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### **Uphold the Rights of All!**

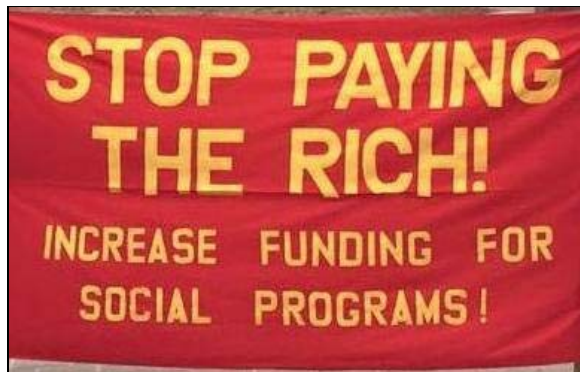
## **Big Pharma Extorts Money from the Public Purse**

Sanofi S.A., a global pharmaceutical cartel refuses to distribute its Fluzone High-Dose vaccine in BC. The drug company declares it only makes the vaccine available at the beginning of the flu season to jurisdictions in Canada that have some form of public pharmacare coverage of the drug. Sanofi says it will only supply the drug to BC later in December.

"As BC does not have a high-dose public program in place, we only supply limited volumes of flu vaccine to the private market in that province," Sanofi states. *CBC News* reports that all the pharmacies it contacted in BC have not received any Fluzone and were uncertain when they would receive it for public or private sale.

Sanofi says "it prioritizes delivery of vaccines to provinces and territories that publicly cover the vaccine, including Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island." Ontario is the only province that offers the vaccine free to all seniors while the other provinces and territories mentioned distribute free doses only to people living in long-term care.

Sanofi has made availability of its flu vaccine a form of extortion to force a pay-the-rich scheme from governments to buy its drug for free distribution, thus guaranteeing a large market. Public



pharmacare is associated with the right of all to health care at the highest possible level. Big pharma is determined to turn this right and social program into a pay-the-rich scheme to benefit the narrow private interests of the global pharmaceutical oligopolies to serve their aim of maximum profit for the rich.

BC pharmacies generally charge \$75 for one application of the Sanofi Fluzone High-Dose vaccine. As is standard practice, the drug cartel issues no reliable data concerning the price of production of the drug so that the market price of \$75 can be evaluated.

Health Canada approved the High-Dose vaccine in 2015 for use in people aged 65 and older. It contains four times the antigen of a standard flu vaccine and produces a stronger immune response in seniors, who are vulnerable to the flu because of their weaker immune systems. According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, adults 65 and older accounted for up to 90 per cent of seasonal flu-related deaths in recent years, and up to 70 per cent of seasonal flu-related hospitalizations.

Canadians are reflecting on this situation where the global financial oligarchy uses a crucial modern social program such as public pharmacare to extort money from the public treasury. What new direction for the economy is necessary to deal with this problem? How can Canadians gain control over the pharmaceutical industry and indeed all the various aspects of the health care sector? Suggestions range from a public wholesale authority controlling the sale, price and availability of pharmaceuticals to all Canadians that need them, to the development of a public pharmaceutical industry whose aim is not to maximize profit for the rich but to make a significant contribution in fulfilling the right of all to health care at the highest possible level.

A new direction begins now with the organizing and struggle of the people for political empowerment. Take a stand for your empowerment and control of those affairs that affect your life such as health care!

***Empower Yourself Now!  
Vote ML!***

## **Note**

Sanofi S.A. is a global pharmaceutical cartel with deep roots in the European financial oligarchy, including with the oligarchs in control of the French oil and gas oligopoly Total S.A., the German pharmaceutical oligopoly Bayer, and the now defunct IG Farben notorious for war crimes during the murderous rule of the German Nazis. Sanofi currently employs 110,000 workers globally who produce annual realized gross sales of \$50 billion.

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## **The Right of Seniors to a Dignified Life**

***- Interview with Peggy Askin, MLPC Spokesperson for Seniors' Care -***

*Renewal Update* interviewed Peggy Askin, spokesperson for the MLPC on matters related to the struggle of seniors for a dignified life. Of particular concern are the consequences of the privatization of care facilities, cutbacks to social programs, lack of security in retirement, and inadequate pensions. The struggle of seniors for a dignified life is a fight of all working people to ensure Canada is a society that looks after its seniors with the respect and humanity they deserve.

**Renewal Update:** Peggy, in Alberta the workers in seniors care facilities are known for their fight for what is proper and just when it comes to looking after seniors. Can you comment.

