

## Editorial

# "Made in Canada": Lining Up Workers Behind the Agenda of the Monopolies

Over the past two years approximately 200,000 manufacturing jobs have disappeared in Ontario alone. This is largely the result of the overproduction crisis which exists for many commodities and particularly in the automobile sector. Increasingly, the big monopolies are either shutting down plants in North America and relocating them to China or modernizing their technology in order to reduce their labour costs or both.

Within this situation, intense ideological pressure is being exerted on workers to divert them from seeking alternatives to the status quo. In one way or another, workers are being told that they can achieve job security by lining up behind their own monopolies in their competition for markets with

foreign monopolies. One such example is the "Made in Canada" campaign of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) union. According to the CAW, the goal of this campaign is to "protect Canadians by keeping jobs in Canada".

Of course, no one can argue with the goal of keeping Canadian workers working in good-paying jobs. In fact, that should be the goal for workers in every country. However, the issue is how trade unions such as the CAW propose to accomplish this goal. The example of the Ford assembly plant at St Thomas, Ontario provides a good example.

The St. Thomas plant is one of the plants slated for downsizing or closure by Ford as it seeks to

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## Stephen Harper at the United Nations

The Sixty-first Session of the United Nations General Assembly opened at UN Headquarters in New York on September 19. It began with a general debate initiated by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and followed with speeches by the heads of state and government of the member countries. Prime Minister Stephen Harper addressed the General Assembly on September 21 and used the occasion to pat himself and his government on the back for Canada's participation in the ongoing U.S. and NATO aggression against Afghanistan.

Harper portrayed Canada's role in Afghanistan as just, honourable and consistent with high ideals. One of his arguments to support this contention was that the UN Security Council has given its blessing to the U.S.-led "Operation Enduring Freedom" and the

NATO-led "International Security Assistance Force". He said: "All our actions in Afghanistan - civilian and military - are being taken in accordance with the mandate of the United Nations Security Council." But what does this prove? The UN Security Council "mandate" only proves that the five permanent members of the Security Council have agreed to carve up Afghanistan. In a more general way it also proves that the imperialist doctrine of "might makes right" still prevails in relations among states. This is a far cry from justice, honour and high ideals.

Furthermore, it is even far-fetched to state that Canada has a mandate. The United States, Britain and NATO acted unilaterally when they invaded

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rationalize its North American manufacturing facilities and free up capital to expand its production facilities in China and other low-wage countries. At the same time that it is closing several plants and laying off 30,000 workers in the United States and Canada, Ford is planning to build a new plant somewhere in North America for the production of small cars. The CAW has submitted a detailed proposal to Ford making a business case for building this new plant at St. Thomas, adjacent to the existing plant. The essence of the proposal is that, if Ford builds the plant at St. Thomas, the CAW will agree to lower wages and streamlined job classifications. Wages would start at 75 percent of the master Big Three agreement and gradually increase to 100 percent over a period of six years. During those first six years, the CAW would also eliminate several days of special paid absences that auto workers now enjoy and guarantee that there are no strikes. The CAW is also promising to lobby the Ontario and federal governments to pay 20 percent of the capital costs of the new plant. According to CAW president Buzz Hargrove, the CAW's proposal would generate profits averaging 18.3 percent annually over seven years, compared to projected returns of 4.9 percent for a plant in the U.S. and 9.3 percent for a plant in Mexico.

The CAW is also trying to broker a deal between Ford and Frank Stronach's Magna International whereby Magna would build and own the new plant in St. Thomas and produce cars for Ford. Magna currently produces cars in Europe on contract with BMW, the Chrysler and Mercedes division of Daimler-Chrysler and the Saab unit of General Motors. It is extremely interested in developing an assembly site in North America. During the last federal election the CAW endorsed Belinda Stronach, Frank Stronach's daughter and the Liberal candidate in Newmarket-Aurora. Around the same time, Magna announced that it would be dropping its long-time opposition to CAW organizing drives in its Ontario parts manufacturing plants.

In addition, the CAW recently agreed to the re-opening of its collective agreement with General Motors in Oshawa for the purpose of contracting out 388 unionized jobs and making a number of other concessions. Once again, the rationale was to 'save jobs in Canada' by assisting the employer to remain competitive.

