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Canada's Craven Foreign Policy

Canada Fails to Reject Israel's Plan for "New Middle East" with Palestine Erased from the Map

– Margaret Villamizar and Hilary LeBlanc –



Ottawa, October 29, 2023

At a time the peoples of the entire world, including Canadians and Quebeckers, are denouncing the crime of genocide Israel is committing against the long-suffering Palestinian people, official Canada stands exposed as a thoroughly dishonest champion of human rights, peace and any other claim it makes in the name of a so-called rules-based international order. Canada's attempts to create a moral equivalence between the Palestinian resistance and what Israel is doing have no other aim than to conciliate with what Israel is doing. Most recently, Canada raised no objection to the provocative speech delivered on September 22 by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during the General Debate at the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Netanyahu presented his vision for a "New Middle East" which he accompanied by holding up two maps. The first map showed what he said was Israel in 1948. The second map represented what he called "The New Middle East." It was impossible to miss that what stood out about the maps Netanyahu held up was that both presented Israel devoid of Palestine altogether, showing it covering the entire geography of historic Palestine. There were no demarcations to indicate the existence of any Palestinian territory -- either in 1948 at Israel's creation with the partition of Palestine into separate Arab and "Jewish" states, or in Netanyahu's vision of a new Middle East.

On the first map Netanyahu held up, bearing the title "Israel in 1948," only Israel was labelled, with none of the countries surrounding it named. His explanation was that at the time of its founding Israel was "a tiny country, isolated, surrounded by a hostile Arab world." The second map, which he said represented "The New Middle East," had six other countries labelled, with whom Netanyahu said Israel had so far made peace: Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco -- the latter four most recently through the Abraham Accords in 2020 which he said was accomplished with the help of the United States. Now a peace deal with Saudi Arabia was all that remained to clinch the "new Middle East" he envisioned, Netanyahu said.



Map of 1948



Netanyahu's present day Middle East



Map with red line indicating trade routes into Europe

Of course all that is now shattered with the peoples of all those countries protesting *en masse* the crimes Israel is committing today. Netanyahu's speech nonetheless confirms what the U.S., Canada, Britain and other countries which are supporting Israel in its attempt to kill all Palestinians and deprive them of their homeland once and for all are defending in the Middle East. Netanyahu provocatively declared that this "new" alignment of countries with Israel as the hub would not only deliver prosperity but increase the prospects of making peace between Israel and the Palestinians. In the most cynical fashion he declared that when Palestinians "see that most of the Arab world has reconciled itself to the Jewish state, they too, will be more likely to abandon the fantasy of destroying Israel, and finally embrace a path of genuine peace with it."

The unspoken but very clear implication was that "peace" with the Palestinians means their acceptance of the permanent extinction of their sovereign rights as a people and the seizure and occupation by Israel of all their remaining territory. Of course, what Netanyahu described as the "new alignment of countries with Israel as the hub," is the trade, security, communication and energy corridors the U.S. is doing its utmost to develop in that strategic region of the world based on its own striving for hegemony against the new alliances being established by the majority of the countries of the world which reject U.S. destructive hegemonic designs.



Canada raised absolutely no objection to this "vision for a New Middle East," clearly designed to create a bulwark against the rights of the people of the entire region, the Palestinians first and foremost, so as to protect U.S. imperialist interests. Now, less than a month after Netanyahu delivered this speech, Israel is engaged in a campaign of genocide which the entire world can see seeks to empty the northern part of the Gaza Strip, turn its population into refugees once again and then annex that land as part of their plan for a Greater Israel. They are now doing the same with all of Gaza as well as the West Bank. And Israel is defended to the hilt by the United States, Britain, Canada, France, Germany and other old colonial powers who partitioned Arab lands after World War I and created borders by carving up territory and putting certain tribes into power to suit their own predatory interests.

It is a game plan that the resistance of the Palestinian people and of others both excluded from and included in Netanyahu's delusional "new" Middle East are rebelling against. The cunning of history is such that the outcome of the grand Zionist illusions will not be determined by Israel's killing power, backed by the U.S. and now also Canadian Special Forces, but by the Palestinian Resistance and the peoples of the world who are demanding justice for the Palestinian cause. No matter how hard those who seek to conciliate with Israel's crimes in the name of high ideals try, blaming the Palestinians will not wash.

Excerpt from Speech by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at 2023 UN General Assembly

Below is an excerpt from the speech made by the Israeli Prime Minister at the United Nations General Assembly on September 2, 2023 in which he speaks about his plans for a "New Middle East."

[...]

There is no question. The Abraham accords heralded the dawn of a new age of peace.

But I believe that we are at the cusp of an even more dramatic breakthrough – an historic peace between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Such a peace will go a long way to ending the Arab-Israeli conflict. It will encourage other Arab states to normalize their relations with Israel. It will enhance the prospects of peace with the Palestinians. It will encourage a broader reconciliation between Judaism and Islam, between Jerusalem and Mecca, between the descendants of Isaac and the descendants of Ishmael. All these are tremendous blessings.

Two weeks ago, we saw another blessing already in sight. In the G20 conference, President Biden Prime Minister Modi and European and Arab leaders announced plans for a visionary corridor that will stretch across the Arabian Peninsula and Israel. It will connect India to Europe with maritime links, rail links, energy pipelines, fiber optic cables.

This corridor will bypass maritime checkpoints, or choke points rather, and dramatically lower the cost of goods, communication and energy for over 2 billion people.

What a historic change for my country. You see, the land of Israel is situated in the crossroad between Africa, Asia and Europe. And for centuries, my country was repeatedly invaded by empires passing through it in their campaigns of plunder and conquest elsewhere. But today, as we tear down the walls of enmity, Israel can become a bridge of peace and prosperity between these continents.

Peace between Israel and Saudi Arabia will truly create a new Middle East.

To understand the magnitude of the transformation that we seek to advance, let me show you a map of the Middle East in 1948, the year Israel was established. Here's Israel in 1948. It's a tiny country, isolated, surrounded by a hostile Arab world.

In our first seven years, we made peace with Egypt and Jordan. And then in 2020, we made the Abraham accords – peace with another four Arab states. Now look at what happens when we make peace between Saudi Arabia and Israel. The whole Middle East changes. We tear down the walls of enmity. We bring the possibility of prosperity and peace to this entire region. But we do something else.

You know, a few years ago, I stood here with a red marker to show the curse, a great curse, the curse of a nuclear Iran. But today, today, I bring this marker to show a great blessing, the blessing of a new Middle East, between Israel, Saudi Arabia and our other neighbors.

We will not only bring down barriers between Israel and our neighbors, we will build a new corridor of peace and prosperity that connects Asia, through the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, to Europe. This is an extraordinary change, a monumental change. Another pivot of history.

[...]

To view a video of the full speech, [click here](#).

U.S./Zionist Policy of Destruction

– Pauline Easton –

In Palestine, the U.S./Zionist policy of destruction permits no political solution while Israel gets away with war crimes, the crime of genocide and other crimes against humanity. The historical fraud promoted by the U.S. which Canada also promotes claims an alleged right of Israel to self-defence so Israel is not held to account for its duties as an occupying power, duties it has never upheld. Israel has trampled in the mud all the requirements the United Nations set for its founding in 1948. Despite this, and the fact that the conception of a modern state cannot be based on

religious criteria, but must recognize all its members as equal irrespective of national origin, gender, age, political, religious or ideological beliefs, Israel is presented by the U.S., Canada, Britain and others as a democratic country acting in self-defence while the Palestinians' right to be, right of return and very humanity are denigrated, ignored and slated for extinguishment.



Destruction caused in Gaza by Israeli bombardment, October 25, 2023.

As a result of the fact that the U.S. is permitted "indispensable nation" status by Britain and other big powers in Europe, with countries like Canada which are big promoters of the Zionist project in tow, what is called the international community has been powerless to hold Israel to its founding resolution and to all the other resolutions which have condemned its actions against the Palestinians. A deliberate "no war, no peace" situation has been maintained which permits Israel to launch open war from time to time in the form of destructive genocidal assaults on the Palestinian people, while daily the siege of Gaza, illegal settlements, arrests and imprisonment of people without charges take place. Israel's current war of destruction against the Palestinians has reached disastrous proportions pushing Palestinians to die in ever smaller pieces of occupied Palestine while Israel, backed by the U.S., goes unpunished for its crimes.



A "no war, no peace" situation is also consistent with conditions where the U.S. launches and backs wars of destruction such as in Palestine and the U.S./NATO proxy war in Ukraine. Such wars do not have political aims. They are not politics by other means which is why there are no negotiations to reach a peace settlement. The aim is not negotiations to settle disputes but to destroy those who cannot be forced to submit. Their tactics include "shock and awe" bombings of cities, as was done against Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan as well as atrocities against civilians who they call collateral damage, as Israeli spokespersons do today. The many examples of massive bombings as well as drone attacks targeting weddings and homes in Afghanistan were evidence of this, often

using the excuse that the victims were being used as "human shields." The U.S./NATO bombing of Yugoslavia was an egregious example of this, as was the destruction of Libya and the U.S.-backed Saudi bombing of Yemen. The crimes committed against Syria are of like-kind. Now the Israelis have even gone beyond claiming that citizens are "collateral damage" but are saying that deliberate targetting of civilians is legitimate. Israeli President Isaac Herzog, who it is claimed is a "moderate" defended deliberate bombing of civilians saying "It is not true this rhetoric about civilians not being aware, not involved. It's absolutely not true. They could have risen up [against Hamas]."



It is the policy of destruction which leads to the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide as it is directed not primarily against military targets but against civilian infrastructure and, most importantly, people. The notion of "endless wars" develops in part because wars of destruction only destroy; they do not seek negotiations and a peaceful resolution of conflicts. The U.S., Israel and their backers will not agree to be held to account so it is the peoples who must rein them in. The peoples of the world have suffered enough as the result of their pursuit of narrow private interests with impunity, which they call a "rules-based international order."



The decisive factor for peace is the peoples of each country and of the world. In the current atrocities Israel is committing against the Palestinian people with the clear support and encouragement and material aid of the U.S., Canada, Britain and other former colonial powers of Europe, the peoples of the world can readily see who pays the price for the striving of the war machines and profiteers to prevail. There is nothing redeeming about their aim to wipe out the Palestinians under the pretext of high ideals. What the people of Canada and Quebec are supporting is a clarion call to oppose Canada's integration into the U.S. war machine and to dismantle NATO, dismantle NORAD and support dialogue and negotiations which produce desired results and a peaceful resolution of the problems the peoples of the world are

facing, solutions which favour the peoples of the world, not ruling elites committing crimes in the

name of high ideals. By speaking out in their own name to demand justice, it is the resistance waged by the peoples of the world which advances the cause of peace, freedom and democracy. Today, we are all Palestinians. We stand as one with Palestine.

Leaked Israeli Plans and Statements Reveal Criminal Intent

The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) condemns the crimes the state of Israel is carrying out against the Palestinian people and condemns the Government of Canada and Official Opposition for condoning Israel's criminal actions and remaining silent about its criminal intent which clearly accompanies its criminal actions.

A leaked document issued by Israel's Ministry of Intelligence on October 13 confirms an Israeli plan to transfer all residents of the Gaza Strip to North Sinai as the preferred option among three alternatives regarding the future of the Palestinians in Gaza. Evidence also confirms the U.S. participation in trying to implement this plan which was thwarted because of Egypt's categorical opposition to it.



The leaked document was published on October 28 by Israeli cultural magazine *Mecovit*. The Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* informs that the document includes three alternatives which include residents staying in Gaza with the return of the Palestinian Authority to the Strip, residents staying in Gaza with the emergence of local Arab rule, or relocating them from Gaza to the Sinai Peninsula.

The document indicates that the third alternative would achieve strategic results, is feasible and requires the support of the United States and other countries that support Israel to achieve their goals. It recommends that Israel evacuate the Gazan population to Sinai during the war, establish tent cities and new cities in northern Sinai to accommodate the deported population, and then create a closed security zone stretching several kilometres inside Egypt. The deported Palestinians would not be allowed to return to any areas near the Israeli border.



Ha'aretz says that the first and second alternatives "have significant shortcomings, especially in terms of their strategic consequences and their long-term feasibility, as neither of them would provide the necessary deterrent effect." It says that "the Intelligence Ministry confirmed the existence of the document, but a source familiar with the drafting of it said the Cabinet is not expected to debate the proposal and that the ministry is not the government entity that would be responsible for such decision-making."

According to *Ha'aretz*, "sources at the ministry minimized the importance of the document. But it is initial evidence that Israeli government officials are examining exit strategies after Israel's goal of ending Hamas' rule in Gaza is achieved," adding "the document acknowledges that the relocation of the population of Gaza would not gain international legitimacy but claims that it would reduce the number of casualties among Gaza's population."

