



**THE NOVEMBER 8TH
PUBLISHING HOUSE**
Publisher of Marxist-Leninist and Progressive Literature

Who Does the Dire Situation in B.C. Serve?

- N. Ribar -

In *What Do You Do When Both Sides Are Wrong?*, B. Paul wrote:

Two wrong interpretations cannot add up to a correct conclusion; nor can any number of interpretations replace the study of the thing itself. We cannot properly understand any phenomenon without studying it itself, as it really exists. Not divergences, not exceptions, not interpretations, but the thing itself must be examined, in its development, and in its myriad of relationships.

So often the choices that are presented to us by the consortium of big business, big labour and the state, through their cartel parties and the monopoly press, are given only to make us feel as though there is a choice. They have created a so-called “political spectrum” — a left and a right, a liberal and a conservative, a “progressive” and a “traditional”, etc. And if you do not fall under one of these labels, then you fall in somewhere in-between — you are a blend, a mix, a median.

The situation is presented thus: here, you have two choices. If you do not like the way you are living while the current government is in power, vote for the other party the next time around and you may get change. And then when the new party is elected the reverse occurs. It is increasingly clear to Canadians and to the peoples of all countries who aspire for renewal that this way of doing things is anachronistic. In the present way of doing things, outlooks are not built from the people themselves, from their aspirations and desires, starting from their feeling that everything is not alright and built into a conscious movement with an aim, but rather the pre-existing outlooks within the realm of “acceptable” views within the present political process are presented to them as if they are the only available choices.

Right now in Canada, we are facing this acute problem. Two wrong interpretations or some mix of them are put forward as to say — choose a side, pick a right and a wrong. At the same time, it is said that it is good to look at things from “both sides.” But the world itself is one and indivisible. Certainly, it is made up of things which constitute a whole, but it is one whole and not two. So, the truth is also whole: either something did happen or it did not. If



THE NOVEMBER 8TH PUBLISHING HOUSE

Publisher of Marxist-Leninist and Progressive Literature

there were two interpretations of the world, they may both claim that I am not writing this article right now but disagree on what exactly I am doing; say, for example, if one side would claim that I am watching television while the other would claim I am reading a book. Both of these outlooks are wrong, not only because I am not watching television or reading a book, but also because they both stem from the basic falsehood that I am not writing at the moment. Thus, two wrong interpretations cannot make a right, and to understand something it is necessary to study the thing itself, not from some preset dogmas, whether it be conservative, liberal, social-democratic or even communist dogmas, but to dive into the motion and interconnection of the thing.

One example of where this scenario is playing out in full force is in British Columbia, the westernmost province of Canada. As anyone who has been paying attention to federal politics as of late knows, there has been a sharp debate between the Conservatives and the NDP-Liberal coalition over the drug problem in B.C. The Conservatives, who are neither in power provincially nor federally, naturally will have the upper hand in criticizing the situation because they can claim to have no blame. The NDP-Liberal coalition is in power both provincially and federally, so they have a disadvantage. What are these arguments?

Starting with the latter, the NDP-Liberals argue for what is called “safe supply,” prescriptions to people identified as “high risk for overdose” for illicit drugs. The idea is that instead of users picking up illegal drugs which have a certain likelihood to be infused with more dangerous substances causing overdoses, they will take drugs manufactured safely as are other prescriptions. It then follows that overdoses and death will decrease, a form of “harm reduction.” On the other hand, the Conservatives openly disparage the NDP-Liberal policy as ineffective and encouraging the use of drugs. They blame the scenes of Vancouver and other areas of B.C. where drug addiction and overdose is commonplace on this policy, and are clamouring to criminalize the youth instead.

On the face of it, it may seem like these are opposing views, a spectrum and one’s role is merely to choose a side or somewhere in between. But, in fact, the idea that the Conservatives and NDP-Liberals differ is only true on its face. These are two interpretations with their own agendas being imposed on the people, but to leave the matter at that is to omit the key feature of both of these forces. They are both in favour of the drug trade on the