**Peggy Askin:** Security in retirement, including pensions and modern and humane seniors' care, is a right that belongs to all people. The ruling circles continue to present the growing number of older persons in society as a disaster, a "grey tsunami" they say with derision, and demand that seniors fend for themselves.



Time and again Canadians oppose the assertion that society is incapable of providing the right to security in retirement with a guarantee and that seniors should have to fend for themselves and face poverty and insecurity in old age. The conditions in many private care centres are dismal, one could say inhuman, for both the seniors and the care workers.

**Renewal Update:** The assault on pension plans at the work place in private industries as well as the public sector, and the low level of benefits under the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans, especially for those with no other source of income, are exacerbating the problems for seniors. Can you elaborate.

**Peggy Askin:** Thirty-nine per cent of Canadians have no retirement savings. The assault on pensions for decades now is part of the neo-liberal anti-social offensive aimed at dragging all Canadians down instead of raising everyone up. During the offensive the ruling elite have gone after workers' defined-benefit pensions and any guarantee of security in retirement. They have made the focus of pensions insecure savings and defined-contributions rather than extending Canadian-standard defined-benefits to all.



In opposition to the anti-social offensive, the defence of the pensions we have and fight for pensions for all is of great significance to the retirement security of all Canadians. Having a secure income during retirement would go a long way to alleviating the plight of seniors who are forced to fend for themselves. Of course, income is not all that seniors require. Social programs and infrastructure and public services are equally important. Also, seniors should be able to count on proper public care facilities and seniors' institutions and not have to fend for themselves or depend on their families. Canadians are already overburdened as a result of the anti-social offensive and besides, most are not professionals either in knowing what seniors require for their well-being or how to provide it.

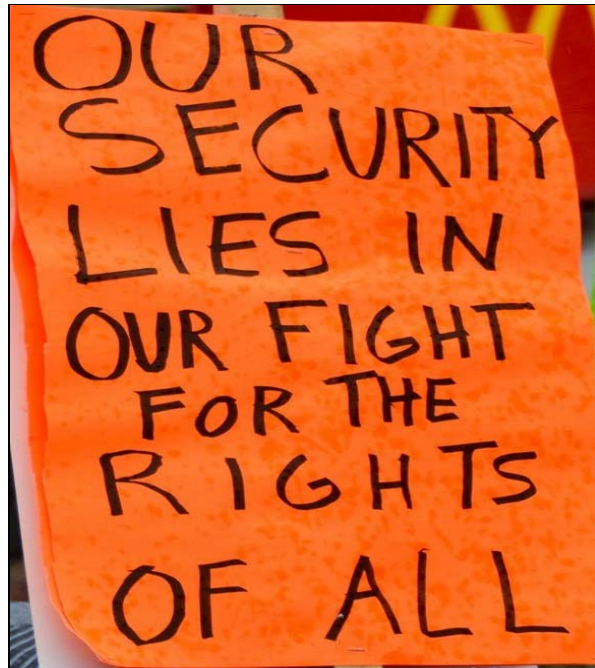
**Renewal Update:** Active and retired workers have waged battle after battle to defend the pensions they have and to fight for pensions for all. Tell us about this.

**Peggy Askin:** In a modern Canada pensions must be enshrined as a right, which belongs to everyone by virtue of being human. Workers have a right to pensions by virtue of their contributions as workers, as is also the case with all members of society who have contributed to society and its well-being. Within a socialized economy everyone's contribution is inter-related. It is a matter of an ensemble of social relations and governments have a social responsibility to uphold the dignity of seniors, but in defiance of this modern principle, they do not. They demean and abuse the right of all to Canadian-standard pensions, reducing it to a matter of affordable or unaffordable costs, and spend their time scrambling about cutting those so-called costs.

In this way, seniors are viewed as an inconvenient element that represents a burden on the budget, which society supposedly cannot afford. If someone can no longer work because of old age, or any other reason for that matter, they are viewed as useless and a cost. This anti-social outlook is unacceptable and backward. The ruling elite use this outlook to present certain seniors who have "fallen through the cracks" as collateral damage of this or that social phenomenon such as what they call the "grey tsunami" of those born during the baby boom following the end of the Second World War.

