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Canada

Canada: Getting rid of the Harper government – an imperative necessity

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For some years, Canada's Conservative government has imposed a series of social, political and cultural regressions: concentration of wealth in the hands of the 1%, dismantling of public services, decline of democratic rights and deterioration of the environment. Harper's austerity policies have perverted the institutions of representative democracy and have strengthened repressive policies against the trade union movement and popular resistance. The Harper government has, in addition, committed Canada to a militaristic course. These policies increasingly reflect ever more closely the interests of the most offensive factions of the dominant class (the financial, extractivist and military-industrial sectors).

Concentration of wealth in the hands of the 1%

The distribution of wealth is the central issue of the class struggle in the Canadian state. By increasingly regressive taxation, the multiplication of openings to tax avoidance for the richest, and the legal opening to the use of tax havens, the Harper government has followed a policy of radical enablement of the dominant classes to avoid the payment of taxes. The action of the Conservative Party is in the tradition inaugurated by the Liberal Party of Canada. The income gap is widening more and more.

The Conservative government, and the provincial governments in Canada who follow in its footsteps, follows austerity policies to make the subaltern classes pay the debt caused by the disengagement of the banks, large companies and other financial institutions of the level of the share of tax that they should pay to finish with the concentration of wealth and the resulting inequities. The financial oligarchy has imposed its orientations and the governments are at their service.

The Conservative government has attacked unemployment insurance. It has decreased unemployment insurance benefits and their accessibility. It is now attacking pension schemes.

Dismantling of public services

At the level of the civil service, the Conservative government has delivered massive redundancies in the various governmental departments and agencies. Even the research institutes have been affected, particularly those whose research would have allowed us to throw some light on the environmental consequences of governmental policies.

The Conservative government systematically pursues a policy of privatization and public disinvestment. Basing itself on the debt system - reduction of the tax contributions of the dominant class, government indebtedness with banks and financial institutions, and use of the debt to justify austerity policies and privatization of public services by pointing to their deterioration - this is the framework of the economic policy of the neo-liberal governments concerning the public sector.

A multiplication of policies against women

and their struggle for liberation

The policies of the Conservatives against equality and fairness for women are a constant. The neo-liberal and neo-conservative state is more and more clearly a patriarchal state. The attacks against public services are attacks against jobs often occupied by women. This government have also attacked pay equity in the public service. Not content to target women, the Harper government has targeted organizations for the defence of the rights of women which have had their funding cut. No surprise that it is among women that this government polls lowest.

A turn toward increasing exploitation of fossil fuels

As regards the environment, the Conservative Party is irresponsible and cavalier. It has rejected the Kyoto accords. It subsidizes the extraction of dirty oil in Alberta. It has stepped up efforts to promote the export of this oil by supporting the construction of pipelines on the entire American continent and by putting pressure on European governments to accept the import of oil from the tar sands.

It has not hesitated to use the worst parliamentary manipulation to attack the environmental laws with the aim of speeding up the establishment of infrastructure to exploit and transport oil from the Canadian west.

Opening of Canada to the cult of free trade

Harper's Conservative government has maintained systematically the turn of the Canadian bourgeoisie toward free trade: NAFTA, multiple bilateral treaties with many countries of Latin America and Asia, negotiation of a free-trade treaty with Europe, negotiation of a Transpacific treaty. For neo-liberal governments and the Conservative government in particular, it is about giving free rein to the multinationals to attack the social state, to allow companies to question social and environmental protections. All the social advances won by hard struggles are threatened. For example, these agreements grant private companies the power to sue the Canadian government for public health measures which would erode their rate of profits.

Multiplication of attacks on democratic rights

The Harper Government has made a mockery of democratic rights and gives an increasingly limited character to democracy in the Canadian state. It has even attacked the parliamentary institution by introducing mammoth laws to push through its counter-reforms. It has abused gags to end debate. It despises the media and has sought to control and to hide information from the public. It has decreased grants for organizations for the defence of rights and freedoms - rights of women and indigenous peoples. With Bill C-51, "the government seeks to put in place a broad integrated system of information collection, investigations, arrests and preventive interventions which could even be contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms." It is clear that the plan is to give to the Canadian state more repressive capabilities against the popular resistance to these antisocial and anti-environmental projects. The government has not hesitated to assimilate environmentalists opposing the construction of pipelines to terrorists.

A warlike stance in the service of pillage and

the military-industrial complex

The Harper government has engaged in a series of wars following the requests of the US government. It is engaged in a war against Islamic State under the pretext of combating terrorism. This war contributes to the dismantling of the existing international order and constitutes a threat to peace and security. It meets the wishes of the forces of neo-colonial re-conquest of the Middle East and its oil wealth. It meets the interests of the military-industrial complex who see in it business opportunities. It creates in the Canadian state a climate of obsession with security and restrictions of the democratic rights of any social and political opposition to this government. It allows the diversion of “colossal public resources to make war, promote military industry, and glorify the army and the military past of Canada, while years of “austerity measures” are imposed on education, health, public services, the promotion of the rights of women, the protection of the environment, international cooperation and so on.” (Échec À la guerre)

Contempt for First Nations and the Quebec nation and a denial of their right to self-determination

The Conservative government maintains the indigenous peoples in a colonial situation. Their living conditions are those of the peoples of the third world and this government refuses to tackle this situation and give them essential rights. It allows the oil companies to plunder their territories and to threaten their environment and their survival.

The Conservative government has not recognized Quebec as a nation with a right to independence and enjoying the right to self-determination. Recognition as a nation is granted only on the condition that the Quebec nation defines itself within the framework of the Canadian state. And this recognition has no legal impact. In short, it is pure manipulation. The policies of the Conservative government trample underfoot the French language, the provincial powers as defined in the constitution and the right of Quebec to make fundamental social and economic choices concerning its future. Thus the people of Quebec are denied the right to decide on the passage of pipelines across their territory. The strategy of Nation Building of the governments in Ottawa means the negation of the existence of oppressed nations in the Canadian state and of their right to self-determination.

Get rid of this government, the essential task

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However, the Bloc Québécois and other nationalists have underestimated the importance of ending the Conservative government to justify sending a few MPs to Ottawa. This attitude is indicative of an irresponsibility which denies the task of the hour: use the federal election to get rid of this government and to demonstrate to the whole of the oligarchy that the popular majority in Canada and in Quebec wants to end the current offensive waged by a government in the service of the dominant class.

Source: the blog [Presse-toi À gauche](#).