


**June 24 Toronto--St. Paul's By-Election**

**Vote for Democratic Renewal! Vote Marxist-Leninist!**

Longest Ballot Project  
Toronto – St. Paul's June 24, 2024 By-Election



**CAST YOUR VOTE FOR A CANDIDATE WHO ISN'T AFRAID TO TACKLE THIS OUTDATED ELECTORAL SYSTEM**

**VOTE MEÑICO TURCOTTE**

**NO TO CARTEL PARTY GOVERNMENT!  
FUND THE PROCESS, NOT POLITICAL PARTIES!**

The Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada has endorsed Meñico Turcotte as its candidate for the June 24 Toronto-St. Paul's by-election. Meñico is endorsed by the MLPC as a participant in the Longest Ballot Project through which 79 candidates have registered to highlight the need for electoral reform. The MLPC supports all work which helps renew the political process to empower the people. It supports the demand of the Longest Ballot Project for an end to the first-past-the-post system.

Visit: [mlpc.ca](http://mlpc.ca)

**VOTE MARXIST-LENINIST**

X: @LongestBallot e-mail: [toronto-st.pauls-mlpc@cpcl.ca](mailto:toronto-st.pauls-mlpc@cpcl.ca)

Authorized by the official agent of Meñico Turcotte

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### **June 24 Toronto--St. Paul's By-Election**

## **Vote for Democratic Renewal! Vote Marxist-Leninist!**

The June 24 federal by-election in Toronto--St. Paul's, with 84 candidates, features the longest ballot in Canadian federal election history -- 90 centimetres long and 30 centimetres wide, with two columns of names. The significance of this by-election is that besides the candidates of the cartel parties, 78 candidates are running to underscore the need for electoral reform. Most of them are running as independents and some are representing small parties but a vote for any one of them is a vote which says *No!* to the first-past-the-post electoral system which brings a cartel party candidate to power. It gives the constituents of Toronto--St. Paul's a way to make their views about the electoral system which does not represent them known.

The Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada (MLPC) has endorsed Meñico Turcotte as part of the Longest Ballot Project in the by-election. We call on electors in Toronto--St. Paul's to *Vote for Meñico Turcotte! Vote Marxist-Leninist!* (seventh from the end of the ballot)

One proposal of the Longest Ballot Project is for the creation of a Constituent Assembly to come up with a new electoral law. This would allow Canadians to decide what kind of electoral system they want. It would certainly not be a system that allows a political party to obtain the votes of as few as 17 per cent of eligible voters and still declare that they have a "majority" and a "mandate to govern." It would definitely not be one where the act of voting is the moment at which an elector hands over all power to unaccountable governments taken over by narrow supranational private interests with no connection to the people they claim to represent.

The political pundits and pollsters of the establishment media have declared that the significance of the June 24 Toronto--St. Paul's by-election is that it will provide electors with an opportunity to show what they think about Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. They say Trudeau may be pushed to resign if he is defeated in what has been designated a "safe Liberal riding." Reports tell of cabinet ministers from the ruling Liberal Party and shadow cabinet ministers from the Loyal Opposition descending on the riding to campaign for their respective candidates. If the Liberals are pushed out of the riding, it is said, it will be an indication that the alleged preference of Canadians for the Conservatives in the never-ending polling is accurate. It will supposedly show that the

Conservatives are "more popular" and bound to win the next federal election. Their speculation confirms that an election is not about the people of the riding choosing a candidate who represents their interests in any way.

The ease with which so many candidates who stand for electoral reform were nominated is due to the profound discontent of Canadians with all the cartel parties, the House of Commons and the entire political system. The Longest Ballot Project is a courageous and significant expression that Canadians are not only demanding democratic renewal but taking practical steps to enable themselves to make it so, including building their organizational capacity to make themselves heard.

***On June 24, Vote for Democratic Renewal!***  
***Vote TURCOTTE, Meñico -- Marxist-Leninist! (seventh from the end of the ballot)***

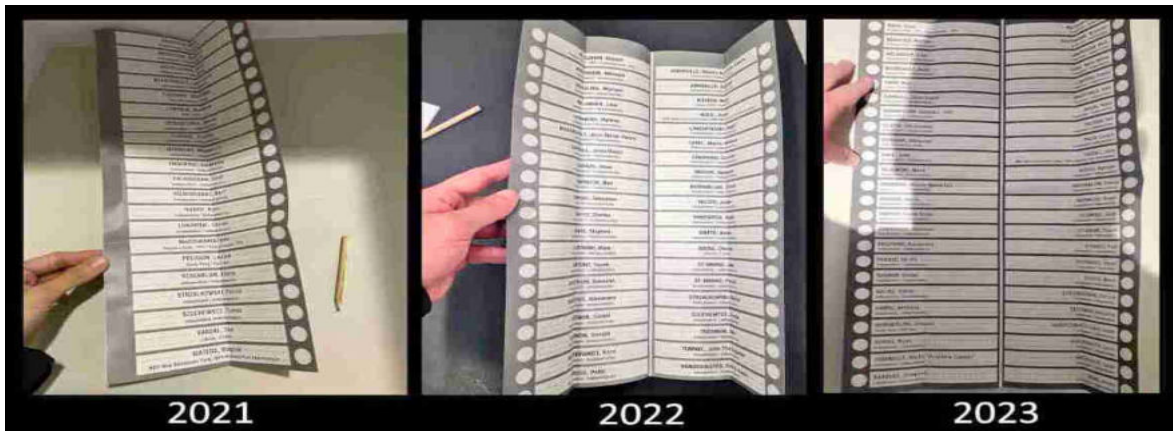
## **Longest Ballot Committee Breaks Record For Most Candidates on a Single Ballot**

*The Longest Ballot Committee released the following announcement on June 4:*

We are thrilled to announce that the Longest Ballot Committee has broken the record for the most candidates on a single ballot for a Canadian federal election. As of today, the number of candidates for the Toronto St-Paul's by-election stands at 84, breaking the previous record of 48.

To achieve this, Long Ballot volunteers collected 12,543 nomination signatures from voters who wanted to help send a powerful message for genuine democratic reform.

It is unfortunate that politicians have repeatedly broken their promises on democratic reform, and this is why today, any politician who promises change simply cannot be believed.



**Previous longest ballots in 2021 to 2023 elections**

*To reach the organizers or a variety of independent candidates for comment on the Longest Ballot 2024: [longestballot@gmail.com](mailto:longestballot@gmail.com)*

The organizers of this year's Longest Ballot back the calls made by pro-democracy groups for the establishment of a permanent, independent body to take over those areas of legislation where politicians are in a direct conflict of interest: Election rules, campaign finance rules, ethics rules and penalties, and MP benefits and pay.

*Longest Ballot Committee*

# Origins of the Longest Ballot Initiative

In the 2015 federal election Justin Trudeau promised that if his Liberal Party was elected it would be the last first-past-the-post (FPTP) election. Like other prime ministers before him, he broke his promise once proposals for a system based on proportional representation did not suit the chances of the Liberal Party winning more seats. When the Conservatives were in power they too failed to bring about changes to the electoral law in the interests of Canadians. Everything is done to favour the interests of the cartel parties.

The original organizers of the Longest Ballot, Tomas and Kieran Szuchewycz, brought to the attention of electors that the democracy in Canada is one that is designed to keep the voices of ordinary people out and concentrate power in the hands of a few. They pointed out that people feel disillusioned with voting for those that don't represent them. Instead of accepting apathy and alienation, they decided to do the opposite; they engaged directly with the democracy to make themselves heard.

