



FOCUS ON **S**Ocialism

The Political Journal of Canadians for Peace and Socialism

A PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PROGRAM OF PEACE

Don Currie, Chairman, CPS

THE ALBERTA ADVANTAGE (PART I)

W.C. O'Casey

STATEMENT ON KOREA

Canadian Peace Congress



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PROGRAM OF PEACE 3

THE ALBERTA ADVANTAGE (PART I) 20

US GOVERNMENT SEEKS CONFRONTATION – THE WORLD WANTS PEACE 26

EDITORIAL BOARD

EDITOR DON CURRIE
MEMBERS CATHY FISCHER
W.C. O'CASEY

Letters to the Editor, and articles should be sent to:
Don Currie,
Box 168, Slocan B.C. V0G 2C0

Donations and bequests (cheques) should be sent to:
CPS
#5 – 2243 Lorne St.
Regina, SK. S4P 2M8

Focus On Socialism: The political journal of Canadians for Peace and Socialism. In it we address current national and international issues. We strive to bring a Marxist-Leninist viewpoint to the struggle of Canadians for peace, progress and socialism. Focus On Socialism is published 4 – 5 times a year. The journal is made possible through volunteer labour and the generosity of our readers and members through their donations. We appeal to help us continue in the publication the journal in these turbulent times of rapid change throughout the world. The analysis it gives is needed now more than ever.
Copyright © 2006, Canadians For Peace and Socialism

A PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PROGRAM OF PEACE

DON CURRIE, CHAIRMAN, CPS

PEOPLE WANT PEACE — CORPORATE POWER SUPPORTS WAR

The reaction of the minority Harper Government to the popular peace sentiment among a majority of Canadian citizens is to ignore it, to defy it, and embark the country on a path of militarism and war. Prime Minister Harper has warned his rich and privileged right wing supporters that if they wish to continue to profiteer from deeper integration with the USA they must now give full support to imperialist war and at all costs maintain the Conservative Government in power.

Prime Minister Harper's support is first of all among the most reactionary sections of high finance in Canada, those allied most closely with US imperialism that have been given unprecedented scope by both Liberal and Conservative Governments for profiteering from

the export of resources, especially oil and gas. These corporate insiders have the most to gain from continued massive capital investment in Alberta oil sands development and the export of Canadian synthetic crude to feed US refineries while Canadians are forced to depend on imported oil.

Intimately connected with the energy sector is the arms manufacturing sector. Today military conflict and the quest for oil are inseparable. The “war for oil” cabal has the most to gain from a prolonged conflict in Afghanistan. The American Petroleum Institute in July 2004 acknowledged that “Military fuel consumption makes the Department of Defence the single largest of consumer of petroleum in the US”.

The banks and investor classes are not interested in peace, the needs and welfare of Canadians, their only interest is maximum profit and they are moving their investor capital to where it will bring the fastest and highest return, to the energy sector and military expenditures. These are the interests that will do whatever it takes to keep the Harper Conservatives in power.

THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT!

Ralph Klein has skulked off the political stage protesting that his policies did not endanger Canada's long term energy needs. Under his watch 56% of all of Alberta's oil exports go to the USA and Canada's natural gas reserves have dwindled to an estimated 16 year reserve and these figures are climbing. No doubt the devil made him do it.

Another bombshell is the announcement by Irving Oil of New Brunswick that it is planning a \$6 billion investment to increase its refining capacity in Canada to meet rising demand. Where will the crude come from for this venture? Irving Oil, Canada's second largest refiner has been content to import crude and supply eastern Canada and the north-eastern US market with gas and fuel oil, without the slightest regard for a national energy policy.

Another factor is the behind the scenes involvement of former Prime Minister Jean Chretien on behalf of Canadian oil investors with interests in the pipeline running from the Caspian Sea through Afghanistan and directly through the Kandahar region where Canadian troops are being sacrificed, to ports in Pakistan for trans-shipment to

European and North American markets. When Stephen Harper intones that “we” are in the war in Afghanistan on behalf of democracy and women’s rights, he sets a new low in political cynicism. He and Chretien are involved in a “dirty war for oil” full stop.

ENERGY /S POLITICS

The energy issue is impacting all politics. The simplistic idea that all the left has to do is decry the export of Canadian energy to the USA and the working class and labour movement will automatically take up the struggle for public ownership is woefully inadequate. There is a growing dispute among oil investors concerning the politics of extraction, upgrading and refining that is impacting Federal, Alberta and labour politics. The \$11 billion (US) partnership between Encana Corp and Conoco Phillips Co. that will send oil sands bitumen from Fort McMurray to Conoco refineries in Wood River Illinois is causing political conflict in the Alberta leadership race of the Conservative Party.

LABOUR AND CAPITALIST PARTIES

The stake of organized labour in jobs in oil patch construction, upgrading and refining has led the Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL) to purchase 5000 memberships, with an option to buy an additional 5000 in the Conservative Party leadership race for Alberta Conservative Party leader and premier. The AFL backs Lyle Oberg, who claims to support more refining capacity in Alberta and curbs on raw exports to the USA.

The criticism by the Alberta NDP of the AFL for venturing into a Tory leadership race is offered without the slightest self-criticism of its own historic neglect of labour policy and its failure to confront squarely the issue of NAFTA and the need to call for the nationalization of tar sands and impose public ownership restrictions on the upgrading and refining of bitumen. The Alberta NDP takes the same self-righteous approach to the AFL as the Ontario NDP took to the CAW in the January federal election when it expelled Buzz Hargrove for calling for the election of Liberals where the NDP stood no chance of election in the January

2006 elections to keep Harper out. Will the NDP now expel the leadership of the AFL?

“LEFT” ILLUSIONS AND RIGHT-WING REALITY

Class collaboration, the influence of capitalist parties over working class politics is not new. To condemn it and offer no alternative is not useful. The discussion must focus on what to do about it. That involves advancing a working class alternative economic program to the corporate plan of US-Canadian integration and militarization and to campaign for it among all working people.

