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Go Digital Canada Program

**Federal Government Promotes
Powerful Private Interests**

- K.C. Adams -

On July 11, the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario announced that with its "partners" it is undertaking an initiative called "Go Digital Canada" whose purpose is said to be "to support nearly 23,000 Ontario businesses to go digital." The partners cited are various Ontario mayors and representatives of local business associations and chambers of commerce, plus a manager from Google and another from Shopify. As part of the program, the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario and the Ford Ontario government have partnered with Shopify in a \$58 million Digital Main Street program.

The federal government program Go Digital Canada channels retailers into the clutches of

Shopify to extend the company's reach among businesses seeking to build websites, where many will remain to pay ecommerce rent after their free three-month trial has ended. The program deepens Shopify's already existing connection with the federal government. Ottawa has also contracted Shopify to roll out a contact-tracing app in Ontario. Shopify is a multinational ecommerce giant, headquartered in Ottawa. In 2019, its revenues were \$1.58 billion, with more than one million businesses using its platform in 175 countries.

"Ottawa deepens ties to Shopify with new small-retailer support program during pandemic" is a recent *Globe and Mail* headline. The article says, "The federal government is partnering with Shopify Inc. to help small Canadian retailers set up online stores for 90-day trials, as the governing Liberals deepen their ties to Canada's most valuable publicly traded company."

Through these public-private partnerships governments promote particular private interests. Gone is any pretence of governments serving the common good and welfare of all Canadians equally. Governance through the cartel party system has come to mean, in practice, the representation and promotion in government of the most powerful private business interests and their rich owners.

The government rationale in partnering with Shopify is that the company's ecommerce platform already exists for retailers to buy and use and no alternative public infrastructure at nominal cost is possible. People should say *No!* to this and demand that public ecommerce platforms be built and made available for all to use in common as a public resource. This however does not enter into any official discussion because such a discussion is not allowed and never takes place. The only thing that makes sense to the ruling elite is for the rich to become richer so as to consolidate their control and power over all economic and political affairs. Privatize everything including ecommerce platforms and summer employment for youth is the banner of governments of the rich. The only dispute among the cartel parties and representatives is which private interests are to be favoured.



The *Globe* writes, "Behind the scenes, [Shopify's] chief executive officer, Tobi Lutke, has been regularly advising members of the government on digital affairs, including contact-tracing technology." In fact the relationship goes beyond "advising." Shopify's general manager Sylvia Ng has been named to lead the federal government's Go Digital Canada program. Ng remarks in the *Globe* article that Shopify and the federal government "have a shared mutual interest and commitment to Shopify supporting the digitization of small businesses." "Shared mutual interest" indeed, as Shopify has exploded into a global multi-billion dollar business with its owners joining the ranks of Canada's richest oligarchs.

The *Globe* writes, "The federal lobbyist registry shows that Shopify has lobbied the federal government 27 times since 2017, with 22 of the instances in the past six months" with federal ministers regularly meeting the company's leaders. "Shopify representatives met with both Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and [federal Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion] Mary Ng [no relation to Sylvia Ng] in early May, records show. They have also had separate meetings with chiefs of staff for Mr. Trudeau and [Minister] Ng since the pandemic began. [Shopify CEO] Lutke chaired the government's economic strategy table on digital industries in 2017.... Shopify has hosted Mr. Trudeau, Minister Ng and Innovation Minister Navdeep Bains at its offices for various events in recent years, and Mr. Trudeau spoke with Mr. Lutke onstage at the company's annual Unite conference in 2018."

The *Globe* says Ryan Nearing, a spokesperson for Minister Ng told the newspaper that the government partnership and connection with Shopify "builds our relationship with industry -- working collaboratively with the private sector on initiatives that will help Canadian entrepreneurs succeed."



As private interests seize control of governments, the public interest and common good become overwhelmed and suppressed. The narrow private interests of the most powerful oligarchs become the cornerstone of government policy. No discussion of an alternative can be found in the halls of power as the political system itself blocks the working people from representing themselves and giving their views on the direction of the country's economic and political affairs and taking actions that favour their interests.

The situation boils down to the necessity for political renewal. The working people are organizing and fighting in opposition to this striving of the rich and their political representatives to control everything. People are speaking out against the takeover of governments by rich oligarchs. The battle for democracy is on and all these measures to serve and pay the rich must be rescinded. The battle of democracy requires that working people vest decision-making power in themselves with new political forms and the fundamental aim to guarantee the well-being and security of all. The battle has begun with demands to *Stop paying the rich!* and *Stop serving their narrow private interests!*

The time is now to move on to an alternative with increased investments in social programs, public services and public enterprise with working people in control. The time is now for political institutions that ban private interests from usurping power and overwhelming the public interest. It can be done! It must be done!

Discussion on the Reopening of Schools

Teachers and Education Workers in Alberta Must Empower Themselves

- Kevan Hunter -

The Alberta government announced its plans for the September return to school at a press conference on July 21. The announcement was made as COVID-19 cases are rising significantly in the province, reaching numbers of new cases daily not seen since April. Despite this trend, it was announced that in-person classes will resume at the start of the 2020-2021 school year, under what are called "near normal" conditions, with some health measures to be put in place to control the spread of COVID-19. While schools are to have contingency plans in place in case it is decided to instead have students attend half-time or exclusively online, at present the expectation is that schools will be open to all students every day.

The government's guidelines for school re-entry include both requirements for school boards, and recommendations which are optional. Students and staff must perform hand hygiene (either washing or sanitizing) when entering and exiting the school and when entering each classroom. Schools must have procedures for increased cleaning of high-contact surfaces. Students and staff

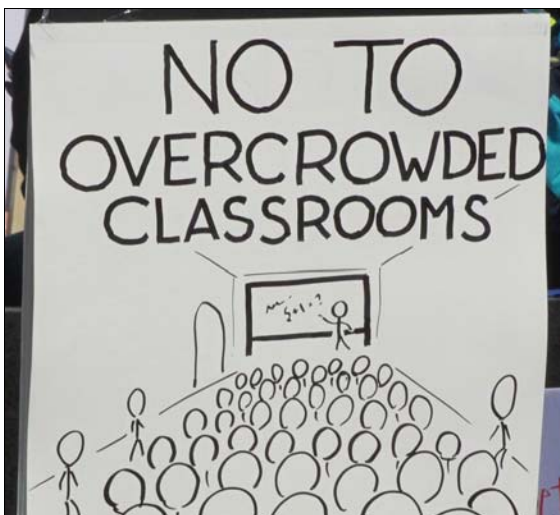
must check themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 and stay home if they have any. Rules exist around the consumption of food, procedures exist for when students become ill at school, and so on.[1]

What is absent from all these requirements and recommendations is input from the teachers and education workers who will have to implement the plan, as well as the funding needed to do so. It has become clear why the government simply stopped consulting the Alberta Teachers' Association in June -- the government clearly had no intention of addressing the concerns being raised of how the necessary measures can be implemented. To pretend that this can be done without the input of staff and the necessary funding is irresponsible in the extreme, and it is giving rise to great concern amongst teachers, parents and students. As education workers who make the schools function, teach the children, and maintain the schools, we must have a decisive say in planning return to school. The government's arbitrary pronouncements show it is refusing to put the interests of the children and youth and those who work to provide education in first place.



The existing problems of large class sizes, too few educational assistants and other supports for students with special needs, and a maintenance staff cut to the bone have become even more acute under pandemic conditions. There can be no safe return to this old "normal." Life cannot return to the way it was before the pandemic.

Secondly, rather than setting necessary standards, the regulations afford wide discretion. For example, they require that the number of students per bench on school buses should be limited "where feasible." In other words, so long as bus companies, which are private enterprises, claim it is not feasible to operate more buses with fewer students, they may continue with business as usual. While it is stated that drivers should have some sort of protection, there is no guidance on what that should be. As well, schools can consider staggering start and end times along with class changes, but again, there are no specifics.



Of concern to many is the fact that there are no requirements for physical distancing. Two metres is recommended, but where this is "not possible between desks the greatest possible spacing, is recommended." In this way, the reality of class sizes, which have been unacceptably large for years, is dismissed. In the vast majority of schools in Alberta, students will be nowhere near two metres apart. While not the norm, there are classrooms in Alberta where there is not room for each student to have a desk, yet the Premier speaks about "social distancing where possible." There are no limits on class sizes in Alberta and at a press conference following the announcement on school reopening, it was confirmed that this

would remain the case.

In explaining the decision to resume "near normal" classes, Premier Jason Kenney and Minister of Education Adriana LaGrange pointed to examples from other parts of Canada and the world where schools have been opened, as well as the experience of summer school classes in Alberta. But none of the examples are comparable. In BC, one of the places specifically mentioned, students in Kindergarten to Grade 5 were able to attend 50 per cent of the time and Grades 6 to 12 were able to attend 20 per cent of the time. Attendance was voluntary and many students continued to stay home. In Denmark, another example cited by the Premier, classes were divided in half to allow for physical distancing and entry times were staggered, neither of which are required by Alberta's plan. Summer school courses that have taken place in Alberta this month are subject to class size limits of no more than 15 students. When asked how classes of less than 15 can provide evidence of the safety of a full return in September, the Minister of Education was unable to provide a coherent answer.

How to guarantee the right to education within the context of a global pandemic is a serious question. The closure of schools in mid-March has had a negative impact on students in terms of lost academic learning, and also a lack of opportunities for socialization and supports normally provided by schools for the most vulnerable students. The public education system in a modern society plays a role not just in educating students, but also in looking after their overall well-being, as well as allowing parents to go to work. Teachers are well aware that for many students, online learning has been far from adequate to meet their needs.

By announcing that students will return to school in September without the active participation of teachers, educational assistants, custodial and maintenance staff in sorting out how this can be done safely, the Kenney government is declaring a return to business as usual. The decision comes from on high, and schools are supposed to just "make it work." If they cannot, it is evidence of the failure of public institutions and a pretext to place more of public education under the control of private interests. The government acknowledges there will be cases of COVID-19 in schools as a result of this approach. The immediate reaction of many parents is to weigh the risks and benefits of sending their children to school and make an individual decision. This suits Kenney just fine -- "choice" in education is one of the key pieces of the United Conservative Party agenda.



Teachers, education workers, parents and students are responding by affirming their support for public education. The Alberta Teachers' Association has enlisted an infectious disease specialist to assist members in understanding the latest science on COVID-19 and hosted a town hall on July 29. In some schools, teachers are establishing staff committees to sort out how the return to work can be as safe as possible. The fact that the Kenney government is unfit to govern is plain for all to see. It is up to us to build the alternative! Teachers, education workers, students and parents should go all out to develop discussion in and amongst schools and in neighbourhoods. Together we can get our bearings and find a way forward.

