

Turn Left Virez à gauche

Voice of the NDP Socialist Caucus / Voix du caucus socialiste NPD

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**Make housing a right for
everyone in Canada. Now.**

BY COREY DAVID

Investment is designed to foster growth in a company or asset to increase the value of the investment. In theory, the mobilization of capital could develop key sectors to strengthen and diversify our economy. Sadly, opportunistic individuals play games to increase their fortune by inflating or grossly devaluing commodities.

Short sellers follow short term trends, buying at the bottom to foster demand. Having no intention of holding onto the property beyond when it can be sold for a peak return -- in the process creating instability and job-killing over-capacity. This behaviour provides no benefit outside the surreal confines of the stock market. It drives up prices and investor profits, further consolidating wealth for a select few.

Average working people, including the precariously and under-employed, have no financial ability to challenge the deep pockets of investors. The problem is not fundamentally a shortage; it is the reduction of a home to the wretched status of a commodity, subject to the cold-blooded goal of profit maximization. Instead of tolerating this horror show, cities should be the biggest player in the housing market -- with a mandate to meet human needs for decent shelter, set benchmark rates and create new jobs in the process.

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh says raise taxes on capital gains from 50% to 75%. He proposes to increase the corporate tax rate from 15% to 19.5%. To fund universal public childcare, Pharmacare, social housing, and free post-secondary education, the tax rate will have to go much higher.

But this is the direction the NDP must travel to more fairly distribute the profits of business and investment. The NDP should also address the issue of speculation and market manipulation in order to lead the fight for a just and equitable society.

Working people should not be robbed of the value they create and should not be extorted for seeking decent housing in the place they call home. To that end, public ownership of resources, of land development, the construction industry and basic services is urgent.

As Niki Ashton's leadership campaign stressed, it's time to put people before profit. ■

Corey David is the Socialist Caucus candidate for President of the Federal NDP

Time to Put People Over Profit

In the 1600's, Isaac Le Maire, a major shareholder of the Dutch East India Trading company, employed selling short to drive down the value of the company's stocks, enabling him to purchase stocks sold at a loss. There have been limitations, even bans put on short selling around the world, but the practice continues in Canada, in spite of the financial crisis it caused on Wall Street and other financial markets in 2007-2008.

Tax law does nothing to curb this behaviour. Only 50% of profits in the form of capital gains are taxable. Given this logic, should all young people aspire to be Bay Street investors? Why is it that those who have the luxury of time and disposable wealth to gamble on the value of labour and production are not liable to pay taxes on 100% of the value they extract from the market?

Look at the housing situation in Vancouver, Toronto, and lately Montreal. Big property investors took advantage of rapid urban growth by buying real estate as prices began to increase modestly. Once again stoking demand in the residential sector, while at the same time skyrocketing the cost to renters.

Some argue that a supply problem is driving up prices. While this may be partly true for single detached homes, it is not the case in other housing categories where there is an abundant supply. People with great wealth can buy multiple properties and make great profit from renters who are forced to accept this reality, or move far away.



BC NDP FAILS SITE C TEST



photo: Jeffrey Wynne

Gary Porter, former President of Certified General Accountants of Ontario, is the Socialist Caucus candidate for Treasurer of the Federal NDP.

On December 11, British Columbia's New Democratic Party Premier John Horgan announced that his government would complete the third massive power dam on the beautiful Peace River in north-eastern BC at a cost of \$11 billion. Andrew Weaver, leader of the BC Green Party, who signed a "confidence and supply" agreement with the labour-based NDP, allowing it to form a minority government after sixteen years of right wing rule by the BC Liberal Party, condemned the decision. But Weaver said he would not force an election over it.

The Site C go-ahead tramples the rights of indigenous peoples in BC. It mocks the promise of the BC NDP to respect those rights. The dam will flood 80 kilometers of forest along the river and bury over 6,500 hectares (14,000 acres) of prime agricultural land (BC Hydro estimate), along with the history, cultural treasures and burial grounds of the native peoples.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs stated that "a nod of approval doesn't guarantee that this project will, in fact, happen. Certainly, there are thousands of people that are bitterly disappointed." Bob Botterell, attorney for the Peace Valley Landowners' Association, said that his clients viewed the NDP government review process preceding the "go" decision as a sham. He predicted that his clients would use every legal tool to stop the project.

Premier Horgan argued that the \$4 billion cost of halting the project, \$2.2 billion already spent and \$1.8 billion to re-remediate the affected area, would prompt an immediate 12 per cent increase in hydro prices. This claim is either ignorant or dishonest. Such cancellation costs under government accounting rules in

Canada can be written off over as much as 30 years. The original project cost estimate in 2012 was \$6.6 billion; it is now \$11 billion. No one really knows what it will cost to proceed. All of this will be financed by high grade BC bonds -- a boon to the financial brokers and bankers of Canada. Instead, \$11 billion could finance 100 new schools or 20 new hospitals.

Environmentalists point to rapidly falling prices of solar, of wind and geothermal power, and to the geometric increases in battery storage capacity. If the project was stopped today and simply re-mediated, and the province proceeded instead with solar and wind projects, the power could be generated

conditions. And what I think is important to remember is that conditions are not roadblocks; they're road maps."

Mungall's job description letter from the Premier includes a directive to nurture the sector based on four criteria: a "fair return" for the province, accommodation of First Nations' interests, protection of the environment, and guarantees of jobs and training for British Columbians. Given the Site C decision and the loose approach to the facts and reasons for proceeding, can the NDP be trusted to negotiate these conditions in good faith? Basically, jobs and royalties are likely all they consider worth fighting for.

"Indigenous peoples, environmentalists, deeply disappointed New Democrats, young people and trade unionists... **should unite** to stop this craven sellout to big oil and gas."

more cheaply and with no violation of the rights of indigenous people or any destruction of the fertile Peace River Valley.

Perhaps the worst is yet to come. Site C was launched by the previous BC Liberal government to provide massive power support for a prospective LNG industry in BC using fracking technology. Although one large project proposed by international hydrocarbon giant Petronas, has folded, other big oil and gas companies have expressed passing interest. Horgan, as NDP Energy critic while in opposition, expressed his support for this water polluting, environment wrecking, earthquake causing enterprise.

More recently Michelle Mungall, the BC NDP's new minister of energy, mines and petroleum resources, stated in Vancouver, "Our position has always been supportive of LNG, as long as the industry meets our four

If the LNG dream becomes reality, it would put the BC NDP government squarely on the wrong side of the struggle for environmental sanity -- right alongside the tar sands oil industry backed by Alberta's NDP government.

The Site C decision makes it abundantly clear that the struggle to defend indigenous rights and the environment is not centered in the parliamentary arena. It must be concentrated in the streets by mass action. Indigenous peoples, environmentalists, deeply disappointed New Democrats, young people and trade unionists who understand that planetary survival is the only way to defend workers in the medium term, should unite to stop this craven sellout to big oil and gas, and to the financial institutions that fund them. ■

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Editor and Designer: Sean Cain

Editorial Board:

Elizabeth Byce
Julius Arscott
Barry Weisleder
John Orrett



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Casting a Gender Lens on Free Trade Agreements

BY DIRKA PROUT

Five thousand years ago, trade enabled resource poor Mesopotamia to achieve great prosperity. Negotiators currently involved in revamping the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)



are banking on similar gains in prosperity for their citizens. Trade liberalization has been critiqued for exacerbating inequality, especially with women and marginalized groups. Could the new NAFTA improve gender equality in North America?

In 2017 Canada's Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland commented to Canada's Standing Committee on International Trade (CIT) that NAFTA could be made more progressive by addition of chapters on the environment, labour, gender equality and Indigenous rights.

