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people's VOICE

**Wealth and poverty
in Canada**

See page 5

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earth day 2010

**The future
of the
planet is
in our
hands...**

Environment, not profit!
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Quebec Common Front heading towards a general strike?

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Fascist violence

A sudden wave of violent attacks against anti-racist activists appears to be connected to an upsurge of hate campaigns launched by neo-Nazis and white supremacist groups.

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School cuts

A staggering \$18.1 million budget shortfall could force nearly 200 job cuts in Vancouver schools, but the fightback is gaining momentum.

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Crisis "far from over"

Despite the corporate mythology, the latest economic crisis is far from over. In fact, the pursuit of even bigger profits is creating conditions for a deeper recession in the months ahead.

Solidarity with Journal de Montréal workers!

The following resolution in solidarity with the Journal de Montréal newspaper workers, who have been locked out for over 15 months, was adopted by the Central Committee, Communist Party of Canada, on March 28.

Since January 24, 2009, 253 clerical and editorial workers of the Journal de Montréal have undergone a lockout imposed by their employer, Pierre-Karl Péladeau, boss of the Québec

empire and owner of *Le Journal de Montréal*.

The objective of Péladeau is to make his staff accept major setbacks in their working conditions, including elimination of hundreds of positions in the advertising department, mostly held by women, to replace subcontractors, and to allow all of his media companies to supply content for *Le Journal de Montréal*, going against the rules of journalistic

ethics that ensure the quality of information. Since the conflict began, Péladeau has made demands for some 233 rollbacks in collective agreement provisions, and refuses any genuine negotiations.

Péladeau has invoked the "crisis of the media industry" to justify his actions, but this is only an excuse. In reality, the *Journal de Montréal* made profits of \$50 million in 2008, on sales of \$200 million. Péladeau holds a record of lockouts in his business empire, always with the aim of strangling unions in endless conflicts.

As with disputes at Videotron in 2002, which lasted almost a year, and at the *Journal de Québec* that lasted 16 months, Péladeau prepared his coup in anticipation of a long conflict. During the months preceding the lockout, he doubled the number of managers, expanded the newsroom of the free daily *24 heures*, and created a new news agency to circumvent Québec's anti-scab law. In addition, he has tried to impose exclusivity agreements on freelance journalists, by which they abandon their copyrights to Québecor, which supplies their writings to the *Journal de Montréal*.

Through these manoeuvres, the *Journal de Montréal* is produced

daily without his professional workforce, as if there was no conflict. Québecor is playing with the rules and laws of Québec with the deepest contempt, yet the company has received wide support from the state, public funds, and the Caisse de depot (Québec pension plan) to become the monopoly it is today in the fields of information and communications. Québecor has indeed been guilty of using strikebreakers during the *Journal de Québec* conflict, but this ruling occurred only when the conflict had ended.

In order to resist this aggression



Logo of the web newspaper, www.ruefrontenac.com

and to offer an alternative to the public, the union has produced a newspaper on the web, *Rue Frontenac*. For its part, the union federation to which the union is affiliated, the CSN, launched on Feb. 26 a major campaign to support the 253 locked-out workers. To pressure elected officials at all levels, the CSN is inviting the public to sign a petition asking the government to "put in motion all means available to promote, as soon as possible, a settlement negotiated and satisfactory to the parties (appointing a special mediator, legislative action to rebalance the power relationship, etc.)."

The Communist Party of Canada fully supports the struggle of the *Journal de Montréal* workers, and urges the government of Québec to strengthen and enforce the spirit of the anti-scab provisions in the Labour Code of Québec. ●



On the picket line at the Journal de Montréal

Student Movement News

First Nations Uni shut-down

First Nations University is being shut down by the Ministry of Indian and Northern Affairs. The institution recently reached a funding agreement with Saskatchewan's government, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the University of Regina. Without the federal government's \$7.2 million annual contribution, the University will close its doors, further breaking treaty obligations to fund Aboriginal education.

Student demo in Montreal

Over 12,000 students and allies marched in the streets of Montreal on April 1, protesting the recent Charest budget. The demonstration was organized by the Coalition Against User Fees and the Privatisation of Public Services, composed of over 100 unions and community, feminist, environmentalist and student organisations. The coalition is calling on the government to instead adopt a more progressive tax system, add a tax bracket for the highest incomes and reduce then abolish tax exemptions benefiting the rich. More: youtube.com/watch?v=Po8irzf7_4

Right-wing attacks on CFS

A number of student associations are holding referendums to leave the Canadian Federation of Students this spring. Students on campuses in Guelph, Calgary, and Montréal have just voted to leave. Several of the campaigns have been coordinated by networks of right-wing students including members of the Conservative Party, leaving progressive student activists calling foul. ●

PV Fund Drive: \$50,000 in 2010
\$17,422 raised already -
34.8% of our target!

This year's PV Fund Drive is now in high gear, with another \$9,207 raised since our previous issue. That brings the total to \$17,422, or 34.8% of our \$50,000 target for 2010.

So far, it's a close race, with Alberta leading the way. Our supporters in the wild rose province have achieved 39.7%, with \$1350 out of their target of \$3400. Ontario is second, with \$7577 sent in, or 35.1% of their target of \$21,600. Just behind the leaders is British Columbia, with \$6620 towards its goal of \$20,000, or 33.1%, and then Manitoba, at 30%, with \$740 out of the goal of \$2400. Saskatchewan readers have sent \$200, or 25% of their \$800 goal, followed by Newfoundland & Labrador, with \$80 sent in, or

20% of their goal of \$400. Supporters in the Maritime provinces have raised \$75, or 6.5% of their \$1200 target. Another \$800 has been sent by generous supporters in the United States and beyond. Thanks to everyone for your contributions so far!

This issue of *People's Voice* has a couple of examples to prove why the working class press is so important for labour activists and other progressives. If any readers in English-speaking Canada have seen mass media coverage of the magnificent labour struggles in Quebec, reported on page 7 of this issue, we'd like to hear about it. Similarly, if readers outside British Columbia have seen reports about the attempt by Catalyst to drive down the wages

of Vancouver Island pulp and paper workers (see page 4), let us know. Seriously, please send in copies of any clippings about these stories - we are quite certain that only *People's Voice* is presenting coverage of these critical topics to working people across Canada!

Contributions for the PV Drive will be collected at the next Left Film Night, Sunday, April 25, 7:00 pm, at 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver. The movie will be *Life and Debt*, a powerful documentary about the impact of capitalist globalization on Jamaica.

Remember to mark Sunday, May 9 on your calendars. That's the Burnaby Club's annual Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast, starting 10 am, at 5435 Kincaid Street. It's just \$10 (or \$8 for readers under 12) for all the fabulous food you can eat. For details, call Anna at 604-294-6775.

As a mark of appreciation for your generosity, we are once again offering supporters complimentary gifts. For each \$100 in donations, you can choose one of these black and white portraits, mounted on card, matted and ready for framing: Che Guevara, Clara Zetkin, Augusto Cesar Sandino, Bhagat Singh, Gall (Sioux), Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Louis Riel, Jeanne Corbin, or Gladys Marin. Other choices include music CDs or a copy of our 2010 Women's Socialist Calendar. ●

Here's my contribution to the PV Fund Drive!

Enclosed please find my donation of \$ _____ to the 2010 People's Voice Press Fund Drive.

Name _____

Address _____

City/town _____

Prov. _____ Postal Code _____

Send your contribution to:
 People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1

MAY DAY 2010 GREETING ADS

To mark May Day 2010, *People's Voice* will print greetings from a wide range of labour and people's organizations in our May 1-15 issue, which will be distributed at events across Canada. The deadline for camera-ready ads is April 24; if PV is preparing the layout, the deadline is April 22. Please check with us about the format if your ad is being sent electronically.

Ad rates (based on 5 column page):

One column-inch.....	\$10
One column x 2 inches.....	\$20
Two columns x 2 inches.....	\$35
Two columns x 3 inches.....	\$50
Two columns x 5 inches.....	\$75
Three columns x 4 inches.....	\$90
Two columns x 7 inches.....	\$100
Three columns x 7 inches.....	\$150

Send greetings to *People's Voice* at:
 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1
 Fax (604)254-9803 E-mail: pvoice@telus.net

New wave of attacks against anti-racists

By Kimball Cariou

A new upsurge in violence against anti-racists is emerging in western Canada and the U.S. Pacific Northwest region.

The most serious recent incident was in Portland, Oregon, where a prominent activist was shot just after midnight on March 27. Luke Querner, who has spent over a decade opposing the white supremacist movement in Oregon, was the target of an apparently well-planned attack by an assailant who concealed his identity and fled the scene. At last report, Querner remained in intensive care.

While local police portrayed the attack as a random, gang-related shooting, Portland Anti-Racist Action believes the attempted murder was a political act designed to intimidate anti-racists.

"The Portland Police aren't telling the whole story," states Alicia of Portland ARA. "They have not mentioned the most obvious motive for the shooting. We fear that they are more interested in smearing the victim than in uncovering the truth."

An expanded statement with

further details surrounding the shooting is available on the website rosecityantifa.org.

White supremacist groups in the region, such as Volksfront, the Northwest Front and the National Socialist Movement, share information about anti-racists and the Left, and have been increasing their actions against such targets.

Two other attacks in Canada appear to confirm that neo-Nazis are stepping up their terror campaign.

During the early morning hours of April 6, a bomb blast damaged a home in Abbotsford, just east of Vancouver. Police report that an accelerant and a fused device were used in the attack.

Anti-Racist Action member Maitland Cassia lives in the house. He told media that the blast was likely in retaliation for an anti-Nazi rally which he helped organize at New Westminster's Braid SkyTrain Station on March 21. Cassia's name and face were in much of the coverage of the rally, which drew hundreds of anti-racists. A couple of the neo-Nazis who had called for a "white pride" march to start at the station turned



Aryan Guard posters pasted to the front door of Anti-Racist Action members in Calgary.

up but left quickly.

Cassia planned to move out of the house immediately. Abbotsford police say they have had "no prior interaction" with the residents, and are trying to determine "potential motives" for the attack.

A few days earlier, neo-Nazi posters were plastered on the front door of two leading anti-racists in Calgary. The "poorly-made" posters attacked Jason Devine, a public spokesperson of Anti-

Racist Action Calgary, and ARA itself as an organisation.