DEFEAT THE HARPER GOVERNMENT

The illusion among many on the left that Stephen Harper couldn’t win the last election is now being perpetuated in another equally dangerous illusion that the Conservatives can’t be re-elected. The media is playing the Liberal leadership race as the selection of the next Liberal Prime Minister. That is neither assured nor a solution for working people.

Those on the left who argue there is no fundamental difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives are locked in a tautology, a useless repetition of a fact that no one disagrees with but leads nowhere and explains nothing. To break out of it, more has to be said. **The concentration task is to defeat the Harper Conservatives.**

Jack Layton leader of the NDP told the September NDP Quebec City Convention that the NDP aims for power in the next federal election. How the NDP will achieve that goal on its own and leap from 29 seats to a majority is not discussed. To achieve a minority government the NDP will need coalition support. Where will it come from? Any repeat of the “go-it-alone” NDP policy in the January federal election that focused attacks on the Liberals and led to Harper’s election can lead to another Conservative victory.

The left must confront the reality that there is a shift in the balance of power in finance capital circles and the big money, including banking capital is at the disposal of the energy sector in oil sands extraction in

Alberta, Saskatchewan (now the second largest producer of oil in Canada), oil and gas extraction in northern BC and some off-shore plays in Newfoundland and Labrador. They want Harper to remain in power.

TRENDS AND CHANGES

Canadians for Peace and Socialism (CPS) are speaking of *new* trends in the capitalist economy and politics, *changes*, new *directions*, not absolutes. Of course there is enormous capital concentration in Eastern Canada and on-going corporate support for the Liberals and there will continue to be, but what is new, what is affecting the economy as a whole and impacting the working class and its future is the rise of Canadian and US capital concentration in the energy sector. It must be understood better and taken into account by serious political and economic class analysis. It will help us all to develop the programs and strategies that will mobilize working class action all across the country and help break the control of capitalist parties over labour.

THE CRISIS OF EASTERN CANADIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The manufacturing and industrial heartland of Ontario is still powerful but in chronic crisis. Capital investment in 2006 is predicted to increase 10.6% in oil sands development, 83% in pipeline development, 50.3% in public transportation and 0% in manufacturing machinery and equipment. The Harper Conservatives have no plan to deal with the crisis overtaking manufacturing. In fact Prime Minister Harper appears to be adopting policies that actually worsen the crisis of Eastern Canadian industry. While scrapping Kyoto, a demand of Alberta Big Oil, the Harper Government is shifting attention away from the major emitter of green house gases the up graders and refineries in Fort McMurray, Fort Saskatchewan, Edmonton and Regina, and imposing emission standards on the beleaguered auto industry that will make the industry less competitive. Such policies illustrate the anarchic state of affairs in capitalist economic development and the cannibalistic competition among rival corporate interests.

HIGH ELECTRICAL ENERGY PRICES AND THE DECLINE OF MANUFACTURING

Production costs in industrial and manufacturing sectors are being driven upward by high electrical energy prices. There is a growing demand for electrical power that is not being met. Ontario hasn't built any major power generating plants for a quarter of a century as industrial and consumer demand skyrockets. The McGuinty Liberals are being forced to sanction the building of a new nuclear plant by Ontario Power Generation. A third of Ontario nuclear generating capacity is shut down for safety and environmental concerns have eliminated coal as an energy source for power generation.

Deregulation and privatization of electrical power production and generation has wreaked havoc in Ontario and everywhere in the country and left Canadian consumers and industry to the tender mercies of the US market, where most of Canada's surplus energy goes. Instead of an east-west power grid, Canada's electrical generation capacity under the Mulroney Conservatives was merged with US grids. North American electrical power was taken out of public control, and handed to private marketers such as Enron that sold it to consumers at monopoly prices. Marketing power attracted huge banking loans from several Canadian banks including the biggest CIBC that was forced to pay billions to the US Government to avoid a law suit for its part in propping up the corrupt Enron Empire.

While Enron corralled the existing electrical energy supply it raised prices and plundered the consumers. The construction of power generating capacity stopped in both Canada and the USA. The collapse of Enron, was the collapse of right wing free market theories gone mad. Jurisdictions all over the continent are now scrambling to construct new generation plants, using coal, natural gas and nuclear energy to catch up. But all of this activity is still firmly in the hands of private investors. In British Columbia provincially controlled BC Hydro is not allowed to build new generating capacity but only to purchase new power. BC Hydro must rely on private energy development to increase supply.

FOREIGN TAKEOVERS OF STEEL AND NICKEL PRODUCTION

The foreign takeovers at Stelco and Inco, key players in supplying steel and nickel to the Canadian auto industry have not and will not translate into manufacturing expansion in Ontario. Foreign owned Canadian mills will continue to supply metals for the auto industry but it will charge maximum prices as the price is driven up by the competing demands of oil patch, pipeline construction and the militarization of the economy. Globalization and NAFTA determines the market and foreign monopoly control determines the price. Foreign concentration in the Canadian steel industry will supply steel to the highest bidder regardless of its negative impact on Canadian industrial and manufacturing industries.

SOFT WOOD LUMBER, PULP AND PAPER

The hit taken by the soft wood lumber sector from Harper's sell-out to the US lumber lobby with close ties to the Bush administration is resulting in destruction of small and medium sized lumber mills all across BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick with thousands of jobs gone. Even some big corporate interests have been bilked as \$1.5 billion is left on the table and pocketed by the US soft wood lumber lobby. The pulp and paper sector, from Fort Francis, to Newfoundland is in decline and workers are losing high paying jobs.

FREE TRADE AND THE RETAIL AND AGRICULTURE SECTORS

Free trade has opened the door to US capital penetration in all sectors of the retail industry, crushing and destroying small business at an alarming rate. The demand for consumer goods is not being supplied primarily from Canadian manufacturers but floods in from China and Asia. The agriculture sector is struggling across the whole country as the last bastions of orderly marketing that sustained farmers for decades, such as the Canadian Wheat Board, egg, poultry and dairy marketing boards are all under attack by corporate farming interests.

The fishing industry in large part is shut down and small independent fishers are disappearing.