NAFTA was one of the first Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with side agreements on labour and the environment. The labour agreement is widely considered to be feeble and unenforceable. Chapters on Indigenous peoples are largely without precedent but a gender chapter was included in the Canada-Chile Free Trade Agreement.

The Liberals hope that the gender chapter makes "economic growth more inclusive". This may be just posturing. The NDP's supplementary opinion in the CIT's December 2017 report expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of inclusion of the comprehensive recommendations made by Oxfam Canada, the Organization of Women in International Trade and others.

Instead, 'vague' references to gender rights were included in the gender chapter and not 'mainstreamed' throughout the agreement as requested by Oxfam Canada.

Ideally, provisions in the revamped

NAFTA should be informed by a gender related assessment on the impact of the proposed trade agreement. Such assessments should be carried out prior to or parallel with negotiations.

History is a good teacher. Following NAFTA's inception, Canada experienced an increase in trade and economic growth greatly benefitting large corporations and investors at the expense of well-paid workers in the manufacturing and processing industries.

For example, in the female-dominated garment manufacturing sector, there has been a marked reduction of unionized, well-paying and secure jobs. Internationally, free trade has impacted small farmers, the majority of whom are women.

In Mexico, most small farmers were forced off the land as trade liberalization permitted large agribusinesses to thrive and drive down commodity prices. This was accompanied by labour migration to towns with Export Processing Zones (EPZ). The EPZs, or Maquiladoras, are notorious for low wages, rampant sexual harassment, gender discrimination and an egregious absence of labour rights.

The NDP has called for strong labour rights to protect women by addressing pay

equity and eliminating child labour. To alleviate the poor working conditions prevalent in EPZs, labour rights including the right to organize must be enforced and not subject to dispute resolution.

Some garment manufacturing jobs from Canada and the US went to Mexico, causing an increase in women's wages but no reduction in poverty levels. Other garment jobs moved to poorer countries in Asia providing an initial boon for Asian women. They quickly regressed when the economy improved and there was a shift to higher value added industries that were capital intensive or required more skills.

The initial gains for female workers were unsustainable due to rapid industrialization and an exodus of lower skilled manufacturing to lower wage jurisdictions. For example, in Southeast Asia, a severe defeminisation of the manufacturing labour force occurred over the past two decades. These experiences highlight the need to include gender-related considerations into FTAs.

Where significant gender biases in education and training or access to credit, land and technology exist, women's ability to be fully employable or be entrepreneurial is limited.

To mitigate these biases, and enable women to truly benefit from trade, governments should put in place policies to improve the education and skills of women and girls, reduce gender discrimination, alleviate women's unfair burden of unpaid work, and increase their access to and control over economic and financial resources.

Women's empowerment is essential for sustainable development. Mainstreaming gendered analysis in a trade agreement is morally imperative. It recognizes the role of women as key change agents, and what is good for women uplifts everyone. ■

Dirka Prout is the Socialist Caucus candidate for Participation of Women Chair for federal NDP Executive

"Women's empowerment is essential for sustainable development. Mainstreaming gendered analysis in a trade agreement is morally imperative. It recognizes the role of women as key change agents, and what is good for women uplifts everyone."



It's Time to Reform NDP Foreign Policy

BY YVES ENGLER

While the NDP sometimes challenged Ottawa's hostility towards the Chavez government, between 2014 and 2017 the party's foreign affairs critics backed renewed efforts by Washington and the Venezuela opposition to undermine an essentially democratic effort to empower the poor and working class.

On a number of occasions, the NDP foreign affairs critic demanded Ottawa do more to undermine President Nicolás Maduro's government. Amidst opposition protests, in August 2017 Laverdière told CBC "we would like to see the [Canadian] government be more active in... calling for the release of political prisoners, the holding of elections and respecting the National Assembly."

Laverdière's statements ignored the death and destruction caused by the opposition protesters and the division of powers between the different branches of Venezuela's government. It also ignored the opposition's effort to hamstring the government after it won control of the National Assembly in 2015.

In June 2016 Laverdière put out a press release bemoaning "the erosion of democracy" and the need for Ottawa to "defend democracy in Venezuela." In it, Laverdière said, "the OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro has invoked the Inter-American Democratic Charter regarding Venezuela, and Canada, as a



member of the OAS, should support his efforts."

But the former Uruguayan Foreign Minister's actions as head of the OAS were highly controversial. They even prompted

Almagro's past boss, former Uruguayan president José Mujica, to condemn his bias against the democratically elected Venezuelan government. While they found cause to criticize the Venezuelan government, the NDP stayed mum when US President Donald Trump threatened to invade Venezuela in the summer of 2017.

They also failed to challenge Canadian sanctions, which followed a similar move by the US. In a move that probably violated the UN and OAS charters, in September 2017 the elected president, vice president and 38 other officials had their assets in Canada frozen and Canadians were barred from having financial relations with these individuals.

The NDP also ignored Canada's role in directly financing an often-unsavoury Venezuelan opposition. A specialist in social media and political transition, Canada's ambassador to Venezuela between 2014 and July 2017, Ben Rowsell, told the Ottawa Citizen just after leaving his position: "We established quite a significant internet presence inside Venezuela, so that we could then engage

tens of thousands of Venezuelan citizens in a conversation on human rights. We became one of the most vocal embassies in speaking out on human rights issues and encouraging Venezuelans to speak out."

While not forthcoming with information about the groups they supported in Venezuela, Ottawa funneled money to the U.S.-backed opposition. The NDP would certainly condemn American or other officials who interfered in Canadian politics in this way. So, why is it okay in a South American country?

Laverdière has also demonstrated pro-Israeli and anti-Russian sympathies, in lock-step with American foreign policy. Five months after speaking at the 2016 American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) conference in Washington D.C., she participated in a JNF tree-planting ceremony in Jerusalem. During a visit to Israel with Canada's Governor General, the NDP's foreign affairs critic attended a ceremony with JNF World Chairman Danny Atar and a number of other top officials of the JNF (KKL in Israel).

In 2017, Laverdière also applauded a bill modeled after the US Magnitsky Act that would further strain relations between Ottawa and Moscow by sanctioning Russian officials. NDP MPs voted for legislation Laverdière labelled an "important step to support the Global Magnitsky movement." ■

Policy, Not Image, Should Be Focus of NDP Leader

BY BARRY WEISLEDER

The honeymoon was over in record time. The business press that blatantly boosted Jagmeet Singh over his lackluster NDP leadership rivals turned away from him within weeks of his October 1 triumph. A burst of unfair media criticism quickly gave way to a studied disinterest.

Singh was unjustly singled out for comment on the Air India bombing - which occurred when he was six years old. He was chided for not immediately seeking a seat in Parliament. And then, the NDP did very poorly in the six by-elections held on December 11. It now sits at a mere 17 per cent in opinion polls.

Singh gave a stirring speech to the B.C. NDP convention, but later dodged the Site C dam decision. He has been nearly mute on a rising wave of issues including the future of NAFTA, the rebellion against electoral fraud in Honduras, Trump's affront to Palestine on the status of Jerusalem, and Washington's supply of lethal weapons to the reactionary regime in Kiev. Even on tax evasion by the rich and powerful, including by Liberal Finance Minister Bill Morneau, Singh has been out-hustled by Tories Andrew Scheer and Pierre Poilievre.

The problem now is not image, or timing, or electoral tactics. It is political. It is the lack of bold policies, and the absence of direct action.

Recall that Jagmeet Singh was the most conservative of the four aspirants who ran the last lap of the leadership race. The political up-side of his win was his positivity and pride as an articulate, equity-seeking racial minority person.

The thirty-eight year old lawyer from Brampton, Ontario is the first Person of Colour to head a major Canadian political party. The significance of this was evident, long before the Terry Milewski CBC interview, when he was confronted

by a racist woman in Peel who absurdly berated him for being a Muslim. Singh countered by simply repeating the words "We love you. We support you."

