

October 27, 2016

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in the Service of Narrow Private Interests**

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## **Steelworkers Oppose Restructuring in the Service of Narrow Private Interests**

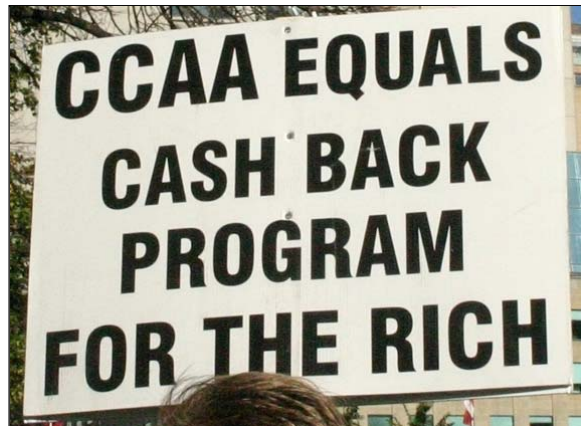
# **Damage Caused by Inter-Monopoly Dogfight and Its Airing of Dirty Linen**

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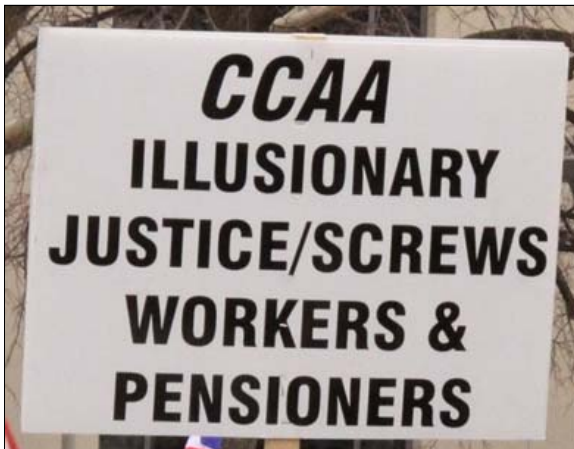
*Canadians must step up the organized fight to gain control of their  
basic economy from the global monopolies*

Essar Global Fund put its subsidiary Essar Steel Algoma into bankruptcy protection of the federal *Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act* (CCAA) in November 2015. The monopoly said its subsidiary could not pay its bills or meet its social obligations to workers and retirees, and that the U.S. company Cliffs Natural Resources was refusing to supply iron ore to the mill as contracted. Essar Global contends that a dispute with Cliffs in Minnesota motivated Cliffs to stop supplying Algoma Steel with iron ore.

Prior to putting Essar Steel Algoma into CCAA, Essar Global siphoned off the Port of Algoma and the mill's co-generation plant and brought them under its separate control. Some suggest that this was in preparation for the CCAA, as control of the two entities outside CCAA would position the parent company to exercise control of the situation. The port especially has to function for the mill to produce normally.



Essar Global Fund expanded rapidly prior to the 2008 economic crisis mainly through borrowing. The collapse of prices for the commodities it sells and a downturn in steel consumption has put the global monopoly under severe pressure from its creditors. Those creditors and others smell blood and have pounced on the many assets of Essar Global that are vulnerable including Essar Steel Algoma. Essar Global appears to have hoped that control of the Port of Algoma would be its trump card in keeping control of the Algoma mill after entering the CCAA process. The CCAA monitor in the case, Ernst & Young, and the main Debtor-In-Possession (DIP), Deutsche Bank, are now directly attacking Essar Global's control of the port to weaken its position within the CCAA process.



Essar Global alleges that Ernst & Young and Deutsche Bank, which holds a \$200 million DIP, have conspired to seize control of the Essar Steel Algoma CCAA and force Essar Global out of the picture. Anshumali Dwivedi, chief executive officer of the Port of Algoma, a business separately owned by Essar Global since 2014, alleges a conspiracy is attempting to undermine the credibility of Essar Global and its financial stability.