The posters feature the web site and email addresses of Calgary's Aryan Guard, the white supremacist neo-Nazi group whose members have committed a string of assaults in recent years.

The postering is the latest attack on the northeast Calgary home of Jason and Bonnie Devine, and their

young children. In 2008 a Molotov cocktail was thrown at the house, causing minor damage. Racist graffiti has been sprayed-painted on the walls, and last fall a cinder block was thrown through the front window and a projectile shot through the children's window.

The Devines have often been the focus of abusive and threatening messages on neo-Nazi websites. The new posters are further important evidence that the Aryan Guard has been targeting Jason and Bonnie, who have been leading organizers in a successful public campaign to expose the racist movement in Calgary.

The Devines are also members of the Communist Party of Canada, which has demanded police action to protect the family, and to bring charges against the perpetrators of the attacks. Earlier this year, the CPC called for the firing of Calgary Police Service chief Rick Hanson, citing his apparent inability to ensure that the department take appropriate action against these crimes. ●

Harper government attacks human rights

PSAC/CALM

The Harper government has decided to close Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) offices in Vancouver, Toronto and Halifax. These three offices received 70 per cent of all signed complaints to the CHRC in 2008.

The Public Service Alliance of Canada maintains that closure will make it substantially harder for individuals from marginalized groups to launch human rights complaints.

For PSAC president John Gordon, the closures indicate a strategy by the Conservative government to destabilize human rights organizations and women's groups in Canada.

"When the Conservatives took power in 2006, one of their first moves was to abolish the Court Challenges Program and close Status of Women Canada offices across the country," Gordon says. "Women's groups were denied government funding if they engaged in research or advocacy work, and equality-seeking groups lost the ability to fund Charter of Rights challenges. The government has also cancelled funding to notable NGOs such as KAIROS, and appointed ultra-conservative partisan board members to Rights and Democracy - manufacturing a massive crisis within the organization. The closure of CHRC offices is another example of this outrageous trend." ●

Fix job crisis: CCPA

CCPA/CALM

Canada faces its worst job crisis in a generation and the federal government needs to step up, says the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA). Along with the release of its annual Alternative Federal Budget, the CCPA proposed a six-point job plan.

"The global recession wiped out 486,000 full-time Canadian jobs within a year and those jobs aren't coming back on their own," says CCPA economist Armine Yalnizyan. "To make matters worse, 810,000 Employment Insurance beneficiaries may run out of benefits within the next few months without a job in sight."

The CCPA jobs plan would:

- Reform EI to ensure more than a million and a half jobless Canadians don't fall into poverty or end up on welfare.
- Commit \$15 billion a year, focused on paying down a huge accumulated deficit in social and physical infrastructure investments
- Invest \$5 billion over three years to rejuvenate the industrial base of this country
- Make Canada an environmental leader with a \$5 billion plan over three years to green our economy
- Double summer employment efforts to ensure Canada's youth don't sit out another year.
- Unleash a poverty reduction plan to help boost fledgling consumer confidence and get Canadians spending locally.

"It took seven years to regain the full-time jobs lost in the 1990-91 recession," says budget coordinator David Macdonald. "Our plan would bring unemployment back to pre-recession levels by the end of 2011 and demonstrates there is a better way to reach fiscal balance through smart investments and smart taxation." ●

Vancouver school cutbacks meet with angry response

PV Vancouver Bureau

Faced with the biggest funding crisis in its history, several Vancouver School Board trustees have warned that they will not vote for the preliminary budget presented on April 7 by the VSB's senior management. Teachers' unions also gave an immediate thumbs down to the budget, which would eliminate 190 full-time equivalent positions.

School boards across British Columbia are struggling with an estimated \$200 million funding shortfall for the 2010-11 term. Vancouver alone is looking at a shortfall of \$18.1 million in a total budget of about \$450 million. Prohibited from operating a deficit (unlike higher levels of government), VSB officials propose to slash millions of dollars from special needs students, inner city schools, English as a secondary language (ESL) and many other programs. Ten instructional days will be cut from the school calendar. The next step, in the 2011-12 school year, would include school closures.

The three Coalition of Progressive Electors trustees, Allen Blakey, Allan Wong and Jane Bouey, announced that as it stands, they could not vote for the preliminary budget.

"The provincial government's deliberate under-funding and cutbacks are responsible for this budget that does not meet the needs of the children and youth of Vancouver," said Board vice-chair Jane Bouey. "Districts right across the province, even those with growing enrollment, are facing similar cuts."

Trustee Allen Blakey commented: "This is crazy. We have money for a stadium roof and to helicopter snow on to Cypress

Mountain, but we can't fund public schools in Vancouver properly." Blakey was referring to plans to spend \$600 million of taxpayers money for a retractable roof on B.C. Place, as demanded by developers of a new casino project adjacent to the stadium.

"In tonight's proposed budget, we're forced to cut direct services to children like special education and inner city school programs, when we should be improving our system," asserted Allan Wong. "An early Mandarin program that has long been supported by our community is nowhere to be seen in this budget. That's unacceptable."

"If we're going to make cuts, then a much bigger proportion needs to come from senior management positions. The cuts need to be kept as far away as possible from kids," added Blakey.

Bouey pointed out, "Our budget needs to provide adequate support for all of our students, especially Aboriginal children, ESL students, and those with special needs. The budget we were presented tonight doesn't do that and we won't vote for it. Provincial resources need to be increased substantially or the school board can't do the job it was elected to do."

The preliminary budget was also condemned by the teachers' unions.

"Vancouver classrooms and supports to students have already been decimated over the past eight years because of successive Ministers of Education failure to provide funding that meets the real needs of our students," said Chris Harris, president of the Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association. "During the eight-year period ending in 2009/2010, the district reduced its operating budget by a new total of \$51 million - and now there is an additional

\$18.12 million shortfall."

Teachers and school trustees, including VSB Chair Patti Bacchus, have been stunned by flippant comments from Minister of Education Margaret MacDiarmid. For example, MacDiarmid says the Vancouver district has enjoyed annual budget surpluses, apparently based on the fact that the VSB has money in its bank account at the end of each fiscal year. The minister's bizarre argument ignores the reality that for many years, the VSB has been compelled to meet its legal obligations by repeatedly cutting staff and programs.

MacDiarmid claims that declining enrollment is the only factor affecting funding. This ignores the fact that even Surrey, which is now the largest district in B.C., faces a \$12 million deficit next year, despite higher enrollment. The real factors behind underfunding include the Liberal government's tactics of downloading extra costs to Boards, clawing back grants, and changing the "per pupil funding" formula from one year to the next.

"The Minister of Education is either completely ignorant of the real costs of running a school district and what supports students need, or she is deliberately misrepresenting the situation," says Harris. "Either way, she has demonstrated that she should either resign or be removed from her position."

A similar position has been expressed by Bacchus, whose Vision party holds four of the nine VSB trustee positions.

Several public consultations will be held on the budget, including April 15 and 21 at the VSB offices (1580 West Broadway), and April 20 at Mount Pleasant Elementary. The final budget, including amendments by trustees, will be put to a vote on April 29. ●

EDITORIALS

Climate justice for Earth Day

Recent headlines reporting that Inuit communities are describing warming and "weirder" weather to scientists should add urgency to Earth Day events.

In expressing our support to the actions on April 22, *People's Voice* again calls for emergency climate change legislation. Environmental problems are not simply a question of individual consumption habits. They are deeply rooted in social-economic realities. The Copenhagen Summit's failure to reach an agreement shows that imperialism aims to transfer the cost of climate change directly onto the backs of the world's peoples. For centuries, imperialist countries have pillaged the global south. Some, like Bolivian President Evo Morales, have recently called for climate reparations allowing third-world countries to economically develop using sustainable technology.

Yet from international to domestic policy, Canada's Harper Conservatives have consistently allowed the big corporate polluters to set the guidelines, ignoring scientific facts while crafting destructive positions. We need to boot Harper out, and radically re-write Canada's position to one of climate justice.

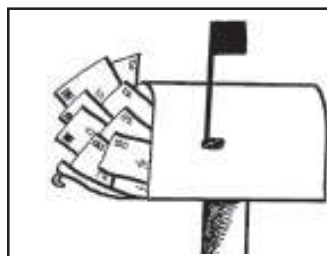
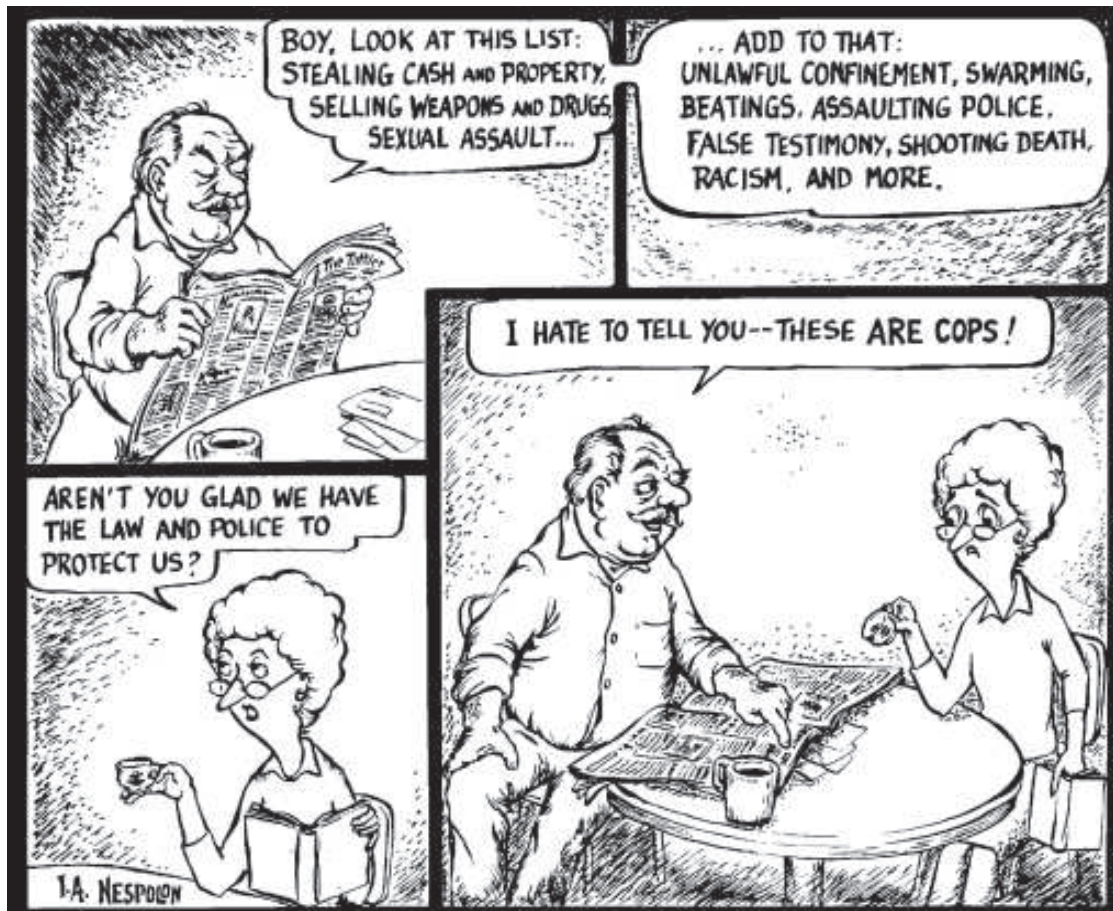
Our friends in the Young Communist League are currently debating putting climate change onto their priority areas of struggle (see page 6 in this issue) in the lead-up to their May 21-23 Central Convention. We wish them well in this discussion. Climate justice is an important demand, not just of the youth but also the working class. Serious progress in this direction appears clearly incompatible with a social and economic system based on private ownership of wealth and resources. Protection of the environment requires a deep-rooted social transformation, breaking away from capitalism, and instead putting nature before profits as a critical step towards socialism.