Bourgeois pundits lapped it up. The truth is that racism and incipient fascism must be countered by stressing the need for working class unity against the system that breeds racism, and by initiating mass actions to crush the racists. But to establishment politicians, that's not 'cool.'

Singh handily defeated his opponents for the NDP leadership by skillfully recruiting from his extensive social network. His election represented a doubling down on the party's shift to the center, to glamour politics, to trying to beat the Liberals at their game. Snazzy three-piece tailored suits and his publicized engagement failed to out-dazzle Justin Trudeau's 'sunny ways', super-selfie persona.

It is a losing proposition for the NDP to compete with Justin in a glamour gambit when the NDP base and the working class needs system change, not another personality contest. This is especially true when the political right wing, including the Liberal government, is moving ever more stridently against democratic rights, to condone criminal tax avoidance, to tighten the grip of imperialism on the world, and to put profit before the environment.

Sadly, the most left wing

candidate for leader, Niki Ashton MP, squandered the opportunity to present a bold socialist policy platform, to integrate grassroots socialist activists into her campaign, and to turn it into a vehicle for mass action against capitalist austerity. She steered away from the radical path of British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn.

Jagmeet Singh, former Ontario NDP Deputy Leader, appointed leadership opponent and Quebec MP Guy Caron to be NDP House Leader until the 2019 election. Charlie Angus, who was

praised by the Toronto Star for having "the most nuanced position on pipelines and energy projects", is left out in the cold. Does this mean Singh will oppose pipelines, and fight for public ownership and for a rapid Green energy transition away from carbon dependency?

Maybe. But it would take enormous pressure from below to move him in that direction. Remember, Singh initially favoured the Energy East pipeline, then backed down under pressure from Niki Ashton and others.

When he last ran for public office, he initially opposed LGBTQI-positive sex education in Brampton schools.

As an Ontario MPP, he fully backed Leader Andrea Horwath's failed 2014 Ontario election campaign opposing tax increases on corporations and the rich (a

"Party and labour leftists should press Singh sharply on Pharma-care, dental care, free post-secondary education, steep taxation of corporations and the super-rich..."

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policy not unlike Tom Mulcair's "Balanced budget, No matter what"). As Horwath's Consumer Affairs Critics, Singh did nothing to advocate public auto insurance, a longstanding Ontario NDP policy championed by beloved NDP MPPs Mel Swart and Peter Kormos.

During the 2017 federal leadership race, Singh stunned members when he came out against universality in seniors' benefits. He infamously toured Israel hosted by Zionist organizations, and he was backed by the openly pro-imperialist NDP Foreign Affairs Critic Helene Laverdiere. On post-secondary school fees and student debt, he has

been vague.

On the positive side, Singh has a visionary position on illegal drugs. He wants to de-criminalize all drugs and invest in the treatment of substance abuse as a health issue.

However, he never uses the word "socialist" to describe himself; he proposes only minimal changes to tax law; and offers not a word about striving for democratic control of the economy. He is silent on internal party affairs, particularly the need for greater democracy.

So, what is to be done? Party and labour leftists should press Singh sharply on Pharma-care, dental care, free post-secondary education, steep taxation of corporations and the super-rich, for

BDS against Israeli apartheid and Canada Out of NATO, and for public ownership, particularly in the areas of energy, banking, telecommunications and transportation. We need a commitment to respect the local NDP candidate nomination process and for the Leader to actively campaign for the policies adopted at convention.

Instead of trying to revive a short-lived honeymoon for the new leader, working class activists need to set a militant tone at the February 2018 NDP federal convention. This should be done by advancing socialist policies and by demanding that Singh lead the fight for a Workers' Agenda. He can do it, if we unite to demand it. ■

NDP SOCIALIST CAUCUS

The NDP Socialist Caucus is a group of party members who believe that in order to survive, the New Democratic Party must turn to the Left and join working Canadians and their allies in the struggle for socialism, democracy and freedom.

Founded by NDP members in Toronto in 1998, we believe that the struggle for peace, women's rights and environmental sustainability is central to the creation of a better world. The Socialist Caucus also believes that the NDP must become more democratic and allow for greater debate and bottom-up participation in the party and at conventions. We invite you to join us.

LE CAUCUS SOCIALISTE NPD

Le Caucus Socialiste du NPD est un groupe de membres du parti qui croient que, dans le but de survivre, le Nouveau Parti démocratique doit se tourner vers la gauche et rejoindre les travailleurs et les travailleuses canadien-nes et leurs alliés dans la lutte pour le socialisme, la démocratie et la liberté.

Fondé par des membres du NPD à Toronto en 1998, nous croyons que la lutte pour la paix, les droits des femmes et la durabilité de l'environnement est essentielle à la création d'un monde meilleur. Le Caucus Socialiste estime que le NPD doit devenir plus démocratique et permettre une plus grande participation et un débat de la base au sommet dans le parti et aux congrès.

Pour toutes les femmes y compris les femmes minorisées

PAR CHLOE MATTE GAGNÉ
PRESSE-TOI-À-GAUCHE DÉCEMBRE 2017

Le PDF (Pour les droits des femmes du Québec) par les écrits de Annie-Ève Collin et Michèle Sirois a publié dans *Le Devoir* une réponse à la vice-présidente de la Fédération des femmes du Québec Marlihan Lopes concernant la nouvelle présidente Gabrielle Bouchard.

Le débat porte autour d'une personne trans comme présidente de la Fédération des femmes du Québec. Gabrielle est-elle une femme, un homme, une transition, un sexe... etc. Gabrielle est d'abord une personne qui se définit comme femme et qui veut défendre les droits des femmes. Elle fait partie d'une minorité opprimée de la société : les personnes trans. Et c'est ce combat politique qu'elle veut mener à la Fédération : faire reconnaître les femmes minorisées.

Effectivement le féminisme que nous connaissons au Québec et malgré la diversité des points de vue exprimés soit par sensibilité syndicale, professionnelle, et même gouvernementale relève d'un féminisme blanc, de classe aisée ou moyenne, sans handicap hétérosexuel et sans questionnement de genre.

Ce féminisme a permis un développement important de la lutte dans femmes ici et partout dans le monde avec la création de la Marche Mondiale des femmes. Cela a permis aux femmes de prendre leur place et de prendre la parole.

Et surtout, cela a permis aux femmes les plus opprimées de faire connaître, pour une première fois, leurs souffrances et leur aliénation. Elles ne se situaient plus en victimes subissant le poids de leur domination, mais comme personnes luttant contre leur situation. Ne pas tenir compte de leurs paroles serait divisif pour le mouvement des femmes.

Car, malgré leur bonne volonté, les femmes blanches de classe aisée ou moyenne, hétérosexuelles sans handicap et sans questionnement de genre, n'ont pas le vécu pour défendre ces femmes minorisées. Leurs privilèges les en empêchent. Reconnaître ce fait c'est se mettre en alliée avec ces femmes, c'est se mettre à leur écoute, c'est être en solidarité avec toutes les femmes et pas seulement celles avec des avantages.

Pas question non plus de choisir la minorisation la plus acceptable parmi d'autres. Le questionnement de genre et la transsexualité font que ces femmes vivent des discriminations dont il faut que le mouvement des femmes prenne en compte et qu'il lutte avec elles pour les abolir et faire reconnaître leur réalité légalement, socialement, civilement et fémininement.

C'est un tournant essentiel que doit prendre le mouvement des femmes : s'ouvrir à toutes les femmes. Nous pensons que madame Gabrielle Bouchard pourra certainement faire avancer les réflexions féministes comme présidente de la Fédération des Femmes du Québec.