In a recent interview with the *Sault Star*, "Dwivedi said he's 'extremely disappointed' with

a Toronto judge's [Judge Newbould's] decision released earlier this month that rules Essar Steel Algoma did not have to pay the Port of Algoma its fees under their previously agreed upon Cargo Handling Agreement." CCAA Judge J. Newbould also authorized the monitor Ernst & Young to commence an oppression proceeding in relation to the separation of the Port of Algoma from Essar Steel Algoma in 2014 to ascertain whether it was "fair and equitable." [1]

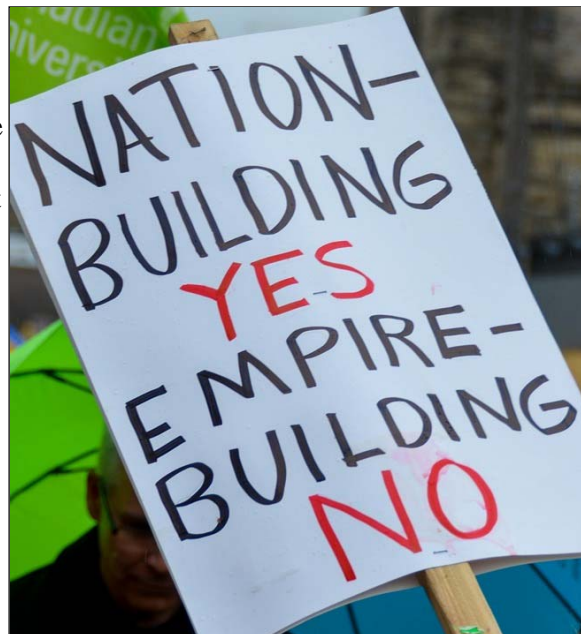
Dwivedi said he found the ruling "alarming" and not consistent with the facts. In the interview he alleges, "The judge is being fed selective information by certain parties who want to steer him in a certain direction. I'm the lone voice being drowned out by the DIP (Debtor-in-Possession) lenders and the monitor and others."

Dwivedi said in the interview that the Port of Algoma has the continued support of its parent company Essar Global, which is able to provide it with equity. He has plans to expand the port using in part public funds from the Trudeau government's New Building Canada Fund -- Natural Infrastructure Component. Dwivedi was recently seen in the city with Trudeau's Minister for Innovation, Science and Economic Development. "The application is ready to go when Algoma's CCAA process is done, but in the meantime we are continuing to keep the ball rolling," he said. His company wants the federal funding program to pay 25 per cent of the estimated \$147.5 million expansion project with matching public funds from the provincial government.

The allegations in the oppression motion against Essar Global Fund are similar to allegations that U.S. Steel diverted customers away from its Canadian subsidiary, the former Stelco, to weaken it deliberately; that it overcharged for commodities transferred to its Canadian mills from its internally owned companies, and otherwise manipulated the accounting books to turn its equity investment into a loan. In the USS case, no oppression motion has been allowed even though the evidence against it is said to be compelling.

Canadians generally should be alarmed that their economy is subject to this kind of infighting and manipulation by global monopolies. Not only do these allegations suggest a pattern of abuse to serve the narrow private interests of global monopolies using the value Canadian workers produce but that monopoly contention for control leads to direct attacks on workers and demands for concessions, wrecking of the particular facility and economy generally, and senseless loss of value in court fees and other charges.

The value workers produce should as first priority be used to ensure the well-being of the workers themselves and their communities, and the extended reproduction of the particular facility and its capacity to assist the economy generally in a cooperative manner. Canadians have to step up their fight for control of their basic economy and to restrict this wrecking behaviour of the global monopolies. More and more Canadians demand a self-reliant economy under the control of the actual producers. Such an economy would use the strengths of the modern working class and Canada's natural resources to stabilize and grow the internal economy in a self-reliant way, provide the people with necessary social programs and public services, trade with others for mutual benefit and development, and build the nation in opposition to the nation-wrecking of the monopoly empire-builders.



## Note

### 1. Details of Ernst & Young's Motion of Oppression against Essar Global Fund

Ernst & Young launched the motion of oppression on October 20. The monitor and the many lawyers required are presumably being paid out of Essar Steel Algoma's CCAA funds from production and the DIP, although Essar Global has complained that it has to pay for its own lawyers.