Canadians say "no extension"

The latest developments confirm that the future of Afghanistan must be in the hands of its own citizens, not the NATO occupation armies. The supposedly "bizarre" comment by President Hamid Karzai - that he might consider joining hands with the Taliban - proves what the anti-war movement and progressive Afghans have often said: there is no fundamental difference between the NATO-backed "Northern Alliance" which currently holds office in Kabul, and the Taliban who were driven out in the fall of 2001. Both groupings are linked to various sections of the warlords which were given huge imperialist backing to defeat the pro-people government of Afghanistan in the early 1990s. Both have taken advantage of alliances with the U.S. for their own purposes, and neither has any intention of advancing the equality of Afghan women, or other progressive policies.

Karzai's statements have further undermined popular support for the war. For several years, polls have shown that a majority of Canadians oppose extending the military mission in Afghanistan. The latest survey shows this anti-war sentiment rising: 60 per cent now oppose any military extension, while just 28 per cent support such a course. Not surprisingly, opposition to the mission is highest among Bloc Quebecois voters (75%) and NDPers (62%; Jack Layton, are you listening?). But even more conservative sections of voters reject continuing the war. Extension is backed by just 37 per cent of Albertans, 36 per cent of Tory voters and 35 per cent of men.

This won't stop the Harper Tories from maneuvering to find a way to keep the troops in Afghanistan. But it does give the anti-war movements even greater legitimacy to demand the immediate pullout of all Canadian troops. The billions of dollars spent on fighting this disastrous war should be redirected towards support for genuine, grassroots people's movements in Afghanistan.



Letters to the Editor

Catalyst Paper lies to drive down wages

Catalyst Paper is having troubles. Their just released Annual Report talks about the global recession, the post Olympic-post recession world, the strong Canadian dollar, the weak market globally for newsprint and the fact that the Chinese market will set demand levels for the next several years.

There isn't one of their troubles, or the troubles of the corporate world generally, that is caused by the workers in their four mills or the residents of the BC cities they are located in.

Why then did they pilot an



attack on municipal taxes to impoverish the towns that have nurtured them and why won't they pay the millions they owe after they lost in the courts? Why do they demand a roll-back of negotiated wages, benefits and working conditions as a condition for re-opening the Elk Falls plant?

There are two years left in the current "pattern" agreement and they want the workers to break the pattern by re-opening at Elk Falls. They want the remaining 105 Elk Falls workers to take ridiculous concessions. On top of this they want to have new "non-core" wages for almost every maintenance and service job that is not directly production of paper.

Is it possible that this is a move by Catalyst to introduce a two-tier wage and benefit system, a direct attack on new hires and a separation of workers into different classes? This is exactly

what has happened in all other concessionary bargaining and it is at the heart of the nine month strike in Sudbury, Ontario, by nickel miners.

If the Elk Falls workers are finagled into accepting a concession agreement below the other plants, with no guarantee of re-opening, it is likely the agreement will be used as a club against workers at the other three plants and a bidding war will ensue. This could only escalate downward and bottom out with no bargaining power and almost certainly the loss of the union. It is very probable in the next several years that three of the four plants could supply the weak global market and Catalyst could keep rotating its closures to keep the equipment working and to keep forcing concessions in a plant by plant bidding war to the bottom.

The \$82,000 per year wage being used in company propaganda is a farce. It includes all employment costs, benefits, pension costs, severance and retiree costs. It probably includes landscaping and building maintenance. It is exactly the method of phony bookkeeping used by General Motors against the Autoworkers in Ontario. To spread the lie through a complicit media is to tell all BC citizens that the workers in Campbell River are greedy and overpaid when they are really unemployed and in dire straits.

Most Canadian manufacturing corporations have taken advantage of the crisis, which was not created by workers, to force huge concessions in wages and working conditions. The Auto industry was the leader but the same has taken place more quietly with a more or less passive trade union leadership across

manufacturing.

If working people want to have any future and not return to the conditions of the 1930's it is necessary to resist the offensive being launched against them and their communities. The corporate world created the crisis and not working people. If they want to close mills instead of operating them then they should be seized for taxes owing and nationalized. If we are to maintain sustainable industries and communities then let us work in mills we own and earn equity in. If we are going to pay the bills we want the ownership deed and the profits.

Graham Auger and Jack Higgins, retired workers from Elk Falls Plant, Campbell River



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Wealth and poverty in Canada

The Forbes list of the world's "richest 1000" includes 23 Canadian individuals and families. Fifteen of these billionaires are in the top 500, starting with media empire owners David Thomson and family, who place 20th with a staggering \$19.0 billion in net worth.

Ranking #100 is the Weston family (\$7.2 billion, retail). Tied for #212 with \$4.0 billion in net worth are the Irvings (refineries, agribusiness) and B.C.'s Jimmy Pattison (media, advertising, supermarkets, real estate). Paul Desmarais is at #232, with his \$3.9 billion financial and media conglomerate. Barry Sherman,

founder of the Apotex pharmaceutical giant, is at #237 with \$3.7 billion.

David Azrieli's shopping malls worth \$2.5 billion place him at #374, tied with Guy Laliberte, founder of Cirque de Soleil, and electronics distributor Robert Miller.

Others in the top 500 include Emanuele Saputo (2.4 billion, dairy agribusiness), Jeffrey Skoll (2.4 billion, first president of eBay, now movie producer), James Balsillie and Mike Lazaridis, \$2.3 and \$2.2 billion respectively (co-founders of Blackberry maker Research in Motion), Wallace McCain (\$2.3 billion, agribusiness), and Charles

Bronfman (\$2.0 billion, inherited from the Bronfman liquor empire).

Meanwhile, poverty is a fact of life for over 3.5 million people across Canada. In 1989, when the House of Commons passed a resolution to eliminate poverty among children by the year 2000, the rate of child poverty was 15.1%. By 2000, that rate had increased to 18.1%. In 2006, the child poverty rate stood at 15.8%, meaning that more than 700,000 Canadian children were still living below the official low-income cutoff definition. That number has almost certainly increased substantially during the recent economic crisis. ●

By Mikael Swayze/CUPE

The Supreme Court of Canada has upheld a decision of the Northwest Territories Court of Appeal in the Royal Oak case. The civil case, brought by widows of the miners killed after an explosion during a bitter 1992 strike, centred on the question of who bore liability for the deaths of the miners.

The widows sued the territorial government, Pinkerton's and Royal Oak Mines Incorporated for failing to prevent the murders. The widows also sued the union, CASAW (Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied Workers, which subsequently merged with CAW), union officials and members of the local for inciting and failing to control the miner who set off the explosion.

The strike began in 1992. The mine decided to operate with so-called "replacement workers" guarded by Pinkerton's security. The striking miners engaged in acts of sabotage, including setting explosions. On September 18, 1992, one such explosion killed nine miners. In 1995, a union member was convicted of murder.

At the civil trial, the judge assigned liability to all of the parties sued and awarded damages of \$10.7 million. This was set aside by the

Territorial Court of Appeal. The widows appealed to the Supreme Court to reinstate the award.

It was deeply troubling that a trial judge could find liability for actions not planned or executed by the union. There was no evidence to indicate that the local or national union was involved in planning or executing the explosion.

The Court says it best: "CAW National cannot be found liable as a joint tortfeasor with W... There was no finding of any common design between W and CAW National to murder the miners and no finding that the murders were committed in direct furtherance of any other unlawful common design between W and the union."

I think the court got it exactly right. Trade unions have limited control over their members. Unfortunately, employers trying to operate with replacement workers in a highly charged atmosphere can create the space for this kind of action. Setting off explosions is clearly a criminal act and cannot be justified. Of course, amending the Labour Code to prohibit use of replacement workers would help prevent the creation of this kind of atmosphere. ●

(Mikael Swayze is a staff representative with CUPE 3902 and CALM Secretary-Treasurer.)



As this classic "Mr. Dubb" labour cartoon says, hard work enriches the bosses, not workers.

New misrepresentations aimed at North Korea

By Sean Burton

There has been a plethora of recent media coverage stemming from the North Korean census, and the sinking of the South Korean patrol ship *Cheonan*.

The census was North Korea's first since 1993. Conducted in October 2009 with the assistance of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the results show a population of just over 24 million. That number was considerably different than the 18 million forecast by "experts" who believed that the economic slump in the North would decrease the population; in other words that millions of people had starved to death. The *Chosun Ilbo* newspaper offered a caveat to the tune that since 1996 "when more people began starving to death" the DPRK began to aggressively promote childbirth.