Quant au PDF, nous les invitons à questionner leurs positions au lieu de fouiller dans l'ADN des personnes trans. Nous les invitons aussi à développer une culture d'ouverture envers toutes les femmes dans le respect de leur oppression et dans le choix de leur liberté religieuse.

Il nous faut, ici au Québec, rejeter toutes dynamiques identitaires qui nous conduiraient à privilégier certaines femmes de souche au détriment des apports des personnes immigrantes. La Charte des valeurs du PQ a mis en danger la solidarité sociale. Dans ce contexte, les femmes ne peuvent qu'être perdantes. Les femmes musulmanes en ont fait les frais.

Notre ouverture à toutes les femmes

doit aussi s'alimenter du sort des femmes partout ailleurs. C'est ce que nous a appris la Marche Mondiale des femmes. La conjoncture internationale est loin de favoriser les droits des femmes y compris le droit de disposer de leur propre corps. C'est plutôt l'heure du mépris et des violences faites aux femmes avec la montée de la droite et de l'extrême droite.

À commencer par Trump qui justifie son propre harcèlement sexuel et qui soutient des candidatures de sénateur-agresseur comme Roy Moore, qui refuse les personnes trans dans l'armée et qui coupe systématiquement les fonds aux organismes de planning familial.

Ensuite, la présence d'une forte immigration en Europe soulève aussi des sentiments islamophobes et racistes. Dans cette quête de paix, d'une terre nouvelle, les femmes ont connu humiliation et viols et les enfants souffrances et faim. Le droit à l'avortement revient aussi d'actualité en Europe, les femmes en noir en Pologne ont été à l'avant de cette lutte.

C'est aussi le ras de bol des femmes latino-américaines qui refusent de voir une de plus des leurs se faire tuer parce que femmes. Elles luttent contre les féminicides institutionnalisés.

L'enquête faite sur la disparité des femmes autochtones au Canada et au Québec commence à mettre à jour les liens entre féminicide, colonialisme et racisme systémique.

Le mouvement des femmes doit tenir compte de toute cette conjoncture politique. Et contre toutes ces attitudes réactionnaires, il faut opposer une solidarité la plus large possible. C'est seulement toutes unies que nous combattons le patriarcat, le capitalisme, le racisme, le colonialisme, le sexisme. C'est ce à quoi, nous invitons le PDF à réfléchir. ■

Merci à l'auteure et Press-toi-à-Gauche pour la permission de publier cet article

BUILDING HOUSING TO MEET HUMAN NEEDS



By John Orrett

It is Canada's great shame to have a housing crisis in the midst of a land of plenty. As we endure record breaking cold temperatures in the winter of 2017-18, the homeless face life-threatening conditions. Shelters are filled to capacity. In Toronto, Mayor John Tory, under intense pressure from social activists, belatedly asked the Federal Government to open the downtown Moss Park Armory as an emergency shelter.

In Montreal, "les gens sans abri" are cramming into homeless shelters like the Old Brewery Mission because camping out under the Ville Marie Expressway is a sure way to freeze to death in sub -20 degrees Celcius weather.

In many indigenous communities, housing conditions are deplorable. While native lands continue to supply the timber, stone aggregates, and mineral resources used in Canada's advanced construction industry, indigenous peoples are in need of tens of thousands of new and upgraded homes. A glaring example comes from Attawapiskat, Ontario where in 2016 a federal study showed 2,100 residents were occupying only 340 homes. These conditions are aggravated by unemployment, poor infrastructure, such as

inferior schools and roads, and frequent boil water alerts due to unsafe drinking water.

Across Canada affordable rental properties have become too expensive and consume too much of the disposable income of the working poor. In Ontario the proposed Fair Housing Plan may extend rent controls to units built before 1991 -- a measure far too long in coming.

“ The NDP Socialist Caucus calls on the Government of Canada to dedicate 2% of its revenue to help the provinces and municipalities build more homes for working class people. This should be funded by increased taxes on corporations and cutting military spending.”

Recently landlords have been converting affordable rental rooms and apartments into Airbnb units, so the City of Toronto had made some restrictions on the listing of secondary suites on Airbnb, introduced an annual \$50 Registration Fee for

AirBnb rentals, and capped the renting of entire homes to 180 days a year. These measures unfortunately will not cause more rental apartments to be built.

Moreover, the financial strains felt by middle class working Canadians who are simply trying to buy a home, anywhere near where they work, has become overwhelming. All levels of Government in Canada have been making feeble attempts to solve a problem the whole capitalist system works to create.

In Toronto and Vancouver, where the cost of single family residences have risen the most rapidly, municipal governments have introduced a 15% tax on foreign home buyers. The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation has introduced compulsory insurance on mortgages that are more than 80% of purchase price.

With the blessing of Federal Finance Minister Bill Morneau, the Canadian banks are also stress testing such high loan-to-value mortgages by ensuring borrowers would still qualify for them if interest rates were to rise 2% on a five-year term. The Bank of Canada has also raised lending rates twice in 2017 and has signaled further increases for 2018.

All these measures taken together have somewhat slowed the price increases of

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WE'RE ALL TIM HORTONS' WORKERS NOW

BY LISA HOWARD

We've all been there. You're reading an article about the \$14 minimum wage and Tim Hortons. Then you glance at the comments and notice people saying workers should retrain and get better jobs or become plumbers. Or they say we should all be entrepreneurs. Or this one: "We should join the creative class."



And then you find yourself wondering what you would say in reply. In my case, I hesitate somewhat because people have been quite rude to me online in the past (shocking, I know). Is it worth the trouble? Probably not. But how can we address the changes that have taken place over the last thirty or so years, changes that have made work in Canada so different from that of my parents and grandparents?

Clearly this is not about chutzpah or skills, as people are wont to say. It is, rather, the result of lobbying by the corporate sector for decades. These changes have been a long time coming. So now we need to take a step back and ask the big questions. Isn't it time we had a grownup conversation?

And not the grownup conversation people usually propose, like: "How do we cut costs?" or "Isn't it time to give up on Medicare?" or "What public services can we really afford?"

The grownup conversation I was thinking of would be: "What kind of society do we want to live in?" and, "What policies would lead to a better life for the growing ranks of precarious workers?" and the always topical: "What would make a better democracy?"

The changes that have taken place didn't happen by accident. They're decisions that reflect the interests of one group over the rest of us, that have led to an economy where we're all basically fast food workers (or Uber drivers), even if we work in some other field, such as librarians or professors, voice actors or store clerks, taxi drivers or even journalists. We are

now subcontractors with things like pensions, insurance, and other benefits people used to have through their employers downloaded onto individuals.

Some fall for technological determinism, saying that it was inevitable thanks to robots and automation. But these changes have been occurring for a long time. The "robot argument" is just another way of justifying them. But robots aren't going to take over teaching your kids. And if that does happen, it will be yet another way to privatize – a kind of Uberization - of the teaching profession.

But it won't be a robot at the front of the classroom. Instead, it will be the new world of stay-at-home kids with their e-learning courses like MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses).

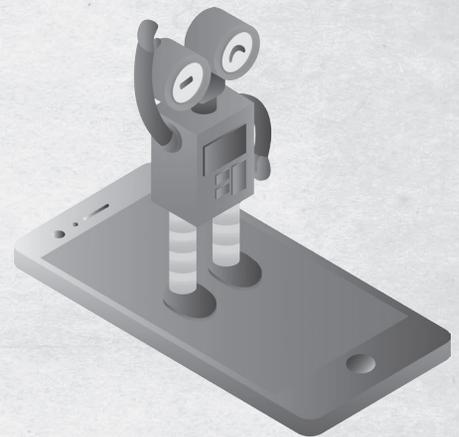
This is part of a larger struggle in which one side is triumphing decisively over the rest of us. One side works tirelessly to convince us what they want is inevitable - and what you want is unrealistic.