Ernst & Young's motion alleges that the Essar Global Group as owner of the subsidiary Essar Steel Algoma "exercised de facto control and conduct over the Sault Ste. Marie steelmaker resulting in transactions that benefit the parent company and has served as a detriment to the steelmaker. Those 'unfair' transactions include the sale of the Port of Algoma and the Co-Generation facility."

The monitor says the amount Essar Global transferred to Essar Steel Algoma for control of the port was less than its true value and should be voided by the court. The motion also considers the agreement regarding the co-generation facility as "unfair" and seeks damages that would see the co-generation facility supply Algoma with energy for its operations or pay Algoma for damages resulting from the "oppression." The monitor wants Essar Global to pay Essar Steel Algoma \$9.1 million for money used for corporate jets and rent on residential and office space in New York City. It also wants repayment of up to \$24.5-million in cash advances from the subsidiary to the parent.

Regarding the use of a corporate jet the motion reads, "This aircraft was not used for Algoma's own business but by representatives of and for the benefit of other members of the Essar Group." Also, "From 2011 to 2016, Essar Steel Algoma paid a total of \$US7.5 million for residential and office premises in New York City that were similarly not incurred for the benefit of Algoma's business but for other members of the Essar Group."

"Since the Essar Group's acquisition of [Essar Steel Algoma] in June of 2007, the Essar Group has exercised de facto control over Algoma and has engaged in a course of conduct that consistently preferred the interests of the Essar Group and in particular Essar Global Fund Ltd., the ultimate parent company of the Essar Group and its stakeholders," the oppression lawsuit states.

"The course of conduct has caused Algoma to engage in transactions and dealings with the rest of the Essar Group to the benefit of the group and the detriment of Algoma and its stakeholders. The unfair and prejudicial transactions arising from the Essar Group's course of conduct in relation to Algoma include but are not limited to the transfer to the Essar Group of long-term control over Algoma's port facilities, an irreplaceable and core strategic asset of Algoma and a valuable equity interest in this asset." the monitor's lawsuit alleges.

Ernst & Young alleges:

"divestiture by Essar Steel Algoma of its co-generation plant left the steelmaker without contractual certainty for its electrical supply

"Essar Steel Algoma paid premiums to Essar Group subsidiary New Trinity Coal Inc. in excess of prices charged by Essar Algoma's other coal suppliers

"transfer of Essar Algoma's port allowed the Essar Group to obtain an effective veto over transactions involving the Sault steel mill

"multi-million-dollar payments made by Essar Steel Algoma to Essar Mauritius for lump iron ore, metallurgical coal and coke essentially amounted to interest-free loans that benefited Essar Group to the detriment of Essar Algoma

"this course of conduct has caused Algoma to engage in transactions and dealings with the rest of Essar Group to the benefit of the group and the detriment of Algoma and its stakeholders

"The port transaction constitutes a transfer at undervalue, is void and may not be set up against Algoma and/or its creditors and stakeholders."

The motion alleges Algoma paid an Essar Group coal supplier, Scott Depot, W.Va.-based Trinity Coal Corp., prices that were higher than Algoma's other suppliers, the monitor said in the complaint, asking the court to order the parent to pay damages of \$25 million in relation to the coal contracts. Trinity Coal is now known as New Trinity Coal Inc an affiliate of Essar Global.

The complaint is requesting damages of \$24.5 million for "trade advances" that Algoma paid to Essar Steel Ltd., a Mauritius-based affiliate of the parent company.

The Ontario mill was forced to divest its co-generation plant "on terms that left Algoma without contractual certainty as to electricity supply from that facility." The subsidiary was also made to prepay another Essar Group company for raw materials and received those payments back, amounting to "de facto interest-free loans" for the benefit of the parent, according to the complaint.

*(With files from SooToday.com, The Sault Star)*



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## Inter-Monopoly Fight Continues in the Steel Sector

*Steelworkers are alert within the situation to defend their rights and the broad interests of Canadians and their economy*

Essar Global Fund is a Social Wealth Controlling Fund (SWCF) registered in the Cayman Islands and headquartered in Mumbai, India. Essar controls social wealth and property worldwide with 60,000 workers in many sectors including steel, mining, shipping (26 vessels), ports (many in India), retail, real estate, finance, etc. Essar controls India's largest telecom retail network and one of the largest in Africa. Essar also has large separate holdings in outsourcing with over 55,000 employees worldwide. It wholly owns Aegis Limited, a global Outsourcing and Technology services company with 40,000 employees. The Essar monopoly borrowed and spent heavily to acquire various companies prior to the 2008 economic crisis. Since then it has found its social wealth under increasing assault from other SWCFs.



