

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2019 Federal Election Produces Liberal Minority Government**
- **Message of the Leader of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada**
- **The Time Is for Vigilance and to Keep Speaking in Our Own Name**
- *Pierre Chénier* -
- **Preliminary Election Results**
- **Background on Minority Governments in Canada**

2019 Federal Election Produces Liberal Minority Government

Message of the Leader of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada



On behalf of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada, I congratulate all our candidates in this election who represented the Party's program for democratic renewal and to make Canada a zone for peace. The call to humanize the natural and social environment, change the direction of the economy, uphold the dignity of labour and the rights of all requires democratic renewal so that the people can speak in their own name. In the opinion of the MLPC, this is what the 43rd general election reveals.

We also congratulate the candidates of other small parties, workers, women and youth who participated honourably by doing their best to have matters of concern to the people discussed and addressed during the election. We thank all those who assisted us in doing this difficult work. As far

as the MLPC is concerned, all over the country we have raised the need for people to speak with their own voice, in their own name and this is where the future lies. We did this every day throughout the elections, the only force in Canada that publishes a daily on-line bulletin in both English and French to smash the silence on activities organized by working people which provide information on matters of concern which everyone holds in common. This work has met with a lot of success. Life is telling us that even though the quantity may still be small, the quality is there and it will grow and turn into quantity. Furthermore, the conditions reveal that economic and social justice of any kind is illusive so long as the workers, women and youth are not an organized political force which speaks for itself. They will not be served so long as a ruling elite continues to speak in their name, declaring it represents what the people stand for.

Our contribution is modest while the campaign of silence and denigration to which small party candidates and most independents are subjected is a disgraceful indictment of a system which calls itself democratic. Increasingly, the failure of what are called the democratic institutions is expressed not only in how candidates are not treated equally but in the division of society between those who rule and those who are ruled and have no say over any aspect of the process called democratic. The influence of money and privilege to favour the cartel parties to form a party government, as well as recourse to defamation of people and the criminalization of ideologies to divide the people, are increasingly offensive in light of the claims which exist on society to satisfy genuine needs. The arrogance with which the minority of those with power and privilege rule is of concern to the working class and people. By negating the rights of all, their rule poses serious dangers to the people at home and abroad.

What the situation reveals is the need for democratic renewal, so that the people become the decision-makers. On our part, through *TML Weekly* we will continue to provide information, analysis and views so that the working people can draw warranted conclusions. The Workers' Centre of the Party will continue to publish *Workers' Forum* with its interviews, reports on meetings and discussion on how the workers' movement is tackling the problems it faces. So too, the work amongst the youth, women, seniors and others will continue so that all the collectives of the people can speak in their own name about matters of concern to them.

These are times which require vigilance. The people must occupy the space for change, as any power vacuum will be used against them. It can be done! It must be done !

With warmest best wishes,

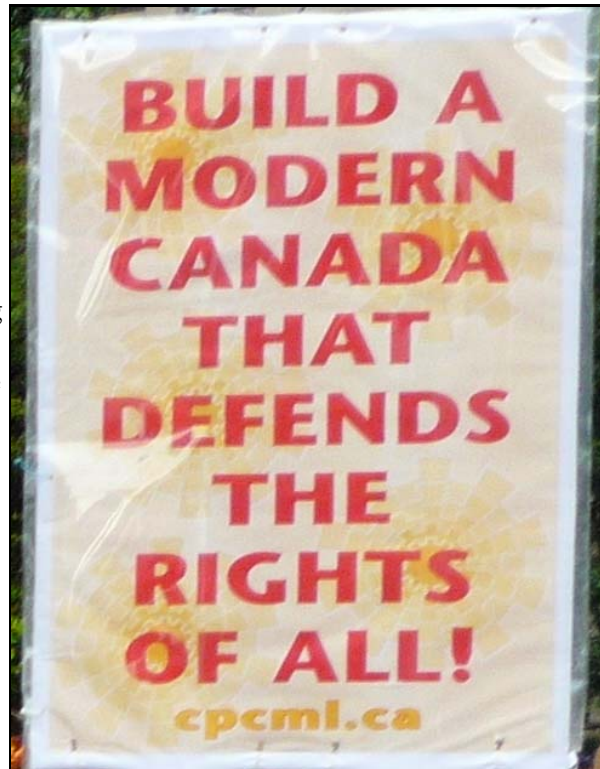
Anna Di Carlo
National Leader,
Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada

The Time Is for Vigilance and to Keep Speaking in Our Own Name

- Pierre Chénier -

The federal election has produced a Liberal minority government in which the Liberals did not win a single seat in Alberta and Saskatchewan and the Bloc Québécois won 32 of the 78 Quebec seats. It was a stunning rebuke of Liberal rule during the last four years but despite this, on election night, Liberal leader Justin Trudeau acted as if his government had just received a blanket endorsement.