Note

1. The Alberta government guidelines can be found [here](#).

It Can Be Done Safely! It Must Be Done Safely!

- Laura Chesnik and Enver Villamizar,
Hosts of Education Is a Right Podcast -



At this time the people in Canada, the United States and other countries are being lined up pro or con on the reopening of schools: in-person versus online, full-time in class versus part-time in class. It is presented as a debate about the risks that people are willing to take with their children and the children of others versus the cost, in terms of children's mental and physical well-being, of being kept out of school. Behind this lies the argument that to maintain the profits of various industries schools must be reopened so parents can be freed up for work. There is a serious disconnect between the problems of public health, which affect everyone, and the direction of the economy, which is socially integrated but privately controlled. This is at the root of the way the discussion about reopening schools is becoming polarized.

It is becoming a very tense and personal debate where some who have no choice but to send their children to school in order to work are pitted against those who do have the choice or who cannot risk sending their children to school due to, for example, pre-existing health conditions of their children or themselves. However the problem does not pose itself as a matter of risk analysis or balancing risk and benefit, as is often talked about.

Public education and the participation of the population to accomplish the aim of defeating the pandemic are vital ingredients to stopping the spread of the virus and bringing it under control until a vaccine or mass treatment regimes are launched. In this vein, the opening of schools on a full-time basis can be an ingredient for stopping the virus and not just a "risk" to be balanced against another "risk." However, it can also contribute to spreading the virus more intensely and quickly, depending on the circumstances. A major issue is the need to have community transmission brought under control before schools reopen.

Dr. Mike Ryan, Executive Director of the World Health Organization's Health Emergencies Programme, said in this regard at a news conference on July 13, "If we suppress the virus in our society, in our communities, then our schools can open safely. The fact remains that when community transmission exists and when community transmission is intense, children will be exposed to that virus and children will be part of the transmission cycle. They will be exposed, some will be infected and they will infect others."^[1]

If community spread has been controlled then opening schools can contribute to maintaining its control and to educating students about how and where the virus spreads. On the other hand, if it has not been brought under control, opening the schools will inevitably contribute to speeding up transmission in the community.

In some provinces where reopening plans have been announced, there is deep concern that the

way in which governments are proposing to reopen schools is seriously unsafe, especially in places where the pandemic is not under control and the number of new cases is still rising. Responses such as "there is no completely risk-free approach" and that there are negative consequences to keeping children at home, while true, are not sufficient answers but are used to try to silence those who are raising serious concerns that need to be addressed. Parents are being put in a position where they have to make an individual choice between the serious risk of sending children into a classroom of 30 students with no physical distancing, as in the case of Alberta and now Ontario too, and the damage done when children miss out on learning and socialization with other students. Many are concerned that this approach will have long-term consequences for the education system, as parents leave the public system and choose alternate programs.

Education as a Right

Education is a right, and governments are duty-bound to provide that right with a guarantee under all conditions and circumstances. This means working out an approach that will meet the needs of all students and their families and that harmonizes the various individual interests with those of the collective interest. This includes taking into account families who have no alternative but to send their children to school five days a week as well as families where members of the household are at a higher risk of severe consequences if they contract COVID-19.

Putting the right to education along with actually stopping the pandemic in first place as the aim, and not just a policy objective, will open up prospects and bring forward viable solutions. A government with this as its priority would examine all the available options. Qualified teachers who have left the profession could be encouraged to return. What alternate spaces can be used to allow for smaller classes? Can empty offices or other suitable spaces be converted into classrooms? What transportation capacity exists in cities and how can it be expanded? How can nurses and other public health personnel be brought into schools? How can testing be done regularly and in a widespread manner? How can the education workers, students and parents be empowered to take control over the decisions that will affect their lives?



The point of this discussion is not to say that there is one way or a formula for doing this, but rather to overcome the stalemate that is emerging in which governments refuse to take measures that will actually eliminate the virus, and just tell us all to live with it, and make our own decisions on the basis of cost-benefit calculations like shrewd gamblers. Instead, with an aim of actually defeating the virus so we can proceed with re-establishing stability, we can view schools and the human beings who converge in them each day as an asset that can be put at the disposal of solving the public health problem confronting humanity.

It can be done safely! It must be done safely!

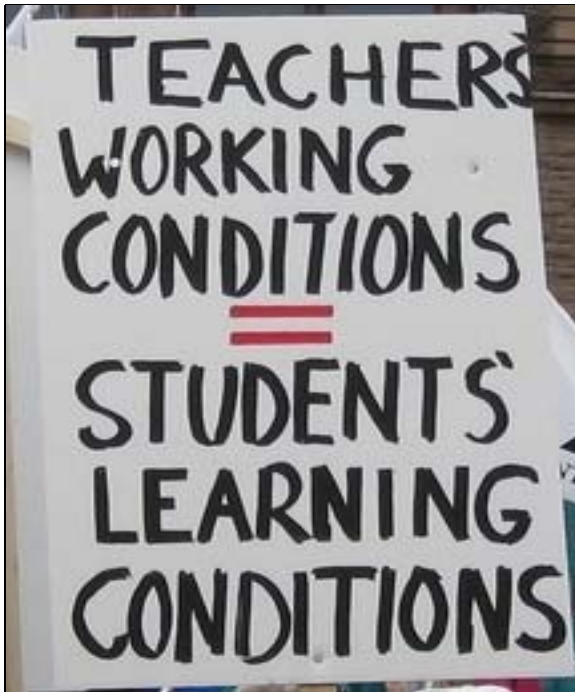
The Need to Start Afresh When Reopening Schools

When the pandemic hit Canada around mid-March, schools were shuttered in many jurisdictions from one day to the next. There was no time or space to educate the students and staff about the virus or proper protocols and behaviours that would contribute to preventing its spread. This was left to chance.

Without ensuring that the population understands the protocols so that they can implement them under different circumstances, it is impossible to truly slow down the virus's spread and ultimately defeat it. Those countries that made sure the public was fully informed about the protocols and why they were being implemented and then ensured the population was not left to fend for themselves have suppressed the virus. Vietnam is a good example, with three deaths and only a few hundred cases to date in a population of over 97 million. Those working in public health in Vietnam have explained that having the buy-in of the population to implement and follow the protocols was key in containing the virus, along with the whole of society approach toward stopping its spread.

In Canada, if the aim of reopening schools is taken up in a way to contribute to stopping the virus and affirming the right to education, it can play a very positive and activating role. For example, the World Health Organization has pointed out that schools can play a key role in quickly getting information and guidance out to the population. They can also serve as a hub for testing and immunization programs. If the aim is to stop the virus, schools could be used to identify as many cases as possible and to organize the implementation of the necessary public health measures to prevent further spread in the population. This may sound counter intuitive but in a situation where everyone is being left to fend for themselves, having students attend school, especially those who are not effectively able to just stay at home, is a way to make sure they are taken care of and learn how they and their families can protect themselves and others.

When and How to Reopen?



With this framework, one of the first things that must be tackled in reopening schools is when to open and how to know when the time is right. Different areas of Canada and different regions of provinces have varying degrees of community transmission. With stopping the virus as the aim, the reopening of schools has to be in keeping with the conditions. In an area with relatively high community transmission it would make sense to have students taught remotely until community transmission is brought under control and then physically reopen schools gradually with all the necessary safety protocols in place to ensure the virus stays under control.

Alongside this there must be measures to stop outbreaks in workplaces where these are still occurring. In one area of Southwestern Ontario, for example, which currently has the highest infection rate in the province, most new cases continue to be among migrant workers employed at agribusiness operations. Many of these workers, considered by the local public health unit to be high risk because of their working and living conditions, live together in bunkhouses on their employers' premises. A lot of others, however, live in community settings as do local workers who work alongside them. Without bringing these workplace outbreaks under control, the schools cannot fulfill the aim of stopping the virus effectively and may increase community spread should they open prematurely. What is needed is an all-sided approach.

In areas with little to no community transmission there is a better possibility of restarting school with all students, albeit with smaller class sizes and strict measures for hygiene. This requires investment and the empowerment of those who will be on the front lines so it can be done with

the full participation of those expected to implement the new protocols.

Testing, Screening and Follow-up

The next matter is testing. Schools can be used to assess the presence of the virus in the general population, especially among those who are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic and to do detailed contact tracing. Having this information will assist in adding to the body of knowledge about how the virus spreads through the population so as to better defeat it and manage future pandemics. If in the first week of school all students and staff are tested and then sent home until the results are available a snapshot of the school population can be established. Any positive cases can self-isolate along with their families, with full income and job maintenance supports provided for any affected staff, along with food delivery and daily check-ins by public health authorities. Repeat testing could then be done once a week or on another regular basis. Tests would have to be assessed in an expedited manner, possibly over weekends, to identify any new positive cases.

Following the first round of testing the main focus of the schools would be to educate students in the proper hygiene and distancing protocols with full information about the virus, how it spreads and why the measures are being taken. The first week of school would be training in implementing the measures and involve the students in working out how to implement them in the classroom and school so that they can be empowered to make the rules their own.

During these times, custodial staff would have to carry out intense sanitizing each evening.

Another aspect that is significant is whether or not to take temperatures of students at the schools. In many provinces authorities have not indicated that this is a requirement. One case study in a Chinese hospital showed that up to 41 per cent of infected children who were in the hospital for COVID-19 developed a fever. By regularly taking the temperature of students and staff and documenting it, immediate measures can be taken if a fever develops and long-term data can be collected on how the virus presents.

Masks and Ventilation

Whether to require masks in schools or not has become a matter of controversy. The debate does not centre around their usefulness, but rather whether children can wear them or not. This has a lot to do with the conditions in a school. Children can and should be educated about how to wear a mask properly and why. This will contribute to them informing their families as well about these matters. If proper investments are made to ensure ventilation, wearing a mask is very realistic. If schools are not properly ventilated and extremely hot, as is often the case, this will make wearing a mask for long periods of time very difficult and possibly even dangerous. Making sure schools have proper ventilation will ensure that children and staff will have the conditions required to wear masks. This may mean ensuring that windows can be opened. Many older schools don't have screens and opening windows would pose a new risk that wasps or bees could get in and cause serious allergic reactions if children or staff are stung. Screens can be installed to ensure that outside air is brought in.