But what about the two or three million people who supposedly died during the period of difficulty known as the "Arduous March", a time of shortages unlike Cuba's "Special Period"? One professor from Seoul National University

compared the 2008 and 1993 census data and concluded that the number of deaths was about 340,000. Though room for error exists, there is apparently no statistical basis for saying two or three million deaths. To some observers, the data also suggests that the Korean People's Army is not quite so large as the common estimate of 1.1 million troops, raising the possibility that South Korea's intelligence organizations have been inflating the numbers for some years.

Quite a bit of data was gathered by the census, and it is noteworthy that the DPRK allowed the results to be made public. Some UNFPA officials have suggested that the North wants more support from the international community. Well, who can blame them given all the hostility they receive?

North Korea's enemies often claim that it is a closed and secretive country. The release of this data should, but probably will not, shut

some of those people up. It even includes information on household heating (mostly coal and wood due to energy shortages), average household size (slightly small by South Korean standards), and running water and bathrooms (to which most households have access). Data on life span shows an aging population, which might make one wonder about that childbirth

policy suggested above. Life expectancy has also decreased, not too surprising given the deprivations of the last fifteen years. Cooler heads in South Korea are critical of any attempt to paint clear pictures of North Korea based on hearsay and the words of defectors, much of which is presented in the South Korean media (and indeed, media around the world) as factual. This has especially been the case since the DPRK's currency reform last year. There have been stories of riots, soldiers ordered ready to shoot, executions of Worker's Party officials, and so on. Yet ultimately, none of those things can be verified, not even the "total failure" of the currency reform. According to Kim Keun-sik of Kyungnam National University, it may have worked out; that the new notes are still being circulated is not evidence of collapse and chaos, and for the time being the DPRK has strengthened its planned economy and put inflation in check. Put another way, the DPRK is acting according to a plan for future development, not on the whim of a mad-man as some would have it.

Meanwhile, in the midst of attempts to restart six-party talks, a South Korean patrol ship was

sunk after an explosion while it was in apparently dangerous waters. A number of South Korean broadcasters announced that the *Cheonan* had been attacked by North Korea. This baseless accusation was refuted by the government and the military, but a clear answer is hard to come by. There have been suggestions that a torpedo caused the sinking, but there are conflicting reports of mines or running aground. The presidential office has also claimed now that it "never ruled out a North Korean attack".

The South Korean military may be trying to avoid the truth of the matter. Why would the North make such a reckless attack when attempts are being made to resume talks, and when Kim Jong Il is soon to visit China? This appears to be the opinion of the South's intelligence director, who has said that no unusual activity on the part of the North had been observed. But the war of words continues, with the *Chosun Ilbo* quoting "a retired naval operations chief" that North Korea does things that are "inexplicable by common sense". ●

how we see it...



The *Cheonan* sank on March 26, about 1.9 km off the south-west coast of Baengnyeong Island, located on the South Korean side of the Northern Limit Line, the de facto boundary with North Korea (DPRK). 58 crew members were rescued, another 46 crew were unaccounted for.

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Climate change and youth struggle

The 25th Central Convention of the Young Communist League-Ligue de la jeunesse communiste (YCL-LJC) will be held May 21-23 in Toronto. We reprint here some excerpts from Part 5 of the Call to the 25th Convention, the section on the struggles by young people around the issue of climate change.

The issue of climate change has engaged many young people today - first, because the nature of the impacts which will primarily involve the young generation, secondly because most of us were born at a moment when climate debate became very public.

The Copenhagen conference

teaches us many things. First, it illustrates how global warming is mobilizing the masses and especially the youth in all countries. The Asia-Pacific started the flow of events around the world with some 50,000 people in the streets in Australia, Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne. In Manila, Hong Kong, Jakarta, and as in most major Canadian cities, rallies of several hundred protesters were also held. In Copenhagen itself, hundreds of thousands of people began marching in the cold to protest.

One thing is interesting to note in this mobilization: some have noticed, like the French deputy José Bové, a farmer and *altermondialisme* personality, that here is an opportunity to link "climate justice and social justice..."



YCL members present a satirical corporate "news broadcast" at the recent Communist Party convention in Toronto. (Photo: Ed Bil)

Today, there is no break between the fight against global warming and the fight for another world."

With the abysmal failure of this United Nations conference which was suppose to conduct an agreement between states to reduce GHG following the Kyoto agreement, it becomes obvious to the people that the imperialist countries have no desire to act. The strings of this conference were pulled by the United States and its allies including Canada. The so-called agreement that came out was not obtained in a democratic way and is a farce. In summary, the countries simply have the obligation by the end of the year to provide targets for 2020.

At this summit, leaders of imperialist countries have been singled out and accused of being in the pay of industry. For the general public, the belief is that industry and individual consumption are causing climate change. But as Marxists, we know that this is not so much the industry as the way it is implemented; in other words, how capitalism works. For itself, industry is not necessarily something negative. In fact, because of industry for the first time in history, the

development of productive forces has the potential to produce enough to meet the needs of all.

About individual consumption, this is a way for capitalists to individualize the problem and put us all in the same boat. Under this idea, people are all equally responsible for the disaster. But the working men and women of the world do not consume as the bourgeois class does. Half the planet lives on less than \$2 per day and is not liable as the capitalists who exploit them.

It is not without reason that the media propagate massively the idea of the individual solution. Only the rich can afford an electric car, organic vegetables or any other new product supposedly green. The conditions of the working class already determine its consumption. This idea of individual responsibility is dangerous and leads to even viewing with a negative eye the aspiration of some developing countries to achieve a standard of living equivalent to the occident.

Instead, we need to consider the demands of Evo Morales, President of the Republic of Bolivia and others who call for climate reparations, and funding sustainable technologies in the

developing world. The obstacle to this is imperialism, which prefers to make trillions off these countries rather than address the gravity of climate change...

Imperialism is considering other approaches to solving global warming as well - so-called "Plan B." This is because the effects of global warming have already begun and are expected to get much worse. Therefore immediate problems of mitigation come into play. Plan B or geo-engineering is the intentional large-scale manipulation of the global environment, generally to reduce undesired climatic change (i.e., initiating a giant plankton bloom in the ocean, or the injection of large amounts of sulfate aerosols into the atmosphere simulating a volcanic eruption). NASA, the British Institute of Mechanical Engineers, the British Royal Society, and the UK parliament are all doing studies on geo-engineering. But these nightmarish solutions could cause unknown damage. ●

Want more info?

www.ycl-ljc.ca

Rebel Youth, the YCL's English-language magazine

Earth Day 2010: environment before private profit

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the first Earth Day, held on April 22, 1970 in the United States. But despite an enormous growth in global awareness of environmental issues, the threat of ecological disaster is ever greater. We reprint here an excerpt from the Main Resolution adopted by the recent 36th Central Convention of the Communist Party of Canada, dealing with the urgent topic of climate change:

Imperialism's efforts to stymie talks at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the post-Kyoto Protocol negotiations deserve special attention. Imperialist countries have generated billions in profits from industrial production creating historic levels of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the last two decades. GHG emissions are actually accelerating. But in what might be described as "carbon neocolonialism", imperialism is trying to force the burden of addressing climate change onto the working people and Third

World countries, restricting development while refusing to fund sustainable and renewable energy technology.

These efforts reflect a marked shift in the public policy debate on climate change. Capital has generally replaced its tactic of denying human-caused global warming with efforts to co-opt or hijack climate solutions. For example, the European Union's Emission Trading System has revealed the cap and trade approach to be a 'polluter profits', not 'polluter pays' solution. Similar approaches are being advanced in North America, with the Chicago Climate Exchange, Obama's model, and the Western Climate Initiative. Business is making profits selling offsets or Clean Development Mechanisms like planting trees, which are also ineffective. As the recent Delhi Declaration of the Workers and Communist parties said, "Capitalism's proposal for restructuring in the name of climate change has little relation to the protection of the environment. Corporate inspired 'green development' and [the] 'green

economy' are sought to be used to impose new state monopoly regulations which support profit maximisation and impose new hardships on the people."

Canada is the second-highest per capita producer of Green House Gasses (GHG) in the world. The major contributions come not from the people but rather from business, especially the Alberta Tar Sands, while the military is also a major GHG producer. Canada will also suffer severe consequences



from rising temperatures including destruction of boreal forests and agriculture, coastal flooding, devastating impacts on water resources and fisheries, as well as transport and health; events internationally could be catastrophic. Hardest hit will be aboriginal, working class, poor and racialized communities.

Despite this rapidly deteriorating situation, successive governments have blocked even modest reforms. Liberal governments have supported intensity-based emission targets, while the policies of the Harper Conservatives have been unabashedly drafted by their corporate patrons in the resource industry, which resulted in the retrograde role that Canada played in negotiations leading up to the Copenhagen Meeting in December 2009.

The urgent need to stop and reverse global warming calls for a bold emergency response. In fact, the effects that the Kyoto Protocol was supposed to prevent have already begun. Emission reduction targets must be significantly

increased if the accelerating rate of global warming is to be arrested and reversed. It is time to 'pay the climate bill' - the debt or reparations owed to the oppressed peoples, nations and countries of the world, a view supported by the UN Framework on Climate change - and make deep cuts to GHG emissions in imperialist countries. Mitigation efforts including climate change agreements must be strong, legally binding, comprehensive, and audacious, and be based on international solidarity, peace and respect for sovereignty, self-determination and democracy, as well as employment and social progress.

There is no other alternative. The nightmarish so-called "Plan B" responses that some military researchers as well as NASA and the British Royal Society are investigating in case other efforts fail - geo-engineering technologies like simulating a volcanic eruption, or use of nuclear bombs as stop-gap measures - must be categorically rejected. ●

Mass struggles shake Charest Liberals

PV Québec Bureau

Québec's political landscape is becoming increasingly volatile. A number of recent mass demonstrations by labour and other peoples' organizations have rocked the province with tens of thousands of people hitting the streets. As *People's Voice* goes to press, a major government scandal appears to be coming to a head, and a recent poll by Léger Marketing and *Le Devoir* newspaper has announced that Jean Charest's Liberal government is at an historically all-time low approval rating.