Now, on the eve of the anniversary of Confederation, they have succeeded in creating the longest federal ballot ever seen in the country's 157-year history.

The Longest Ballot Project was launched in the 2021 General Federal Election with the mobilization of ordinary Canadians from all walks of life and from a diverse range of political opinions to stand as candidates in a single riding at the heart of the country, St. Boniface-St. Vital (Winnipeg, Manitoba). Nearly 1,600 individual nomination signatures were collected from local residents who were excited to see regular people stand up for a better democracy. Fourteen candidates were fielded by the project.

In the Mississauga-Lakeshore (Ontario) by-election of December 12, 2022 there were 40 candidates, with 34 of them fielded by the Longest Ballot Project. Elections Canada decided to hold consultations on how to re-format the ballot, which is statutorily proscribed and would have allowed for only 26 candidates. Chief Electoral Officer Stéphane Perrault had to use his regulatory powers to adapt the ballot. It measured the size of a tabloid newspaper.

At the outset, the organizers pointed out:

ANDERSON, Mélodie Independent / Indépendante(s)	KARAVAS, Demetrios Independent / Indépendante(s)
AYKROYD, MarthaLee Independent / Indépendante(s)	KRISA, Kevin Independent / Indépendante(s)
BANKS, Alex Independent / Indépendante(s)	KRZYWINSKI, Krzysztof Independent / Indépendante(s)
BEAULIEU, Myriam Independent / Indépendante(s)	LAMONTAGNE, Alain Independent / Indépendante(s)
BEDNARSKI, Michael Independent / Indépendante(s)	LAROCHELLE, Pierre Independent / Indépendante(s)
BELANGER, Line Independent / Indépendante(s)	LEBEL, Marie-Hélène Independent / Indépendante(s)
BOIVIN, Maxime Independent / Indépendante(s)	LÉGARE, Danny Marjane Party / Parti Marjane
BONNEAU, Mylène Independent / Indépendante(s)	LEMIEUX, René Independent / Indépendante(s)
BOUDREAU, Jean-Denis Parent Independent / Indépendante(s)	LUKAWSKI, Connie Independent / Indépendante(s)
BOURGAULT, Alain Independent / Indépendante(s)	MACDONALD, Glen Independent / Indépendante(s)
BOWMAN, Eric Stanley Independent / Indépendante(s)	MARSZALEK, Agnieszka Independent / Indépendante(s)
CARSON, Sean Parti Réconcilié Party	MARTIN, Maëlo Independent / Indépendante(s)
CHAMPAGNE GAREAU, Jaël Independent / Indépendante(s)	MOHUDDIN, Ali Centrist / Centriste
CHURCH, Leslie Liberal / Libéral	MONY, Thibaud Independent / Indépendante(s)
CORRHINO, Sébastien Independent / Indépendante(s)	NASHI, Yusuf Kadir Independent / Indépendante(s)
CORRIVEAU, Léthicia-Pélex Independent / Indépendante(s)	NEUTEL, Winston Independent / Indépendante(s)
CULLIS, Christian Green Party / Parti Vert	PARADIS, Guillaume Independent / Indépendante(s)
CURRIE, Charles Independent / Indépendante(s)	PARHAR, Amrit NDP-New Democratic Party / NPD-Nouveau Parti démocratique
DALE, John Independent / Indépendante(s)	PHAM, Joshua Bram Hieu Independent / Indépendante(s)
DAVIS, Stephen Independent / Indépendante(s)	POLYA, Lorant Independent / Indépendante(s)
DEJEWski, Mark Independent / Indépendante(s)	PRESTON, Danimal Independent / Indépendante(s)
DESAI, Kubera Independent / Indépendante(s)	RENAUD, Olivier Independent / Indépendante(s)
DESBIEENS, Manon Marie Lili Independent / Indépendante(s)	ROCCHI, Spencer Independent / Indépendante(s)
DEVILLE, Cory Independent / Indépendante(s)	ROWAT, Wallace Richard Independent / Indépendante(s)
DOGGER, Gerrit Independent / Indépendante(s)	SAINTONGE, Jacques Independent / Indépendante(s)
DUCHARME, Samuel Independent / Indépendante(s)	SCHACHTER, Jonathan Independent / Indépendante(s)
DUPONT, Ysack Independent / Indépendante(s)	SHERWOOD, Roger Independent / Indépendante(s)
ECKSTROM, Donovan Independent / Indépendante(s)	SHIMADA, Yogo Independent / Indépendante(s)
ENGERING, Alexandra Independent / Indépendante(s)	ST-AMAND, Julie Independent / Indépendante(s)
FRAZER, Dji-Pé Independent / Indépendante(s)	ST-AMAND, Pascal Independent / Indépendante(s)
GAGNIER-MICHEL, Guillaume Independent / Indépendante(s)	STEWART, Don Conservative / Conservateur
GAGNON, Daniel Independent / Indépendante(s)	STOCCO, Mario Independent / Indépendante(s)
GAGNON, Donald Independent / Indépendante(s)	STRZALKOWSKI, Patrick Independent / Indépendante(s)
GRAHAM, Daniel Andrew Independent / Indépendante(s)	STUCKLESS, Daniel Independent / Indépendante(s)
GRANGER, Pierre Independent / Indépendante(s)	TEICHMAN, Benjamin Independent / Indépendante(s)
HALACHEVA, Zornitsa Independent / Indépendante(s)	TURCOTTE, Melico Marxist-Leninist / Marxist-Léniniste
HAMEL, Anthony Independent / Indépendante(s)	VANDERWATER, Darcy Independent / Indépendante(s)
HAMEL, Felix-Antoine Independent / Indépendante(s)	VANDERWATER, Gavin Independent / Indépendante(s)
HAMILTON, Blake Independent / Indépendante(s)	WAND, Elliot Independent / Indépendante(s)
HICKS, Loren Independent / Indépendante(s)	WIECZOREK, Michal Independent / Indépendante(s)
HILDEBRANDT, Kerri Independent / Indépendante(s)	WILSON, Dennis People's Party - PPC / Parti populaire - PPC
JUBINVILLE, Martin Acetaria Caesar Independent / Indépendante(s)	WONG, Jordan Independent / Indépendante(s)



