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### Discussion on the Election Results

## The Narrative of a Divided Vote and Polarization Is a Creation of Desperate Forces

- *Normand Chouinard* -

The counting of ballots was not even over when the monopoly-controlled media and pundits began speaking about how divided and polarized Canada is following the October 21 election that resulted in a Liberal minority government. Social media and newspapers are inundated with maps of Canada separated by the colours of the political parties that won seats. Not only is Canada said to be divided according to "popular" allegiances to political parties, Quebec is also allegedly fragmented between Liberal voters in Montreal and Laval and voters who, in the regions, cast their ballot for the Bloc Québécois and, in the Quebec City area, for the Conservatives. An attempt is being made to present these divisions as the social fabric representative of the Quebec nation and of Canada.

For these experts and pundits who serve as the mouthpieces of the ruling elite and of the Anglo-Canadian state, Canadians are not citizens of one political body with equal rights and duties. Canada is not a country made up of the First Nations, the Quebec nation and people of Canada. Far from it, Canada is portrayed as disparate categories of what are called "people with opposing values." For them there is no working class nor any other social class, each with the imprint of its own relations of humans to humans and humans to nature. Distinct working class interests reveal themselves as needs

and claims on society while distinct ruling class interests reveal themselves as self-serving narrow interests which seize whatever they can get away with. The people are regarded as "vote banks" in the service of the interests of so-called major electoral parties.

These "experts" and pundits will never admit that the colours they have used to dress-up the map of Canada are in fact the result of factional infighting amongst the Anglo-Canadian state's ruling circles. What do the disparities of the vote reveal if not the fact that what are called democratic institutions are anachronistic? They were created to sort out the differences between the factions of the ruling class and keep the people as spectators to the rule over them. Today, elections no longer act to smooth over the contradictions in the ranks of the ruling elites, while the people are more and more creating opportunities to speak in their own name, and not permit their name to be usurped by those who do not in fact represent them. Today elections are functioning to perpetuate a climate of civil war within the ranks of the rulers who demand that the people line up with one side or the other. They have nothing to do with expressing a popular will and political demands of the Canadian and Quebec peoples, nor of the Indigenous peoples.



*Normand Chouinard is a member of the Executive of the Workers' Centre of CPC(M-L).*

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### **Actions on Eve of Election Show Where People Stand**

## **Vancouver Rally Demands Government Elected October 21 End Colonial Violence**



The Coalition on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and their allies gathered at Victory Square in Vancouver for a rally for justice, action and accountability on October 20, on the eve of the federal election. The march and rally demanded that whoever forms the government after the federal election must make implementing the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls a priority. All the political parties were invited to participate.

The organizers of the march and rally belong to 29 organizations which have been fighting together since 2010 for government action to end the violence. "My rights as an Indigenous women do not fit into this system," one speaker said, "they must be recognized."



In the press release for the event, the Coalition gave notice that it expects a National Action Plan within 90 days of the formation of the next federal government. The Coalition calls on all political parties to treat the 231 Calls for Justice not as optional recommendations, but as legal imperatives. It is the bare minimum that must be done to move forward, they point out.



(Photos: UBCIC, D. Day)

## Youth and Indigenous Peoples Lead Significant Edmonton Climate Action

- Dougald MacDonald -





About 10,000 people rallied very enthusiastically in Edmonton on Friday, October 18 as part of the continuing youth-led climate actions taking place around the world. This was twice the number which gathered on September 27. Students of all ages, Indigenous peoples, workers, and seniors all participated in the latest Edmonton action. Local MLPC candidates and supporters took part and distributed the *Renewal Update* issue on the environment and collected signatures from new subscribers.

The demonstrators gathered first at Amiskwaskehegan (Beaverhills Park) in downtown Edmonton. The huge crowd then marched on the streets for a kilometre to the Alberta Legislature waving signs and chanting. Signs included: *There is No Planet B, Solutions Not Pollution, System Change Not Climate Change, Oceans are Rising and So are We, and Respect Indigenous Rights*. Chants Included *What Do We Want-Climate Action-When Do We Want It-Now!* and *Hey Hey Ho Ho Jason Kenney's Got to Go!*

At the Legislature, a number of speakers, mainly Indigenous, gave short speeches calling for action on climate change. Chubby Cree, an Indigenous hand drumming group, performed some music. The final speaker was Swedish activist Greta Thunberg who was well received. Thunberg said, in part: "Today is Friday. And as always, we are on climate strike. Young people all around the globe are today sacrificing their education to bring attention to the climate and ecological emergency [...] We are doing this because our future is at stake." In the course of her remarks, Thunberg included a special shout out to the youth and Indigenous people at the rally, asserting, "You are the hope."



*Dr. Dougal MacDonald was the MLPC Candidate in Edmonton-Strathcona.*

*(Photos: RU)*

# Alberta Public Sector Workers Rally at Legislature Against Government Anti-Social Measures



On October 18, about 1,000 public sector workers and their allies rallied in Edmonton at the Alberta legislature to oppose Bill 9 and the United Conservative Party's expected cuts to social programs. A provincial budget is expected on October 24. The rally took place during the AUPE convention.

Unions represented at the rally included the Alberta Union of Public Employees who called the rally, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Health Sciences Association of Alberta, Canadian Postal Workers' Union, Non-Academic Staff Association, United Nurses of Alberta, Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations, and Association of Academic Staff of University of Alberta. Spokespersons for a number of unions as well as the president of Alberta Federation of Labour made brief, strong speeches expressing the need for all public sector unions to unite against government attacks.