No sooner the results became known, the monopoly controlled media and pundits started raising a din that Canada is "more divided and fractured" than ever. It is divided and fractured, they say, between the West and the East, between Alberta and Quebec, between pro-pipeline and anti-pipeline forces, between those standing for national unity and those opposing national unity. They found an individual in Alberta to start calling for the separation of Alberta and Saskatchewan from Canada. According to the narrative they have started, to avert the separated entity being landlocked, northern B.C. could be incited to join. If Canada can be divided, why not the provinces as well, they said.



The narrative ascribes to the working people of Alberta and Saskatchewan an absurd position according to which they are not concerned with making sure the economy provides for them and their families in a sustained way. On the contrary, the suggestion is that they are fanatically determined to maintain a one-dimensional economy based on resource exploitation which throws their lives into chaos at every upset of the "global markets." Presumably, being angry at Quebec will resolve the difficult conditions they face.

Mainly Albertans and Quebecers are made the target of attack along with a barrage of disinformation which targets all the people. The aim is to impute all kinds of explanations for the voting results so that people cannot think for themselves.

The Workers' Centre of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) calls on the people of Quebec and Canada to condemn the false and irresponsible statements which are being made, by speaking about their own concerns. It is more necessary than ever to oppose the narratives of the monopoly-controlled media and rulers which seek to divide the people pro or con this or that ideological belief. The aim is to give the cartel parties, especially the Liberals and the Conservatives, free rein to act with impunity against the rights, the well-being and the future of the people, both at home and abroad. Attempts to pit people against one another are to deprive them of an outlook of their own which helps them to provide solutions to the problems they are dealing with. These problems demand a new direction for the economy and concrete measures to humanize the social and natural environment and make Canada a zone for peace. Workers across Canada must make a statement that the interests of the working class are one.

The actual splits that exist are those within the ranks of the financial oligarchs themselves. They are hopelessly divided between contending narrow private interests and are attempting to line people up behind this or that faction, while incapable as a class of providing any solution to the problems the people and their society face. Any attempt to ascribe to the people of Quebec or Alberta what their vote means on a self-serving basis must be fought. To portray Quebecers and Albertans as racists or rednecks will not do.



Meanwhile, the Bloc has made it clear it is going to act as a block in Ottawa against any attempt to infringe upon Quebec's prerogatives. It has a tendency to equate the interests of Quebec with what the Legault government is up to. It is up to the Quebec people to define what their interests are. The anachronistic constitutional arrangements which not only define what the federal power will or will not permit for Quebec apply to the provinces as well. The people need a modern Canada which upholds the rights of all, is not integrated into the U.S. economy, homeland security and war machine. Albertans, Quebecers and the people of the country from coast to coast to coast must continue to make their claims on society for a change in the direction of the economy and to stop paying the rich and increase investments in social programs, for a healthy

environment and against war. The dignity of labour must prevail. The Quebec people can be counted on to be in the forefront of opposing both Quebec-bashing as well as Alberta-bashing and fighting for the rights of all.

This is their history and to say otherwise is to defame them in a manner which harms the interests of all. So too across the country Canadians reject self-serving interpretations of what they stand for. This is what the rulers are exploiting to turn one section of the working class against another. It must not pass!

Pierre Chenier is the Secretary of the Workers' Centre of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist).

Preliminary Election Results

The Liberal Party of Canada has succeeded in acquiring 157 seats in the House of Commons, out of 338 seats. This is thirteen seats short of a majority. This means that with the support of other parties the Liberals can pass legislation and survive a vote of no confidence which would bring down the government.