THE RISE OF STEPHEN HARPER AND THE “NEW” POWER IN OTTAWA

The economic decline of eastern Canada is the flip side of the rise of western finance capital. It is the expression of the anarchic and contradictory economic factors at work in capitalist development in Canada at this time.

The progression of Stephen Harper from a Conservative, to a Reformer, to an Alliance leader, and then back to a Conservative, betraying every capitalist party leader who stood in his way, was a single-minded quest on behalf of a new corporate power, the Alberta energy sector. His loyalty to this interest stood above all others and enabled him to ride to power in the last federal election. Alberta big oil is *now* a very *big* presence at the federal table and along with it, the most reactionary sector of US high finance, the Bush administration and its policy of the New America Century. It is these forces that will fight tooth and nail to maintain Harper in power.

MILITARISM AND OIL

The USA with 5% of the world's population (296 million) consumes 25% of the world's petroleum products. Each US civilian consumes 3 gallons of fuel per day compared to Europeans at 1.4 gallons per day and the non-industrialized world at 0.2 gallons per day. (40 gallons of fuel equals one barrel of oil). The US military is the biggest purchaser of oil in the world which means much of what Canada supplies to the USA go directly into the war in Iraq. Each member of the US military in Iraq consumes 9 gallons of fuel per day. US military consumption in 2004 was 144 million barrels about 395,000 barrels per day the equivalent of the daily energy consumption of Greece. The US Department of Defence spent \$8.2 billion on energy in fiscal 2004. US military consumption of petroleum products is a major contributor to global warming.

CANADA AND THE US DEPENDENCY ON OIL

Canada currently supplies the US with about 30% of its fossil fuel requirements. As conventional oil supplies decline world wide oil sands deposits (heavy oil) will become the major source of the world's oil supply. Between them, Canada and Venezuela possess an estimated 2.239 trillion barrels of "heavy oil" and as conventional supplies dwindle will become the world's major suppliers of synthetic crude.

HOW WILL OUR TWO COUNTRIES MANAGE THIS RESOURCE?

Hugo Chavez, the President of Venezuela has opted for a socialist model and demonstrated in practice, that through state ownership, oil wealth can be used to uplift the Venezuelan poor, assist their Cuban and Bolivian neighbours through mutual trade and even assist the poor in the USA. President Chavez asserts he will attempt to convince OPEC to stabilize the world price of oil at about \$50 barrel to bring long term stability to the Venezuelan economy so the Venezuelan people can plan the rebuilding of their country into a socialist model where peaceful labour, and humanity and genuine international solidarity is the norm.

Canada has a corporate model of oil sands development. During the 1970 and 80's when there was ample conventional oil supplies, the Canadian Federal Government maintained a two price system for oil, a domestic price and an international price – which meant that fluctuations in the international price did not affect Canadians at the pump. The two price system was cancelled in 1985 and by the late 1990's the state owned oil company, Petro Can was privatized at a fraction of its value.

Today market forces determine the price of oil and Canadians are paying the highest prices in their history for gasoline, home heating fuel and natural gas. Fifty percent of oil sands production is owned outright by US investors and the remainder shared by an extremely wealthy investor class. Royalty rates to the Province of Alberta are frozen at 1% and the Alberta Government pleads "poverty" when the people demand more be spent on health and education.

The federal government received \$5.1 billion CDN in federal taxes from oil related revenues in 2005. By 2008 this amount will decline to \$2.4 billion because of a tax policy that allows oil sands developers to accelerate write offs of capital spending and defer billions in tax. Thirty percent of big oil companies have converted to income trusts to evade federal taxes.

WHAT ABOUT NATURAL GAS?

Before NAFTA Federal Government policy required that a 25 year reserve of natural gas production must be assured before export of natural gas to the USA was permitted. The same government that removed the two price system and sold off the state owned oil company removed the market restrictions on the export of natural gas. The massive conversion in the USA to the use of cheap Canadian natural gas has reduced Canadian reserves to less than 16 years and some estimates place it at 10 years. At the same time, new natural gas discoveries may never reach Canadian consumers as much of it is allocated to the production of insitu synthetic crude from the oil sands.

Under the terms of NAFTA Canada cannot reduce its exports to the USA even in a situation of a national scarcity and if it wishes to conserve energy it must still continue to export the same proportion of total supply as it exported to the USA in the previous three years.

DEMOCRACY AND ENERGY POLICY

All of the above was done in the back rooms between the government and corporate power brokers. There was no national debate on the details of the NAFTA agreement on energy and there is no great public debate today on the threat to Canada's long term energy needs which can have drastic negative effects on Canada's future economic development. The Governments that permitted this affront to the sovereignty of the people of Canada, now presumes to teach the people of Iraq, Afghanistan and Haiti about the principles of freedom, independence and democracy.

Canadians confront a stark choice. We can continue to export our oil and gas resources to satisfy the insatiable war based economy of the

USA or we can do as other nations are doing, assert our sovereignty over this precious resource, conserve it, and use it for the peaceful development of our economy and assist on a mutually beneficial basis the energy deficient nations.

THE NEW POWER ON PARLIAMENT HILL - THE ALLIANCE OF FINANCE CAPITAL, BIG OIL AND MILITARISM

Prime Minister Harper represents that section of finance capital not satisfied with record breaking profits appropriated from exploiting the working class at home. Bulging with capital, extreme right wing reaction, an alliance of finance capital, big oil and militarism, seeks complete domination over the state, the suppression of parliament and the transfer of economic, military and foreign policy decision making to the imperialist grand council of states at NATO headquarters in Brussels, to joint non-Parliamentary Conferences such as the recent corporate love in at Banff of US and Canadian oil magnates, military brass and right-wing politicians.

Canadian imperialism has thrown off the mask of “liberalism and parliamentary democracy”. It has ventured onto the path of open and aggressive militarism to achieve its international goals. The testing grounds are Haiti and Afghanistan. The Conservative Government is doing their bidding and moving towards the militarization of the Canadian economy. The Harper Government is accelerating spending on the military and so-called “security” and if returned to power will make it the top priority of the Government.

ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY ON MILITARISM — THE WAR BUSINESS

Canada now ranks twelfth among the world’s nations in military spending. For 2005 Canada’s military expenditures were \$10.6 billion (\$327 per capita) representing 1% of the all military expenditures on the globe. Prime Minister Harper’s decision to turn a war of occupation in Kabul into a war of aggression in Kandahar has increased military expenditures to \$15 billion and rising. Canadian Government spending

on NATO for 2005 (combined personnel and equipment) was \$6.4 billion, or 60.4% of total military expenditures and an increase of 20% over year 2000. The Canadian Government spends 60% of its military expenditures on NATO and only 40% on the defence of Canadian territory, airspace and coastal waters.

US military expenditures for 2005 were \$482.2 billion (\$1,604 per capita) exceeding by \$116.6 billion the expenditures of the next fifteen highest nation states put together. The US economic dependency on war and military expenditures is the Achilles heal of US imperialism not as many opine, its great strength. US military expenditures on NATO for personnel and equipment totalled \$192.23 billion in 2000 and rose to \$262.29 billion by 2005 a rise of 36.4% in five years.

It is clear from these figures why Canadian military decisions are taken at Brussels and not in Ottawa. The big money is at NATO. On September 18th 2006, the Assistant Secretary General for Defence Investment of NATO announced that the 26 member countries have begun building a 75 million euro command and control system for missile defence. This is only the start. NATO has produced a 10,000 page report that endorses the US plan to deploy ballistic missiles to space that will increase the initial investment to unlimited heights. It is the anticipation of huge profits that has caused the Harper Government to state its willingness to re-open talks with the Bush Administration on Canadian participation in Ballistic Missile Defence.

To be in on the profits, Canadian business has to be in on the war. That is why it was at NATO headquarters that the decision was taken by Canada’s new corporate-military caste to take the country onto the path of imperialist aggression and war. It was at NATO that defence minister Gordon O’Connor, a lobbyist for the military-industrial complex, and Canadian Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Hillier, decided to elevate a war of occupation in Kabul into a war of aggression in Kandahar. Casualties among Canadian soldiers provided the missing ingredient to launching a Government propaganda campaign that shamelessly capitalized on the grief of families and that pandered to the chauvinism and jingoism of its right wing electoral support.

The war in Afghanistan, predicted to last a decade, is designed to win for the new corporate order at Ottawa a more influential position for itself among NATO allies and rivals. The war is designed to improve the position of Canadian high finance in the inter-imperialist rivalry for

the re-division of markets, the export of investment capital and the seizure of resources and exploitation of foreign labour. The Harper Conservatives took those decisions in the interest of maximum and rapid profit making by their corporate friends.

When Prime Minister Harper intones the Bush mantra, “we will not cut and run” from Afghanistan he sends a message to his closest supporters that they can rely on him to make Canada a bigger imperial presence among allies and rivals, that their investments in the oil patch and defence industries are safe and will grow. Harper boasts that Canada is now an “energy super-power” and when he met in Washington with President George Bush, he assured Bush that Canada’s oil sands were a safe and reliable source of cheap energy to fuel the US war machine.

Prime Minister Harper should know, since it was Alberta Big Oil that put him in power in the last federal election and to whom he is now beholden for his re-election. Prime Minister Harper has done such a fine job on behalf of “big oil” that he has been awarded the Woodrow Wilson Award for “public service”. The co-chairs of the event are N. Murray Edwards, Canadian Natural Resources Limited (the major player in oil sands development), Gerald T. McCaughey of Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) the bank that helped the late Ken Lay of Enron to try and save his empire), Gwyn Morgan, Encana Corporation, (the one who branded immigrants as lazy) and Stephen G. Snyder TransAlta Corporation, your average group of “good corporate citizens”.

The decisions taken at NATO headquarters by the Harper administration to openly engage in imperialist rivalry abroad was accompanied by a pledge to the imperialist club at NATO that the Conservative Government would tighten the screws on the democratic rights of Canadians at home. These measures include concocting terrorist plots to spread fear and justify more massive and wasteful spending on “security” and armaments. The Government allocated \$1.4 billion to security measures in the last budget.

THE SOCIAL COST OF THE MILITARIZATION OF ECONOMY

The stranglehold of the new corporate-military power over Ottawa is working quickly to impose harsh new laws restricting democratic and

labour rights, abolishing and weakening government programs protecting health, pensions and child care. The transfer of federal funding from social programs to military spending means in practice a wage cut to families that rely on fully or partially funded health care, seniors assistance, children’s programs and subsidies to education and apprenticeship training. Such federal funding, won by labour and farmers out of bitter struggle with the capitalist state is a measurable component of average working class incomes that corporate planners seek to steal and transfer to their profit agenda. Any cut in federally funded programs for workers and farmers translates into increased state funds available for war and corporate subsidies.

Rising state subsidies to the corporate sector combined with falling corporate taxes is robbing federal social programs that working people rely on and need. Cut backs, paying down deficits is a class policy benefiting the corporate class and their hangers-on. The removal of restrictions on foreign ownership also removes restrictions on the power of foreign investment capital to re-order the domestic economy. Corporate takeovers, accelerating consolidations and centralization of capital proceeds without regard for job loss, reduced purchasing power, falling living standards and worsening working conditions.

INVESTMENT CAPITAL FOR PEOPLE’S NEEDS

All of this is happening on the watch of a *minority* Government with less than 36% of electoral support and an increasingly discredited and politically isolated Prime Minister. It is happening when a majority of Canadians reject the Bush Doctrine of regime change and pre-emptive war and call for the withdrawal of Canadian military forces from Afghanistan.

Then why is a political minority able to wield such destructive over the common good? It is because political power is merged with finance capital and does its bidding. That must be changed. Political power must serve a different cause – people’s needs.

The rise in the power of the energy sector, the militarization of the economy, the worsening of regional underdevelopment and the assault on federally funded health, public education, pensions and child care is in accord with the profiteering of finance capital, the merger of banking

and industrial capital. In fact the foreign takeover of Canadian industry is financed with capital supplied by Canadian banks.

