



# ***F*OCUS ON *S*SOCIALISM**

**The Political Journal of Canadians for Peace and Socialism**

## **WAR AND ENERGY – PARLIAMENTARY SCORE BOARD**

**Don Currie – Chair CPS**

## **LENIN AND CANADIAN INDEPENDENCE**

**Tim Buck – From Chapter 7 of Lenin and Canada, Published 1970**

## **VIMY 1917 – KANDAHAR 2007**

**Canadians for Peace and Socialism**

## **CPS Farmer Members & Supporters Assess Fight to Halt Corporate Control of Agriculture**

**Canadians for Peace and Socialism**

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# THE WAY I SEE IT!

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## NDP APRIL 24<sup>TH</sup> PARLIAMENTARY BLUNDER

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The **political** question before the House of Commons on April 19<sup>th</sup> when it debated the Government's Afghan War policy was; does Parliament support an end to the war or does it support Prime Minister Harper, Defense Minister O'Connor and General Hillier and their demand for a Parliamentary mandate to continue the war indefinitely?

When Conservative MPs, with the support of the NDP caucus voted 150 to 134 on April 24<sup>th</sup> to defeat the Liberal motion to end the combat role of Canadian military forces in Afghanistan on February 2009 they voted **for** Harper's demand for a Parliamentary mandate to continue the war indefinitely. No amount of NDP spin can change that political reality.

Jack Layton and the NDP, claiming to be advancing the cause of immediate withdrawal by helping to defeat the Liberal motion, handed Prime Minister Harper the gift of Parliamentary approval for a Conservative war without end in Afghanistan. Prime Minister Harper is gleeful and will trumpet Parliamentary support for an open ended war far and wide. That is good news for the defense contractors, General Hillier and President George Bush and NATO. The motion of support for Harper came on the same day that President Bush rejected a similar demand by the US Congress to set a date for US withdrawal from Iraq.

The NDP has sacrificed Parliamentary credibility to score points against the Liberals. That is a major blunder and bad news for the cause of peace.

**Don Currie,  
Chair, Canadians for Peace and Socialism**

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# ***WAR AND ENERGY – PARLIAMENTARY SCORE BOARD***

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DON CURRIE – CHAIR CPS

## THE PARLIAMENTARY SCOREBOARD... LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's plan for an early election and an easy ride to a Parliamentary majority has hit some pot holes. A crisis of credibility is overtaking the Conservative government. Resistance to the Harper neo-con agenda of deep integration with US imperialism and rapid militarization of the economy has stiffened. Canadian working people are wiser and at a different place than when the neo-cons formed a minority government after the 39<sup>th</sup> General Election on January 23, 2006. As the Harper agenda of war, corporate entitlement and restricted democracy has unfolded what has been the reaction of the opposition parties?

## ASSESSING POLITICAL PARTIES – FUNDAMENTALS REVISITED

The only way that workers and farmers can accurately judge the record of political parties is to assess their actions as the country confronts profound changes in economic development affecting the wages and farm income of 16.6 million Canadians who must work to live.

The reaction of all of the major political parties to the fundamental changes underway in the economy is somewhat similar because all of them, the Conservatives, the Liberals, the NDP, the Bloc and the Greens without exception support the profit system and base their programs and policies on the belief that it will continue indefinitely.

As the capitalist system falters and fails, as it is presently doing, the political parties that uphold it compete for the votes of working people with the promise that their party can run a system of corporate greed and privilege with the least negative impact on wage earners and farmers.

## MACRO TRENDS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – WINNERS AND LOSERS

What are the major changes in the Canadian economy that the political parties confront? The macro change is the trend to a mono-economy dependent on the energy sector for most of the profit and job growth in the country. The mono-economy is accompanied by a mono-market, the USA that under NAFTA has become the principle destination of Canadian raw material resources and manufactured products. For workers the trend to an energy mono-economy-market means the steady decline of jobs and income in the non-energy resource sector, manufacturing, basic industry, transportation and utilities, and a steady decline of farm income in the agricultural sector. Growth in



home construction, a major employer of skilled labour is precarious and totally dependent on low interest mortgage rates.

The major growth in employment is in the low wage service, financial, education and health care sectors. Put another way, seventy-percent of the jobs are now dependent on a declining commodity value added productive sector. There is no end in sight to declining value added sectors of the economy. In fact government policy is designed to accommodate its further development.

The financiers do not want a change in the mono-economy. The investor classes are getting rich and richer as the price of a barrel of oil reaches and exceeds \$65. The energy sector is attracting a flood of capital, resources and labour. Under investor pressure to meet construction deadlines to complete mega projects and pipe lines to get product to market, demands for skilled labour, technicians, technologist and engineers is skyrocketing in fixed capital projects and accounts for “labour mobility” agreements becoming the fashion. Workers whose skills are not in demand or have been exhausted through years of exploitation have not been retrained and are discarded as redundant and unemployable.

The same is true of agriculture. Harper’s plan to destroy orderly marketing starts with the Canadian Wheat Board but the logic of the policy is to wipe out all government protections for all agriculture producers and throw them to the mercy of the open market where large private ag-corporations dominate every link in the so-called “value chain”. The result is a growing number of farmers forced into off farm employment or right out of farming into the cities where their skills do not always match employment opportunities.

A neo-con government dedicated to NAFTA and eschewing central planning, public or state capitalist investment to overcome regional disparities is not a government that can be counted on to protect workers not in demand and farmers too economically weak to compete with large ag-corps. As labour intensive



manufacturing sectors close, workers are abandoned and along with them their communities, its infrastructure and the future of the youth. The result is major cities are growing at an exponential rate as the rural communities and smaller towns decline.

Corporate financial analysts point to numbers that show growth in GDP, a rising stock market and dozens of indicators that place Canada high among the G20 countries in economic growth. Those indicators are rarely analyzed for who are the main beneficiaries of that growth and who are its victims. Credible left wing researchers are deluging our movement with facts that show it is the corporate and banking elites that are appropriating the wealth and workers and farmers who are left to make do with what's left.

Freedom and liberty are the grand words used to obscure the dictatorship of capital. In the name of freedom, Canadian finance capital demands that all restrictions be removed on the movement of capital in and out of the country. The result is the flight of Canadian capital to the four corners of the earth while Canadian flag ship basic industries in steel, steel pipe production, nickel, aluminum are allowed to fall one by one under the control of foreign investors to be played like poker chips in an endless game of corporate takeovers, consolidations, break ups and sell-offs with workers jobs and community needs expendable and CEO's reaping windfall bonuses as stock prices rise on plundered companies.

## HARPER'S ADVICE TO WORKERS AND FARMERS

The main advice of the Harper Conservatives to workers and farmers since the last election is to adjust to the "new" economy, adjust to less economic security, declining incomes, bigger work loads, longer hours and fewer benefits. Workers whose wages from one job cannot make ends meet are advised not to complain but to get another job, since "there is lots of work". A second job



with more work and longer hours often for fewer wages per hour and with no benefits is Harper's answer to the need for more purchasing power.

Farmers who confront falling income are advised by Harper to farm "smarter", code for "get big or get out". Youth, rural and urban, skilled and unskilled, partially educated or fully educated are advised by the neo-cons to "start at the bottom and work their way up" code for "take what you can get and hope for the best". Workers looking forward to retirement are advised by the right-wing to keep working beyond retirement age because companies and the government say they can no longer afford to pay a decent retirement income. Women with children are advised to stay home and make do with Harper's \$100 per child handout.

## CAN HARPER BE REFORMED?

The record shows that the Conservatives are hostile and contemptuous to pressure from labour and farm organizations. Speaking to 3000 Conservative election workers on the weekend prior to the federal budget, PM Harper expressed once again his contempt for organized labour and people's movements by characterizing them as "small groups" of complainers who attend "rallies" while the "quiet majority" that he claims to represent, were content to "work hard", and no doubt keep quiet. Harper's notion of democracy is to refuse to meet with Buzz Hargrove representing 250,000 auto workers confronting layoffs, and to fire the head of the Canadian Wheat Board for standing up for a majority of farmers who benefit from single desk marketing of wheat, barley and Durham.

