

## New book on Harper's record

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Just in time for the federal election, the [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives](#) yesterday released [The Harper Record](#).

Edited by [Canadian Labour Congress](#) researcher Teresa Healy, with contributions from 47 policy analysts and economists, The Harper Record gives a detailed account of the laws, policies, regulations and initiatives of the Conservative government over the last two-and-a-half years.

Scheduled for broad release in early October, the CCPA is releasing an electronic version of the book this week to help Canadians make informed choices about the future of their country.

The findings, says Healy, are startling. "Contrary to the general perception that this has been a moderate government, this book reveals that it, in fact, has taken significant steps to transform Canada in a very short time. Harper's very conservative vision has been advanced across a broad range of policies. It is a deeply troubling prelude of things to come."

Excerpts from The Harper Record:

- Municipalities have been denied the federal funding urgently needed to repair aging water treatment plants. Instead, Harper has seen the crumbling municipal infrastructure as an opportunity for private corporations to make profits.
- The Harper government has engaged in a wide range of privatization activities intended to increase corporate power and weaken the public sphere.
- The contracting-out of work by the federal government has nearly doubled in real dollars since 2000-01 and now amounts to about \$10 billion a year.
- Contracting-out theoretically lowers government costs, but since private firms can charge more for the work they do, the costs invariably go up. It is estimated that reversing just one-third of the work currently contracted out would save the federal government about \$500 million or more a year.
- At the United Nations, the Harper government has repeatedly opposed the recognition of water as a human right. Their opposition is spurred by NAFTA, which defines water as a service and an investment, not as a fundamental essence of life itself.
- Under the current Harper tax regime, low-income individuals, most of them women, actually end up paying a higher income tax rate than do large corporations.
- The total price tag for Harper's military spending over the next 20 years is a staggering \$490 billion. Canadians hoping for expenditures of that magnitude from the Harper government for health care or the environment will be disappointed.
- Canada's tax system has been made less fair by harmful corporate tax cuts.
- Harper has let the "free" market run freely without government intervention, permitting environmentally destructive development of the tar sands, a wave of foreign takeovers, and a shift of nearly all new job-creation from high-paying industries to the relatively low-paying service sector.
- Canada attracted over \$200 billion worth of foreign investment in 2006-07, but this inflow was not aimed at building new facilities or creating jobs; instead, 94 per cent of it was aimed at taking over existing profitable Canadian companies. With just one exception, these takeovers have been rubberstamped by the Harper government.

- The many Canadian icons that have been allowed to fall into foreign hands include Domtar, Falconbridge, Stelco, Inco, Algoma Steel, Hudson's Bay Company, Four Seasons Hotels, Molson's, Labatt's, Tim Hortons, and even the Montreal Canadiens.
- The Conservatives have subsidized big oil companies by an estimated \$1.5 billion. Canada is the only petroleum producing nation that provides subsidies of this kind to massively profitable companies, while allowing its oil and gas to be exploited entirely by foreigners.
- One of Harper's first decisions as Prime Minister was to terminate the early learning and child care agreements reached with by the previous Liberal government, which would have provided \$5 billion as a first step toward establishing a national child care system in Canada. Instead Canadians got a taxable monthly allowance of \$100 for each child under six.
- The United Nations General Assembly last June voted 143 to 4 in favour of adopting the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Canada was one of the four countries that voted against it.
- The UN's Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict has publicly deplored Harper's decision to leave Canadian citizen Omar Khadr imprisoned at Guantamano Bay. Khadr was a teenager when first imprisoned by the Americans.
- The No-Fly List, introduced by the Harper government in 2007, violates several sections of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including mobility, due process, and equality rights, and the right to be free from unreasonable search and seizure. People are put on the list with no prior notice or opportunity for a hearing to learn about and answer the allegations against them.
- Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) was set up to provide migrant workers with employment. The TFWP has ignored the exploitation, mistreatment and underpayment of these "guest" workers by many employers. Harper promised to bring in reforms that would ensure fair treatment for these migrants, and for immigrants, too. But in his 2007 budget, he allocated more than \$84 million to the TFWP.