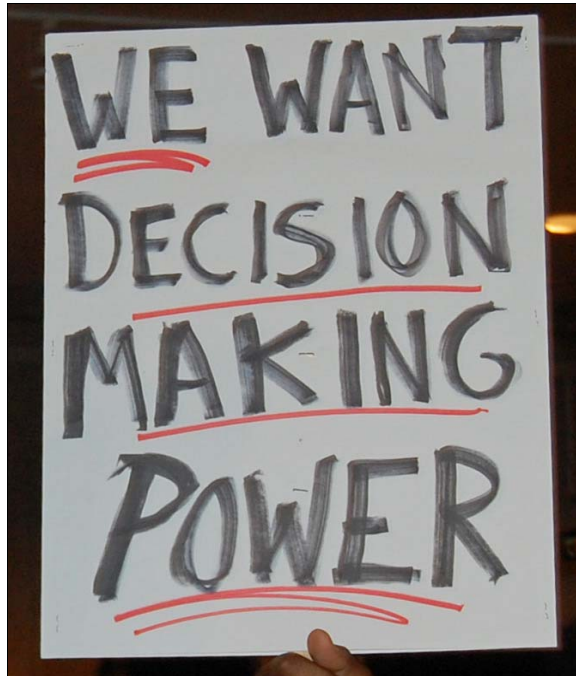
Empowered Health and Safety Committees

Each day worksite health and safety committees, either those established by law in places like Ontario, or those created by staff in areas where there are no mandated worksite committees, should meet to assess how things went and make any changes for the next day. On a weekly basis the representatives from each school would get together to share experiences and sort out problems. These meetings could be open for all to participate. Students should have representatives on the health and safety committees as it is their health and safety as well. They could be student council representatives where these councils exist or they could be students from

each grade level who volunteer and who act to help get information from and to their peers.

These committees should be empowered to oversee the reopening and to be the link between the school and the school board and local public health authorities. In all of this, students, staff and parents or guardians must be empowered to have a voice at their local school so they can work out how to achieve the aim.

In conclusion, the point to reiterate here is that if we can strictly control the virus where there is low community transmission school opening can contribute to keeping it low, educating the population on hygiene and other measures and gathering important data on how the virus spreads and where it spreads so that we can contribute to the body of scientific knowledge which can prepare us to prevent or stop future pandemics. However, if schools are opened on the basis of a calculated risk it will not inspire the population nor empower the people to participate in combating the pandemic. When and how to open schools has to be based on local conditions and on affirming the right of the youth to education and the right of workers to healthy and safe working conditions over which they exercise control.



Note

1. "WHO warns against using school reopenings as 'political football' in coronavirus debate," Noah Higgins-Dunn, CNBC.com, July 13, 2020.



Ontario's Plans for Reopening K-12 Education

On July 30 the Ontario government announced its direction to school boards across the province for the reopening of schools. A major issue with the plan is that it does not change or limit class sizes in elementary schools so as to contribute to students being able to physically distance from one another the minimum one metre recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).

At a press conference Premier Doug Ford said, "We're going to get our kids back to schools in a way that looks and feels much like it used to." He emphasized that the plan had the go-ahead from the province's Chief Medical Officer of Health and other "top public health officials" as evidence that it was based on sound medical and health considerations. "We're taking every step and every precaution to be ready for September," he said. "While we're facing an unprecedented situation, we're prepared for anything, armed with the best medical advice available to protect your child at school."

Ontario's Chief Medical Officer has also given the green light to a guidance that would permit infected workers to continue working in the agri-food sector in order to maintain the profits of these businesses. This situation causes a serious lack of confidence in public authorities and leads to a mistrust of government directives, as the refusal to take control of the outbreak in

agribusinesses and elsewhere is what is fueling continued community transmission in areas like Windsor-Essex.

The direction for reopening schools was made under Regulation 364/20, issued under the powers of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, and then continued under the government's omnibus *Reopening Ontario Act*. An important note is that Regulation 364/20 is specifically for Stage 3 of reopening; however, not all areas of the province have reached Stage 3. Windsor-Essex remains at Stage 2 as a result of the new cases that continue to be reported on a daily basis, especially in the agribusiness sector but also in the community at large. This is significant because nowhere in this plan is it indicated that school openings should depend on local conditions. This is a critical absence in the plan as it means school boards are being asked to carry on as if the reality of how and to what extent the virus is spreading in a given area is not the major guiding factor.



The Ontario government's plan for reopening has been made without the participation and input of the various unions and federations that represent teachers and education workers across the province, and without any input from students or parents' groups on any objective basis. In fact, in the name of "Reopening Ontario" the government is using emergency powers to impose its agenda to eliminate funding from education through an emphasis on high class sizes and "choice" in education that emphasizes online elective courses which have larger class sizes in high school.

The province originally issued a planning document for school boards on June 19 with guidelines that included limiting class sizes to 15 students wherever possible and relying on cohorting and distancing of students. The new direction states that since that time "public health data has changed considerably, with daily confirmed cases significantly declining" and now is in a position to direct protocols and procedures for the reopening of schools. So, the

government's plan now appears to use the overall drop in confirmed cases to change its requirement for classes of 15 students or less where possible. What the government is not explaining is that there is more evidence now about how the virus spreads through respiratory droplets of different sizes and the importance of physical distancing. There is also more evidence from other countries that decreasing class sizes to ensure physical distancing is a critical measure for preventing the spread of the virus in schools.

The government claims that school boards will follow public health advice and respect their collective agreements with teachers in preparing for the new year. However, the fact that there is no requirement for physical distancing between students in elementary schools, for example, actually goes against public health advice. This is a major flaw in the government's plan. It is not investing the funds required to ensure the guidelines for physical distancing can be adhered to with lower class sizes. Instead the responsibility is put on school boards to "follow public health advice" without having the means to implement one of its main tenets.

The new direction states that most schools in Ontario will open for students on September 8,

2020. School boards are expected to schedule three days of professional activity prior to September 8. All school-based staff, including supply/occasional teachers and other occasional staff, will be required to participate in a one-day paid health and safety training session prior to the opening of schools.

Elementary Schools

All elementary schools with students in Kindergarten to Grade 8 in the province will open for conventional in-person delivery of teaching and instruction, five days a week, with 300 minutes of instruction per day, remaining in one cohort for the full day, including recess and lunch. Against all recommendations by the WHO, there is no requirement for physical distancing by school boards as class sizes will be funded as they were prior to the pandemic.

Rotary subjects such as French or Music (where students are taught by a different teacher in their home classroom or go to a different classroom to be taught by a different teacher) will continue to be taught, and students will also be permitted to leave class for special supports with the caveat that direct and indirect contacts in schools for students should be limited to approximately 50. This caveat is not being mandated for staff -- a rotary teacher normally sees up to five different classes of students per day. This is an example of how the refusal to provide the investments required may be used to force teachers to come in contact with multiple classes each day, risking their health and that of their students.

In-person attendance for all students will not be mandatory. Parents can opt their children out of in-person delivery and have the learning done from home. Teachers are expected to provide online learning for students who stay home.

The government indicates that students in Grades 3 and 6 will not participate in the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessments in the 2020-21 school year. The rationale for not participating is not presented. The EQAO is the province's standardized test required for elementary students in grades 3 and 6. The test is administered in each class by the student's teacher. The test was also cancelled for the past academic year. The cancellation of the tests two years running itself is a savings, likely close to \$70 million dollars.

Secondary Schools

Secondary schools will be permitted to open with "conventional delivery," and enhanced health and safety protocols, apart from in 24 school boards designated by the province. These boards -- the biggest in the province -- will open on an adapted model, with class cohorts of approximately 15 students, on alternating schedules with at least 50 per cent of in-class instructional days. The designation of these school boards "is based on several factors that take into account the size of the school board, the number and size of the board's secondary schools, the size of secondary grade cohorts and whether the board is predominantly urban." A full list of the designated school boards can be found [here](#).

In designated schools, students will be assigned curriculum-linked independent work to do on days they are not physically in school and would, where possible, participate in live online learning with their teacher and classmates for a period of each school day. This would mean that teachers are expected to teach classes in person every day and teach online every day, something that is not possible without more staff and supports. School boards are being asked to organize their timetables over a one- to two-week period in order to "limit indirect and direct student contacts to approximately 100 students in the school; and [...] keep secondary school students in a maximum of two in-person class cohorts."

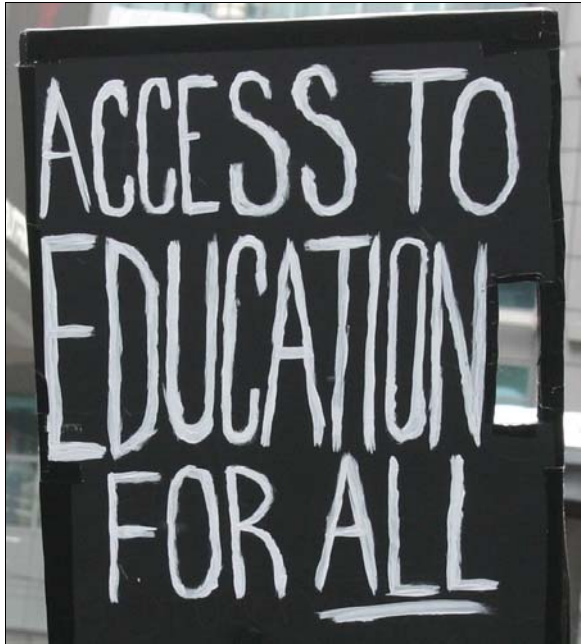
The government is also recommending -- not requiring nor funding -- that school boards plan that

students with special needs for whom adapted timetables or remote learning may be challenging, be able to attend school full-time. Again school boards are being left to fulfill their requirement to affirm the right to education of the youth without the necessary funding, which means that violating this right is being put into their hands so the government can pass the blame to them.

The "quadmester model" -- where students take two credits at a time, spending the morning on one subject and the afternoon on a second subject, with four segments to the school year -- is being presented by the government as a model school boards can follow to reduce mixing of students in four or eight classes as would normally be the case in semestered and non-semestered schools.

Another option presented is for smaller secondary schools to cohort grades of students and ensure that only students in a specific grade are in classes with each other.

The government indicates that cohorting of students in grades 11 and 12 will be more difficult than in 9 and 10 as students have more options for elective classes in upper grades compared to the standardized required classes in earlier grades. To address this, the government indicates that school boards are working to provide "the same range of other classes through remote learning," an indication that there will be an emphasis on elective courses being offered online in a "study hall model" in which students would be cohorted with the same group of students to take online courses. A class of students in study hall might take a range of courses during the same class period. It is important to note that while normal class averages in secondary school are funded at 23 students to one teacher, online courses are funded at a ratio of 30 to 1.



Students in high school are being encouraged to take online courses through TVOntario's Independent Learning Channel to fulfill their elective requirements. Last year, the Ontario government had planned to make it a requirement for students to take at least four courses online in order to graduate. This was eventually changed to two mandatory online courses, put in place prior to the pandemic. The pandemic is now being used to present online courses as an exceptional non-mandatory measure, when in fact it is something the government tried to bring in previously over widespread public opposition.

