

HEARTS & MINDS

A Newsletter by Members of the Parkdale-High Park NDP

Issue 4

November 2009

Five reasons why you should support the Clean Train movement

Cheri DiNovo, MPP (Parkdale—High Park)



Over the past several months, there have been a series of local protests regarding the provincial government's decision to run over 400 diesel trains daily through our community. Citizen opposition to GO/Metrolinx's diesel train expansion has been overwhelming. Below are the five reasons why I encourage you to get on board the clean train movement:

1. **It is about our environment.** The provincial agency responsible for urban transit renewal in Ontario is GO/Metrolinx. This agency has told us that diesel trains are a practical solution to getting people out of their cars. Unfortunately, the current plan to use diesel technology could emit up to 10 times the pollution that cars do. This plan will actually increase pollution. (cont'd on p. 2)

Oil and the end of globalization

Mel Watkins (Carleton-Mississippi Mills)

It isn't every day that one can recommend to the left a book written by a bank economist, but here goes.

His name is Jeff Rubin and he was Chief Economist at CIBC World Markets for almost twenty years, before stepping down recently to peddle his own wares as an energy expert.

The book has the grabby title *Why Your World Is About to Get a Whole Lot Smaller*, by which Rubin means that long distance trade is going to shrink and local markets become much more important.

As is often the case, the real message is the sub-title, *Oil and the End of Globalization*. The price of oil is going to soar, like the almost \$150 a barrel price only yesterday, and stay high. (cont'd on p. 4)

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Editor's note

Dear friends,

This has been an autumn packed with disturbing —oops, *challenging*— developments: the announcement of the provincial government and Metrolinx's plans to run 400 or more diesel trains a day through west end Toronto; progressive mayor David Miller's decision to not seek re-election; the provincial government's attempt to make local boards of education powerless; continued job destruction (will we ever bottom out?); and tremendous suffering at home and abroad, in which our federal government is deeply implicated.

I remain convinced that it is our party, and our party alone, that has a coherent and ethical strategy to deal with both socio-economic inequality and the destruction of our environment. We need to get the word out to our fellow Canadians that we're here, we've got intelligent, principled and feasible proposals, and we're ready to govern.

Regards,

J.A. MacNeil (Editor, Hearts & Minds)
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The articles contained within represent the views of each author, not necessarily those of either the riding association executive or any other NDP body

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Five reasons why you should support the Clean Train

(cont'd from p. 1)

2. **It is about our children.**

Under the current plan, Metrolinx will run hundreds of diesel trains within the immediate vicinity of many of our schools. The noise and pollution will make learning exceedingly difficult. Running diesel trains close to our local schools is unacceptable and must be stopped.

3. **It is about local democracy.**

Our community runs best when local citizens are engaged and involved in the institutions that govern our lives. While Metrolinx held public consultations, almost all of the demands of local citizens were ignored or bypassed. It is time that Metrolinx listen to the demands of citizens.

4. **It is about building clean, efficient public transit.**

Metrolinx's current infrastructure plan makes building future electric tracks exceedingly difficult. If the

provincial agency wants to build clean public transit, electrification should happen now!

5. **It is about the future of our community.** Metrolinx has failed to listen to the legitimate demands of our residents. Now the agency is spending thousands of dollars on public relations calls trying to cast doubt on the negative facts about diesel technology. The fact is that diesel technology harms our environment and is detrimental to our health. Rather than trying to sell a bad plan, Metrolinx should use their resources to electrify the new transit lines immediately.

To get further involved, I encourage you to contact the clean train coalition (www.cleantrain.ca) or contact my community office (www.cheridinovo.ca). I hope you all have a safe and happy autumn.

See also Marjolein Winterink's backgrounder on the diesel train proposal, p. 3

Upcoming NDP Events in our riding:

Monday, December 7, 7 pm

Mixer, Blondie's, 1378 Queen St., 7 pm

New Democrats and friends welcome.

Monday, December 14, 7 pm

Parkdale—High Park NDP riding executive meeting

Blondie's, 1378 Queen St., 7 pm

All NDP members in good standing are welcome. Get involved!

Announcement - Beit Zatoun House opening shop in the Annex

Zatoun, a non-profit organization established to sell Palestinian products (wonderful olive oil, olive soap, za'atar herb mixture, and embroidered crafts) from the Occupied Territories, will be opening a shop and gallery space called "Beit Zatoun" at 612 Markham St. (south of Bloor), in early December. Beit means "house" in Arabic and Hebrew. Zatoun is endorsed by Kairos Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. Consider Zatoun products for your holiday shopping - a bottle of olive oil with za'atar make a unique and delicious gift, and your purchase alleviates suffering. See: www.zatoun.com

The scoop on the diesel train proposal

Marjolein Winterink (Vice-President, Davenport NDP riding association)



City Councillors Adam Giambone and Gord Perks at the Clean Train rally

The Ontario Government led by Dalton McGuinty wants to increase GO service along the Georgetown corridor, and build a rail link from Union Station to Pearson International Airport. It ought to be a good thing, a great contribution to getting cars off the road and modernizing public transit at the same time. But what an opportunity, NOT!

What they are doing instead is bringing over 400 diesel-fueled trains a day through communities with 96 daycare centres, 54 schools and 300,000 residents within 1 km of the corridor.

Residents along the corridor understand the need for this type of transit. There is a need to expand the transportation options for those living in the suburbs and working in downtown Toronto. A modern commuter rail system must be built to meet the future demand from the growing suburbs, one that can meet the needs of all the communities along its corridor, move people from one neighbourhood to the next, and get travelers and employees alike to and from the airport in a fast and

economic manner.

McGuinty and Metrolinx's current plan does none of the above. It does little to encourage commuters to stop using their cars every day and shift to GO Transit. There are few stops, leaving most communities in Toronto without access to the proposed trains, and the Union Station–Pearson rail link, as proposed, is outrageously expensive and has no stops in communities on its way to the airport.

The trains that were initially being proposed are Tier 2* diesel trains that will not meet appropriate environmental standards. Diesel exhaust is a danger to human health, especially the health of children and seniors, causing cancer and respiratory diseases.

The Medical Officer of Health in Toronto has come out strongly against diesel trains, and in favor of electrification of the commuter trains, which is what citizens are proposing too.

Electrical trains will be cheaper in the long run, especially as the cost of petroleum-based fuels soars, as it is expected to do once the recession eases. However, the government is stubbornly ignoring science, economics and good urban planning practices in its headlong rush to intensify diesel-fueled commuting.

Starting in Weston five years ago, communities along the corridor have been organizing themselves to bring about the electrification of the GO trains. It is now City of Toronto policy to have electric trains on the commuter lines. The Clean Train Coalition was formed last spring, emerging in the neighbourhoods

along the Georgetown corridor. It is a non-partisan coalition advocating the immediate electrification of the Georgetown expansion, united behind the idea “Build it once, build it right”. The CTC has a successful track record of mobilizing and organizing thousands of people to participate in letter-writing campaigns, petition drives and door-to-door canvassing. Most recently, it organized its Human Train. Over 200 marchers walked from Weston to Trinity Bellwoods Park, and another 1,500 people participated in events in neighbourhoods along the route.

While the communities along the corridor are mobilizing themselves, this is an issue that affects more than the 300,000 people living within 1 km of rail line. Four hundred diesel trains a day and their exhaust will affect everyone in the region, including those more than a kilometer from the rail line.

Please join the folks in York South Weston, Parkdale—High Park, Davenport, and Trinity-Spadina, as they fight for the electrification of GO's rail lines. It is urgent that this issue be brought forward in your riding or organization. We need to work together to establish an efficient and healthy public transportation system that moves Toronto into the future.

** n.b. Tier 2 is the second most lax emission standard for diesel-fueled vehicles set forth by the US's Environmental Protection Agency. Tier 4 is the most stringent standard, stipulating levels of particulate matter and NOx emissions a further 90 percent lower than those under Tier 2. However, so far, there are no plans for the production of Tier 4 trains, and similar standards can only be met by electrical trains.*

For further info, see:
<http://www.cleantrain.ca>

Oil and the end of globalization

(cont'd from p. 1)

The rising cost of transport will ravage trade and end globalization as we know it.

This is powerful stuff. The left has its doubts about globalization, to say the least, so all of this has its appeal, albeit with understandable concern about how chaotic such an adjustment will be.

But the truly good news about this scenario is that the big increase in the price of oil will compel a sharp reduction in demand. This, in turn, will likewise reduce carbon emissions and hence mitigate global warming and climate change.

All of this will result from the operation of the market. The endless debate between advocates of the carbon tax and cap-and-trade will be sidelined by an increase in the market price of oil much bigger than any government is presently prepared to contemplate imposing by increasing the price of carbon emissions. Markets will trump politics and the world will be better for it.

What Rubin is talking about here is a combination of peak oil and peak carbon. How likely is that? Most of us are persuaded by the overwhelmingly scientific consensus about peak carbon, which is that we are near, if not already past, the point where carbon emissions will have—if they are not already having—devastating consequences for global warming and climate change.

Peak oil is a more contentious matter. It assumes as a given that we are running out of cheap oil. We'll keep finding more but, say the peak oil people, it will get more and more expensive.

There is a vast literature on this, but Rubin makes one of the more

compelling cases that peaking is a fact with huge consequences, even insisting that the root cause of the current Great Recession was not the subprime mortgage crisis but the rising price of oil.

The price has now fallen again, but not back to where it was, and Rubin sees it continuing going up.

Rubin is an economist, as am I, and economists are trained to be suspicious of so-called Malthusian arguments that rely on notions of resource limits and inevitably rising resource prices. By and large, such arguments in the past, including those of Malthus himself, have been proven wrong. But today there is a kind of perfect storm of chaos without limits that is causing even economists like Rubin to defy mainstream complacency. For what it's worth, I count myself among those who find the peak oil argument increasingly persuasive.

But not to the point where anyone, including Rubin, thinks we should just sit back and let markets take their course. It seems as certain as anything can be that the amount of oil in the world is finite and someday supply will peak and go into terminal decline, but when is anybody's guess.

Meanwhile, economics itself, while praising markets, also tells us that it is the failure of the market to put a price on damaging carbon emissions that is the source of the problem. The solution is the carbon tax or cap-and-trade, either of which increases the price of oil.

But, says Rubin and others, if some countries impose such environmentally friendly policies while others do not, production and jobs will shift even more than they already have to those which are indifferent to environmental consequences. However, there is a way out of this conundrum. Any

carbon emissions tax that a country imposes should, in the simple name of fairness, or what economists would call neutrality, be likewise imposed on imports.

The kicker here is that imports from China—which loom so large, think Wal-Mart—have much higher carbon emissions than the goods they are displacing. The result is that the policy being advocated will both reduce carbon emissions and increase jobs in the country pursuing such a policy. It will repatriate jobs which have gone to China in the first place because of its loose environmental regulations. It's a win-win situation.

China can counter by itself imposing a tax on its carbon emissions, and not just on its exports, which is good environmentally for the world. And, regardless, insofar as the cost of transport will increase because of the carbon emissions therefrom, there will be less trade and hence there should still be more jobs in the country or countries that started this process.

Nor is this a violation of trade agreements. It is understood that if a country imposes a sales tax it is entitled to impose a tariff of the same amount on imports. The same logic that permits this means that pricing carbon, whether by imposing a tax or by cap-and-trade, can be applied to imports.

It is thinking of this kind that underlies, even strengthens, what in the United States is called the Blue-Green Alliance, which sees the commonality of interests of working people and environmentalists. At our recent federal convention in Halifax, Leo Gerard of the Steelworkers spoke passionately about the merits of an alliance between trade unionists and environmentalists—the United Steelworkers of America and the Sierra

Club. It helped to elect the Obama Democrats.

The NDP has the unique quality of being both pro-labour and pro-environment. That's where our comparative advantage lies politically. The Liberals and the Conservatives are neither, while the Green Party has no credibility on jobs. We should be proclaiming our blue-green credentials.

This is, of course, easier said than done. We have to be prepared to put a price, a high price, on carbon emissions. This sounds like a tax, and "tax" has been made such a dirty word

that it deters even social democrats who know better.

The answer is that it is not a tax. It's putting a proper price on carbon emitting production. It's correcting a failure of the famous market to do that. It's enabling the market to create jobs and control climate change. Who could be opposed to that?

Mel Watkins is a Canadian political economist and activist. He is professor emeritus of economics and political science at the University of Toronto. He ran for the NDP in the federal riding of Beaches—East York in the 1997 and 2000 elections. He currently writes columns

for This Magazine (<http://this.org/>) and the on-line publication Straight Goods (<http://www.straightgoods.ca>). He escaped Toronto when he retired from academia, and now lives in Constance Bay, Ontario.