The Conservative Party will form the Official Opposition with 121 seats, the Bloc Québécois won 32 seats, the NDP 24, and the Green Party three. Jody Wilson-Raybould won her seat as an Independent -- the first independent to win a seat in over a decade.[1]

In this election, there were 27.4 million eligible voters, an increase of 1.4 million since 2015. When more than 73,291 of 73,536 polls had reported, Elections Canada said voter turnout was 17,890,264, or 65.95 per cent. The total number of voters is not immediately known because those who registered on election day have yet to be taken into account. Nonetheless, so far the calculation puts the number of Canadians who abstained at 34 per cent.

The Conservatives received the greatest number of votes cast at 34.4 per cent compared to 33.1 for the Liberals. The NDP received 14.9 per cent, the Greens 6.3 per cent, the People's Party 1.7 per

cent, Independents 0.4 per cent and no report for "other." In Quebec, the Bloc Québécois received more votes than the Liberals and almost twice the number of votes cast for the Conservatives.

These results show that, based on current figures, the Liberals will govern with less than 22 per cent of registered voters casting a ballot for their party.[2] The Liberals received the lowest percentage of the total votes cast of any governing party in the history of Canada. It is only the second time that a governing party will form a government while receiving less than 35 percent of the total votes cast.

Twenty-one registered parties fielded candidates in the election. Once registered, all political parties are supposedly treated equally by law. However, in practice the *Canada Elections Act* permits the parties to be divided into "major" and "minor." Only those declared "major" are given status and privileges in order to maintain the cartel party system.

An estimated 4.7 million Canadians cast ballots in advance, a 29 per cent increase from 2015. Elections Canada opened 1,100 more polling stations than it did in 2015, and extended the early-voting hours. The number of polling places, ballot boxes and election workers all increased from 2015. Thirty-five million ballots were printed for the 2019 election. There were 20,000 polling places, 105,140 ballot boxes, and 300,000 election workers nationwide.

Notes

1. In the 42nd Parliament, the majority Liberal government was elected with 184 seats, the Conservative Party had 99 seats, the New Democratic Party elected 44 Members of Parliament, the Bloc Québécois elected 10 MPs, and the Green Party elected one MP.

Compared to 2015, the Liberals lost 29 seats, the Conservatives gained 23 seats, the NDP lost 18 seats while the Bloc Québécois gained 22 seats, and the Green Party added two seats. The People's Party of Maxime Bernier did not elect any candidates and Bernier lost his seat.

On the dissolution of the 42nd Parliament in September 2019, the Liberals held 177 seats, the Conservatives 95, the NDP 39, the Bloc 10 and the Greens two. There were eight independents, five vacant seats, and one seat each held by Maxime Bernier's People's party of Canada and the Cooperative Commonwealth.

2. Voter turnout in the 2011 federal election was 61.4 of registered voters, and 68.5 per cent of registered voters in 2015, the highest turnout since 1993.

Background on Minority Governments in Canada

Under the parliamentary system, the sitting prime minister remains prime minister until he or she formally resigns or is dismissed by the Governor General. Following the 43rd general election, the Trudeau government will remain in power so long as it has the support of either the Bloc Québécois, Conservatives, or the NDP for any given piece of legislation.

During the election, there was much talk of "coalitions" and that minority governments in Canada



lead to formal coalitions between parties. Despite all the talk about "coalitions," there has actually never been a formal coalition to resolve legislative stalemates in the Canadian parliament. Nor has there ever been a cabinet where positions were divided among different parties.[1]

Minority governments are quite common in Canadian history. This election marks the twelfth minority government at the federal level since Confederation. There have also been two minority governments resulting from governments being replaced between elections, for a total of fourteen federal minority governments in thirteen separate minority parliaments.[2] It is also not uncommon in minority government situations that the official opposition had a larger share of the popular vote than the ruling party.

The "King-Byng Affair"

The precedent setting case in Canadian parliamentary history is known as the "King-Byng Affair." In the federal election of October 29, 1925 the Liberals under William Lyon Mackenzie King won 100 seats, in a 245 seat House, Arthur Meighen's Conservatives won 115 and the Progressive Party won 22. Even with the support of the Progressive Party, the King Liberals were one seat short of a majority. When a Liberal MP was forced to resign over a bribery scandal, it left the Liberals two short of a majority.