The banks have abandon nation building and are in the business of profiteering from all opportunities without regard to the economic future of the country. The banks are prospering as jobs are lost in the takeover frenzy afflicting the economy.

Name of Bank	Increase in Profit 2005 Over 2003	Total Shareholder Return Since Jan. 1 2003
RBC Royal Bank of Canada	\$412 million	82.6%
CIBC Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	\$ 2 billion	112.6%
BMO Bank of Montreal	\$627 million	70.6%
TD Toronto Dominion	\$1.2 billion	106.5%
Bank of Nova Scotia	\$778 million	93.1%

Source Globe and Mail – 15-04-06

The concentration of capital in the major banks illustrates the fact that the Canadian economy does not lack capital funds for investment it lacks democratic control and planning *over* investment. The anarchic state of capital investment is intensifying and capital is seeking those areas that provide quick and high returns. More profit can be derived from financing mergers and takeovers, slashing jobs, funding the energy sector, and fuelling militarism and war.

THE PEOPLE’S STRUGGLE FOR ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY, SOVEREIGNTY AND A LASTING PEACE

Current Canadian politics is the people’s struggle to defend their vital economic interests and stop the looting and spoilage of the country by anarchic corporate elites. The fight back, here intense, there nascent and weak, nonetheless is drawing all strata of working people from the

poorest to the more affluent into a harsh struggle with finance capital for economic survival, democracy and peace.

The struggle will ebb and flow, but is permanent. The hope that there can be a return to “good old days” of relative class peace is illusory. The confrontation between workers and capital, peace and war, people’s needs and corporate greed, US imperialism and Canadian sovereignty, democracy and nascent fascism can only sharpen. It will not go away or self correct.

The task of the left is to advance a program that summarizes the main tasks of the people’s struggle at the current stage, and fight for it everywhere the working class confronts the power of monopoly. The fate of the country depends on it.

A PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC ELECTORAL PROGRAM OF PEACE

1. Stop the militarization of the Canadian economy.

- No support for US imperialist wars.
- Withdraw from NATO and NORAD
- Cut the arms budget and spend on people’s needs.
- Bring the troops home.
- Defend the arctic from US imperialism.
- No security fences between Canadian and US citizens.

2. Corporate rule is ruining Canada. Take our country back!

- Abrogate NAFTA – trade with the world.
- End Canadian dependency on the crisis ridden US economy.
- Put Monopoly under control.
- Nationalize the Banks.

3. Stop the Big Oil Rip Off of Canada.

- Nationalize the Energy Sector
- No energy exports for war.
- Ensure Canadian self-sufficiency in oil and natural gas.
- End foreign imports.
- Consumer protection from high prices

4. Supply basic Canadian industrial and manufacturing needs from Canadian resources.

- Stop raw exports
- Process all natural resources in Canada into semi-processed and finished products.
- Reduce foreign imports of resources available in Canada
- An east-west electrical power grid for Canadian needs.
- US hands off Canadian fresh water

5. An economy for wage earners not shareholders.

- No public money to prop up private stock, bond and investor income.
- End the corporate welfare tax system.
- Legislation to protect Canadian jobs from foreign takeover.
- No corporate concessions without expansion of jobs.
- Return the unemployment insurance fund to the unemployed.
- Work, wages or full unemployment insurance.
- Not one worker without a job, a home and economic security.
- Not one child without an education, health and care.
- Not one youth without a trade, an occupation and a future.

6. For economic democracy and social justice.

- Take back Parliament from the capitalist parties of corruption, wealth and privilege.
- Elect a government of the working people.
- End all racist oppression.
- Enact and enforce legislation for full women's economic equality and rights.
- A universal federally funded child care program
- A worker's bill of rights
- Keep private investors out of public health care
- Take the Canada Pension Plan off the stock market and return it to the people of Canada.
- Stop the corporate raid on workers pension funds.

THE ALBERTA ADVANTAGE (PART I)

BY W.C. O'CASEY

PART ONE OF A THREE PART SERIES

W.C. O'CASEY IS A WORKER IN THE ALBERTA OIL SANDS

***“The increasing magnitude of individual capitals provides the means for leading more powerful armies of workers with more gigantic instruments of war upon the industrial battlefield, Karl Marx, Wage-Labour and Capital.*”**

They dot the side of Highway 63, monuments to the fallen. But these fallen will not have Bagpipe bands, honour guards or yellow ribbons. “They” are crosses marking locations where workers have died on their way to work in Ft. McMurray.

Some of the crosses have hard hats; some are covered in fresh flowers, but most stand naked, bare reminders of the drive for profit.

Every weekend an army of labour is mobilized, thrown into action by the Captains of Alberta's resource war machine, torn from families for days, weeks, months and years at a time, working for wages.

Tens of thousands of wage labourers march their way to the heart of the battlefield, the Alberta Tar Sands. Miles of columns of red taillights illuminate the highway up "Super Test", past Suncor, Syncrude, and Canadian Natural Resources and beyond to the plants and mines – workers marching into battle.

Working fifty, sixty, seventy hours or more every week, Canadian workers construct huge, complex industrial plants. Bus drivers, Office Clerks, Pipe fitters, Welders, Scaffolders, Technologists, Mechanics, Nurses, Operators and others are marshaled from all across Canada, from Newfoundland and Ontario to BC and the North, to do their tour of duty.

These are the ground troops in the Oil Generals drive to secure US strategic energy reserves. This is the Alberta Advantage.

NEW BOSS SAME AS THE OLD BOSS (WELL NOT REALLY)

Directed by the largest arms manufacturers and finance capital, guided by the Cheney cronies and the "New American Century" doctrine, Washington scours the planet for energy, and in particular liquefied petroleum. Liquefied petroleum is used to control and subjugate national economies to aggressive imperialist market expansion and to maximize war profits. Canada's corporate elite want in on the party!

Led by the principal corporations in Canada, with broad powers and authority centred in Calgary, Prime Minister Stephen Harper assumes his role as leading spokesman, chief salesman and "friend of business" for Canadian corporate interests, driving corporate power west.