## THE LABOUR, FARMER, PEACE AND DEMOCRATIC COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

Confronted with major changes in the economy organized workers and farmers are fighting back. It is their mass pressure on

the opposition parties that is taken into account by Layton, Dion and Duceppe but rarely acknowledged. How have the movements of workers, farmers, the peace and democratic forces affected recent Parliamentary decisions? It is time to take stock to review the record, draw conclusions, regroup, get organized and move forward.

## THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND AGAINST THE ANTI-TERRORIST LEGISLATION HAS MOVED FORWARD – STILL A BITTER STRUGGLE AHEAD...!

On February 27<sup>th</sup> 2007 by a 159 to 127 vote Liberal, NDP and Bloc MP's united to defeat Security Minister Stockwell Day's attempt to extend the provisions of the anti-Terrorism Act that permitted police to arrest without warrant suspected "terrorists" and to compel them to testify before special judges in secret. Failure to comply permitted the judge to jail detainees indefinitely.

Following the vindication of Mahar Arar an all party delegation of MP's visited detainees at "Guantanamo North" at Kingston Penitentiary and exposed the deplorable conditions of their incarceration. The Supreme Court acted and ordered the Harper Government to release, Adil Charkoui, Mahmoud Jaballah, Mohamed Zeki Mahjoub, in jail for seven years without charge and Mohamed Harkat incarcerated since 2002. The Supreme Court will meet in June to determine if the security certificates enacted under pressure from the Bush administration following 9/11 are constitutional under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

James Clancy, President of the 230,000 member National Union of Public and Government Employees (NUPGE) said, "Security certificates and secret trials deny citizens one of the most basic and universal rights of all human rights, the right to fundamental justice."

## THE “THRILL IS GONE” FROM THE BUDGET

The blush from Finance Minister Flaherty’s March 19<sup>th</sup> pork barrel budget has quickly faded. The budget designed to bribe Quebec voters with their own money helped the neo-con ADQ under Mario Dumont to increase their seats but reduced Jean Charest’s right-wing Liberals to a minority government. The PQ lost ground in some ridings but ousted the Liberals in others such as the Saguenay where Alcan is shamelessly pillaging Quebec Hydro and the town.

Dismissing Maritime and Saskatchewan voters as irrelevant in his Ontario and Quebec centred re-election plans, Harper broke his promise to Conservative Premier Danny Williams and Saskatchewan NDP Premier Lorne Calvert not to include oil revenues in the calculation of budget transfer payments. The budget was roundly condemned by First Nations, the labor and farm movement, women and child care advocates and the peace movement – in a word the people. It was endorsed by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE) the energy sector and the big investors. The Liberals and the NDP united against the Government but the budget passed by 176 to 119 on March 27<sup>th</sup> with the support of the Gilles Duceppe Bloc.

## HARPER’S “SUPPORT PLAN” FOR WORKERS

On March 21<sup>st</sup>. with across the board labour support and after passing two readings, the anti-scab private members Bill C 257 lost 122-177 on third reading. The Liberals split. Stephane Dion and a majority of Liberal MP’s voted against the pro-labour bill and a minority joined the NDP and the Bloc to support the legislation. All of the 42 Liberals supporting the anti-scab Bill came from heavily unionized cities such as Vancouver where all BC Liberals voted with the NDP for the legislation.

After Harper and Dion endorsed the use of scabs, they got together again and backed Conservative Labour Minister Jean



Pierre Blackburn to enact Bill C 46 the Labor Continuation Act, forcing 2800 United Transportation Union (UTU) back to work. The striking rail workers rejected by a vote of 1553 to 402 a one year agreement that fell far short of their demands for modest wage increases and reductions in long mileage hauls without breaks and proper rest. The UTU has been without a contract for three years. An arbitrator will be appointed to impose a final selection offer on the workers.

CN President and CEO E. Hunter Patterson attacked older CN workers who he accused of being more concerned with pensions than working long hours for CN. Patterson called for the replacement of older workers by younger workers who he said would be willing to work “off the spare board”. Working off the spare board is a system used for years by CN and CP to force rail workers to put their lives on hold while sitting around waiting for a call out from CN to go to work. The spare board puts the term “labour mobility” into context. As Focus goes to press the media is reporting that CP maintenance workers may be hitting the bricks for more wages.

## HARPER’S “SUPPORT PLAN” FOR FARMERS

Harper unleashed Agriculture Minister Chuck Strahl on the next step in his mission to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). Strahl rigged the March 28<sup>th</sup> “heads I win tails you lose” vote among barley producers the outcome of which is so tainted that it will likely be challenged in the courts by the National Farmer’s Union. Strahl is attempting to enact regulations and will allow the sale of barley on the open market, a clear violation of the legislation governing the scope and application of CWB.

## THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN – STEPHEN HARPER’S IRAQ! JACK LAYTON’S FOLLY



Canadian participation in the US-NATO war in Afghanistan was debated in the House of Commons on April 19<sup>th</sup>. During the debate all of the opposition parties demanded that Prime Minister Harper come clean on his plans to expand and extend the war beyond the February 2009 deadline set by Parliament for Canadian withdrawal from a combat role.

Jack Layton repeated the NDP's demand that troops be withdrawn now. On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, when the vote was taken on the Liberal motion to end Canada's combat role on February 2009 inexplicably the NDP lined up with Harper and against the Liberals and the Bloc. Incredibly Layton vehemently denies the NDP vote supported the Harper Government. We leave it to NDP spin to explain to their voter base and the peace movement how their votes did not support the Conservatives demand for a mandate to conduct an open ended war with no end in sight. Defense Minister O'Connor, a cynical hard nosed former consultant for the world's biggest defense contractors is counting on the war to continue for 15 years. Compounding Layton's folly is the fact the NDP support for Harper came on the same day as President George Bush of the USA rejected the demand of the Democratic majority in Congress to set a date for the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq. It is difficult to see how Layton, Harper and Bush on the same page on the same day apparently agreeing on the same issue is "good optics" and helps the cause of peace.

Layton's policy advisors are too clever by far. They have led the NDP caucus into a crisis of credibility in its obsession to oppose the Liberals at all costs. It is further evidence that the NDP intends to pursue a "go it alone" policy even if it means setting the stage for another Conservative electoral victory. Layton could have stood up in the House and given the Liberal motion conditional support, explaining its limitations but recognizing that it expressed a widely held belief among Canadians that the war must end. Layton had a golden opportunity to act in a statesmanlike manner explaining the limitations of the Liberal



position while pledging to continue to fight for the NDP's policy of immediate withdrawal.

The NDP leadership refuses to accept the fact that they do not embrace all of the peace sentiment in the country and that by insisting that they hold the only moral high ground worth defending they alienate, irritate and exasperate their soft support that does do not share their full political position. Layton's position of "love me or leave me" is a losing strategy. Layton's position on the vote on Afghanistan has handed the Liberals and Greens new arguments to appeal for a shift of NDP voters to their parties. Alexa McDonough's claim that the NDP acted out of "principle" is not convincing. Given her experience she cannot fail to see how Harper will now gleefully use the vote to attack the peace movement and intensify the war and continue to reward the defense industries with many more years of lucrative contracts.

## STEPHEN HARPER'S THREATS

Harper accuses anyone disagreeing with his war of betraying the troops. His attempt to impose a gag order on Parliament and public opposition to his policy is universally ignored except for his poorly informed supporters. Harper's grandstanding with the Queen at the Vimy Memorial was marred by the deaths of eight more Canadian soldiers in Southern Afghanistan turning an expensive photo op into a tragic farce.

Without missing a step, Harper approved General Hillier's request for \$832 million to lease and buy 20 aging Leopard 2 and 100 Leopard 2A6 tanks from the German Bundeswehr and the Dutch government to be used to escalate the war in Southern Afghanistan. The government is also taking delivery of 28 H92 Sikorsky Super Hawk helicopters on January 29<sup>th</sup>. 2009 the very date Canadian involvement in Afghanistan is supposed to expire. All opposition party leaders in the House and the Greens seized on the arms purchases as further evidence that Harper plans to

extend the war beyond the January 2009 deadline imposed by Parliament.