For further information on Canada's Blue Green Alliance, see: <http://www.bluegreencanada.ca/>

Video on the launch of Blue Green Canada by the United Steel Workers of Canada and the Environmental Defence Fund: <http://www.youtube>.

Gerard Kennedy votes with Tories to block NDP's climate change bill

J.A. MacNeil (Editor, *Hearts & Minds*)

On October 21, we found out just how committed the Liberals are, and aren't, to fighting climate change. On that day, most Liberal MPs voted with the Conservatives to delay consideration of Bill C-311, *An Act to ensure Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change*. They thereby are guaranteeing that Canada will go to the international negotiations in Copenhagen on climate change without any coherent instruc-

tions from Parliament on what Canada's commitments should be.

Bill C-311 was originally introduced by Jack Layton in 2006 and was re-introduced by Thunder Bay NDP MP Bruce Hyer earlier this year. It set strict targets for reduction of the CO2 emissions that are causing global warming.

When push came to shove, only 14 Liberals voted with the NDP and the Bloc to not delay this important

measure. **Parkdale—High Park MP Gerard Kennedy was not one of them. He sided with the Tories to block it.**

To see which other Liberals voted with the Tories in favour of this dangerous delay, check the "yays" in the vote: <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/House-Publications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=40&Ses=2&DocId=4151478>

As the figures in the two tables to the left indicate, the Harper government's proposed target for emissions reduction—a laughable 3 percent—is all the more pathetic when one takes into account the fact that we have higher per capita emissions than many other industrialized countries.

On the plus side, it's encouraging to note that many countries with a standard of living most Canadians would consider acceptable—France, Italy and Sweden, for example—are maintaining those standards of living with much lower emissions.

CO₂ emissions per person (tonnes of CO₂, 2005)

United States	19.87
Canada	17.30
Russia	10.95
Germany	10.05
Japan	9.77
United Kingdom	8.94
New Zealand	8.58
Italy	8.14
France	6.55
Sweden	5.79
China	4.28

Targets set by various countries for their reduction of CO₂ emissions (percentages; base = 1990)

	%
European Union	- 30
United States	- 7
Norway	- 40
Australia	- 25
Japan	- 25
Canada	- 3

Hear George Monbiot on Saturday Nov. 28. Details: p. 29

Bill 177: The Beginning of the End for School Boards

Rosario Marchese, MPP (Trinity-Spadina)



When I was a trustee, I learned that when parents have a problem at school it is the trustee they call.

School board trustees make important and sometimes difficult decisions on behalf of the parents and supporters who elect them. Trustees have always been an essential part of the education of our children.

There has always been a balance between the authority of the Ministry of Education and the responsibilities of the trustees. Bill 177 is a threat to that balance and to the rights of parents.

The McGuinty government wants to appear tough in response to the spending irregularities that occurred at the Toronto Catholic District School Board. The government is using the actions of one group of trustees as an excuse to do major surgery on Ontario school boards. Unfortunately, they have decided to perform that surgery with a chainsaw rather than a scalpel.

Bill 177 will allow the provincial government to, "...make regulations governing the roles, responsibilities, powers and duties of boards, directors of education and board members, including chairs of boards". If I were still a trustee I would be saying, "Well that just about covers it. What's left? Why am I here? Who am I working for here, the parents and their children or

the government?"

Concerned parents all over the province have views on the adequacy of resources, transportation, school closures, lack of special education programming, school fundraising, corporate donations, the curriculum, credit integrity, declining enrolment, school information-finder websites, etc. They expect their elected trustees to respond to those concerns and to take them to the Ministry. This legislation abolishes this historical relationship by redefining trustees as agents of the government. If enacted, it will make it impossible for trustees to effectively represent parents.

A clear example of the government's lack of respect for trustees is that Bill 177 demands that each school board, "effectively use the resources entrusted to it". This implies that trustees have not been using resources wisely and that the resources that they have been receiving have been adequate. In fact, for years trustees have been struggling to stretch inadequate education funding to meet the needs of their students and this is the thanks they get.

What this bill is really saying to boards is, "Use the funding we give you and don't dare point out that it is not enough to meet the needs of your students."

This bill claims to mandate student success but for this government, "closing gaps in student achievement" means orchestrating and fabricating higher EQAO scores at the expense of all other learning opportunities. What about the growing number of parents who feel that success should be defined by more than test scores?

What about parents who don't want to follow the model of the American education system?

The McGuinty government has been reducing the role of school boards. It has been apparent for some time now that the primary role the government wishes to assign trustees has been for them to take the blame for things like school closures, lack of special education services and poor transportation funding. If there was ever any doubt about this, Bill 177 removes it.

As a former school trustee I am incensed that the parents' elected representatives are being muzzled. How does this bill help parents? If trustees lose their power, parents lose their voice.

All Ontarians should oppose this bill because if Bill 177 passes in its present form, it will make the election of trustees meaningless.

Rosario Marchese served as a Toronto School Board Trustee from 1982 until 1990, when he was elected MPP for Trinity-Spadina, and served as Minister of Culture in the province's first NDP government. He is currently the provincial NDP's critic for the following portfolios: education; universities, colleges and training; the GTA; and condominiums.

rmarchese-qp@ndp.on.ca

416 325 9092

Take action

Protest Bill 177 by contacting the Minister of Education:

Hon. Kathleen Wynne,

416 325 2600

kwynne.mpp@liberal.ola.org

Envisioning a progressive future for Toronto:

Gord Perks, City Councillor



The surprising news that Mayor Miller will not seek a third term raises a profound challenge for Toronto progressives. For over half a decade we have had remarkable leadership from a decent, thoughtful, and visionary mayor. Now, we need to imagine a progressive future for our City without that leadership.

Mayor Miller set a high bar: imagining Toronto as a Transit City, where pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders come ahead of automobile users; building a world-leading climate and environmental plan; investing in priority neighbourhoods; attacking the financial problems resulting from downloading of financial responsibility for services previously provided by higher levels of government; revitalizing the waterfront; and much more.

It now falls to the broader progressive community to describe the Toronto we want. The conversation about who will run for mayor in 2010 is important, but not as important as what we want for the City. Here are some questions we should ask ourselves and each other:

- How do we build a sustainable City

out of the bones of a disposable and auto-oriented culture?

- Given the legacy of downloading and Lastman's ill advised tax freeze, how do we fund the work?
- How do we maintain and expand beautiful and welcoming public spaces, community centres, parks and libraries?
- How do we expand on the community policing initiatives of the past few years?
- How do we achieve real inclusion and overcome some of the barriers racialized and marginalized Torontonians face?
- How do we protect and expand the crucially important notion of public ownership and delivery of public services?
- How do we provide safe affordable housing?
- How do we manage necessary development and re-development while respecting Toronto's neighbourhood feel?
- How do we create green jobs?

Before Mayor Miller's tenure, these and other questions were answered by community groups working with members of the progressive minority on Council. Mayor Miller's first term relied heavily on formal advisory committees and consultations such as "Listening to Toronto". The current term was founded on a detailed campaign agenda. Implementing this, "the Mayor's Mandate" has been the focus of progressive work at City Hall.

Mayoral candidates cannot register

until the New Year. We who work for progressive politics have three months to decide what we want for this city. If we have that full, rich dialogue, we will set the bar for the 2010 election. We must start with the what, then settle on the who.

Gord Perks:

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<http://www.gordperks.ca>

Gord Perks has been City Councillor for Ward 14 since 2006. Gord's vision for the city extends beyond ward boundaries. Gord led the fight to get the TTC to adopt the Ridership Growth Strategy, making Dufferin, King and Queen priority streets for improved transit servicing. Similarly, he was fundamental to the expansion of the City of Toronto's blue and grey box program. He was successful in his fight to introduce a pesticide by-law that banned the use of cosmetic use of dangerous chemicals on all outdoor properties.

NOTE: As a part of the city's policy of open and accessible government, the City of Toronto encourages public participation in its decision making process. If you want to make your views known about a matter being considered by a committee of Council, you can arrange to speak at a meeting. For further information, see: <http://www.toronto.ca/committees/speak.htm>

See video of Gord Perks and Olivia discussing the Clean Train issue at the Human Train rally: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HaB4eKcGW8Y>

See photos of the Jameson Street Gallery at Gord's website: www.gordperks.ca

Cheri DiNovo's Bill 198 allowing zoning for affordable housing unanimously passes second reading

Terry Burrell (Parkdale—High Park)

Ontario's lack of affordable housing has become a chronic festering sore. Readers will be pleased to know that Parkdale—High Park's NDP MPP Cheri DiNovo is one large step closer to providing what she called in her statement to the Ontario Legislature a "piece of the puzzle that will address the nightmare of housing in Ontario."

Bill 198, Cheri's private member's bill, passed second reading in the Legislature on September 24, 2009. It is a bill which helps pave the way for inclusionary zoning in Ontario.

Inclusionary zoning — the requirement that new housing developments have a specific portion of units affordable to those with low and middle incomes—has been adopted in a wide variety of jurisdictions including Vancouver, London England and a raft of US cities.

Why not in Ontario? Perhaps it is because there is no explicit permission in Ontario's legislation which allows inclusionary zoning. Municipal attempts to use zoning specifications to require the provision of affordable housing might be thwarted by developers' appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board. This is the issue that Cheri's bill addresses and it does so by amending Ontario's Planning Act.

Municipalities are "creatures of the province" whose authority is a product of legislation adopted by the provincial government. The province's Planning Act, amongst other things, gives municipalities the authority to regulate land use by enacting zoning regulations and entering into subdivision agreements with developers. However, the Act does not specifically permit inclusionary

zoning. Cheri's bill changes that by adding the following to the Act:

Zoning by-laws may be passed by the councils of local municipalities for requiring inclusionary housing in the municipality and, more specifically, for regulating the required percentage of affordable housing units in all new housing developments in the municipality.

For the purposes of this provision, new housing developments are defined as having 20 or more housing units.

Further, the Bill specifically states that the municipality need not offer the developer any incentives, financial or otherwise, to provide the affordable housing. It also says that the municipality may require that the developer enter into an agreement with the municipality concerning the provision of the affordable housing. This paves the way for particular details to be negotiated.

In addition, the Bill specifically allows such agreements to require that the affordability of the units be maintained over time. This is a response to the concern that units may start out as affordable, but quickly become unaffordable after resale if there are no terms and conditions attached to the units. One of the mechanisms that the bill specifically mentions to maintain affordability is the "restriction of purchase and sale of the units to eligible persons as determined in accordance with the regulations."

The reference to "the regulations" highlights an important feature of the Bill. It states that provincial cabinet may make regulations it thinks advisable to deal with the nature of the affordable housing requirements in the municipal zoning specifications

and the agreements negotiated by the municipalities. The bill specifically mentions such details as the number of bedrooms, the size of the units, timing of the construction, ownership and occupancy eligibility requirements and alternative methods for satisfying inclusionary housing requirements. This is an attempt to ensure that affordable housing requirements embodied in municipal bylaws do not produce deeply disappointing results, such as inappropriate design or rigid requirements that are inconsistent with the reasonable attainment of the objectives of increased housing affordability.

Cheri's bill also makes the provision of affordable housing a "matter of provincial interest" in the Planning Act itself. This is noteworthy because of the way the Act works. One of the stated purposes of the Planning Act is to "integrate matters of provincial interest in provincial and municipal planning decisions." Accordingly, municipalities have the responsibility to consider matters of provincial interest in their planning decisions. Currently the provision of affordable housing is identified as a matter of provincial interest only indirectly, through its inclusion in the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Housing's Policy Statement, a separate document. Specifying right in the Planning Act that the provision of "housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households" is part of the provincial interest arguably makes it harder for municipalities to ignore that responsibility when undertaking all of their housing-related deliberations, including the preparation of official plans.

So, while Cheri's bill does not require municipalities to bring in inclusionary zoning, it enables them to do so by removing legal uncertainty, and it

(cont'd on p. 9)

New Democrats lead fight for lower drug costs

Judy Wasylycia-Leis, MP (Winnipeg North)



New Democrats are opening new fronts in our pitched battle with big pharmaceutical corporations and their Conservative and Liberal allies over high drug prices and the need for a national public drug plan.

Our latest focus has been fighting back a Conservative move to allow direct-to-consumer drug advertising and bringing in urgently needed changes to Canada's Access to Medicines Regime to get low-cost drugs flowing to developing nations.

Drug costs are the fastest rising

(cont'd from p. 8)

encourages them in this direction with the clear reminder in the Planning Act that affordable housing is a matter of provincial interest.