**Commemorative pin given to participants in 2022 and 2023 Longest Ballots**

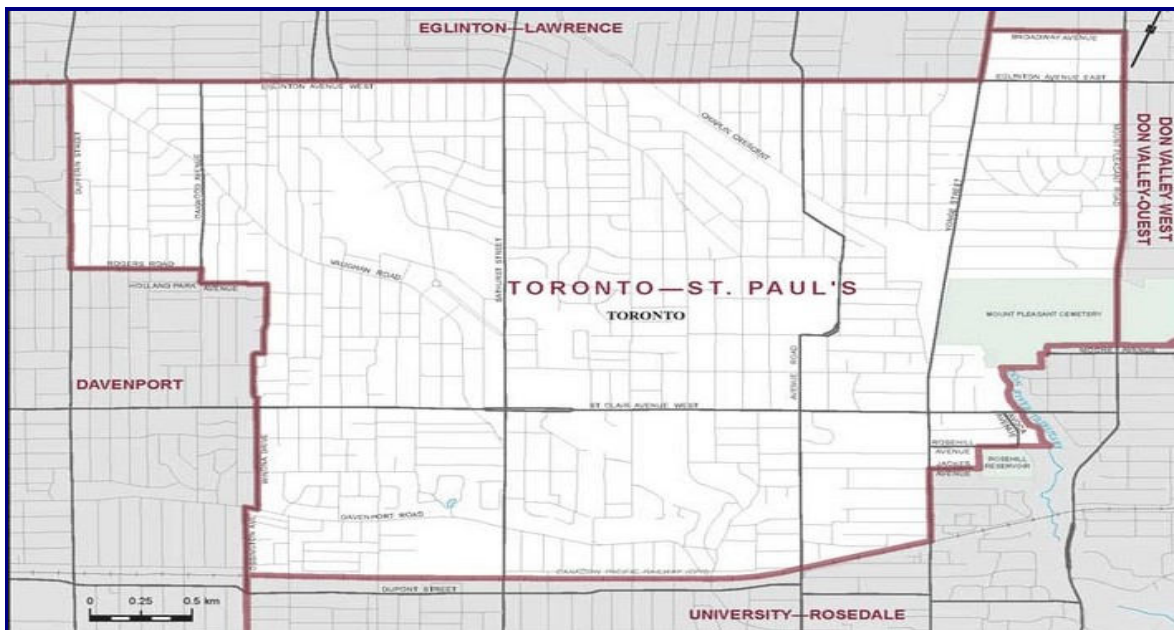
"We believe a democracy in which everyday Canadians have a bigger voice will forever remain a distant dream until we start to exercise our democratic rights to their fullest extent and stand up with our own voices against the politicians who seek to speak on our behalf.

"Some will call the longest ballot frivolous, inappropriate, or just ballot clutter. We must disagree. There is nothing inappropriate about having regular Canadians exercising their *Charter* rights and engaging directly in politics. The rules and model of our democracy is determined by the winners of the last election; this is neither fair nor democratic. We have shown what a few people can accomplish, and we will continue to work hard to bear pressure on the administrative and conceptual limits of our electoral system until the widespread calls

for democratic reform are answered."

This is as true today as it was when the Longest Ballot Initiative first began. In fact, the more Canadians are able to participate, the more it becomes clear that democratic renewal of the political process is the order of the day.

## Information on Toronto--St. Paul's Riding and By-Election Candidates



The Toronto--St. Paul's electoral district is home to 125,438 people according to the 2021 census. The average age in the district is just over 43 years old; the median age is just under 41. Elections Canada's most recent figures show that there are 84,442 electors registered to vote.

The riding has been described by the establishment media as a "safe" riding for the Liberals because it has been won by the Liberals ever since the 1993 federal election which saw the then

Progress Conservative Party reduced to 3 seats. It is also referred to as a "bellwether" riding, meaning that how electors vote in the riding is indicative of a trend showing which party will form the government.

The seat has been empty since Liberal MP Carolyn Bennet officially resigned on January 16.

In the September 2021 General Federal Election there were 82,891 electors registered, of which 65 per cent, or 54,278 cast ballots, falling in line with the cross-country low turn-out of 62.5 per cent. Carolyn Bennett, then Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, won the riding with 26,429 votes. Conservatives received 13,587 votes; NDP 9,036; Greens, 3,214; and People's Party 1,421. There were no other candidates; in the past three federal elections, (2021, 2019 and 2015), there were no independent or small party candidates in the riding.

While all ridings in the city of Toronto tend to be characterized by pockets of "the affluent" and "the poor," Toronto--St. Paul's is one where the differences are stark, with wealthy neighbourhoods such as Forest Hill and Casa Loma a few blocks away from high density apartments owned by slum landlords. Over 61 per cent of the residents are renters, compared with 48 per cent in Toronto as a whole and 45 per cent of tenants spend more than 30 per cent of their income on housing, compared with 40 per cent in Toronto.

Based on the 2021 Census, national minorities with origins in South Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, East Asia, Latin America and West Asia make up close to 40 per cent of the population living in the riding. The establishment media has been highlighting the fact that Toronto--St. Paul's has a significant number of Jewish voters and is imposing its prejudiced supposition that "the Jewish vote" will go to candidates that are the strongest defenders of the Israeli genocide of Palestinians. According to the 2021 Census, there are 11, 625 people of Jewish origin living in the riding making up 6.1 per cent of the total population of the riding.

The riding is one of several in which electors have formed constituency-based Free Palestine groups. Toronto--St.Paul's for Palestine is calling on voters to use the by-election to demand that "our potential representatives challenge Canada's complicity in the Gaza genocide." The group is asking electors to make a pledge declaring that they will refuse to vote for anyone who "fails to condemn the decades-long injustices, including ethnic cleansing, occupation, apartheid, denial of self-determination and what was recently deemed by the International Court of Justice plausible genocide in Gaza."



For Elections Canada's list of candidates [click here](#).

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## Revolving Door Between Government, Corporations and Diplomatic Postings

A serious problem facing the cartel parties which form government is the revolving door through which individuals can pass back and forth from the House of Commons to corporations and now, increasingly, diplomatic posts. The more they try to overcome the lack of confidence of Canadians in the electoral system and present it and the institutions as democratic, credible, and legitimate, the revolving door phenomenon defeats their purpose.

The Toronto--St. Paul's Member of Parliament, until her resignation in January, was Liberal Carolyn Bennett. Whether it is true or not, it has been made to appear that the timing of her resignation and consequent appointment as ambassador to Denmark was calculated to create a vacant seat for another Liberal that the Liberal Party wanted in the House before the next election.

Bennett had announced in July 2023 that she would not run in the 2025 federal election but would serve out her term until then. She finally resigned on January 16 and on January 17 she got a diplomatic appointment. (Treasury Board in 2020 noted that an average pension for an MP was \$69,842). As ambassador, on top of her MP pension, Bennett will receive a salary of between \$244,300 and \$287,400.

Regarding the matter of diplomatic appointments, according to the Canadian Ambassadors Alumni Association, an ambassador is "the most senior accredited diplomat [...] sent abroad to represent the spectrum of Canadian interests." Its website explains that while the majority of foreign mission heads are career diplomats appointed by order-in-council, "on occasion the Government of Canada will appoint exceptional individuals to represent Canada's interests abroad."

Former Canadian ambassador to China (2012-2016) Guy Saint-Jacques told the *Hill Times* that Bennett's appointment represents "an unfortunate trend." "It's clear that it is a process used by the Prime Minister to free up ridings for people that he likes," he said.

Previously, Trudeau appointed his Minister of Immigration John McCallum to serve as ambassador to China and his vacated Markham--Thornhill seat was taken by former political staffer Mary Ng who had served as Trudeau's Director of Appointments. In 2019 Trudeau appointed Dominic Barton, former global managing director for McKinsey and Company until 2018 and from 2018 to 2019 Chairman of Teck Resources Ltd., as Canadian ambassador to the People's Republic of China. This is the fourth such appointment by Trudeau and it sets a new record for a government's use of the diplomatic service for patronage.

In the case of the Harper Conservatives, one of the most questionable patronage handouts was the appointment of Bruno Saccomani, head of Harper's security detail, as Ambassador to Jordan (also responsible for Iraq) in 2013.

The Liberal candidate in the current Toronto--St. Paul's by-election, Leslie Church, is also part of the revolving door phenomenon which Canadians do not like.

