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### Discussion on Election Results

## A New Democratic Personality Emerges Despite Attempts to Preserve Old Arrangements

During the 2019 Federal Election Campaign a new democratic personality made itself felt in many ways as people came forward to speak in their own name about their concerns. Their concerns are also the concerns of society itself, which the parties that vie for election as part of the cartel party system do not address. One of the greatest concerns is how the electoral process itself blocks people from participating directly to set the agenda for the country and to elect governments that are known as fighters for that agenda. Instead, the electoral system is designed to bring parties to power to form party governments and the people are reduced to spectators. There were many instances where candidates of the cartel parties refused to participate in debates which people tried to organize so that they could hear what the candidates had to say about their concerns.



Debates are considered a central way for electors to become informed. However, election campaigns as promoted by the monopoly-controlled media and carried out by the cartel parties are focused on party leaders and they, as well as local candidates, are tightly controlled by campaign managers to keep on message and not interact with people in any other way except to discredit their opponents or present themselves in a good light -- the concerns of the people be damned. Not a few candidates worry about getting into trouble if their remarks conflict with the "branding message" of their party. Government incumbents, in particular, do not want to have to answer questions about what their government has done. In other cases, participation is simply a matter of whether their campaigns consider there are votes to be won or not.

Across the country, debates organized by various bodies were cancelled because of lack of response from one or more candidates or leaders of the cartel parties. For example, the City of Mississauga could not get sufficient participation for a debate entitled "Mississauga Matters" scheduled for September 23 and simply cancelled it. The Munk Centre at the University of Toronto cancelled its October 1 Foreign Policy debate because Justin Trudeau declined to attend.



In many cases, however, organizers refused to cancel and used the occasion to discuss their concerns. This was the case when Studio.89, a non-profit fair-trade café and community hub in the riding of Mississauga East--Cooksville, invited candidates to participate in a Youth Town Hall on October 19. While all candidates were invited, only three accepted: the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada National Leader and Mississauga East -- Cooksville candidate Anna Di Carlo, the Mississauga-Streetsville candidate for the Animal Protection Party Natalie Spizziri, and Mississauga Centre Green Party candidate Hugo Reinoso.

Although the initial plan was to follow the traditional "candidates' debate," with prepared questions to be answered by the candidates, the youth chose to revamp their event. Candidates were given time for introductory remarks, but all the participants were encouraged to speak out about their experiences and present their views. The youth set out topics that they wanted to address, which included problems related to education and student debt, economic security, and the natural environment.

Each candidate made a contribution by elaborating how the problems present themselves. The

discussion that ensued was characterized by everyone presenting their own thinking. For instance, on the subject of the environment and food sustainability, an informative exchange took place on theories which define the problem as one of population growth. Examples were given of how problems related to food and water scarcity could be solved if the profit-motive is not put in command at the expense of people. The participants gave their own experiences from various countries as to how people are blamed for problems that are created by the destructive forces of multinational corporations.

The issue of student debt and the burden it imposes on students led to an exchange focusing on the terrible pressure young people face when problems are turned into matters of individual weaknesses, such as "money management" or "debt management." It was evident that systemic structural problems and the failure to recognize and guarantee rights such as education and health care must be addressed along with the destructive consequences as a result of the privatization of education and anti-social "austerity" measures.



The lively and substantive discussion contributed to the participants' determination to step up their own political activities beyond the election. In a thank-you note to the MLPC, Studio.89's Events and Program Coordinator wrote: "You've inspired us, and further motivated us in our efforts to have our voices heard. As a way to keep this momentum alive, we do hope to have more events of this nature happening in our space."

(Photos: RU)

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## **The Aim of Bashing Quebec and Alberta**

**- Normand Chouinard -**

Through their continued use of Quebec- and Alberta-bashing as a preferred weapon, the ruling circles have two specific aims in mind. The first is to sow division and discord between the workers of Quebec and those of the rest of Canada, in particular the workers of Alberta and Western Canada. They will do everything in their power to smash the unity of the Canadian working class to maintain their control over political power and to disrupt any attempt on the part of workers to organize Canada-wide on the basis of their own social and class interests. This stereotyping of what people stand for is one of the main disorganizing tools that has been used since Confederation to impose a vision of Canada in the image of the propertied classes. Quebec- and Alberta-bashing are used to sow maximum confusion on the origin of the factional fighting within the ruling circles. Quebec workers are accused of being narrow-minded and Alberta workers are accused of being rednecks who will have nothing to do with "Quebec" or even Canadian values and vice-versa. What these values are and the fact that imposing values on people is anti-democratic in the first place is not even



to be considered.