Think about how the word "globalization" was used in the past - much the same way that "automation" is used now: strategically, and like a threat. Think about what passes for innovation these days: no new ideas, just new "models," and ways to strip down and repackage existing industries.

Is the Uberization of everything really a step forward, or just the deregulation of society via the back door? So now we all pay less for a hired car. But Uber drivers themselves can't pay for their own safety inspection or insurance, or time off. Or to put it differently, we pay

less, and then they pay less, and then no one has anything.

Because none of this is an accident, we need to address it with solutions that take into account the fact that it's a deliberate choice. It's not enough for the NDP to propose more of the status quo: A liberal lite government won't do. When the Left chooses the status quo, in effect, not to act, the Right



has no such qualms. Just look at the brushes with fascism we're seeing around the world.

So instead, the NDP should propose measures that result in re-industrialisation and a return to a more equitable society. If you're an industrialist and you sell products here, maybe you should have to make them here.

University tuition should be free (making it fully public, like high school). Anti-monopoly and anti-trust laws should be enforced, making media concentration less of a problem. Private think tanks like the Fraser Institute should have their charitable status revoked. Tax fairness should be pushed and tax evasion penalties enforced.

These are just a few suggestions. Deliberate Uberization is not inevitable. Here's hoping the Left and the NDP are up to the job of countering the constant drift to the Right. ■

Lisa Howard is a writer and social democrat who lives in Ottawa

"Is the Uberization of everything really a step forward, or just the deregulation of society via the back door?... It's not enough for the NDP to propose more of the status quo: A liberal lite government won't do."

...Housing, from page 9

rents and homes, but they are still rising faster than the rate of inflation and certainly faster than average income gains. They will not solve the supply problem simply because they do not deal with it. We need to increase supply more than reduce demand. Disqualifying aspiring home owners by putting their potential mortgage payments out of reach does not put them in a house.

Builders, developers, land owners, and real estate moguls are interested in the highest rate of profit. They have chosen not to build affordable rental units or affordable housing. High end real estate development is where the money is. Furthermore the Federal and Provincial Governments have been missing in action for decades on the affordable housing portfolio. This is the issue.

The solution then is to recognize it, not to trim the hedges with zoning changes, regulation changes, and interest rates. We need to build more affordable housing in Canada to meet human needs, not private profits.

The NDP Socialist Caucus calls on the Government of Canada to dedicate 2% of its revenue to help the provinces and

municipalities build more homes for working class people. This should be funded by increased taxes on corporations and cutting military spending.

We demand that the Government of Canada create a Public Land and Home Construction Corporation that would assemble public lands and purchase more using all the resources of the state, to establish a land bank for housing. It would then initiate a building and contracting company with provincial and municipal branches to build homes.

This would not be a construction monopoly but it would build houses that are environmentally advanced, using union labour and Canadian materials and employ the best health and safety construction guidelines. The goal would be to build as many affordable housing units as possible as a prime national goal on a not for profit basis.

This can be done. We can certainly improve on the record of two of Canada's largest building contractors -- the scandal ridden SNC Lavalin, former jail builders for Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, or Aecon Building Group, that has just sold out to the China Communication Construction Company, proving once again that Big Capital has no country or sense of social obligation.

The NDP should support creating a Public Land and Home Construction Company that would put human needs first and begin building homes for people who need them. ■

Socialist Caucus Resolutions at Convention

Resolutions were approved by the federal NDP Socialist Caucus Conference in Toronto in December 2017, on a variety of economic, social and environmental issues.

They have been circulated for adoption at meetings of NDP riding associations and affiliated unions for debate and vote at Convention.

We hope you speak out and support them on the convention floor.



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BY CHRIS GOSSE

There is a train of thought that imagines new technology has the potential for great job creation. You can go to McDonald's and to your local grocery store and use automated machines to do a self check-out. But what about the people who did those jobs before?

Now, the bosses can have an employee monitoring six self check-out lanes. That's pretty good profit maximization, 6 for 1. I haven't seen a full-service gas station in a while. The local gas stations used to have a minimum of two people. Now they are down to one. This is a trend in many industries, including mine, the stevedore and long-shore industry.

There are longshoreman locals in Canada that once had 3,500 members loading/unloading conventional vessels by manual labour. In the 1960's, as



Port Automation is a Dystopia for Dockers

containerization/mechanization brought technological change, these locals declined in membership – to 150-200 members each today.

There are fully automated terminals in three places in the world right now. The employers' group on the west coast (Pacific Maritime Association) is trying to push through a job killing contract extension with the International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU). While on the east coast, the employers' group, the United States Maritime Alliance (USMX), is pushing the automation envelope as well.

As recently as a few weeks before Christmas, International Longshoreman Association (I.L.A.) President Harold Daggett broke off talks with the employer group on a new collective agreement. The bosses want fully automated terminals which can run with two or three employees, while the union favours semi-automated terminals that have automated features but are operated by dock workers. President Daggett has viewed automation as the main issue in current contract talks.

Of the three fully automated ports, not one has the same productivity as those operated by workers. The bosses like automation because they don't have

to deal with workers, unions, and safety issues.

Labour is a source of value, the wealth produced by workers. Corporations want to produce profit as the number 1 goal. Some of those corporations pushing for automation want public subsidies and public investment. It is bad enough that members of the 1% control 51% of the world's wealth, but they want your tax dollars to make themselves wealthier and destroy good, decent-paying jobs in the process.

Also, 22% of working people are working poor. Social security belongs to the workers, not to the bosses. What is happening to the Panama and Paradise Papers bandits?

What are the regulators and Canada's federal government going to do to protect good jobs on the docks? What is the social contract with the employer to make sure that workers aren't dumped and replaced by machines that don't pay taxes like the people exposed by the Paradise and Panama Papers?

How do we secure core working class values like universal health care (including Pharmacare), public education, public transit, public mail service, and postal banking? Casualized, outsourced, contracted-out, precarious work in the transportation industry will not help our

people, especially our country's workers.

The way to achieve a truly realistic prosperity is through uncompromising revolutionary change and by exerting workers' power for creative and socially productive work in a world of ecological sustainability and genuine equality.

Let's take a page from the Transitional Program, a set of demands formulated by Leon Trotsky in 1938, which includes the call for shorter work time without loss of pay or benefits, to share the available jobs along with the boon of rising productivity that comes from tech change.

In the late 19th century, Friedrich Engels called the London Dockers' Strike the greatest promise he had witnessed in the fight for the working class. Harold Daggett and the I.L.A. have shown the greatest promise in the current fight for the dignity of the working class against the dystopia of capitalist automation. When the dockers get organized and win, all other sections will follow. ■

Chris Gosse is President of the International Longshoreman's union Local in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Socialist Caucus candidate for NDP Vice-President - Labour.

COMBIEN COÛTE LA PAUVRETÉ AU CANADA ?

Par Henri Chevalier



Les coûts de la pauvreté affectent économiquement la société dans l'ensemble, aussi bien que les gouvernements fédéraux et provinciaux que les gens touchés par la pauvreté. Il y a un manque d'exactitude lorsqu'il s'agit de déterminer les coûts financiers de pauvreté au Canada.

Cependant, nous pouvons toujours évaluer l'ampleur des coûts que la pauvreté a déclenchés et qui pèsent sur la société dans l'ensemble et sur le gouvernement. Il faut comprendre que la pauvreté impose des très grands coûts économiques, pas seulement à ceux qui sont pauvres, mais aussi

à la société en général et sur les différents gouvernements qui ne font pas grand chose pour résoudre ce problème. En effet, notre gouvernement, comme dans beaucoup de démocraties libérales, ne travaillent seulement sur des projets à court terme parce qu'ils savent qu'en ayant des résultats positifs à court terme, ils seront réélus. Vaincre la pauvreté, c'est du long terme. En d'autres mots, les investissements dans des stratégies d'anti-pauvreté devraient être assez massifs et ils devraient être faits dès le début d'un mandat, alors que les avantages en termes de réductions des coûts, d'augmentation de l'activité économique et des revenus fiscaux viendraient plus tard.