The major direction of public anger has been against the Charest Liberals' budget, unveiled in late March. Over 12,000 students, workers and community groups mobilized on April 1 against the budget. On April 11, 50,000 people rallied against the budget in Québec City. These huge protests came just weeks after the March 20th mobilization of 75,000 people in Montréal under the banner of the *Front Commun* (Common Front) - a coalition of trade unions representing almost all public and para-public sector workers in Québec (see our April 1-15 issue).

According to labour and social movements, the Liberal budget has attracted strong opposition because it targets workers and the poor through increased fees and taxes, including a \$200 per-person "contribution" for health care and higher tuition fees. The budget also steps up a sharp privatization attack on public services.

"In fact, the budget is probably illegal because of its reforms to health care," Robert Luxley, editor of the Québec communist newspaper *Clarté*, told *People's Voice* in an interview. "It violates the Canada Health Act and provokes a federal-level attack on Medicare."

"People in Québec are mobilizing now because they think enough is enough," Luxley said. He pointed to the case of the labour unions where the Common Front is negotiating against a government position of five per cent wage increases in five years. "This is after a two year wage freeze, which is a decrease with inflation, and many years of other cutbacks."

The government is demanding

a series of harsh austerity measures from the Common Front's members. For example, nurses' overtime will essentially be abolished, reclassified as regular work hours. Sick leave pay will be regressively reduced from 80% to 50%.

At the same time as the budget, the Liberals have announced they will build two major university hospitals in Montréal as "public-private partnerships", in spite of strong public opposition and a damning review of P3s by Québec's Auditor General. The contracts are worth more than three billion dollars. In the case of the Montréal University Research Centre, the contract will be awarded to a former Québec Liberal Party official.

or the Hells Angels, Luxley told PV. "But that is not the major point. We see that the bosses have decided to make the laws for the government. This again proves what the Communists say [about capital and the state] and what happens 'behind the curtain!'"

"At this moment we think it is necessary for the Common Front to place itself at the core of the fight-back and make a bigger commitment to the broader people's struggle," Luxley said. "It is not enough to stay the course and continue fighting on their immediate bargaining demands. The Common Front must go further, denouncing the budget."

Québec solidaire, the province's

mobilization in Québec City, according to Luxley.

The student demo featured a larger turn-out than recent years. Bold speeches by youth and community activists suggested the struggle was a class conflict. In Québec the rally came together under the direction of a man better known to the public as an organizer of pop music concerts. It bought out people from the broad sweep of civil society.

"While the Québec demonstration was, perhaps, 'mixed' - for example, there were evidently some anti-taxation voices - it is correct to say that the workers and poor people pay far too much taxes. The people are

abolishing the regressive GST and QST. "These kinds of demands could be won through the type of struggle we see developing with the Common Front," he said.

Following the Common Front's mass action on March 20, the government publicly called for a flurry of negotiation. Before long, however, it was clear the government was not willing to change any of its demands and talks remain jammed. Instead, the Charest Liberals put forward their budget as a way to divide the people from the demands of the Common Front, Luxley suggested.

"I think both sides are very conscious that this is a battle to win the public's opinion," Luxley said. "The government is running a series of large ads in the media. They are suggesting that cutbacks will save public services. It is blatantly hypocritical."

The ads say that the debt load because of the economic crisis can be re-paid - 38 per cent by the public and corporations, and 62 per cent by the government itself. In fact, Luxley explained, this means the main victims of the cutbacks will be the workers and people at large.

Meanwhile, the Charest Liberals are touring Québec, meeting with local business associations and boards of trade. "They desperately want to be the hero of big business at all costs," Luxley said. "Charest knows this is the Liberals' last mandate. They are not afraid to use their powers."

"The Common Front exists because of the past experience of the trade union movement in Québec," he added. "When the unions were divided, the people were defeated. They have learnt from this to be united. Today the people want to make pressure on the government, and are searching for real alternatives. The *Le Devoir* poll reinforces the idea that the people are not satisfied by the main political parties. This is a very important situation. It calls for more united action of the working class and people's forces, with the Common Front at the core." ●



Part of the Common Front rally by 75,000 people in Montreal on March 20.

"Over the past year there have been a lot of revelations showing the government is linked in an illegal way to the big bosses - especially in the building industries who are the first beneficiaries of the government's bailout packages," Luxley said. Radio Canada (CBC) has just revealed statements by the former Minister of Justice, Marc Bellemare, that construction companies have conspired with Charest to appoint three Québec judges.

The Radio Canada revelations show that some of the companies are possibly linked with the Mafia

left party with one member in the National Assembly, has called for the resignation of the government. Luxley also regards as very positive the resolution adopted on April 9 by some of the health sector unions in the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), calling for the government to resign.

"This is an excellent idea. What is needed is a political general strike against the budget," Luxley said.

If the spirit of resistance is being taken up by the people, the evidence lies in the April 1 action of the students and workers in Montréal, and April 11 mass

seeing clearly that the rich do not pay enough," said Luxley.

He noted that the Communist Party had longstanding demands for a progressive tax system based on ability to pay, including increasing the corporate tax rate to 29 per cent, ending tax loopholes and shelters and jailing corporate tax evaders, while eliminate taxes on incomes under \$35,000/yr and

2,000 rally in Vancouver against Campbell Liberal cutbacks and HST

PV Vancouver Bureau

In its first major public action, the newly-formed Coalition to Build a Better B.C. drew an estimated 2,000 people to an April 10 rally at the Vancouver Art Gallery. The Coalition's 30-plus affiliates include the B.C. Federation of Labour, the B.C. Teachers' Federation, and many other trade unions, as well as Aboriginal groups, anti-poverty movements, cultural organizations, seniors, students, and others.

The main focus of the Coalition has been resistance against the sweeping

cutbacks imposed by the Campbell Liberal provincial government. Funding for schools, the disabled, arts groups and other sections of society was slashed soon after the Liberals narrowly won the May 2009 provincial election, on the excuse of the huge deficit arising from the economic crisis. Anger over the cuts has been stoked by the massive spending on the Winter Olympics, leading nearly everyone in B.C. to ask how taxpayers could afford billions for street parties while vital supports for disabled people and inner-city schools are being eliminated.

Another factor in the declining

support for the Campbell government has been the impending "Harmonised Sales Tax." While the government has started to claim that HST revenues will support social spending, the fact is that the legislation will transfer nearly \$2 billion annually from the pockets of British Columbians to the business sector. Supporters from the anti-HST campaign were at the April 10 rally, gathering signatures for their attempt to force a province-wide referendum on the issue.

For information on the Coalition to Build a Better B.C., visit www.betterbc.ca.

May Day 2010

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GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Mass rallies across Bengal

More than two million people took part in picketing actions held on April 8 in Bengal. The actions were organized by the Indian state's four Left parties to protest against the pro-business policies of the central government.

Central government buildings in Kolkata were surrounded by thousands of people from the morning until early afternoon. From sales tax and income tax offices to railway HQs, the areas were vast swathes of slogan-shouting people.

Addressing the Kolkata rally, Communist Party of India (Marxist) state secretary Biman Basu was sharply critical of the Congress-run central government which, he said, had pursued an anti-people economic policy and failed to protect the internal security of the country against terrorist attacks.

There were big rallies in other areas of Bengal, such as the Darjeeling district. In that area, members of the right-wing Pradesh Congress party attempted to disrupt the rally but were repulsed by over a thousand protesters, including many women.

In Midnapore, several hundred thousand people came out in the searing afternoon heat to picket before the central government offices. The huge turnout was preceded by an intense week of campaign and agitation by the left parties among working people in the area.

Armenia fails on labour standards

A new report on labour standards in Armenia has found that further measures are needed to comply with the commitments Armenia accepted when it joined the World Trade Organization, as well as in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Social Justice Declaration.

The report finds that the right to strike is provided, except for civil servants; however, in reality it is limited. Collective bargaining and agreements at the national level have been virtually non-existent until 2009, when a first agreement was finally signed between the social partners.

Equality between women and men in pay and employment is regulated by Armenian labour law. However, they do not enjoy the same rights in practice, and discrimination is pronounced. There is a large wage gap between women and men in Armenia.

Child labour is prohibited by law and the minimum age for employment is 16 years of age. However, children are allowed to work from the age of 14 with permission of a parent or a guardian. Many work in informal economic activities in agriculture or as street vendors.

The law prohibits forced and compulsory labour, including by children, as well as all forms of trafficking in persons. Yet women and girls are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation and men for forced labour,

particularly in the construction industry.

Strikes, protests around Egypt

The sidewalk in front of the People's Assembly witnessed new demonstrations on April 8 as the Egyptian parliament resumed activity following the Easter holiday. A number of MPs joined the protesters and promised to help resolve their disputes.

About 100 workers from Nubariya Engineering and Agricultural Automation demanded salaries that have not been paid in two years. The workers are also asking to obtain



control of the company after an investor illegally seized 74 percent of its shares, distributing the remaining shares to his wife and sons.

Employees at the Ministry of Agriculture's Land Improvement Authority continued their strike for a tenth day, complaining that the government is ignoring their demands for higher salaries and permanent job contracts. The protesters say they have been paid a daily wage of LE3 (\$1.60 Can.) for more than 15 years.

Approximately 200 workers at the Quick Tel Company have threatened to join other strikers if their overdue salaries are not paid and their factory is not made operational again.

In other labour news, some 300 workers of the Samo factory for ready-made garments in Port Said are now on strike. The workers have not received salaries for two months, and management often deducts from their income and threatens them with layoffs.

Meanwhile, workers at the Dobera Spinning and Weaving Company in Ismailia went on strike, saying the company's production manager assaulted a colleague. They also want the minister of manpower to penalize the company for recruiting foreign workers.

In Menoufiya, 250 workers of the Minotex factory for blankets have launched a sit-in to protest the company's offer to sell the factory at a public auction. In Gharbiya, nurses of the public chest hospital ended a sit-in after the administration agreed to pay them 75 percent of the bonuses they requested.

Profits lead to deadly mine blast

In the wake of a coal mine explosion which killed at 29 workers, AFL-CIO President

Richard Trumka issued a stinging statement, pinning the blame on Massey Energy Company, which owns the Upper Big Branch Mine, site of the worst U.S. mining disaster in over 20 years.

"This incident isn't just a matter of happenstance, but rather the inevitable result of a profit-driven system and reckless corporate conduct," Trumka said. "Many mining companies have given too little attention to safety over the years and too much to the bottom line."