Harper is tasked with implementing policies of continental integration, military expansionism and transfer of Canadian raw resources, for his US masters, all under the benevolent gaze of Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE) and their mouth piece Thomas d'Aquino. Who needs Liberals when you have a Harper?

HOMETOWN BOY GETS DRAFTED

Stephen Harper articulates the desire of the Canadian ruling class for uncontested power, expanded markets and subverting bourgeois parliamentary democracy. The "club" met at a secret meeting in Banff, Alberta, September 12-14, 2006 led by the CCCE and the Canada West Foundation.

The event was chaired by former US Secretary of State George Schultz, former Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed and former Mexican Finance Minister Pedro Aspe. The Conference was an "end run" around Canadian sovereignty and to relegate the Canadian Parliament to a "rubber stamp" institution for the policies of the biggest industrial, distribution and finance capital class.

Early in June the Canadian and US ruling class created the North American Competitiveness Council (NACC). This "council" is an advisory committee comprising representatives from the largest corporations in North America including Wal Mart, Chevron, General Motors, Lockheed Martin, Suncor and others.

Harper attended a secret meeting in March in Cancun of the council. Present were some of the largest captains of Canadian and US industry and other Harper Conservatives. In a statement made in September 13, 2006 edition of Macleans's magazine Ron Covais, President of US arms manufacturer giant Lockheed Martin and Chair of the US section of NACC said, "*The guidance from the ministers was, "tell us what we need to do and we'll make it happen."*"

THE HARPER "APPRENTICESHIP"

Stephen Harper's early training for his job as chief salesman for the sell out of Canada began as President of the National Citizen's Coalition (NCC). Founded in 1967 by insurance millionaire Colin M. Brown as a "not for profit corporation" the NCC advocates for free enterprise espousing the slogan, "More freedom through better government."

The NCC "Agenda for Canada" policy paper defines "Better Government" as, "...limited government, it means free markets, it means accountable politicians; it means lower taxes and most of all it

means government that truly protects our democratic and economic freedoms.”

Agenda for Canada outlines policies for increased military spending, unlimited tar sands growth through the death of Kyoto, privatization of the CBC, entrenchment of private property rights in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, dismantling the Canadian Wheat Board and the destruction of labour unions. This was Harper’s apprenticeship.

JUNIOR MAKES GOOD (THE ALBERTA AGENDA)

As President of the National Citizen’s Coalition Stephen Harper and a close circle of petty bourgeois policy advisors developed the first primitive ideas of a “New Alberta Century”.

Harper was assisted by Tom Flanagan, professor of political science and former Director of Research, Reform Party of Canada; Ted Morton, professor of political science and Alberta Senator elect; Rainer Knoppf, professor of political science; Andrew Crooks, Chairman, Canadian Taxpayers Federation; Ken Boessenkool, former advisor to Stockwell Day, and former Treasurer of Alberta. The group developed policies of regional security, taxation, privatization of health care and pensions and increases in provincial powers.

In “The Alberta Agenda”, an open letter published in the National Post January 27, 2001, to then premier of Alberta, Ralph Klein, Stephen Harper stated, *“An economic slowdown, and perhaps even recession, threatens North America, the government in Ottawa will be tempted to take advantage of Alberta’s prosperity, to redistribute income from Alberta to residents of other provinces in order to keep itself in power. It is imperative to take the initiative, to build firewalls around Alberta, to limit the extent to which an aggressive and hostile federal government can encroach upon legitimate provincial jurisdiction.”* Corporate oil power in Calgary was delighted!

THE IMPERIAL PRINCE

Speaking at the Economic Club of New York on September 20 2006, to a crowd of elite US business interests, Prime Minister Harper stated Calgary’s dream of becoming an “Energy Superpower” and Alberta’s role as an imperial power broker. Harper said. *“I want it understood that we are determined that Canada’s role in the world will extend beyond this continent.”*

Stephen Harper is wearing the crown of the new imperial prince. He is trying to sell the Canadian working class on the benefits of Canada as an “energy super power.” Clearly aligning the interests of Big Oil, Finance Capital and armaments power, Harper is seeking to undermine and transfer control of Canadian sovereignty in the hands of US “financial oligarchs.”

THE OIL OLIGARCH

Energy1Net a “Not-for-profit” organization of some of the biggest oil organizations in the country communicated in their October 2005 Ottawa Outreach conference entitled, “Helping Create a Canadian Energy Superpower”; 1) the need to increase demand or decrease supply for increased profits (monopoly control of markets), 2) increased productivity and competitiveness (decrease wages, increase hours of work and labour mobility) and 3) increase security to ensure reliable production (tie development more closely with imperialist export of war.)

Some of the founding members of Energy1Net include; Alberta Economic Development, Alberta Energy, Canadian Natural Resources Limited, EnCana Corporation, EPCOR, Natural Resources Canada, Nexen Inc., NOVA Chemicals Corporation, SaskPower, Shell Canada Limited, and Syncrude Canada Ltd.

Alberta Oil Associations stipulate owner/contractor labour and building trades contractual and bargaining principles and practices, develop “environmental” policy for provincial and federal governments, expand the political role of Big Oil and raise capital for expansion of Alberta energy projects primarily Canada Natural Horizons Project, Suncor’s Firebag, Shell’s Scottford and Opti/Nexen’ Long Lake. The rise of “oilgarchs” to leading prominence in setting

public policy indicates a new stage in the development of the political economy of Alberta.

Chief amongst the “Alberta Oil Oligarchs” is the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), Energy1Net, Canadian Energy Pipelines Association (CEPA), and the Canadian Heavy Oil Association (CHOA) among others. The CCCE represents the more virulent idiom of finance capital in Canada.

Lenin stated that “...*finance capital is connected, with the intensification of the struggle for the partitioning of the world.*” – Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism, VI Division of the World Among the Great Powers, p74.

The general crisis in capitalism is a product of the continued and intensified concentration of finance capital. The manifestation of the crisis is sharpened attacks on labour and the closer integration and expansion of capital export in the form of armaments, foreign control of resources and labour mobility.