Essar put Essar Steel Algoma into bankruptcy protection of the federal *Companies' Creditors*

*Arrangement Act* (CCAA) in November 2015 but soon lost control of the steel facility and bankruptcy process to the Deutsche Bank-led \$200 million debtor-in-possession financing facility and the Court appointed Monitor, the U.S.-based SWCF Ernst & Young.

Essar Global Fund has made several attempts to bring Essar Steel Algoma out of CCAA under its control but has so far failed due to the opposition of the other SWCFs, including Cliffs Natural Resources based in Minnesota. It also attempted to purchase U.S. Steel Canada during the summer, which is also under CCAA, but likewise failed.

Apparently, Essar has now teamed up with the U.S. SWCF Cargill in a new bid for U.S. Steel Canada. This relationship is interesting in that Cargill is headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota and is the largest SWCF in the U.S. not listed for open trade on a stock market. Essar Global's local subsidiary Essar Minnesota is engaged in a long-running battle with Cliffs Natural Resources over the control of Minnesota and Michigan's natural resources and specifically Essar's iron ore mining facility under construction in the state, which entered U.S. Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last July. This inter-monopoly battle has spilled over into Canada with Cliffs delivering iron ore to Essar Steel Algoma only on condition that Essar Global is blocked from regaining control of the steel mill. U.S. Steel is also in the mix of this inter-monopoly battle as it owns iron ore reserves and mining facilities in Minnesota and competes directly with Cliffs for markets and access to resources. Regarding U.S. Steel Canada's CCAA process, the court has declared U.S. Steel as the principal creditor of the Stelco assets it owns.



Essar Global's alliance with Cargill indicates that some of the most powerful members of the financial oligarchy have lined up with it in a battle for control of both steel and iron ore mining facilities. Of note, is the huge presence of Cargill in India where Essar is also predominant.[1] Cargill's energy and industrial unit also controls a global metals business that operates nine steel service centres in the United States and China that process and finish steel for end users.

The absence of Canadians' control over their basic economy allows this destructive inter-monopoly fighting to carry on without restriction. None of the SWCFs currently battling for control of Essar Steel Algoma and the former Stelco bring solutions to the problems in the steel sector. Nor do they guarantee production, jobs, retirement benefits or pensions. They are only looking out for their narrow private interests.

Steelworkers and their allies are acutely aware that their welfare and security of employment and pensions are not a consideration of these SWCFs and their political representatives in government. Workers themselves are mobilizing their peers and allies and building their own institutions to defend their rights and the broad interests of Canadians and their economy.

The root of the problem facing Canadians is their lack of control over their basic economy, politics and lives. This must change if Canadians are to bring some stability and security to their lives. They have to gain control over the basic sectors of the economy in a direct clash with the monopoly front of the global financial oligarchy. Workers are organizing a powerful people's front

capable of mobilizing Canadians to stand up for their rights in the face of monopoly right. Join in!

## Note

### 1. Cargill in India

The Social Wealth Controlling Fund, Cargill Foods India, processes, refines and markets a wide range of both indigenous and imported edible oils, fats and blends to the food industry with customers in the retail, food service sector and beverage industry. Cargill India is one of the largest originators and marketers of food and coarse grains in India. It also controls its own Trade and Structured Finance arm that operates Cargill Capital and Financial Services India. Cargill Energy, Transport and Metals BU is active across ocean freight, coal, iron ore and steel trading. Cargill recently bought Sunflower Vanaspati oil brand from Wipro. Cargill is the second largest buyer of food grain from Indian farmers behind only the government of India. Cargill also controls Mosaic, one of the world's largest producers of fertilizers with extensive mining and refining operations in six countries including three potash mines in Saskatchewan.