Graduating students will continue to be required to fulfill the 40-hour volunteer community involvement graduation requirement but can do so virtually.

Extracurricular Activities

No limitation is being placed on school boards offering clubs or school sports other than that they be done safely and respect physical distancing requirements.

Safety Protocols

All staff and students are to self-screen every day before attending school. Testing for symptoms will not be guaranteed and instead those with symptoms will be encouraged to attend a COVID-19 testing centre. There is however no requirement for staff and students feeling sick to remain at home, only that they "should" remain at home while waiting for test results.

School boards are being asked to train students in proper hand hygiene including the use of hand sanitizer.

Medical masks and eye protection (i.e., face shields) will be provided for all teachers and other school board staff. The government indicates that it is sourcing masks and other PPE. This indicates that school boards will be reliant on whatever company or companies the government gives the contract to for this equipment as Ontario has no public medical supply production operations.

Students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear masks indoors on school property. Students may wear their own non-medical masks, and non-medical masks will also be made available for students. Exceptions to the requirement to wear masks will apply.

Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks in indoor spaces.

Reasonable exceptions to the requirement to wear masks are expected to be put in place by schools and school boards.

The government says school-based staff who are regularly in close contact with students will be provided with all appropriate personal protective equipment. This refers to educational assistants who work with students who cannot follow or have difficulty following physical distancing protocols and who, in many cases, are already medically fragile.

The government says it is making a \$309 million investment to ensure a safe return to schools, including funding for public health nurses -- which is to be "phased in," masks and personal protective equipment, additional teaching positions, additional school custodians and enhanced cleaning supplies, additional supports for students with special education needs, additional health and safety training for school-based staff and increased funding for mental health supports.

Note

1. [Government guidance to school boards for reopening of school.](#)

COVID-19 Back-to-School Plan in Quebec

Since May 11, preschool and elementary schools located outside the Montreal Urban Community (MUC) have been open for all children. Students' attendance was not mandatory. Secondary schools have remained closed. Preschool and elementary schools located within the territory of the MUC were scheduled to reopen later in May, but the Quebec government kept them closed until September because of the continuing spread of COVID-19 in the region.

Starting in September, all preschools, elementary and secondary schools are reopening all across Quebec. It will again be compulsory for all students to physically attend school. The only exception is for students with a health condition that makes them vulnerable (e.g., chronic disease, severe immunodeficiency). They may choose not to return to school and instead be taught remotely (a doctor's note will be required). The announcement of the reopening of the schools was made by the Minister of Education Jean-François Roberge on June 16.

Preschool, Elementary School and Secondary I, II and III

All students in preschool, elementary school and Secondary I, II and III will attend class full-time,

This is to be done without modifying existing student/teacher ratios. This means that the teachers' demand for fewer students per class has been dismissed under the hoax that it is not necessary because classes will be divided into "bubbles" or subgroups with a maximum of six students in each. Students will work within these subgroups without distancing constraints. There will be a physical distancing rule of one metre between subgroups. A physical distancing rule of two metres will apply between students and staff.

While teachers will move between classrooms to teach their subject, students will remain in the same classroom. All subjects will be taught, including Physical Education and Health and Arts Education. There will be modified access to common areas, while respecting disinfection and distancing measures in gymnasiums, music rooms, cafeterias, etc.

Secondary IV and V

For the last two years of secondary school, two options are available to school service centres which replace the school boards which were abolished by Bill 40, legislation adopted under closure in February:

Option 1: 100 per cent of students present in schools full-time. This option is based on the model used for students in Secondary I, II and III, who are attending school full-time and are organized into subgroups of a maximum of six students. The physical distancing rules are the same. The students belonging to a subgroup work without distancing constraints. For the rest, the current physical distancing rules apply (1 metre between students and 2 metres between students and school staff). The staff move between rooms to teach a subject. There is modified access to common areas, while respecting disinfection and distancing measures (gymnasium, music rooms, cafeteria, science laboratories, etc.) The entire curriculum is taught.

Option 2: Modifying schedules and reducing time at school to allow for optional courses to continue. Optional courses are those specific to students who are preparing for college. Students have to be present in school as often as possible, but usually no less than 50 per cent of the time. Subgroups of a maximum of six students are maintained, with no distancing rules within the subgroups. There is compliance with the current physical distancing rules (one metre between student subgroups and two metres between students and school staff). All subjects are taught. Homework is assigned for days on which the students are not in the classroom. Online learning resources and pedagogical activities outside regular school rooms are emphasized.

Increased hygiene measures are being implemented (similar to the ones established in the preschool and elementary school sector outside of the Greater Montreal area on May 11) such as: handwashing at the beginning and end of the day, before and after meals, and before and after breaks and recess periods. Face masks are to be worn by preschool teachers and staff members working with students with disabilities and by staff in close contact with students during interventions. No general use of masks and face coverings is planned but reusable face coverings will be provided to school staff who request them. There will be increased janitorial services in schools. For those students who are eligible to be transported by school bus, a one metre distance between students will have to be maintained, which means one student per seat.

According to education workers and their organizations this back-to-school plan imposed by the Minister of Education on June 16 for the 1,216,791 students in Quebec's elementary and secondary school system raises more questions than it answers. "Imposed" is the right term, as the 107,000 teachers in Quebec and the two organizations that represent them -- the Federation of Teachers' Unions (FSE-CSQ) and the Autonomous Teachers' Federation (FAE) -- were not consulted on what it should be.

The main aspect of Minister Roberge's plan, "bubbles" or subgroups of a maximum of six

students, was communicated to union representatives the day before the announcement. Teachers were quick to point out that their experience in opening preschool and elementary schools outside the MUC should have been taken into account in the plan. The teachers, in the midst of the pandemic, went back to classroom teaching on May 11. Because attendance was not mandatory, class sizes were reduced by almost half, and everyone -- teachers, students and parents -- saw the benefits, both in terms of health protection and academic support. Teachers and school staff are calling for this positive experience to be reflected in the government's plan, especially since reducing the student/teacher ratio has been one of their demands for almost 20 years.

If funding and human and material resources are not forthcoming, it is not possible to talk about a safe return to school, concerning either students' and education workers' health or the quality of teaching, say teachers. The FAE had to issue a formal demand for access to data on reported cases of infection in schools that opened on May 11 outside the MUC. A government plan to reopen schools without the facts and without taking into account the direct experience of those who work with students every day demonstrates that the government is not serving the interests of public education, say the teachers.

75th Anniversary of the Use of Nuclear Weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Never Again! All Out to Make Canada a Zone for Peace

- Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) -

75 Years: Canada, Nuclear Weapons and the UN Ban Treaty



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

On the very sad anniversaries of the U.S. nuclear attacks against the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, on August 6 and 9, 1945 respectively, the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) expresses its deepest respects to the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and their families.

To this day, the U.S. claims that its actions on the morning of August 6, 1945, when it dropped an atom bomb on Hiroshima and on August 9 when it dropped another one on Nagasaki, were righteous, moral and proper, as if anything could justify committing such crimes against humanity.

The bomb the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima was made of uranium and killed about 140,000 people in the initial blast and ultimately more than 237,000 in total. The bomb it dropped on Nagasaki was made of plutonium and killed 85,000 people in the initial blast and eventually resulted in the deaths of more than 70,000 additional people due to exposure to radiation and injuries. Thousands suffered their entire lives, as have the generations that followed, from the crimes committed on those days.



Prior to this, on March 9, 1945, 334 B-29 bombers firebombed Tokyo with napalm in an operation called Meetinghouse. They killed more than 100,000 people that day and many more were injured.

These were unprecedented war crimes which had nothing to do with the fight against Japanese militarism. Japan was suffering defeats everywhere and its surrender was imminent. But irrespective of that, such war crimes and mass murder are impermissible no matter the excuse.

This mass murder of civilian populations in Tokyo and then Hiroshima and Nagasaki served as a threat to the peoples of the world, especially the Soviet Union, that the U.S. had the monopoly on the use of force. Following the Korean War in 1950, the U.S. engaged the world in "nuclear politics" to blackmail the peoples into doing what the U.S. wanted.

The U.S. considered the use of nuclear weapons to settle the Korean War and wipe out China, but instead declared their use "unthinkable" and "taboo." In this way, the U.S. claimed such weapons were nonetheless necessary to act as a deterrent and that this was the main factor for peace in the world.

The slogan was raised to "Ban the Bomb," while crucial work to establish the conditions required to preserve the peace was abandoned. Post-war demands for denazification and to develop a peace economy were lost within the clamour to "Ban the Bomb!"

The Soviet Union developed nuclear weapons initially to hold the U.S. in check. However, by the 1960s, instead of the peoples' cause for peace being made the centre of the foreign policy of the big powers, an arms race replaced the striving of the peoples of the world for peace. Expenditures on weapons soared. All five members of the UN Security Council also developed nuclear weapons and gave the green light for some of their allies to do the same.

The U.S. imperialists never accepted anything less than a nuclear advantage over all other countries, fueling the nuclear arms race and, along with other big powers, subjecting the world's peoples to nuclear blackmail.

The nuclear politics of the imperialist powers, especially those of the U.S. and British imperialists,



were fueled by their Cold War anti-communism and wars of aggression and coups d'état against the Greek, Iranian, Guatemalan, Korean, Vietnamese, Indonesian and other peoples of the world. This politics underscores the depths of depravity and criminality to which the U.S. is willing to sink to establish its domination and to which Canada both directly and through NATO has adhered ever since World War II.

The U.S. failure to render account for its criminal actions against the people of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and its reckless drive for domination under the pretext that it is the "indispensable nation" means that the threat they pose still looms large. The U.S. imperialists' feigned concern for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has always been tempered by the determination to retain strategic advantage and first-strike capacity in nuclear weapons over all other countries. The same is the case today. Every so often declarations are made about reducing nuclear stockpiles or leaving nuclear treaties but all of it is based on cynical calculations designed to contain the peoples' striving for peace, freedom and democracy under the sway of their nuclear politics.

Canadians' repudiation of nuclear weapons is such that in 1984 the U.S. had to remove its nuclear weapons from Canadian soil. Reports indicate that between 1963 and 1972 there were between 250 and 450 nuclear warheads on Canadian bases. Some 108 Genie missiles armed with 1.5 kiloton W25 warheads were present from 1963 to 1984 and Canada played a key role in the U.S. nuclear weapons program from its beginning, including in the weapons used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



Demonstration against nuclear weapons in Canada outside NATO ministerial meeting in Ottawa in 1963.

