the issue of bringing about real change pose itself when the conditions call for real change but the people continue to be divided between this and that faction of the ruling class vying for power? So long as this is the case, the real change the people desire will remain undefined and elusive.

The desire of Britain's working people is to have a labour party which is not part of the status quo. This requires blocking the factions within the Labour Party itself and others that support a neo-liberal agenda and the status quo of power and privilege, which is what the Parliament represents today. It is the pay-the-rich agenda from which the factions seek to benefit that has caused havoc in the British economy in this period. The ruling class has privatized the systems of health care, education and civil services, as well as transportation, and turned other sectors of the economy over to war production and the oligopolies which are marauding over all countries of the world to make Britain, or the U.S. or some other big power, great again.

The change the conditions call for requires the replacement of the current forms used to keep the

people outside of the decision-making power. This should begin with defeating Boris Johnson and his cabal and making it very clear to whosoever forms the next government that the people condemn factional fighting within the parties and between the parties.

In this election, prevent the Conservatives from forming a government, on their own or in alliance with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), or in a coalition with any other party. Also, those in a position to do so, go all out to defeat the DUP and fight for a new coherence. Let us use the election to go all out to break the impasse by not permitting the status quo of factions fighting with one another to continue. This self-serving fighting is the sure sign that these factions do not represent the interests of the people. Reject these factions! That is the first step in the fight for real change, a change which has a broad perspective for the benefit of the whole of society.

(Workers' Weekly. Photos: WW)

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