THE NOVEMBER 8TH PUBLISHING HOUSE

Publisher of Marxist-Leninist and Progressive Literature

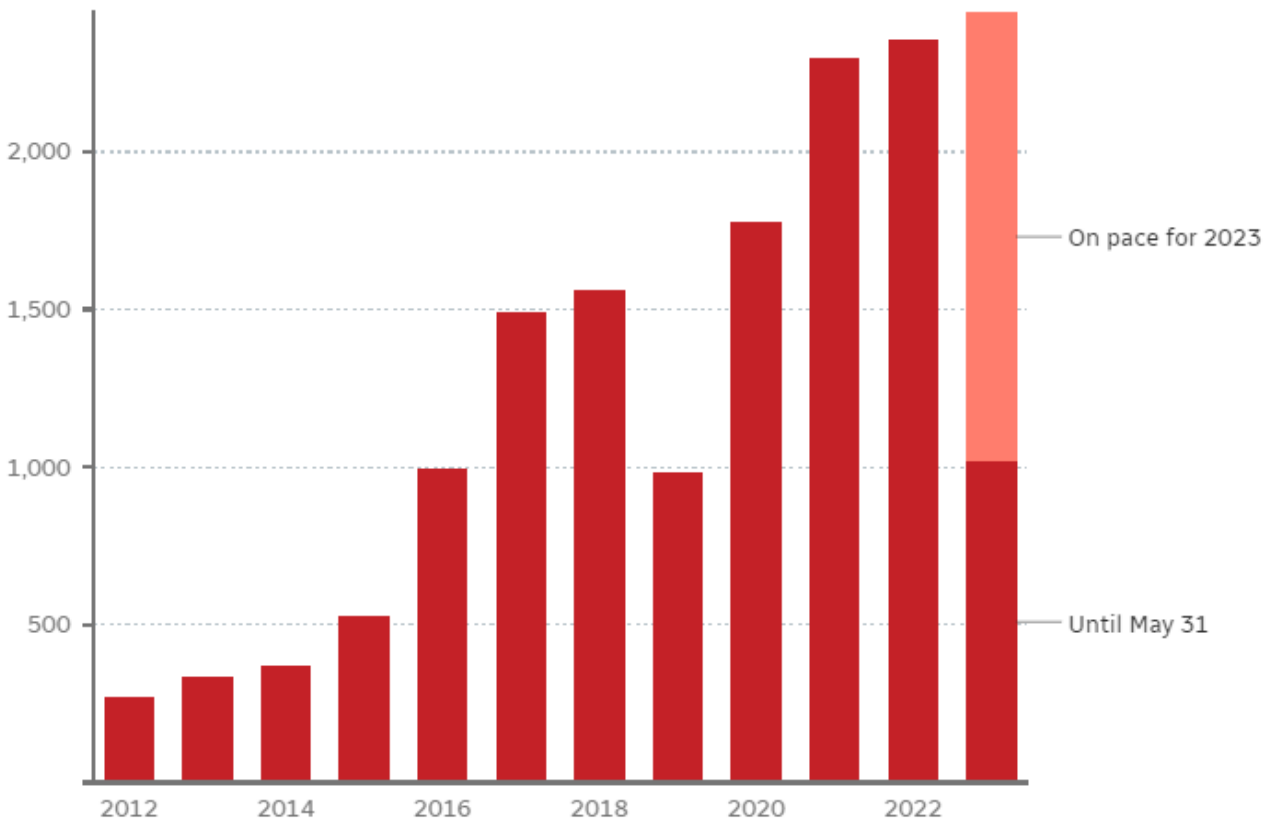
world scale, and any of their words to the contrary is mere posturing. Before the people of Afghanistan kicked out the U.S. neo-colonial regime and wiped out the production of opium, 90% of the heroin on the Canadian market was from Afghanistan. The U.S. imperialists and their Canadian abettors, regardless of which cartel party was in power, invaded and strengthened their grip over Afghanistan to produce an item that could be sent back home and used in the drug trade. Neither the government of Stephen Harper nor Justin Trudeau has or could raise a voice against this. On the contrary, since the Afghani people won victory against the U.S. invaders two years ago, the Trudeau government has issued the most foul and prejudiced statements opposing their right to determine their social system, most certainly in part due to the loss of opium.

Now, again regarding B.C., what is the *whole truth*? What do we find by looking into the thing in its motion and interconnection? For one, and this nobody will deny, we find a dire situation. On June 19, 2023, the Canadian Press issued an article with the headline: "Death toll for toxic drugs in B.C. surpasses 1,000 in first 5 months of the year." As this report makes out, overdose is now the leading cause of death for British Columbians from the ages of 10 to 59. It is a greater factor in death than homicides, suicides, accidents and natural disasters combined. On the basis of the same data, the following is a graph of the B.C. overdose deaths year after year from the CBC:



Number of toxic drug deaths per year in B.C.