The ruling elite refuse to acknowledge that within the ensemble of social relations, those who are working now not only work for their paycheque in the present, but for when they and others were children and when they and others are old and infirm or injured and sick. The social wealth workers produce is a continuum in the modern socialized economy that goes towards individual well-being and the collective well-being of all members of society. Working people obviously fulfil their duty to work or the economy would have totally collapsed. By fulfilling that duty they have the right to live in dignity from birth to passing away.

**Renewal Update:** Is the issue of the right of seniors to a dignified life being dealt with in this election?



**Peggy Askin:** The cartel political parties striving to come to power will promise anything to get elected. These promises are well known to be hollow. When in government, they use all manner of excuses to cut spending on social programs; they support the privatization of care facilities and the entire issue is presented as outside their control because the economy is mostly in the hands of powerful private interests.

Important measures, which would help seniors, such as covering the cost of medicines, are not taken and all kinds of excuses are given. They continue to deny Canadian-standard pensions for all with defined benefits. In fact the reverse has been going on recently with large-scale bankruptcies of companies where the rights of creditors are guaranteed but not the right of workers to the benefits they were promised.

The entire direction and aim of the economy has to be changed so that the needs and concerns of the people and society itself are put at the centre. As it stands, those in control even deny that a society exists and that they as the ruling elite have a duty to uphold its interests, not those of the rich



minority.

Denial of the rights of Canadians, by not guaranteeing them in practice, means that the cartel parties in power have lost the moral authority to govern. Any political or economic force in positions of power that attempts to deny the rights of Canadians must be removed. And one thing people have learned from direct experience: workers cannot depend on the gods of plague for solutions, they have to organize themselves and fight to bring the new into being.



**Renewal Update:** Speak to us about some of the fights workers are waging on the front of pensions.

**Peggy Askin:** Since 2016 pensioners who work under the *Canada Labour Code* and federal regulations have combined forces to defend their right to retirement security and to demand the withdrawal of Bill C-27. Workers in the federal public service, post office, airlines, railways, and telecommunications are all affected by this anti-pension bill put forward by the Liberals. This bill threatens to replace federal public sector defined-benefit pensions with "target benefit" pensions, a

form of defined-contribution pension resulting in the loss of secured pension benefits

To the credit of retirees and their unions, a strong momentum against Bill C-27 has been built. The campaign included protests in Ottawa and Toronto, petitions and postcard campaigns attracting thousands of signatures, lobbying and meeting with MPs. Importantly, the stark truth was raised in the court of public opinion that the Liberal Minister of Finance Bill Morneau would directly benefit from the change, as the company he used to run and own shares in called Morneau Sheppell, advocates for and manages defined-contribution pensions.

Despite the government's denial that there was a conflict of interest, the situation was untenable and the bill was stopped at second reading and died on the order paper when the election was called. It shows that the essence of the matter only comes to light when people fight for what is right, which is for the claims they are entitled to make on society. Only when the struggle is taken up in earnest does it win support and gain momentum. This is why it is so important to smash the silence on the struggles the workers are waging on all fronts. Retirees and their organizations must remain vigilant against the reintroduction of any legislation that puts retirement security at risk, no matter which cartel party comes to power.



Another example is the fight of many active and retired workers to defend the pensions they have. Hamilton Steelworkers, represented by Local 1005 USW, organized a crucial and tenacious fight to defend the pensions they have and fight for retirement security for the coming generation of workers. Their collective efforts made sure that U.S. Steel could not use the *Companies' Creditors*

*Arrangements (bankruptcy protection) Act (CCAA) to deprive them of their pensions. But of course, the courts rule in favour of companies that claim they are bankrupt all the time. Sears is a notorious example. The CCAA insolvency law allows big corporations to declare bankruptcy and then rob workers of their pensions. It remains on the books and is used to steal workers' pensions irrespective of which cartel party holds power.*

The workers' fight has been waged under the banner of slogans such as *Defend the Pensions We Have! Fight for Pensions for All! The Pension Fight Must be Won! Hands off Pensions and Benefits! Uphold the Dignity of Labour!*

*Peggy Askin, MLPC spokesperson on Seniors' Care, and Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada candidate for Calgary Nose Hill, in Alberta, can be reached by calling (403) 283-6545.*

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## **Sisters in Spirit Vigils Call for Justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**



**Calgary**

On October 4, vigils and other events were held in Quebec and across Canada to honour the memory of the more than 4,000 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. This was the 14th year the vigils have been held.

The vigils support grieving families and provide opportunities for healing; and aim to be a movement for social change, united in the demand for action on an issue that affects us all, the Native Women's Association of Canada states in its organizing kits for the events.