## BILL C288, THE CLEAN AIR ACT AND A DIRTY BETRAYAL OF KYOTO

The Harper Government's decision to renege on Canada's Kyoto obligations to reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions by 5% below their 1990 levels by 2013 has been substituted with Bill C 30 a toothless Clean Air Act that has been met with universal condemnation by all parties in the House and by a growing consensus of labour, environmental and scientific community groups. Pablo Rodriguez, Liberal, introduced a private member's Bill C288 demanding the government adhere to its Kyoto commitments and come up with a plan to implement Kyoto within 60 days. The Bill passed the House last February where it is now stalled in Senate hearings and under attack by John Baird, Minister of the Environment. Baird is grandstanding at Senate Hearings, crying wolf over claiming that the costs of instituting the Kyoto targets are so great they will bring on a depression.

The Pembina Institute of Alberta estimates that GHG emissions from the Oil Sands projects can be reduced to near zero at the cost of approximately \$2.50 a barrel, an amount they assert that represents the month to month fluctuation in the price of a barrel of oil on the stock market. Oil sands workers estimate that typical productions costs are about to \$12 to \$15 per barrel and when recovery of capital costs are factored in may be marginally higher. That translates into a 6% loss in profits when all of the tax deferrals, low royalty rates and government infrastructure support to the industry is factored in to the final price. With a barrel of oil averaging \$60 per barrel and intermediate price high grade synthetics fetching much more, the actual cost per barrel of cleaning up GHG emissions may be closer to \$3 to \$4 per barrel. Whatever the real hit to profits it is a small price for the industry to pay to stop polluting the whole country.



## JOBS AND A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT — A LABOUR ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTION

At the other end of the spectrum some well-meaning environmentalists are calling for a total moratorium on tar sands production mindless of job losses for tens of thousands of energy sector workers and their families who have come from all over Canada to work at Fort McMurray.

The scandal arising from a pitiful 1% royalty going to the Alberta Treasury while health and education are under funded has forced the Stelmach government to conduct royalty hearings that provides labour and environmental groups the opportunity to press their demands for a people's democratic solution to energy development.

There is a growing trend in the discussions under way at the Parkland Institute, the Council of Canadians and the Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) that recognizes there is no answer to GHG from oil sands development that excludes workers and farmers from the solutions. A five point challenge by the AFL to the Stelmach Conservative Government's exclusive control over all of the decisions affecting tar sands development is leading many workers to the conclusion that the time is right to demand nationalization and public control over the entire sector. They have concluded that right-wing Harper and Stelmach governments fronting for big oil investors are unwilling and incapable of a solution to either GHG or sustaining workers jobs and addressing the housing, transportation, education and health crisis gripping the oil rich province.

## HARPER AND BUSH AND TRI-LATERAL CONTINENTALISM

Harper continues to work behind the scenes with continentalist forces in the USA and Mexico to accelerate deep integration with



US imperialism and to assure Cheney and Bush that he can be counted on to continue to send a steady stream of Alberta Tar Sands production for the US military even if it endangers Canada's long term energy needs. Harper's advisors are also working on plans to market Canadian fresh water to the USA under the terms of NAFTA.

Harper has capitulated to the US lumber lobby on the soft wood lumber file leaving \$1 billion of the Canadian industry's money on the table and the closure of scores of lumber mills in BC, Ontario and Quebec. With the agreement only seven months old, the US lumber lobby is renewing its attacks on the agreement that is supposed to be in force for seven years.

The Asian Pacific Gateway Corridor, (APGC) quarterbacked by International Trade Minister David Emerson and Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon is a massive government-private project to upgrade Lower Mainland and Prince Rupert ports linked to upgraded rail and pipeline transportation routes serving western Canada and west-central USA. It is part of the grand scheme to move energy, ore and raw timber to Asian and US markets and to import Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) and oil from Asian markets to the USA via Canada. All of this is done without a debate in Parliament. The Harper government is committing hundreds of millions to this project, to turn Canada into the new Wal Mart marketer of its priceless natural resources to satisfy US demand at the expense of Canadian economic needs and development.

Harper will host a Tri-Lateral Conference in Edmonton in August to plan further deeper integration under the terms of NAFTA, joint security agreements and resource sharing talks started last year at Banff. The Council of Canadians is considering a counter-conference to demand a planned development of the tar sands that protects both the environment and energy sector jobs.

## LESSONS OF THE 39<sup>TH</sup> PARLIAMENT TO DATE

The 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament is not over and there are many issues that could bring down the Government and bring on an election. A spring election is now unlikely. The above analysis and Parliamentary snapshot reveals that when the opposition parties unite, Harper loses and the people win. When the opposition splits on issues of importance to labour and farmers, to peace and democracy, the people lose and Harper wins.

The snapshot also shows that nothing positive happens in Parliament for the people without organized mass extra-Parliamentary pressure, the bigger, the more inclusive, the more united are the actions, the more progressive is the result.

The other lesson is that both workers and farmers are “equal opportunity” targets of the ultra-right and to harbor illusions that the Harper Conservatives are the friends of the working people of either city or farm is a dangerous illusion.

Another factor worth analyzing is the experience and consequences of Liberal and Conservative minority governments. A Liberal minority under pressure from the NDP, organized labour and farmers, the peace movement and Canadian independence forces was forced to concede some ground to the demands of the people. The experience with the minority Harper neo-cons is quite different. Harper’s attitude to the two thirds of the electorate that voted against his policies in the last election is arrogance and contempt. Harper exhibits the same disdain for majority opposition in Canada to the war in Afghanistan as do President George Bush of the USA Prime Minister Tony Blair of Great Britain and Prime Minister John Howard of Australia towards majority opposition in their countries to the war in Iraq.

## HARPER - MOVING TO THE CENTRE?

Talk by the chattering classes of Harper moving to the centre is just that – talk. Not even Danny Williams Conservative Premier of Newfoundland Labrador considers Harper a Conservative. Harper is not a “Tory”. Stephen Harper is a glib, cunning but overrated neo-con zealot with a shaky voter base in the religious right, among the neo-con Dumont forces in Quebec, right-wing oil investor classes in Alberta, the military brass and defense contractors at Ottawa and the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE). Harper and his election advisors are at work to consolidate that base that in the last election gave the Conservatives 36.3% of the popular vote and 124 out of the 308 seats in the House of Commons and a minority government. Harper is counting on a united right and a divided “left” to retain power.

## HARPER PLODS ON – FURTHER TO THE RIGHT

Harper is capable of moving in one direction only, away from parliamentary democracy towards corporatist autocracy, a term that working class militants with long memories used to call corporate fascism. Not one to be deterred by a string of failures, Harper bides his time, consolidating his right wing base and courting the entire corporate sector which he considers the key to his drive for a majority.

The federal election may be on hold but Harper’s quest for a Parliamentary majority is in full swing. The notion that Prime Minister Harper is just another “Tory” and that the political pendulum is automatically swinging back to the Liberal “centre” and maybe even to the NDP “left” is a dangerous illusion. Harper cannot be reformed he can only be defeated.

## HARPER — IMPERIAL AMBITION OR CANADIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND UNITY!

Harper poses as a patriot while he works for the disunity of the country. Harper courts the most reactionary corporate interests, Tom D'Aquino's Canadian Council of Chief Executives, CCCE, the Bay St. bankers, the energy sector and the militarists, promising to retain all of the coercive powers of the federal state while decentralizing all of its social and economic obligations to the people. Harper's pitch to high finance is that he can be counted on to remove all bourgeois democratic restraints on corporate power. Harper, in the short time he has held power has steadily shifted major decision making regarding foreign policy and war, fiscal and monetary policy, export markets and internal security outside Parliament to secret conclaves. Harper sends his minions to make major decisions affecting all Canadians at conclaves of non-elected mandarins at imperialist trilateral conferences at NATO the WTO and the G8 which are then sent home to be rubber stamped by a compliant caucus and sold to the public by a servile media.

## WHAT DOES THE ABOVE POLITICAL SNAPSHOT TELL US?

As we said at the outset Prime Minister Stephen Harper's plan for an easy ride to an early election and a Parliamentary majority has hit some bumps in the road. The Parliamentary crisis has deepened. A federal election is on the way and progressive voters are called upon not merely to vote, but to unite at the polls to defeat the extreme-right.