The U.S. expansion of its anti-ballistic missile (ABM) systems marked a dramatic escalation of the nuclear arms race as the aim of such systems is to neutralize nuclear and conventional missiles launched by other countries and maintain an advantage in any possible scenario, including where the U.S. exercises NATO's first-strike policy. Moreover, the weapons of war have become so sophisticated that in a few years they have rendered practically obsolete the ABM defence systems inside the U.S., in the Pacific, aboard naval craft in the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean, and in eastern Europe and even the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in south Korea.

A serious concern for Canadians remains the intentions of subsequent governments for Canada to contribute to the U.S. war preparations under the hoax of dealing with "changing technologies and threats."

Subsequent governments betray the call of *Hiroshima and Nagasaki Never Again!* by continuing to collaborate with the U.S., including by allowing testing of nuclear weapons delivery systems

and permitting vessels and aircraft carrying nuclear weapons inside Canadian territory.



On the occasion of this solemn anniversary, CPC(M-L) calls on Canadians to stand against the U.S. imperialist war preparations and Canada's integration into the U.S. imperialist war economy and its appeasement of U.S. aggression and wars.

CPC(M-L) calls on Canadians to militantly oppose Canada's participation in NATO and U.S. criminal sanctions' regimes.

Repudiation of the crimes at Hiroshima and Nagasaki contributes to the profound sentiment of Canadians to Make Canada a Zone for Peace. Let us make the slogan *Hiroshima and Nagasaki Never Again!* a reality by uniting in action to build the organizations required to establish an anti-war government that makes Canada a Zone for Peace!



Oppose Spending Another \$19 Billion to Support U.S. Aggression

- George Allen -



The Justin Trudeau Liberal government plans to spend \$19 billion buying 88 fighter jets from a not-yet-chosen foreign war contractor to replace Canada's aging CF-18 fighter fleet. This works out to about \$216 million per aircraft. The war contractors had until the end of July 2020 to submit their bids, a deadline first extended from May 2019 to March 2020, then to June 2020. So far Boeing (U.S.), Lockheed Martin (U.S.), and Saab (Sweden) have entered the competition. The Trudeau government is expected to announce the chosen contractor by 2022, with the first aircraft delivered by 2025. On July 24 vigorous protests against the purchase plan were held at 18 MPs' offices across Canada.

Since entering the jet age, the Canadian air force has never flown a jet-powered fighter aircraft designed outside of the United States. The CF-86 Sabre, the CT-133 Silver Star, the CF-101 Voodoo, the CF-104, the CF-116 Freedom Fighter and the CF-188 (CF-18 Hornet) all came from the U.S. While many of these were license-built in Canada, the designs came from giant U.S. war contractors like Lockheed Martin, Boeing and McDonnell Douglas. The intention to keep Canada's own fighter design business alive with the amazingly innovative CF-105 Avro Arrow met a sad

end in 1959 with the Diefenbaker government's secretive cancellation of the project, likely due to U.S. pressure. Canada has been tightly tied to the U.S. for fighter aircraft ever since.



The proposed jet purchase, which is in essence another giant pay-the-rich scheme, has already been marked by hypocrisy. When the Harper government was in power the Liberal opposition railed against its plan to buy Lockheed Martin-made F-35 fighter jets without competitive bidding. Once elected, Liberal government officials proposed that Canada buy another U.S.-built plane without competitive bidding, the Boeing Super Hornet. Now the bidding process has been added to try to give the purchase plan a façade of legitimacy.

Throughout this farce the phrase "joint continental defence with the U.S." has been repeated, making it clear that the principles guiding Canada's next fighter jet purchase have to do with the needs of the U.S. imperialists, NATO and NORAD, not the needs of the people of Canada.

Whatever contractor wins the bidding, the critical point is that it is the Canadian people who must exercise real control over our fighter jet supply and air defence. It is a matter of sovereignty. When it comes to Canada's integration into the U.S. military apparatus, it is well known who gives the orders; the North American Air Defence Command (NORAD) has a U.S. commander and a Canadian deputy commander. Important decisions regarding the defence of Canada should be made by the Canadian people, not U.S. monopolies and imperialist institutions. The Liberals and their U.S. masters are using fearmongering about the need for joint defence against a non-existent threat from Russia or from "rogue states" to claim that not buying new fighter planes will somehow be a threat to Canadian sovereignty, when it is exactly the opposite that is the case.

The truth of the matter is that it has been shown in practice time and time again that the U.S.-NATO-NORAD conception of air defence is not defence at all but aggression -- attacking any country which exerts its own independence and refuses to knuckle under to imperialist dictate. Since the Second World War Canadian fighter jets have not once "defended Canadian sovereignty." Instead, they have participated in the U.S.-led aggression and bombing of the sovereign nations of Iraq, Serbia, Libya, and Syria. Asserting the "right" to conduct preemptive strikes and the actual bombardment of cities are key features of the doctrine of all three recent U.S. presidents; Bush, Obama and Trump.

Reducing questions of Canada's defence to a phony argument over "which jet" is another indication that the Liberals have no intention of defending the security of the Canadian people but rather of placing Canadians in serious danger. The 1957 Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line, built by the U.S. on Canadian soil to detect enemy bombers far enough away for the U.S. to retaliate, is a perfect example. The ludicrous scenarios of a fictitious Russian air attack, dredged out of Cold War comic books, have been designed to sow confusion among the Canadian people and smash their opposition to warmongering, and have no basis in fact. On the contrary, the source of any threats to Canadian sovereignty has always been our so-called ally, the U.S.



The Liberal government is pushing for further integration into the U.S. war machine precisely at a time when Trump and the U.S. ruling elite are organizing to launch further aggression against the world's people. The path is clear. Our real security lies not in buying the "right" U.S. jet fighter to further enrich the U.S. war monopolies and support U.S. aggression but in standing as one with the world's peoples in defence of their right to oppose U.S. imperialist preparations for another world war. Canada should get out of NATO and NORAD and all aggressive military bodies. Canadians must continue to fight for an anti-war government that will say no to foreign control of Canada's air defence, end interference in the affairs of sovereign countries, and become a staunch force for peace in the world.



Day of Action: "Strike for Climate Peace, No New Fighter Jets"

On July 24, there were 18 demonstrations held in 13 cities across Canada for the National Day of Action, "Strike for Climate Peace, No New Fighter Jets" organized by Voice of Women for Peace, World Beyond War and other anti-war activists demanding that the Canadian government abandon its plan to buy 88 fighter jets.

Halifax, NS



Montreal, QC



Ottawa, ON



Toronto, ON



Hamilton, ON



Collingwood, ON



Waterloo, ON



Kitchener, ON



Regina, Saskatchewan



Vancouver; Victoria BC



Sidney, BC



(Photos: TMLW, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, K. Winkler, Brent Patterson, Hamilton Coalition to Stop the War)

**Government Hoists Flag of Vietnam's Defeated Colonial
Powers on Parliament Hill**

**CPC(M-L) Condemns Government's Promotion
of Division and Hatred**



Shameful ceremony held on Parliament Hill, July 30, 2020 to mark "Journey to Freedom Day."

The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) unequivocally condemns the ceremony held on July 30 on Parliament Hill to mark the reactionary and illegitimate "Journey to Freedom Day." The event was postponed from April 30, a date that has long been celebrated in Vietnam and the world over as Vietnam's Reunification Day. The ceremony included the raising of the old colonial flag of the reactionary and collaborationist regime that the Vietnamese people deposed in 1975.

On that day CPC(M-L) put out a statement which reads as follows:

This is an unacceptable event that seeks to rewrite the historic verdict of the U.S. defeat in Vietnam, undermine relations with Vietnam and sow divisions among Canadians of Vietnamese origin today.

The Government of Canada calls April 30 "Journey to Freedom Day"[1] to portray all Vietnamese who live in Canada as those who have escaped tyranny. It is as self-serving as it is false. In fact, some of the people escaped because of the crimes they committed on the side of the U.S. imperialists. They are the ones behind the promotion of the flag of the old colonial regime.

The ceremony seeks to cover up that it was not the communists who divided Vietnam, dropped agent orange and committed all the other crimes against the people. It was the U.S. imperialists.[2]

Hoisting the old colonial flag on Parliament Hill is for purposes of giving free rein to the hatred of these dregs from the U.S. imperialist regime in Saigon. The rendering in Vietnamese of "Journey to Freedom" translates back into English as "national hatred day." It goes against everything Canadians value and stand for.

Canada has no business enabling attempts to foment hatred and anti-communism against the Government of Vietnam and to divide Canadians on this basis.

This is a time when monuments and symbols which exalt slavery and genocide are being brought down all over the world, including in Canada whose own history and foundation are tainted with countless acts of genocide, slavery and inhuman treatment which continues to this day. It is beyond the pale to hoist flags which exalt the use of napalm and agent orange against the

Vietnamese people under the hoax that it can be justified in the name of "freedom from communist tyranny." And this is done on the eve of the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States which were crimes against humanity of like kind, also committed in the name of freedom, peace and democracy.

Furthermore, those who support this so-called Journey to Freedom Day are the same forces behind the construction of an anti-communist memorial in Ottawa which is a pathetic attempt to rehabilitate Nazi collaborators as freedom fighters, to promote hatred of the Soviet Union and Soviet peoples who bore the brunt of the sacrifices made by the peoples of the world, including many Canadians, to achieve peace, freedom and democracy during World War Two, as well as to oppose all those who fought for national liberation and to decide their own way of life without outside interference.

Canada and Vietnam have nearly 50 years of ongoing diplomatic relations. How does it strengthen the bonds of friendship between our two countries and our two peoples to exalt symbols of colonial oppression and genocide? How does it bring honour to Canada at home or abroad?

Canadians from coast to coast, from all walks of life, stood second to none along with peace- and justice-loving peoples the world over, in opposing the U.S. aggression against Vietnam. Many Canadians came to this country to dodge the draft or escape the punishment meted out to those who deserted the U.S. armed forces because their conscience would not permit them to commit the crimes which they were ordered to carry out by the U.S. against the Vietnamese people.

CPC(M-L) expresses deep regret that the Government of Canada thinks it has the right to hoist the flag which represents the regime that collaborated with the U.S. warmongers in their war of aggression against Vietnam.

Let us unite with the people of Vietnam and build genuine friendship between Canada and Vietnam!

Notes

1. At the instigation of reactionary elements who collaborated with the U.S. aggressors in Vietnam and were given refuge in Canada when they escaped, the government of Stephen Harper declared April 30 "Journey to Freedom Day" despite the formal protest of the Government of Vietnam and its embassy in Ottawa, along with the expressed opposition of many Canadians who supported the Vietnamese people during the Vietnam war, including those who found refuge in Canada from the U.S. draft and crimes against humanity it was committing in Vietnam. Canadians continue to hold dear the relations of friendship between the peoples of Canada and Vietnam.