*(With files from SooToday, Globe and Mail and Wikipedia)*



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### Fort McMurray Workers Demand Their Rights

## Fighting to Rebuild After Devastating Forest Fire

- Marie Thibault -



**Meeting of Fort McMurray residents' evacuation relocation help group. (S. Legacy)**

The working class city of Fort McMurray is fighting to rebuild after last May's devastating wildfire. The fire forced the evacuation of 90,000 residents who for the most part either directly work in the nearby oil fields or service the industry. Over the years, their work-time collectively has produced more than one million barrels per day of crude oil from area wells, adding enormous value to the Canadian economy and society. They deserve to have their residences and local businesses rebuilt either with investments from the private insurers, oil monopolies or from government. Workers say this is far from the case with many lives still upside-down even though oil production in the vicinity is mostly back to normal.

"The Beast," as locals call the wildfire, destroyed or damaged 2,793 homes or apartments and 3,200 units cannot be re-occupied, according to July estimates from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Even though the oil monopolies called workers back to work to restart production and 80,000 residents have returned, as of October 20 just 184 development permits have been issued for new structures and only 30 houses are putting framework in place, according to city officials.

Workers point fingers at governments and the insurance companies for blocking redevelopment and re-establishing some sort of normal city material, cultural and social life in the city. According to Red Cross estimates most of those who came back to find their charred houses gutted by the fire have yet to start rebuilding as they have been blocked by lack of investment funds and the demand for costly permits.

Kevin Lewis, a local demolition company owner, quoted by Reuters, said, "People are mad and companies are mad; there have been lawsuits filed." The slow pace of insurance payouts and permit issuance is causing tempers to flare. People question why the oil monopolies have their operations back to normal with what seems no lack of investment funds, while oil and service workers suffer a snail's pace of recovery.

By July, residents had filed 45,000 fire insurance claims with damages estimated at \$3.58 billion, according to the Insurance Bureau of Canada. Residential claims alone totalled 27,000. Complaints against the insurance companies for such issues as refusing to pay for water damage abound. CBC reports residents saying "they've had it with insurance companies that don't return calls and emails, pressure them to accept low settlements or have been rude and unprofessional."

Workers, who deal with complexities in their work every day, do not appreciate hearing excuses from insurance and government officials, such as a comment from the Municipality reported on CBC: "We hoped to have a ton of houses started and on the ground but we have had significant complexities." Why were the oil monopolies able to deal with their "complexities" of restarting production but when it comes to workers' living conditions, suddenly excuses replace concrete action? This proves again that the economy in Canada is geared to serve the narrow private interests of the global rich and the monopolies they control and not the rights and well-being of the workers who produce all the social wealth the economy and society require for their existence.



Workers point out that concerted rebuilding should have been accomplished immediately after the fire during the late spring, summer and early fall. Now with the brutal northern Alberta winter already blowing about their ears, many residents will have to wait until next spring to rebuild their homes. Daytime winter temperatures average minus 12 Celsius, but can fall as low as minus 40C. Also, cement companies add a 10 per cent winter heat surcharge from October 1 to April 1 for pouring concrete.

"Lots of people are frustrated with how it's going. The rebuild is going slower than expected, I am not sure if it's insurance issues or permits or a mixture of both," fire captain Damian Asher told CBC. "People that are renting or living with friends are still sitting on the edge of not knowing



whether they will be able to start rebuilding or not," Asher said.

Asher, who lost his home while battling the wildfire in another part of the city, says his own rebuilding plans have been delayed while waiting for a demolition permit even though he has already spent \$12,000 on other permits. Forcing residents to pay for multiple rebuilding permits and other fees before work can begin and after they have lost so much in the fire has outraged many returning workers. They began a Facebook page dedicated to helping fellow evacuees and bringing pressure on officials. They denounced the fact that owners of burned houses had to pay for permits to rebuild while scrambling to find investment money from savings and insurance. In the face of mounting organized resistance, the local city council voted in September to waive permit fees; one small victory in the fight to defend the rights of residents in this embattled working class city.



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## **Workers Demand Audit of Canadian Food Inspection Agency Resources**

### **Need to Defend Food Safety of Canadians**

**- Pierre Chénier -**

Canadian food inspectors and their union, the Agriculture Union (part of the Public Service Alliance of Canada) are demanding an immediate audit of the resources of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to ensure that the federal agency has adequate resources to oversee the industry and enforce safety standards.