C'est pour ça que ça prend du temps; ça ne se fait pas en quelques mois et c'est pour cela que les gouvernements n'attaquent pas

vraiment le fléau de la pauvreté.

Quand vous regardez les coûts de services médicaux, les gens qui ont les revenus les plus bas utilisent le plus le système des services médicaux et sont beaucoup plus coûteux au système de santé que ceux qui font partie de la classe moyenne.

Rappelez-vous cette corrélation super intéressante : Plus votre revenu est bas, plus vous aurez de chances d'avoir des problèmes de santé, et plus vous serez coûteux au système de santé canadien.

Lorsqu'on regarde les coûts supplémentaires de services médicaux attribuables à la pauvreté - c'est à dire les coûts des services médicaux qui pourraient être réduits si notre gouvernement éradiquait la

a continué à la page 17



A gang of rebels fighting for the
East Coast Working Class, since 1892



LET'S ENDORSE THE SMARTERTRACKS FOR A SENSIBLE TRANSPORTATION POLICY



By Hans Modlich

Politician interference with progress has been the bane of transit planners in Canada's central region for over forty years.

Either their visions were too bold and totally unproven, as with Bill Davis' maglev Personal Rapid Transit (PRT), or the projects were myopic selfies like Mel Lastman's Sheppard 'stubway' in North York -- or the now-proposed one-stop subway extension to Scarborough's Town Centre.

Davis' original PRT came down to earth as the Vancouver Skytrain and Scarborough's SRT, and both have proven the concept of light rapid transit (LRT) in three decades of service, although being obsoleted by advances in semiconductor technology. More conventional LRT systems are operating in Calgary, Ottawa and Edmonton and are in the works for Mississauga and Kitchener-Waterloo.

But the Toronto centered polemic subway vs LRT has completely obscured an even more powerful alternative for metropolitan regions like the GTHA: full size express commuter rail - electrified and with light-weight, rolling stock, yielding much shorter headways than the lethargic GO (Government of Ontario) system which Wynne is electrifying only at a snail's pace.

They have been endorsed by Transportation 2000 and referred to as Surface Subways because of their far greater throughput capacities than LRT, and obviously much lower construction costs than tunneling.

Toronto mayor John Tory successfully outsmarted Olivia Chow's

LRTs with a hyped up version of Wynne's Regional Rail called SMARTTRACKS. But simulation experts quickly debunked its feasibility because of the limited capacity of Union Station to handle the frequency of trains promised by the mayor.

So this is where SmartERtracks comes in. It has been on the boards for merely 40 years, and then- Premier of Ontario Bill Davis could have found a much wiser home for the 7 billion (1970) dollars sunk into Urban Transit Development Corporation. (UTDC was privatized to Bombardier for a mere 1% of that sum. Recall the similar fate of SkyDome, now Rogers Stadium, not to mention CN rail privatization by Liberal Paul Martin in 1993 for less than one 30th of its present capitalization).

This smarter way is called the Missing Link and its feasibility study has been financed by four GTHA municipalities, including Toronto. Premier Wynne has pronounced herself in favour of further planning.

Missing freight tracks between Streetsville and Bramalea (two towns west of Toronto) would be built under this plan at roughly the same cost as quadruple-tracking the CP Milton corridor (as Metrolinx' plan would have for GO-Milton).

This link will provide a joint CN-CP freight train bypass for almost all of Metro and would make sense from a safety point of view alone. CP's adamant refusal to budge stands in the way and it seems that only federal legislation will force them to comply with Transport Canada's Safety Review Board recommendation made in the wake of the Lac Megantic disaster.

I appealed to federal Transport

Minister Marc Garneau in person from the floor at a Trinity Town Hall, but being a Liberal more so than an astronaut, no sign of such vision seems to be forthcoming.

The over-riding benefit of Missing Link is that it frees up the most important unused GTHA commuter rail artery, midtown Toronto's CP Rail tracks. They are still referred to in railroader jargon as the North Toronto Subdivision.

Implementing the link would be the biggest bang for the billions being designated for transit infrastructure -- without the need to privatize Ontario Hydro.

It would link fastest growing Markham to Mississauga/Pearson Airport and would also provide a Downtown Relief Line extending all the way to Scarborough-Agincourt and Markham - instead of only Pape subway.

Union Station would not become the bottle neck that it invariably will.

Had Olivia Chow listened to my repeated suggestions, she might have been the mayor of Toronto, instead of us scurrying for an alternative to John Tory's and Doug Ford's one stop Scarborough Town Centre subway extension -- on which a refurbished existing SRT can fully meet the projected demand, and be extended to Malvern at least cost.

Our Beaches-East York riding association passed a Missing Link Resolution two years ago, which never did make it to the floor in Edmonton. We passed this resolution again, now for Ottawa. Let's endorse this most ecologically sensible transit project to mitigate climate change in the most populous region of Canada. ■

DEMOCRATIC - THE NDP'S MIDDLE NAME, EH?

BY ELIZABETH BYCE

Is the New Democratic Party democratic?

Compared to the Liberal and Conservative parties, it is. The policies of the parties of Bay Street are set by their leaders, not by members.

Their conventions are just a showcase for party big wigs and a playground for trial balloons. Whatever else happens, the interests of the rich prevail.

The NDP, on the other hand, is a working class party, based on the unions. Its purpose is to fight for the needs of the vast majority, against the evils of capitalism. Its policy is decided by working class delegates at large party conventions, with ample discussion, and the policies are implemented, supposedly. But is that really what happens?

My experience is that very little debate on policy occurs at convention. Decades ago, most of the time at NDP



conventions was devoted to policy debate. But in recent years, less than 25 per cent of the time is spent that way. Worse, very few radical, or even slightly controversial resolutions make it to the floor. Even worse is the fact that progressive policies that are adopted are often quietly buried.

I can think of three examples: Canada get out of NATO, abolish the GST, and demand public ownership of the energy resource sector. A controversial issue today is Palestine and the campaign known as Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against the racist Israeli state.

Before the October 19, 2015 federal election, the NDP leader blocked nomination bids or removed locally nominated candidates for the crime of just mentioning Palestine, or for quoting Amnesty International data on the crimes Israel committed against the people of Gaza.

But the majority of New Democrats support self-determination for the Palestinian people; they even back the BDS campaign as a peaceful tool in the quest for a little justice in the Middle East. That's why Palestine is

such a big issue in the NDP today - which brings us back to the issue of internal democracy.

The NDP badly needs a democratic revolution. What would that look like? It would be much less costly to become a convention delegate. Most of the time at convention would be devoted to policy debate, which would make for more time to deal with resolutions submitted by grassroots bodies, including progressive and socialist policies.

The party brass would be stopped from obstructing or removing locally nominated candidates for political reasons. Party electoral campaigns would not just reflect, but would highlight the most progressive policies adopted by the ranks at convention.

Resolutions circulated by the NDP Socialist Caucus that aim to make those changes are in the convention resolutions book now, submitted by many NDP riding associations, unions and youth clubs. It's time for a change, don't you think? Join the democratic revolution. ■



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photo: Neil Cummings

BOOM AND BUST - THE CAPITALIST CURSE

By Barry Weisleder

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is basking in the reflected 'glory' of the Canadian economy. The GDP is up. Unemployment is down. Housing starts are on an upswing.