This year vigils took place across Alberta in a province-wide day of action, with programs in Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Fort McMurray among other places. In Winnipeg a gathering was held at the provincial legislature building.

Families of Sisters in Spirit organized a vigil at the eternal flame on Parliament Hill. One year ago on this occasion organizers read out the names of the 124 Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited people who had been murdered since the Trudeau government came to power in 2015, with its promises to end the violence and establish a new relationship with Indigenous peoples. That number has now risen to more than 140.

The number of those missing and murdered is a damning indictment of the government's refusal to act. The disappearances and deaths continue while the state refuses to investigate these cases and



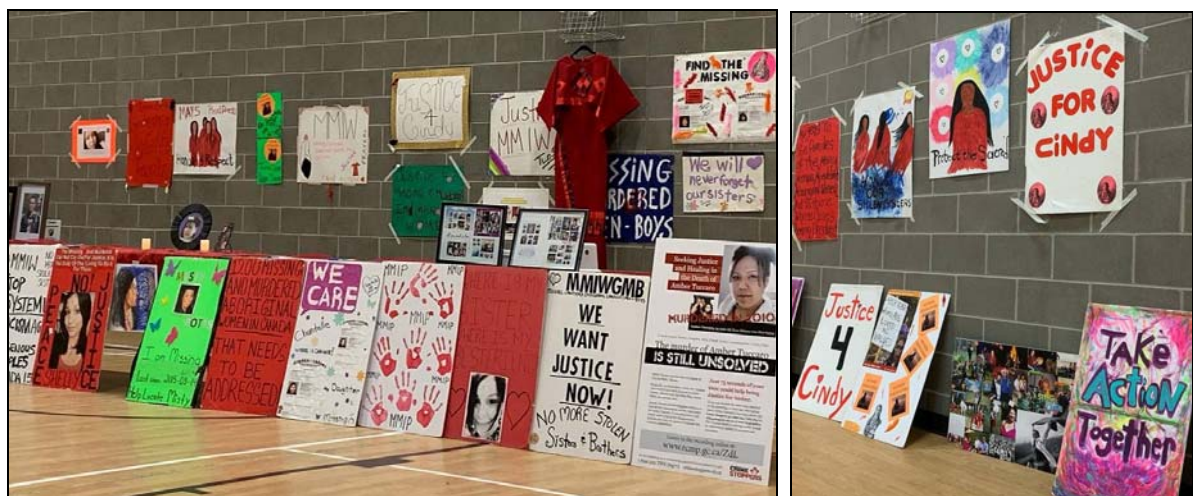
bring those responsible to justice, in some cases dismissing suspicious deaths as suicides, and missing women as having run away and "not wanting to be found."

This year's vigils comes five months after the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls published its final report including its 231 calls for justice, aimed at addressing the root causes of the disproportionate levels of violence facing Indigenous peoples.

**New Westminister, BC**



**Edmonton, AB**





**Fort McMurray, AB**



**Calgary, AB**



**Lethbridge, AB**







Winnipeg, MB



Windsor



Six Nations, ON





Halton, ON



Ottawa, ON



Montreal, QC







**Charlottetown, PEI**



**Bay St. George, NL**



*(Photos: RU, AFN, Unifor, CMHA Newfoundland, B. Arte, P. Bourque, E. Olsen, E. Brass, T. Yao, HCSL, SN Canada, Construction Rehab.)*

## The Wet'suwet'en Continue to Resist Coastal GasLink's Illegal Occupation and Destruction of Unceded Wet'suwet'en Territories



On Thursday, September 26, Chief Dsta'hyl of the Likht'samisyu Clan was blocked by Coastal GasLink's private security as he attempted to enter a community meeting at the Witset First Nation band office. When Dsta'hyl gained entry to the meeting, he told David Pfeiffer, President of CGL, that no pipelines will be allowed to cross sovereign Likht'samisyu territory -- only the Likht'samisyu clan and the Likht'samisyu hereditary chiefs can make decisions affecting Likht'samisyu territory. The Likht'samisyu stand in solidarity with the Unist'ot'en and the Gidumt'en people, and continue to reoccupy and protect their traditional territories.

For more info see [likhtsamisyu.com](http://likhtsamisyu.com) and [www.facebook.com/likhtsamisyu](https://www.facebook.com/likhtsamisyu).

To donate in support: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/likhtsamisyu2019>.

*Video by Michael Toledano.*

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