Bill 198 received unanimous approval at second reading. The next step is for hearings on the Bill to take place before the Standing Committee on General Government.

What kind of effect might the adoption of Bill 198 have?

Cheri had this to say in her October 20, 2009 Newsletter: "if inclusionary zoning had been in place throughout Ontario as it has been in Maryland, we would have had 12,500 new affordable housing units at no cost to taxpayers."

expense in health care and, without a national drug plan, they'll continue to hit Canadians unevenly and unfairly, with the impact depending on where we live, whether we're in hospital or out, if we have a job with a drug plan and how much we make.

Last year, Canadians spent \$30 billion on medicines—17 percent of total health spending. Only hospital costs were higher. Published research shows a "marked variation" in provincial drug coverage, which both challenges our principle of equal access to care and leaves a huge chunk of the drug bill still coming directly out of individuals' pockets, regardless of their current actual ability to pay.

We're paying the third highest prices in the world for brand-name prescription drugs—an unacceptable financial drain now compounded by the economic crisis. Hundreds of thousands of Canadians are losing not only their jobs, but the family drug benefits that go with them.

The Conservative government—propped up by the Liberals—refuses to take on the big drug companies. Even with the provinces and territories on side, they've taken no action on the National Pharmaceutical Strategy—the beginning of a pharmacare plan—for three years.

Rather than trying to reduce drug costs, the Harperites, in the Mulroney-Chrétien tradition, actually extended patent protection in 2006 over New Democrat opposition. They did this despite Big Pharma's continuing failure to meet their solemn 1987 promise to spend 10 percent of sales revenue on research in exchange for years more of monopoly pricing. Canada now has the second worst R&D-to-sales ratio in the industrialized world.

And the big pharmaceutical corporations keep coming back for

more—perhaps to help pay off their record US\$2.3 billion court settlement for improper marketing or perhaps to help pay the \$2 billion allegedly owed in Canadian taxes. Whatever the reasons, their Conservative pals seem only too willing to pave the way to more profits, caving in to Big Pharma in June with a recommendation to legalize direct-to-consumer-advertising (DTCA).

New Democrats strongly opposed the Tories' softening on DTCA in their controversial Bill C-51. We fought them then and we'll fight them again if they try to sneak DTCA into their "new C-51" expected this fall.

New Democrats will also be trying this fall to counter Big Pharma opposition to much-needed improvements to Canada's Access to Medicines Regime, which is designed to deliver life-saving medicines to the world's poorest nations at affordable, non-patent prices. We'll be seeking support from all parties for this humanitarian goal.

New Democrats have headed into the fall more committed than ever to the goal of the father of Medicare, Tommy Douglas*: to add drug coverage to medicare. The time for federal government action is long overdue.

Judy Wasylycia-Leis has been MP for Winnipeg North since 1997. She chairs the federal NDP caucus, and is its critic for health and people with disabilities. Prior to being elected federally, she was Minister of Culture and Minister for the Status of Women in the Manitoba government. Before that, she was co-chair of Choices—Manitoba's social justice coalition.

** Tommy Douglas, a New Democrat, was the Premier of Saskatchewan. His implementation of medicare in that province led to national health care across Canada.*

NDP breaks through in November 9 federal by-elections

NDP candidate **Fin Donnelly** scored an impressive victory (49.6 percent of the vote) in New Westminster—Coquitlam, winning by a comfortable margin of 3,376 votes over his nearest competitor, a Tory. Donnelly, an environmental activist, was elected to the Coquitlam City Council in 2002. He has been active in raising public awareness about rivers and watersheds in British Columbia. In the Montreal riding of Hochelaga, won by the Bloc, New Democrat **Jean-Claude Rocheleau** came a solid second, with 19.5 percent (+5.1 percent over the 2008 vote). The NDP doubled its vote with **Mark Austen** in Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, a Nova Scotia riding traditionally a Tory stronghold.

NDP Federal Convention 2009

Sufiya Mary Reid (Parkdale—High Park delegate to NDP federal convention)

The NDP Federal Convention for 2009 took place in Halifax, Nova Scotia from Friday August 14 to Sunday August 16.

Before it started, on Friday morning, delegates were invited to various Resolution Panels which provided the opportunity to alter the order in which resolutions would be considered on the convention floor, so that resolutions the panel deemed important would actually get to the floor for debate, in the very limited time set aside for that purpose. I welcomed these panels, as at Ontario NDP conventions I have wondered if “the powers behind the scenes” had conspired to ensure that nothing controversial was ever debated.

The convention officially started after lunch. Ed Broadbent, federal leader from 1975 to 1989, initiated proceedings with a speech emphasizing that societies with more equality are healthier and that we must restore the dream of a Canada built on social justice. (Video of Ed’s speech: <http://www.ndp.ca/press/broadbent-kicks-off-convention-let-s-win-for-canada>) Jack Layton followed with a plea to fix Employment Insurance now. Ken Georgetti, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, said that corporations are out of control and need to be stopped. We need an economy based on need, not greed.

Showcases 1 and 2 were panel discussions based on the NDP victories in Manitoba since 1999 and in Nova Scotia in 2009.

Saturday was largely devoted to debating and voting on resolutions. Even for items that were universally supported, time was taken for several key players to make impassioned speeches about them. Some resolutions which did not reach the floor will be addressed by Federal Council.

Peggy Nash was elected President of the NDP.

Showcases 3 and 4 were based on the victory of Barack Obama’s presidential campaign in the United States in 2008. Marshall Ganz, who had worked on civil rights in the United States in the 1960s, was a key organizer of the Obama campaign. He said it was critical to bring a message of hope. Goliath doesn’t always win. David didn’t do a feasibility study. Emphasize values rather than issues, and build teams of volunteers, he urged.

On Sunday, Jack Layton made the final speech. He invited us to imagine a government on the side of the people. All people, aboriginal, new Canadians, and the disabled, should be able to participate fully in society. We need a new energy economy to reduce climate change. The government would promote early childhood education, jobs for all,

better pensions, and universal public health care. It’s our Canada. Let’s take our country back.

The convention was upbeat, with optimism following the recent victory of the Nova Scotia provincial NDP.

I stayed at St. Mary’s University with several other members of our Parkdale—High Park delegation. The accommodation was simple and comfortable. I was glad to have all day Thursday and Sunday afternoon to explore the city. The elected Assembly of Nova Scotia dates back to 1758, and was the first in what is now Canada. The Legislature building offers conducted tours for visitors, which feature the history of Joseph Howe who won a battle for Freedom of the Press in 1835 and for Responsible Government in 1848. Other tourist attractions include the Maritime Museum, and Pier 21, where thousands of twentieth century immigrants first set foot in Canada.

I included the convention in a delightful three-week camping trip to the east coast, including Quebec national parks at Oka and Bic, Kouchibouguac Canadian national park in New Brunswick, Peggy’s Cove, the Bay of Fundy, the Cape Breton Highlands and Louisbourg in Nova Scotia.

For videos of different presentations during the convention, see: <http://www.ndp.ca/hfx09/speakers>

Letter to Parkdale—High Park New Democrats

Darlene Lawson, Provincial Secretary



Friends:

The dedication and hard work of New Democrats in the riding of Parkdale—High Park is legendary, as is your proud history of activism, organizing and electoral success. Parkdale-High Park New Democrats have worked very hard in the last few years and significant victories were born from your efforts. The gains you have achieved for the Ontario NDP, with the election of the outstanding MPP Cheri DiNovo, and for the people of Ontario, with your well-run minimum wage campaign, are inspiring to say the least.

Working together with our new Leader, Andrea Horwath, Parkdale—High Park New Democrats can help us achieve success in 2011.

At provincial office, our immediate goal is to tackle our financial situation and to help build capacity in the ridings. With a more solid financial base, we can then move on to subsequent steps in concrete pre-election organizing and planning.

At the November 21-22 Provin-

cial Council meeting, we will be announcing the launch of a new Major Donor campaign following on the completion of the successful Cornerstone campaign.

Our leader is personally committed to growing each and every riding and achieving a solid financial footing at Richmond St. At Council, she will be announcing The Leader's Challenge — a partnership between Provincial Office and the ridings, to encourage and support riding fundraising events and membership drives.

Ridings must be able to seed fundraising events, pay off local election loans and undertake organizing. The Leader's Challenge will include local financial incentives. It will provide a project-focused window with financial incentives that will allow ridings to retain a portion of funds locally for the coming fiscal year.

In concert with the Leader's Challenge, Provincial Office will provide training at the November Council on holding fundraising events with the Leader and membership drives. Later next year, we will move into the next phase of pre-election readiness — with training on other aspects of campaigns such as Campaign Managing, Voter Contact, NDPVote, etc.

Meanwhile, as Provincial Office focuses on strengthening our infrastructure, Andrea and the Caucus will continue to get our message across Ontario and effectively hold the Liberals accountable for the unfair HST, the scandalous waste of healthcare dollars at eHealth,

and the largest provincial deficit of all time. In Ontario today, people are expected to pay more and get less while corporations enjoy even more tax breaks. In the meantime, emergency rooms are closing, we continue to bleed good jobs and municipalities are not able to provide the services Ontarians deserve.

Now more than ever, we need a strong New Democratic Party in Ontario.

Certainly, we are our greatest asset. Each NDP member has an important role to play in ensuring that we are ready to fight the 2011 election.

I hope to see you at what will be an exciting and informative Council, and at the Leader's Levee.

Yours,

Darlene Lawson

Provincial Secretary

ONDP

Darlene Lawson founded Interval House, Toronto's first shelter for women escaping violence, in 1973, after doing an MA in Social Work at the University of Toronto. She then went on to become executive director of the Elizabeth Fry Society and the Barbra Schlifer Clinic. In 2007 she was granted the YWCA's Women of Distinction Award for Social Justice. She managed Andrea Horwath's successful 2009 campaign for leadership of the Ontario NDP, and became provincial secretary in September 2009.

Power and principles are not contradictory terms

Gary Doer, former Premier of Manitoba

If you are not elected, you cannot achieve the key goal each of us has when we get involved in politics in the first place—namely to improve the lives of our fellow citizens.

Our NDP government in Manitoba is rapidly approaching its 10th anniversary. During that decade, we have made real differences in the lives of Manitobans.

- We have reduced child poverty by 40 per cent.
- We have brought in legislation to ensure Manitobans have safe workplaces and increased the number of workplace, safety and health officers to inspect those workplaces to prevent worker injuries. Work-related injuries have been reduced by 27 per cent since 2000 as a result of these measures.
- We have banned logging in 80 out of 81 provincial parks.
- We have developed a comprehensive green energy strategy that is good for the environment, is consistent with principles of social justice and good for the economy. This includes making northern and First Nation communities equity partners in new hydro electric dam construction. We also lead the nation in geothermal installations and invested in ensuring that Winnipeg-based manufacturer New Flyer produces green buses that are sold throughout North America.
- We have made it more affordable for families to send their children to college or university. Manitoba tuition fees at colleges are the second lowest in Canada and tuition fees at universities are third lowest.
- We have hired 300 more doctors and 2,000 more nurses, reversing a trend where doctors and nurses were leaving the province. The Canadian Wait Times Alliance recently gave our province an A grade for cardiac surgery, cancer care and hip and knee surgery.



None of that would have happened if we were on the sidelines watching the game or in opposition criticizing the government of the day for what it is or isn't doing.

Change doesn't come out of ivory towers where the very real conditions of the real world don't matter. It comes by getting up every day, working hard and working with people to bring about that change.

We were delighted recently when Darrel Dexter was elected premier of Nova Scotia because we know that he and his team can make similar improvements to help the people of that province.

It all starts with being elected.

Election campaigns begin the day after the next one. I believe one visit to a doorstep just after an election is worth 10 during an election campaign. People then know that you care about what they think and what they want from their governments and aren't just interested in their vote.

We also believe in ensuring that the people who run for office reflect the diversity of the people they represent. We are proud that we have the governing caucus with the highest percentage of women in Canada, with six of them

serving in our cabinet. We are also proud that we have strong representation in our caucus from the aboriginal community and from new Canadians.

We also needed to be patient. Tommy Douglas didn't introduce medicare immediately – it took decades.

It took six years of hard work with logging companies to ensure that we could proceed with a banning of logging in provincial parks that did not come at the expense of workers.

In October, the minimum wage increases to \$9 per hour. It was \$6 per hour a decade ago. We didn't increase it overnight. We made steady, sustained increases.

We also have made steady changes to employment standards and just recently included agricultural workers.

We don't believe we have all the answers on getting elected and staying elected. However, we believe that economic and social justice can be popular and can be a winning formula if you keep working hard, if you remain grounded and if you keep listening to the people that put you in power in the first place.