NEXT ISSUE: W.C. O’CASEY DISCUSSES THE RISE OF THE ALBERTA OILAGARCHS AND THE RALPH KLEIN ERA AND ITS IMPACT ON LABOUR.

US GOVERNMENT SEEKS CONFRONTATION – THE WORLD WANTS PEACE

STATEMENT OF CANADIAN PEACE CONGRESS

The Canadian Peace Congress calls upon Prime Minister Harper to oppose all proposals for a military attack on Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and to work in the UN for a policy of de-escalation of tensions and a diplomatic solution. The way out of the crisis is the resumption of direct talks between the USA and North Korea.

Support for President Bush’s Korean policy is the road to war. The Bush administration faced with possible defeat in the November Congressional elections, and seeking a pretext to divert world attention from the US debacle in Iraq has seized on a nuclear weapon test by the DPRK and raised it to the level of an international crisis. The US did not threaten war against Pakistan, India and Israel when these states acquired nuclear weapons.

The Bush Administration’s policy towards the DPRK is regime change. Branding North Korea as part of an “axis of evil”, the Bush Administration demands a free hand to punish a member state of the

United Nations by economic blockade and war. At the same time, the US administration declares the DPRK has no right to self defence. Given such options, it is not surprising that the DPRK has resorted to nuclear weapons tests.

The world needs peace, not another war. The US policy of regime change has resulted in the deaths of 655,000 Iraqis. A nuclear war on the Korean Peninsula would bring untold suffering to the people of both North and South Korea. Nuclear disarmament is the best guarantee of security and the most firm basis for an enduring peace.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) are important international agreements to prevent the *spread* of nuclear weapons. To prevent the *use* of nuclear weapons existing nuclear weapons stock piles must be reduced and eliminated. A powerful and united world wide peace movement is needed to make that happen.

The policy of all US administrations has been to maintain nuclear weapons supremacy. The policy was established in August 1945 when President Harry Truman ordered atomic bombs to be dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Bush Administration continues that policy.

The Bush Administration withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) to be free of constraints in its Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) program. The ABM treaty is now defunct.

The NPT dating from 1968 and signed by 189 states was intended to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons to countries not possessing them and was extended indefinitely in 2003 with a solemn agreement among the major nuclear powers to accelerate efforts to reduce the numbers of nuclear weapons. The US Bush administration backed out of the acceleration commitment.

The Clinton administration signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) but the US Republican dominated Senate refused to ratify it because the USA was heavily engaged in the production and testing of tactical nuclear weapons of the bunker busting type which it has plans for using against Iran. The USA has to this day not ratified CTBT.

The current frenzy of condemnation of the DPRK by the major nuclear lacks credibility. The USA, Russia, France, Great Britain, China, India and Pakistan and Israel to 1990 conducted 530 nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere or under water and 1,522 tests underground. The USA

alone to 1992 conducted 1,032 tests. The 1998 tests by India and Pakistan took place in defiance of the NPT. Israel has conducted secret tests and is reported to have a nuclear stockpile greater than Britain, including the long range missile system to deliver them throughout the Middle East. Nuclear weapons development, testing and deployment by the USA and Israel have proceeded without any IAEA oversight. The use by NATO of depleted uranium in shells and bombs has wreaked havoc on the lives and territory of the former Yugoslavia, and now Iraq and Afghanistan.

Twelve thousand nuclear war heads are deployed (in active service) with 90% of these weapons in the hands of the USA and Russia. The total of both deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons number 27,000. Thousands of nuclear weapons are on hair trigger alert defined as readiness to fire as early warning systems activate launch-on-warning. Hair trigger alert is fraught with dangers of false warnings.

It is clear to all, except for an ideologically blinded minority, that the DPRK is not decisive in eliminating the nuclear threat from the world. The major nuclear powers are. In the first place, it is the USA and NATO that is driving the current renewal of the nuclear arms race by the development and deployment of BMD and tactical nuclear weapons. The USA maintains a first strike nuclear policy and includes in its military doctrine the use of nuclear weapons against states that do not possess them. The USA deploys nuclear weapons offensively outside its own territory from foreign military bases aimed at states it deems to be adversaries such as the DPRK and Iran.

The hue and cry about an alleged threat to the USA by the DPRK drips with hypocrisy. The U.S. has 30,000 troops in South Korea and has recently conducted military manoeuvres aimed at the DPRK involving 120,000 US and South Korean forces, armed with nuclear weapons. The people of Korea remember that US General Douglas MacArthur, called for the use of atomic weapons against the DPRK and China, during the Korean war of 1950, a scant five years after President Truman ordered atomic bombs to be dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Adhering to the terms of the defeat of Japanese forces in Korea at the end of the war in the Pacific, the USSR withdrew all of its forces from the Korean Peninsula in 1947. The USA is still there, claiming it has “strategic interests” in the area.

The USA seeks to prolong its military presence in South Korea to maintain a powerful nuclear equipped military force in proximity to

China. The US has nuclear weapons in South Korea, on the US Pacific Fleet and at huge airbases near Tokyo and on the island of Okinawa. The presence of US bases has resulted in large peace movements in both Japan and South Korea demanding the removal of all US military forces from the region.

The US is opposed to détente between North and South Korea. The process of North South détente began in 1985 when the DPRK acceded to the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and signed a Joint Declaration with South Korea on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. That process was halted when the US accused the DPRK of engaging in the production of weapons grade plutonium and imposed economic sanctions.

Pressure from the Korean people restarted negotiations between DPRK and the USA in 1994 and the DPRK agreed once again to freeze its nuclear program, accede to IAEA inspections, rejoin the NPT and agree to a treaty on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, including the dismantling of its nuclear plants. The DPRK demanded formal assurances from the USA that it would not use nuclear threats against the DPRK and the USA would help finance light- water reactors to supply two 1000 MW plants and supply heavy oil to ease the energy needs of the DPRK domestic economy. The agreement would include easing trade restrictions and lead to formal diplomatic relations.