Church studied at the London School of Economics, specializing in "international political economy and global economic governance" and obtained her law degree at the University of Toronto. She practiced law at Torys LLP in Toronto.

In 2006 she worked as Director of Communications for Michael Ignatieff's Liberal leadership campaign. From 2008 to 2011 she worked for him as a staff member of the Office of the Opposition leader. (Ignatieff himself was parachuted into the riding of Etobicoke Lakeshore by forcing the removal of the much respected Liberal MP Jean Augustine). In June 2012, after the May 2011 federal election and Ignatieff's resignation, Church landed a three-year job with Google Canada as Head of Communications and Public Affairs.

When the Liberals won the 2015 election she moved back into government, serving as Chief of Staff for the Minister of Canadian Heritage, then for the Minister of Women and Gender Equality, and then for the Minister of Public Service and Procurement. Her name has been brought forward on several occasions in parliamentary committee hearings to mock the "accountability" and "conflict of interest" laws which are supposed to prevent individuals going back and forth between government and corporate positions, particularly when she went from working for Google to serving as Chief of Staff in the Ministry of Canadian Heritage at a time the ministry was working on regulations and legislation that would impact Google.

Since 2021, Church has worked in the Office of Deputy Prime Minister Freeland, first as Director of Policy and then as Chief of Staff.

The sanitized campaign biography leaves out these details and says only that she has "held executive roles in one of the world's most prominent technology companies, practiced law at a leading Toronto law firm and served at the most senior levels of government."

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## Police Monitoring Toronto--St. Paul's By-Election

The Liberal government announced on May 21 that the June 24 Toronto--St. Paul's by-election would be monitored by the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force. SITE was created in 2019 in time to monitor the Federal General Election of that year. It is comprised of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), the Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSEC), Global Affairs Canada, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

SITE produces weekly reports about spy agency "intelligence" it receives as well as analysis of "open-source data" which means all forms of public speech in any form, from individual social media postings to journalistic endeavours. The reports go to the Deputy Minister Committee on Intelligence Response which transmits the information and advice to "ministers with mandates to combat foreign interference and protect Canada's democratic institutions." The number of entities with such mandates has so grown that Public Safety Canada established a "National Counter-Foreign Interference Coordinator" whose job is to "drive the government's proactive response to the threat of foreign interference."

At the close of the by-election, SITE produces both a classified and redacted report about its findings. Following the four June 2023 by-elections held in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount, Québec, Oxford, Ontario, Portage-Lisgar, Manitoba, and Winnipeg South Centre, Manitoba, SITE reported that it did not observe "any indication of foreign interference," nor any "cyber incidents [to] suggest that any foreign state actors were specifically targeting Elections Canada."

Following the July 2023 Calgary Heritage, Alberta by-election, having decided to extend its responsibilities to look out for "violent extremism," SITE reported it didn't find "any direct threats ... in social media, message boards, chatrooms, online forums or news media ... No direct threats to any of the candidates, or to the administration of the election were identified."

These same words were used again in the SITE report on the February 2024 Durham byelection, in the "baseline threat assessment ... taking into consideration potential FI (foreign interference) indicators specific to the Durham region." Once again, nothing was detected.



The Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada goes on record once again that it categorically opposes government measures to submit the life of Canadians, their political discourse, assembly and social media to the ongoing surveillance of political police. All attempts to intimidate the people with threats that they should not speak "wrong things" for fear of being tagged, defamed, criminalized, are signs that Canada, far from renewing its democracy is becoming increasingly autocratic. We call on Canadians to vigorously oppose being spied on in the name of national security, defence of democracy and the like. Speak out for democratic renewal and oppose all measures to have "Big brother watching," or to turn Canadians into snitches under threat that if they do not cooperate they can lose jobs, or reputations, or access to services and the like.

***No to Intimidation! No to Public Resources Being Used to Spy on Canadians!***



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**Quebec**  
**Chief Electoral Officer's Proposed Changes to Electoral Law**  
**Parties Not Represented in National Assembly**  
**Advocate for Democracy Where People**  
**Have Their Say**  
**– Christine Dandenault –**

On May 7, the six parties that signed an open letter to the Office of the Directeur général des élections du Québec (Chief Electoral Officer), presented their views and concerns on its proposed reforms to Quebec's electoral law during a meeting with two advisors from its research office. The meeting with the Bloc Pot, Équipe autonomiste, Parti libertarien, Marxist-Leninist Party of Quebec (PMLQ) and Démocratie directe was part of the Chief Electoral Officer's consultations on the *Election Act*.

From November 30, 2023 to March 30, the Chief Electoral Officer organized consultations on his document, *For a New Vision of the Election Act*. Thirty-five briefs were submitted, including from the first five of the political parties listed above, and the open letter. In that letter, the six parties had asked to be heard and in response, the Chief Electoral Officer organized the meeting. Even though it was clearly held only as a matter of form, the parties' representatives intervened with all the seriousness required of them to deal with the problems posed by the current electoral law and the proposed changes, which constitute obstacles to the participation of the polity in elections that claim to be free and fair.

The six parties' representatives presented their concerns and how these could be resolved to the best of their ability, relying on their own experience in renewing the democracy. These are people who have organized to establish a party – some as long as 20 years ago and others more recently – to participate in political life and propose alternatives to the current political process that encourage more people to get involved. They have first-hand experience with the process that marginalizes them and the body politic.

Below is a summary of the main interventions made by the parties. The full text of the PMLQ's entire intervention at the meeting which dealt with the issue of representation and representativity is reproduced in this issue.

### **On the *Election Act* and the Process**

- Today, history is calling upon us to complete the renewal of the democracy by ensuring that the constitutional provisions in place vest sovereignty in the people, not the narrow special interests that govern the society for private gain. We need an electoral system that guarantees that power is vested in the people. Changes to the *Election Act* must, at a minimum, advance in that direction instead of strengthening the autocracy,

- With this form of regime and the institutions we are saddled with, Quebeckers have no say in the decision-making process. This includes the electoral process which is said to be a form of



representation. The people do not choose the candidates and it is not they who participate in the smear campaigns. It is also not they who decide on the agenda or to forego an informed vote, create

division and approve exorbitant expenses. They are also definitely not the ones determining the outcome. If this electoral process is representative then it is representative of others, not the people.

- Our party is sensitive about paternalistic practices. The *Election Act* is supposed to be there to assist people in involving themselves in politics, helping them to participate in the democratic process, not to turn the law into a form of coercion.

### **Political Activities and Life**

- Political action has already been entered into by the fact that there exists a group of citizens who have come together to form a party and have an opinion to express. By imposing constraints, such as having to present candidates, there is the risk that the Chief Electoral Officer will adopt too strict a definition and impose on parties what their political activity should be.

- I think that one of the Chief Electoral Officer's mandates should be to explore what being political means. How do we carry out politics? Is being political simply a matter of the vote? Can we run for office? How is that done, because reducing politics to being merely an issue of voting, a vote, although that action is promoted, is not enough.

- The Chief Electoral Officer is requesting that the parties engage in politics and is proposing that an accountability mechanism be set up. This is incoherent. More often than not, the funding received by parties whose candidates are not elected is used to pay to produce an annual financial report. Rather than collecting the money for political purposes, they end up doing so for administrative purposes.

- I think it's up to the political parties themselves to involve themselves in politics in the manner that they deem most relevant and that it should not be limited to solely participating in elections.