In the steel industry, which is also in the midst of global restructuring, similar calls are being issued by the unions to 'save' the Canadian steel industry through a combination of government handouts and protectionist measures against steel imports from abroad, especially Asia. These calls are also couched in language about 'protecting Canadians' and the Canadian economy and saving local communities.

The problem with all of these calls to 'keep jobs in Canada' is that they are selling workers a bill of goods. At present one of the main factors in the elimination of jobs in the manufacturing sector is rapid technological change, which is, in turn, necessitated by fierce global competition. Therefore, any government handouts will be used by the monopolies to modernize their technology and eliminate jobs. If the unions were honest with workers they would admit that their schemes amount to little more than attempts to 'keep a few jobs in Canada', that is, attempts to merely slow down the inexorable destruction of manufacturing jobs in Canada. However, the unions would then have to explain to workers what their long-term strategy is to reverse this trend and, of course, they have no such strategy.

Worse yet is the mentality that the unions are instilling in workers in the name of 'saving jobs', the mentality of submission to the demands of the monopoly capitalists. The issue is not just a matter of making concessions to the capitalists. In fact, sometimes it is in the short-term interest of workers to make concessions in order to keep their jobs. However, in this situation the issue is that by convincing workers that their long-term interests are served by lining up behind their 'own' capitalists against the capitalists (and workers) in other countries, these unions are blocking any possibility for workers to actually defend their long-term interests. They are also setting the stage for the wholesale slaughter of workers when the current inter-monopoly and inter-imperialist trade wars become all-out shooting wars.

The entire experience of the working class of all countries during the past century has been that there is no common ground between their interests and the interests of the monopoly capitalists. Monopoly capitalism is synonymous with reaction and war, with corruption and parasitism. There can be no

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# The CAW's "Balanced" Resolution on the Middle East

†On August 17, the Eighth Constitutional Convention of the Canadian Auto Workers in Vancouver passed an emergency resolution on the crisis in the Middle East. The resolution was passed at a time when not only was the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank continuing, but an all-out assault by Israel on the people and infrastructure of Lebanon was underway. Yet unlike resolutions passed by CUPE-Ontario and CUPW, which clearly expressed their opposition to the crimes Israel is committing in the region, the CAW resolution was intended to take a more "balanced" approach. (See sidebar for the full text of the resolution.)

††The resolution is underpinned by a number of assumptions which are worth examining. From the very preamble, which talks about the humanitarian crisis facing Lebanese, Palestinian and Israeli citizens, the CAW resolution is based on the notion of *e q u i v a l e n c y* : equivalency of responsibility for the crisis in the Middle East (including the invasion of Lebanon) and equivalency of suffering because of this crisis.

†The problem with the CAW resolution is that there is no equivalency between an occupier and the occupied or an aggressor nation and the country it invades. How can Hezbollah, an organization that includes a military

wing of guerilla fighters, be compared to the Israeli state, which has one of the largest armies in the world? Even the Hezbollah kidnapping of two IDF soldiers is the pretext Israel used to launch its invasion of Lebanon is a military attack. Israel's response was to launch massive air strikes against the people of Lebanon, systematically targeting the country's civilian population and infrastructure. Within the first two weeks of launching the assault on Lebanon, Israel had destroyed oil refineries, hospitals, electrical plants, schools, bridges, and even a UN command post. The numbers of civilian casualties also tell the story is Hezbollah's attacks on Israel resulted in the death of less than 40

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## Text of CAW Resolution on the Middle East

WHEREAS the war in the Middle East has produced a deep and grave humanitarian crisis and a horrible tragedy for Lebanese, Palestinian and Israeli citizens;

WHEREAS a diplomatic resolution guaranteeing the security of the people of the region and the cessation of hostilities is imperative;

WHEREAS the Government of Canada must assert a leadership role that is unfettered by any outside influence and solely reflects what the Government concludes is in the Canadian public's best interest;

IT IS RESOLVED THAT this Convention calls for:

1. An end to the shelling of Israeli cities by Hamas militants.
2. An end to the shelling of Israeli cities by Hezbollah militants.
3. An end to Israeli bombing of Lebanon and Gaza and all military operations including the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and Lebanon, and the demilitarization of Southern Lebanon, south of the Litani River.
4. The release of the Palestinian Ministers and Parliamentarians arrested by the Israelis.
5. The immediate return, unharmed of captured Israeli soldiers.
6. The immediate reinstatement of International Aid to the Palestinian Authority under the leadership of President Abbas.
7. Acceptance by Hamas and Hezbollah, and their sponsors Iran and Syria, that Israel is a legitimate member of the community of nations of the world, and any call for its destruction is unquestionably unacceptable.
8. Acceptance by Israel of a peaceful process of negotiation, in concert with the duly elected government within Gaza and the occupied territories of the West Bank and the implementation of a negotiated solution to the plight of the Palestinian people including the establishment of a viable Palestinian State, and the resolution by negotiation of the issues of Palestinian refugees, and the status of Jerusalem.
9. Recognition that all civilians in the region have the right to personal security and to live in peace and that the terrorizing of civilian populations to further political ends is unacceptable.
10. All parties and governments in the region to respect and adhere to the conditions of the UN ceasefire resolution, without compromising or limiting the terms above.

### **Harper at the UN...from page 1**

Afghanistan. Later they had their actions rubber-stamped by the UN Security Council. This did nothing to change the fact that these countries invaded and occupied a sovereign state and overthrew its government contrary to the letter and spirit of the UN Charter.

In his speech Stephen Harper also justified Canada's presence in Afghanistan on the grounds that the Taliban regime was promoting terrorism. He quoted from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan who said that terrorism is a direct attack on the core values the United Nations stand for: the rule of law, the protection of civilians, mutual respect between people of different faiths and cultures, and peaceful resolution of conflict. It is a fact that the Taliban government refused all requests to extradite Osama bin Laden to the United States or a third country. However, this is not grounds for launching a military attack on another country. If that were the criterion then every country in Latin America would have legal grounds to launch a military attack against the United States for training, financing and equipping death squads and facilitating other terrorist activities in their countries.

In addition, if Mr. Harper subscribes to Kofi Annan's definition of terrorism, then he should have joined the representatives of Iran, Venezuela and Cuba in denouncing the United States of George W. Bush, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld who have shown themselves in utter contempt of the rule of law, civil rights, the rights of people of different faiths and cultures, and the peaceful resolution of international conflicts. But Stephen Harper did not do this. Rather, he simply parroted the empty rhetoric of George W. Bush about defending freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Prime Minister Harper also told the General Assembly that Canadians feel tremendous pride in Canada's role in Afghanistan, despite the fact that all of the public opinion polls in Canada tell a different story. He concluded his speech by stating that the challenge in Afghanistan is one of peace-building in a nation where there is not yet peace. This is spin-doctoring of the first order. In plain language, what is happening in Afghanistan is that the U.S. and the NATO countries, including Canada, are waging war

against a sovereign nation and they have not been able to eliminate the resistance there. Nor are they likely to succeed in doing so in the future, as the Soviet Union found out not so many years ago.

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protection for Canadians or any other people so long as this system dominates Canada. Supporting the agenda of the monopoly capitalists can only lead to the further elimination of Canadian jobs and even greater disasters for the Canadian working class and people. Standing up for Canada and the Canadian people necessitates ending the domination of Canada by monopoly capital and not the further enslavement of Canadians to monopoly capital as the CAW and various other unions are advocating.

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### **CAW Resolution...from page 3**

civilians, with over 100 soldiers killed. Israel's attacks on Lebanon killed over 1,000 Lebanese civilians, with less than a couple of hundred Hezbollah fighters killed. No other conclusion can be drawn than that Israel was deliberately targeting civilians while Hezbollah largely confined itself to military targets.

††The CAW has long portrayed itself as a champion of social justice issues in Canada and around the world.† Its so-called balanced resolution on the Middle East passed on August 17 is in clear contradiction with this image.

## **Modern Communism**

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**To contact the Manitoba Branch of CPC(M-L):  
Fax: 477-6741  
Email: mrc-cpcml@mts.net  
Internet: www.modern-communism.ca  
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