Egypt rejected such a plan but U.S. President Joe Biden himself makes it clear he actively worked to implement it. National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby told reporters at the White House on October 11 that the U.S. was in active talks with Israel and Egypt to establish "safe passage" corridors for civilians in Gaza to flee ongoing Israeli airstrikes and avoid the ground offensive Israel was preparing.

"We're actively discussing this with our Israeli and our Egyptian counterparts, we support safe passage for civilians. Civilians are not to blame for what Hamas has done. They didn't do anything wrong," Kirby said. "We are actively working on this with Egyptian and our Israeli counterparts. Civilians are protected under the laws of armed conflict, and they should be given every opportunity to avoid the fighting," he added.

Canada's silence on all of this is damning. Biden's request to the U.S. Congress to finance the wars in the Ukraine and Gaza with up to \$106 billion is further evidence of U.S. attempts to implement this plan. It included these lines (pg 40):

"These resources would support displaced and conflict-affected civilians, including Palestinian refugees in Gaza and the West Bank, and to address potential needs of Gazans fleeing to neighboring countries. This would include food and non- food items, health care, emergency shelter support, water and sanitation assistance, and emergency protection. This would also include potential critical humanitarian infrastructure costs needed for the refugee population to provide access to basic, life-sustaining support. *This crisis could well result in displacement across border and higher regional humanitarian needs, and funding may be used to meet evolving programming requirements outside of Gaza.*"[2] (TML emphasis.)

When Egypt outrightly rejected the plan, Biden was forced to also reject it. On October 29, after speaking with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, Biden said:

"We reaffirmed our commitment to work together and discussed the importance of protecting civilian lives, respect for international humanitarian law, and ensuring that Palestinians in Gaza are not displaced to Egypt or any other nation."

CPC(M-L) also condemns all efforts of U.S., Canadian, British et al disinformation which makes Hamas the issue and conciliates with the crimes Israel is committing under the pretext that eliminating Hamas is a righteous cause. Israel claimed responsibility for its recent bombardment of the Jabalia refugee camp saying it carried out the assault to target a Hamas commander. It considers the more than 100 Palestinians killed and hundreds more injured "collateral damage."

The U.S. recently opposed a call for ceasefire by saying that it favours Hamas. Such convoluted criminal logic to justify what is being done to the people of Palestine is unconscionable. The entire world opposes what Israel is doing.



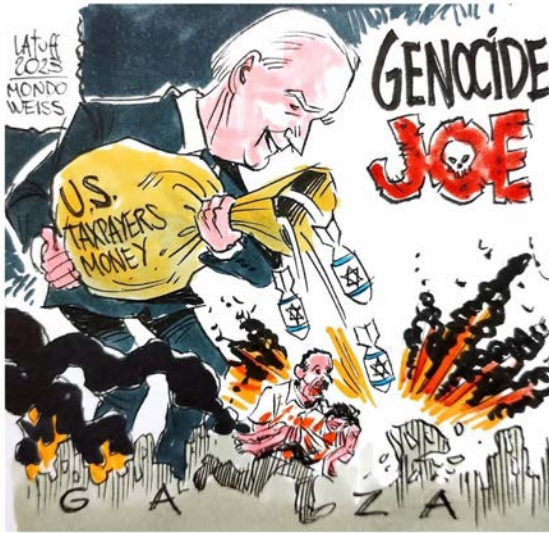
Notes

1. *Ha'aretz*

2. Letter regarding critical national security funding needs for FY 2024, White House, October 20, 2023

Evidence of U.S. Involvement

There is ever more evidence of direct U.S. involvement in the heinous crimes being committed against the Palestinian people. At least six of the missiles in the most recent attacks against the Jabalia refugee camp were provided by the U.S. *The Intercept* investigative journalists Ken Klippenstein and Daniel Boguslaw recently wrote an article which says U.S. government documents also confirm the presence of a new classified U.S. base and forces to sustain it. They write:



"Two months before Hamas attacked Israel, the Pentagon awarded a multimillion-dollar contract to build U.S. troop facilities for a secret base it maintains deep within Israel's Negev desert, just 20 miles from Gaza. Code-named 'Site 512,' the longstanding U.S. base is a radar facility that monitors the skies for missile attacks on Israel.

"On October 7, however, when thousands of Hamas rockets were launched, Site 512 saw nothing – because it is focused on Iran, more than 700 miles away.

"The U.S. Army is quietly moving ahead with construction at Site 512, a classified base perched atop Mt. Har Qeren in the Negev, to

include what government records describe as a 'life support facility': military speak for barracks-like structures for personnel.

"Though President Joe Biden and the White House insist that there are no plans to send U.S. troops to Israel amid its war on Hamas, a secret U.S. military presence in Israel already exists. And the government contracts and budget documents show it is evidently growing.

"The \$35.8 million U.S. troop facility, not publicly announced or previously reported, was obliquely referenced in an August 2 contract announcement by the Pentagon. Though the Defense Department has taken pains to obscure the site's true nature -- describing it in other records merely as a "classified worldwide" project -- budget documents reviewed by *The Intercept* reveal that it is part of Site 512. (The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a request for comment.)

"Sometimes something is treated as an official secret not in the hope that an adversary would never find out about it but rather [because] the U.S. government, for diplomatic or political reasons, does not want to officially acknowledge it,' Paul Pillar, a former chief analyst at the CIA's counterterrorism center who said he had no specific knowledge of the base, told *The Intercept*. "In this case, perhaps the base will be used to support operations elsewhere in the Middle East in which any acknowledgment that they were staged from Israel, or involved any cooperation with Israel, would be inconvenient and likely to elicit more negative reactions than the operations otherwise would elicit."

"Rare acknowledgment of the U.S. military presence in Israel came in 2017, when the two countries inaugurated a military site that the U.S. government-funded *Voice of America* deemed 'the first American military base on Israeli soil.' Israeli Air Force's Brig. Gen. Tzvika Haimovitch called it 'historic.' He said, 'We established an American base in the State of Israel, in the Israel Defense Forces, for the first time.'"

(*The Intercept*)

Canadians Call on Trudeau Government to Take a Principled Stand Against Israeli War Crimes



Tens of thousands of Canadians have taken action in the form of mass demonstrations, vigils, petitions, letter-writing and more from coast to coast to demand an end to the siege of Gaza, an end to the occupation of Palestine and an end to Israeli war crimes against the Palestinian people. Trade unions, social justice organizations, faith organizations, cultural workers and others condemn the brutal violence against the people of Gaza and violence against Palestinians in Israel and the West Bank and are demanding a ceasefire and space for negotiations for a peaceful resolution to the current armed conflict and an end to the illegal Israeli occupation.

Trudeau continues to condone Israeli war crimes by responding to calls for a ceasefire and end to the siege of Gaza with his proposal for 'humanitarian pauses.' To call for a 'pause' in a genocidal campaign is to condone it. The world sees and unreservedly condemns the new Nakba against the Palestinian people and calls for the UN and all state actors to join in efforts to bring it to an end. The insistence of the Prime Minister, Defence Minister and others on supporting war crimes under the guise of Israel's "right to defend itself" is condemned by Canadian and world public opinion. Canadians are rightly saying "not in our name!" and demanding that the Canadian government change course.



The week of October 16, more than 30 Members of Parliament from the Green, New Democratic and Liberal parties sent a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau in which they said "We demand that Canada join the growing international call for an immediate ceasefire. Canada must act before more innocent children are killed." The

letter also calls for Canada to do all in its power to facilitate the opening of a humanitarian corridor for humanitarian aid supplies. They also "call on Canada to strongly stand up for international law. International law is clear that civilians and all those not taking part in the fighting must on no account be attacked and must be spared and protected. Canada must remind all parties to this conflict of their responsibilities in this regard. Canada must recognize that, for generations, the Palestinian people have suffered under occupation. Canada must reaffirm its commitment to a free Palestinian state living peacefully alongside a free Israeli state and do all it can to bring the parties to the negotiating table."

An online petition to the Prime Minister has been registered, Petition e-4649, initiated by Maeva Gaudrault from Montreal and sponsored by NDP MP for Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie, Alexandre Boulerice. The petition calls for Canada to demand an immediate ceasefire, to ask that Israel lift the blockade of the Gaza Strip and authorize the creation of a humanitarian corridor, ask that Israel meet its commitments under the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law. It calls for Canada to meet its international commitment to promote and defend human rights and to take any other measure necessary to protect civilians, both Israelis and Palestinians, and help foster a climate conducive to building a lasting peace. The petition can be accessed [here](#).

Trade Unions



Labour for Palestine action in Ottawa, October 25, 2023

The Ontario Federation of Labour calls for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the blockade of Gaza, the restoration of humanitarian aid and immediate return of all people being held by Hamas and civilians being held in detention without charge by Israel. The Public Service Alliance of Canada calls for an immediate ceasefire and opposes Israel's illegal restriction of water electricity, food and medicine to the more than 2 million people of Gaza and demands the immediate establishment of a humanitarian corridor. The National Union of Public and General Employees also issued a call for a ceasefire and the enforcement of international law. Other unions have joined in actions and joint calls with similar demands.

At the Canadian Union of Public Employees 2023 National Convention, on October 24, delegates debated and passed a resolution that CUPE will "Demand the Canadian government call for an immediate ceasefire in Israel-Palestine, an end of its sale of arms to Israel, an end to diplomatic immunity for the state of Israel, and for an end to Israel's blockade of Gaza and the restoration of aid and the basic necessities of life", and that "CUPE will conduct member education about the history of Israel's occupation and colonization of Palestine, Canada's complicity and what trade unions can do to support a just peace."

Anti-War, Social Justice and Faith Groups

On October 13 KAIROS Canada and its member churches and agencies -- including the Anglican Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Mennonite Central Committee of Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and the United Church of Canada issued an "Ecumenical Statement on Violence between Hamas and Israel." In the letter they call on "our members and all people of goodwill" to pray and work for a just and lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis, to write to their Member of Parliament to urge Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Minister Melanie Joly to call for an immediate ceasefire, a safe corridor for humanitarian aid to Gaza, an end to the current blockade, the immediate and safe release of all those being detained. They end with "In addition to condemning the spiraling violence and doing everything in its power for an immediate ceasefire, Canada must work with renewed effort toward peace with justice that upholds the rights of both Palestinians and Israelis to life and to freedom from violence and discrimination, and an end to the occupation."

On October 15 members of the Jewish community in Toronto organized one of several actions calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. A shiva and vigil was held in Matt Cohen Park to mourn the deaths of Israelis and Palestinians and call for the safe return of the people held by Hamas in Gaza. Organizers led over a hundred people in songs and discussion and a recitation of the mourner's Kaddish, a Jewish mourning prayer, after which they crossed the street to the office of Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland carrying a banner calling for a ceasefire. Several Jewish organizations organized an action on the morning of October 23 at which several hundred people gathered outside the Israeli consulate in Toronto calling for a ceasefire, for Canada to stop funding the Israeli military and for an end to the occupation of Palestine.



Toronto, October 23, 2023

Groups like Independent Jewish Voices, Jewish Voice for Peace, and B'Tselem have been lobbying for an end to what they aptly refer to as an apartheid regime in Israel. They have been active for years and their numbers around the world are growing. (In Washington, DC on October 18, some 10,000 Jews demonstrated peacefully, calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Reports inform that this resulted in hundreds of them being arrested.)

The National Council of Canadian Muslims denounced the war crimes being committed against the people of Gaza, the failure of the Canadian government to take a stand in defence of Palestinians' rights and an increase of over 1,000 per cent in "hate incidents" reported to them in the period of one week. On their website they provide a letter that readers can send to Trudeau demanding that Canada do its part for an urgent and immediate ceasefire, denounce the Islamophobic and racist backlash against Palestinian and Muslim communities in Canada, and protect the right of

Canadians to express their solidarity with the people of Palestine.