### **On Gender Parity**

- Today, we have come full circle and the Chief Electoral Officer is concerned, rightly so in our opinion, about Quebeckers being increasingly dissatisfied with the system of representation. However, instead of going to the heart of the matter and differentiating between what is relevant and what is not, it's embroiling itself in identity politics. This is divisive and distracts from the fact that when we talk about belonging to a body politic, its basic unit is the citizen, irrespective of any other consideration. To talk about gender parity within such a context and open the door to imposing penalties on parties that do not follow this is to do a great disservice to those intent on modernizing the electoral process.

### **On the Criminalization of So-Called Hate Speech**

- As for everything related to hate, harassment and intimidation, the *Criminal Code* already deals with this, as do the authorities and those who specialize in these matters. I do not believe that the Chief Electoral Officer should be going down this path.

- These should not all be lumped together. I would instead explore a path complementary to others. The frustration felt towards our elected representatives could be greatly attenuated by strengthening the feeling amongst people that elected members are there to serve them and that they are listening. Therefore, the better the democratic system functions, the greater the chance of cultivating a type of harmony at that level. I won't go any further into the details.

## Participation of the Polity in Political Life

- Today, history is calling on us to complete the renewal of the democracy by ensuring that constitutional provisions vest sovereignty in the people, not narrow special interests that govern society for private gain. We require an electoral system that guarantees that power resides with the people. Changes to the *Election Act* must, at minimum, advance in that direction, rather than strengthening the autocracy.
- Any modification of the *Election Act* that does not take into account who the democracy serves, who decides and the electoral system this requires will only deepen the legitimacy and credibility crisis in which it is currently mired. It would be ill-advised to make changes to the *Election Act* without taking this fundamental reality into account and the Chief Electoral Officer should refrain from doing so.
- If we want real representation, we must provide ourselves with the means to include everyone. I would invite you to continue your reflection so that everyone is considered, all the others who find themselves excluded from the process.
- We are really proposing a more just and transparent society, where every voice counts, where the people are truly at the heart of the decisions. Citizens should have viable, non-partisan information in order to fully participate in the democratic process.
- We truly believe that the system should be further reviewed, to make it even more inclusive because not all voices are really being heard, particularly those of marginalized communities.
- I think that the electoral process in its current form with its representative mode risks reproducing the illegalities that already exist within society as a whole.

## On the Public Financing of Political Parties

- In our proposal, Élections Québec would finance the electoral process, not the political parties, which would eliminate any need for state administrative control over the funding of political parties. Voters would know fully which interests finance the political parties and who they serve, whatever the propaganda may be, while Élections Québec would guarantee the right of citizens to an informed vote by providing each household with the information they require on those presenting themselves for election.
- Parties receive funding based on the number of ballots cast. The calculation of all registered voters in the per vote funding for parties, which recoups even those electors who did not vote, poses a problem. Frankly speaking, this is one of the reasons for our political party's existence, to denounce the fact that there is absolutely no way to annul one's vote. When it is said that our vote is worth \$1.82, this is a violation of freedom and the right to vote. The citizen has no real choice in ensuring that the financing associated with his or her vote does not end up in the party's coffers. If I do not vote, it is still factored into the total



funding pot to be distributed, which goes against the voter's intent. Already, the meaning of an abstention vote or a vote to annul is annihilated through this legal reality. If we advocate that voting has value, then accordingly, all the options should be there. Political parties, therefore, should not be able to count on the financial support of all those who did not cast their ballot and financing should only take into account the actual vote obtained by each of the big political parties.

- Regarding politics in general, 75 per cent of political party financing is public funding. This is problematic, because parties are private interest groups.

### **On Mainstream Media Silence**

- At present, when it comes to the dissemination of information to voters, the media are not really our allies. It's still quite cynical to always be hearing about the same parties, the same news, without voters being permitted to think or even to find information.

- What I want to denounce or make clear to the Chief Electoral Officer and all those present here is that the media also shapes public opinion. I do not consider it conspiratorial or exaggerated to say such a thing. This is because the scope of politically acceptable ideas about which we are able to debate is already a power entirely held by private interests and mainly by Quebec's big media companies.

- As for access to electoral information, it is certainly crucial that every citizen be provided reliable and non-partisan information. What is happening is that we have reached the point where, in order to express ourselves, we have to rely on independent media, as the big media ignore us. Our only option is to meet with independent media, which themselves are limited, in their respective fields, in getting themselves known.

- With regard to media representation, as parties, we know that if we don't have a member in the National Assembly, the media never cover us. And that once we do have a member, they will. This means that we need an elected member in the National Assembly in order for them to end up talking about us. Therefore, with regard to the *Election Act*, the Chief Electoral Officer should be doing more to ensure that the media cover all the parties so that all are given a chance.

### **Pre-Election Spending**

- Concerning third-party pre-election activities, care must be taken not to interfere with the freedom to express one's opinions during elections or pre-electoral periods, whether they be organizations or third parties. I consider this a relevant discussion but one that merits further elaboration.

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## **Electoral Law's Lack of Citizen Representation and Representativity**

**– Marxist-Leninist Party of Quebec, May 7, 2024 –**

In our presentation to the Chief Electoral Officer we mentioned that we had an objection to the proposals regarding what the Chief Electoral Officer calls representativity, saying that there needs to be gender parity and if the parties do not pronounce themselves on this or make a show of good faith or whatever, then the door is open for their penalization. We object to this on principle because it is a sign of the state's intent to further intervene in the affairs of political parties which it has no business doing. The Electoral Commission is responsible for running what are called free and fair elections and not to establish itself as the decision-maker of who can be a member, who can pay funds and how much, who it can choose as a candidate, etc. State interference in the affairs of political parties in a system which claims to be liberal democratic smells of autocracy and should

be ended forthwith. In our proposal that Élections Québec fund the electoral process, not political parties, the need for administrative state control over funding of political parties would all then disappear. Electors would know fully which interests provide which political parties with funding and who they serve, no matter how much propaganda they pay for. Meanwhile Élections Québec would guarantee the right of the citizenry to an informed vote by supplying every household with the information they require about the individuals presenting themselves for election.



All of this of course raises the issue of representation and representativity, which the Chief Electoral Officer does not even bother to address, having reduced this to a matter of gender parity and equated that with representativity. No argument is presented to explain the system of representative democracy – what is it? Does the division of the electoral map into a more or less equal number of citizens mean that every citizen is thereby represented by whoever is elected? How is that the case? How will getting political parties to guarantee gender parity improve the representation of citizens in government – i.e. their agenda, their needs, accountability to them, and so on. No argument is given to this effect. Do we need to go out and count all the voters in a constituency to establish whether there is gender parity? Do we need to debate whether parties are fielding candidates in the right proportion to the gender of the electorate in each riding? Maybe there are a majority of women in every constituency across the country. Should we then only have women candidates because they are the majority?

It's ridiculous and distracts from the essential point, which is that we're talking about the members of the body politic, and that this has nothing to do with beliefs, origin, language, gender, age, etc. It's about the relationship between citizens and the State, not all those things that conceal what we mean by representation.



The form of representation in Quebec, as is also the case in Canada, in fact represents what the sovereign who wields the supreme power stands for, not what the people stand for. And in Quebec, as in Canada, that sovereign is Charles III of England, not the Legislative Assembly as we are led to believe. It is a form of rule which not only carried out broad genocide of the Indigenous Peoples in the past in order to steal their territories and make them subject peoples but continues to do so in the present as well. And lest we forget, it is a form of rule imposed on Quebec through the suppression of its striving for a republican form of rule. The heroic and ongoing resistance to this attempt to wipe out members of the polity as peoples striving for

empowerment is the only thing standing between their survival as peoples and their extinction. This will not change if we have gender parity because the system of rule does not include the citizenry in the decision-making power unless they cooperate with the form of rule designed to disempower them..