The election of the Bush Administration, and its infamous declaration that North Korea was part of an “Axis of Evil” that included Iran and Syria, effectively destroyed the diplomatic process. The USA reneged on its agreements, and the DPRK reverted to a military defensive posture and declared on February 2005 that it possessed nuclear weapons.

The Bush policy of regime change, confrontation, nuclear supremacy leads to war. Another policy is needed to achieve peace. The Canadian Peace Congress joins in solidarity with all peace forces who assert that isolation of the DPRK, sanctions, military threats will lead to a deeper crisis and possible nuclear war. The process of negotiations based on respect for the sovereignty and rights and security of the DPRK, can lead to a reduction of tensions and avoidance of conflict. That is what we expect our Government to work for.

THE LAST WORD

NO INCOME, NO TRUST

Wage earners can be forgiven if they are not overcome with grief that the portfolios of the wealthy heavily invested in income trusts are a bit lighter and that corporations sheltered in trusts will now pay taxes.

The Liberals claim to be outraged. What next? Taxing wealth sheltered off-shore? No more corporate subsidies? No more tax deferrals and write offs? What a concept - corporations prevented from evading taxation.

When the Liberals lament the loss of unearned retirement income from income trusts they are not talking about wage earners. High risk investments are impossible for workers who live on wages. Workers pay for their OCP and CPP public pensions by tax deductions from each and every pay cheque. Most workers cannot afford RRSP's while raising families. Workers rely on union negotiated pension plans, paid for from deferred wages. Unorganized workers often wind up with nothing but OCP.

When Conservative Finance Minister Jim Flaherty ended the income trust party he also wasn't concerned about workers pensions, he was concerned about voter back lash that was developing around the income trust scam.

Flaherty was also attempting to settle in inter-corporate row. Thirty-percent of Big Oil companies had converted to

income trusts and Telus and BCE were leading another parade of companies bent on evading taxes. Paul Desmarais of Power Corporation and corporate king maker, had a quiet talk with Stephen Harper and complained that the corporate playing field was not level and demanded an end to the competitive advantage given to Big Oil. Harper got the message and Flaherty acted. Flaherty hasn't ended corporate privilege – he has deferred it until after the next election.

Secure retirement income for workers is not won on the stock market or pandering to corporate schemes. It is won in struggles with the capitalist state and the employer classes. That struggle is not over and won't be until every worker has a secure pension.

THE NEXT ISSUE OF FOCUS ON SOCIALISM

US President George W. Bush in one of his recent speeches claimed to be aware of Lenin's great work “What Is To Be Done.” For a President that critics claim has difficulty reading a corn flakes box without a teleprompter, it was a stretch for Focus to imagine Bush reading Lenin. Perhaps that other scholar, Dick Cheney helped him with the tough passages.

Bush nevertheless was making a valid point. US imperialism *is* engaged in an ideological war. That much is true. US imperialism is engaged in a world wide struggle of ideas and the main protagonist continues to be Marxism Leninism. For a world outlook that has been pronounced dead many times throughout the last century and a half, Marxism as Bush confirms, is remarkably resilient. The next issue of Focus On Socialism, with the help of Tim Buck, Lenin and the documents of the International Communist

movement will attempt an analysis of the current state of the battle of ideas. Readers may be surprised at how Lenin's observations in 1902 can help us to analyze today's struggles.

The national question is back. Liberal leadership candidate Michael Ignatieff has finally accepted Quebec's status as a nation about sixty years after the Communists first pointed out that fact. Murray Dobbin, in a recent issue of CCPA Monitor has ventured some theories on the state and corporate power that Focus will discuss. Focus will venture into these subject areas, again with the help of the Communist Party's Program and Lenin's writings on the National Question and the State.

Focus will continue to comment on labour policy, the NDP and offer some predictions on the next federal election. We are working on some farm issues in particular the struggle to save the Wheat Board.

Focus will publish a book list and would like to hear from our readers about what they are reading. If you have read a good book that you think helps advance the struggle for peace and socialism, we would like to hear about it. Send us a review. Letters to the Editor are welcome.

The Editorial Board

TO OUR READERS

Focus on Socialism is returning to a journal format. The journal format appeared January 1979 under the editorship of Bill Beeching, first Chair of the Committee of Canadian Communists (CCC) and first editor of Focus on Marxism Leninism. Volume One Number One of Focus was a critical thesis by Bill on problems faced by the Communist Party. Focus will serialize Bill's work in future issues.

The current issue of Focus On Socialism is Volume 25, Issue 2 marking twenty-five years of Communist commentary and analysis. Much more needs to be done. There is an urgent need on the left for a consistent Marxist Leninist theoretical pole in the tradition of World Marxist Review, Problems of Peace and Socialism, Monthly Review, Marxist Quarterly and Communist Viewpoint. CPS and Focus on Socialism is dedicated to making a contribution to fill that void.

We welcome W.C. O'Casey to the editorial board. John Beeching is stepping down and will continue on as Honorary Chair of CPS and to write for Focus. Our next issue will announce a new Canadian for Peace and Socialism website. We appeal for your support.

The Communist Party of Canada has just issued its call to the 35th Central Convention to be held in Toronto on February 1- 4, 2007. The Party invites "friends and supporters" to participate in the pre-convention discussion. CPS will study the Main Political Resolution and submit a contribution. CPS and Focus on Socialism will also request observer status at the CPC Convention.

Another important event takes place this month, a meeting in Athens of the International Communist Parties. The main issue before the meeting is the role of energy in the struggle with imperialism. Focus will study the documents and share our observations with our readers.

Don Currie, Chair Canadians for Peace and Socialism

FOR A PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PROGRAM OF PEACE

STOP THE ATTACK ON WORKERS

HALT THE MILITARIZATION OF CANADA

END THE CORPORATE CONTROL OF PARLIAMENT

DEFEAT P.M. HARPER

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

- ✓ **FEDERAL ELECTION PREVIEW**

- ✓ **THE ALBERTA ADVANTAGE (PART II)**

- ✓ **LENINIST THEORY & PRACTICE — A
WORKER'S GUIDE**