On October 14, Amnesty International Canada issued an open letter to Prime Minister Trudeau calling on Canada to urge the immediate lifting of Israel's illegal and inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip, the respect of international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians by all parties, noting that "We are alarmed by the unprecedented scale of violations of essential principles of international humanitarian and human rights law and the grave risks facing civilians." In particular they condemn the order by the Israeli Defense Forces for the evacuation of northern Gaza and Gaza City, prohibited under international law, and point out that "International humanitarian law imposes an absolute prohibition on attacking civilians." They condemn the Hamas actions of October 7 as "egregious violations of international law and amount to war crimes" and assert "These war crimes, however, do not, and must not be used to, justify collective punishment." They call on the Canadian government to "unequivocally and publicly urge Israeli authorities to immediately rescind the 'evacuation order,' call on all parties to prioritize the protection of civilian lives as mandated by international humanitarian law and end indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, facilitate humanitarian assistance, and "use all diplomatic efforts at your disposal to address the root causes of the repeated cycles of violence and help end Israel's 16-year-long illegal blockade of Gaza and Israel's system of apartheid imposed on all Palestinians." The letter ends with "Prime Minister, you have the obligation, on behalf of all Canadians, to uphold Canada's international commitments to human rights and hold Israel to its obligations. At this critical hour we urge you to stand on the right side of history and unequivocally use Canada's voice and influence to protect the most vulnerable."

Over 50 organizations endorsed a call for "Ceasefire Now, End the Siege, For a Just and Lasting Peace" on October 21. The call points out that "We endorse the Canadian government's call for humanitarian aid to Gaza and the safe return of hostages. These demands cannot be meaningfully addressed without an immediate ceasefire and while Israel's blockade of Gaza continues." In calling for immediate steps to end the blockade, provide humanitarian assistance and prevent escalation of the war on Gaza, the statement says "Beyond these immediate steps, the world must support efforts for a just and lasting peace in Israel-Palestine and address the root cause of the violence: Israel's decades-long occupation of Palestinian territory." Signatories include trade unions, faith groups, academics and human rights and social justice organizations.

Artists, Academics and Cultural Workers

Canadian artists, academics, and cultural workers are vocalizing their support of Palestine in an open letter that has garnered thousands of signatures, including from members of nearly 200 organizations and groups.

"We, the undersigned artists, academics, and cultural workers, pledge our support for the Palestinian people in the face of over 75 years of Israeli apartheid, settler colonialism, military occupation, and ethnic cleansing," their letter states.

The letter points out that "Palestine solidarity supporters and Palestinians around the world, particularly in the U.S., Canada, and Europe, are being criminalized, intimidated, imprisoned, facing unprecedented levels of anti-Palestinian racism and incitement of violence," and in the face of the illegal Israeli bombardment they "call on all people of conscience to show their meaningful solidarity with Palestinians."

The statement expressed disappointment and shame at the response of the Canadian government, elected representatives, and institutions, "who have once again voiced their overwhelming support for apartheid Israel and legitimized the ongoing shelling of Gaza and the escalation of military violence in the West Bank. " They decry that this has created an "atmosphere of increased racism, policing, intimidation, and fear for Palestinians and their supporters..."

The letter reads: "How must Palestinians in Ottawa have felt to see the Israeli flag projected on Parliament Hill while Israel dropped internationally banned white phosphorus in residential neighborhoods of Gaza, promising to "open the gates of hell"? What message does that send to Palestinians? Voices of conscience are publicly scolded and defamed, suggesting to Palestinians among us that they cannot voice their grief in public. In attacking political and labour leaders who have voiced their support for Palestinians, the Canadian government has built an environment of fear and fueled acts of discrimination against Palestinians and their supporters."

By "Failing to document the war crimes of the Israeli regime or the suffering of Palestinians, and proliferating racist claims from Israel without substantiation, Canadian media is contributing to the dehumanization of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and beyond," the letter states.

The artists, cultural workers and academics respond to the call from Palestinian artists and cultural workers for a cultural boycott of Israel saying, "we pledge to accept neither professional invitations to Israel, nor funding, from any institutions linked to its government until it complies with international law and universal principles of human rights. Without international ground-up pressure through the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, the Israeli regime will continue to practice apartheid and commit crimes against the Palestinian people unhindered."

In conclusion the statement reads:

"It is easy to look back at history and recognize right from wrong, but it takes bravery to speak for justice in the present moment. Join us in taking a principled stand. Apartheid is a security threat to all, and none of us are free until all of us are free."

Vigorous Action Opposes Canadian and CARICOM Interference in Haiti!



On Tuesday, October 17, a vigorous picket was held from 4:00 pm in front of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's office at the corner of Wellington and Elgin in Ottawa. The action was organized to denounce the Canada-CARICOM Summit being held on the same day, and to oppose any interference by Canada in the Caribbean. Marchers chanted: *Solidarity with the Haitian People! No to Canada's Interference in the Caribbean! No to Canada-CARICOM Support for Foreign Interference! Popular Solidarity: Yes! Interference: No!*

One after the other, activists took to the stage to denounce the situation. Among others, Jennie-Laure Sully of Solidarité Québec-Haiti said that Canada's interference in Haiti is designed to protect the interests of the Canadian oligarchy and those of their accomplice, the Haitian oligarchy. "We are led to believe that Canadian cooperation is a form of solidarity. But it's a cooperation that masks interference." She added: "One of the plans of the Canadian and U.S. oligarchy is to make sure they have a Haitian nation that serves as cheap labour. They want to keep them in semi-slavery so they can despoil these people. We say *No* to Canada's interference in Haiti."



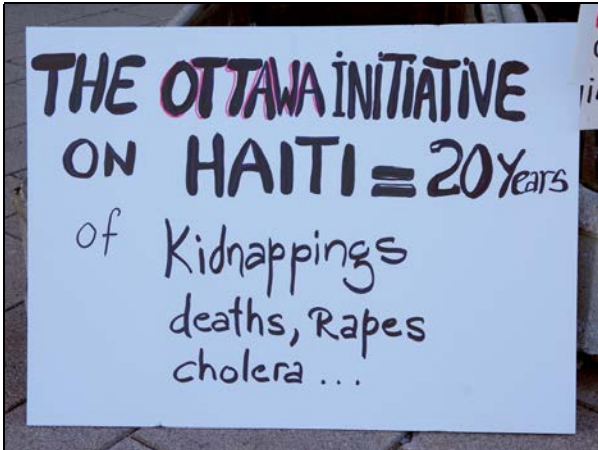
Jean Saint-Vil, an activist in the Outaouais region, went on to declare ironically that the imperialists have run out of ideas. "They want to dissociate themselves from the criminals they installed in Haiti 20 years ago -- since Ottawa's Meech Lake initiative on Haiti -- and who created the current chaos. To dissociate themselves from the chaos, they announce that Canada is going to give instructions to the Kenyan soldiers and police who are going to Haiti so that they don't commit rape. They're taking us for fools," he said. He denounced the deception of the resolution adopted by the Security Council to send troops from Kenya. "The UN MINUSTAH mission raped Haitian women and young men. With this resolution, as it's not an official UN mission, if there are abuses committed in Haiti, we won't be able to say it's the UN's responsibility. The UN mission that committed horrible crimes in Haiti is protected by the United States, while millions of Haitian victims cannot obtain reparation for the murders, killings and cholera."

Other activists intervened in the same vein, to the applause of the demonstrators and the honking of motorists.

The rally was joined at around 5:30 pm by a strong contingent from the Palestinian community, who had come to mourn their people following the bombing of a hospital in Gaza that very day, and to denounce the Canadian government for its shameful support of the Israeli government. Shame on the Canadian government!







On the Election of New Speaker of the House of Commons

Factional Fighting in the Parliament Underscores Need for Democratic Renewal of Political Process

– Anna Di Carlo –

On October 3 Hull-Aylmer Liberal MP Greg Fergus was elected the new speaker of the House of Commons. A new speaker became necessary after the resignation of the former speaker Anthony Rota who was thrown under the bus as being solely responsible for the two standing ovations the entire House of Commons gave to a former member of the Ukrainian WWII Nazi SS Galizien on September 22. Much has been made of the fact that Fergus is the first Black Canadian to serve as Speaker of the House which the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada concurs is indeed significant.[1] But what received scant attention was what Fergus said when elected. In fact, all those vying for the position spoke in the same vein.[2]

Like many speakers before him, in his bid to be elected, Fergus promised to end the rancour among MPs and dysfunctional proceedings of the House. "As your Speaker, I would restore, and quickly bring back, honour to the chamber," Fergus told MP's. "... there is respect for each other, in the way we treat each other and the way we talk to Canadians. In other words, this is all about decorum," he said.

In his acceptance speech he reiterated his wish for decorum, stating, "I am going to be working hard on this, and I need all of your help to make this happen, because this is the place where hard debates will happen."

But it is not about decorum. It is about the inability of parliament today to reestablish an equilibrium needed to say the decisions taken by government represent "the national will," and are good for "the nation." It is about the urgent need to renew the political process to eliminate positions of power and privilege and empower Canadians. It is about changing the direction of the economy so that it is not the bloody profits of the narrow private interests and oligopolies which are put at the centre of government concerns but the well-being of the people. Once the people are forgotten, abused and silenced, illusion-mongering that Members of Parliament represent their "constituents" or that Canada's institutions are "democratic" without permitting discussion of what that even means, are another block to solving problems and finding a way forward which favours the interests of the people.

Today, the vicious factional fighting between narrow private interests which call themselves political parties is directed by marketing companies hired by these cartel parties to defame, discredit, attack, misrepresent, disinform and do whatever it takes to lie, cheat and worm their way into positions of power and privilege. To say the problem is the decorum in the House of Commons is part of everyday chitter-chatter to make sure there is no discussion of substance on all the matters which profoundly concern Canadians including not only domestic affairs but also Canada's role in the world.

When asked by CBC if Fergus could achieve his aim of re-establishing decorum in the House of Commons, one expert answered with a simple "No." "Parliament has always been contentious, it's always been rowdy. There's never been a quiet moment really," he said. Tari Ajadi, assistant professor of political science at McGill, answered the question in a similar fashion, noting that there has been a long steady decline in parliament. "As for the actual, meaningful impact on policy," he told CBC, "I think there's nil. As for a meaningful impact on the decorum of the House of Commons, I think that that will also be nil. I don't think that this appointment is going to shift that in a meaningful way."

Finally, when asked, Fergus himself said he did not think whatever he did would have any impact whatsoever.

While it is clear that attempts by the speaker to re-establish decorum will go unheeded, such answers reveal a typical refusal to go to the heart of the matter which is that today political parties have no standing whatsoever in the parliament and they are no longer primary organizations which link the citizens of the country to government policy and decision-making. If they have members, these members play no role in discussing policy or setting the direction of the country. MPs are merely tools for carrying out whatever they are told to do and say and even government ministers, beginning with the Prime Minister are merely tools of what narrow private interests which have taken over the functions of the public sector decide. Today, it is mainly the U.S. war machine, including the U.S. and Canadian intelligence agencies which set policy by declaring what constitutes matters of national security, the security of the economy, and everything that determines matters pertaining to crime and punishment, war and peace.

Since the 1993 federal election which brought the Liberals to power, the House of Commons lost its equilibrium and a cartel system of party government set in. The Liberals' desperation for money to pay for elections led to the sponsorship scandal which showed that corruption had become a main feature of party rule. Far from eliminating it by renewing the political process as Canadians were demanding, one government after another, with the full cooperation of all the cartel parties with seats in the House of Commons, changed electoral laws so as to strengthen their positions of privilege and power and exclude Canadians from having any say whatsoever over the decisions which affect their lives and society itself. Also excluded are political parties without seats in the House of Commons and organizations of workers, women, youth and others. Added to this, since 9/11, besides the narrow private interests organized as oligopolies which operate as cartels and coalitions, Canadian and foreign intelligence agencies have overtly taken over telling government what policies it must dictate when it comes to the fundamental issues pertaining to defining crime

and punishment as well as problems of war and peace.

The violation of people's conscience and depriving them of the right to free speech and to organize -- in the name of national security and anti-hate legislation and anti-terror laws -- has become commonplace. The only "right" of Canadians is to submit to the views, policies and values espoused by the state or lose their jobs, careers and reputations to campaigns which smear and defame them. Initially, the idea of enshrining the rights to speak, organize and to conscience in constitutions was to protect those who do not think the same as the state or believe in the same causes or share the same aspirations. Today, because the views of the state are so self-serving and unconscionable, its only recourse is to criminalize people, jail them, fine them and deprive them of the rights which each human person is entitled to.



The lack of equilibrium in Parliament is a serious problem for Canadians because governments of police powers push extremist positions in the name of defending democracy against authoritarianism. Only by engaging in the work of renewing the democratic process can Canadians establish a form of rule which upholds the rights of all by virtue of being human. The problem of decorum will not exist.

Notes

1. As part of its on-going series entitled Being Black in Canada, CBC News interviewed leading Black Canadians about the significance of the election of Greg Fergus to the position of Speaker of the House of Commons.

George Elliot Clarke, English professor at the University of Toronto and Parliament's former poet laureate, told CBC that the election of a Black Speaker is historic. "[It] is, of course, a major event in terms of Black Canadian History, African-Canadian history and also this history of this country," Clarke said. CBC summed up his view by stating Clark believes "it challenges a Western racial hierarchy that sees white people at the top."