Gary Doer was first elected to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly in 1986. He served as minister of various portfolios in the Howard Pawley government, then was elected leader of the Manitoba NDP in 1988. When the NDP won the elections in 1999, Doer became premier, and achieved the enviable public approval rating of 81 percent in 2008. On August 29, 2009 he announced that he would not seek re-election. The following day, he was appointed Canada's Ambassador to the United States.

n.b. This article was written prior to Doer's announcement that he was stepping down as premier.

Letter from Jack Layton, Leader of the New Democratic Party



Dear Friends,

I want to thank you for all your hard work and dedication. Working together, New Democrats are accomplishing important things and getting results for Canadians.

Whether it's in the House of Commons, or door-to-door in Parkdale-High Park, New Democrats are working for Canadians who are finding it harder to make ends meet, are worried about their retirement or have lost their job. We're standing up for seniors and immigrant families and working together to build a more sustainable future with new green jobs, lower greenhouse gas pollution and a cleaner environment. But there is still much work to be done.

This last year has been very hard for too many Canadians; 500,000 more Canadians are out of work than this time last year, which means paying the bills and putting food on the table has become increasingly harder for families that were already struggling. And these same families are seeing banks and credit card companies continue to raise fees and squeeze Canadian consumers just when they can least afford it.

New Democrats are focussed on taking action and getting urgently-needed results. Our plan for Employment Insurance reform provides real and immediate solutions for laid-off Canadians. In the short term, we have secured a billion dollars to help long-tenured workers. In the longer term, we will continue to fight for EI reform, including reducing the hours needed to qualify for benefits, making sure more people qualify when they lose their jobs and including self-employed workers in the program.

In August, at our Federal convention in Halifax, I spoke of our pride as Canadians and of the way we treat each other, our open-heartedness and our generosity of spirit. Yet we have seen successive governments that don't seem to share these values. Conservatives and Liberals cater to big business, not the needs of ordinary Canadians. That's why New Democrats are as committed as ever to standing up for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Whether it's fairness for immigrants, protection for workers

and pensions or the environment, we're fighting for a government that works for people, not against them.

Toronto's west end has a long and rich history of multiculturalism. From the Polish and Ukrainian immigrants who came here decades ago to the more recent arrivals from Asia, Africa and Latin America, new Canadians have always played an important role in building the communities of Parkdale-High Park. Yet the Conservative government is making it harder for immigrants to come and contribute to the Canadian community. From a painfully long family reunification process to the exploitation of temporary workers, new Canadians are facing more barriers than ever. New Democrats are working to change this. We're committed to a fairer and more effective immigration process that benefits not only new Canadians, but all Canadians.

In Ottawa, New Democrats are taking action on the environment. We introduced the landmark Climate Change Accountability Act with medium and long-range targets for cutting Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, and penalties for those who don't meet them. The bill, which was adopted by Parliament, has been celebrated by environmental activists in Canada and around the world. Because of the last election, the bill had to be reintroduced in this session. We are working hard to get this bill through the House of Commons again before the landmark climate change meetings in Copenhagen. *

With actions like these, it's clear which party is serious about climate change. Global warming will not wait for the inaction of the Conservatives or the indecision of the Liberals. Neither should Canadians.

As we go forward, it is important that we remember that all we have achieved thus far, we have achieved by working together. Together we have built our communities, and together we will keep them strong.

All the best,

Jack

* Editor's note: Most Liberal MPs, including Gerard Kennedy, have sided with the Tories in blocking the NDP's Climate Change Accountability bill. —JM

Jack Layton was elected leader of the federal NDP in 2003, and has served as MP for Toronto-Danforth since 2004. He was first elected to Toronto City Council in 1982. Prior to that he was a professor of political science at Ryerson, and an activist on a variety of issues, including homelessness.

“Goliath doesn’t always win”

Winning from the ground up: Obama organizer Marshall Ganz on the politics of hope versus the politics of disappointment

J.A. MacNeil

Amid the reports and the debates on resolutions, one of the most inspiring and energizing moments of the NDP federal convention (Halifax, Aug 14-16) was the presentation of Marshall Ganz, Obama’s chief organizer. Ganz’s rich organizational background includes decades of work in the civil rights movement and the struggle to organize grape workers. The grape boycott brought him to Toronto and Montreal in 1968, where he was welcomed by the Ontario NDP provincial council and helped canvas for David Lewis in York South. More recently he has worked on the Dean and the Obama campaigns.

Convention delegates’ ears pricked up when Ganz commented, “Progressives in the United States are very familiar with the politics of disappointment. . . . Your critical skills get very well developed. So you sort of have a distant early warning system for detecting the first signs that you’re going to be let down . . . disappointed . . . that it isn’t going to be what you hoped it would be. . . . We are really good at that. I don’t know about you. . . . The politics of hope is a lot more challenging, because . . . you have to take responsibility for identifying the opportunities, and seize those opportunities to make the most of them, and that takes courage . . . and imagination. And what we found was that our critical facility had supplanted our imaginative one, and now we have to be more imaginative, but we’re happy to have the opportunity to do so.”

Ganz continued, “It’s a powerful moment, because it’s both the best of times and the worst of times. It’s what theologian Walter Brueggemann calls ‘a prophetic moment’ when there’s a convergence of what he calls ‘criticality’—a clear eye, a clear understanding of the world’s pain, suffering, sorrow and limitations—but coupled with hope, a capacity to see the world’s joys, its possibilities and its opportunities. It’s the two coming together that make this such a powerfully transformational moment in our country, and hopefully in yours as well. But they don’t last forever. My old friend Tom Hayden used to say, ‘change is slow. Except when it’s fast.’ We’re in a fast moment right now. So what we do really matters.”

He added, “In the civil rights organizing in Mississippi, civil rights organizers learned that the people who would be the beneficiaries of the change had to be the authors of that change.”

Ganz went on to describe the elements of effective organizing, saying that the Obama campaign had a commitment to develop the leadership needed to organize effectively on a large scale, and did use the “new media” (Facebook, Twitter, e-mail). However, at no time did the campaign organizers believe that the new media could supplant the central role of skilled, motivated and creative leadership on the ground. The new media are powerful tools, “but effective tools can’t build a house. on their own.” It takes a skilled team of people with a vision of the house to wield the tools appropriately.

Ganz defined leadership “accepting re-

sponsibility to enable others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty” and organizing as the “development of leadership, building community around leadership and developing power based on the community’s resources.”

On the importance of ensuring that core values drive the campaign, he noted, “We learned to turn away from the marketing methods, the robo-calling, the canvassing that electoral politics had become, and return to the politics of organizing. The canvassers became organizers. The politics of organizing resisted turning people into ‘customers’ for finely targeted messages. It resisted turning people into ‘clients’ being served. Instead it recognized people as citizens, to be called to work together, come together to decide their future together.”

Ganz highlighted the five principles of organizing in the Obama campaign:

- 1) **Organizing is rooted in bringing people together around shared values, with narrative playing a central role.** Values-based organizing, unlike issue-based organizing, invites people to escape “issue silos” and come together as complete human beings whose diversity becomes an asset, rather than an obstacle. Because values are experienced emotionally, they can be communicated through narrative. People need to learn how to tell their own story, listen to other people’s stories, and then create a shared story.
- 2) **Organizing is based on relationships creating mutual commitments to work together.** It is the process of association—not simply aggregation—

that makes a whole greater than the sum of its parts. Through association we learn to recast our individual interests as common interests, interests on behalf of which we can commit to using our combined resources. Relationship building goes beyond delivering a message, extracting a contribution, or soliciting a vote. It is these “lateral” connections, entirely missed in the “marketing” approach, that create the “glue” – or social capital - that sustains volunteer engagement in the face of challenge, inspires creativity in the work, and supports reaching out to diverse social networks to engage the broader community. Campaign organizers trained in the craft of the one-on-one meetings and house meetings created the foundation of the local organizations. These organizations were rooted in commitments people made to each other, not simply an idea, task, or issue—and thus a source of new “social capital”, particularly important for an “insurgent” candidate, as Obama was, who could not rely on established sources of power and influence.

3) Organizational structures are based on team leadership, rather than individual leadership, and depend on shared purpose, clear norms, and well-defined roles. Volunteer efforts often flounder due to a failure to develop reliable, consistent, and creative individual local leadership teams.

4) Although based on broad values, effective organizing campaigns learn to focus on a few clear strategic objectives, and how to turn those values into action. National efforts benefit from campaigns owned at the bottom. The benefits are access to local knowledge, greater motivation, better quality work, more of it, and

greater capacity for strategic adaptation. Striking this balance sustained a campaign that was both relentlessly well-oriented and engaged from the bottom up. The challenge of how to orient numerous local teams without micromanaging them—or dumbing down their work to such an extent that they trivialize volunteer time, effort and imagination—is one that campaigns seldom meet. If achieved, however, that balanced approach can mobilize far greater resources than a local or a national campaign on its own, by engaging everyone in the ongoing strategic work of matching resources, tactics, and outcomes.

5) Organizing outcomes must be clear, measurable, and specific if progress is to be evaluated, accountability practiced and strategy adapted based on experience.

The organizing outcome that Obama organizers measured was not the number of checkmarks beside voters’ names, but rather the number of volunteers recruited, the number of house meetings, the numbers of people attending them, which became the foundation for mobilization of thousands of volunteers, most of them active for the first time, and for voter identification.

Ganz ended by retelling the David and Goliath story, saying the lessons of the story are about strategy and about being a successful insurgent. The moral of the story he points out is the following:

1) David did not condition his strategy on feasibility. He said, ‘this is an injustice, and I commit to dealing with it.’ Good strategy is rooted in commitment—commitment is not conditional on strategy, but rather, the strategy must be driven by com-

mitment.

2) David did not base his strategy on what he didn’t have. He had a sling and he knew how to use it. So he looked for the right rocks. You build a good strategy on what you have and what you can do.

3) David was an outsider, and could see with an outsider’s eyes. He could re-imagine that battlefield, and see possibilities no one else could.

4) What about Goliath? As Cesar Chávez used to say, **‘power makes you stupid.’** And that’s where your opportunities are going to come from.”

Ganz reminded us: “To be a realist is to recognize that David does sometimes beat Goliath, that Goliath doesn’t always win”.

He ended his intervention with these words: “freedom is a hard won thing. You have to work for it, fight for it, day and night. And every generation has to win it again. Pass it on.”

Amen.

Further info:

Video of Ganz’s entire presentation: <http://www.ndp.ca/video/winning-from-ground-up-marshall-ganz>

Marshall Ganz: Why Stories Matter - The Art and Craft of Social Change: <http://friendsofjustice.wordpress.com/2009/02/18/marshall-ganz-why-stories-matter/>

Marshall Ganz’s module on organizing: <http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k2139>

Subsidy to U.S. forest companies kills 75,000 Canadian forest jobs

Dave Coles, President, Communications, Energy and Paperworkers' Union of Canada

What they are toasting these days in the U.S. forest industry is hard to swallow here in Canada because it has been mixed up with a shooter that is priced in half-gallons and appropriately named "black liquor."

The black liquor raising U.S. spirits, and leaving us with a hangover, is a concentrated residue of wood lignin that is a byproduct of making kraft pulp. Now, some enterprising American pulp and paper producers have implemented a scheme to generate billions of dollars in tax credits from their black liquor use.

They receive an Alternative Fuel Tax Credit of 50 cents a gallon from the U.S. government for the use of any fuel mixes that combine alternative, renewable fuels—such as black liquor or ethanol—with fossil fuels such as diesel or gasoline.

It is a massive subsidy that directly imperils Canadian pulp and paper mills and thousands of jobs because it allows the US industry to flood the Canadian market with subsidized paper that even further depresses its price. The damage to our pulp and paper mills is already considerable. If this measure is allowed to stand, the damage might very well be irreversible.

This disastrous scenario spurred our union into action.

On June 2, about 4,000 of our members marched to the office of the Prime Minister on Parliament Hill.

The week before, some of our members had occupied the office of seven Conservative MPs, four of them cabinet ministers.

The next thing we heard, Minister of Natural Resources Lisa Raitt announced \$1 billion in tax credits for environmental improvements in mills. That means Canadian companies get a credit toward money spent on improvements over the next three years. But those credits are of no help to companies on the brink.

What these viable mills need now are federal government loan guarantees—the key to preventing further bankruptcies. We are not talking about subsidies, or about taking taxpayers' money and putting it into investors' pockets. We are talking about back-stopping loans at commercial rates because otherwise Canadian banks will only finance mills at very high rates of interest.

CEP has legal opinions indicating that such loan guarantees would not violate the Softwood Lumber Agreement. All federal political parties, except the Conservatives, agree with our position on this issue.