However, before popping the champagne cork, consider the following: The growth in exports is weak. Trade is in deficit territory. Wage improvements are the slowest since 1998. In fact, the past 40 years have seen a virtual wage freeze, except for the top 1 per cent of the people, each of whom makes more money in a day than most workers do in a year.

In order to pay their bills, millions of working people go into debt. This is encouraged by low interest rates, and by a selfish desire to eat and sleep under a warm roof. More about debt below.

Do the ups and downs of the so-called free enterprise economy seem like a merry-go-round (except for the merry part)? Well, that's due to the very nature of the market economy. Despite the fact that giant monopolies dominate it, the system is chaotic, unplanned and quite irrational. It puts human needs at the bottom of the list, well below

profit, the so-called bottom line. For proof, just look at how bankrupt firms like Enron, Stelco, Target and Sears treat their retired workers.

Capitalism is characterized by generalized commodity production. That is, production for profit, not for use. When sales of goods and services slow down, assembly lines slow, or grind to a halt, and workers are laid off.

Is that because there is no work to be done? No. It's because too many commodities were produced to generate high profits. Viola! An overproduction crisis occurs. Often, it is the overproduction of useless things. Bombs, not homes. Capital is periodically over-capacity. Machines sit idle. Workers' incomes decline, many to the point of impoverishment and desperation.

Over-production crises are a mainstay of capitalism. The decline in the rate of profit is also a feature of the system. It results from the growing reliance of capitalism on machines, increasingly on robots. The rate of exploitation of labour can be increased. But machines cannot be squeezed to produce more surplus value (profit).

The threat of workers' revolution prompted some 20th century liberals to

propose "solutions" to these deep-seated problems. One experiment, proposed by British economist John Maynard Keynes, seemed to work for a while. Government expenditure (based on tax revenues, deficit spending, and some money-printing) created public projects, social services and jobs.

But a by-product of such currency creation, deficits and public spending is inflation. Inflation can quickly get out of control. Eventually debt mushrooms, and becomes bad debt. Then the bubble bursts. Remember 2007-2008? Of course, the government comes to the rescue... to the aid of the biggest banks and corporations -- not to the rescue of heavily indebted workers.

Is there any 'conventional' way out of the boom-bust syndrome, given the physical limits of global resources and the world market?

Yes. But it's very risky and very bloody. Imperialist war destroys the competition. It also kills millions of people and devastates the natural environment. Conquest by war lays the basis for a new round of capital accumulation and production for profit. This works like a charm for the

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pauvreté -, ils représentent respectivement 6.7 % et 6% des coûts totaux de santé au Manitoba et en Saskatchewan.

En ayant une approche plus holistique, la pauvreté en termes de coûts de santé coûte 9.1 milliards \$ chaque année au Canada. Cela signifie que les 20 % les plus pauvres au Canada - nous appelons cette section de la population le quintile de revenu le plus bas - coûte au système de santé du Canada 9.1 milliards \$ par an de plus que les personnes qui représentent le deuxième quintile de revenu.

Ceux dans le quintile de revenu le plus bas ne gagnent pas des sommes exorbitantes, ou ne sont pas aussi activement impliqués dans le marché du travail que, ceux dans le deuxième quintile de revenu parce qu'ils sont généralement marginalisés de la société. Si nous les réintégrons dans notre société, non seulement ce serait une chose moralement juste de le faire, mais le faire augmenterait aussi l'activité économique.

Quand nous accumulons tous les

coûts supplémentaires liés aux services médicaux, le crime, les réductions dans l'activité économique et des revenus fiscaux inférieurs en raison de la pauvreté, la pauvreté nous coûterait approximativement entre \$62.4 à \$70.8 milliards chaque année.

C'est trois fois et demi le budget militaire fédéral du Canada. Ou ça peut nous permettre de payer un programme universel et national de pharmacare pendant au moins 17 ans et de d'investir simultanément dans un programme national d'alimentation scolaire totalement gratuit pendant 5 ans.

Pour investir dans l'extermination de la pauvreté, le gouvernement fédéral devrait abandonner son obsession pour des résultats à court terme, ses stratégies court termistes pour se faire réélire et ses approches néolibérales. Le centre canadien de politiques alternatives a proposé une solution, parmi d'autres: un transfert d'argent fédéral aux provinces et aux territoires afin de les aider à atteindre leurs buts de réduction de la pauvreté.

Cela coûterait seulement 4 milliards \$ par an afin d'améliorer le système d'assistance sociale et les taux de prestations relatives aux

personnes handicapées. Je dis 'seulement' car c'est presque rien lorsqu'on compare ce chiffre aux \$70 milliards qu'on pourrait économiser chaque année après avoir détruit la pauvreté au Canada.

Cependant, il y a d'autres coûts supplémentaires associés à la pauvreté, comme les coûts de logement à faible revenu et les coûts des sans abris. Résoudre le problème des sans-abris, c'est économiser entre 3.25 milliards \$ et 3.7 milliards \$ chaque année pour seulement des coûts liés aux personnes chroniquement sans abri.

L'idée ici est de vous dire que nous pouvons résoudre la pauvreté et que c'est finalement logique financièrement et économiquement de faire ainsi. Ce n'est pas moralement acceptable, que tant de personnes dans un pays riche comme le Canada soient défavorisées. ■

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...Boom and Bust, from previous page

ruling rich if wages and benefits are slashed as a result of the smashing of workers' parties and labour unions by fascism and war.

Some countries, due to exceptional circumstances, can avoid one or another aspect of the destruction. But no capitalist country can escape the booms and the busts, the very temporary nature of the "solutions," and the persistent social misery of poverty and injustice.

There is only one way out of this mess, that is, in the interests of the working class and the dispossessed. Break the stranglehold of monopoly capitalism! To do that, it is necessary for working people

to take hold of the commanding heights of the economy (not the corner grocery store or barber shop, but the big banks, mines, mills and factories) and run it according to a democratically decided plan. The notion, entertained by some liberals and social democrats, that capitalism can be 'regulated' to be in harmony with nature and put an end to periodic crises, is pure illusion.

Nationalization of a few large firms (with or without compensation, with or without workers' and community control), will not be sufficient to break, permanently, the dynamic of private capital accumulation and the anarchic organization of production. Only public ownership and a democratically planned economy can replace the waste and

brutality of capitalism with a cooperative commonwealth.

Canada is not presently on the verge of an economic transformation, but that day is surely coming as capitalism continues to wreak havoc on people and the environment. It will be hastened as socialists step up efforts to explain the necessity and viability of such a change.

Hopefully, the transformation will occur before catastrophic climate change makes political action a tragically belated, academic exercise. As Rosa Luxemburg famously said, "Socialism or barbarism" is the choice facing humanity. ■



There is only one way out of this mess, that is, in the interests of the working class and the dispossessed... Only public ownership and a democratically planned economy can replace the waste and brutality of capitalism with a cooperative commonwealth."

Investor State Dispute Settlement: The Mysterious and Powerful Tool of Big Corporations

BY HENRI CHEVALIER

The Investor State Dispute Settlement, commonly referred as ISDS, is everywhere; in bilateral trade agreements and in international trade agreements, such as NAFTA, CETA or even the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

ISDS is a system through which investors can sue countries for alleged discriminatory practices. However, what we call "alleged discriminatory practices" were, in many cases, very beneficial as they included environmental, financial and labour regulations. Because of NAFTA, Canada is now the most sued developed country in the world.¹ Canada has been sued more times than either the U.S. or Mexico. Let's be honest and reasonable, countries usually win more cases than they lose. But it doesn't impede us from revealing four reasons why the ISDS is really bad for you.

First, the ISDS is a tool used by corporations to make governments pay when they regulate. Across the world, you can see that many corporations use the ISDS to make governments pay because

of perfectly legitimate government policies that were supposed to protect your health, the environment that you live in and other crucial public interests.