Debra Thompson, Canada Research Chair in Racial Inequality in Democratic Societies at McGill told CBC, that Fergus' election "is quite significant." "It's not often we see Black folks in the upper echelons of power in this country. Representation is definitely not everything, but it's something," she said. "When you grow up Black in this country ... and you walk through the world and nobody in a position of authority looks like you, that's limiting to how you imagine your life progressing and what you think you can achieve as a person."

Velma Morgan of Operation Black Vote Canada, echoed this sentiment. "For our community, we are able to see someone that looks like us," she said. "And for everybody else, it says that we matter and we've contributed to our society and we continue to contribute to our society."

2. An extract of an October 2 article by Alex Ballingall, Ottawa based reporter covering federal politics for the Toronto Star, aptly describes what MPs have to say about the level of discourse in the House of Commons

[...] Not only will the person they choose have to steer the institution away from the ignominy of the Nazi controversy, but some of those vying for the job say there is a profound and pressing need to repair political discourse in the House, which was unacceptable even before parliamentarians applauded someone who fought for Hitler's Third Reich.

"Awful" – that's the word longtime Liberal MP Sean Casey, who is running to replace Rota as Speaker, used to

sum up the state of decorum in the current House of Commons.

"Being in an environment where people are intimidated and bullied on a regular basis during question period is not OK. Being in an environment where we have people screaming at the Speaker is not OK. That's where we are now" Casey said.

For New Democrat MP Carol Hughes, one of two assistant deputy Speakers who are now both vying for the top job, the tone of debate has become "unacceptable" and needs to change. Her colleague as assistant deputy, Liberal MP Alexandra Mendès, believes discussions in the House have grown "out of control."

"If we want to continue to interest Canadians in what happens in the House of Commons, we have to show them that what we debate and what we exchange on is done in a respectful and mature manner, and we're not just throwing insults at one another," said Mendès.

Conservative MP Chris d'Entremont is the current deputy Speaker, and also running for Rota's vacant job. He attributed much of the "sharper" tone in Parliament to the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced MPs to participate in Commons debates virtually for long stretches of time.

"Members of Parliament really didn't get to know each other at all, so there's no friendships being made here, there's no understanding what the position of other members are," he told the Star.

Yet regardless of where it comes from, those vying for the Speaker's chair appear to agree something needs to change in how debates are refereed in the House of Commons.

According to Mendès, it can be as simple as more rigorously applying the rules that already exist to enforce decorum. For example, she said the House has grown too lenient in allowing MPs to point out when somebody isn't present in the chamber – something that is explicitly forbidden but frequently happens without consequence.

Both Hughes and Casey also stressed that the next Speaker needs to be stricter, noting how some MPs have grown too comfortable challenging decisions about how to manage debate and what types of statements are acceptable.

"We have now in the House experienced members who openly defy the chair and repeatedly receive a slap on the wrist," Casey said, calling for more "tough love" from the next Speaker. "Ground rules need to be laid early and observed."

Elizabeth May, the Green Party leader in Parliament and a British Columbia MP, said she is putting her name in the race for Speaker but not actively campaigning for the position. For her, the need to enforce the rules has existed for many years, including a convention that prohibited MPs from reading from written speeches that has been largely abandoned.

"The debates we have in the House are essentially an exercise in bad high school theatre," May said. "It's not edifying."

May also bemoaned how in recent decades successive Speakers have agreed to use lists provided by the whips from each party to decide whom to call on during debates in question period. For May, that means MPs have a greater incentive to please their own partisan bosses than they do to follow the Speaker's strictures about how to behave in the House of Commons.

"The more that backroom party operatives have anything to do with what happens on the floor of Parliament is contributing to the loss of respectful discourse," May said.

To steer debate in the Commons, Rota often paused discussions to ask MPs to stop shouting over each other. More rarely, he would publicly name an MP who was misbehaving, or shift around the order in which they were called upon to ask questions. Further action was even rarer still – and perhaps wasn't that effective.

Last year, for instance, Rota ejected Conservative MP Raquel Dancho from the Commons after she refused to apologize for accusing a Liberal MP of lying during a debate over gun control. In the days to follow, Dancho claimed she was being punished for "speaking the truth," while the Conservatives cited the incident in a drive for fresh donations from their supporters.

Situations like that suggest that the next Speaker should refrain from ejecting MPs, and instead refuse to recognize

them during debates if they use language or behave in ways deemed to be "unparliamentary," Casey said.

To d'Entremont, it's sometimes better to try to find a middle ground, especially when MPs from both sides of the House are locked in a heated argument. Such an example occurred after the Nazi incident, when Conservative MP Melissa Lantsman called Liberal House leader Karina Gould a "disgrace." With Liberals demanding Lantsman apologize for using unparliamentary language, and d'Entremont overseeing debate after Rota's resignation, he took a day to consider what happened. The following day, he ruled Lantsman's words weren't "unparliamentary," even if they failed to support the "essential civility and respect" parliamentarians should show to each other. He decided not to take any action over the incident, other than to encourage MPs to use nicer language.

The ruling sparked criticism from Liberal MP Chris Bittle, who said it showed d'Entremont shouldn't be the next Speaker. But d'Entremont said he felt he struck the right balance, especially given that "more was being said" during the debate on both sides.

"In a lot of situations like this, when everybody's upset, then you're probably in the right place," he said.

In his view, the next Speaker will still have to be stricter, in the sense of being quicker to tamp down tensions when tempers rise in the House.

"Whoever the next Speaker is going to be has to be more judicious and quick in their decision-making, rather than just sort of letting things flow a little too far," he said.

Along with the responsibility of the job, the Speaker gets a \$92,800 salary bump on top of the \$194,600 base annual salary for all MPs. The Speaker also gets the keys to an official residence called "The Farm," a 19th-century estate in the Gatineau hills that Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King bequeathed to the federal government when he died there in 1950.

Perks aside, however, the role is essential to Canadian democracy, and now comes with the added responsibility of helping the House recover from the blunder of its recognition of a man who fought with a Nazi unit in the Second World War, said May.

"I am fond of Anthony (Rota) as a person, but I could kill him because this was just so unnecessary. It wasn't embarrassing. It was mortifying. You feel physically ill from the fact that it happened," she said. "And it's certainly horrific, just the aftermath and the way in which, of course, everyone's going to play partisan games with it.

"Oh, man – the next Speaker has quite a challenge."

(Toronto Star, October 2, 2023)

Old Arrangements Cannot Restore Equilibrium in Party System of Government

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the federal election held on October 25, 1993, which profoundly changed Canadian politics. The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) analyzed that as a result of the election, a disequilibrium had been created which must be settled in favour of the people. For the first time in Canadian history, a situation no longer existed whereby the governing party was replaced by the party in opposition. Throughout Canada's history, federally, it had either been the Liberals or the Progressive Conservatives (PCs) in power, with the other party as the Official Opposition. With the resounding defeat of the PCs at the polls in the 1993 election -- they were reduced to two seats in the House -- they lost official party status in the Parliament. The Bloc Quebecois, which is not a national party, formed the official national opposition, along with the Reform Party which, for its part, ran no candidates in Quebec.

This disequilibrium marked the further metamorphosis of power which began with the Referendum in 1992, when the Canadian electorate resoundingly defeated the establishment parties by voting *No!* to the Charlottetown Accord.

The leader of CPC(M-L), Hardial Bains convoked a press conference the day after the election in which he pointed out that all the political forces would become very active in the coming period trying to reestablish the parliamentary equilibrium in their favour. This means, he said, that Canadians must become very active to pursue their program of getting involved in mainstream politics by dealing with the concrete issues which face them as these issues present themselves. The program of Canadians to empower themselves has to be fought for within this arena of establishing an equilibrium which goes in favour of the people, he pointed out. He stressed that unless the people become a factor in the equation, the establishment forces will reestablish arrangements which favour the status quo of their rule and reaction, further eroding the achievements the people had made in the previous decades and heightening the dangers which face them and society, nationally and internationally. "A party which is incapable of opening new paths within the country cannot open them up internationally either," he said.

The newspaper *Today/Tomorrow* reported on the press conference saying:

"Bains also pointed out that in order to reestablish the equilibrium in their favour, the establishment forces will become increasingly demagogic, because the objective basis for them to have the 'just society' they are speaking about, no longer exists. This 'just society' was created in the 1960s, when the expansion of American capital into Canada was used to build schools, hospitals and infrastructure of various kinds. It went into crisis with the onset of the recession in the 1970s at which time wage controls were brought in and the cutbacks began in various forms. Furthermore, the furtherance of the cause of establishing political equality between all citizens and residents does not favour them either, because it erodes their stranglehold on political power which they seek to preserve, Hardial Bains pointed out.

"Discussing the necessity to provide a modern definition of citizenship, Bains dealt with the negative role of various forces in promoting the marginalization of all sections of society. He pointed out that the practice of elite accommodation, which is part of Canada's political process, 'is a strategic policy of those who want to maintain the status quo. Elite accommodation is not in favour of the ghettoized people. ...It is not in order to assist these different sections of the people. It should be understood.' He added that 'elite accommodation is one of the most powerful weapons of the bourgeoisie to keep the middle strata away from the working class. It is a weapon which is directed against the people, many of whom are democratic, enlightened in many ways, who would like to see the situation change. But once they become victims of elite accommodation, they lose their positive role.'"

"The current situation has created a complexity, Hardial Bains, pointed out. Neither can the establishment forces carry on in the old way, given the disequilibrium which has been created, nor can they overcome their credibility crisis on the basis of demagoguery and illusion-making which they will be forced to engage in, in order to maintain appearances. This means that Canadians must activate themselves, to ensure that they provide solutions to the problems which face them.

"Bains also pointed out that in the election, the working class played no role, while the middle strata succumbed to the scare tactics of the establishment forces, according to which Canada faced a danger from the right-wing and separatist forces. It has been acknowledged that this created the conditions for a Liberal sweep in the election, he said. For instance, he said, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) 'played its usual role. It created the scenario that the main enemy is comprised of the Tories. On that basis, they had hoped that the people would go for the NDP and they completely lost on this question.' In the end, he said, such forces, including the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and others, favoured the election of a Liberal government. In Quebec, Hardial Bains pointed out, 'the trade unions put their entire lot with the Bloc and, as time passes, they will find out that they also lost with the Bloc because, with such a massive Liberal majority, the Bloc cannot really lay claim to uncontested popularity, even in Quebec.'"

"As for the participation of the Marxist-Leninist Party in the election, Hardial Bains pointed out

that the Party 'set its program and stuck to it. Its program was to keep the establishment parties out for the next five years. What has happened is that the establishment's balance has been shaken. The situation does not show that the establishment won. Its equilibrium has been thrown completely out of whack.(...) At the same time, a new equilibrium has yet to be established."

"How far the Party and the working class will be able to take advantage of the situation, this really is the question," he said. He called on all members of the Party to discuss this thoroughly so as to intervene in the situation effectively. "In this situation of disequilibrium," Hardial Bains said, "once again the question arises that only the working class can lead an alternative, which is socialism. This should be brought forth through our work. In other words, immediately the debate must begin and practical work must begin. In no way can the Party afford to be subjective just because the adversarial electoral system is fully controlled by the establishment."

"What this means," Hardial Bains pointed out, "is that the working class must mobilize itself in the coming period in its own favour and it must also neutralize the middle strata, so that it breaks away from supporting the establishment and takes up positions which favour Canadians and the real resolution of the problems of the economy, democracy and federalism." "In this respect," Bains said, "the Party cannot go to the people and merely say that the Liberal Party is not going to do anything! This is not the issue, even though we should tell the people that the Liberal Party cannot solve the problems of the economy, the political process and the constitution. The Marxist-Leninist Party and all political people have to actually make proposals, as to how the situation can be changed. The first proposal which we have put up for deliberation is that the problem of the economy can only be sorted out if we have a binding referendum on its direction. Canadians have the right to set the direction of the economy. We cannot wait to see what the Liberal Party is going to do." He pointed out that discussion is also needed on the issue of changing the political process and drafting a new constitution.

"We have to get into action without delay so that the working people become a factor in the equation and the equilibrium settles in their favour, not in favour of reaction and the status quo," Hardial Bains concluded.

(Today/Tomorrow, October 27, 1993)

Status For All, Without Exception

Thousands of Canadians and Quebeckers Take Action on Eve of Opening of Parliament

– Diane Johnston –



Toronto

On September 17, the day before the fall session of parliament opened, thousands of Canadians along with migrant workers without status, held actions in 17 cities across the country to demand that the Trudeau government prioritize the regularization of close to half a million workers in Canada without permanent status. The actions were organized by the Migrant Rights Network with the support of more than 160 organizations including unions. The united demand was that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau keep his pledge, made more than 20 months ago, to implement a regularization program for all migrant workers.