## CAN HARPER BE DEFEATED AND DOES IT MATTER?

The proposal from many on the left including Canadians for Peace and Socialism (CPS) for an electoral alliance of Liberal, NDP, Greens and the movements of the people to defeat the Conservatives in the next federal election is based on the assessment that the Harper neo-cons are the main and immediate threat to peace, democracy, Canadian independence and the needs of workers and farmers.

Many workers and farmers have told us they agree that Harper is the main danger but respond, “I remember Martin and I don’t trust the Liberals”, others say “I remember Bob Rae and I don’t trust the NDP” others say “I remember the Greens veering to the right in the last election under the leadership of a former Conservative.” Personal experience with betrayal is not easily set aside.

Distrust of main line parties is natural. Peace activists point out that the Liberals originally committed Canadian forces to Afghanistan and 25 of them voted with Harper in May of 2006 to extend the mission to 2009. Farmers remember the Liberal betrayal at the Doha Round of WTO talks on farm subsidies, and militant trade unionists cite the Liberals joining the Conservatives and voting for anti-labour legislation. Some workers and farmers have become so exasperated with the blinkered sectarian stance of the NDP that they have decided not to vote for them either.

To talk about the similarities between the Liberals and Conservatives as though there was disagreement on that score does not move the discussion forward one dot. Both the Liberals and Conservatives support the capitalist system – so does the NDP, the Greens and the Bloc. The only party that has an unambiguous program to replace capitalism with socialism is the Communist Party. So where does that leave working class and farm voters in the next federal election who do not yet see the



need to fight for socialism and are confronted with casting a ballot soon?

## UNITY HAS TO BE FOUGHT FOR – NOT JUST PROCLAIMED

An electoral alliance is not a united front for socialism; it is a voter alliance to defeat the immediate threat from the ultra-right. To date Jack Layton and his closest advisors are prepared to risk another Conservative victory rather than come to some form of an electoral agreement with the Liberals and the Greens at least in swing ridings where the unity of Liberal, NDP and Green voters can defeat the Harper neo-cons. The exasperation with the NDP leadership arises from their refusal to answer the question as to how they propose that Harper be defeated or admit candidly that they either don't care or don't believe he can be defeated and prepare their supporters for the consequences. Neutrality is not an option.

## FIGHTING FOR AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE BEFORE THE ELECTION CALL?

Lobbying the leaders of the Liberals, the NDP, the Greens and even the Bloc helps to keep the issue of electoral unity to defeat Harper to the fore. But the main task of the left is to talk over the heads of the Liberal, NDP and Green Party leaders to their rank and file supporters, especially those activists in the labour, farm, peace and environmental movements about the danger of the extreme right.

The debate must be taken to the people at the level of the constituency, union and farm local. It is these forces that wield the power to influence the election strategists. It is the process of identifying the common enemy and fighting for an alliance to defeat it that moves the whole political process on the left forward



and secures a credible political platform from which to continue the struggle after the election. The idea of unity needs proclamation but above all it needs organization and that can only arise from an intense discussion of what is at stake for the people. If the assessment, that Harper is the main danger is correct, then concentration on the task of defeating him has to be reflected in unity of action.

# ***LENIN AND CANADIAN INDEPENDENCE***

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TIM BUCK – FROM CHAPTER 7 OF LENIN AND CANADA, PUBLISHED 1970

The idea that a modern state, of fully developed state-monopoly capitalism, could lose its independence and become dependent upon and, in essentials, subservient to another, and still remain an imperialist state, an active partner in the exploiting, oppressive, bellicose, imperialist world system, seeking to preserve that reactionary system by wars of conquest, had never occurred to us until it happened to Canada. When it did happen our first tendency was to assume that Canada could either continue to be an imperialist state or could become dependent upon the United States but that it was not possible for her to be both at the same time. Again we were impelled by our need to take counsel with Lenin and again Lenin's guidance led us to "...the sense of a bold forecast of the future and of bold practical action for its achievement." (Vol. 21, p. 72)

Reference to Lenin showed the argument that it must be "either, or, imperialist state of dependency," to be just a boggle over static



concepts. Indeed, reading *Imperialism* afresh, for light on the unexpected developments, showed clearly that Lenin's explanations of certain features of imperialism as a distinct and higher stage of capitalism could have been written to help us to understand the new, radical change in which was signaled by government action during the period of November 1947 to March 1948. For example:

Finance capital is such a great, such a decisive, you might say, force in all economic and in all international relations, that it is capable of subjecting, and actually does subject, to itself even states enjoying the fullest political independence. (Vol. 22, p. 259)

...it must be observed that finance capital and its foreign policy, which is the struggle of the great powers for the economic and political division of the world, gives rise to a number of *transitional* forms of state dependence.

...diverse forms of dependent countries which, politically, are formally independent, but in fact, are enmeshed in the net of financial and economic dependence, are typical of this epoch. (Vol. 22, p. 263 - Lenin's emphasis)

Those words alone explained what had appeared to be a contradiction in the behaviour of the Canadian Minister of Finance. He had explained in some detail his ten days of discussions with bankers in New York City and with politicians in Washington, and the change that they had all agreed should be brought about. A spokesman for the pro-British Conservative Party declared "No Canadian government since Confederation had gone so far to take orders from another country."<sup>16</sup> At that the Minister leapt to his feet and interrupted his critic with a loud denial of "taking orders from another country."<sup>17</sup> It is possible that he considered his denial to be true. Certainly he understood quite well that the powerful finance-capitalist tycoons in New York City wanted the change keenly. He knew equally as well that their opposite numbers in Canada scented the possibility of vast and quick profits from such a change. Furthermore, Abbott understood much more fully than his immediate critic did the qualitative change that had taken place in the role of governments as they became integrated with the operations of finance capital.



This is not the time for a detailed review of the “Abbott Plan.” It was named after the Minister referred to above, who acted for the government imposing it upon the people of Canada by a radio speech in which, without any previous warning whatsoever, he announced at eleven o’clock in the evening that its harsh restrictions, political and economic, would go into effect within one hour: that is to say at midnight. It was another four weeks before the law to provide a cloak of legality for the change was introduced in Parliament. That plan and the subordination to the United States that it imposed upon the people of Canada, has been analyzed in some detail in an earlier work.<sup>18</sup> It was the legal lever by which finance capital and its government of the day in Canada brought about a radical change in the relationship of Canada to the United States literally overnight. In economic terms the change was from all-round development of manufacturing, the processing of Canada’s natural resources, and trade with all countries, to restriction of manufacturing by drastic governmental action and systematic emphasis on expanding the production of raw materials needed by the United States. Abbott rationalized it as follows:

A greater integration of the efforts of the United States and Canada to assist world recovery would add considerably to the capacity to assist this continent to provide urgently needed assistance just as it did during the war. We are making every effort *to achieve the needed integration*.<sup>19</sup>

If we cut down the consumption of refrigerators, and other articles which contain metal, we can sell the metal in its original form....Instead of using labour in Canada to convert the metal into things our own people consume, we shall sell the raw materials.<sup>20</sup>

The words quoted are typical of numerous statements by members of the government of that day. They showed clearly, indeed brazenly, that their immediate aim was the economic colonization of Canada by the great monopolies in the United States. Even if it were accepted as being solely an economic policy, it was evident from the very beginning that, as we pointed out, under the terms of the Abbott Plan:



Canada will become increasingly dependent upon the United States for capital goods, machinery, and finished products (such as newsprint paper - T.B.) to pay the United States for costly capital goods and manufactures. The inevitable economic and political results of such a relationship would be to undermine the political sovereignty of Canadian people.<sup>21</sup>

But study of all the factors in the situation showed that the change being introduced was not simply in economic policy. Their pretence of frankness was in fact a mask to obscure from the overwhelming majority of the people the fact that the Abbott Plan revealed only a limited part of their real aims. Their decisive motivation and objectives were political. The negotiations in New York City and Washington which preceded imposition of the Abbott Plan upon Canada were not the beginning; on the contrary, they marked the conclusion of the first stage of their cynical over-all plan.