The British monarchy was and continues to be enriched by the brutal enslavement and subjugation of people yet Quebeckers and Canadians are called on to be loyal to the King and the system of governance which carries his name because the rendering of history declares that whatever crimes were committed were committed by the British empire in the past, and we are ridiculous if we do not let bygones be bygones. The fact that the crimes are committed in the present in the form of the perpetuation of the constitutional order which permitted their commission in the first place, and today glorifies them, is not up for discussion. The work for democratic renewal is not to touch that subject. In this way, the outlook which perpetuates the constitutional rule is designed to convert everyone into "loyal subjects" of a foreign monarch today and everything that entails where the supreme decision-making power lies is to be kept hidden.

Anyone who does not see that this is germane to the system of elections cannot be taken seriously in the strict sense of the word. The fact remains that the system of elections is designed to get the people to cast a ballot to authorize others to represent them. They hand over their name to another without exercising any control over the agenda orienting that person to speak and act. The person must be true to the system of rule and the decisions taken to perpetuate it. That is the *raison d'état*. Once the people have no say over the *modus operandi* of those who take decisions and the cartel party system which operates to maintain it, the rendering of the facts themselves is neither serious nor helpful. It is the fruit of a process of thought given rise to more than 400 years ago following the English Civil War. It imbues the brains of successive generations with nonsense.

The constitutional arrangements condemn us to remain within that realm of thought. The presumptions are to be successfully digested since Confederation imposed a constitution adopted by the Imperial Parliament in 1867 which was patriated holus-bolus in 1982, with the addition of a *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and an amending formula. None of the foundational constitutional arrangements are ever discussed and nor is the reasoning behind the system of representation called a representative democracy. History lessons describe them but never discuss them. They were never adopted by the people. Quebec, said to be a founding nation of Canada, is not even a signatory to the 1982 Constitution.

On this basis, the Victorian thought material persists and erases the memory of the people, the actual experience of the people is to be forgotten, relegated to oblivion. We are supposed to accept the taboo on discussion and the limitations imposed by the conception of rights and freedoms given rise to by a civil society based on the Victorian ideals of duty, order and civilization.

The current status of Canada as a constitutional monarchy, with a foreign monarch as head of state to boot, is a national humiliation, an embarrassment but this is ignored by the acceptance of the electoral process said to be representative despite the fact that the system of representation is not of the people but of the monarch. If this is a national humiliation for Canadians it is even less tolerable for Quebeckers for whom it is a national humiliation plus.



All of this came to the fore after the death of Elizabeth II and the ascension to power of Charles III. It is to the credit of some members of the National Assembly that they have raised the point that the

system of representation as it stands can only make sense for the people if loyalty is to the people, to those who elect the members, and not to a foreign monarch. This in itself poses problems worth discussing. For example, if we say "those who elect them," we are forgetting all those who, in the same constituency, did not vote for these members. Some didn't vote at all. But by the magic of the first-past-the-post system, the elected representative is proclaimed to represent all voters. While many members have shamelessly insisted that this is merely symbolic and unimportant, it is in fact a very important aspect. The rules decreed that those who refuse to swear allegiance to the foreign monarch, and a British one no less, could not be seated in the National Assembly. This had the makings of a political crisis seen to be undesirable since all those who elected these members would thereby stand without representation, to say nothing about the perception that a government calling itself nationalist was willing to reconcile itself to swearing allegiance to a foreign monarch. While some calling themselves the popular representatives of Quebeckers to their eternal shame were willing to negotiate a deal so long as they would not lose their seats in the National Assembly, in the end a consensus was reached with all members of the Assembly to make swearing allegiance to the foreign King optional in exchange for swearing loyalty to the people. In this way, the entire issue of who the representative democracy represents and the role of elections in maintaining this status quo was swept under the rug.

Now we come full circle and the Chief Electoral Officer is, in our opinion, rightly concerned that the people of Quebec are increasingly unhappy with the system of representation. However, instead of going to the heart of the matter and differentiating what is pertinent and what is not, he is going down the rabbit hole of identity politics. This is not only totally divisive but also diverts from the fact that when speaking about membership in a polity, the basic unit is the citizen and not based on any consideration other than that. The PMLQ believes that talking about gender parity in this context, and opening the door to penalties for parties that don't respect it, is a disservice to those who want to modernize the electoral process.

At the very least, the need for discussion on what constitutes representation and what constitutes representativity, and how the electoral system is construed to have neither when it comes to the people, should be discussed.

A fictional persona is presented to us as being represented by our head of state, Charles III. This fictional persona is said to embody the values which unify the nation. How can values which we do not espouse unify the nation? It is a ridiculous presumption we are supposed to accept because we are supposed to accept that there is nothing we can do about it. We are powerless. The aim of erecting this fictional person of state is to hide the actual relations between humans and humans and humans and nature and what they reveal, which is the need to empower the people. Today, the call of history is to complete the democratic revolution by making sure constitutional arrangements vest the supreme power in the people, not in the narrow private interests which rule over the society for private gain. An electoral system which guarantees power is vested in the people is required. Changes to the electoral law, far from reinforcing an autocracy, must at the very least take a step in this direction.

Any changes to the electoral law which do not take into account who the democracy serves, who decides and the system of elections to make it so are going to deepen the crisis of legitimacy and credibility in which the electoral law is mired, not rescue it. The PMLQ believes that it is unwise to proceed with amendments to the *Election Act* without taking this fundamental reality into account, and that the Chief Electoral Officer should not proceed with his proposals.

## General Elections in Mexico

# Mexican People Refuse Retrogression and Affirm Pro-Social Policies

– Claude Brunelle –



**Victory rally in Mexico City, June 8, 2024 for President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum and Mayor-elect of Mexico City Clara Brugada, both of whom ran for the Morena Party.**

On June 2, over 60 per cent of Mexico's 99 million eligible voters went to the polls in the largest general election in Mexican history. More than 18,000 male and female candidates contested the elections, in which the country's next president was elected. Also up for renewal were the Congress of the Union, made up of 128 senators in the Senate, 300 elected deputies and 200 multi-member deputies in the Chamber of Deputies, the governors of eight of the 31 states that make up Mexico, the deputies of 30 of the country's 31 state congresses, the government of the capital Mexico City and its head, as well as thousands of local government positions such as mayors, governors and municipal councillors.

The president of the National Electoral Institute (INE), Guadalupe Taddei Zavala, announced at a press conference in the early hours of June 3 that Claudia Sheinbaum, the presidential candidate of the Let's Keep Making History (Sigamos Haciendo Historia) coalition formed by the Morena Party, the Labor Party (PT) and the Green Party, had won the presidential election.

On June 8, after all the vote counting and recounting procedures had been completed, the INE declared Claudia Sheinbaum elected with 59.76 per cent of the vote, or almost 36 million votes, far ahead of her closest rival who received 27 per cent of the vote. Claudia Sheinbaum is not only the first woman in Mexico's history to be elected president, but also the candidate with the most votes ever, even more than outgoing President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's 30 million in 2018 when he was the Morena candidate.