Montreal

In Montreal, hundreds of people descended upon the riding office of Marc Miller, the recently appointed federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. The action was organized by Solidarity Across Borders.

Protesters told Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to stop stalling, that justice and equality for all requires permanent resident status now.

"We are fighting for regularization because it's the right thing to do for all communities of immigrants open to abuse. These are people who have contributed to the development of Canada economically as well as in many other ways," one speaker said. "We are demanding that Immigration Minister Marc Miller implement a regularization program for all, which includes everyone on Canadian soil, without condition or exception."

Speaking on behalf of Solidarity Across Borders, Samira Jasmin called for an end to deportation and detention. She informed that at present dozens of inmates at the Laval immigration holding centre are on a hunger strike demanding to be treated like human beings, and called for their release.

Those without status took to the mic to inform about the abuse they suffer because they are undocumented. For example, they are denied access to health care and education for themselves and their families, as well as proper housing. They are without a work permit and live in constant fear of arrest, detention and deportation. As contributors to Quebec and Canadian society and as human beings, they ask no more than what belongs to them by right: equality.

Participants were called upon to step up the struggle for a regularization program and status for all, without condition or exception.





Toronto

In Toronto a lively demonstration 3,000 strong marched through the streets from Bloor and Yonge to Dundas Square and on to City Hall. Slogans rang out, such as *Status for All, Now!*; *Migrant Students, Migrant Workers Welcome Here!* and *When We Fight We Win!* A number of unions participated in the action, including the Canadian Labour Congress, the Ontario Nurses' Association, the United Steelworkers and CUPE.

Throughout the action, speakers from rights organizations, such as Migrante, the Workers' Action Centre, and Migrant Students United, as well as individual workers, some of whom have been coming to Canada for decades on work permits, told of their experiences and the grave injustices being committed against them. These included farm workers, factory workers, international students working in retail, and home care workers, who spoke with pride of their contributions to Canadian society and demanded that their rights be respected.

Those who spoke in Toronto, like elsewhere, brought out the particulars of the abuse and exploitation experienced in Canada. This includes long hours, earning less than minimum wage, being denied basic health care and social services, wage theft, being unable to visit their children and the mental distress and anxiety of living in constant fear of being caught, and of being criminalized by employers for speaking out, and threatened with deportation.



Vancouver

In Vancouver several hundred people participated in a Status for All rally. Speakers pointed out that seasonal agricultural worker and temporary foreign worker programs create a super-precarious workforce with few rights. They face the constant threat of deportation, including for organizing.



Action outside immigration detention centre in Surrey, BC.

Speakers at various actions cited the recent statement of the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Tomoya Obokata, who criticized the Trudeau Liberals for supporting various temporary foreign workers' programs in Canada that are "breeding grounds" for modern day slavery. They called for an end to the temporary worker regime and for full status for all workers.

The militant actions across Canada in support of full status and rights for migrant workers also underscored the resolve of the participants to continue to organize and fight until full status for all is achieved. They demand that as members of one working class, migrant workers can continue to contribute their skills to building Canadian society and live with dignity and enjoy their basic rights as workers.

Actions also took place at Canadian embassies in Britain, France, Spain and India in support of the demand for regularization of undocumented workers in Canada, organizers reported. For a video of action by allies in England [click here](#).



Ottawa



Kingston



Hamilton



London



Edmonton



Victoria

A victory in Canada would be a victory for all of us!
 Une victoire au Canada serait une victoire pour nous toutes et tous!
 Una victoria en Canadá sería una victoria para tod@s nosotr@s.



PARIS, France



LONDON, UK

VALENCIA, España

International

(Photos: TML, Migrant Workers Action for Change, Solidarity Across Borders, Decent Work and Health, Gawley, Migrant Rights Network, K. McCoy, A.M. Dorts, M. Dutt, S. Kaplan, M. Graeme)

Montrealers Demand Regularization and an End to Exploitation and Abuse



On Saturday, October 21, around 100 people gathered in the rain in Montreal for a rally outside the constituency office of federal Immigration Minister Marc Miller. The action was one of three events taking place in Quebec on the weekend of October 21-22 that some 40 community and union organizations had mobilized for, with three main demands: the immediate establishment of an inclusive regularization program for the undocumented and those with precarious status; an immediate end to deportation and detention; and the abolition of closed work permits for temporary foreign workers.

Participants denounced the fact that despite Prime Minister Justin Trudeau having mandated his minister of Immigration to explore ways to regularize the status of undocumented workers in December of 2021, close to two years later, nothing has been done.

"There's no human rights for persons who must work while fearing that they may be deported," declared Susan Ponte Rivera, a member of the Immigrant Workers Centre. "The wait has been long, especially for those whose situation has worsened as a result of the rise in the cost of living and the housing crisis," she said.

Nina Gonzalez, a spokesperson for the Immigrant Workers Centre, who likened the situation of most temporary foreign workers to one of modern slavery, demanded an end to closed work permits. "We have value! We have rights! Together, we are fighting for our cause!" she concluded.



Mario Beachemin, from the Central des syndicats du Québec (CSQ), speaking on behalf of all of Quebec's union centrals, affirmed the need for an inclusive regularization program, one worked out in close collaboration with those providing a voice to those deprived of one. He also addressed the urgency of putting an end to closed work permits and of providing access for temporary foreign workers to permanent residency and to all the public and social services they require, along with decent working and living conditions.

Speaking of those who find themselves in the most precarious of situations, another member of Solidarity Across Borders, demanded equality for everyone living in Quebec.

"Finally," she continued, "our demands most certainly include freedom for Palestinians, Palestinians who have the highest number of refugees worldwide! Our hearts go out to the residents of Gaza and the rest of Palestine at this time! We have always believed in freedom of movement but we also believe in freedom to remain and freedom to return. We call for Free Palestine and an end to apartheid and to genocide. Ceasefire Now!"



(Photos: Comité d'action de Parc-Extension)

UN Special Rapporteur's Damning Statement on Canada's Treatment of Temporary Foreign Workers

Tomoya Obokata, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, visited Canada from August 23 to September 6. While here, he travelled to Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Moncton.

The stated purpose of his visit was "to assess Canada's efforts to prevent and address contemporary forms of slavery, including forced labour, child labour, domestic servitude, debt bondage and sexual exploitation within its territory and abroad ... and to present constructive recommendations to address the challenges he observed."

Besides federal, provincial and Quebec government officials and department representatives, he met with trade unions, civil society organizations, academics and Canadian and migrant workers involved in agriculture, caregiving, meat and seafood processing, amongst others.

In his End of Mission Statement, the UN Special Rapporteur noted: "I am deeply disturbed by the accounts of exploitation and abuse shared with me by migrant workers."

"Employer-specific work permit regimes, including certain Temporary Foreign Worker Programs, make migrant workers vulnerable to contemporary forms of slavery, as they cannot report abuses without fear of deportation," he said.



UN Special Rapporteur Tomoya Obokata (3rd from left) holds discussion on situation of Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited people in Canada, August 25, 2023

"So-called 'temporary' foreign workers address a permanent need on the labour market and have valuable skills that are critical to the Canadian economy," he added, urging Canadian authorities to regularize the status of foreign migrant workers, and end the closed work permit system. "Canada must offer a clear pathway to permanent residency for all migrants, to prevent the recurrence of abuses," the UN expert stressed.

The Special Rapporteur is to submit his report on Canada to the United Nations Human Rights Council no later than September 2024.

(Source: United Nations, Canada: Anchor the fight against contemporary forms of slavery in human rights, a UN expert urges, 06 September 2023)

(Photo: L. Groulx)

Highlights from End of Mission Statement

The UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, Tomoya Obokata, issued a statement on September 6 at the end of his two-week visit to Canada. He notes that even though Canada "has ratified the majority of core international human rights instruments and fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization aimed at preventing forced labour, child labour, and labour exploitation and securing workers' rights, and participates in global fora addressing contemporary forms of slavery, ... there are several important treaties yet to be ratified." These include the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, as well as international labour standards related to the protection of migrant workers.

He recommends their "expeditious ratification and implementation ... in order to address violations of workers' fundamental rights."

Migrant Workers

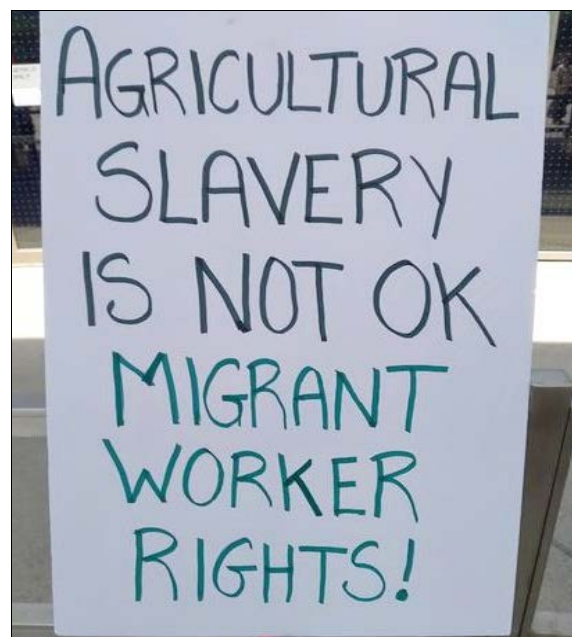
The Special Rapporteur writes that he "is disturbed by the fact that certain categories of migrant workers are made vulnerable ... by the policies that regulate their immigration status, employment,

and housing in Canada." He expresses particular concern over the fact "that this workforce is disproportionately racialized, attesting to deep-rooted racism and xenophobia entrenched in Canada's immigration system." In particular, he writes that "the agricultural and low-wage streams of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program constitute a breeding ground for contemporary forms of slavery." He then declares that he "is perturbed by reports that the share of workers entering Canada through this program is sharply on the rise."



The Special Rapporteur remarks that time and again the "Government of Canada has been made aware of the potential for abuse and exploitation and the lack of effective oversight of temporary foreign worker programs, ... including through reports from the Auditor-General and relevant Parliamentary Committees."

"Workers that enter Canada through these programs," he continues, "receive closed work permits, meaning that they cannot change employers and may face deportation upon termination of their employment." And although the Canadian government maintains that temporary foreign workers may quit their jobs and remain in Canada legally until the expiration of their visas, the UN expert notes this is not an option for most.



He details the hurdles they face: "They are prohibited from working until they can find a new employer to undertake a labour market impact assessment on their behalf, a process that in and of itself takes many months. They would also not be able to access most social services for persons without employment given their temporary status. This creates a dependency relationship between employers and employees, making the latter vulnerable to exploitation and abuse," and "many feel unable to report for fear of losing their migration status and/or employment."

"It is equally important," the Special Rapporteur states, "to recognize the existence of debt bondage among many migrants as they may pay large amounts of money to recruitment brokers in their countries of origin." He adds that "The rights of migrant workers are further curtailed by the governance gap between the Federal jurisdiction that governs their entry into Canada and the Provincial and Territorial jurisdictions that regulate working conditions in 90 per cent of jobs."



"The inability of workers to signal abuses is compounded by the fact that many workers reside in employer-provided accommodation, which is explicitly required of employers under some [Temporary Foreign Worker Programs], and may as such face homelessness if they lose their employment. Even where workers are not required to reside in employer-provided housing, they have limited affordable alternatives, as many employers are based in remote locations and there is an overall shortage of affordable housing in Canada."

A similar precarity exists in the case of international students, "who work in excess of the permitted 20 hours per week, asylum-seekers awaiting their work permits, undocumented migrant workers, and those that have lost status ... as they may not report abuses for fear of deportation. Employers who are aware of their status may exploit them under threat of denouncing them to immigration authorities."

The Special Rapporteur also informs he has received first-hand information from many quarters, "notably migrant workers themselves, pointing to the appalling working and living conditions in reality. They include excessive working hours, being obliged to perform extra-contractual tasks, physically dangerous tasks, low wages, no overtime pay, being denied access to health care and/or transport to medical facilities, limited access to social services including services for newcomers, and language courses, as well as sexual harassment, intimidation, and violence.... Those in employer-provided housing reported overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions, lack of privacy, lack of gender-sensitive housing arrangements" etc.

Labour and health and safety inspections "do not occur regularly, and when they do, may be conducted remotely via telephone and submission of photos, or, when in-person, with advance notice given to employers in most cases so that they can make necessary preparations."