In accordance with constitutional convention, King had the right to present a Throne Speech and test whether his government had the "confidence of the House of Commons." King decided not to count on the support of the Progressive Party, and instead asked the Governor-General, Baron Julian Byng to call an election. Byng refused on the grounds that the Conservatives held the largest number of seats, and invited Meighen to form a government. Meighen formed a government, but was defeated after only three days on a confidence motion. Byng then issued the writs of election. The Liberals won the election, squeaking in with 127 seats, although the Conservatives won the popular vote, 45 to 43 per cent over the Liberals. King held power with a *de facto* coalition with the Progressives.[3]

Minority Governments from the 1960s to the 1980s

In 1957, the Conservatives led by John Diefenbaker formed a minority government with 112 seats to the Liberals' 105 and 12 held by Social Credit in a 265 seat House. The Liberals won the popular vote (40.4 per cent to 38.5 per cent for the Tories). Although the Liberals were entitled to try and form a government by precedent, Liberal leader Louis St-Laurent chose not to do so and retired from office. When the Liberals called on the Conservatives to resign and allow the Liberals to take office, Diefenbaker called an election, which he won with 208 seats of 265.

Both the 1963 and 1965 elections resulted in minority governments, this time with the Liberals led by Lester B. Pearson forming government with the support of the NDP. These governments are often cited for the legislation passed, which included universal health care and the Canada Pension Plan, as proof that minority governments can be productive. More recent experience in the present period of neo-liberal globalization when the democratic institutions no longer function indicates that other scenarios are likely which involve deal-making between the cartel parties in the service of the financial oligarchy, integration into U.S. Homeland Security and the U.S. war machine. Minority governments no longer represent a temporary situation in which the parliamentary equilibrium is maintained on the basis of a party in power and a party in opposition

In 1968 during the second Pearson minority government, another precedent was set when the Liberals were defeated in a surprise vote on an *Income Tax Act* amendment. As this was a money bill, precedent was that this was a vote of non-confidence and the government should resign. Instead, Pearson introduced a new vote of confidence which passed, and did not resign.

Pierre Trudeau's Liberals won the 1968 election with a majority, but the 1972 election resulted in a minority Liberal government, only two seats ahead of the Conservatives. The NDP under David Lewis held the balance of power.

The Conservatives under Joe Clark had a short run in office from 1979-1980, in a minority government with 136 seats in a 284 seat House, six short of a majority. The Liberals had 40.1 per cent of the total votes while the Conservatives trailed with 35.9 per cent. Clark's government was defeated over the budget after only nine months and the Trudeau Liberals returned to power in the ensuing election.

Once again the Liberals, now under Paul Martin, were returned to office with a minority government in 2004 with 135 seats, 20 short of a majority. The Martin government chose to govern through horse-trading with the other parties on a bill-by-bill basis.

Harper's Minority Governments

Stephen Harper led two minority governments from 2006 to 2008 and 2008 to 2011 when he finally won a majority, to be defeated in the 2015 election. These were the first and second longest lasting federal minority governments in Canadian history. He did so without a formal coalition with any party. He also benefited from the electoral system that requires a lot of money to come out on top. As is the case today, after the election the cartel parties had exhausted their coffers and it was declared that Canadians were in no mood to go to polls so soon after the election which had just taken place.

In 2006 the Harperites had 124 seats to the Liberals' 103 in a 308 seat House. His first minority government lasted two parliamentary sessions (from April 2006 to September 2008), enacting three federal budgets, an omnibus crime bill which covertly contained all kinds of measures and a bill to fix future election dates, among other legislation. The government was not defeated by the parties in opposition, rather Harper triggered the election in the belief he could secure a majority to act with impunity.

In the 2008 election, Harper was returned to power with another minority government. When this government was threatened with a "no confidence" motion, the Governor-General acceded to his request to prorogue Parliament on December 4, 2008. Before recalling Parliament, he accused the opposition parties of "treason" for planning to work with the Bloc Québécois. When Parliament was recalled, all talk of a coalition government between the Liberals and the New Democratic Party with the support of the Bloc Québécois had disappeared. Instead the minority government lasted through three parliamentary sessions. So long as no party in the House of Commons saw an advantage for itself in an election, one or another party kept the Conservatives in power.

In March 2011, the Conservatives were finally defeated in a 156-145 no confidence vote, triggering the fourth election in seven years.

Notes

1. [Legislative Coalitions and Minority Governments in Canada](#), Jean-François Godbout and Bjørn Hoyland.
2. Wikipedia
3. See *Modern Convention and Minority Governments*, Ian MacDonald, Policy Magazine