Trumka said that mine safety has improved since the passage of the Coal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1969, but "mining remains a dangerous occupation." He added that "strict enforcement of regulations by the Mine Safety and Health Administration and the additional protections a union membership brings are key factors to improving worker safety."

The non-union mine had been the subject of 450 safety violations, and the company has paid over \$1 million in fines last year. In the past two months, miners had been evacuated three times from the Upper Big Branch because of dangerously high methane levels, according to two miners who asked for anonymity for fear of losing their jobs. Representative Nick J. Rahall II, a Democrat whose district includes the mine, said he had received similar reports about recent evacuations at the mine, which as recently as March 2010 was fined at least three times for ventilation problems.

In 2008, one of Massey's subsidiaries paid the largest settlement in the history of the coal industry after pleading guilty to safety violations that contributed to the deaths of two miners in a fire. That year, Massey also paid a \$20 million fine, the largest of its kind levied by the Environmental Protection Agency, for clean water violations.

The disaster has raised new questions about Massey CEO Don L. Blankenship, and about why stricter federal laws, put into effect after a mining disaster in 2006, failed to prevent another tragedy.

Kevin Stricklin, an administrator with the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration, said the magnitude of the explosion showed that "something went very wrong here.... All explosions are preventable. It's just making sure you have things in place to keep one from occurring."

Six miners killed in Peru

In response to a government promise to negotiate, small-scale gold miners in southern Peru have temporarily called off protests in which six people were killed and 30 injured when the police attempted to clear a roadblock.

On April 4, some 6,000 unlicensed miners blocked the Pan-American highway and two bridges near Chala in the southern region of Arequipa, as part of a national strike in support of a draft law that would make it possible for them to work legally. The bill has been stalled in Peru's Congress since last June.

The miners clashed with the

police when the latter tried to clear the traffic blockage on the Pan-American highway, the main coastal road. Five demonstrators were killed, and a woman riding a bus stopped by the roadblock died of a heart attack.

Of the 28 demonstrators who were arrested, 27 were released the next day, in exchange for allowing stalled traffic through the roadblock for two hours. One miner is under investigation for illegal possession of explosives.

Leaders of the National Federation of Artisanal Miners of Peru, which called the protests, said that between 10 and 20 demonstrators are still missing.

The clash has similarities with a June 2009 incident in Bagua in Peru's northern Amazon jungle region, where 33 indigenous demonstrators and police were killed when the security forces attempted to lift a roadblock. The native demonstrators were demanding the repeal of laws that opened up their territories in the jungle to oil, mining and logging companies and undermined indigenous rights.

NUMSA condemns shooting of miners

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) has condemned the police shooting of striking mine workers at Aurora Empowerment Systems' Grootvlei, East Rand.

The mine workers are on a strike after Aurora management failed to pay wages to workers for more than two months. "These workers have a legitimate right to embark on a strike action to raise their frustrations with Aurora management," said a Numsa statement on April 8. "It is our view

that police cannot be bullies or used to mitigate over wage disputes through unleashing brutal force. The role of the police is on the streets by fighting rampant scourge of crime in our communities and broader society.

"The continuation by the police to silence dissent through the barrel of the gun is tantamount to a police state. It is within this context that we are opposed to the militarization of the police force. This is informed by our ideological underpinnings that in a class divided society like South Africa, state apparatus particularly the police can't be used to protect the interests of the owners of the means of production, as opposed to the broader interests of the working class and the poor. Therefore the brutal shooting of mine workers at Aurora should be understood and located within the context of police protecting the interests of Aurora and their private accumulation interests...

"We call on our reliable ally Police and Prisons, Correctional Services Union to conscientize their members working as police not to be irresponsibly used to reverse struggles intended to undermine the logic of capital at the point of production and broader economy. The police should be consciously aware that this struggle by mine workers is also in their own interest as part of fighting for decent work for decent pay.

"We call on the striking mine workers and our allies National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) to be resolute and fight until the lumpen bourgeoisies, as personified by the Aurora owners, adhere to the workers demands. As Numsa we support their struggles because it is consistent with our federation's commitment of fighting greed and corruption."

Many items in our "Global Class Struggle" column are from the Labour Start website, www.labourstart.org

Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada

The Communist Party of Canada, formed in 1921, has a proud history of fighting for jobs, equality, peace, Canadian independence, and socialism. The CPC does much more than run candidates in elections. We think the fight against big business and its parties is a year-round job, so our members are active across the country, to build our party and to help strengthen people's movements on a wide range of issues. All our policies and leadership are set democratically by our members. To find out more about Canada's party of socialism, contact the nearest CPC office.

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Bengal Communists rally against "Grand Alliance"

By B. Prasant, PV
correspondent in India

At a March 26-27 meeting of its state committee, the Bengal section of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), one of the strongest units of Asian Communist Parties after China and Vietnam, called for widening and deepening the struggle against right reaction and left sectarianism. Since 2008, nearly 400 CPI(M) leaders, activists, and workers have been killed and thousands more seriously injured by rightists and the ultra-left (so-called "Maoists").

The Bengal CPI(M) and its mass organisations (whose numbers are in the millions) work tirelessly among the small and marginal farmers, the rural poor, workers, and the poorer sections of the people. The Left Front led by the party has governed Bengal since 1977.

Until now, the Bengal CPI(M) has responded to the armed attacks on its cadres through mass movements and organised protest actions. The assaults commenced in earnest when the CPI(M) suffered losses in elections to the lower house of the Indian parliament in mid-2008.

In the wake of the Lok Sabha elections, the CPI(M) was dealt a further blow. For the first time in close to four decades, the Party suffered defeats in Bengal's three-tier rural self-governing or Panchayat system - at the levels of the districts (Zillah Parishads), the blocks (the Panchayat Samities), and the villages (Gram Panchayats).

Other changes have since taken place in the state's political scene. Just as the CPI(M) has built a strong base for the Left Front, along with eight other left, socialist, and



CPI(M) graffiti depicting Trinamul Congress "supremo" Mamata Banerjee, leader of the right-wing forces which aim to topple Bengal's Left Front government.

workers' parties for more than three decades, the anti-Communist opposition has fashioned what is called a mahajot or "grand alliance" in the corporate media.

This grouping, anti-people and opportunist to the core, includes anti-Communist elements of virtually every kind - left, right, centre, and the lunatic fringe - plus a guiding hand from the agents of imperialism, and their lackeys in the Indian ruling classes. Adding succour has been the centre-right Congress party that runs the central government in the cosy ambience of a constitution that is very much more unitary than federal.

The division of votes amongst the anti-Communist opposition in Bengal has always worked in favour of the CPI(M) and the Left Front, especially after 1998, when the large and violent segment of the provincial Congress, or Pradesh Congress as it is known here, broke away to form the "Trinamul" ("grass-roots") Congress with

Mamata Banerjee as its supremo. Mamata always had good relations with the left sectarians and the right reactionaries, through links via the corporate houses and international "sponsors" of her brand of violent anti-Communism. Historically this has been perhaps a minor factor, but a factor nonetheless in determining both urban and rural election results.

Adding grist to the mill of the anti-Communist opposition has been the role of the "left" literati, including artists, teachers, and intellectuals who have always been closet anti-Communists, even while benefitting from the governance of the Left Front. These elements, otherwise very professional in the theatre, cinema, painting, and writing, have formed several "groups" who squabble over art and such matters. Sometimes they are critical of the right and stand opposed to the religious, nationalist concept of *Hindutva*. Now they are making a

unified appearance as an anti-Communist front, openly calling for a *parivartan* or régime change.

By themselves, these groups do not carry much political weight. But when synergised with the blast of media propaganda in favour of the need to "end" Communist governance, they constitute a bigger factor. In south Asian countries, such celebrities are known to influence the voting pattern of the bourgeois and the petty bourgeois who compose the bulk of the urban and rural "middle class."

The shift in loyalties of these classes is unfortunately also legitimised by local grievances, nurtured over the decades against malgovernance and by acts of omission and/or commission by those considered "friends" of the CPI(M) and the Left Front.

As elections approach in the middle of 2011, the CPI(M) has decided to go deep among the masses, talking and listening, and then trying to rectify itself in a big way. Rectification has always been

seen in the CPI(M) as an ongoing process, in the manner of Mao Zedong who characterised it as a continuous act of "from the people and to the people."

The CPI(M) has also chosen to muster its strength amongst the youth. In areas where it is under physical attack, especially in the forest areas in western Bengal, the CPI(M) has called for protests to be turned into mass resistance. This political-organisational drive has started to yield results. The killings of CPI(M) cadres have fallen, after a gruelling couple of years of death and mayhem. The left sectarians have been disheartened as they lose their grip over the masses, and as their "field commanders" flee the state. The CPI(M) has organised village-level resistance committees who keep vigil and repel armed incursions by the sectarian and reactionary elements. Meanwhile, elections for 81 municipalities will take place in June. We hope to preview this campaign in our next column. ●

PAME calls new strikes



The All-Workers Militant Front (PAME), the leading force in the recent strike movement in Greece, has called for a new 48-hour walkout on April 21 and 22. In the demonstration above, PAME members demand protection for unemployed workers.

Cuba and Venezuela to rebuild Haitian health care

From the statement of
Bruno Rodriguez Parilla,
Cuban Minister of Foreign
Affairs, at the Haiti Donors
Meeting, United Nations
Headquarters, New York,
March 31, 2010

The program for the reconstruction and strengthening of the Haitian national healthcare system, drawn up by the Haitian government and Cuban governments, with the cooperation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and other countries and humanitarian organizations, will guarantee wide health coverage for the population, in particular the low-income sector.

That program is based on 101 primary healthcare centers which are being created, at which an estimated 2.8 million patients will be treated, 1.3 million emergency operations performed, 168,000 babies delivered, and 3 million vaccinations administered every year.

These health centers will be supported by the services of 30 community reference hospitals distributed throughout the country and equipped with cutting-edge technology for secondary attention, which can treat 2.154 million people per year, perform 54,000 operations, 276,000 electro-cardiograms, 144,000 diagnostic ultrasounds,

43,000 endoscopies, 181,000 X-Rays, 107,000 dental examinations, and 487,000 laboratory tests.