The Conservatives were willing to breach their laissez-

Outsourcing of good telecommunications jobs is bad news

Dave Coles, President, Communications, Energy and Paperworkers' Union of Canada



Over the past 20 years, thousands of jobs in the telecommunications industry across the country have been either outsourced within Canada or moved offshore to other countries. These good, well-paying jobs with benefits have disappeared, and been replaced with low-wage jobs, and customers are now receiving a lower quality of

service. It is costing Canadians in more ways than one.

Outsourcing Canadian telecommunication jobs to other countries where labour is cheaper —the Southern US, India or the Philippines, for example—began in earnest in 1999. That year, more than 1,500 telephone operator jobs were eliminated at Bell Canada and outsourced to Nordia,

a non-unionized company co-owned by Bell and an Arizona company. Hundreds of other jobs followed a year later in the credit department, the direct marketing call centre, the 611 repair service, phone activation services, administrative clerical and technical personnel, and customer service.

Today, foreign interests are allowed to own up to 46.7 percent of a telecom or broadcasting company. Though the limit ensures that control still remains in Canadian hands, there is mounting pressure from the industry, supported by the Conservative government, to allow even higher levels of foreign ownership.

However, more foreign ownership in the telecom industry will have a major negative impact on workers, customers, and Canadians in general.

JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS JOBS

faire philosophy to shore up the auto industry in Ontario. But they are stony-faced when it comes to making a real move to offset the completely unfair trade advantage the US is giving its mills in the form of the black liquor subsidy.

The Americans have decided that when this recession is over they will have an industry—they will have pulp and paper mills, they will have productive capacity—and they will have a future.

The forest industry in Canada and

the paper industry in Canada also have a future. We are a land of trees and water, and forestry is a renewable resource. If allowed to compete on equal terms, Canada's industry would be unbeatable.

The Canadian government must immediately request that the US government eliminate the massive tax credit to a limited group of kraft pulp and paper mills. And the Canadian government must also provide loan guarantees to our viable mills.

Here are the cold numbers about

Canadian forestry jobs losses: 55,000 forest jobs in two years, 75,000 forest jobs in five years. Three times that number with the economic spin-off effects. The numbers don't convey the anguish of uprooted families and decimated communities, but they do convey the urgent need for the Conservative government to act now to give forestry a future.

For more information on CEP's forestry campaign, visit http://www.cep.ca/campaigns/forestry/info_e.html

Job Losses in Forestry Industry since 2003

	2003-07	2007-09	2003-09
Paper products (Pulp and Paper, Paper converting)	11,800	12,100	23,900
Wood manufacturing (Lumber, Panels, Veneer, Beams)	6,900	17,000	23,900
Forestry	600	26,200	26,800
Total	19,300	55,300	74,600

Source: Statistics Canada, Employment, Earnings and Hours, catalogue number 72-002, Table 5 in January 2003, January 2007 and February 2009

Here's why:

Lower wages and benefits

Contracts for outsourcing, either in Canada or offshore, are usually provided to non-unionized companies. That means lower wages, few if any benefits, and reduced labour standards. The average wage gap between North America and India, for example, can be as large as a 12:1 ratio for telephone workers.

Lower quality of service

Outsourcing eliminates the direct communication between a company and its clients. This prevents customers from building solid relationships with the companies they pay their money

to. Agents working out of a different country or continent lack the cultural references and context necessary to provide a high quality of service.

Privacy and security at risk

When sub-contracting companies sub-contract their work, Canadians' personal information is more vulnerable, paving the way for identity theft.

Rising social costs

The loss of Canadian telecommunications jobs narrows the tax base, increases EI benefit costs and also burdens the government with higher costs for retraining programs.

Canadians deserve a clear signal that

the government is serious about keeping well-paid, unionized, Canadian jobs in Canada. Federal government action must include:

- Improvements to the labour code to protect unionized jobs from outsourcing
- Tax incentives for companies keeping workers in Canada
- Pressure on governments to buy from companies that do not substantially outsource offshore.

For more information, see: http://www.cep.ca/campaigns/foreign_ownership/telecoms/telecoms_e.html

Strike against Vale Inco a global fight

Rick Bertrand, Vice President of USW Local 6500

On July 12th, the 3,100 members of USW Local 6500 in Sudbury, Ontario went on strike against Vale-Inco. This certainly isn't the first strike we've been involved in up here in Sudbury. Our longest was during the 1978 contract fight when we were out for nine months. More recently, in 2003 we were on strike for three months.

But this fight is different. Back then, we were fighting against Inco, a Canadian mining company headquartered in Toronto. And a strike in Sudbury took out the majority of the company's operations. Now we're striking against a multi-national corporation with operations on every continent around the globe. This is a company that had \$13.2 billion in profits last year, and is sitting on \$22 billion in cash.

The issues today are largely the same. We're fighting to hold on to the gains that our fathers and grandfathers won through decades of struggle here in Sudbury. We're fighting to maintain good pensions that allow us to retire with dignity; we're fighting to hold onto our strong contracting-out language that prevents the company from using contractors to do our jobs; and we're fighting to hold onto the nickel bonus that lets our community share in the prosperity when the nickel market is high.

In the past we've been able to bargain with management. We'd sit down at the table and make an offer, and the company would make an offer, and if things worked out, be-

fore the contract expired we'd have an agreement that both sides could live with. But this time around, Vale management came to the table with a take-it-or-leave-it offer that didn't substantially change from the first time we met back in the spring until July 12 when we went out on strike. And now for more than 100 days, this management team has refused to come to the bargaining table to bargain in good faith to negotiate a fair collective agreement and end this strike.

Vale management has said that they want to implement one business model at all of the company's operations around the globe. We don't think that's necessarily a bad idea. The problem is that Vale wants to push our compensation, health and safety standards, and pensions down to the lowest common denominator. We think that Vale employees everywhere deserve the same strong working conditions that we won through generations of struggle here in Canada.

But we realize that this is different than any strike we've ever seen in Sudbury. The decisions aren't being made in Sudbury or even in Toronto; they're being made at the company's head offices in Brazil. So we realize that our strike can't just be a local fight here in Sudbury or even a national fight across Canada. We need to confront this global company on a global level.

In August I represented our union as part of a delegation to Brazil to meet with Vale work-

ers there, on the company's home turf. We participated in rallies and demonstrations, and addressed workers at plant-gate meetings. We have union members traveling all over the world to meet with workers wherever Vale is. Earlier this month, with the help of our union brothers and sisters from around the world, we were able to track a shipment of copper ore from Voisey's Bay, another struck location, all the way to Germany and then Sweden. With union allies from both those countries and around the world we greeted that shipment with demonstrations. We met with the ship's captain, and with managers from the company's customers to tell them about our strike and ask them not to buy ore from Vale during our strike.

We even chased the company to New York City to confront top executives at a major shareholder event on the New York Stock Exchange. When the company found out we were coming they got scared and canceled the event. But instead of heading back to Sudbury, we ramped up efforts and organized demonstrations in Toronto, New York, Sudbury and Rio de Janeiro, sending a strong message to the bosses: you can run but there's nowhere in the world you can hide from the Steelworkers.

While we understand that we need to fight this global corporation on a global level, we haven't forgotten about the tried and true strategies that we learned

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Strike Against Vale Inco a Global Fight (cont'd from p. 20)

from our fathers and grandfathers. We certainly need to confront this company globally but we also realize that we need to stay strong here locally.

Here in Sudbury, we're holding the picket lines strong, reaching out to our community for support, organizing a food bank and other

support and assistance programs for our members who are out of work. Solidarity among our membership is staying strong and support in the Sudbury community is steadily growing. We know that this fight isn't going to be easy and we've got no indication that it will be over any time soon. But with

the support of the people here in Sudbury and across Canada and the solidarity of workers around the world we're sure that we will last one day longer than Vale.

For a video of the Sudbury workers' thoughts on the strike and on Vale Inco, see: http://www.fairdealnow.ca/?page_id=1927

FACTS ABOUT VALE INCO

CASH ON HAND:

- Vale has \$22 Billion US (cash assets as of 31 March 2009).

PROFITS:

- Vale had \$13.2 Billion US in PROFIT last year (2008 after-tax profit).
- Vale Inco has made twice as much profit in 2 years as Inco made in the previous 10 years.
- Vale Inco collected \$4.1 Billion US profit from Ontario two years (2006-2008).
- Inco collected \$2.2 Billion US in Ontario profits in 10 years (1996-2006).
- Vale has collected big profits every year, even during economic recessions.

NICKEL BONUS:

- Vale is trying to eliminate a bonus that pays nothing in hard times (currently \$0).
- The nickel bonus only applies in conditions of profitability. It's a way of sharing in good times, without burdening the company in bad times.

EXECUTIVE PAY:

- Six executive officers were paid \$33 Million US in 2008.
- Vale executive officers pay has increased by 121 percent in the last two years.

WORKERS' PAY:

- Vale Inco workers make \$29 per hour (current average wage).
- Vale Inco workers make \$0.00 bonus (current hourly bonus).
- Vale Inco workers previously made \$4.86 bonus (average for past decade).
- Labour accounts for less than 1/10th of Vale's costs.
- Workers already took a cut in income in the last six months, because the bonus is zero (\$0).
- Salary for those working thousands of feet below ground that Vale wants to cut: \$29 per/hr.
- This is very hard, dangerous work that deserves middle-class compensation.
- Because of bonus structure, workers currently get zero in bonuses (\$0), but Vale wants much further claw-backs, including two-tiered pensions and challenged seniority.

Source: USW - http://www.fairdealnow.ca/?page_id=100

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Vale-Inco: An example of the kind of foreign ownership Canada does not need

Claude Gravelle, MP (Nickel Belt)



I began working at Inco as an apprentice in 1968. I was just a teenager and the workers decided to go on strike. The union wanted fair wages for apprentices, and the whole bargaining unit stood in solidarity with us and stayed on strike for over three months. When I returned to work my pay increased significantly and I was able to start making a life for myself.

Throughout my 34 years with Inco I've been through a number of strikes and tense contract negotiations. I've struggled to support my family on strike pay and understand the anxiety of not knowing for months whether an agreement will be reached.

In 2006 when Brazilian-based Vale purchased Inco, many of us had concerns about the company's global

reputation on workers' rights and about foreign ownership of our natural resources. We were assured by both Vale and the Canadian government that the acquisition would be of "net benefit" to the country.

Since the strike began in mid-July, company spokespeople have implied that Canadian workers need to bring their hard-won wages and benefits in line with those of workers from developing countries. They have further provoked the strikers by announcing that they would begin operating two mines by forcing members of USW 2020 and non-unionized employees to cross the picket lines.

The federal government has responded by saying that Vale Inco has "done nothing wrong" and has even claimed that Sudbury would have been a "valley of death" were it not for Vale.

This labour dispute highlights a larger, more worrisome issue in our country. Our government is publicly defending a company that is attempting to roll back workers' rights. Instead of demanding corporate accountability from Vale Inco worldwide, our government expects workers' wages and benefits in Canada to fall to the level of the poorest-paid group of employees.

Vale operates in 40 countries worldwide and has over 100,000 employees. Non-governmental orga-

nizations have documented endless numbers of human rights abuses and incidents of environmental irresponsibility throughout its operations. The Government of Canada should never have allowed Vale to acquire Inco until it cleaned up its operations around the globe. As a country, we should expect only the highest of standards from companies that wish to control our natural resources.

At this time it is clear that Vale is an unsuitable owner for Inco; it respects neither the community, its workers, nor our country. The Government should use Vale's original acquisition agreement to bring in fines, sanctions and other consequences. It is time for our government to stand up for Canada and put our workers first.

Claude Gravelle was elected MP for the federal riding of Nickel Belt in October 2008, after also running in 2004 and 2006. He is the federal NDP's critic for mines, and has also served on the Parliamentary committees concerning Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario and Francophonie. Prior to his election as an MP, he served as a town councillor and community health centre director, and worked as a machinist for INCO for 25 years.

TAKE ACTION

To support the Vale INCO workers, send a letter Vale INCO management, urging them to bargain in good faith with the United Steelworkers: [Click here:](#)

http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/solidarityforever/show_campaign.cgi?c=595

Why the give-away? (cont'd from p. 21)

made mining equipment? What was needed was a major mining company to establish a new industry in Canada, focused on the development and production of a wide variety of mining equipment to meet the needs of the diverse types of mining conducted in various provinces in Canada.

If we owned INCO, we could have started the process to create such an industry, rather than importing the equipment from the USA, Sweden or Germany.