2023 numbers as of May 31.



Other reports have indicated that overdoses have increased by 300% since the implementation of “safe supply” prescriptions. Some in the scientific community, and the website of the government of Canada, still claim that safe supply will reduce overdoses. On its head, such a proposition makes sense. After all, if someone is going to use drugs, would it not be more beneficial for them to use drugs which will not kill them? Why has this led to the opposite results?

The reason for this is that very few people use the drugs they are given through safe supply. They are ciphered off to people, who may, at first, use them, but the problem is that the more you use them the less they are effective at delivering relief for an addiction. The vast majority of people who take the safe supply drugs turn around and sell them to dealers who will give them more potent drugs, who then sell to other people. In this way, the communities are flooded with endless drugs, with more and more dealers who have a



THE NOVEMBER 8TH PUBLISHING HOUSE

Publisher of Marxist-Leninist and Progressive Literature

greater interest in selling to more and more people at higher and higher prices. Some believe for some mystical reason that the laws of capitalist society do not apply to drugs because the way they are bought and sold is “illegal,” under the table, but when looking at the question from a dialectical viewpoint, we see that society is a single whole and that drugs do operate according to anarchy in production, the law of value, a greater pursuit of profit-making on the part of the dealer, etc. just as any capitalist enterprise does. The dealer who does not make a profit will be ruined and destitute.

It thus follows that with a greater and greater supply, turning the profits of the trade into a more substantial portion of economic life, an increasing number of people, especially the youth, will be driven into using drugs. The fact that many of the most severe drugs, including heroin, fentanyl, cocaine, methamphetamine and the like are available and, moreover, abundant and present in B.C. today, are in themselves signs of a society that is in deep decay and devastation, ready to move on and advance. The fact that the Canadian government is presenting this situation to the people as though they are saving lives when seeking truth from facts tells the opposite story, of a 300% increase in deaths, is simply another example of their stock-in-trade methods of disinformation. The agenda has already been decided from above — the policies will carry on — regardless of what the people are demanding.

One of the key aspects of this program is that the goal of giving out prescription illicit drugs is not recovery, and this is stated on the website of the federal government. They claim safe supply services offer: “flexible client goals (for example, focusing on improving health and not requiring that clients stop using illegal drugs).” That is, the goal is not to eliminate or even reduce drugs at all, but merely to increase a safe supply in the society, “improving health.” Government has given up the old phoney banner it held of helping people overcome addiction and instead replaced it with one that ignores the problem of the people’s sufferings entirely.

The question is begging to be asked: who is served by flooding working class and minority communities, most of all Indigenous communities, with drugs? Let us imagine some of its effects. Well, for one, drug addiction makes the user disoriented. When the “New Left” emerged in the 1960s with all its sects and promotion of decadent lifestyles, they professed



THE NOVEMBER 8TH PUBLISHING HOUSE

Publisher of Marxist-Leninist and Progressive Literature

a liberal culture of standing on the sidelines, possibly joining a protest here and there and thinking it will change the situation, but most of all “having fun.” In that era, the so-called “counter-culture” which prevailed stated that the revolution comes from inside, from changing one’s actions to one of a hedonistic self-pleasuring lifestyle, and not changing the world. Change the individual, to use drugs and “have fun” — this is the first effect.

The second effect reveals very markedly what kind of human beings a society in decay produces. The dependence which comes along with the use of drugs is conducive to docility and passivity. The highest aspiration of the exploited and oppressed individual, which is renewal to end their marginalization, becomes second to something that makes them physically dependent. In such a tragic situation, the ability to consciously act becomes very difficult to obtain.

The third effect, and perhaps the most myopic, is that it makes the individuals numb to what is going on around them. We are living in an all-sided crisis where the youth are militarized and criminalized, and will never even be capable of owning their own home. The so-called “popular culture” is marred with cosmopolitanism, pornography and sexualization — all that is decadent and anti-people, and the thinking imposed by university ivory tower intellectuals on the people is postmodern and denies all science and objective analysis. And, of course, drug addiction itself is a crisis in proportions never before seen. There are active genocides in Canada that the government refuses to put an end to no matter the cost in human lives. In the favour of the owning class, workers who utilize drugs become more willing to work an endless amount of hours, as they can simply use it as an “escape” from the horrific conditions they are tied to. The youth especially see no future in this system, and the solution can never be to dive into some substance for artificial happiness, but to take up the work necessary to change it.