Given the extraordinary number of poly-traumatized patients, 30 rehabilitation rooms are likewise being equipped which, within 12 months, will provide services for 520,000 patients and 2.4 million therapeutic treatments.

There will also be three electromedicine centers, a prosthesis laboratory and an integral hygiene and epidemiology program.

Also planned is a Haitian National Specialties Hospital at tertiary level, involving cooperation from other countries, directed by 80 high-level Cuban specialists responsible for services and clinical departments, research and teaching, and Haitian professionals who will be trained at the institution and progressively replace the Cuban medical professors.

The cost of the already mentioned services will amount to \$690.5 million over 10 years, a total that includes the medical services provided, calculated at 50% of international prices; the sustainability of these services and the personnel providing them; and the training of a further 312 Haitian doctors in Cuba.

As can be deduced, the approximate cost is \$170 million per year for a country of approximately 9.33 million

inhabitants.

It is possible to do this. Our practical experience confirms it. In fact, this program is already underway and, post-quake, 23 of these primary care health centers, 15 community reference hospitals and 21 rehabilitation rooms are up and running.

From almost immediately after the earthquake, Cuban specialists have been dedicating their attention to the population affected. To date they have seen 260,000 patients, performed more than 7,000 operations, delivered close to 1,400 babies, and administered close to

100,000 vaccinations. More than 50,000 patients have undergone rehabilitation therapy and more than 75,000 children have received psychosocial therapy, in the presence of some of Cuba's most eminent professionals.

A total of 783 Cuban and 481 Haitian doctors, plus 278 health professionals from 28 countries - all of them graduated in Cuba - are working on this program.

Last Saturday [March 27], as part of the program outlined, a memorandum of understanding for the strengthening of the healthcare and public services system and

epidemiological prevention was signed in Port-au-Prince, thanks to the will of the Haitian government and a significant contribution from President Lula and Brazil, which will be decisive for the planned healthcare program.

During the 11 years of work prior to the earthquake, the Cuban medical brigade, which has a presence in 127 of the 137 Haitian communes, saved 223,442 lives, treated 14 million people, performed 225,000 operations and delivered 109,000 babies. Via the Operation Miracle program, 46,000 Haitians have had their sight restored or improved. During the same period, 165,000 Haitians have become literate in Creole.

If we evaluate the medical services provided in these 11 years and the training of medical personnel in Cuba, it would represent \$400 million throughout the period.

The medical program that we are proposing, in its entirety, will benefit 75% of the poorest population of the country at a minimum expense.

We invite all governments, without exception, to contribute to this noble effort. For that reason, we attribute particular importance to this conference, and aspire to its success. ●

Translated by Granma International



Students from Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine participating in a May Day march in Havana. Each student carries the flag of their country, including those from the US.

Paul Robeson - "the tallest tree in our forest"

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was marked this year in Toronto with a tribute to Paul Robeson. Held on March 25 at City Hall, the event included greetings from Mayor David Miller and other speakers.

We reprint here part of the speech by Selwyn McLean, chair of the Paul Robeson Centennial Committee-Toronto, which has worked since 1998 to popularize the historic contributions of this famous African-American artist and activist.

... There is no one more fitting than Robeson whose name could have been chosen to symbolize what the International Day For The Elimination Of Racial Discrimination represents. Robeson's entire being was a manifestation of "day-to-day struggle" against the most formidable of foes...

Born in 1898 to well-established parents (his father had escaped slavery) Paul Robeson's rise to prominence began at Rutgers University where he excelled in every aspect of college life, and continued at Columbia Law School. However, he found no satisfaction during his brief life as a lawyer at a New York firm from which racism forced his departure. But his extraordinary talents as a widely acclaimed singer and actor brought him tremendous satisfaction as he thrilled audiences in America and around the world. Robeson had found the vehicle through which he could promote his passion for bringing justice and peace to those denied them.

As an activist-artist, Robeson was selfless. He lived by his own



Selwyn McLean (right), speaker at the Robeson tribute in Toronto. At left is Prof. Lee Lorch, long-time civil rights and Cuba solidarity activist. (PV photo: Ed Bil)

stated conviction that, "The artist must take sides. He must elect to fight for freedom of slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative." (1937 speech at Albert Hall, London, England).

As his causes broadened from national civil rights and racism to international issues like anti-colonialism and anti-fascism, Robeson soldiered on at the risk of great personal and financial sacrifices. He was singled out and targeted by Edgar Hoover's repressive FBI as a dangerous threat to American democracy; he was persecution by Joseph McCarthy's tyrannical senate committee; he was abandoned by spineless friends.

The full weight of the state had descended upon him.

For holding principled beliefs about equality, peace and justice, and for doing great political work on behalf of the oppressed and poor, Robeson was made to pay a heavy price. He was placed on the Det-Con List, which meant that, in case of a declared national emergency, he would be arrested as a communist and jailed at a concentration camp.

After speaking at the 1948 World Peace Conference in Paris, he was accused of interfering in the anti-colonial affairs of Africa, and his passport was illegally confiscated in 1950 for eight years. He was blacklisted all across the USA, and could not earn a living as a performer.

But Robeson did have genuine friends who shared his conviction and stood by his side during that darkest period. Albert Einstein, who was as much a social activist as he was a scientist, stood with Robeson in the face of McCarthy and the Hoover. So did Lena Horne, Harry Belafonte, Lee Lorch, W.E.B. DuBois, Pablo Neruda and many

others who were in the fight for justice. There is much that could be said about the tremendous support Robeson received from around the world, whether it was from India's Prime Minister Nehru or the coal miners in Wales. But I want to place support for Robeson in a Canadian context, because Canada was cherished as his second home.

Robeson had been visiting Canada from as early as 1929 and all through the 1940s. He performed in *Othello* at The Royal Alexander Theatre; he performed at Massey Hall; he performed with the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir; he performed at Sudbury; his activism had taken him to Windsor on behalf of Auto Workers there.

The fight for his right to travel abroad was particularly taken up by the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers of Canada with whom Robeson had a long relationship. It is in this context that Mine-Mill invited Robeson to visit Canada. But when the complicit Canadian government refused his entry (even not needing a passport) the famous Peace Arch Park concerts were organized. These four concerts from 1952-1955 stand out in defiance of the U.S. government as Robeson stood on the bed of a truck inches away from the Washington-British Columbia border and sang and spoke to 40,000 Canadians and Americans on both sides of the border. Robeson's defiance was heightened by these concerts. At the 1953 concert he ended his speech thus: "I shall continue to fight, as I see truth ... And I want everyone in the range of my voice to hear, official or otherwise, that there is no force on earth that will make me go backward one-thousandth part of one little inch."

... Robeson's legacy as a scholar, athlete, lawyer, linguist, singer, performer, humanitarian and renaissance man is a perfect example of what a role model looks like. By bringing him back to life 100 years after his birth; by celebrating his life as we are doing here today, Torontonians, I am certain, are helping to inspire our youth to pick up the challenge, and continue the struggle against injustice, racism, neo-fascism, sexism, homophobia and all other forms of oppression.

Robeson's legacy will always be an integral part of Toronto's diverse history... ●

festival of working people and the arts MAYWORKS 25 years

This month, Toronto's Mayworks Festival is celebrating "25 glorious years of meaningful and relevant arts and culture." Here are some highlights; for the full program, visit www.mayworks.ca.

Scouring City, Brushing Sky

April 24 to April 27, Beaver Hall Artists Gallery, 29 McCaul Street
Scouring City, Brushing Sky expresses the social contribution, hopes and dreams of women who work as cleaners in Toronto, part of the invisible workforce. Many are non-unionized, racialised and low-income, and often cannot negotiate good working conditions or living wages.

Many Years Later and WARCHESTRA

April 24 to May 22, Toronto Free Gallery, 1277 Bloor St. West
Many Years Later, by Marcos Arriaga, includes black and white photos of 1986-87 protests by union workers and popular organizations in Peru, and a video installation chronicling the Days of Action by union and community members in Ontario against the conservative government of Mike Harris from 1995 to 1996. WARCHESTRA is a multimedia series about war and culture, highlighting the cultural heritage of the Arab peoples.

Family Fun Day!

April 25, 10 am-Noon, free, Fixt Point Studio, 1550 Queen St. West
Storytelling and raucous noisemaking with writers Cammy Lee and Clare Nobbs, and "percussive harmony" with Drum Artz Canada!

Voices From the Crisis

April 24 to May 16, The Raging Spoon, 761 Queen St. West
Voices From the Crisis showcases the artistic work of a diverse set of Canadian Auto Workers members, as they struggle with the crisis in manufacturing and the economy.

24 Days in Brooks

Monday, April 26, 7 pm, \$5, Gallery 1313, 1313A Queen St. West
Directed by Dana Inkster, *24 Days in Brooks* centres on the first-ever strike at Lakeside Packers, one of the world's largest slaughterhouses, in Brooks, Alberta.

Day of Mourning Ceremony

Wed., April 28, 12 noon, Nathan Phillips Square, City Hall
"Truth Is" will perform for Toronto's annual Day of Mourning, a ceremony to remember workers killed or injured on the job. Co-sponsored by the Toronto and York Region Labour Council and the Workers Health and Safety Centre.

From Margin to Centre

Friday, April 30, 7:30 pm, \$5-\$15 s/s, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander Street
Adopted, queer, female, sex worker, of colour, missing, HIV positive, poor - these identities and experiences take centre stage in *From Margin to Centre*. The evening features *Fifty Plus Women*, on the missing women in Vancouver's downtown eastside; an excerpt from Zena Lord's one-woman show *Sooooo White*, a humorous and sometimes painful glimpse into her experiences as a black child in the early sixties; Belladonna, performing works from her repertoire and a reading from *Oh Sudanah*, a play in development that examines HIV infection in small communities; Ami Mattison, from Michigan, tackling poverty, homophobia, gender issues and civil rights with an unparalleled ferocity.

It Will Work!