The first Canadian signal issued to the bourgeoisie had been in an elaborately staged prepared address by Louis St. Laurent, in January 1947. St. Laurent was, at that time, Minister for External Affairs. He became Prime Minister soon afterwards. The title of his address was "The Foundations of Canada's Foreign Policy." It was a carefully formulated statement to the effect that the prospect of a third world war made it necessary that in the future Canada's foreign policy should be integrated with that of the United States instead of, as in the past, with that of Great Britain. The keynote of his address was: "In my lifetime we shall engage in the greatest and most destructive war ever waged in the history of mankind; to preserve our Christian civilization from the spread of atheistic bolshevism."<sup>22</sup>

Louis St. Laurent's cynical call to arms was followed two months later by the then President Truman's notorious Navy Day Speech, in which he pledged all the naval power, all the military power, all the industrial power, and all the financial resources of the United States, "to stop the spread of communism." Attempts to foment chauvinistic hatred of the Soviet Union and its heroic people became quickly "the order of the day" in monopoly-capitalist

politics. The “integration” that the Minister of Finance and other members of the government referred to as desirable, was not “to assist world recovery” as they pretended. On the contrary, they were “making every effort to achieve the needed integration” as part of the aggressive jingoistic United States preparations for the war by which they hoped to destroy the rising socialist system, i.e., the Soviet Union and the fledgling People’s Republics. Guided by Lenin we drew the attention of the workers and all peace-loving people in Canada to the threat to our country and the people of her two nations in the following words:

In place of the wartime assurances of post-war devotion to the ideals embodied in the Yalta Accord, the Dominion government’s foreign policy statements during 1947 were in accord with the aggressive imperialist war aims of the Truman Doctrine. The publicly owned Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was actively engaged in an extensive campaign in support of the idea of another world war - this time against the U.S.S.R. and the New Democracies of Central and South-eastern Europe....Mackenzie King, the Prime Minister, “called for military preparations for war against those countries which reject the capitalist system.”...Lester B. Person, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, called a week later for organization of a military alliance of all the nations that are prepared to support the policies and aims of which the United States is the outstanding protagonist...by the end of 1947 nothing appeared certain except the increasing certainty of crisis and the threatening danger of a third world war.<sup>23</sup>

The sequence of events combined with their political character showed clearly that the Abbott Plan was but the initial public administrative measure introduced by the government to bring about a change in the purpose and the direction of economic development in Canada; to make it correspond with their drive to integration with the United States. Canada’s sovereignty was being discarded like an old shirt. The country was being committed to a policy aimed at economic and political incorporation in the United States in all except the name, as part of the grisly preparations for a criminal atomic war by which the blind enemies of human progress in the Pentagon and Wall Street,



in Washington and Ottawa, hoped to reverse the course of history by destroying their socialist competitors.

It was difficult for democratic people to believe that such an outright betrayal was possible. It was even more difficult for them to believe that the betrayal was conscious and calculated. It contradicted the firmly established traditional concept of the bourgeoisie “at the head of the nation” Again we had to refer them to Lenin and show them that, to paraphrase his words, the Canadian bourgeoisie had accepted a subservient relationship *to* the United States rather than ally itself with an aroused working class to protect and maintain its independence *from* the United States. (Vol. 21, p. 77), The radical change of policy of which the Abbott Plan was only one facet, illustrated in a striking way the fact that the bourgeoisie was no longer the decisive force in shaping governmental policies in Canada; and, as we pointed out:

The dominant monopoly-capitalist interests are not concerned primarily with the development of Canada’s economy or the welfare of her people. The correspondence which did at one time exist between the aims of Canada’s industrialists and the national interest has disappeared. It disappeared with the transformation of Canadian economy from competitive capitalist enterprise to monopoly capitalism and the assumption of control by the “geniuses of financial manipulation”...The un-Canadian character of the policies adopted by the King government...reflects the un-Canadian aims of the finance-capital oligarchy which now dominates the economy and the politics of our country.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, the betrayal of Canada’s independence was the considered aim of the Canadian government, acting for the finance-capitalist monopolists with which it had become integrated, no less than it was the aim of United States imperialism. The struggle to regain Canada’s independence must, of necessity, be a struggle against the monopoly-capitalist interests in Canada and their government, as well as against United States imperialism as such. The highest national interests of both of the Canadian nations, French and English, were at stake. It could be expected that broad circles of the youth, of the intelligentsia, and other circles of the petty-bourgeoisie, would be drawn into the struggle as it

developed. It was quite clear, however, that against the integrated forces of state-monopoly capitalism, such a struggle could reconquer national independence only if an aroused and united working class marched at its head.

The urgent immediate need was for mobilization of all democratic forces, particularly the working class, in democratic actions for peace and for Canadian independence. Study of all the factors involved, in the light of Lenin's teachings, indicated definitely that, as the struggle extends and its political level rises, those two streams must converge and to some extent even merge in united struggle which, objectively, must challenge the power of monopoly capital. Indeed, in Canada, to regain our independence from the United States requires that that control of the country be wrested from the state-monopoly-capitalist oligarchy and restored to the democratic will of the people. This, which in the past would have been a bourgeois-democratic task, will be accomplished now only as part of the political advance of the working class.

The Communist Party of Canada developed a wide public campaign on that issue. Explaining the portent of the Abbott Plan and the sinister anti-democratic military aim of which it was a part, we concentrated all the energy and resources of our party on the task of mobilizing opposition to it. "Keep Canada Independent!", the slogan under which we tried to bring about rejection of the Abbott Plan, became a subject of broad public discussion all over the country.

Public discussion of the issue of independence and of its inseparable relationship to the struggle against the drive of the United States imperialism to war, brought forward the question: "If Canadian capitalists prefer that Canada be absorbed by the United States via the path of integration of capitals, how can the economy of this country be maintained and developed further without United States capital?" In various forms that question is being asked all over Canada. The Communist Party proposes that the democratic answer is nationalization:



It is clear that to establish Canadian control of decisive policy - making is going to involve some measure of nationalization - state ownership.

Nationalization of foreign-owned monopolies will open the way for better all-round economic development. The political necessity for their nationalization would be compelling even if there were no specifically economic reasons...the monopolies impose upon us, day by day, policies dictated in the U.S.A., including matters concerning foreign relations, military commitments, acceptance of a reckless nuclear attack role in Europe, and so on.<sup>25</sup>

Step by step, the public utilities, natural resources, and key industries, especially the foreign-owned, will have to become government-run properties...we cannot escape the need for nationalization, and the sooner we start the process the better.<sup>26</sup>

Regrettably, it must be emphasized, the social democrats, as a political party and as a group in Parliament, sneered at the warnings of the Communist Party. They voted for the Abbott Plan. They supported the cynical anti-communist, anti-democratic aims enunciated by St. Laurent and Pearson. Their support of what they euphemistically described as “Canada-U.S. Integration” and their over-all pro-United States position divided the Canadian working class on the issue of Canadian independence and the struggle for world peace, actual activity to regain our independence has been limited to a relatively small minority.

All the parties represented in Parliament supported the policy that was misnamed “Canadian-U.S. Integration” when it was introduced in 1947-48 and have continued to support it consistently since. Outside parliament opposition was by the Communist Party and its supporters alone throughout the first 15 years that it was in effect. In the circumstances United States absorption, at times via giant U.S. monopolies, has proceeded apace. Developments have shown conclusively that the warnings broadcast by the Communist Party alone when the Abbott Plan was introduced were fully correct. The character of the results, economic, political, and cultural, has been exactly as we forecast. But their scale and the rate at which they are extending into every



sphere of social life in Canada is far worse than even the Communist Party thought to be possible in such a short time.

From less than 4,000 million dollars at the end of the Second World War, United States investments in Canada had increased to 20,000 million dollars by 1965. They constitute now 80 per cent of all foreign investment in the country. Foreign owners control no more than 60 per cent of the manufacturing industry as a whole. As part of that they control 97 per cent of the automobile industry, 97 per cent of the rubber industry, 78 per cent of the chemical industry, 74 per cent of the natural gas industry, 59 per cent of the mining and smelting industry. A daily paper reported recently that 500 enterprises passed out of Canadian into foreign ownership during the year 1968 and the first nine months of 1969.<sup>27</sup>

The economic base of the Canadian bourgeoisie is not simply *dominated* by United States-owned monopolies, it is being taken over physically by U.S. state-monopoly capital.