The select committee on economic and cultural development (1971-1975) had a recommendation calling on government to assist in developing mining equipment in Ontario. Members of the select committee supported the recommendations. But the Tory cabinet did not! Rather than send all of the nickel produced locally to the USA and Norway, why wouldn't a mining company, owned by the province, seek out prospective buyers of nickel to encourage the development of manufacturing goods made with nickel here in Ontario, or elsewhere in Canada? I don't know exactly what is being manufactured here with the nickel mined in Canada. But very likely, not enough, yet.

A number of years ago, former Treasurer Floyd Laughren and I called for the establishment in Ontario of facilities to manufacture medical supplies using stainless steel from INCO, rather than continuing to import such supplies.

When will we wake up, determine what is needed here, and use our resources to meet the needs of our peo-

ple and create meaningful work for them, rather than service industry jobs and call centres?

If the electric car is to become a reality, the need for copper will skyrocket. INCO, when it was INCO, made a real effort to produce a high quality electric car battery. The car industry, which we're bailing out today, played a major role in killing the electric car. However, that car will eventually happen, and we must seize the manufacturing opportunities that will arise.

With a crown corporation established to run an INCO operation, two other things would have changed overnight. The approach toward the environment and to the health and safety of employees would have been positive, rather than negative and hostile as was the case. In fact, INCO and others were assisted constantly by the Ontario Tory government in delaying improvements in the fight for a clean environment. They battled the union—Local 6500 of the United Steelworkers—and penalized employees who sought improved and safer working conditions.

Some brought out the "red" herring when I moved my bill, Bill 210, to purchase INCO. You can't nationalize what you already own, and we own the mineral but not the companies. They have a license to operate.

Some day, if it's not too late now, we will demand that much more be done here with our resources. It's time we stopped being drawers of water and hewers of wood, and got into the production of manufactured goods out of our minerals.

There is a major strike at Vale INCO

as I write. According to Leo Gerard, the President of USWA, Vale, in less than three years of ownership of INCO, made \$4 billion dollars of profit, which is more that INCO made in the previous 10 years combined. However, now VALE says production costs are too high and must be reduced.

It's time we moved to eliminate foreign ownership of our resources so that we develop a meaningful manufacturing sector, using resources extracted here, for the people of Ontario and Canada!

Elie Martel served as MPP for Sudbury East in the Ontario Legislature from October 1967 to May 1987. He was the NDP's critic for Resource Development, Workers Compensation and Social Development, and was also the NDP House Leader at various times.

Breaking news! **Vale's Brazilian workers go out on strike**

On October 26 and 27, Vale's Brazilian workers voted to go out on strike, after the company made a disgraceful proposal at the bargaining table.. For further info, see: <http://www.local6500usw.ca/feedstream/content/brazil%20vale%20strike.pdf>

Vale Inco workers' strike attracts solidarity at home and abroad

Charles Campbell, Research Director, United Steelworkers of Canada

Steelworkers forced out on strike at Vale Inco's nickel mining and processing operations in Sudbury and Port Colborne, Ontario, and Voisey's Bay, Labrador, entered the fourth month of the labour dispute with growing support from many quarters.

Brazilian union activists who work for Vale, the giant mining multinational, joined a delegation from Sudbury in marking the 30th day of the strike by handing out pieces of "anniversary cake" at Vale's World Headquarters in Rio de Janeiro.

In October, Vale Inco workers from Canada traveled to Germany and Sweden to take their case to some of the company's biggest customers, joined again by union activists in those countries. Other delegations were preparing to head to Australia, Indonesia and New Caledonia to meet with community leaders and unions representing Vale workers there.

Myles Sullivan, USW area coordinator in Sudbury and a member of

the delegation to Brazil, reported on the action in a weblog he maintained during the trip: "A crowd formed and were very supportive. And it was a great feeling for all of us. ... Something that I found surprising was when they told us that Vale had never had a strike go over 30 days before now."

Anyone interested can follow the reports from Myles and other news of the strike at: <http://www.fairdealnow.ca/>, a website dedicated to the strike, which began July 13.

Meanwhile, more than 7,700 kilometres from Rio, delegates to the federal NDP convention in Halifax thunderously endorsed an emergency resolution backing the striking Steelworkers.

In a keynote speech to the convention, USW President Leo Gerard accused Vale Inco of "trying to use the global economic situation to destroy what Canadian workers and families have built over decades."

The workers have voted overwhelmingly to reject company offers that

would take away the defined benefit pension plan from newly hired workers and scale back the bonus system linked to the volatile market price of nickel.

The NDP resolution linked the Vale Inco dispute to the current lock-out of workers at the Lake Erie Works by U.S. Steel, which bought the former Stelco operation in 2007, because in both cases promises made by foreign investors to maintain jobs and production in Canada have been broken with apparent impunity.

The convention called on "the government of Canada to take all actions necessary to hold Vale Inco and U.S. Steel to the promises they made to secure permission to buy control of Canadian companies."

It also pledged that the party would "redouble its efforts to campaign for new rules limiting and regulating foreign investment in Canada to truly ensure that any such investment is of benefit to the country and its people."

Vale-Inco strike: Why it should matter to all Canadians

J.A. MacNeil (Editor, Hearts & Minds)

It's tempting for recession-weary Torontonians and other Canadians to underestimate the importance of the Vale INCO strike. We do so at our peril.

This attempt by a powerful transnational corporation—Vale, the second largest mining company in the world—to weaken Canadian workers' rights is an alarming portent of what we can expect as foreign ownership here rises under either Conservatives or Liberals, neither of whom have recently shown any inclination to regulate foreign investment in such a way as to guarantee it benefits Canadians.

China and South Korea are now

investing in Canada's resource sector. Will they too expect Canadian workers to accept wages similar to the ones paid in those countries? And will the Liberals and Tories again go along with such plans?

If that prospect doesn't concern Canadians, the implications for provincial and federal government revenues should. According to Sudbury mayor John Rodriguez (MP for Nickel Belt, 1972–80 and 1984–93), "Sudbury's mining operations have provided the Federal and Provincial Governments with billions of dollars in taxes over the past century. Between 2001 and 2005, tax revenues generated by On-

tario's mining industry have grown by 77.6 percent and 109.8 percent for the provincial and federal governments respectively. And 50 percent of Ontario's mining industry is located within the Sudbury Basin."

That said, the heaviest impact of this forced strike is obviously in Sudbury. Rodriguez notes that lost wages in the Sudbury area due to it are in excess of \$4 million per week. Rodriguez and the Sudbury city council have unanimously urged that the company and the union get back to the bargaining table as soon as possible.

Five-plus years of foreign domination leaves Haiti as poor as ever

Roger Annis

The goat that has many owners will be left to die in the sun.

Haitian proverb

Canada's government was the only one in the western hemisphere that failed to squarely condemn the military coup d'état in Honduras in June. It hedged its commentary, saying that the ousted president shared some of the blame for his fate.

But even that guarded expression of mild concern by the government looks positively principled compared to Canada's participation in a very similar coup d'état five and a half years ago, in the nearly forgotten nation of Haiti, and its ongoing involvement there.

Canadian involvement in the 2004 coup d'état and its aftermath

On February 29, 2004, Haiti's elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and his wife, Mildred, were taken by US Marines from the presidential residence in central Port au Prince in the early morning hours and flown to one of the world's most isolated countries, the Central African Republic. They live in exile to this day, in South Africa.

Thousands of soldiers from the US, Canada and France moved into Haiti in the days surrounding the coup d'état, providing vital backup to a rebellion of small numbers of Haitian paramilitaries and the wealthy elite that had been launched several months earlier.

Eight hundred soldiers from Canada secured the airport from which the Aristides were abducted. Plans for the coup were laid in part in Ottawa at a

conference organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs called the "Ottawa Initiative on Haiti", which was held at the Meech Lake Conference Center in early 2003.

The coup was also preceded by a cutoff of all foreign aid to the government of Jean Bertrand Aristide following his second election to the presidency in 2000.

Haiti's government institutions were disbanded by the coup-makers and replaced by a foreign-appointed regime drawn from Haiti's elite that ruled for the next two years. Several thousand Haitians died in the anti-Aristide violence unleashed by the coup, while several thousand more were imprisoned or forced into internal or external exile.

Today, Canada contributes some \$110 million annually in aid money to Haiti. Like most international funds, the money is largely spent on sustaining the institutions of the status quo presiding over the hemisphere's poorest country, principally police, prisons and the infamously underfunded and unjust Haitian legal system.

Canada has held up its 100-person police training mission as its most important contribution to Haiti since 2004. Its role is to train the Haitian National Police, an agency that was completely revamped following the coup and stands accused of gross human rights violations since that time. During a visit by this author to the Canadian Embassy in Port au Prince in August 2007, no less than 45 photos devoted to this mission adorned the

walls of the public space inside. They were the only photos depicting Canada's role. The mission was all but declared a failure late last year when the Canadian International Development Agency announced that it was putting the work up for bids from private security firms.

MINUSTAH—the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti—is a 9,000-person police, military and political/administrative regime whose annual budget, forecast at \$618 million for 2009–10, rivals that of the national government. But unlike the latter, MINUSTAH spends nothing on either social programs or economic development.

Today, Haiti is governed by an elected president and legislature of limited popular authority and next to no financial resources. The real power in the country is shared with MINUSTAH. President René Préval has repeatedly called for a shift in UN spending, away from military and police expenditure and towards economic and social infrastructure. So far that request has fallen on deaf ears. That fact and the continued violence of UN forces against the population are leading to intensified calls within the country for the force to leave.

Social and economic calamity

The coup of 2004 remains a deeply controversial event. Its defenders argue that power had corrupted Jean-Bertrand Aristide. From a Catholic priest, proponent of liberation theol-

ogy, and most important voice of the popular movement that overthrew the Duvalier family dynasty in 1986, he allegedly became a human rights-violating dictator during the course of his two terms in office as president, 1991-96 (interrupted by three years of military coup) and 2001-04.

Author Peter Hallward has refuted these arguments in a masterly study of Haiti since the Duvaliers, published last year by Verso and entitled, *Damming the Flood: Haiti, Aristide and the Politics of Containment*. The reader of these lines can read the book and decide for him/herself.

Confounding the controversy and confusion over Aristide and the coup has been a mix of support, complicity or silence over the events of 2004 by many of the world's leading NGOs and human rights organizations, and the fact that many Latin American governments and militaries participate in MINUSTAH. Brazil is assigned the leading role in the military component of the force and contributes the largest number of soldiers. Other large Latin American contributors of soldiers are Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Bolivia.

A different measure of the events of 2004, however, is the following. What has become of the country since? Here, perhaps, some consensus may be found among supporters and detractors of Aristide.

Without question, Haiti is living through the deepest social, economic and environmental catastrophe in its long and difficult history. There is no national economy to speak of, and no serious plan nor resources for re-launching one. The overwhelming majority of Haiti's population is without meaningful employment or income. Half of Haiti's children do not attend

school. Basic nutrition and health care is denied to the majority of the population of nine million. Life expectancy is the lowest in the hemisphere and one of the lowest in the world. Tropical storms, seemingly growing in frequency and intensity, are killing many people every year and taking a growing toll on the country's topsoil and infrastructure.

How can conditions in Haiti be worsening dramatically under the very noses of a massive foreign presence?

As for the vaunted democracy that the UN-backed intervention was supposed to encourage, it remains in tatters. Two recent rounds of election to one third of the seats in Haiti's Senate featured a banning by the country's electoral commission of the largest political party in the country, the party Fanmi Lavalas of Aristide partisans, and a near-zero participation rate, in part due to Lavalas's call for a boycott following its banning.

Recent international moves emanating from the new administration in the United States offer hope to some Haitians and Haiti observers. These include the cancellation of Haiti's outstanding foreign debt and the appointment of former U.S. President Bill Clinton as a United Nations Special Envoy to Haiti.

But the single largest impediment to Haiti's future progress and welfare is the unceasing interference in its internal affairs by the economic interests that predominate in the Caribbean and Latin America, principally Haiti's historic protagonists, the United States and France, and a newcomer to the scene, Canada. That interference is unlikely to end until Haiti can catch the wave of political and economic change that is sweeping Latin America, and that cannot happen without deeper

popular mobilization within the country and growing awareness and solidarity from abroad.

The massive popular opposition within Honduras to the recent coup d'état is not going unnoticed in Haiti, nor are the uprisings and general strikes against austerity in France's remaining Caribbean possessions, which took place earlier this year. Despite all the misery that is the lot of the ordinary Haitian, there are grounds for hope and optimism for the country's future.

