

BC Election Results

Step Up the Fight for the Rights of All!



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Step Up the Fight for the Rights of All!

The initial results of the 41st BC General Election held on May 9, reflect the crisis in which the ruling elite are mired. No cartel party was able to secure a majority of 44 seats, with the ruling BC Liberal Party winning 43 seats down from 47 going into the election. The NDP increased its seats from 35 to 41 and the Green Party went from one to three seats, all on Vancouver Island.

In three ridings the results are so close as to require recounts, which together with absentee ballots will establish the official allotment of legislative seats sometime after May 22. Voter turnout increased from 57.1 per cent in 2013 to about 60 per cent, according to Elections BC. Liberal Premier Christy Clark met with BC Lieutenant Governor Judith Guichon on May 10, who granted Clark permission to continue to act as Premier pending the outcome of the final count and the

horse-trading amongst the cartel parties to determine which one will govern for the moment.

The Liberals and NDP concentrated their electoral efforts in the Lower Mainland plus a few select ridings on Vancouver Island and in the BC Interior. Altogether, eight ridings changed from Liberal to NDP; all but one are in the Greater Vancouver area. The lone exception was the Courtenay-Comox riding on Vancouver Island, where the NDP won by only nine votes and which may well go back to the Liberals after the recount.



Following the election, speculation has filled the media over the deals to be made to establish some sort of equilibrium and to calm the crisis of leadership within the ruling elite. For their part, both BC Liberal leader Christy Clark and NDP leader John Horgan are wooing the Greens, who are hedging their bets waiting until the final results and what they see as the best deal.

The Green Party has been crowned the "king-maker" with the possibility of forming a coalition government with either the Liberals or NDP to fashion a slim majority. Green Party deputy leader Matt Toner, interviewed on the CBC program *The Current* on May 11, was asked what the Greens intended to do. He said they have two options: a formal partnership with either the Liberals or the NDP, or working collaboratively vote by vote. He said they are open to talking to both the Liberals and the NDP and suggested that in holding the balance of power the Greens might be able to provide the "political cover" needed by another party to do something on the Site C dam or LNG project. The Green Party opposes the projects while the Liberals are pushing both and the NDP is in favour of the LNG project and would ask for a review of the Site C dam, which is already underway but widely opposed by Indigenous nations, local farmers in the Peace River Valley and concerned scientists, economists and many others.

Opposition to the Current Direction of the Province

Momentum has been building against the anti-social offensive amongst workers in sectors from forestry to education, truck drivers and health care. They are against the neo-liberal agenda of putting all the human and natural resources of the province at the disposal of the financial oligarchy. Workers from many sectors took up the call to defeat the governing Liberals in this election, as did Indigenous nations and environmental activists and others fighting against the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion project and the Site C dam. To defeat the Liberals was presented as a "faint hope" that something positive would come from one of the other cartel parties. At the very least, a vote against the Liberals expressed the opposition of the people to the anti-social offensive and the desire for an alternative but much more can and must be done to organize the workers' opposition.

The cartel parties are now, and were throughout the election, focussed on winning and/or holding onto power. The new situation where no cartel party won a firm majority of seats is pushed as a lull and a time to "wait and see." Neither the Liberals nor NDP can claim a "mandate," which many view as good. The Green Party has stated that its top two priorities are to "clean up campaign financing" and push electoral reform through "some form of proportional representation."



For the working people and others concerned with the direction of the province, the situation is seen as a time to step up the fight for a new direction for the economy and for solutions to problems that favour the people and not the oligopolies in control. Now is the time to step up demands to break the stranglehold of the financial oligarchy over the economy, which is especially obvious in the big projects of Site C, Kinder Morgan, LNG, and TransLink, and in the housing, transportation, and forestry sectors. The people demand that the rights of all to health care, education and a livelihood be provided with a guarantee.

The ruling elite are doing everything to ensure that the people remain passive in the face of the "lull." This should not be the case. Only when the solution to problems are in the hands of the working class and its allies will society's path to progress be freed from the self-serving obstruction of the financial oligarchy that presently puts its social wealth and political power towards depriving the working people of having any control over the political, economic and social affairs that affect their lives.



Voters in Greater Vancouver Area Turn Away from Liberals

Voters in the Greater Vancouver Area turned away from the ruling Liberal Party. Working people in the GVA are increasingly faced with an impossible situation. The housing crisis alone is forcing many, especially younger workers, to pay over 50 per cent of their wages for a place to live usually far from work, or if possible, live with their parents. The serious housing situation is coupled with constant traffic gridlock, especially in the Massey Tunnel and on the bridges, of which two of the busiest have expensive tolls. The wholly inadequate and anti-people mass transit system is more and more viewed not as a reliable, efficient and comfortable public service but as a source of infighting amongst the ruling elite and a means to pay the rich.