Most migrant workers, he says, are also unaware of complaint mechanisms and are "afraid to report instances of labour law violations due to the fear of unemployment and deportation, along with other obstacles such as language barriers and limited access to the Internet."

Even though migrant workers in situations of exploitation and abuse can apply for an Open Work Permit for Vulnerable Workers, the Special Rapporteur emphasizes that "this is not an effective solution." He points out that "the worker must remain with the abusive employer or survive in Canada without the ability to work legally or access most social services until the open work permit application is granted." As well, there is "the high evidentiary standard required in practice to receive a positive decision in spite of a legal threshold of 'reasonable grounds,' and language barriers and lack of ability to navigate the legal process to obtain a permit without external assistance. Even once the permit is received, it is of limited duration and not renewable, and stigmatizing for many in practice as future employers may view holders of the permit as 'troublemakers.'"



As for Canada's National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking (2019-2024), it "does not commit

to review or revise Government policies which directly facilitate forced labour, including the agricultural and low-wage streams of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program."

The Special Rapporteur also expresses concern that "the rate of prosecution and punishment of contemporary forms of slavery is quite low in Canada" and surmises that "the number of victims and incidents as a whole is likely to be much higher when labour exploitation and other forms of contemporary slavery" are taken into consideration.



Migrant farmworkers in Canada from Guatemala

Conclusions

Amongst the many remedies required to address the situation, the Special Rapporteur raises the need for "measures to promote effective human rights due diligence in the activities of Canadian companies, reforming migration programs that serve as a breeding ground for contemporary forms of slavery and ending racialized discrimination in migration policies."

"The root causes of contemporary forms of slavery such as poverty, inequality and discrimination, which have been amplified by the legacy of colonialism and racism," he states, "must be tackled more seriously.... Closer coordination and unified approaches across all jurisdictions ... are also needed in a number of areas affecting the well-being of victims or those at risk of contemporary forms of slavery. In so doing, it is essential that the affected individuals and communities are fully included in all decision-making processes affecting their lives."



Key Recommendations Regarding Migrants' Human Rights

"- Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families 1990 and other important treaties;

"- Modify the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to enable workers to choose employers freely without any restriction and discrimination;

- "- Apply Provincial/Territorial employment standard legislation fully to those under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program without any exemptions or exceptions, including trade union rights;
- "- Strengthen labour and housing inspections. Allocate sufficient human and other resources for this purpose, and work collaboratively with civil society organizations and trade unions;
- "- Guarantee access to health care for all migrant workers without any discrimination;
- "- Make the application for open work permits for vulnerable workers easier and simpler;
- "- Create pathways to long-term or permanent residency for all migrant workers without any discrimination;
- "- Enhance coordination among Federal and Provincial/Territorial Governments and non-governmental organizations in providing support and assistance to victims;
- "- Regularize the immigration status of undocumented migrant workers who have been victimized in contemporary forms of slavery;
- "- Provide stronger oversight over employment recruiters and immigration consultants;
- "- Tackle the root causes of abuse and exploitation among migrant workers, particularly racism and xenophobia;
- "- Promote a unified approach to protecting the rights of migrant workers across Canada through more proactive coordination and communication among the Federal and Provincial/Territorial Governments;
- "- Ensure that employers who engage in labour exploitation are held accountable with appropriate punishments;
- "- Include migrant workers in all decision making affecting their well-being;
- "- Regulate all [Temporary Foreign Worker Programs], including those outside SAWP [Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program], through bilateral agreements with sending countries and permitting consular oversight and protection of workers."

(Source: End of Mission Statement, September 6, 2023, Tomoya Obokata, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences.)

Strong Opposition to Proposed Quebec Housing Law Marches Assert Loud and Clear that Housing Is a Right



On the eve of the opening of the fall session of the Quebec National Assembly, a Summit on Homelessness was held September 15 in Quebec City. The following day, at the call of the Regroupement des comités logement et associations de locataires du Québec (RCLALQ) rallies were held simultaneously in Montreal, Quebec City, Rimouski, Rouyn-Noranda and Sherbrooke. Participants demanded that Bill 31, *An Act to amend various legislative provisions with respect to housing*, tabled on June 9 by Minister responsible for Housing France-Élaine Duranceau, be discarded.

In Montreal, close to a thousand people gathered in the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve district on September 16. Among other things, they demanded that Section 7 of the bill, which provides landlords with the right to refuse to allow lessees to transfer their lease to someone else, be scrapped.

Present at the rally were members of various collectives fighting for the right to housing. They proudly carried banners identifying themselves with their Montreal neighbourhoods and surrounding areas: Ahuntsic-Cartierville, La Petite-Patrie, Plateau Mont-Royal, Parc-Extension, Pointe-St-Charles, Rosemont, Verdun, Ville-Marie, and others. Representatives of organizations working in defence of the most vulnerable, including welfare recipients, were there with their banners. The message repeated on most of the banners and placards was that housing is a right, not a privilege.



People from organizations defending tenants and the most vulnerable, among them the homeless and pensioners, addressed the crowd. One of them was Cédric Dussault, spokesperson for the Coalition of Housing Committees and Tenants Associations of Quebec's (RCLALQ), who noted that, in addition to demanding the elimination of Section 7 of Bill 31 and the need to set up a national rent register, the issue of evictions must also be dealt with. He said that during the Summit



on Homelessness the previous day, it was revealed that housing evictions are the main cause of homelessness, accounting for 25 per cent of those who find themselves without a home. He pointed out that when it comes to evictions, landlords are able to circumvent the right to maintain tenancy and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and discriminate with regard to access to housing.

To illustrate his point, he named a real estate speculator who spends his time buying up buildings in the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve district. This speculator then evicts tenants, renovates the units and rents them out at exorbitant rates, all the while declaring that everything he does is perfectly legal.

A spokeswoman for the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain (FRAPRU) denounced the CAQ government's claim that Bill 31 is there to restore "the balance between landlords and tenants." She said the bill does anything but this and will maintain the current real estate and rental

market that targets the most vulnerable people in society, be they low- or modest-income tenants, including women who are victims of domestic violence. She added that the bill will also weaken access to social housing, and open the possibility that low-income housing units could be sold to private interests to be turned into so-called "affordable housing." This is an unacceptable situation, she said. She informed that 40,000 low-income households in Quebec are waiting for low-cost housing, some for as long as five years, to the point where they find themselves on the street.

Through Bill 31, the law that defines the Montreal metropolitan community, which includes all the cities on the Island of Montreal, will be amended to replace the expression "social housing" with "housing." As a result, she said, subsidies that used to go exclusively to municipal offices managing low-cost housing, housing cooperatives and non-profit organizations, will now go to private interests. This is being done while the Minister of Revenue in his fall budget update claims to be funding social housing.

Other spokespersons from organizations working to defend the homeless and tenants took the floor to reiterate, with examples, why the government must abandon Bill 31.

Participants then marched through the streets of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. They were warmly welcomed by local residents, whose banners and posters denounced Bill 31 and the arrogant assertions of Premier Legault and the Minister responsible for Housing in the face of public anger and indignation.



Participants said they are prepared to demonstrate again.







(Photos: TML)

Night of the Homeless Demands a Roof for All, Now



Montreal

October 20 marked the 34th Night of the Homeless, one of many actions organized in Quebec throughout the year to demand that everyone have access to decent housing. This event, as is now tradition, was a time for exchange of information between advocacy organizations and the

homeless, with the public sharing a meal with them or donating warm clothing.

For Quebec's 10,000 homeless people -- according to the most recent count -- nighttime is synonymous with wandering, the cold, the struggle to sleep while avoiding being robbed or mugged, choosing from among the best and worst options for safety, at the price of being stuck with others in a dormitory, with no privacy. Organizers said that housing, mental health, drug overdoses, inflation and the international violence crises are impacting all members of society, with even more serious consequences for those without a roof over their heads.

The event took place in over 60 cities and towns, showing how homelessness is a social problem that governments have a responsibility to solve.





Montreal



Longueuil



Sorel-Tracy



Alma

Unsustainable Housing Crisis Exacerbated by Government Diversion, Inaction and Corruption

– Pierre Soublière –

Since the National Assembly reconvened in January, not a day goes by that the current housing crisis is not addressed. Every day, Members of the Assembly report on housing difficulties faced by their constituents. Outrage at the situation abounds. The private real estate sector must be regulated, say some; the rise in rents must be controlled, say others, etc. The Caquist government is denounced for not keeping its promises.

In response, the government admits that the situation is not easy, provides figures to prove that it has made advances, lists the random measures that exist or announces that more needs to be done and presents new measures.



These debates culminated on February 8 in the unanimous adoption, after two hours of discussion, of the following motion calling on the government to put in place a housing action plan.

"That the National Assembly note that the housing and home ownership situation has deteriorated over the past five years;

"That it take note that Quebeckers who are tenants are confronted with multiple factors that put significant pressure on the cost of rents, in particular:

"- the lack of housing, as expressed by the generalized decline in vacancy rates for rental units in Quebec in 2022;

"- the rising cost of living;

"- the decrease in housing affordability throughout Quebec; and

"- the lack of housing adapted to the needs of families;



"That it also notes the lack of social housing in Quebec for people with lower incomes and the growing obsolescence of a portion of this housing stock;

"That it take note that access to property for a generation of Quebeckers is currently compromised by the rising cost of property, the decline in housing starts, the rise in construction costs, the shortage of labour in the construction sector and the rise in interest rates;

"That it recognizes that the multiple processes of the different levels of government, including housing organizations, are too long and complex and that a simplification of programs is necessary;

"Finally, it demands that the Quebec government assume this mission of the State by setting up an action plan for housing in order to act on the availability of social housing, the affordability of the rental stock and access to property."

One might say that no one can be against virtue. But such a motion is a tasteless farce. It is part of the dark *modus operandi* by which such motions are made. The issue here is not to take note, to observe or to recognize, especially since the motion states that the situation has been deteriorating for five years! Immediate action is possible.

In an emergency situation -- i.e. immediately -- the government must rent hotels for all those seeking housing; the government must pay the amount of rent that exceeds the 30 per cent that families, workers or students must pay for housing; and it must immediately begin the construction of social housing needed in Quebec to guarantee a roof over everyone's head. All sorts of other actions can be taken immediately if the concern is to meet the needs of the people of Quebec and ensure that no one is left to their own devices. All kinds of actions are possible when the objective is to guarantee the right to housing – decent, well heated, sanitary, affordable for all incomes – so that all can live as human beings, and with complete peace of mind.



Night of the Homeless Marked in the Outaouais

– *Alexandre Deschênes* –



This year, the 34rd Night for the Homeless in Quebec was held on October 20 under the theme "Being without a roof is not an option." It was held in the context of the growing deterioration of living conditions because of the anti-social offensive which permits the dramatic increase in food and housing costs, and of the worsening of working conditions affecting an increasing number of working people, specifically workers in the health, education and social services and community sectors. They are overworked and burdened with mandatory overtime, with all the family disruptions and physical and health problems which ensue. Within this context, the Quebec government categorically refuses to invest in the public sector and to provide workers with the wage increases they require. This puts greater and greater pressure on inability to afford housing.

In the Outaouais, this is the 21st such Night for the homeless and close to 1,000 people participated. Because of the overall situation mentioned above, the number of homeless people has risen dramatically, particularly in the Outaouais. At the event, during the minute of silence to honour those struggling with homelessness who died since last October, more than 50 people were named, as compared to twenty in the past, all people who have died in inhumane circumstances.

The first activity of the evening was a demonstration of close to 200 people who marched through the streets of the Vieux-Hull. At the Maison du Citoyen (Gatineau's City Hall), they asserted their right to housing, their right to dignity and security. The march was followed by musical performances, all prepared and presented by people struggling with homelessness.

The theme "Being without a roof is not an option" was very fitting for the Outaouais, since the director of the Centre of Health and Social Services for the Outaouais (CISSSO), after having proposed solutions for the homeless facing the impending winter, proposals which were both unrealistic and unrealizable, stated that if some people were caught outside in the cold this winter, it would be "their choice". There was also a statement by the City of Gatineau that trailers and tents in a camp on the parking of the Guertin arena were not in accordance with municipal bylaws. As is often the case, decisions are taken and orders given without taking into account those involved, as they form small communities attempting to better protect themselves and help one another out to better survive.

This shows how the system of government based on an electoral system said to represent the people is a fraud. It does not represent the population and excludes those struggling with homelessness. Pompous proposals and designs do not address their needs but, on the contrary, cater to developers eager to take over projects which make them a lot of money.