The website of the Canada Haiti Action Network is an important source of news and analysis. It can be viewed at <http://www.canadahaitiaction.ca>. One of the reports posted under "Media Resources" is a comprehensive look at human rights in Haiti from 2004-06, published in the September, 2006 in the UK medical journal *The Lancet*.

Sources:

1. CIDA contracting out police training in Haiti:

"Ottawa opens bids for Haitian police training"; January 10, 2009 National Post <http://www.nationalpost.com/news/story.html?id=3D1164066>

Andrew Mayeda, Canwest News Service

2. MINUSTAH budget in Haiti:

Figure is from the April 2009, annual report of the Secretary General of the UN on MINUSTAH.

<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/minustah/reports.html>

Roger Annis resides in Vancouver and is a coordinator of the Canada Haiti Action Network. He visited Haiti in August 2007 as part of a human rights investigative delegation and is a member of the NDP.

Mexico: National police seize installations of capital's electricity company, government dismisses utility's 40,000 workers

J.A. MacNeil (Editor, Hearts & Minds)

If anyone still needs convincing that Canada should exit the NAFTA *toute de suite*, one recent development should clinch the argument.

On Saturday, October 10, over 1000 Mexican federal police seized hundreds of installations of the government-owned power company Luz y Fuerza del Centro, which supplies electricity to the capital—Mexico City—and several neighbouring states. Moments later, in the middle of the night and without consulting the national legislature, President Calderón decreed that the company was being liquidated and its 40,000 unionized workers were dismissed.

For the moment, the federal electrical commission will run Luz y Fuerza. Calderón has said that, at most, 10,000 of the 40,000 laid-off workers may be rehired. Their wages, and benefits, if any, have yet to be determined. The others will be given advice on how to go into business themselves.

If Calderón's decree is allowed to stand, not only will this public utility be privatized, but the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME) will likely be destroyed, since its membership would immediately be reduced by two-thirds in one blow with the loss of the Luz y Fuerza workers. Some 15,000 of the utility's retirees will also be left in the lurch. And 25 million Mexicans residing in Greater Mexico City and four other nearby states will probably face rate hikes that the majority can ill afford, especially in the midst of a recession.

The mere fact that the government ordered the police into the L y F installations demonstrates that it knows the privatization and dismissals will meet strong opposition from the former

employees and the public.

Calderón blamed the utility's poor economic situation on the allegedly high wages of its unionized workers. However, SME members' wages are in line with other public sector workers and none too generous: for example, a skilled carpenter working for the utility earns about \$340 US a month. The truth is that the company's poor financial state owes more to the following: illegal tapping of electricity by millions of Mexico City residents too poor to afford the relatively high residential rates; and the provision of electricity to big companies or politically well-connected individuals at lower than cost, or completely free of charge. Residential rates are approximately three times as high as the rates officially charged to large corporations.

The SME is one of Mexico's oldest independent trade unions, with one of the strongest collective agreements in the country. It has played a leading role in the struggles against the NAFTA, privatization, regressive changes to the federal labour law, and other neo-liberal measures.

The destruction of the SME would be a major setback for Mexico's independent labour movement and for all the sectors of Mexican society opposing neo-liberalism.

A word about Mexico's history and labour movement. Much of Mexico's labour movement is not independent and democratic, but rather ineffectual, corrupt and closely allied with the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the party that ruled Mexico for almost 70 years. The PRI initially had a clearly socialist platform. President Lázaro Cárdenas in the 1930s and 1940s clamped down on corruption, including within the PRI itself, and

enacted many major social and economic reforms, most notably nationalizing Mexico's petroleum industry, until then controlled by US and European companies, in the lead-up to WWII. However, by the 1970s, after several more decades as the governing party, the PRI came to epitomize electoral fraud and corruption. In 1989, after attempts to reform the PRI from within failed, the PRI's left wing, led by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (President Cárdenas's son), broke away from the PRI and formed the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD).

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas was warmly received and carefully listened to at the NDP's national convention in Halifax back in 1991.

The SME's struggle is one that New Democrats should whole-heartedly back.

Take action

Take a minute to send a message to Mexican President Felipe Calderón.

Click here: <http://en.maquilasolidarity.org/node/904>

Or phone or write the Mexican Embassy:

Ambassador Emilio Rafael José
Goicoechea Luna
45 O'Connor, Suite 1000
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1A4

Telephone:

(613) 233-8988 / 233-9272 / 233-9917 / 233-0710 / 233-1011 / 233-6665 ; Fax: (613) 235 9123

Or better still, do both.

Tell them you and your relatives won't visit Mexico until the decree is rescinded and the laid-off Luz y Fuerza workers are reinstated.

Canada and Africa: The opportunity to make history

Gerald Caplan



Millions of Canadians care deeply about Africa. Look at all those who belong to Darfur solidarity groups, contribute to the Stephen Lewis Foundation, and tell pollsters they favor much more generous foreign aid.

Of course all generalizations about Africa need to be handled with great care. The continent couldn't be further from a monolith. It includes 54 wildly diverse countries and a billion wildly diverse citizens. And it's absolutely true that Africa is NOT just a collection of bad news stories and that millions of Africans do lead normal, happy, vibrant, fulfilled, loving lives.

But the other truth is that Africa remains a continent of a million woes, many of them exacerbated by the economic meltdown and global warming, for which Africa has had no responsibility whatever. It has more problems per square person than any other—poverty, conflict, genocide, corruption, hunger, disease (including HIV and AIDS), miserably mistreated girls and women, despicable leaders, giant slums, insufficient drinking water and sanitation, inadequate electricity, lousy schools, minimal health care, little infrastructure. What's worst,

each of these harsh realities feeds on and exacerbates the other, so all must be dealt with at the same time—a superhuman task that has barely been begun.

Many Canadians feel deep sympathy for the plight of Africans and wish they could do more to help. Most Canadian governments have made the same claim. We want to be part of the solution to Africa's ills.

Trouble is, however, that we're actually part of the problem. We proudly see ourselves as some kind of noble missionaries—the dedicated white man or woman come to save the hapless blacks from their own failures. But the harsh reality is that for some 600 years we've consistently pursued policies and actions that have brought misery and suffering to the majority of Africans, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa. Almost all of us in the rich world continue to benefit from the exploitation of Africa that has been executed by our governments, the powerful multilateral financial institutions we support, and the private companies that our governments often promote.

This doesn't mean that all Africans are simply the passive victims of white neocolonialists; that's knee-jerk liberalism run amok. The opposite is true. Since formal colonial rule ended, country after country has suffered from a plague of malign leaders whose only interest has been to reward their own cliques while increasing the oppression of their citizens. In fact, it's this double jeopardy that has been the scourge of Africa: Venal leaders at home and destructive intervention from outside. These twin afflictions

are not unrelated.

Look at the list of Africa's ills. Virtually every one has been caused, or exacerbated, by western influence in one form or another.

Almost without exception, Africa's "Big Men", its despots and tyrants, have either been installed or propped up by a western power, usually the US, Britain or France. It began at the very dawn of African independence when the US initiated and the Belgians executed a plot to murder Patrice Lumumba, the Congo's first elected leader and, for the next 45 years, its only one. The Americans helped put in power Joseph Mobutu, who for three decades plundered his country and brutalized his people with the active and knowing participation of the US, France and the World Bank. The appalling war that has convulsed eastern Congo in recent years is a direct result of Mobuto's misrule and the decision of France to allow leaders of the genocide against Rwanda's Tutsi to escape into Congo. Africans kill; the west enables.

That 1994 genocide is another perfect storm of African elites and westerners colluding to cause incalculable harm. It was Catholic missionaries and Belgian colonialists who were most responsible for pitting Hutu and Tutsi against each other. A tiny greedy elite of Hutu extremists planned and executed the genocide, it's true, but it would not have succeeded without the active support of the French government and military. The genocide might well have been stopped dead in its tracks but for the adamant refusal of the Clinton administration to send reinforcements to General Dallaire's puny UN force.

Canada and Africa: the opportunity to make history (cont'd from p. 27)

Even Africa's most notorious Big Man today, Robert Mugabe, might not have gained power had Britain stopped the illegal rebellion of a handful of white racists, and had it not then embraced Good Old President Bob in his first decade of murder and oppression.

Look at the terrible cost in lives and lost development opportunities caused by the apartheid state in South Africa before 1994. Besides its vicious internal policies, the apartheid government systematically raided and destabilized all the African-led governments of southern Africa. The US and Britain bolstered the white government as a so-called bulwark against Communism in Africa. The tragic toll is still being paid.

Take corruption—an ugly phenomenon that has almost become synonymous with Africa itself. It's quite true that corruption is a deep-seated crisis for much of Africa. But there's corruption and corruption. Cops demand bribes from drivers to ratchet up their miserable salaries. But the big guys, the ones who steal millions of dollars and more, can only succeed with the aid of a sophisticated network of western banks, lawyers, accountants, middle men and tax havens. We never hear of this half of the dance, yet it takes two to tango. Let's have a Transparency International for rich countries that creates a dishonor roll for those that facilitate and profit from the hundreds of millions, even billions, they help steal from Africa.

Take the crises in education and health care. Believe it or not, policies imposed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, on which so many African states depend for loans and legitimacy, actually put a ceiling on the number of teachers and health workers that government can employ,

in order to keep the cost of government low. Questions of need were irrelevant. In fact, the west demanded that fees be imposed on both schooling and health care, which, to the apparent astonishment of the horde of Ph.D's who work for these institutions, led to a serious decline in school attendance and in the use of health clinics.

This is only one example of how western policies and practices have contrived to worsen the burdens for many Africans. There are countless others. Many of them stem from the same ideology that led to school and health fees for the poorest people in the world. Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz calls it market fundamentalism—the dogma that whatever the question, market nostrums are the answer: small government, privatization, the conviction that the private sector will bring growth that will trickle down and benefit all.

As report after report has documented, in Africa as in the much of the poor world, these dogmas have palpably failed to create sustained growth while dramatically increasing inequality: a perfect failure.

Onerous conditions for receiving a loan—privatizing water supplies, for example, or grossly underfunding higher education—were actually destructive of African economies. So were the loans themselves. Often provided to the most egregious of African leaders at exorbitant rates, many desperately poor countries have spent more repaying the interest on their loans to the affluent west than on their health and education budgets combined.

Instead of trade being profitable for Africa, the west has forced the continent to open its markets to western goods, all in the name of free trade,

at least for the weak and poor. At the same time, European and North American farmers are subsidized to the tune of \$1 billion a day or more. Incredibly enough, it costs Ghanaians more to buy a local chicken than one shipped from Europe. No country has developed without protecting its markets and industries until they were strong enough to be competitive. But we insist Africa, with all its burdens, be the first to try. It can't be done.

We promote more western investment for Africa, but in reality most of it goes to a small number of oil-producing states. China is always blamed, half fairly, for its obsession with Africa's resources. But they've learned everything they know from us. Few western resource-extracting industries pay appropriate taxes, royalties or wages. Many pollute the environment and use bribes to get contracts. Western investors are in fact the source of much of Africa's corruption.

Finally, foreign aid is far from the generous contribution to Africa that we like to think it is. Not only isn't there enough of it, it often doesn't do the job intended. Under Stephen Harper, aid—already at record lows—has actually declined. But a great deal of so-called aid rarely gets to where it's needed. Much is tied to buying Canadian products, and large amounts end up going to Canadian consultants. What actually goes to alleviating poverty or helping development is never quite clear, but it's only a fraction of whatever amounts you hear.

I wish we had heard these truths from Dambisa Moyo, the Zambian whose attacks on aid have received such extensive coverage of late. I'd take her far more seriously if she were as concerned about the way the rich world rips off Africa as she is about

how aid is wasted. But perhaps that would be too much to expect of a former World Bank guru.

The truth about the west's relationship with Africa is exactly the opposite of what most of us believe. The west exploits Africa far more than we help develop it. The reality is that over six centuries, from the slave trade to the brutal decades of colonialism right through to today, year after year the west drains off far more of Africa's resources than we invest or donate.

What should Canadians do? First, understand that we are not compassionate humanitarians or modern missionaries, but that in the name of jus-

tice we owe Africa an enormous debt for the way we've looted and plundered it. Second, we need to make the rest of the western world understand that many of our trade, aid, lending, investment, recruiting and other practices are causing far more harm than good. Otherwise, despite the best efforts of millions of courageous African social activists, their continent will remain a mess.

*Gerald Caplan, who has a Ph.D. in African history, is the author of *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide* and *The Betrayal of Africa*. He was federal secretary of the NDP from 1982-84, and was national campaign manager for the NDP in the 1984 general election. In 2001, he was named by the United Nation's Special Coordinator for Africa as a member of the senior experts' team undertaking an evaluation of the UN's New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. He has also acted as a consultant for the Economic Commission for Africa, UNICEF, WHO and the African Union. He has been an active defender of public broadcasting.*

Catch these important public discussions, and bring friends!