2. The anti-communists who promote the yellow flag collaborated with the U.S. regime, themselves committed crimes against the people, and then went all out to save themselves, calling their exit "a journey to freedom." Some were major drug lords or were those who trafficked women and children and conciliated with heinous crimes against the people.

(Photo: Senator Ngo official twitter page)



NO to the Promotion of Hatred! YES to the Promotion of Friendly Relations with the People of Vietnam!

- Canada Vietnam Friendship Society -

The spectacle held today, July 30, 2020, on Parliament Hill to mark the occasion of so-called "Journey to Freedom" day is shameful. It is promoted to Canadians as honouring the "incredible contributions that Vietnamese refugees have now made to building our great country" but the Vietnamese slogans on the banners of those assembled literally promote hatred against all that Vietnam is today: its people, its government, its social and economic system. "Journey to Freedom" is rendered in Vietnamese as "Tuởng niệm Quốc Hận 30-4." It refers to April 30 which is the day when National Liberation of Vietnam is celebrated in Vietnam and around the world. The rendering in Vietnamese of "Journey to Freedom" translates back into English as "national hatred day."



Click to enlarge.

Slogans of hatred do not belong here. The yellow flag of the former colonial occupation regime should not be hoisted on Parliament Hill by the collaborators and agents of that foreign imposed colonial regime. It is as disgraceful and insulting as it would be to fly the flag of Vichy France or the Confederate flag on Parliament Hill.

The Canada-Vietnam Friendship Society calls on the Government of Canada to stop hosting this event, stop inciting divisions and conflict within the Canadian-Vietnamese community and stop encouraging, funding and making Parliament Hill available to those who promote hatred against Vietnam.

"Journey to Freedom" Day was established in 2015 by the government of Stephen Harper. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was postponed by three months this year to July 30.

For more information, please contact: media@c-vfs.com.
Visit the Canada Vietnam Friendship Society webpage [here](http://www.cvfsc.com).

(July 30, 2020)

Statement by Canadian-Born Vietnamese Youth

Andy Tran is a member of the Toronto Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines. He can be contacted at info@c-vfs.com.

I am a Canadian-born Vietnamese youth. My parents fled southern Vietnam in the early 1980s. My parents raised me to believe that the three-striped flag of South Vietnam was the only genuine flag of Vietnam. South Vietnam, the puppet regime of the United States raised from 1955-1975 to resist our people's revolutionary movement, was the only genuine Vietnam to them.

For a long time, I didn't understand this conflict. I didn't know why my family hated the one-star flag of Vietnam so much. I didn't know why all the pagodas we attended flew this flag when the

official flag of Vietnam is something different.

Now, having studied the history of my people and our long struggle for freedom, I understand why that three-stripe flag is flown here in Canada. I understand which people fly it, and why. That flag represents a class of Vietnamese who benefitted more from the U.S. puppet regime of South Vietnam than [they would from] a country built upon principles of independence, sovereignty, and a socialist perspective.

Those people quickly fled when the tide turned against them, and here they are now, fifty years after losing the war, flying the flag of a failed U.S. puppet regime that barely benefitted them compared to the horrors it ravaged against the masses of our people.

The fact that the three-stripe flag of the failed U.S. puppet regime is being flown in Canada's capital city doesn't surprise me. It does outrage me, as does the one-sided narrative that justifies ceremonies like the Journey to Freedom Day. I find it two-faced and shameful for Canada to openly promote a division among my people while at the same time benefitting from its political and economic relationship with Vietnam. My people deserve the unity we fought for, and we deserve for our history to be shown truthfully. We deserve our flag.



Vietnam's official flag is proudly raised on National Reunification Day on April 30, 2020 at the historic site Hien Luong-Ben Hai.



Vietnam's official flag is raised in Hanoi, April 30, 2020. (VNA)

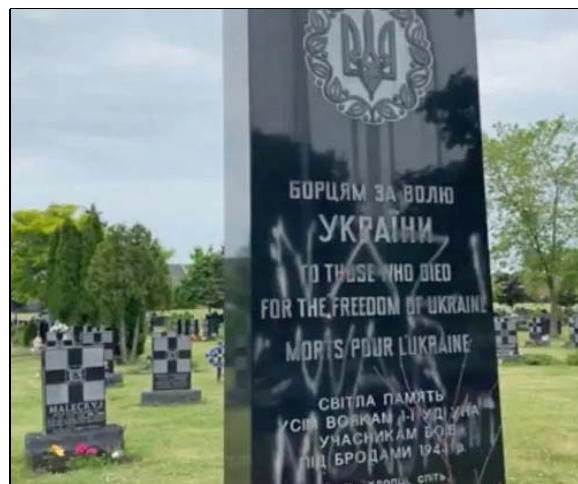
Canadian People Oppose Nazi Memorials

- Dougald MacDonald -



On July 6, unknown individuals spray-painted "Communism will win" and three hammer and sickle symbols on a barrier at the future Ottawa site of the long-delayed so-called "Victims of Communism Memorial." Various reactionaries howled that the spray-painting was a hate crime which is ludicrous and a feeble attempt to obscure that the proposed memorial itself is the hate crime. In fact, it is based on the Hitlerite definition of communism as the main enemy of humanity that must be destroyed. Thus while it purports to memorialize so-called victims of communism, the memorial is actually a monument honouring the Nazis and fascists who fought against the communists, the same communists who led the liberation of the world from the Hitlerites and their allies and who have made many other indelible contributions to a better world.

Around June 21, in a similar incident, the words "Nazi war monument" were spray-painted on a cenotaph located in Oakville, Ontario's St. Volodymyr Ukrainian cemetery, commemorating soldiers in the 14th Waffen-SS division. (There is also a statue dedicated to the 14th Waffen-SS Division in an Edmonton cemetery.) The post-war military tribunal at Nuremberg declared the Waffen-SS, which was ultimately under the command of Heinrich Himmler, a criminal organization. However, in 1950, at Britain's request, Canada still let in almost 2,000 members as immigrants, without regard to their sinister backgrounds. In 1985 a so-called commission to investigate war criminals in Canada was launched by the Mulroney government. In the end, the ridiculous conclusion of the Deschênes Commission investigation was that not a single war criminal was successfully prosecuted, even though a number of them could actually be identified by name.



Oakville regional police at first declared the June 21 spray painting of the cenotaph to be a "hate

crime" but had to apologize when questioned by human rights exponents as to how opposition to Nazism could be considered a hate crime. On Twitter, the local police chief agreed with a post calling for the monument to be removed. Oakville Mayor Rob Burton stated: "It is personally repugnant to me, I have family who died fighting Nazis. If Ontario laws permitted me to have it removed it would have been gone 14 years ago."

The Guardian, in a July 17 article about the Oakville cenotaph, noted clear connections between the Waffen-SS and war crimes: "The 14th Division was made up of Ukrainian nationalists who joined the Nazis during the Second World War. Members of the division are believed to have murdered Polish women and children, as well as Jewish people." Numerous researchers validate those assertions.[1]



In Alberta, two statues commemorating Ukrainians who fought with Nazi Germany's forces exist in Edmonton. One of them, partially funded by taxpayers, is of Nazi collaborator Roman Shukhevych, erected in the mid-1970s. On December 9-10, 2019, unknown individuals spray painted "Nazi scum" on the Shukhevych statue.

Previously on November 15, 2019, Daniel Moser had provided important facts on Shukhevych in the *Alberta Jewish News*: "After his formal association with Nazi Germany had ended, Shukhevych's anti-Semitic murders continued. In 1943 declaring independence, but maintaining allegiance to Nazi Germany, Shukhevych was supreme commander of the newly formed Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), where creating an ethnically Ukrainian country was

priority one. The UPA was responsible for the mass killing of 60,000-100,000 ethnic Poles, thousands of Jews, and many more."

Of course, those who want to falsify history and whitewash their own crimes deny all this and insist on venerating Shukhevych as a freedom-fighting hero.

Another significant and related prior incident was the March 2017 outing of Deputy Prime Minister Freeland's grandfather Michael Chomiak as a Nazi collaborator and propagandist in wartime Poland from 1940-45. Much could be said about this.[2] What is important to note here is that Freeland covered up the fact that he was a collaborator and that she still calls him a "freedom fighter." When questioned, she chose to deflect and instead blamed the Russians for supposedly spreading fake news to derail Canadian democracy. What was even more nauseating was how a vocal cabal of journalists, professors, and pundits of various kinds issued apologies for her. Avoided at all costs was the opportunity for Canadians to assess what kind of government Freeland's Liberals stand for, whether this is the democracy Canadians want, and if it is the democracy they shed their blood for fighting in World War II against the Nazis and their collaborators.

The Ottawa "Victims of Communism" memorial project which the Liberals are so gung ho to complete was said to have been first proposed to the Harper government in 2008 when Jason Kenney, then Harper's Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and now Premier of Alberta, was approached by Czech Ambassador Pavel Vosalik. Not coincidentally, in 2009, Canada's House of Commons unanimously adopted a resolution to designate August 23 as the national day of

remembrance in Canada for the victims of Communism and Nazism. It should also be noted that the U.S. completed its own anti-communist memorial in 2007, dedicated by war criminal George W. Bush. Due to continued opposition from the people, the Canadian memorial has been repeatedly delayed, as well as scaled back both in size and location. Following the fall of Harper in 2015, the Trudeau government revived the project and a design was chosen in June 2018. The memorial is currently being built in the architect's studio and will be shipped to the site in the Garden of the Provinces and Territories when completed, forever tainting that Garden if its placement there is permitted.

The shadowy group behind the memorial is known as Tribute to Liberty (TTL), and is headed by Alide Forstmanis, aided by her husband Talis. TTL's links to Latvian collaborators with the Nazis and their hatred for the communists and Jews are verifiable. During the Nazi occupation of Latvia, Talis Forstmanis' father Fricis was technical editor at an anti-Semitic, anti-communist publishing house called *Zelta abele* and like Freeland's grandfather Michael Chomiak he worked for a Nazi newspaper called *Tevija* (Fatherland). *Tevija* was the only paper published in Nazi-occupied Latvia from July 1941 to October 1944. The cover of the first issue bore a photo of Adolf Hitler, with the statement, "Henceforth Latvia is free from communists and Jews." Subsequent issues featured anti-Semitic, anti-Soviet and anti-communist propaganda and quotations from Hitler and Goebbels. Today, Talis Forstmanis is treasurer of the Canadian branch of Daugavas Vanagi, an organization founded by and for Latvian veterans of the Waffen-SS who fought for Nazi Germany and escaped to areas of Nazi Germany later controlled by the U.S. Now Latvia is a centre of Europe's neo-Nazi revival.

