

# Democracy Prorogued?

## Hope is in the Streets, not Parliament!

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### THE HARPER TORIES

We can all see there are many reasons to oppose the Harper Tories. Just in the past short time, they have been responsible for:

- ▶ *Undermining efforts to address climate change in a meaningful and just way,*
- ▶ *Supporting the Alberta tar sands, which many commentators believe is the single-worst act of ecological violence on the planet,*
- ▶ *Propping up the corrupt Karzai government and covering up torture allegations against the same as part of a NATO-led occupation of Afghanistan,*
- ▶ *Vulgar boosterism for the corporate feeding-frenzy that is the 2010 Olympics, being held on stolen and unceded indigenous lands, and*
- ▶ *Cuts to important community organizations and government programs, such as the Canadian Arab Federation, KAIROS, and Status of Women Canada.*

All of this in addition to upcoming public spending cuts in the March federal budget that will weaken crucial services and hurt the workers who deliver them.

### PROROGATION

The latest affront from the Harper Tories has been the proroguing of Parliament, an event that has brought out thousands of people across the country in protest. However, in our efforts to rightfully condemn the Tories, we shouldn't forget two facts:

- 1 *All Canadian parliamentary parties agree on more than they disagree on: the primacy of markets over the people.*

Despite partisan feuding, all parties - including the NDP - accept the subservience to corporations, financial markets and balanced-budget dogma of neoliberal capitalism. Capitalism is the global system that's causing ecological crisis and doing so much harm to people.

- 2 *The kind of democracy we have in Canada - representative democracy - is democratic only in a very limited way.*

Holding elections every four years to select a few hundred people to 'run the country' leaves real power in the hands of people who are never elected: the people who own and manage major corporations, the top slice of the government bureaucracy, military generals, and so on.

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We need to remember, while we are out here today protesting the unilateral decision of Harper to prorogue Parliament, that even while in-session Parliament did not truly work for the people of this country.

No party currently exists that offers solutions to today's crises, and any party that tried would quickly discover the limitations of Parliament's power.

We need to remember that this country, built on the conquest of the indigenous population and the Quebecois and the exploited labour of countless immigrants, has never been run for the benefit of the majority of its population - but instead for a rogue's gallery of the rich, the powerful, the well-connected.

**What, then, can today's protest accomplish?** It can show the powers-that-be that many people do not accept anti-democratic powergrabs.

More importantly, today can be the start of something bigger.

We didn't get into this mess by voting, and voting won't get us out. Instead of looking to the Liberals, the NDP & the Bloc Quebecois to save us from the Tories, we need to build power from below: protest and resistance against cuts, privatization and all other efforts to make ordinary people pay for the economic crisis. We also need to demand and work for measures that really will help people, including:

- ▶ *A strategy for 'greening' the economy, focused on creating decent green jobs and drastically cutting our carbon emissions.*
- ▶ Expanded and strengthened education and social programs to combat inequality.
- ▶ *Ending the occupation of Afghanistan*
- ▶ Real aid & debt cancellation for Haiti - not a military occupation by the US and United Nations.

These changes will not come about by electing this politician or that politician. Real change will only come by building our power on the streets, in our workplaces, on our campuses - through strong unions and strong community organizations.



*The Winnipeg New Socialist Group is a local collective working to build the next upsurge of radical left politics. We want to work with others who have the same goals. If you'd like to learn more about the Winnipeg New Socialist Group, or if you are interested in working with us, please contact us at [winnipeg@newsocialist.org](mailto:winnipeg@newsocialist.org) and check out [www.newsocialist.org](http://www.newsocialist.org).*