They are doing so because they say these regulations and policies have the indirect effect of undermining their corporate profits. For example, Lone Pine, a Canadian company, sued the Canadian government via a US-subsiary for \$250 million (Cdn.) due to the fact that Quebec imposed a moratorium on shale gas extraction, which they considered a threat.¹ Other examples could be cited and demonstrate the total submission from governments as they give millions of dollars to corporations because they were simply protecting citizens' interests. It is very worrisome as a situation.

Second, the ISDS kills Canadian democracy and sovereignty, as it is utilized as a powerful corporate weapon to delay, weaken and kill regulation. Many law firms, such as White & Case or King & Spalding, that specialize in this form of shady business, encourage their corporate clients to use this weapon to scare governments into submission.

According to the report CETA:

Trading Away Democracy, Peter Kirby from law firm Fasken Martineau revealed that "ISDS is a lobbying tool in the sense that you can go in and say: 'Ok, if you do this, we will be suing you for compensation.'"² In short, the ISDS effectively grants corporations, which became the masters of trade deals, the power to strike down laws of sovereign nations.

Third, it is important to understand that the ISDS created a parallel business-friendly judicial system exclusively for transnational corporations, known under the name of the investor-state arbitration system. It seems like a conspiracy, but investor-state lawsuits are decided by private commercial arbitrators who are paid for each case they hear for as much as \$1.2 million (Cdn.).³ Their salary is not the main problem. What is most alarming is the fact they have a clear tendency to interpret the law in favour of the investors.

In other words, arbitrators tend to defend the rights of private investors

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photo: Glenn Halog



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above those of the public interest. Investor-state arbitration violates the principle of “equality before the law” as it privileges ‘foreign’ investors over local entrepreneurs, citizens and communities who do not have access to this business-friendly system. It is unquestionably a very one-sided process as only companies can sue governments.

Finally, what is distressing is that the risks of being sued by corporations are ever growing for governments. Indeed, the number of investor claims against states has exploded: from a dozen in the mid-1990s to more than 568 known cases by the end of 2013.⁴

There are two main reasons,

among many, that explain the existence of this phenomenon. First, the ISDS system has been democratized; it is very well known in the business community. Second, investment arbitration has become a money-making machine. Today, many law firms and arbitrators exist whose business models depend on companies suing states and which monopolize the elite. These law firms are making millions of dollars at the expense of our common interests.

What we are talking about is not something that we should deny. We absolutely need to reform the concept of bilateral and international free trade agreements, because we would all agree that people are more important than profits. ■

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NDP Socialist Caucus Public Forum

WHAT'S WRONG WITH NDP FOREIGN POLICY?

Friday, February 16, 6:30 p.m.
(doors open at 6 p.m.)
Room 204 in the Shaw Center

Featuring Canada's leading left critic of Canada's foreign policy, **political activist Yves Engler**.

Also, come to the forum and meet the NDP Socialist Caucus candidates for Executive and Federal Council (see bios below and on back page).

Donate to the Socialist Caucus

The Socialist Caucus devotes its resources to publishing editions of *Turn Left*, issuing literature to promote SC candidates for executive, promoting public forums, and producing SC posters, buttons and more.

If you can give, now is the time. We can make a real difference in creating a more democratic party. Please send a cheque to: NDP Socialist Caucus, 526 Roxton Rd. Toronto, ON. M6G 3R4.

Log onto our website and Like our Facebook Group

Our website includes articles from NDP members and information about past and future events. And please “Like” our Facebook page.

www.ndpsocialists.ca

TYLER DOWNEY Atlantic Representative

Tyler is from St John's, and has been involved with the NL NDP for 7 years in various capacities, from



volunteer, to campaign manager, to potential candidate. His guiding principles are those of equity, fairness, and real opportunity for all, and stands by these principles in all decisions.

BARRY WEISLEDER Ont. Rep to Federal Council

Barry is a teacher, union organizer, writer, and member of the NDP for almost 50 years.



He is co-chair of the federal and Ontario NDP Socialist Caucus, and wants the party to become a bottom-up organization that fights for a Workers' Agenda and socialist democracy.

SAM CHEADLE Ont. Rep to Federal Council

Sam is a trade unionist and social activist from Toronto. He currently works at the LCBO as an OPSEU member, working to build consciousness and union democracy among the rank and file. He also a proud member of the Workers Action Movement (WAM).



ROB GENTLES Ont. Rep to Federal Council

Rob studied Political Science at the University of Calgary, then attended the University of Alberta for his bachelor of laws. He has worked for the federal government since 2002 in Ottawa, where he lives with his family, and serves as a board member for a local autism charity.



The Campaign for Socialism and Democracy in the NDP

The Socialist Caucus is presenting a team of candidates for Federal NDP Executive and Council. Let's build a more participatory and activist NDP that fights for socialist policies.

COREY DAVID President

Corey is a machinist from Vaughan, Ontario. He spent five years as a front line staff for Community Living Toronto. A strong supporter of human rights, renewable energy, the arts and the labour movement, he writes poetry, short stories and plays hockey in his spare time.



HENRI CHEVALIER Vice President (francophone)

Comme nouveau membre de Davenport NDP et réalisateur de la série vidéo populaire Blabla Canada, Henri s'efforce d'engager les jeunes dans la politique pour changer le monde et spécifiquement, via le Caucus Socialiste, virer le NDP à gauche.



CHRIS GOSSE Vice-President (Labour)

Chris is a trade unionist and craftsman, and president of the LSPU (ILA) Local 1953 St. John's, NL. Chris believes in transparency and democracy in labour unions, and wants to build a working class movement based on organizing, education and activism from the bottom up.



GARY PORTER Treasurer

During his career as a licensed public accountant in Ontario, Gary served 8 years as a member of the Board of Directors of the Ontario Teachers Pension Board. He has been an auditor for multiple unions in Ontario, and has been an author and teacher in the field of accounting.



DIRKA PROUT Participation of Women

Dirka is a senior geotechnical engineer and former President of the London West NDP. She enjoys working towards an equitable society, and believes the federal NDP will achieve great success with an invigorated grassroots campaign.



JUDY KOCH Disability Chair

Judy Koch is a long time social activist and a member of the Toronto Danforth NDP executive. She is a strong advocate for workers' rights people with physical and mental challenges, and an active member of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty.



PETER D'GAMA Visible Minorities Chair

Peter is President of the Etobicoke North Federal NDP and has worked on countless elections for the party. Peter wants to see the NDP work alongside equity-seeking groups to fight racist discrimination, poverty and injustice.



JOHN WILSON LGBT Chair

John has long been involved in the NDP and its predecessor party, starting with the Ottawa CCF youth club in 1954. Involved in human rights and gay/queer liberation since the early 1970s, John is a founding member of Queer Ontario.



ROSEMARY HNATIUK Prairie Representative

Rosemary is a lawyer specializing in Indian Residential School claims. Fluent in both official languages, she has been active in the Manitoba NDP for two decades. Her interests are engaging members in policy and advocating for more grassroots participation.



LILAH WOODS Quebec Representative

An eco-socialist activist, musician and songwriter, Lilah is a life-long NDP member. As a delegate to the Quebec Congress, she composed resolutions for the protection of journalistic freedoms and equity for workers in our transition to a sustainable economy.



JULIUS ARSCOTT Ontario Representative

Julius is a member of the Socialist Caucus and an organizer of the Workers Action Movement. He is an Executive Board Member representing 30,000 members of OPSEU in Toronto, and has been an active proponent of union affiliation to the NDP.



MICHELLE DUKU Ontario Representative

Michelle studies Information Technology at York University in Toronto, Ontario. She's an active member of the Etobicoke North NDP Riding Association and the federal NDP Socialist Caucus Steering Committee.