The federal government is required to conduct such an audit every five years as per the *Safe Food for Canadians Act* passed in 2012 in response to the listeriosis outbreak at Maple Leaf Foods in 2008 that killed 22 people. It was clearly revealed at that time that the Maple Leaf Foods disaster was made possible by severe cuts to food inspector positions and a change in the role of food inspectors from performing inspections on the shop floor to auditing the reports of plant owners. The federal government cut the number of food inspectors and deregulated the food processing industry. The same deregulation took place on the railways, also with tragic consequences.

Four years after the *Safe Food for Canadians Act* was passed, no audit of the resources of the CFIA has been conducted because the law is still not fully in force. The audit would have to be done within five years of the law coming into force.



The Agriculture Union is asking Canadians to write to Minister of Health Jane Philpott who is responsible for the file to urge her to act now to determine if CFIA has the human resources and the budget it needs before another outbreak happens. The union points out that this concern is even more urgent because, for the second time in a decade, the government is reworking the food

inspection system. In a survey conducted earlier this year only 14 per cent of front-line food inspectors surveyed believe senior management can introduce the new regime without compromising public safety.

*Workers' Forum* recently spoke with Bob Kingston, President of the Agriculture Union. He gave some examples of the changes that are being implemented in the food inspection system.



"That whole process is being changed. [The standards are] not going to be prescriptive anymore in terms of what people have to do to achieve things. They are going to leave it up to [the companies]. They are not going to be asking for specific requirements from the companies," Kingston said.

"For example, an inspector before might have a prescribed set of requirements for a plant to carry out. For example, to get rid of the *E. coli* in hamburger, you would have to have a label that would say that it would have to be cooked to a

certain temperature. If you are preparing a product that is called 'ready to eat' it is supposed to have additives that would kill all bacteria and keep it safe while it sits on a store shelf. The old legislation would say that to achieve that you need to do x, y and z. They are afraid to tell people what to do so they are just saying that you have to achieve food safety, whatever that means, and they are not going to have any particulars attached to it," he added.

Kingston also said that the food inspection system is moving towards "consolidation." The *Safe Food for Canadians Act* consolidated many different pieces of legislation governing different types of food, fish, meat, or processed products in cans under one piece of legislation regarding food inspection

"They think they can consolidate everything so that one inspector can look at five different products, whether they are trained or not. If you had all experienced inspectors, inspectors who are experienced in particular products, who would do the looking, people would not have to worry that much. The inspector would know what is required. But under the new system that the management in CFIA has in mind, you are going to have somebody who has a degree in forestry looking at fish, or somebody who has a science degree looking at canned corn. It is crazy and all of this is also happening in the context of a shortage of inspectors," Kingston said.



The Agriculture Union says that the CFIA is transforming its inspection systems to cope with the shortage of inspectors. That is why the union is demanding an immediate audit to shed light on the actual resources and budget of the CFIA rather than see the further reforms implemented without public scrutiny.

The union elaborates the urgency of the situation on its website: "This is like *déjà vu* all over again. The last time the CFIA did something similar was just before the Maple Leaf Foods listeriosis outbreak that killed 22 people. The investigation into the disaster concluded: Too few inspectors were on the job prior to the outbreak, and just before the outbreak, a new inspection system was implemented without a detailed assessment of the resources available."

"What happened is that they made a change from a hands-on inspection process to an auditing process. They had no idea what this would mean and what it meant was that everybody was tied up sitting in offices reading documents instead of being on the plant floor. So all that stuff about the dirty cutting machines that kept on re-contaminating finished beef products at Maple Leaf, no inspector saw that because they were too busy in the office doing paperwork. All that stuff that happened on the floor, the plant did not even report to CFIA. Inspectors need to be on the floor. The idea of doing auditing is a good thing because it is good to evaluate the process from time to time, but that is not regulatory inspection. That is like doing a check up, that is an annual event. That is not hands-on inspection. For these people to think they can replace inspections with audits makes no sense," Kingston told *Workers' Forum*.

"They need to describe what they want, describe in detail what they think the new system would look like, and then we can evaluate whether there are enough resources to do it or not," Kingston concluded.