The Liberal government's assault on public education has also resulted in great anger amongst the polity, in particular in Surrey and Vancouver East. People in the Lower Mainland are also faced with the Trudeau and Clark Liberal governments' proposal to expand the Kinder Morgan pipeline along with a tripling of oil tanker traffic in Vancouver's Burrard Inlet, which have aroused enormous passions and opposition. These issues became the focus of both the Liberal Party and the NDP's election promises and policy objectives for the GVA, along with the constant attack ads denigrating the two leaders as self-serving and corrupt.



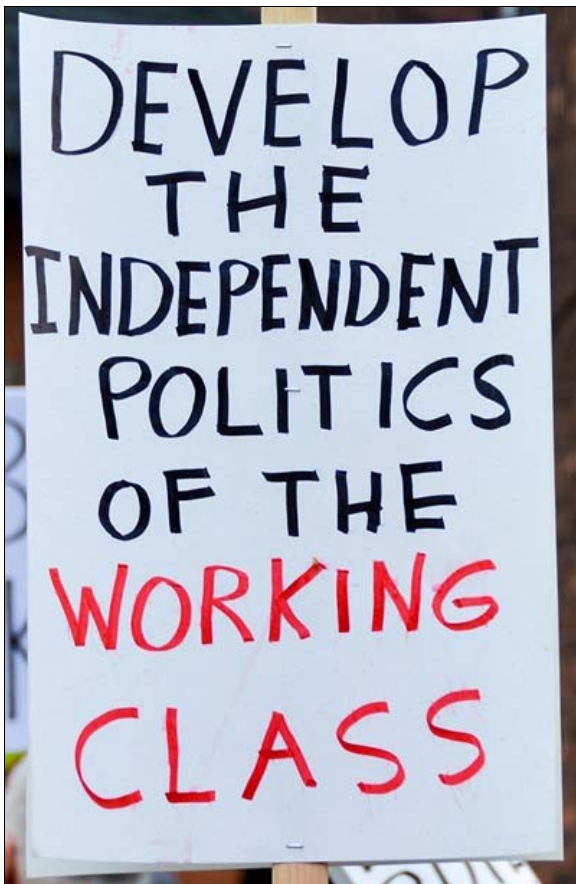
Four GVA cabinet ministers lost their seats in the Legislature: Attorney General Suzanne Anton;

Minister Responsible for TransLink (mass transit) Peter Fassbender (who was previously Minister of Education); Minister of State for Emergency Preparedness Naomi Yamamoto; and Minister of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services Amrik Virk. Premier Clark lost her seat in the Vancouver Point Grey riding in the last election and has since found refuge far away in the Okanagan Valley in the so-called safe Westside-Kelowna riding.



The BC Election and the Right to Conscience

The first casualty in the BC election was the voters' right to conscience. The ideological offensive of the electoral machines of the big parties and the media during and now in the aftermath of the election is aimed at browbeating the people into voting and thinking in a particular way for a particular aim. The aim is to maintain the status quo, entrench the anti-social offensive, and divide the people on a sectarian basis. The ideological offensive is meant to ensure the polity cannot even think and instead will succumb to waiting and seeing what others will do "on their behalf." A climate is created to overwhelm the people into believing that there is no alternative.



During the election, the tools in the hands of the electoral machines, in addition to mountains of money to throw into advertising, included cheap shots to coerce a vote for either the Liberals or NDP or another party presented as an alternative. All the arguments of the electoral machines of these parties and the mass media are aimed at depriving the people of an outlook where they can find their own bearings, fight for their own interests and unite with others within the situation.

The overwhelming electoral noise diverts the people from deciding how to occupy the space for change which has presented itself in BC at this time. This is why everything is geared to making sure no discussion takes place on either the problems that have beset the working people since the onset of the anti-social offensive and before, or the possible solutions to these problems. Everything is geared against discussing a program that will actually end the anti-social offensive and empower the working class and people. This is done by targeting the conscience of each voter.

One way to target the conscience of members of the polity is to declare the aim of the election is to defeat the Liberals. But a program to defeat the Liberals does not present the people with a strategic consideration or alternative. It therefore reduces itself to devising tactics to defeat the Liberals and not to further the working people's own cause. By contrast, defeating the anti-social offensive is a strategic consideration and tactics to achieve that aim become an important concern. In other words, to participate in an election based on the demand that everyone should vote for the

narrow aim to elect this or that party goes against dealing with the burning political issue of the day, in this case: how to bring an end to the anti-social offensive.

The current speculation over which cartel party can guarantee itself enough seats for a majority in the Legislature leads to crass opportunism. Regardless of the outcome, it will not turn things around in the workers' favour. The party that sees itself as the king-maker and is pleased to be at the negotiating table does not oppose the fact that this system is based on providing the rulers with positions of privilege and that this is very much part of the overall corruption. That party's stand on choosing whom it will support and when is not based on principle. Such a principle recognizes that this electoral system constitutes an attack and block to the right of the people to decide all those matters that affect their lives.