TTL at first attempted to raise money from the people of Canada to fund the vile memorial project but this was an utter failure due to opposition from Canadians from all walks of life. The whole fund-raising campaign was an abject failure even though proponents tried to claim that Canadians were all for the memorial. In the end, the project was so unpopular that the Government itself started donating money to keep it going. Cost for the memorial planned by the Harper regime was originally projected at more than \$5 million, then cut to \$3 million in 2015. The Trudeau government cut the cost even further and then handed over \$1.5 million to the private project, as well as another \$500,000 "for design." TTL is still unable to raise popular support and on its website it is begging for donations.

The final design for the memorial resulted from a competition among five architects which ended in June 2018 with the selection of a group headed by Toronto architect Paul Raff.

It is important to ask the question, who are the so-called victims of communism that the monument in Canada will supposedly commemorate? Will they include all those so-called nationalists and "freedom fighters" who actively collaborated with the Nazis in the occupied countries to fight against the Soviet Union and who massacred civilians in those countries during the anti-fascist war? Will they include Hitler, Goebbels, Himmler, and their minions, who slaughtered more than 50 million people in the name of opposing the "Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy" only to be soundly defeated in the end by the Soviet Union, the communist resistance, and the occupied peoples? Or will the so-called victims remain nebulous and unnamed but consist simply of the standard list of ever increasing fictitious numbers that populate the tirades of Trump, Johnson, and others of their ilk?

The "victims of communism" memorial proposed for Canada takes its cue from that already built in the U.S. It is part of the ongoing campaign in Europe and North America that is aimed at falsifying history, blocking society's path to progress, preventing democratic renewal and concealing and continuing the crimes of Anglo-American imperialism against the working class and peoples of the world. This is not just an attempt to build a single memorial but an organized campaign to reverse the people's verdict which long ago condemned Nazism, fascism and militarism to the dustbin of history. The people who should be commemorated by a monument in

Canada are the countless millions of victims of cold war democracy worldwide who have been slaughtered by those in power to protect and advance their anti-people interests. It is certainly not in the interests of either the Canadian or world's people to have monuments to the alleged "victims of communism" which are cynically designed to cover up a despicable revanchist attempt to rehabilitate avowed enemies of the peoples.

Notes

1. See Littman, Sol, *Pure Soldiers or Sinister Legion* (Toronto: Black Rose, 2003).
2. See entire issue of *TML Weekly*, March 18, 2017.



No Racist and Colonialist Monuments Protest



On July 18 a protest was held in downtown Toronto calling for the removal of colonialist and racist monuments. Statues of Egerton Ryerson, one of the main architects of the residential school system; Canada's first Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, who implemented a policy of land theft and starvation to quell Metis dissent; and King Edward VII, which was given to Toronto in 1969 by India, in the process of getting rid of reminders of the days of British rule, were covered in pink paint.

Police surrounded and arrested three protestors. They were held for nearly 16 hours, while protestors outside 52 Division demanded their release. All three protestors were denied legal counsel and one was denied medication for hours. They all refused to sign papers imposing conditions on them.

Support actions and protests of symbols of colonialism and racism continue.



Supporters outside 52 Division demand release of detained activists, July 18, 2020.



No More Criminalizing Black Dissent, No More Monuments to Racists and Racism

- Artists in Support of Black Lives -



An Open Letter in Support of Black Lives Matter Toronto, the Arrestees and Artists

We, a group of artists, arts administrators, curators and arts professionals, are writing to express our concern and anger over the criminalization of peaceful protest, artistic intervention, dissent and Black action. Black Lives Matter Toronto recently organized a peaceful intervention to call attention to the ways that Canadian society pays tribute to racism and colonial violence through the statues of Egerton Ryerson, John A. Macdonald, and King Edward VII. This protest was met with an egregious amount of police harassment and intimidation tactics.

It resulted in over 20 police officers kettling three of the attendees, arresting them, and holding them for over 16 hours without explanation, or confirmation. Access to legal counsel was not provided for over five hours. The artists were detained without access to medical attention and without vital medication. When questioned, the police misled the public and changed their story multiple times throughout the day. BLM called for a 6:00 pm rally to call for the release of the

artists. At 5:24 pm the police issued a press release stating that two out of the three artists had been released. BLM members were unable to reach their 'released' colleagues. After the press left, some time around 8:00 pm, the police changed their story and stated that all three were still detained.

The statues are unquestionably racist. Egerton Ryerson was a principal architect in the development of the Residential School System in Canada, a genocidal system that terrorized generations of Indigenous children and their families. He also supported segregated schooling that separated Black children from white children.

Sir John A. Macdonald created and promoted genocidal policies, and oversaw the intentional starvation of Indigenous communities, resulting in the deaths of more than 10,000 people between 1800-55. Macdonald had close ties to the Maafa, commonly referred to as the slave trade, in the Americas and was a vocal supporter of the pro-slavery Confederacy during the American Civil War.

The statue of King Edward VII was a colonial monument originally installed in a public square in Delhi, India. Removed by the Indian people after Independence, it was brought to Canada by a private interest, and was installed, even against the wishes of the then City Council, in one of Toronto's most well-loved public spaces.

Artistic interventions on monuments have a long and well established history. Monuments are not symbols of history but rather, symbols of intentional emphasis. Artistic responses to the existence of these monuments is both protected political speech and a recognized artistic practice.

We affirm our position that these monuments honour legacies of racial violence, segregation and genocide, and that their presence in public space emphasizes that the lives and histories of Black and Indigenous people are not valued in spaces that we all share. These monuments are physical embodiments of state-sanctioned systems of oppression and contribute to the ongoing endangerment, imprisonment and murder of Black and Indigenous people.

These monuments must be removed. We affirm that the action by Black Lives Matter Toronto and their allies on Saturday was an artistic intervention to bring attention to and disrupt these narratives of white supremacy. There is no place for these monuments in our society and criminalizing those that attend protests calling for their removal and the defunding of police reinforces the deep rooted anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism in the Toronto Police force.

Together with BLMTO we demand:

- a removal of these monuments
- an end to criminalizing of peaceful protest and an end to the continued surveillance of BLMTO
- all charges be dropped against those detained in connection with the intervention: Jenna Reid, Danielle Smith and Daniel Gooch
- an immediate reduction of the existing \$1.1 billion Toronto police budget by a minimum of 50% (as opposed to the 10% cut proposed by Toronto city councillors)
- The establishment of Black and Indigenous-led, Mad- and disability-informed mental health crisis support and response teams

Black Lives Matter Toronto are people, mostly young people, who choose to engage because they believe in the values of decency, democracy and justice. We demand leadership in a critical moment that is evolving into a social justice movement -- one that is truly reflective of communities of care, and that is grounded in integrity, love, compassion and true equality, for all.

To add your name as a signatory to this letter please email artistsXforXblackXlives@gmail.com.

To see full list of signatories [click here](#).

(July 23, 2020)



30 Years of the São Paulo Forum
Message of Greetings of CPC(M-L)



The São Paulo Forum was founded in July 1990 when revolutionary and progressive parties from Latin America and the Caribbean came together in Brazil to discuss the new international scenario after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequences of the neo-liberal policies that a majority of the region's governments had been pushed to adopt. Fidel Castro and former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva played a decisive role in its development.

On this occasion, TML Weekly is posting the message of greetings sent to the Secretariat of the São Paulo Forum by National Leader Anna di Carlo and Secretary of the Department of International Affairs of the Central Committee Claude Brunelle, as well as the speech delivered by Miguel Díaz-Canel, President of the Republic of Cuba, on July 28 at the virtual Meeting of Leaders in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the founding of the São Paulo Forum.

Message of Greetings of CPC(M-L)

The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) sends revolutionary greetings and congratulations to the São Paulo Forum on the occasion of its 30th anniversary.

Today, more than ever, the struggle of our peoples for sovereignty, well-being and peace requires the development of a strong anti-imperialist movement, in which all peoples, based on unity in action, develop an all-sided struggle against the common enemy represented by U.S. imperialism and its national and international allies.

Thirty years ago, thanks to the vision of Comandante Fidel and the initiative of President Lula, it was possible to break with the imperialist assertion that the end of history had been reached with the fall of the USSR and the socialist bloc in Eastern Europe. From this unwavering statement that there are alternatives for the creation of a better world, a formidable energy arose from all the revolutionary, progressive and democratic forces in Our America to make the aspirations of the peoples to exercise their sovereignty, raise their well-being and to realize peace, prevail.



The arrival of progressive governments with pro-social policies, the creation of important institutions such as UNASUR, CELAC and ALBA among others, all aimed at achieving regional integration, maintaining the sovereignty of each people, marked in a concrete way the will to establish Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace, free from foreign interference.

We have also seen how during these 30 years, the empire and its allies never abandoned their claims to dominate the peoples of Our America and control their human and natural resources for their own benefits. They never accepted that the will of the people to decide their future for themselves and to live in peace existed. Thus they never went on the defensive, only changed their strategy and developed new methods such as constitutional coups and the judicialization of politics to remove progressive leaders from executive power, while not giving up the old methods either, such as funding treacherous internal reactionary forces to provoke chaos, violence and assassinations to justify armed intervention, espionage and interference by the OAS where they count on their lackeys like Canada to attack the credibility of progressive governments and the democratic right of people to freely choose their governments and the policies to direct the development of their future.

During these 30 years of intense struggle, the São Paulo Forum has been a centre of debate to develop plans and actions to continue advancing on the path of peace, integration and well-being of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. It is to the honour of the Executive Secretariat of the São Paulo Forum to have constantly maintained that the Forum is a place of exchange of organized progressive forces, where the concrete problems we face can be examined in the light of the experiences and needs of the present moment.

Thirty years ago, our Party was present at the first meetings, and throughout these 30 years we have always participated in unity with the peoples of Our America, from Canada, in contributing to the advancement of the great objectives of peace and the sovereignty of the peoples, so that Canada will no longer serve as a base for U.S. aggression against other nations and peoples. We were present 30 years ago, and we are present today, to continue the struggle for unity in action of all the peoples of Our America in the anti-imperialist struggle for sovereignty, peace and the well-being of all.

Revolutionary greetings,

Anna Di Carlo
National Leader

Claude Brunelle
Secretary of International Relations
Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist)

Anti-Imperialist Unity Is the Tactic and Strategy of Victory

- Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel -



Speech delivered at the virtual Meeting of Leaders in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the founding of the São Paulo Forum on July 28. Also participating in the meeting were President Nicolás Maduro of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, President Daniel Ortega and Vice-President Rosario Murillo of Nicaragua and Monica Valente, Executive Secretary of the São Paulo Forum as moderator.