It is necessary to point out that the United States share of total foreign investment, 80 per cent, does not define the United States share in control. Most of the biggest monopolies in Canada, virtually the commanding heights of the economy, are subsidiaries of giant United States monopolies. The influence of many U.S.-owned corporations extends into every village, town and city in the country, through tens of thousands of sales agents, through expenditures on advertising, and the advertising itself.

The rate at which the growth of U.S. investment is accelerating is illustrated by the fact that, four years before it reached 20,000 million dollars, its total was 13,900 million dollars. Even more startling is the fact that the growth by 50 per cent in four years was the result of the re-investment of super-profits. After paying to the parent company in the U.S. inflated charges for dividends, interest, management fees, license fees for the right to produce and sell the parent corporation's product in Canada, and numerous other charges, many of which are unknown to the



public, the U.S.-owned corporations in Canada still have an aggregate surplus of undistributed profits of three quarters of a billion dollars per year with which to take another bite out of Canada. United States imperialism is securing ownership of the priceless natural resources of our country, taking over its manufacturing industries, and dominating its political life, with super-profits made by its double exploitation of Canadian workers.

The foregoing does not provide a complete picture of the take-over of Canada by United States imperialism but it indicates the scale on which it is proceeding. The rapid build up of the U.S. monopoly-capitalist productive plant and so on, with the over-all expansion of employment, has concealed the basic effects of this process from the majority of Canadian workers so far. In this sense the words of Marx, addressed to Engels, can be applied to Canada today: "...in developments of such magnitude twenty years are no more than a day, though later on there may come days in which twenty years are embodied." (Quoted by Lenin, Vol. 21, p. 75)

Days in which twenty years are embodied may not be immediately "around the corner" in Canada, but a big change is definitely in the making. Until recently public advocates of action to regain Canadian independence, other than communists, have been members of the capitalist class and they addressed their arguments to the capitalist class. The two most notable of such were James Coyne, former Governor of the Bank of Canada, and Walter Gordon, when he was Minister of Finance. The fatal weakness of each of them was that they were not prepared to break politically with monopoly capital and its dominant oligarchy. The result was that both of them were silenced by being ousted from their positions. Even so, it is noteworthy that the present Prime Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, is seeking to sidetrack the influence of Walter Gordon's advocacy of action to regain Canadian independence by appointing a young ambitious politician to his cabinet. According to the announcement of the



appointment, his job will be to assist the Minister of Finance “in efforts aimed at reducing United States dominion of the Canadian economy.”<sup>28</sup> Evidently Prime Minister Trudeau wants to show that he is “against sin.”

Signs multiply that a big change is in the making in the struggle to regain Canadian independence. Stirrings among the youth, including many of the younger members of the Liberal Party, are becoming crystallized and finding expression in demands for political action. The biggest development of that sort to date found organized expression in the national convention of the New Democratic Party at the end of October 1969. In addition to being numerically, and in terms of the very wide publicity that it received, the biggest organized addition to the struggle, from circles other than the Communist Party, it was also significant politically. The biggest and most influential labour unions in Canada are affiliated to the NDP. Its debaters concerning policies are followed with warm interest by all politically aware workers. In a manner somewhat similar, to that of the British Labour Party, the policies propagated by the NDP become accepted by wide circles of workers.

The left wing in the convention had previously crystallized around the issue of Canadian independence. Its leading spirits issued a manifesto prior to the convention, setting out the policies and measures to which they urged the convention to commit the party, to regain Canada’s economic and political sovereignty. The measures proposed and indicated in their manifesto bear a marked resemblance to the immediate measures proposed by the Communist Party for the same end. Indeed, the most important difference is the following. The Communist Party proposes them as measures directed primarily against the U.S.-Canadian monopoly-capitalist oligarchy. We emphasize that a successful struggle for them will mobilize the forces and clear the way politically for a peaceful advance to socialism. But the left wing in the New Democratic Party convention equated the winning of Canadian independence with socialism. Their tendency to make



their own impatience a substitute for policy was expressed in their slogan: “An Independent Socialist Canada.” But a number of them were very earnest and showed that they were learning quickly.

To get a majority vote against the manifesto issued by the left wing, the right wing was compelled to offer the delegates an alternative resolution, submitted by the National Council of the party. The alternative acknowledged the necessity for action to end United States domination but its right-wing sponsors assured the delegates that it is the way to end United States domination without putting the party in a “political straitjacket.” Their real meaning was, with out offending George Meany and the General Executive Board of the “International” unions. That, of course, also means no effective fight for Canadian independence. However, the delegates voted 449 in favour of the National Council’s resolution against 268 who voted that it be referred back for redrafting in line with the manifesto of the left.

By means of its alleged alternative the right wing maintained its control of the leadership and administration of the NDP. But the left wing was not defeated politically. The resolution submitted by the national Council which was adopted, is, in effect, a repudiation of the attitude that the National Council had always maintained towards “Canadian-United States integration,” right up to the convention. Furthermore, the retreat of the right wing on that burning issue made it impossible for them to rally enough support among the delegates to enable them to maintain their traditional policy of support for Canadian membership in NATO and in NORAD. Overwhelming their opposition, the convention voted in favour of Canada’s complete withdrawal from NATO and NORAD and, for good measure, against Canadian participation in the Organization of American States, declaring that organization to be a tool of American imperialism. The left wing with its manifesto, made the convention of October 1969 different from any NDP or CCF convention that had ever been held before.

There is not yet a formal united front of communists and left social democrats in Canada. Such a development will correspond



with a substantially higher level of labour political action than is general at the present time. But the line of action advocated by the left wing of the convention and supported by a third of the delegates is one of the streams of action for peace and for Canadian independence which, with patient but consistent work, will converge in struggles for immediate demands. In such struggles more and more political activists will recognize that Marxism-Leninism is our sole guide to victory. It is a striking affirmation, on the basis of specifically Canadian experience, of the validity of Lenin's teachings in relation to the new problems which emerge in capitalist countries as consequences of the desperate attempts by the imperialists to counteract the inexorable process of the decay of their system and the irresistible advance of socialism. For the Communist Party it reconfirms the fundamental correctness of Lenin's emphasis upon the primary importance of what a Marxist-Leninist party does:

...it is not so much a question of the size of an organization, as of the real, objective significance of its policy; does its policy represent the masses, does it serve them, i.e., does it aim at their liberation from capitalism, or does it represent the interests of the minority, the minority's reconciliation with capitalism? (Vol. 23, p. 119)

The Communist Party of Canada relies, confidently, on the consistent use of the inexhaustible treasury of revolutionary inspiration and tested scientific guidance in the teachings of Lenin, to ensure that we and the advanced sections of the working class will be ready to put the stamp of the working class upon the days in which twenty years are embodied.

All honour to the memory of Lenin, our inspiring and unfailing guide to a shining future of peace and limitless progress for all mankind.

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**Notes:**

16. Howard Green, MP, *Hansard*, Vol. 87, No. 12, January 26th, 1948, p. 559.

17. Douglass Abbott, MP, *Hansard*, Vol. 87, No. 12, January 26th, 1948, p. 559.



18. *Canada: The Communist Viewpoint*, by Tim Buck - Progress Books, Toronto, 1948. Second printing 1949.
  19. Douglass Abbott, House of Commons, Ottawa, December 16th, 1947. (My emphasis - T.B.)
  20. Douglass Abbott, House of Commons, Ottawa, March 18th, 1948.
  21. *Canada: The Communist Viewpoint*, pp. 31-32.
  22. The Right Honourable Louis St. Laurent, the Maurice Cody Memorial Lecture, January 1947, Convocation Hall, University of Toronto.
  23. *Canada: The Communist Viewpoint*, pp. 16-17.
  24. *Canada: The Communist Viewpoint*, pp. 35-36.
  25. *Put Monopoly Under Control*, by Tim Buck, Progress Books, Toronto, 1964, p. 70.
  26. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
  27. *Toronto Daily Star*, October 17th 1969.
  28. *Toronto Daily Star*, October 16th, 1969.
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## ***VIMY 1917 – KANDAHAR 2007***

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CPS

Government aides and media hacks skulk around the green zone in Kandahar, at Gage Town and Petawawa and gawk as the coffins are loaded and unloaded searching for anything that might justify the needless sacrifice of growing numbers of Canadian military personnel. They can find nothing, so they mindlessly repackage the government line “we will not cut and run” and “we must do all that we can to tackle the terrorist threat to our national interests before Canadian lives are lost again.”