Secondly, stereotyping Canadians and Quebecers on the basis of the values they allegedly espouse has the aim of using the anachronistic democratic institutions to sow even more divisions within the Quebec nation itself. The defenders of the colonial constitutional arrangements since 1867 are predictably vindictive, as once again Quebec has created an imbalance they do not like because it deprives them of full control over the political power. It is already being said that those who voted for the Bloc did so not to block the two major cartel parties, but because they are anti-immigrant separatists who want to break up Canada, and so on.



In the coming days and weeks, we must engage our peers in discussion on the results of the October 21 election, dig deeper to inform ourselves of the actual forces that influenced the vote and make sure the working people speak in their own voice. The people are facing dangerous times and they cannot afford to be made the targets of the power grab within the ranks of the rulers.

But what we must do as a starting point is to take an unequivocal stand in support of the fraternal unity of the working class across the country and explain that it is the ruling circles who are divided and that it is their anachronistic obsolete institutions which are at the heart of so-called divisions and electoral disparities. The minority government will be used to take measures which do not favour the people, but workers, women, seniors and youth can use it to advance their own agenda. They must speak in their own name and not worry that they are unable to persuade those who are not their peers to represent what they stand for.

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

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### **Current Struggles in Defence of Rights**

## **Huge Climate March and Rally in Vancouver**



Tens of thousands of people participated in a huge climate rally and march in Vancouver on October 25.

Long before the scheduled start time, groups and individuals began converging on the rally site, a central square in downtown Vancouver, bringing with them colourful banners and hand-painted placards. Most prominent were thousands of students participating in a Friday school strike for climate, along with large numbers of non-student youth.

There were people of all ages and backgrounds, including mothers with babies or toddlers, seniors, workers, faith groups, community organizations, the differently abled, national minorities and Indigenous people. Swedish teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg was present.



There was lots of singing and chanting of slogans such as "Climate Justice Now!" "No Justice. No Peace!" and "The Seas Are Rising and So Are We!" There were a number of Idle No More banners as well as "There Is No Planet B," "System Change Not Climate Change" and several opposing the pay-the-rich mega projects Site C Dam and TransMountain Pipeline.

The banner "For a Modern Canada that Defends the Rights of All. All Out to Build the New" was appreciated, with numerous pictures taken of it. An Indigenous woman welcomed everyone and there were several other Indigenous speakers. A striking worker at the Georgia Hotel, across the street from the rally, brought greetings of support.

Speaker after speaker urged everyone to unite in order to fight climate change. A number of Chilean flags were held aloft in tribute to Chileans killed and wounded in the brutal violence unleashed by the U.S.-backed Chilean government against the people.

*Renewal Update* was widely distributed and many people wanted to have discussion about a wide range of concerns, including war and peace, trampling on rights by governments in service of the rich, and the necessity for change.



(Photos: J. Chiu, Khelsilem, Meggster)

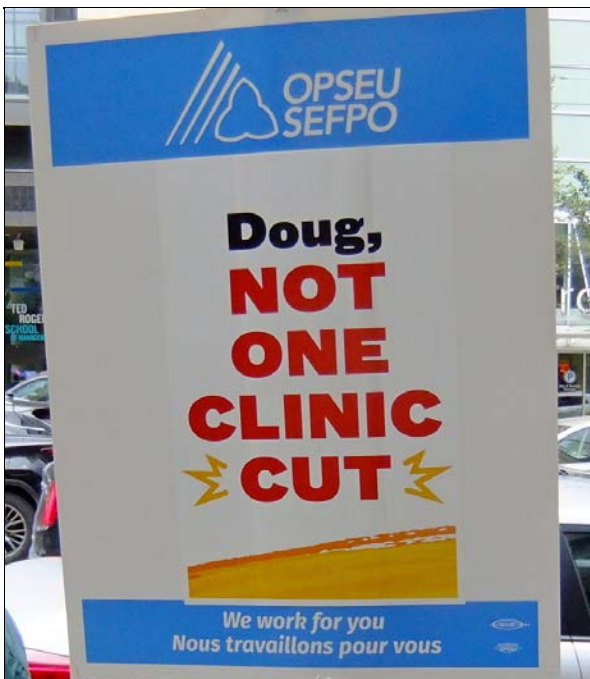


# Ontario Injured Workers and Allies Demand Cuts to Legal Aid be Rescinded



A rally and information picket were held outside the head office of Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) in downtown Toronto on October 24, in support of the appeal being made inside by three legal clinics to have their funding restored. The cuts to the legal clinics followed the cuts to social programs contained in the Ontario Conservative government's April budget.