Dear Nicolas, Daniel, Rosario and Monica,

Brothers and sisters of the political forces following this videoconference with interest:

I am accompanied by compañero José Ramón Machado Ventura, second secretary of our Party Central Committee, and compañero Bruno Rodríguez, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Cuba and member of our Political Bureau.

Thank you, Daniel, for your words; thank you, Maduro, for your words, for the book and the beautiful video about Chávez.

Thirty years ago, doomsayers of despair, enthusiasts of the market, advocates of a single thought, would have the world believe that history had ended.

And here we are, the intransigent defenders of hope and another possible world, celebrating 30 years of an embrace that is now history.

Today we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the São Paulo Forum, an idea born from the political genius of Fidel and an exceptional protagonist of this unifying accomplishment: Brother Lula, former President and leader of the Brazilian and Latin American left.



Fidel Castro Ruz and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

When the Soviet Union and the socialist camp in Eastern Europe collapsed and their gravediggers set out to bury the emancipatory ideas of the left on this side of the world, the creation of the São Paulo Forum provided a sharp shove to a ship that seemed to be drifting.

The revolutionary, progressive and democratic political forces of Latin America and the Caribbean converged in this organization of legitimate consensus to construct unity of the left for the emancipation and integration of our peoples, challenging the Monroe Doctrine and its allies on the continent.

The march of history could not be stopped. Socialist ideals have reared their heads in the empire's backyard with their own personality and strength, and today it is only right to recognize *compañero* Lula and the leaders of Brazil's Workers' Party for their performance leading the Executive Secretariat of the São Paulo Forum.

This celebration also allows us to thank the São Paulo Forum for their unwavering support to the Cuban people and especially the solidarity campaign, undertaken this year, calling for an end to the blockade against Cuba.

This virtual meeting is taking place on the 66th birthday of a dear friend of Cuba, who Fidel described as the best friend of Cuba and of all peoples who struggle, Comandante Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, who at the São Paulo Forum in 2012 invited us to lay "the cornerstone of South American, Latin American, Caribbean and world liberation, without fear."

The invincible example of Chávez now summons us to continue the struggle, with firmness and optimism, convinced that there are no obstacles, however difficult they may seem, that our peoples, united, cannot overcome, as Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba demonstrate today.

"Doctors, not bombs," Fidel said one day, responding to the ridiculous imperial pretension of subjugating peoples with wars and threats of intervention against 60 or more "dark corners of the world."

And today we are witnessing the confirmation of his words, amidst the most complex human

drama on the planet in real time.

Not even the most powerful and sophisticated weapons have been able to stop the new coronavirus pandemic. On the contrary, now the true, anti-human essence of capital has become more visible and more terrifying, with its insistence on the market and its uncontrolled rise under ruthless neo-liberal policies: governments that are helplessly witnessing the collapse of their health systems, unable to save millions of lives, even those that were thought to be out of danger in the chaotic, brutal northern empire that despises us.

The region of the Americas is today sadly the epicenter of the pandemic. The neo-liberal policies of many governments, bent on placing the market above human lives, make it impossible to predict the moment when a definitive control of the disease will be possible. The spread of the virus is a fact, if we consider that the first million cases were confirmed over 96 days, but the latest million were counted within only 16. Neo-liberal paradigms have fallen into absolute disrepute. Whether their credulous followers like it or not, the history of their economic experiment is about to end, or human existence will be further compromised.

Despite the indisputable emergency the pandemic has created for everyone, the United States government has not desisted in its hegemonic plans for the region, reactivating the Monroe Doctrine and McCarthyism, escalating interference, threatening the use of force, and promoting a policy of legal attacks on leftist and progressive leaders and organizations.

While thousands die every day within the empire's territory, the current tenant of the White House maintains continuous pressure on governments that are not to their liking, while receiving support from regional lackeys who operate in their interests.

Of particular concern, within this deplorable scenario, are imperialism's interventionist actions in violation of international law against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which we condemn and reject with the same vehemence with which we reaffirm our solidarity with legitimate President brother Nicolás Maduro Moros and the civic-military union that sustains the country's sovereignty.

We also reiterate our solidarity with the Sandinista government and people, led by Comandante Daniel Ortega, and reject unilateral coercive measures that threaten the peace, well-being, justice and development of the Nicaraguan people.

We reaffirm, once again, our strict adherence to the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, signed by the Latin American and Caribbean heads of state and government in January of 2014, in Havana, and confirm our unwavering commitment to the eradication of colonialism until the debt to the peoples still living under colonial status is settled.

Dear brothers and sisters:

I speak on behalf of a sovereign, revolutionary and solidary Cuba, which will never allow itself to be subjugated, either by seduction or by force: the homeland of Martí, Fidel and Raúl.

I am speaking on behalf of a heroic and noble people who for 60 years have resisted the most cruel and genocidal of blockades, an economic, commercial and financial siege by the world's greatest power, intensified as we battle the pandemic, with relentless, perverse persecution, insisting on a plan to force us to surrender with hunger and hardship.

Under the leadership of the Party, the government of our small, blockaded nation, along with political, mass and social organizations and our people, has controlled and is defeating COVID-19, without over-confidence.

This victory, which includes our commitment to make it sustainable over time, is the fruit of the will of a socialist state that places human beings at the centre of our policies, with a free, universal health care system and the coordinated and dedicated intelligence of professionals and workers in the arenas of health, science, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals.

After more than four months actively confronting the pandemic, Cuba regrets the loss of 87 lives, but we are consoled and encouraged by the fact that not a single child, no pregnant woman, doctor or health worker has died.

Unquestionable successes were achieved thanks to the coordinated action of our public health system and the country's network of scientific institutions, incorporating the accumulated experience of 60 years of revolutionary science and medicine in measures adopted by the government.

For the post-COVID-19 stage, a strategy was approved that should allow us to return gradually, step by step, in a differentiated fashion, to a new normality in our productive and social activities.

The Party Political Bureau, in a meeting led by its first secretary, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, approved an economic strategy to address the negative effects of the pandemic, recover and reach adequate levels of development and well-being for our entire people, without leaving any citizen abandoned to fate.

As I expressed recently, those results seem to have made our adversaries very uncomfortable. The aggressiveness of the United States government against the island is growing, as are its plans for political and ideological subversion with actions meant to discredit Cuban leaders and the work of our government, along with constant attempts to provoke a social explosion and opposition within our institutions.

We are facing very well designed and heavily financed plans to act with unprecedented ferocity and impunity on multiple platforms within the complex contemporary media scene. We are not surprised. The strategies of manipulation, distortion of reality and deceit that are used daily to confuse and demobilize social movements and the peoples of our region are no different.

But we are a people raised by Fidel, who eliminated the word surrender from our political dictionary, very early on.

We know and face the openly aggressive enemy, without losing focus on our political and social priorities, without moving even one millimeter away from the vocation of solidarity, cultivated by Fidel and the Revolution, with the help of other sister peoples who, as Che said, clamor for the concurrence of our modest efforts.

A total of 45 Henry Reeve brigades specialized in disasters and major epidemics are now working in 38 countries and territories, with 3,772 members -- including 2,399 women -- who have assisted more than 250,000 COVID-19 patients and saved more than 8,000 lives. In addition, 28,000 health collaborators in 58 countries have joined national and local efforts to combat the disease, caring for more than 83,268 COVID-19 patients and saving 13,636 lives, to date.

The altruism of our health professionals irritates the empire which, instead of attending to the serious situation of its own infected citizens, has unleashed a campaign to discredit Cuban medical collaboration.

This useless war will not destroy or bury in oblivion the human work to protect life carried out by our professionals, earning the admiration, recognition and gratitude of millions around the world, which has led to a movement across the planet advocating the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Henry Reeve contingent.

Worthy of note, in this battle, is the fraternal collaboration of the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela, the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua and the Cuban Revolution, three revolutions with governments fully dedicated to saving lives and providing well-being to their respective peoples; three revolutions that, facing the brutal onslaught of the empire and its allies in the neo-liberal right on the continent, have, with integration and firmness, defended themselves and preserved, under very difficult conditions, the independence, sovereignty and dignity of the homeland of Bolívar and Chávez, of Sandino and Carlos Fonseca, of Martí and Fidel.

This experience confirms that only cooperation and international solidarity will save humanity from this crisis, unprecedented in world history.

The preamble of the "Consensus of Our America," a document that emerged from the São Paulo Forum's experience in struggle, is dedicated to the leader of the Cuban Revolution and states: "Among the innumerable examples Fidel bequeathed to Latin America and the Caribbean revolutionaries, two stand out as decisive in the struggles of our peoples, our parties and movements. These are unity and consistent internationalism."

Faithful to his legacy, and given the challenging reality that we are facing, the Cuban people continue the construction of a prosperous and sustainable socialism, with the premise of what Army General Raúl Castro Ruz has stated: "Fidel's enduring teaching is that it is possible, that human beings are capable of overcoming the most difficult conditions, if they do not lose their will to triumph, correctly evaluate every situation, and do not renounce their just, noble principles."

Dear brothers and sisters:

Cuba will continue on the independent and sovereign path, with the people leading the way. There will be no pandemic, no blockade, no imperial pressure that will change our course.

To political forces in the São Paulo Forum, we call on you to mobilize in unity to face the new challenges, along with social and popular movements and intellectuals of the left.

The true, definitive independence of Our America depends on the character, strength and correctness for our current struggles.

We will continue, alongside the São Paulo Forum, to contribute to the unity and integration of Latin America and the Caribbean.

History is made by the people, even if it is written by others. No empire can decree the end of history as long as there are chains to be broken, walls to be demolished, exclusions and abuses to be fought.

For the life and independence of our peoples; for the legacy of our founders, who taught us that even in the most difficult conditions it was always possible, it is always possible and will always be possible; for the new generations giving continuity to the struggle, as Maduro explained; for anti-imperialist unity that is the tactic and strategy of victory: We will struggle, we will live and triumph!

Encuentro de líderes a **30 años** del **Foro de São Paulo**

Martes, **28 de Julio** de 2020
Hora: **14:30** (hora local de La Habana)


 Miguel Díaz-Canel


 Nicolás Maduro


 Daniel Ortega


 Moderadora: **Mónica Valente**
 Secretaria Ejecutiva Foro de São Paulo

#30añosFSP | #FSP30anos


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(Granma, July 30, 2020)

SUPPLEMENT

**Resistance Across the United States Increases
in Size and Determination**

**Brutal Assaults by Federal Police Forces Fail
to Intimidate and Suppress Revolt**

- Kathleen Chandler -



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