The next step in this macabre media process is to intrude on the anguish of family, extract statements from bewildered and grieving parents, wives and children and probe for the most intimate details of the fallen. Next comes close ups of the grief of mothers fed to the major networks where solemn news anchors, columnists and media pundits set the stage for the Prime Minister and the leaders of the opposition to express their heartfelt “sorrow and prayers”. The last act is Stephen Harper lumbering from one photo op to the next shamelessly promoting his own re-election.

Using the grief of mothers and family of fallen soldiers to win votes is a common practice of capitalist parties and their media hacks. It was at Vimy in 1917 as the horrific cost to Canadian

youth became known and it is today as more Canadian men and women die in Afghanistan.

In 1917 Conservative Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden, an avowed imperialist, could not provide enough cannon fodder to the British imperialist war machine from Canadian volunteers and opted for conscription. Borden ran into the mass opposition of the people of Quebec bitterly opposed to the British imperialist war. To thwart the people of Quebec and get his way, Borden rammed through a Wartime Elections Act that disenfranchised conscientious objectors and the Military Voters Act that allowed soldiers to choose the constituency where their vote would be counted, handing Borden the right to assign votes to bolster weaker Conservative candidates. Borden also enacted the War Measures Act in 1914 that was used to intern so-called enemy aliens and was later used to suppress the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike and deport 5000 Ukrainian Canadian workers many born in Canada.

The anti-war and anti-conscription sentiment in Quebec threatened Borden's re-election so he formed an alliance of the Conservative and pro-war Liberals called the Unity Party that split the Liberals led by former Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier that resulted in Borden's re-election in 1917. The result was what Borden wanted, conscription, leading to 600,000 Canadians deployed to the killing fields in Europe where nearly 60,000 died. Recruits were sent to war sometimes with as little as three weeks training, armed with the infamous Ross rifle, that made a fortune for its Canadian inventor and his friend the scoundrel Sam Hughes the corrupt Minister in charge of military training and equipment.

The production of munitions and war material and the export of resources to Britain created a new and rising class of Canadian entrepreneurs, financiers and bankers.

The emboldened Canadian ruling class used the deaths of 20,000 Canadians to force its way, over the objections of both Britain and

the USA into a seat at the imperial table and a voice in the Versailles Treaty that ended the war. It gave Canada a voice at the League of Nations. The new status of the Canadian capitalist class that became rich out of the war signalled the beginning of the shift of Canadian high finance from the British Empire to the USA empire symbolized by the 1931 Statute of Westminster that granted independence to the Commonwealth countries comprising the British Empire. The final act in evolution of the Canadian ruling class from disgruntled colonials to new imperialists was symbolized in the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution and the enactment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982.

Millions died in the First World War defending rival imperial empires and the banks and arms manufacturers who became rich out of the unspeakable horrors of trench warfare. The October Bolshevik Revolution broke the western alliance that led to the withdrawal of Russia from the eastern front and hastened the end of the war. Lenin proclaimed peace to the soldiers, bread to the workers and land to the peasants heralding a new type of society that needed peace not war to develop.

The parallels between the vision of Stephen Harper of 2007 and Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden of 1917 would make an interesting study for some eager history major. The starting point would have to be that they were both Conservative connivers, who masked their imperial ambitions with chauvinistic appeals that served to cover up unconscionable war profiteering and servility to a greater imperialist power, Borden to Great Britain and Harper to the USA.



# ***CPS FARMER MEMBERS & SUPPORTERS ASSESS FIGHT TO HALT CORPORATE CONTROL OF AGRICULTURE***

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CPS

***Farm members and supporters of the CPS met in Regina on April 6<sup>th</sup> to review the struggle to save the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) and assess the fight back against growing corporate domination over agriculture. What follows is a summary of the main points made by the participants.***

The assessment of the farmers attending the meeting was that the existence of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) was in jeopardy. They stated flatly the vote of barley producers was rigged, a charge echoed on March 31, 2007 by Regina Leader Post financial editor, Bruce Johnston who accused the Harper Government of posing loaded questions to get an anti-CWB vote.

The farmers said that the pro-CWB members of the elected advisory board would have to dig in deeper now that the barley vote is in because Agriculture Minister Strahl will be going after wheat and Durham next. The CWB Board meeting on May 10<sup>th</sup>



may be discussing legal action. There was uncertainty if the new Board Chair Ken Ritter can stand up to pressure from Strahl. There are seven strong single desk members, two against and five government appointees who are expected to tow the government line. The outcome with that balance is uncertain. The pro-CWB support comes from the National Farmers Union (NFU) which is also considering a legal challenge and the grass roots, Save My CWB. There is broad community support including some informed columnists writing in the Regina Leader Post. The farmers noted the good work of NDP Agriculture critic Alex Atamenenko MP for the Southern Interior of BC.

The speakers said the root of the problem goes back to NAFTA resulting in an across the board attack by US multi-nationals on Canadian supply management. The obstacle to getting rid of supply management is the small farmers and a small group of free market farmers was organized to do the dirty work. It also has its root in the loss of the Crow Rate that removed grain transportation subsidies and allowed the railways to charge the maximum rate to move grain.

For the last number of years to now only a small segment of the farming community was against price pooling by CWB. They were well organized and funded seven years ago to advocate for taking grain across the Canadian US border. They were backed by the media and garnered sympathy by using the slogan “big bad government” and dovetailing that slogan with such hot button issues as abortion rights, gun control and gay marriage, issues having nothing to do with the marketing of grain.

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers, formerly the Palliser Wheat Growers, a free market organization, actually went bankrupt for lack of grass roots support and to stay afloat were bailed out by the Alberta Klein Government. They also got corporate sponsors and backing from the private media such as CKRM radio out of Saskatoon with John Gormley a Brian Mulroney assistant as the main propagandist. By deceit they made some headway declaring government denied choice. A recent joint



convention of the anti-CWB Western Barley Growers Association and the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association listed corporate sponsors that included, Dow Agrosiences Canada Inc., John Deere, Agricore, Monsanto Canada Inc, Canadian Pacific Railway, Dupont Canada Inc., Winnipeg Commodity Exchange and TD Canada Trust.

The speakers at the meeting said the CWB belongs to the farmers, it is their money and it is not the property of the Government. They elect the board and set the policy. Strahl's interference and threats to set regulations is probably illegal. CWB opponents are ironic, said one participant, always talking about "choice" but with an open market there is no choice. As the price for grain fluctuates farmers look for something to blame, so some blame the CWB.

The real cause of falling income to farmers is that the price falls below the cost of production. Because farmers need cash to operate they don't like waiting. Canola and feed barley producers can phone an elevator and ask for the price and sell 10,000 bushels. Some grain companies will provide cash advances at 80% of the going price that is attractive to a cash-strapped farmer. All that some farmers see is the spot price when it is high and complain that they can't get it. What they fail to think about is that all wheat, malt barley and Durham goes through the CWB and price is pooled and farmers are guaranteed income based on the best average price.

The advantage to the farmer of a single desk and pooling income is that the CWB has many options to get the best price that keeps the average price high. The CWB can secure loans at AAA Government of Canada bond rating. It has experts who estimate the market conditions for an entire year and can sell grain at optimum benefit to a variety of customers who they have dealt with for a long time. The CWB can go to the government and negotiate a base price which guarantees farmers a predictable income. Anything over the base price comes back to the farmers. The CWB owns the grain not the elevators, but through the terms of the Grain Commission has control over grain cars which is a big



cost advantage to farmers. The CWB can reduce such costs as demurrage. Sometimes CWB cost of marketing grain is close to zero due to their ability to take advantage of the single desk. The CWB competes with such large marketers as the Australian Wheat Board, Argentina and heavily subsidized US producers. The advantage of a monopoly marketing entity operating in the global market would be lost to Canadian farmers in a free market scenario.