The Ford government cut the budget of the Ontario Attorney General's Office by seven per cent, which in turn cut \$15 million from the budgets of Ontario's legal aid clinics. This amount represents 86 per cent of that seven per cent cut and, according to the legal aid clinics, is the largest cut to legal aid in Ontario's history.



While all 74 of Ontario's legal aid clinics suffered cuts, the hardest hit were three whose main work is supporting injured and marginalized workers, namely IAVGO Legal Clinic, Injured Workers Community Legal Clinic, and Workers' Health and Safety Legal Clinic. These clinics believe they have been singled out because of their advocacy and political support of injured workers dealing with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). Their work is critical in finding collective solutions to the plight of injured workers and their families.

Speakers, one after another, pointed out that without the support of these clinics they have no recourse in affirming their right to full compensation when they are injured on the job. They emphasized that these legal aid clinics also play an important role in acknowledging injured

workers as human beings and validating their suffering and trauma.

One of the injured workers who spoke stated that without the help and support of her legal clinic, she would have been completely isolated and defenceless. She recalled that the WSIB did not believe her, even though her own WSIB doctor testified on her behalf, and they had a surveillance team track her daily activities and accused her of fraud. She condemned the Ford government for imposing these cuts when it should be supporting the most vulnerable in Ontario.

While the rally was taking place, the three legal aid clinics put their cases to the LAO board and injured workers provided testimonials calling on the LAO to reverse these funding cuts. A response is expected within 30 days.

In the meantime, injured workers and legal aid clinics are asking everyone to support their just cause by contacting the Attorney General of Ontario by phone at 1-800-518-7901 or email [attorneygeneral@ontario.ca](mailto:attorneygeneral@ontario.ca), and Premier Doug Ford at 416-325-1941 or [premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca), to call on them to reverse the cuts to legal aid clinics and to stop targeting injured and precarious workers. More information can be found at: [www.stoplegalaidcuts.ca](http://www.stoplegalaidcuts.ca).



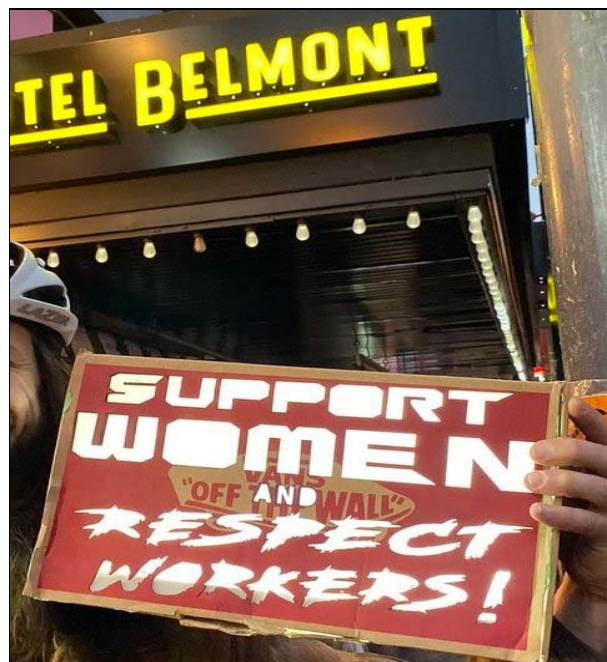
(Photos: RU)

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## Striking Vancouver Hotel Workers' Rally

On October 24 more than a hundred hotel workers and their supporters participated in a loud and militant rally outside the Hotel Belmont in downtown Vancouver in support of workers at the hotel who have come forward with complaints of on-the-job sexual harassment. The Belmont is owned by Pacific Reach Properties, which also owns the Rosewood Hotel Georgia where 200 workers -- members of UNITE HERE Local 40 -- have been on strike for over one month to back their demands for improved wages, job security and improved working conditions including a guaranteed end to sexual harassment and on-the-job assaults.

For over an hour participants marched in front of the hotel and around one side constantly shouting slogans such as "What Do We Want? Respect!"





When Do We Want It? Now!" and "No Justice. No Peace!" Numerous drummers kept up a steady beat. Horns sounded and pots were banged. A huge banner reading "Rosewood: No Sense of Shame" was draped along the street. Banners and flags of a number of unions were present, including the BC Teachers' Federation, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, and BC Government and Service Employees' Union.

UNITE HERE Local 40 President Zailda Chan thanked everyone and declared, "We'll be back" unless the workers' just demands are met.