(Photos: WF, [foodsafetyfirst.ca](http://foodsafetyfirst.ca).)



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**Teachers, Students, Parents and Allies Continue to Fight for Their Schools**

## **BC Liberal Government Fires Vancouver School Board**

**- Anne Jamieson -**



**Rally in support of fired Vancouver School Board trustees, October 20, 2016.**

On October 17, BC Education Minister Mike Bernier announced that all members of the Vancouver School Board (VSB) had been fired -- to be replaced by an appointed trustee. The dismissal came hours before a VSB budget meeting scheduled for the same evening. "It's extremely upsetting that the province has chosen to fire our democratically elected trustees" said one parent, and added "They were our only representatives that we were able to express our concerns to and now we don't know. There is a lot of uncertainty."



The reason given for firing the School Board? They did not "balance the budget by June 30."

### **"Balanced Budget Law"**

The "balanced budget law" regarding school districts was passed by the previous Liberal government led by Gordon Campbell, with Christy Clark in the position of Education Minister. That government had also made it illegal for teachers to strike, and stripped parts of teachers' contracts concerning class sizes and compositions -- an action that courts at two levels, including the BC Supreme Court, found illegal. Nonetheless, the Liberal government, now with Christy Clark at the helm, has continued to use public funds to appeal the rulings and has continued to cut funding to public education while increasing funding to private education. Across the province, school boards have been scrambling for 15 years to balance their budgets, cutting teaching positions, librarians, vice-principal and support positions, and bus services.

### **Sites of Education Become Toxic Workplaces**



Similar to the deteriorating working conditions in B.C. hospitals during the ongoing process of "restructuring," working conditions for employees in the schools under the same pressures have become toxic. A number of administrators have taken medical leaves due to the increased stress. The number of sick days of other employees has not been made public.

On June 18, in an effort to obey the balanced budget law, the besieged Vancouver School Board announced that a number of schools would be closed the following school year. The rationale given was the schools need seismic upgrading, and the provincial government would pay for this only for schools that had enrolment numbers of at least 95 per cent capacity. In a kind of musical chairs, there was a tentative list of 21 possible closures, which was reduced to 12, mostly on the East Side. Teachers, parents and students of each catchment area were left to worry whether or not their school would be on the final hit list.

Rather than vying with each other to be taken off the list, they decided to join forces to resist.

## Save Our Schools Campaign

In June, hundreds of parents, teachers, students and community members organized a campaign to resist the anti-social offensive of the provincial government. "There shouldn't be any schools on that list," said an Indigenous speaker at a rally at Britannia High School. "This is part of a neo-liberal offensive against everybody," he said. A huge number of signatures were collected on petitions, hundreds of lawn signs were erected and two large rallies were held at Gladstone and Britannia Secondary Schools. After the Britannia School rally, the VSB removed it from the list of possible closures. Then, on October 3, the campaign won a moratorium on all school closures. The reaction of the BC Liberals was swift -- they fired all members of the VSB. The Save Our School campaign activists were outraged; the next day they delivered the petitions with 18,000 signatures to the office of the Education Minister.

### What Kind of Government Attacks Its Schools and School Boards?

Education of its children and youth is a basic function of a society. Having access to quality education is a prerequisite to participation in that society, and is a right. A government that does not recognize the value and necessity of providing for the educational needs of members of the polity cannot be said to represent the members of that society.



It is indeed outrageous that instead of supporting the VSB and asking them what funds and support are needed for a quality education for all, the Liberal government fired them, after years of starving and denuding the educational system. It is like a demented beast attacking its young. The policy of the Liberal government towards the educational system is an attack on people's right to stable investments in social programs, but also the right that elected officials cannot be summarily removed at the stroke of a pen by a higher level of government. The Save Our Schools campaign shows that it is necessary to actively oppose the wrecking activities of the neo-liberal-inspired governments that are in power; it also shows that democratic renewal is the order of the day.



**Banner drop in solidarity with fired VSB trustees, Victoria, October 20, 2016.**

*(With files from Vancouver Sun, Metro, 24 Hours, Georgia Straight. Photos: P. Shaker, C. Tudela)*