The rest of the results show a tidal wave for the Let's Keep Making History coalition in all the electoral contests. In Mexico City, another woman, Clara Brugada, was elected with 51 per cent of the vote, and Morena, the PT and Green Party coalition won 11 of the capital's 16 mayoralties. Of the eight states which elected governors, six were won by Morena and its allies, which will govern 24 of the country's 31 states. The dominance of Morena and its allies is also overwhelming in the Congress of the Union. In the Chamber of Deputies, the Let's Keep Making History coalition won a total of 374 of the 500 seats, giving it a two thirds majority, referred to as a qualified majority. In the Senate, the alliance won a total of 83 of the 128 seats to be filled, bringing it within one seat of a qualified majority. A qualified majority in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate is required for any changes to the country's constitution.





**June 8 rally in Mexico City**

It should be noted that the highest percentages received by Morena and its allies were in the south where the López Obrador government has built most of its major projects including the 1,500-kilometre Maya train, a new oil refinery, the Ismo de Tehuantepec inter-oceanic corridor, new airports and tourist circuits.

With these results, the conservative alliance coalition Strength and Heart for Mexico (Fuerza y Corazón por México), formed by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the National Action Party (PAN) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) was the big loser in these elections. The PRI, which governed the country for over 70 years, slipped to fourth place while the PRD, which failed to obtain the required three per cent of the national vote, disappeared as a registered party.

The new president-elect has declared that her government's priority will be to continue and expand social programs, including economic assistance for all women aged 60 to 64, universal scholarships for all levels of education, and consolidation of the health care system, with free care and medicines throughout the country. It will also pursue a policy of energy sovereignty, modernization of ports and railroads, electoral reform and reform of the justice system. Beyond the pursuit of what are called welfare policies, the new government will face enormous pressure from the international financial oligarchy as well as from the U.S. imperialists to leave foreign domination of the country's natural resources untouched. Over 25 per cent of Mexico's territory is covered by mining concessions, 90 per cent of which are owned by foreign companies. There are currently 11 conflicts in the mining sector, some of which have been going on for decades. One of the most coveted resources is lithium. Although the Mexican government has nationalized the extraction and processing of this resource, control of its distribution is in the hands of the U.S. imperialists, who want to seize it for military production. There are over 3,800 concessions for the extraction of drinking water in Mexico, the vast majority of them held by large international corporations which care little about leaving an ever-growing percentage of the population without access to this life-sustaining resource.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government's inhumane immigration policies have effectively turned Mexico into the third largest immigrant-receiving country in the world.

Although the Morena government has adopted and defended a foreign policy of non-interference and mutual respect with other countries, a policy it scrupulously applies when opposing the blockade against Cuba, or the coup d'état in Peru or Bolivia and elsewhere in Latin America, the pressure it is under can be clearly seen in its much more questionable positions of neutrality with regard to the conflict in Ukraine or the genocide of the Palestinian people.

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UK General Election, July 4

## No to the Pro-War Cartel Parties!

– Workers' Weekly –



### *Labour Party Leader Keir Starmer Says Nuclear Weapons Are the "Number One Issue for an Incoming Labour Government"*

The issue of "security" was put forward as an election battleground in the televised leaders' "debate" between Conservative Party Leader Rishi Sunak and Labour Party Leader Keir Starmer on June 4. But far from any recognition that security actually lies in the fight for the rights of all, Sunak and Starmer, within the confines of the format of the "debate," vied to outdo each other in claiming that their own warmongering was key.

Shortly before the election was announced, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak had made an incoherent speech on the issue of "security."<sup>[1]</sup> Then on June 3, Sir Keir Starmer decided to abuse the 80th anniversary of D-Day by dedicating to it a keynote speech in Manchester that claimed, *A stronger; safer; more secure Britain.*<sup>[2]</sup> Like Rishi Sunak, Starmer used his speech to justify continuing Britain's active involvement in the escalation of war in Europe and refusing to condemn Britain's political, military and economic support for Israel's genocide of the Palestinians. All in the name of "security" for the British people.

At the same time, Starmer gave fair warning of an even more dangerous direction that a new Labour government intends when he angrily replied to a question that "this is a changed Labour Party and the most important thing is I voted in favour of the nuclear deterrent, ... and my commitment to the nuclear deterrent is absolute, absolute! That is why I voted for it, that is why I have changed this party and that is why it will be the number one issue for an incoming Labour government."<sup>[3]</sup>

In pursuit of offensive nuclear submarine weapons, Starmer emphasized that Labour "has announced a new triple-lock commitment to our nuclear deterrent. We'll maintain Britain's Continuous at Sea deterrent 24 hours a day, 365 days a year." He declared: "So with Labour, Britain will be fit to fight. Within the first year of a Labour government, we will carry out a new strategic defence review. And we're absolutely committed to spending 2.5 per cent of GDP on defence as soon as possible, because we know our security isn't just vital for our safety today, it's absolutely central to our success for the future."



Lakenheath, May 21, 2022

In other words, Labour intends to continue the further militarization of the British economy which has already been described in recent times as "war's workshop of the world" in exporting weapons to world conflicts. Such talk is not about "defence" or "security" of the British people, is not about triple locking people's livelihoods and pensions, but about the ambitions of the arms industries and their "success for the future" which will bring with it again the disastrous ambitions of the previous Blair Labour government. Remember its criminal wars abroad in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq alongside the U.S. warmongers in which thousands of people died, or became refugees fleeing from these conflicts.

Such statements drew condemnation from former leader of the Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn, now standing as an independent candidate for Islington North, who forcefully declared, "Nuclear weapons are a profound and existential threat to humanity. Instead of investing in weapons of mass destruction, we should be investing in our schools, hospitals and housing to ensure everyone can lead a happy and healthy life. That is what real security means." Andrew Feinstein, an expert on the arms industry standing as an independent candidate against Starmer in Starmer's constituency, Holborn and St. Pancras, pointed out in an article on why he is standing that "the notoriously corrupt British defence sector has for decades routed money to our main political parties and to individual politicians -- mostly once they have left office, for decisions taken while in office. These companies are the most heavily subsidized by the public purse, meaning that we the taxpayer are subsidising the arms being used in Gaza, the undermining of the rule of law and the corrupting of our political system." [4]

The fact that Starmer, like Sunak, reflects the same outlook of the old world values and not the values of peoples striving for peace, empowerment and the New in the modern world is one of the most revealing things about this General Election campaign. The aim of oligopolies and the executive power is the opposite of the deceptive mantra of Sunak and Starmer of "choice" and "change." The aim is not choice and/or change from the cartel party system but the continuation of the reactionary aims and interests of these oligopolies and the ruling elite that are behind executive power of this cartel party system. Starmer's statement that this "is not a party-political issue, this is a national issue" shows how the cartel party system operates so that the people and even Labour Party MPs will have no say in the matter when the executive rules on such vital questions as "national" issues.

In his speech, Starmer also boasted that in February at the Munich Security Conference he "met with world leaders from the U.S., Europe and the Middle East and I met the Secretary General of NATO." He continued, "And I pledged to each of them that with a Labour government, the UK" would be "a leader on the world stage once more." [5] This is a sure indication once again, if one were needed, that Keir Starmer has been welcomed into the club as a champion for the U.S. and NATO interests just as Blair was in the 1997 Labour government.