This is precisely what is pointed out by those who penned a letter signed by a group of campers of the Ruisseau de la Brasserie, one of the areas where people struggling with homelessness have gotten together to survive and help each other out. This letter was published in the regional newspaper *Le Droit*. In her editorial, the editor-in-chief stated: "This year, *Le Droit* is taking the opportunity of the Night for the Homeless to offer those living on the streets editorial space to publish a letter signed by homeless persons speaking out about their living conditions and demanding to be consulted so as to be part of the solution."

Here are excerpts from the letter:

"We live in a camp near the Gîte Ami (a homeless shelter) and the Guertin arena. Perhaps you have seen our tents when you go by St-Rédempteur or near the stream? We have a few words to say on what is at stake and what is most pressing for our community, which is striving to survive, every single day, within your society.

"The coming of winter marks the beginning of our war against extreme cold: we are preparing our reserves of Purel, propane and tents. Frostbite is frequent and heat is rare. We are worried for people who are on the streets for the first time: they do not know how to keep warm and to be safe when everything freezes over. We thought we could count on the fact that a warming station would be provided, but the CISSSO has planned only for a heated trailer with thirty seats. The number of tents in the camp is probably over 100. The trailer will not suffice and, without better installations, a number of people could die from hyperthermia.

"Due to our numerous mobilizing efforts, we managed to obtain a sanitary installation with four showers and four toilets in July 2023. This installation was never properly cleaned. We feel dehumanized because of the lack of intimacy and it is impossible to have a shower every day. In the upcoming weeks, it will be removed and we will have access to a limited number of chemical toilets. We are trying to keep our space clean and would appreciate that this factor be taken into consideration as it would be if we were festival-goers.

"The CISSSO has hired security guards to monitor the camp, but they do not take our problems seriously and, because of this, our community has to intervene when there is a conflict or a case of drug overdose. Many people have been saved by other members of the community. And yet, the Quebec Charter includes that all endangered human beings have a right to assistance. We are at risk and abandoned by the powers that be

"A growing number of people find themselves struggling with homelessness for the first time and the Gîte Ami is full -- 60 beds for 700 people as of last year!...

"In the Outaouais, according to a report by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the average monthly cost of an apartment is \$1,562. Many only receive a welfare cheque of \$850 a month: it is impossible to meet everyday basic needs with such a paltry amount. Others are in the camp as a result of an administrative error and are caught in a system that they don't understand. It is urgent to invest resources so that the camp can offer decent living conditions.

"With the support of our street worker, we have formed a committee to demand our rights and to make our needs known. We denounce the lack of investment by the CISSSO, the inadequate sanitary installations and we demand security guards with proper training and with a humane approach. Our community is getting better organized and is made up of people ready to help find solutions to all these problems. But we are never consulted when comes the time to take decisions which affect our lives. We would like to remind you, dear CISSSO and dear City of Gatineau, that we are available and at your disposal to take part in discussions and decision-making on all matters concerning homelessness

"We would like that people stop thinking that we are living well here, that if we are here, it is a matter of choice. Purl and candles are the only means we have to stay warm and to survive outside during winter, because here, it is hell."



Quebec Housing Bill 31 – A Juridical Approach to Deny the Right to Housing



Banner in Quebec City demonstration September 16, 2023 opposes the elimination in Bill 31 of a tenant's ability to transfer their lease to someone else

On June 9, Bill 31, *An Act to amend various legislative provisions with respect to housing*, was tabled by France-Élaine Duranceau, Minister responsible for Housing in the Quebec Government.

Here are its salient features.

Lease Transfers

The bill eliminates the possibility tenants have had for some 40 years of transferring their lease to someone else who will continue to pay the same amount of rent that they have been paying. According to the current situation in Quebec, a new tenant is entitled to the same rate and can inquire of the Rent Control Board (TAL) what rate a former tenant paid and demand as their right the same rent.



As it stands, landlords can increase the rents in line with official inflation rates once a year. They have been demanding the elimination of tenants' rights, without which the right to housing is a dead letter. This would allow them to raise rents exponentially at the end of a lease, including when a tenant vacates a space and it goes to another person. This is one of the provisions most strongly objected to by the Regroupement des comités logement et associations de locataires du Québec (tenants' organizations).

Under the guise that it is not appropriate for governments to interfere with property rights, landlords will now be able to refuse a request to transfer or assign a lease to another person "for a reason other than a serious one" without going through the TAL. The TAL's requirements will prove to be a dead end for those seeking housing whose life is already a nightmare.

Notice of Increase

Bill 31 revises the provisions of Clause F of a lease. Clause F presently allows a landlord to raise rent for the first five years following the construction of a dwelling in amounts outside of the TAL's recommendations. "In recent years, we've seen tenants move into new units only to face a 30 per cent or 40 per cent increase in their rent the following year," David Searle, lecturer in the Department of Legal Sciences at UQAM points out. Bill 31 stipulates that a landlord's lease for a new building will have to include the increases tenants' will face over the first five years. It is presented as if this provides those seeking housing a more favourable situation because now the agreement they sign will include such increases. This is called providing balance between the interests of the tenants and the landlords.

Eviction

The bill pretends to regulate evictions, but does not deal with the nature of evictions, including that people who can no longer afford to pay rent are put out on the street without recourse. Further people facing eviction are plagued by the visit of a bailiff and the ensuing costs of paying the bailiff and for the recovery of their seized property. Under the provisions of Bill 31, when a tenant does not respond to an eviction notice, he or she will be presumed to have given notice of refusal to be evicted. It will now be up to the landlord to assert their rights before the TAL which is a tribunal to administer the law, not an agency to make sure vulnerable people are provided with housing!



Demonstration in Rimouski September 16, 2023, against Bill 31

What an insidious way for governments to use their positions of power and privilege to pretend they are doing something good for "everyone concerned." It is how what constitutes a criminal act should be defined and it will be one day if society's path to progress is to be opened.

Bill 31 sets out the terms and conditions governing compensation to be paid by a landlord when a tenant is evicted. For example, it states: "Reasonable moving expenses and an indemnity equivalent to one month's rent for each year of uninterrupted rental of the dwelling by the tenant, which may not, however, exceed an amount representing 24 months' rent nor be less than an amount representing three months' rent."

Meanwhile, those seeking a new place to live face rents way beyond their means and are in no way compensated by their so-called right to be compensated. As the representative of one tenants' organization put it: "If we lose a dwelling that is affordable and have to move to an apartment that costs \$1,000 more per month, the landlord might give us \$30,000, but in the medium term, we're still losing out. The bill is silent on the consequences of repossession or eviction in the context of a housing shortage."

Special Consultations

Special consultations on Bill 31 were scheduled September 14, 19 and 20. Eighteen advocacy organizations, cities, jurists and experts were to make presentations to the Committee on Planning and the Public Domain.



Unacceptable Militarization of Public Space

Not a Single Youth for Imperialist War!

– Christine Dandenault –

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) are constantly looking for young people to serve as cannon fodder in U.S./NATO wars of destruction. Canada's active participation as a member of NATO, involved in the U.S./NATO proxy war in Ukraine, and in support of Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people, among others, requires sustained recruitment of young people.

The newspaper *La Presse* published an article on October 8 indicating that at present, there is a total shortage of 16,000 military personnel, i.e. 8,100 regular military personnel in the CAF and 7,900 reservists. The CAF has an authorized strength of 71,150 members but presently only has 63,050.

All kinds of methods are being developed to do this: more targeted advertising campaigns, recruitment kiosks in shopping and community centers, offers of high salaries and bonuses, military exercises in urban spaces, etc. On September 16, at Place Fleur de Lys, a shopping centre in Quebec City, the CAF held an "immersive style" recruitment activity called "Military for a Day." There you could handle disabled rifles, make a camp bed, taste the rations, etc.

Recruitment criteria have also been relaxed for hair colour and length; facial tattoos and hair; lifestyle and even immigration status. As of December 5, 2022, permanent residents can now apply. Canada even offers special pathways to citizenship by recognizing military service in Canada performed by permanent residents who enlist in the CAF.

As part of the exercises to accustom the population in the Outaouais to military vehicles, particularly tactical armored patrol vehicles, military vehicles will be out on patrol on Tuesday evenings from September to December. The stated aim is to train the crews and keep the fleet in good condition. Stops specifically aimed at recruitment are planned during this period, including two in Wakefield sector of La Pêche, one in Gatineau sector Angers, another in Gatineau itself and two others in Aylmer.

The same scenario has been taking place in the Montreal region since October 3, 2023. Every Tuesday evening until April 30, 2024, detachments of four to six members of the Royal Canadian Hussars (RCH) regiment make military road movements in which tactical armored patrol vehicles circulate on public roads. The RCH is an armored reconnaissance regiment belonging to the 34th Canadian Brigade Group and is part of the Canadian reserve. The routes used change regularly.

The weekend of September 30 and October 1, military exercises of the 34th Combat Engineer Regiment, Rouyn-Noranda detachment took place in the Alembert sector in Rouyn-Noranda, simulating a combat situation. D'Alembert is a district of Rouyn-Noranda 17 kilometres north of the urban center, with a population of around 1000 people. This involved setting up facilities, establishing command posts and mock treatment of the wounded. Blank ammunition was used to "enhance realism in training," according to Corporal Talbot, one of those responsible for the exercises. The training took place on Crown land, used by civilians for hunting among other things.



In addition, every Tuesday evening, information and recruitment sessions are held in Rouyn-Noranda, including an open evening in November. In 2003, there were 150 members of the 34th Regiment and today there are only 50.

The press releases insist that these activities are safe for the population. But as we saw on October 17 in Montreal, two tanks entered the heart of a demonstration in support of the Palestinian people in response to the bombing by the Israeli army of the Al-Ahli hospital on same day. Protesters responded by strongly denouncing the Canadian government and this provocative and intimidating activity.

Stating that military activities are safe and without danger for the population or that the Canadian army offers a great future, aims to divert attention from the reasons why this is done. The military exercises aim to train soldiers to fight in all circumstances and to accustom the population to the deployment of soldiers in public spaces, in addition to the 10 already existing Canadian military bases. They are distributed in Quebec, Western Canada, and the central and Atlantic regions. They also aim to recruit young people into the army, whether part-time, full-time, reservist, future soldier, professional, etc. to serve the government of Canada to participate in imperialist wars in the service of the United States, on behalf of the population of Quebec and Canada, without its advice or support.

No to Canadian Armed Forces' Provocation of Protesters During "Routine" Exercise



The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) vigorously opposes the decision of the government of Canada to permit detachments of Canada's armed forces to patrol public spaces. On September 29, a press release announced that detachments of four to six members of The Royal

Canadian Hussars (RCH) regiment would be making military road movements in the Montreal area on Tuesday evenings, from October 3, 2023 to April 30, 2024.

The RCH is an armoured reconnaissance regiment belonging to the 34th Canadian Brigade Group. Tactical armoured patrol vehicles (TAPVs) will be used on public roads. The press release states that these trips will enable RCH members to train and maintain their knowledge of the fleet. The routes will be varied, and the press release says that "the routine movements will not pose any danger to the public."

Despite such pledges, the fact is that on October 17, one of their armoured tactical patrol vehicles and a military truck arrived in the midst of a spontaneous demonstration in downtown Montreal organized following the Israeli bombardment of a hospital in Gaza the same day. Demonstrators shouted at the military tanks, a brutal provocation. Montreal police escorted the military convoy through the demonstration, pushing the angry protesters back.

Incredulously, Department of National Defence spokesman Andrew McKelvey said the vehicle movement had nothing to do with the demonstration. The official version presented was that the vehicles were on a routine journey.

Everyone could see it was a provocation. Quebeckers have never given their approval for the army to roam the streets of Montreal or anywhere else in Quebec. They do not accept the militarization of public space. And the presence of tanks at the heart of the demonstration on October 17 reveals what lies behind the pretext that these "strolls" of armoured vehicles will pose no danger to the public. While the Trudeau government condemns demonstrators who support the Palestinian people, the presence of these tanks and attempt at intimidation was soundly rejected by those expressing their right to speak, assemble and organize in defence of the Palestinian people and their conscience.

For a video of the army provocation [click here](#).

United States

Bold Actions Persist in Defence of Freedom of Speech

The recent broad support in the U.S. for resistance in Palestine and demands for the U.S. to stop all funding and support for Israel have seen numerous attacks on freedom of speech and conscience. Students and professors standing up and denouncing the U.S./Israel genocide are being attacked, fired, denied speaking engagements, etc. Lawyers defending those speaking out are also being fired. Yet more and more across the country people are standing with the Palestinians, defiantly resisting U.S./Israeli genocide. Yet more actions including in Washington, DC are planned for November 4 and after.