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## Solidarity Actions with Chile



**Rally in solidarity with the Chilean people, Ottawa, October 22, 2019.**

Actions are being held in several Canadian cities in solidarity with the Chilean people resisting the impunity of the ruling class. Throughout October, mass actions have been taking place in Chile to oppose the untenable living and working conditions the people face, leading to a situation where working people are impoverished while the wealthy elite are further enriched. President Sebastián Piñera is himself a billionaire businessman and one of the richest men in Chile.

The protests began in opposition to fare hikes for public transit in the capital Santiago in early October. The Chilean government responded with mass repression, declaring a state of emergency on October 18. Military curfews are in effect in 12 regions, with 19,461 police and military personnel deployed to put down the popular protests. News agencies report that as of October 26, at least 19 people have been killed, some 2,500 have been injured and more than 3,100 detained.

Far from being cowed by the government repression, protests have been increasing in size, with the largest to date taking place on October 25, with 1.2 million people taking to the streets of Santiago. The people now have as one of their main demands President Piñera's resignation.

*(With files from teleSUR, Al Jazeera. Photo: ALBA Social Movements Canada)*



## State Financing of Political Parties and Candidates in the 43rd Federal Election

In the name of enhancing the democracy, the *Canada Elections Act* permits parties and candidates which reach prescribed thresholds of the vote to be reimbursed for a substantial portion of their expenses. The Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada opposes state funding of political parties or candidates. It says the state should fund the electoral process, not the parties.

In the 2019 Federal Election, preliminary election expense limits for a party fielding candidates in all 338 ridings is \$28 million, of which \$14 million will be reimbursed. The Bloc Québécois, the Conservative Party, the Green Party, the Liberal Party and the NDP will all receive reimbursements because they each surpassed two per cent of the national vote. The preliminary vote count shows that the People's Party of Canada received 1.6 per cent of the national vote, falling short of the two per cent threshold to qualify for reimbursements.

The average election expense limit for individual candidates is based on an allotted amount of money per elector in their riding. In this election the amount averaged about \$83,000 per candidate with the highest in Edmonton-Wetaskiwin at over \$124,000 and the lowest in Labrador at \$21,015. To qualify for reimbursement of expenses, a candidate must receive at least ten per cent of the vote cast in that riding.



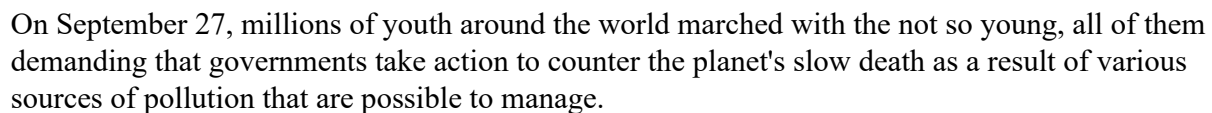
Seventy-two of the 78 Bloc Québécois candidates; 306 of the 318 Conservative candidates; 49 of the 338 Green Party candidates; 318 out of 338 Liberal candidates; and 234 of the 338 NDP candidates qualify for reimbursements. Of the People's Party candidates, only Maxime Bernier qualified, with 28.40 per cent of the valid votes in his riding. Three independent candidates have met the threshold for reimbursement: Archie MacKinnon, Jane Philpott and Jody Wilson-Raybould.

As in the past, election campaign expenses (advertising, meetings, etc) will be reimbursed at a rate of 60 per cent. Candidate's travel and living expenses and other personal expenses are not subject to the spending limit, but eligible for reimbursement at the same rate. Expenses for child care are reimbursed at a rate of 90 per cent.

As soon as the official returns are published, the Chief Electoral Officer informs the Receiver General of the names of the qualifying candidates. Even before their returns are filed, candidates are issued cheques for 15 per cent of the spending limit. The balance due to them is paid after they have filed their returns and receipts. If they have been overpaid, they must return the overpayment to the Receiver General.

The election expense reimbursement regime serves as a form of collateral for candidates and parties. They can go to the bank and use the expected state subsidy to get loans to finance their campaigns. A candidate that does not have this privileged advantage and connection to a cartel party, will not be able to get a bank to agree to fund them, and personal loans are prohibited.

## The Significance of Climate Actions



The claim being laid here is for harmonious relations between humans and nature, the condition for which is the prior establishment of harmonious relations among humans themselves.

Through such a destructive relationship (maximum profit, poverty, hunger, infant mortality, growing social inequality) at the base of social dysfunction, how can anyone expect a healthy relation between that chaotic social environment and its ensuing victim, the natural environment?

The condition for our harmony with Mother Earth is harmony between ourselves, her offspring. Politically, the understanding of that relation has long been expressed by the Marxist-Leninist Party. Its candidates have always upheld that idea within the electorate. With time and through grace and tenacity, that idea will become the reality.

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Montreal, September 27, 2019.

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