The CWB system was contrasted to what would happen to farm income with the loss of the single desk. Under the CWB system 50% of the grain is sold directly to the Wheat Board and the rest is sold to grain companies who operate on a spread - that is they charge a service to clean and transport the grain to grain elevators they own at ports. The grain companies in effect are grain handlers and any price advantage at the point of sale goes to the CWB and back to the farmers. In an open market the system would change, the Grain companies would control the whole process and they would set the price to the farmers as low as possible. In such a system the advantage goes to the big grain producers and the smaller producers would be forced out. Kevin Hirsch a well informed Leader Post columnist asserts it is the big farmers who are for choice. The corporate and government mantra is “get big or get out.” All of the benefits of the single desk that keep smaller farmers in farming would be lost. Without the CWB farmers will be forced to hire brokers to market their grain, a cost now absorbed by the Wheat Board.

The meeting revealed why the Harper Government, acting for the grain companies wants to destroy the Wheat Board. The destruction of the Wheat Board would mean that all of the marketing advantages that accrue to the farmers in increased income would go to the grain companies.

The farmers also expressed concern about the corporate attack on government agencies and scientists that ensure a high quality for Canadian Red Spring Wheat and other crops such as legumes. The corporate interests are seeking changes in the Seed Act. The

Carghills want the option to get their seed grain from wherever. As it now stands the Canadian Grain Commission sets standards for grains and grading is done at the elevators. The corporations want to do their own grading at the ports. Canadian grain quality is a big factor in global markets. That is why the big grain companies want to get rid of Agri Food Canada and control research at leading universities presently working for the farmers.

The speakers pointed out what happened to Canola seed production. It is now 90% privately owned. Farmers used to get canola seed for 30 cents/lb and now pay \$6/lb. Basic seed research is done under the auspices of Agric Food Canada and the Canadian Grain Commission. For example pulse crops (lentils) are nitrogen fixing crops and most research is done by the respected grain researcher Dr. Al Slinkard at the University of Saskatoon, financed by a check off of pulse producers that is resulting in strong varieties. The research called clean field technologies is of direct benefit to 20,000 pulse producers. The corporate interests are hostile to such direct farmer, government, scientist collaboration. In comparison, corporate domination of Canola is a “gong show” resulting in 150 varieties and Monsanto charging \$10/acre for technology use agreements.

The meeting showed the fight to save Canadian agriculture from corporate domination and control to be heating up and that it was vital to expose the Harper Government’s intervention on behalf of big corporate agricultural interests and to win majority support among producers for the CWB.



**THE LAST WORD**

**CANADIANS FOR PEACE AND SOCIALISM (CPS) MEETINGS**

Members and supporter from BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan met in Regina during the week of April 1 to 8. The meetings reviewed the work of the CPS in the peace movement, the fight back against the Harper Government, and to discuss a report by CPS Chair, Don Currie on the February 1-4 2007 35<sup>th</sup> Central Convention of the Communist Party which Currie attended as an observer. The CPS reviewed its work in re-establishing its new website [www.focusonsocialism.ca](http://www.focusonsocialism.ca) and considered steps to expand the circulation of Focus On Socialism, the committee's political journal.

The CPS met with farmers active in the fight back against the attempts of the Harper Government to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board. Discussions also considered further steps in participating in the work to rebuild the Canadian Peace Congress.

***CPS - Regina***

**THE GROWING RANK AND FILE RESPONSE TO HARPER**

Recent public statements of the CPS taking issue with the NDP Parliamentary Caucus voting with the Harper Conservatives on April 24<sup>th</sup> on the Liberal motion to exit Afghanistan on February 2009 has elicited a flurry of responses by email and phone to the editor of Focus on Socialism including

from two members of the NDP Parliamentary caucus. Space does not allow a full report in this issue but it will be reported more fully on our website [www.focusonsocialism.ca](http://www.focusonsocialism.ca)

The CPS experience is a small example of the intense interest in the need for a more critical discussion of what constitutes a winning strategy for a people's alternative to the Harper neo-con agenda of war and energy sell-out.

Similar discussions are unfolding in Alberta at the grass roots level as to what constitutes a people's program for the energy sector and to stop and reduce GHG.

More rank and file action is developing in Saskatchewan and across the west among farmers opposed to the Harper's attempts to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board.

Everywhere in Canada organized labour is fighting back on the picket line and in campaigns and discussions. The Council of Canadians is involved in a sharper confrontation with Harper neo-cons.

What these developments reveal is that there are deep economic roots to the fight back of the people against the pillaging of Canada by the corporate elite.

The reprinting of Tim Buck's insightful analysis in 1970 of the character of Canadian imperialism and what is required to defeat it rings with relevance today.

The next issue of Focus will attempt to continue Buck's analysis in the light of 37 years of history.

***Editorial Board***

## **FOS - READER APPEAL**

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Dear Reader

The overwhelming majority of Canadians must work to live. The wealth they create is appropriated by the corporate elite. The struggle to redress that injustice shapes all politics. Corporate domination over the major decisions of the country affecting peace, economic development and democracy is challenged every day by the organizations and movements of the people.

As the fight back sharpens workers and farmers, First Nations people's, peace activists and rank and file fighters for economic and social justice are learning lessons, exchanging experiences, analyzing and writing and publishing. The discourse on the democratic left is opening up. All rank and file activists feel the urgency of the need to break the corporate stranglehold over politics.

For almost 30 years Focus on Socialism has been part of that process, striving to bring a Marxist Leninist analysis to the discussion of how to move the whole anti-monopoly struggle forward. It is our purpose to do that job better. That is why we are turning to our readers for help.

The editorial board is asking you to consider three requests.

**First** we are asking for greater financial support. Our journal is financed entirely through reader contributions. We also fund a website [www.focusonsocialism.ca](http://www.focusonsocialism.ca) that involves maintenance and monthly fees. We ask you to include Focus on Socialism and the Canadians for Peace and Socialism website in the contributions we are sure you are making to other worthy causes.

**Secondly** we need your feed back and opinions as to how we can make our journal a better fighter for workers, farmers, peace activists, First Nations and all progressive forces. Please take the time to fill out and mail, email, fax or telephone your responses to the questionnaire to the editorial board.

**Thirdly** Focus on Socialism invites you to write about and report on the struggles underway where you live, in your trade union or farm union local. Send a letter to the editor with your critical comments and suggestions. We invite you to reprint and circulate items from our website to your email lists. ***Write as you fight!***



**CANADIANS FOR PEACE & SOCIALISM**

**- MAY DAY 2007 -**

**THIS MAY DAY UNITE!**

**For a Peoples Democratic Program of Peace**

**Stop the Attack on Workers**

**Halt the Militarization of Canada**

**End the Corporate Control of Parliament**

**DEFEAT P.M. HARPER!**



***F*OCUS ON *S*OCIALISM**

**The Political Journal of Canadians for Peace and Socialism**



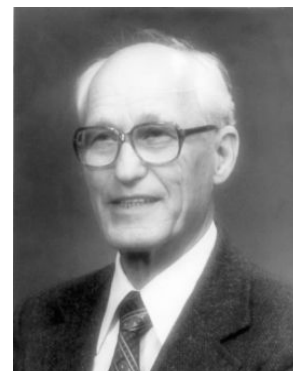
**For Canadians Who Want  
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War & Capitalism**

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**V i s i t**

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**FOCUS ON SOCIALISM - READER SURVEY**

PLEASE FILL IN THE FOLLOWING SURVEY AND MAIL, EMAIL, FAX OR TELEPHONE THE EDITORIAL BOARD. WE THANK YOU FOR HELPING US TO PRODUCE A BETTER JOURNAL. MAIL YOUR RESPONSE TO EDITOR, FOCUS ON SOCIALISM, BOX 168 SLOCAN BC V0G 2C0 OR PHONE/FAX: 1-250-355-2669. EMAIL YOUR RESPONSES TO EDITOR@FOCUSONSOCIALISM.CA. THIS SURVEY WILL BE POSTED TO THE WEBSITE OF CANADIANS FOR PEACE AND SOCIALISM WWW.FOCUSONSOCIALISM.CA

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