The people cannot permit themselves to be put in a passive "wait-and-see" position watching those who claim to be elected to rule make unprincipled alliances. All three of those parties are opposed to building the political unity of the people based on a modern political vision of a society that serves the people and guarantees their well-being and rights, in particular their basic right to conscience.



Tribute to Lifelong Communist Charles Boylan

The Role of the Communists as the Greatest Defenders of the Human Right to Conscience



Charles Boylan speaks at Federation of Post Secondary Educators 2016 AGM.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Education and Training Employees Association (ETEA -- a composite local of about 12 private sector locals teaching ESL) recently designated an annual sum of \$500 for the Charles Boylan Human Rights International Solidarity Award.

After Kevin Drager, President of the ETEA moved the motion to establish the fund, Jean Ardila, Vice-President of Local 1 of ETEA over which Charles served both as President and Vice-President, took the floor and said, "Charles Boylan is a communist, and when some U.S. visitors asked whether he was 'a straight out-front communist' and whether that had some

impact on the union, everyone laughed (his politics are known to one and all). The reason I want to emphasize that Charles is a communist is because in our union, Charles has always stood for the most important of all human rights, the right to conscience. So when you see that Charles Boylan Memorial Human Rights Award, you have to write the word 'communist' in there."

Jean's remarks were vigorously applauded.

On May 17, a letter from Charles Boylan was read out to the AGM of the 10,000 member strong Federation of Post Secondary Educators (FPSE). The reading of the letter was received with a standing ovation.[1]

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) is pleased that the ETEA, Local 21 of the FPSE, to which Charles has devoted so much of his efforts in the past 20 years, created this award and also that the FPSE recognizes Charles' contribution.



Standing ovation following reading of Charles Boylan's letter to FPSE 2017 AGM.

CPC(M-L) considers it a very timely and fitting recognition of the principles Charles has devoted his life to uphold. Defence of the right to conscience is crucial to the fight for human rights. Recognizing that this defence is a quality communists uphold is also an important contribution to the fight to affirm the rights of all.

The leader and founder of CPC(M-L) Hardial Bains pointed out that the right to conscience, to hold opinions, to express and practice them, is not merely an idea; it is a fundamental human right. It is a question of science and civilization, of the well-being of the people, freedom and progress, of the advance of society. It is not fortuitous, he said, that only progressive people deal with the question of conscience in a sincere, open and honest manner.

The anti-social offensive is taking society in a direction opposite to that required by human beings, which is why today our security lies in the fight in defence of the rights of all. Today, all people require a society which recognizes that all people have rights by virtue of being human and provides the rights of all with a guarantee. Instead, the ruling elites are establishing as a norm that only the claims of the tiny economic elite have any legitimacy. Without addressing this problem, no amount of talk about human rights will contribute to the cause of human progress. This is why, speaking further about the right to conscience, Hardial Bains emphasized: "It is a broadly accepted view that freedom is the recognition of necessity. Can our conscience be independent of this? What is necessary now is that a new society be created which does not have the evils of capitalism. What kind of conscience is it that does not recognize this?"

Congratulations Charles on a well-deserved award! Anyone can be brave after the fact, after all the dangers have been overcome, but only a few are there to confront the situation in broad daylight. This acute sense of personal worth and involvement puts you, Charles, in the category of the most trusted activists of CPC(M-L).

Note

1. *BC Worker* is posting below the letter Charles Boylan sent to the 47th AGM of the FPSE, addressed to FPSE President George Davison and read by Kevin Drager, President of ETEA/FPSE Local 21.

Kevin said, "For those who don't know him, Charles Boylan has been a member of ETEA for close to 20 years. He is recently retired due to health issues. I can in no way do justice to his voice. Those of you who have heard it can imagine Charles' booming voice in this message. This is his message to us:"

Dear Brother George,

Please bring my militant greetings to our sisters and brothers assembled at the 47th AGM and Convention of our union, FPSE. You are a fighting force for public higher education and enlightenment, and your actions show your responsibility to this important cause for the nation. These days of retrogression with globalization and neoliberalism being the slogans of the

degenerate rich and corrupt oligarchies ruling egoistically over human kind can only be met with determined resistance, determined consciousness that humanity, working people, are their own liberators. No matter how small or even trivial our struggles sometimes appear, the very act of organizing, of pulling our forces together into fighting collectives is the pulse of life that will help us open a path forward for society, for humanity.

Is it right that we are waiting on three "leaders" to determine whether we have a government willing to invest in post-secondary education, health care and other social programs, or further cut what has been fought and won in the past? Should not the people be setting the agenda and taking control over our collective lives and ensuring that every person is guaranteed basic human rights: food, clothing, shelter, livelihood, culture, political empowerment and freedom of conscience simply because we are human beings!

Sisters and brothers, I wish you all the best in your deliberations fully aware you are our activists, our fighters and the champions of your fellow workers, the students and the interests of society as a whole.

I would be with you but for my illness. [...]

Charles Boylan
Retired Member
Local 21 ETEA



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