Are these conducive to serving the working class or the ruling class? A liberal “do your own thing and have fun,” docility and passivity, and a numbing agent for the all-round devastation in society. Over the scenes of homeless people on the streets doing drugs, or that of the parent who has to see their child’s life ruined, the capitalist class gets to count its fat stacks and preserve its social system. Certain sections of that class may oppose drugs in rhetoric, but all they mean is that they want to imprison people for doing drugs, not that



THE NOVEMBER 8TH PUBLISHING HOUSE

Publisher of Marxist-Leninist and Progressive Literature

they want to eliminate the basis of drugs, because this society can never do such a thing. Not only will they not be eliminated from this society from the standpoint that it is something a certain section of people will resort to out of desperation, but also because it is part and parcel of the bourgeois tactics of ruling over the people.

In military wars of aggression where grave crimes against humanity are committed, for example, those of the U.S. in Vietnam or the nazi Germans in the Soviet Union, bombers, guards and executioners very often were and are given drugs and alcohol to abuse to make them capable of committing such heinous acts. In the latter case, some have postulated that the only reason the nazi war machine was able to kill on the scale it did was because of widespread drug use. If whenever capitalism, in its last stage of imperialism, enters into war ventures (and it does so regularly) it is forced to resort to such things to attain its objectives, then we cannot be discussing a “bad policy,” as this transcends what is referred to as “policy,” but a system whose overthrow is the order of the day.

Regardless of the differences between the various cartel parties, they are all for a society that makes such ills possible. They all protect and defend such a system. The drug policies that have come about, whether it be “safe supply” and the ever-increasing levels of drugs in various communities or the criminalization of larger sections of the population, are all in favour of a system that breeds ills against the will of the people that constitute the society. It can thus only be concluded that the drug policies ruling presently are marked by the stamp of the capitalist class and are in their servitude.

Now, we must consider the way out. The solution cannot be to change a few things within bourgeois society when it itself is the cause of all the problems, get elected to some level and try to push for some policy changes. The solution cannot be to advocate for an endless stream of drugs flooding into communities, wreaking havoc and only serving the ruling class and relations. The solution has to be something more, something really deep-going. To solve the crisis is to take up the renewal of the political process to end the marginalization of the people, open the path for the working class to occupy the space for change and put itself at the centre-stage of development. If such a thing were done, the electorate would be empowered to make decisions for itself, and there would be no need for drug use or abuse as a distraction, a numbing agent or a means to “have fun.” The people could enact a series



THE NOVEMBER 8TH PUBLISHING HOUSE

Publisher of Marxist-Leninist and Progressive Literature

of programs whereby people who use drugs are given the ability, help and encouragement to recover.

As for those of us who intend to constitute the leading, advanced forces in this struggle, we cannot but oppose those theories and ways of living which promote “doing your own thing,” docility and desensitization to all that is base. It is not a frivolous thing, but a matter of principle to be clear-minded and always thinking, always opposing things which may seem superfluous but are actually a key component of the anti-social offensive we are facing.

Some people who talk about progressive causes claim that it cannot be done, that the world cannot be free of ills because within bourgeois society people use and abuse them. In actuality, it can and must be done. To say that the cause of the working class, which has in its interests to end capitalist ills, cannot constitute itself a force capable of advancing those interests is to demean the role which that class must play in human progress. It is to be caught up, stuck in the prevailing ruling ideology which espouses that liberal democracy is the end of history. The individual imbued with this ideology becomes unable to think beyond its boundaries and ruling system, that people will always “want to have fun,” etc. But, we may ask, why does what is considered fun have to be confined only to what defines “fun” in capitalist society? Cannot we bring out, from the life of the people in their struggle, modern definitions of entertainment that are consistent with the next stage of development?

Of course, we can, and we must. British Columbia is today a test centre for where the ruling class is dragging down society in general, in a new and heightened stage of the anti-social offensive. These new heights of decay, decadence and degeneration in all spheres of life will not go uncombated by the working people, led by their advanced elements, who are determined to bring power into their hands and end all that is outdated and against their interests, and against the interests of all humanity. When both sides are wrong, the people answer the call of history to devise their own outlook based on one whole truth.