The U.S. government has been stepping up its attacks on freedom of speech and resistance in various ways. These include the FBI raids last year on the African People's Socialist Party (APSP), its leaders and facilities in St. Petersburg, Florida and St. Louis, Missouri, including a radio station and against those opposing the massive \$90 million dollar police training facility, known as Cop City in Atlanta, Georgia.

In April, following the FBI raids last year, three members of APSP and the Uhuru movement were charged with "conspiring to covertly sow discord in U.S. society," and "spread Russian propaganda," in large part for opposing the U.S. proxy war in Ukraine and charging the U.S. with genocide. The APSP, the Uhuru movement, the Black is Back coalition and about 40 other organizations, many from the Black liberation movement, have joined together to demonstrate in

Washington, DC on November 4, emphasizing the right to freedom of speech. Their demands also include, "Free Palestine," "Hands Off Haiti," "We Charge Genocide," "Stop Cop City," and more.

The more than two-year resistance to Cop City in Atlanta, Georgia has defiantly persisted despite the police killing of one protester and charges of domestic terrorism against more than 20 people standing against Cop City. They face lengthy prison terms. Georgia law enforcement also targeted more than 60 people, under Georgia's *Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act* – the RICO law. Those indicted included people raising funds for bail and others who simply attended a music concert opposing Cop City. The massive \$90 million dollar facility is designed for police training in urban warfare, which many recognize as plans by the government for increased repression and mass incarceration. It is also destroying an environmentally needed forest. The resistance persists and has brought together Indigenous and Black forces along with all others in Atlanta and across the country.

The federal RICO law, whose aim is said to be to oppose gangs and mafia forces, has most often been used against trade unions and those from all walks of life resisting government attacks. Georgia's RICO and state domestic terrorism laws are very broad and do not define terrorism or corruption. Since the RICO indictment involves conspiracy, the government also does not have to prove actual acts, but rather activity they claim could lead to terrorism or corruption. The indictment relies on people's beliefs and community organizing to claim these is a criminal conspiracy. It claims the provision of mutual aid, the advocacy of collectivism, and even publishing materials are hallmarks of a criminal enterprise. It is an effort to intimidate and silence the resistance as well as set a legal precedent whereby any act of support for something the state does not agree with can be criminalized on the grounds that it is a "criminal conspiracy."

These attacks are also meant to embroil everyone in legal battles aimed at discrediting the people's movements for equality, justice, against police violence, state attacks and much more. It is also used against rivals in the intense factional struggle taking place within the ranks of the U.S. ruling class. Indeed, the monopoly media did not fail to mention that Trump was also charged under the Georgia RICO law. This also serves as a means of tarnishing those heroic people resisting state-organized attacks and violence with the same brush as they tarnish Trump, suggesting everyone is corrupt and being brought to justice for being corrupt.

The U.S. working people from coast to coast are fighting for their right to speak and organize. Not in Our Name has become a mighty banner of the U.S. people as they fight for the rights of all, at home and abroad.

Britain

Conservative Party Conference Met with Mass Opposition

The 2023 Conservative Party Conference took place over four days from Sunday, October 1, to Wednesday, October 4. Thousands of NHS staff -- including junior doctors and consultants who continued their joint strike action during that week from October 2-4, and radiographers who were striking on October 2 and 3 -- demonstrated in Manchester on October 3, to speak out and speak in their own name in opposition to the conference and the Sunak government. Demonstrators assembled at Peter's Square in the centre of the city at 1pm for a rally outside of the conference. Striking health workers at Barts NHS Trust also protested at the Royal London Hospital on October 4.[1]



The spirit of the demonstrations during the conference was that of "Enough is Enough," reflected in calls to remove the Conservatives from power. This call is not something reducible to a change of horses, which in the conditions of the present simply means a different faction of the cartel party system claiming power for itself on behalf of the same oligarchic private interests. At essence, it is a call for a new political mechanism that directly embodies the popular will, a will for a new, human-centred direction for the NHS and all social programmes, and an economy that has meeting the needs of society as its primary aim.

In the doctors' dispute especially, the government has forced the issue of Who Decides. The struggle reveals that the solutions to the problems in the NHS lie with the health workers themselves. The fight they are taking up is as much to do with ending their marginalization as it is immediately about pay, beginning with speaking out, smashing the silence on their working conditions -- which are also the patients' conditions -- and refusing to be ignored. They are aiming at a new situation where decision-making involves doctors, nurses and all health workers, along with communities and people as a whole, speaking and acting in their own name and as one, without the mechanisms of disempowerment blocking their direct decisions from being realized.

Notes

1. "Striking doctors & radiographers march on Tory Party Conference," National Shop Stewards Network
2. The recent TUC Congress passed a motion to pledge "100% solidarity with any trade unions attacked under these MSL laws", and which calls for a repeal of this and previous anti-union laws.
"C01 Campaign against the Minimum Service Levels (MSLs) legislation", TUC Congress Motions.
3. "Uniting for the Future of the Health Service: Consultants and Junior Doctors to Hold Joint Strike Action," *Workers' Weekly*, September 23, 2023 .
4. "The cops can't stop us: thousands march in Manchester against the Tories," Shabbir Lakha, *Counterfire*, October 2, 2023.

(*Workers' Weekly*)

Defend Cuba's Right to Be! U.S., Hands Off Cuba!
**UN Vote to End U.S. Genocidal and
Illegal Blockade of Cuba**

– Nick Lin –



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

This year marks 61 years of the economic, financial and commercial sanctions that make up the U.S. blockade which Cuba has been forced to endure. On November 1 and 2, for the 31st year in a row, the UN General Assembly will debate and vote on a resolution prepared by Cuba that details the enormous economic and humanitarian cost of the blockade and calls on the UN member countries to support Cuba's demand that the blockade be ended immediately.

It is a certainty that the blockade will once again be overwhelmingly opposed by the peoples of the world. Only the U.S. and a few other countries, including small island nations in the Pacific that are its protectorates, or Ukraine and Israel, countries that the U.S. has armed to the teeth to serve U.S. hegemonic aims in their regions, will vote against it. Last year, the result of the vote on November 3, 2022 was 185 countries in support of the resolution, two opposed, the U.S. and Israel, and two abstentions, Brazil and Ukraine.

The U.S. and those who support its blockade and its aim to overthrow the Cuban Revolution resort to the highest of ideals, like the defence of democracy and human rights in Cuba to justify the blockade. To the contrary, the U.S. imperialists, through their blockade, are the worst violators of the human rights of the Cuban people. Cuba, despite its high degree of self-reliance and the resourcefulness, ingenuity and expertise of its people and scientific institutions, still needs to engage in trade with other countries for the things that it cannot produce itself, like any other country. By disrupting Cuba's ability to engage in trade, including international financial transactions, the rights of the Cuban people to the health care, public services, food and much more are violated, on the order of billions of dollars per year. Most profoundly, the blockade, with its aim of regime change, violates the Cuban people's right to determine their political system, as reaffirmed in the 2019 constitutional referendum.

The extensive report about the effects of the blockade prepared by Cuba and provided to UN members before the vote was presented on October 20 by Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parilla. He quantified the cost to Cuba of the blockade in the past year as \$405 million per month or \$1 million every two hours. According to estimates, Cuba's Gross Domestic Product could have grown by around nine percent in 2022 if not for the blockade. Looked at in its totality of more than 60 years, the cumulative economic damage of the blockade amounts to \$1.337 trillion, he added.

The Cuban Foreign Minister went on to say that the blockade has a lethal impact with direct and indirect economic damage and aims to deprive the country of financial income that is essential to acquire food, technologies, and supplies, and also causes losses in tourism. He added that due to that policy, 909 discriminatory actions to cancel contracts and services by foreign banks were taken against Cuba from January 2021 to February 2023.

Rodríguez recalled that during the most critical times of the COVID-19 pandemic in Cuba, the U.S. tightened the blockade, a position that he described as a cruel and genocidal act.

This year's vote on the blockade takes place in the context of the U.S.-backed Zionist genocide of the Palestinian people. One need look no further than the unfolding developments in Palestine to see the depravity and disregard for human life of the U.S. and their close collaborators who support the U.S. in its blockade of Cuba. This same depravity and inhumanity also characterizes the U.S. blockade on Cuba.

The U.S. unjust inclusion of Cuba on its so-called State Sponsors of Terrorism List is part of the sanctions regime against Cuba, that tellingly does not include a country like Israel whose state terrorism is responsible for the wholesale slaughter of thousands of Palestinians in just a few weeks. Yet it is Cuba that is included on this spurious list, while time and time again this small country sends its health care, humanitarian and educational workers around the world to uphold the peoples' rights and humanity. A petition campaign on the website LetCubaLive.info that continues until December 10, International Human Rights Day, calls on everyone to get one million signatures to submit to U.S. President Joe Biden in support of Cuba's removal from this list.

An article posted on the website CubavsBloqueo.cu explains that Cuba's inclusion on this list heightens the "risk associated with any kind of humanitarian aid, business, investment, and trade that involves Cuba, and by extension, Cuban citizens." It goes on to give the following examples of how Cubans are affected:

- Cubans with Spanish citizenship have had their Electronic System for Travel Authorization visa waiver to the United States canceled or denied.
- Cubans residing in the European Union have been denied bank accounts or have had existing accounts frozen since their nationality makes them "high-risk" clients.
- Some universities in the United States are barred from supporting research or other work by Cuban artists, writers, academics, activists, and journalists who reside on the island.
- Faith-based groups have had funds frozen and humanitarian supplies shipments blocked.
- People attempting to make a PayPal or Wise money transfer to family in Cuba may have their funds frozen and accounts locked.

The article then explains that Cuba's inclusion on this list means that banks, financial institutions, international vendors, groups seeking to provide aid are all wary of carrying out financial transactions with Cuba because the U.S. could accuse them of abetting terror and impose massive fines, among other punitive measures.

CPC(M-L) sends its warmest congratulations to the Cuban people, their leadership and its diplomatic staff at the UN for what is sure to be another decisive international rejection of the U.S. blockade.

Every year, the victory at the UN is indicative of not only the outrageous and criminal nature of the blockade, but the skill with which each year's resolution is so irrefutably presented, rendering U.S. imperialist disinformation ineffective, and ensuring that even close allies of the U.S. cannot be seen to be supporting the blockade.

The broad international support Cuba receives every year is also indicative of the tremendous prestige that Cuba commands due its unparalleled internationalism and its principled defence of the UN and its Charter, procedures and bodies, and the rule of international law.

The victory also belongs to the international solidarity movement which plays an important role to build people-to-people links with Cuba and influence the foreign policy of their countries to uphold friendly and cooperative relations with Cuba.

Cuba and what it represents to the peoples of the world stand in stark contrast to the isolation of the U.S. on the world stage and the condemnation of its foreign policy of dictate, blackmail and brutality by the nations of the world.

This victory at the UN lends important moral authority to all those who stand with Cuba and oppose U.S. imperialist dictate that might makes right and gives impetus to the work to bring the blockade to an end, once and for all.

**27th International Seminar "Political Parties and the New Society"
in Mexico City**

**Need for Anti-imperialist Struggle, Regional
Integration and World Peace Reaffirmed**

– Claude Brunelle –



From October 5 to 7, the 27th International Seminar "Parties and a New Society" was held in Mexico City. The seminar is organized annually by Mexico's PT (Workers' Party), which this year celebrates the 50th anniversary of its founding. This year's seminar brought together representatives from over 41 countries around the world, with over 270 international and 370 national delegates, including participants from 29 of Mexico's 32 states. More than 112 political parties and organizations were present, including a delegation of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist). Delegations from the embassies of Cuba, Vietnam, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Venezuela took part in the deliberations, in addition to a large delegation from Palestine.

On October 5 on behalf of CPC(M-L), Christine Dandenault presented an important intervention entitled *End of History Vision and Our Argument for the New* which was very well received.



Throughout the seminar, participants discussed the challenges facing the peoples of the world with comprehensive information provided on the matters of most urgent concern. These exchanges led to the adoption of 26 resolutions, including those in support of the peoples of Colombia, Peru, Syria, Guatemala and El Salvador, among others. Unwavering support for Cuba, its government and its people was reaffirmed, as was the demand for an end to the despicable U.S. blockade of Cuba, and support for the One Million Signatures petition to have Cuba removed from the list of countries sponsoring terrorism. Delegates strongly opposed the U.S. proxy war in Ukraine, and took an immediate and unanimous stand on October 7 in support of

the Palestinian people, their right to self-determination and their right to be. They also denounced the UN Security Council resolution in favor of military intervention in Haiti, led by Kenya.

The 28th International Seminar will take place in Mexico City from October 10 to 12, 2024.