Alberta workers have been fighting Bill 9, the so-called *Public Sector Wage Arbitration Deferral Act*, since the Kenney government passed it on June 28. Bill 9 unilaterally erases provisions in collective agreements covering 180,000 Alberta public sector workers. The bill delays the start of wage arbitration so that the Kenney government can pass legislation dictating public sector wages without negotiations or consent of public sector workers. Bill 9 is in total contravention of the signed contracts already negotiated in good faith with public sector unions and accepted by the previous government and workers.

While public sector workers are the specific target of Bill 9, the unilateral changing of a collective agreement is a general attack on the working class and its right to a say and control over wages, conditions of work and living standards. Bill 9 violates workers' right to negotiate terms of employment and to have those terms upheld in a climate of equilibrium, not arbitrariness and dictate. The public sector workers and their unions did not consent to the changes in Bill 9 and they have organized against it ever since. The enthusiastic October 18 rally emphatically underlined once again that the Alberta workers' staunch opposition will continue as long as the anti-worker bill and other anti-people legislation remain in force.





(Photos: RU)

## Toronto Rally and March Defends the Rights of the Kashmiri People



More than 250 people participated in a rally and march at the Ontario legislature on October 19, to affirm the right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination in the face of a brutal military occupation and lock-down by the Indian state which has lasted for more than 80 days. The action was held on the eve of the federal election to demand that whichever party comes to power, it must speak out and condemn the Indian government's brutal campaign of state-terror and violence in Kashmir. India launched this assault after Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, giving Kashmir a degree of autonomy, was rescinded, on August 5 by the Modi government.

Speakers at the rally noted that while Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland is busy in the Lima Group trying to overthrow the Maduro government in Venezuela under the bogus claim that it is violating the human rights of the Venezuelan people, the Canadian government has been silent when actual human rights crimes are being committed against the Kashmiri people by the Indian state. Others noted that the silence of the Canadian state and media is directly related to the economic relations and investments that Canada has in India and the cozy relationship between Justin Trudeau and Narendra Modi.

A few speakers highlighted the historic oppression of the Indian state against the Kashmiri people. One person pointed out that since 1947, the Indian state has been responsible for the deaths of more than 100,000 Kashmiris who were resisting the violence and occupation of the Indian military in their state. It was noted that currently more than one million Indian troops are in Kashmir carrying

out atrocities with impunity, including abducting youth, gang-raping women and using tear gas and pellets against the resistance.

Speakers also noted that the decision of the Modi government to scrap Article 370 means that the provision that bars non-Kashmiris from buying land in the state has been eliminated. They warned that the Modi government plans to re-settle non-Kashmiris in large numbers in the state and in this way, it hopes to quash once and for all the Kashmiri people's striving for over 70 years for self-determination. It was also highlighted that this unilateral move by the Modi government means that the central government has set a new normal when it comes to acting with impunity against the people.



The rally also featured a cultural element. The poet Izzat Saleem recited two poems, one of which she addressed to the UN, calling on everyone to raise their voices in support of the Kashmiri people.

The painter Haris Sheik presented his mural entitled "Curfew" which depicts the state of siege in Kashmir and the determination of the people to defend their right to be.

The most important point made was that the Kashmiris will not be silenced and that it is they who will determine their future through their collective resistance and fight for their rights. The participants then walked a short distance around Queen's Park shouting slogans such as *Indian Army Out of Kashmir!*, *Hands Off Kashmir!*, *No to Human Rights Violations in Kashmir!*

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## Gatherings Throughout Quebec Raise Urgent Need to Recognize the Right to Housing



The 17th Night of the Homeless was organized in Gatineau by the Regional Collective of the Fight against Homelessness in the Outaouais (CRIO) on October 18 in Ste-Bernadette Park. The event was held simultaneously in close to thirty cities across Quebec.

In their call to participate in the event, CRIO states: "As federal elections are taking place and in light of the fact that a large number of people were identified as being homeless in a survey taken throughout Quebec, it is important to underline the different aspects of the problem as well as its various causes, both individual and collective. What makes the situation even more urgent here in the Outaouais is the housing crisis which is making life difficult for a number of people with families or



living alone."

The event began at 5:00 pm with a solidarity march in the streets of Old Hull, and throughout the march participants shouted slogans such as : *Social Assistance Is Not a Choice, It Is a Right!*, *To Choose Austerity Is to Deepen Poverty!*, *Homelessness Is Not a Choice, Everyone Needs a Place to Stay!*, and *To Sleep in the Street Makes No Sense, to Do Nothing Is Unacceptable!*

The event was made possible through the efforts of a large number of community organizations, those who are on the front lines to help the most vulnerable and with the active participation of the people who themselves are affected by the overall impoverishment of society. For example, 35 people contributed artistically to the event. Participants -- close to a thousand in the course of the evening -- paid tribute to twenty people who died during the past year in Gatineau as a result of their dire situation. This is the side of homelessness we hear nothing about. Among the booths that were set up all around the park was that of veterans who were there to remind everyone that a number of them are affected by homelessness.

During the evening, one of the MC's, Alexandre Deschênes, who was the Marxist-Leninist candidate in Hull-Aylmer, reminded everyone how so-called representative democracy and its elections try to reduce the role of the people to that of passive spectators and how crucial it was to hold events such as these where people speak in their own name.

To be homeless and to live in total insecurity is a problem facing the whole of society. It is a problem made worse by austerity measures whereby governments pay the rich, wash their hands of all social responsibility and maintain the rule of the minority over the majority through an electoral process whose main aim is precisely to preserve that power. Under these conditions, to speak in our own name at all times is indeed the order of the day.



(Photos: L. Paquette, Nuit des Sans-Abri)

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