Saturday, Nov. 28, 2 pm to 4 pm

George Monbiot

Countdown to Copenhagen:

Who in Canada is killing the international climate treaty?

J.J.R. MacLeod Auditorium, Medical Sciences Building, University of Toronto, 1 King's College Circle

\$10-\$25 suggested donation. Nobody will be turned away for lack of funds. Seating is limited; come early to guarantee a seat.

George Monbiot is a *Guardian* columnist and author of *Heat: How To Save The Planet From Burning*.

Monday, Nov. 30, 7 pm

John Foster, Energy Economist

A Pipeline through a Troubled Land:

Afghanistan, Canada, and the New Great Energy Game

Steelworkers Hall : 25 Cecil Street (1 block south of College, 2 blocks east of Spadina)

\$5.00 to \$10.00 suggested donation or pay what you can

Energy economist John Foster will present a rarely told story about Afghanistan—plans for a natural gas pipeline to link Central and South Asia via Kandahar. There is rivalry for control of Central Asia's oil and gas—how does Afghanistan fit in? Over the past year, he has presented this topic in talks across Canada, and in a *Toronto Star* op-ed. A report on this subject published last year by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives made front-page banner headlines in the *Globe and Mail*. He has contributed to a new anthology published by Black Rose Books: *Afghanistan and Canada: Is there an alternative to war?* (for sale at the event). He is an energy economist and an expert on the world oil scene. He has a unique combination of work experience - with the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and two oil companies (BP and Petro-Canada). He has worked in more than thirty countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Born in London England, he graduated from Cambridge University in economics and law.

Sponsored by: Davenport Neighbours for Peace, Toronto Coalition to Stop the War

Chances are, at any moment on any evening in Mexico City, Santiago de Chile, Bogotá, Buenos Aires, Montevideo or any other Latin American city, thousands of people are humming or singing or playing or listening to songs by Argentine singer Mercedes Sosa. Her soaring voice accompanied the peoples of an entire continent through the years of hope (1959-73), the decades of terror and despair that followed, and finally, during the reconstruction of democracies, puny or strong. Her passing on October 4 has left bereft our brothers and sisters to the south, as well as the over half a million Latin Americans living in our midst in Canada. That the Argentine government declared three days of national mourning is only one indicator of the tremendous esteem in which she is held. The article below, by Toronto-based Argentine-Canadian journalist Jorge Pica, will give readers unfamiliar with her music a sense of her presence and impact.

—JM

Mercedes Sosa (1935-2009)

La Negra, the magician, the unique one ...

Jorge Pica

Three words, three ways of describing her, three ways of expressing the respect and affection that we have for her. We used to use the phrase “La Negra, the magician, the unique one” to introduce her to the audience, when we had the opportunity to do so, on various occasions on our open line radio programme. I met her years ago, in our country of origin, and then we renewed our friendship over the many re-encounters that her tours afforded us.

We could tell an endless number of stories and anecdotes that would flesh out the portrait of her as a socio-political cultural figure. One occurred when, on her first visit to Toronto (she was already living in exile in Spain), after her concert at the Music Hall on Danforth Avenue, and her presentation at the Trojan Horse (at that time the home base of Los Compañeros, a Chilean-Greek musical ensemble based here) at the invitation of Juan Opitz and Marcelo Puente, we took her to the home of some friends for dinner.

When the host arrived, he introduced himself, then added “Mercedes, as the military states in its propaganda, we are “the anti-Argentine campaign



in Canada.” We had just founded the Canadian Centre for Human Rights in Argentina, and the “No Candu for Argentina” group (to oppose the sale of that famous Canadian nuclear reactor to the dictatorship). I remember that she looked around her silently, seeing the posters, the stacks of books, our faces, our eyes, and responded, “what can I do to help?”

This was the same person who, even if faced with a sea of red flags at her concerts, never uttered the names, neither while singing nor speaking, of Ernesto Guevara or Fidel Castro, nor

Pinochet or Franco.

She didn’t have to. We all knew who La Negra was. It was enough for her to sing, and between the lines, her voice was raised loud and clear. The Argentine military could never prove that she had publicly displayed contempt for their authority—a crime during that period—but they suspected that that “strange dialogue” with the public was real. They couldn’t read it, but they knew it was happening.

Her approach to her work was novel, fruitful and had such an impact that to this day, she has no peer. She never

wrote a single verse herself, but she knew extremely well how to choose the songs she would sing, and made them, magically, hers. People used to say “you’ve got to hear this new song by La Negra, it’s extraordinary,” and they still do. A strange sort of fame for a singer who never wrote a song. She wasn’t defiant, like Bob Dylan, but she achieved the same results. She wasn’t transgressive, like the Argentine rock-and-rollers of the 70s and 80s. However, she climbed onto the stage in Cosquin, and in front of the most conservative audience of the Argentine folkloric music world, introduced Argentine rocker Charly Garcia, who sang with her, and she thereby managed to turn the rudder of the country’s cultural history in a different direction. From that night on, no musical current would be alien to her—neither rock, nor tango, Caribbean music, bolero, classical or festive party music. The names of those who shared the stage with her speak volumes: Charly Garcia, Milton do Nascimento, Luis Mejia Godoy, Astor Piazzolla, Luciano Pavarotti, Quilapayun, Mikis Theodorakis, Rafael Alberti, Amalia Rodrigues, Holly Near, Sting, Vangelis, Miriam Makeba, Joan Baez, Pablo Milanes, Guadalupe Pineda, Silvio Rodriguez, Pete Seeger, Peter Gabriel, Joan Manuel Serrat, Placido Domingo, and recently, Shakira, Los Babasonicos and Los Fabulosos Cadillac.

She made the lesser-known poets and singer-songwriters whose work she chose for her repertoire famous, which helped place them on the international map of popular song. In Toronto, I asked her about her criteria for choosing to add particular songs to her repertoire. She explained, “The choice is an act of love. And it’s also always another move in a complex chess game, where the opponent is very dan-

gerous.”

Paradoxically, any song, once sung by Mercedes, became *her* song. Who would dare to create a better version than that of Mercedes Sosa?

Little known protest groups received immeasurable support if Sosa’s magic wand touched them. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo is one telling example of this, among many. After she merely alluded in one of her songs, *Como un pájaro libre*, to the absence of children, the issue of the disappeared sons and daughters of the Mothers, who gathered weekly, mutely, in front of the presidential palace during the dictatorship, surfaced on the international community’s radar.

Without abusing her fame, without false airs of stardom, without a diva’s rages or making grandiose declarations, *La Negra* projected one of the most respectable images of Argentine culture, and by extension, Latin American culture. Her attitude can be described in a single word: noble.

UNESCO awarded her a special prize in 1996 in recognition of her unique contribution to the world of music, placing her in the company of Yehudi Menuhin, Leonard Bernstein and Herbert Von Karajan.

Anyone who had the luck to be one of her fellow travelers and later get to know her was familiar with her kind-heartedness, her incredible tenderness—Charly García, Victor Heredia and Leon Gieco were not simply fellow singers and friends, they were her “adopted children”—her ability to communicate love and warmth, her habit of hiding away when she was depressed to avoid worrying anyone close to her, and her absolute altruism and lack of self-interest when helping someone.

Everything said about that is in the public domain. The rest is in the songs.

To close, I’d like to mention an anecdote that is emblematic of the deep and sincere affection her colleagues had for her. While on tour in Europe, where she was not then well-known, Mercedes attended a concert by Joan Baez, managing to snag a seat near the front. Joan Baez spotted her in the audience and obliged Mercedes to join her on the stage. Baez introduced her to the audience, telling them, “You don’t know her well yet, but she’s the Mother of all of us who sing.” Then Baez invited her to sing together the classic “Gracias a la Vida” (Thanks to Life), written by Violeta Parra. After singing a few bars of the song with her, Baez withdrew from the stage, leaving Sosa to finish it on her own.

There’s nothing more to be said than that, as a lover of music and someone who has often programmed her songs on the radio, it will be painful to fill the immense hole her passing leaves. My sadness, and that of many people, will be incurable for many years, maybe forever.

Jorge Pica is the director of the programme “Ondas Latinas”, broadcast by CHRY, 105.5 FM Radio York.

n.b. The Spanish original version of this article is available at our website: <http://www.phpndp.ca> - Issue 4

Translation: J.A. MacNeil

For three of Sosa’s best-known songs:

Todo cambia: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8VqIFSrFUU&feature=related>

Gracias a la Vida: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyOJ-A5iv5I>

La Maza (with Shakira): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3_ReggQwmc

Worth reading . . . worth listening to

J.A. MacNeil

Timeline of New Democrat leadership on the treatment of Afghan prisoners: <http://www.ndp.ca/press/timeline-new-democrat-leadership-on-treatment-afghan-prisoners>

“Stop intimidating detainee abuse witnesses” (NDP foreign affairs critic Paul Dewar): <http://www.ndp.ca/press/stop-intimidating-detainee-abuse-witnesses>

Palestinian democrat Mustafa Barghouti and Jewish American human rights activist Anna Baltzer interviewed on the Jon Stewart show (8:27 min.): <http://watch.thecomedynetwork.ca/the-daily-show-with-jon-stewart/exclusive-interviews/the-daily-show-with-j#clip229121> (n.b. There is a 30-second advert prior to the interview. Patience!)

PM heads to U.S. under threat of Palestinian statehood declaration, *Haaretz*, Nov. 8, 2009: <http://haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1126594.html>

Goldstone report (United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza conflict), Sept. 29, 2009: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/12session/A-HRC-12-48.pdf>

The Seattle activists’ coming of age in Copenhagen will be very disobedient, Naomi Klein, *The Guardian*, Nov. 12, 2009: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2009/nov/12/seattle-coming-age-disobedient-copenhagen>

Yesterday’s fuel, yesterday’s deal. Gordon Laxer, *Globe and Mail*, March 25, 2009
<http://www.ualberta.ca/PARKLAND/research/perspectives/LaxerGlobeSuncor09OpEd.pdf>

(Excellent analysis of implications of Suncor take over of Petro-Canada. Laxer is director of the Parkland Institute at the University of Alberta, and author of the forthcoming book *Freezing in the Dark. An Energy Security Plan for Canada*)

Freezing in the Dark: Why Canada Needs Strategic Petroleum Reserves (executive summary), Gordon Laxer, Parkland Institute <http://www.ualberta.ca/~parkland/research/studies/execsum/ESSPR08.pdf>

and **If our NAFTA partners can have national energy programs, why can’t we?** Gordon Laxer, *Globe and Mail*, Feb. 17, 2005 <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/article869129.ece>

(Essential background reading for anyone wanting to understand the current threats to Canada’s energy security.)

Canada prohibited from cutting gas and oil exports to the U.S. . . . even if we experience shortages. Gordon Laxer and John Dillon, May 28, 2008. http://www.ualberta.ca/~parkland/mediareleases/PRMay28_2008Proport.htm

(Executive summary of a report about the urgency of getting out from under the proportional sharing clause in the NAFTA; has a link to the full report.)

USA: carbon emissions already dropping. What had appeared to be hopelessly difficult is happening at amazing speed. <http://www.straightgoods.ca/2009/ViewFeature.cfm?Ref=531>

(A concise summary of recent US initiatives reducing carbon emissions, by Lester Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute, and author of *Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to save civilization*)

Raise the Roof. Radical housing. A rallying cry to revolutionize how we live as we grow old. Beverly Suek, *Herizons*, Winter 2009. <http://www.herizons.ca/node/318>

(Alternative proposals and insightful analysis about current models for seniors’ housing and long-term care and their negative implications, especially for women. Suek, a Winnipeg resident, is active in the Committee for Retirement Alternatives for Women. Her Facebook group is *Raise the Roof – Retirement Options for Women.*)

Canada needs tax fairness, not the HST:

<http://www.straightgoods.ca/2009/ViewFeature.cfm?Ref=527&Cookies=yes>

(A thoughtful and thorough analysis of the need for progressive taxation, and why the HST is regressive, by James Clancy, president of the 340,000-member National Union of Public and General Employees, Canada’s second largest union.)

Rabble.ca audio interview (17 min.) with Ontario farmer and rural activist Thomas Pawlick, author of the *The War in the Country*, about how the food industry is threatening our food security: http://www.rabble.ca/audio/by/artist/thomas_pawlick

CBC’s The Current interview with Andrew Weaver, a prominent member of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on what’s at state at the upcoming international negotiations in Copenhagen regarding climate change: <http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/podcast.html>