The conclusion can be drawn that another attempted coup is about to take place in which the ruling elite hope to rob the people of Britain of real change that upholds the interests of the working class and people at home and abroad. However, this time Starmer has already signalled his vision for a Britain that only benefits the rich and diverts huge resources away from social programs and towards war industries. Starmer's vision, like Blair's, is one of the dangerous escalation of war in the world. The peoples of Europe, who have suffered through two world wars, do not want war, or to have their countries turned into bases for Anglo-American warmongers and NATO. The world's people alongside the youth are demanding an end to this warmongering and are pursuing the demand for an immediate ceasefire to Israeli genocide in Palestine and an end to NATO's proxy war in Ukraine with Russia.



**Demonstration in London, June 8, 2024 marking eight months of the Israeli genocide in Palestine and of weekly solidarity actions across Britain.**

Let us go all out to elect candidates who have an anti-war stance, taking steps towards a government which cannot be free to pursue its pro-war nature in Parliament unopposed. At the same time, the fight is on to establish an Anti-War Government, that is a government with modern democratic arrangements. This is the perspective and vision that inspires the working class, the youth and all the democratic forces. We call on these forces to persist in speaking in their own name, build discussion groups and establish other collective forms in which the participants empower themselves.

*Workers' Weekly is a publication of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist).*

## **Notes**

1. "A Government in Shameful Disarray with No Way Forward," *Workers' Weekly*, May 18, 2024.
2. "Keir Starmer -- A stronger, safer, more secure Britain speech," Labour Party, June 3, 2024.
3. "Sir Keir Starmer says he's prepared to use nuclear weapons to defend UK," Faye Brown, *Sky News*, June 3, 2024.
4. "Why I am Standing Against Keir Starmer, Andrew Feinstein, *Declassified UK*, May 21, 2024.
5. "Munich Security Conference 2024 -- A Manifestation of Morbid Preoccupation with Defeat for the Old World Order," *Workers' Weekly*, March 30, 2024.

*(June 8, 2024)*

# Condemn Labour Party 's Use of "New Deal" to Bring Workers On Side

– Workers' Weekly –



Enough Is Enough! rally, London, June 18, 2022

The Labour Party recently published the latest version of its "New Deal for Working People," which is to feature prominently in its election campaign.

Angela Rayner originally launched the New Deal at the Labour Conference in 2021. As originally introduced, the New Deal was ostensibly a set of measures that would, it was claimed, end the practice of "fire and rehire," ban zero-hours contracts (which do bind employers to provide a minimum number of hours to a worker) and ensure regular hours for all, strengthen trade union rights, and introduce sectorial Fair Pay Agreements, amongst other changes. The legislation to enact the New Deal was to be created within 100 days of a Labour election victory.[1]

In its initial form, it was drawn up in agreement with the unions affiliated to the Labour Party. The context is an extended period of sustained industrial action and campaigning under the heading of "Enough is Enough!" in the face of the rising cost of living, particularly food and energy prices, further deterioration of social programs and the increasingly brazen imposition of worsening employment terms along with the casualization of work.

Junior doctors and teachers and many others have been in prolonged action around their claims, asserting themselves over wages and conditions during and after the pandemic, and are demanding their rights. They are seeking the repeal of laws that have strengthened the police powers of the state against their ability to organize in self-defence, such as the *Minimum Service Levels Act* aimed at undermining strike action.





**Junior doctors strike, April 11-14, 2023**

It is in that context that these unions drew up this New Deal with the Labour Party. Unlike the agreements with unions in the heyday of social democracy, this deal arose not in conditions of relative equilibrium, with the big unions accommodated in the arrangements of governance, but has instead arisen as a result of the profound disequilibrium that exists in the social relation between employer and worker. It is also in conditions of the current and decaying cartel party system, with Labour on its part attempting to win votes from working people to ensure a large victory in the electoral coup they are attempting to mount.

The reality then is that all along, and particularly in the recent period leading to the coming election, the deal has been a battle with a Labour Party that seeks to use it to manipulate the electorate and ensure the deal contains no real substance.

On May 8, union leaders met with Labour leader Keir Starmer to discuss a new draft of the New Deal that Unite General Secretary Sharon Graham rejected as "unrecognizable."<sup>[2]</sup> After nearly a week, while reports claimed that Starmer had been forced to back down on proposals to water down the deal, it is clear that serious points of contention remain.<sup>[3]</sup>

The latest version, now made public,<sup>[4]</sup> though it says "we will introduce legislation in Parliament within 100 days of entering government," it does not actually commit to anything. It does not state what of the legislation it will introduce in that period, and it is at pains to explain that this will really amount to starting the parliamentary process.

In particular, it explains: "Labour is pro-worker and pro-business, and we will work in partnership with trade unions and business to deliver our New Deal. That is why we are committed to following a proper parliamentary process for our legislative proposals, with a full and comprehensive consultation on the implementation of the New Deal. We will invite businesses, trade unions, and civil society to input on how we can best put our plans into practice."

In conditions where civil society barely operates, this is an invitation to business to call the shots, as all power is on its side. The New Deal is merely a set of policy objectives, debated at length with the unions, announced to great fanfare, but in substance is little more than a starting-point to consultation with business. Indeed, all the cartel parties are making various vacuous promises that have no intention of being kept, and in this sense the New Deal is no different.

As Michael Doyle explains, writing in *Conter*, "Even the section on strengthening collective bargaining is focused on the needs of business. Starmer's commitment to strengthening collective bargaining is about reducing strike action and disruptions to business. There is nothing about increasing wages and achieving better terms and conditions. Labour's position on the industrial action of the past few years is one of supporting keeping pay increases below inflation – an example being the sacking of a Labour shadow minister who expressed support for the RMT's [Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers] demand for above inflation pay rises in 2022."<sup>[5]</sup>

In its current form then, the latest and essentially final draft is the result of the machinations of Starmer and his circles to try to bring the workers and their organizations onside, to secure their electoral support and to divert them from fighting for their own interests.

Workers should therefore harbour no illusions about the Labour Party or get distracted by the presence of a "New Deal." While the fact that the deal exists indicates something about the effect of the workers' continued actions at this time, as an end in itself it will simply maintain the system of exploitation. In the current conditions it would favour only the rich, if workers' independent aims are allowed to be buried beneath it.

The workers instead need to have their independent program, and organize to stop paying the rich and increasing investments in social programmes, which is the only basis of the alternative. The issue is not to "make work pay," as Labour describes the aim of its deal, but to change the direction of the economy. This can only be achieved by the workers working out solutions which favour them, not relying on any other force.

The call still is: *All out to elect anti-war candidates and challenge the cartel party system!* The New Deal cannot be allowed to divert this into voting for a Labour landslide. Vote for anti-war and independent candidates wherever possible, while strengthening the fight for empowerment. A deal is not a new arrangement. The need is for fundamental democratic renewal of the political system, expressed in an Anti-War Government, which is the burning need of the day.

## Notes

1. "Labour's new deal for working people," Trade Union and Labour Party Liaison Organisation.
2. "Unions to meet Starmer over workers' rights fears," Andrew Murray, *Morning Star*, May 8, 2024.
3. "Unions stop Keir Starmer watering down workers' rights package," David Maddox, *The Independent*, May 14, 2024.
4. "Labour's plan to make work pay: Delivering a new deal for working people," Trade Union and Labour Party Liaison Organisation, May 24, 2024.
5. "The workers' movement and the coming Labour government," Michael Doyle, *Conter*, June 5, 2024.

(June 8, 2024)

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