Sat., May 1, \$10-\$15 s/s, doors 7:30 pm, show 8:30 pm, The Garrison, 1197 Dundas St. West

The closing night of the festival celebrates 25 years with an extravaganza, shining the spotlight on the struggles, successes and strength of working class peoples, migrants, undocumented and temporary workers. Performers include spoken word artist/dub poet Deidre 'DLishus' Walton; MataDanZe, a Toronto-based interpretative dance group; Mama D, whose powerful tenor voice challenges the rules of songwriting and work; LAL, a collective which fuses international folk and electronic protest music; acclaimed bassist Roberto Riveron, and celebrated acoustic duo Marinda and Solari; the Red Slam Collective's mix of hip hop, rez blues, powwow reggae and drum talk; Humble The Poet; and singer/songwriter Amai Kuda. Co-organized by No One Is Illegal-Toronto and Canadian Labour Congress Ontario Region.

Future Folk

By Sulong Theatre Collective, Sunday, May 2, 2 pm, \$5-\$10 s/s, Fixt Point Studio, 1550 Queen St. West

Future Folk takes the audience through the 24 months of service required by Filipino 'nannies' under Canada's Live-In Caregiver Program. Followed by a discussion moderated by Martha Ocampo, founding member of Caregiver Connections Education and Support Organization, with panelists from the Independent Workers Association, the Caregiver Action Centre and Migrante.



Paul Robeson tribute stamp issued in 2004 by the U.S. Postal Service

Online labour film database

LabourStart/CALM

More than 1,465 union films and videos are contained in an online labour film database co-sponsored by LabourStart and the D.C. Labor Film Fest. As well as the database, there is a labour film festival site, featuring 30 festivals from around the world. Chris Garlock of the Washington D.C. Metro Labor Council put the databases together. You can help keep the lists up to date by emailing cgarlock@dclabor.org.

The database is found at www.dclabor.org/ht/d/ProgramDetails/i/23256/pid/46784 ●

Saskatchewan to privatize IT services

SGEU/CALM

Privatizing information technology services within provincial governments may benefit private business owners, but for the people of Saskatchewan, it's a losing proposition.

The Saskatchewan Party government has announced its intention to contract more information technology work out of the public service to private IT companies. The government will

end up paying business two to three times more to do the same work done in-house by government workers because contract employees are often paid more than government workers, and business owners take a substantial profit off the top.

There is danger of losing specialized IT knowledge and skills, as more and more of this work gets contracted out. Workers may leave not only the province, but the country.

There is also risk of losing

control of personal information - health files and legal records - if companies are sold or work is transferred to the U.S. or an offshore country. Citizens are powerless to ensure that private companies in other countries protect their privacy. •

Craig Harold Pritchett, 1924-2010

Craig Harold Pritchett was born on December 12, 1924 in New Westminster, BC, to Harold and Hazel (Mundy), older brother to Duane, Earle, Cal, and Bill. His wife and partner of 56 years, Eileen passed away a while ago. Their children David, Lynn, Craig B. and Janet travel on with Craig's grandchildren; Cody, Jennifer Shizen, Fayra, and Tristen and great-grandchildren Breanna and Mikayla.

Craig was a dedicated trade unionist, organizer and internationalist who tirelessly fought for the sanctity of collective agreements, while understanding the necessity of the emancipation of the working class through socialist programs and genuine working-class economic democracy. He donated his time generously to the causes of union principle, sovereignty, justice and world peace.

Craig will be remembered at the Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph St., Vancouver (at Victoria drive, three blocks north of Hastings), Saturday, April 17, 10 am to 2 pm, with family, friends, and fellow workers. Please join us.

- From the Pritchett family

Donations in Craig Pritchett's memory can be sent to the following organizations which he supported:

Council of Canadians, 700-170 Laurier Ave. West, Ottawa, ON K1P 5V5, tel. 613-233-2773.

Canada Cuba Friendship Association, Box 1063, 2480 Hastings St. E., Vancouver, BC, V5K 5G6, tel. 604-940-0420.

Communist Party of Canada, 290A Danforth Ave., Toronto, ON, M4K 1N6, tel. 416-469-2446.

People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1, tel. 604-255-2041.

Artemis Program for Girls, 103-2610 Douglas St., Victoria, BC, V8T 4M1, tel 250-598-5183.



Craig Pritchett at an ILWU convention, January 1959

Budget snubs older Canadians

CARP/CALM

The Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) has panned the federal budget. They wanted the government to focus on retirement security and pension reform issues, but they got Seniors' Day instead.

"CARP members see that their government is not listening to them. We have been unequivocal on the urgent need for comprehensive pension reform and the throne speech was the right place for the government to declare that it would act to ensure the future retirement security of all Canadians," says CARP vice-president Susan Eng.

"The federal budget was the place to announce substantial increases to the Old Age Security to help people facing poverty in old age. Changes to the tax-free savings account, RRSP and RRIF rules would have helped those whose retirement savings were devastated by the recent market crash. Older Canadians got fine words in the Throne Speech, but the budget that followed did not back them up. I told our members: The wordsmithing is a nice touch - now we're those who helped build Canada. Enjoy, because that's all we got." •

Dad

Old Craig Harold the longshoreman, died not too long ago,
He selflessly organized along the docks, where the tides still ebb and flow.

Family and friends knew him as Craig, others just Pritchett,
The bosses knew him as their equal; he would never let them forget.

Bound and determined in struggle, all his working life,
A grainliner's duffle bag of principles, held his goals above the strife.

Fighting for class unity was the plan of everyday;
Craig put aside the bullshit, with the cards face up in play.

Climbing rusty ladders, cleaning ship's holds for farmer's grain,
Easier than the Great Depression, or the war fought with bullets in the rain.

Considering unfair angles, with comrades he could find,
Unraveling economic injustice, Marx and Engels beacons in his mind.

Craig knew there was land and plenty, but greed stood in the way,
Pushing back with brawn and generosity, and a strike to make them pay.

Poverty haunted the early days, bulls and scabs were tough as hell,
But a red flag waved true in his heart, with the call of the people's bell.

Needing a job like every one, Craig chose the longshore dock,
Ships were owned by the wealthy, Craig stood up and punched their clock.

Trade was ever flourishing, since the ships of canvas sail,
Union drives had often faltered, books told of the bloodstained trail.

Old timers played progressive music, grandchildren brought the smiles,
Craig understood the road he traveled, common sense easing difficult miles.

Reaching deep in his kit bag, for a hammer, crow bar, or 50-foot tape,
Toil was easier with his brothers alongside, raising houses or building a gate.

But his love was conversation, untangling the world so vast and wide,
Internationalism was his standard, unfurled with a common pride.

Eileen called Bunty was his sweetheart, together they built a humble place,
Most evenings they shared their table, with an atheist's honest grace.

Truth was what they searched for, "each according to their need",
Challenges were offered to David and Lynn, youthful response they would carefully plead.

Later arrived Craig's grandchildren, a seasoned man they often found,
Waterfront battles of earlier years, gave way to tired ground.

Every century demands a lesson; those with courage take time to learn,
As family gathers for security and love, some give up lots to take their turn.

Tactics and strategies filled the kitchens, and down in old rumpus rooms,
Craig was a workingman with gold red heart, wouldn't dance to popular tunes.

Now Dad's life has faded and ended but his ashes will rise tomorrow,
By his wish do not mourn but organize, set aside your comrade sorrow.

Coast range hills hold stormy clouds, as rain will turn to tears,
Love our working class father please, honouring his worth of 85 years.

Craig has fallen to the wayside, our memories full we hold aloft,
We will bow our heads to his organizing dreams, our hats we will truly doff.

Look to the west for brilliant sun, regard morning for the breaking dawn,
We will hold on forever without you Dad, not forgotten but tired and gone.

Always, his son, regards, David L. Pritchett, spring, 2010

What's Left

Victoria, BC

Earth Walk 2010, Sat., April 24, assemble at BC Legislature grounds at noon, parade starts at 12:30 to info fair in Centennial Square.

May Day celebration, Sat., May 1, at BCGEU office, 2994 Douglas St., 5 pm potluck, 7-9 forum, organized by Communities Solidarity Coalition and Victoria Coalition Against Poverty.

Prince George, BC

May Day celebration and banquet, 6:30 pm, Sat., May 1, at the Coast Inn of the North. For info and tickets, contact May Day Organizing Committee, c/o Prince George Labour Council, 250-563-1116.

Burnaby, BC

Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast, Sunday, May 9, 10 am-1 pm, (last call for pancakes at 12 noon). All you can eat, \$10/person (\$8 under 12), 5435 Kincaid St. Proceeds to People's Voice, auspices Burnaby Club CPC. Info: Anna 604-294-6775.

Vancouver, BC

Cultural Night Fundraiser, a night of working class culture and fun with the Young Communist League at the Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive, Friday, April 16. Live music, food, drink, and good company.

Stop School Cuts, forum on BC government underfunding, 2 pm, Sunday, April 18, John Oliver Secondary, Fraser & E. 41 Ave. See www.stopschoolcuts.org.

Left Film Night, Sunday, April 25, 7 pm, at Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive. This month: **Life and Debt**, on the impact of capitalist globalization in Jamaica. Free admission, donations welcome, call 604-255-2041 for details.

May Day activities, Sat., May 1, march 12 noon, from Clark Park (14th & Commercial), evening celebration at Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph St. Info: VDLC, 604-254-0703.

Stop Harper's War Now, anti-war rally, 1 pm, Sat., May 29, Vancouver Art Gallery, organized by StopWar peace coalition, www.stopwar.ca.

Edmonton, AB

Earth Day Festival, Sunday, April 18, noon to 6 pm, Fort Edmonton Park, Blatchford Hangars.

May Day Cabaret, Sat., May 1, 7 pm, Ukrainian Centre, 11018-97 St., featuring Notre Dame des Bananes choir and Maria Dunn, tickets \$15 (\$8 low-income), call Naomi, 465-7893.

Winnipeg, MB

Film night, Paul Robeson: Here I Stand, Fri., Apr 23, 7:30 pm, Ivan Franko Museum, 200 McGregor. Association of United Ukrainian Canadians.

May Day parade, Sat., May 1, starts 12:30 pm at City Hall, ending 2 pm at Old Market Square.

Toronto, ON

Status for All!, 1 pm, Sat., May 1, from Wellesley St. and Ontario St., annual march for workers' rights organized by No One Is Illegal and other groups.

Workers Didn't Cause the Crisis - They Won't Pay For It!, May Day celebration, Sat., May 1, 7:00 pm, at the GCDO Hall, 290 Danforth Ave. Live music, food, cash bar, speakers. Ausp. People's Voice, for details, 416-469-2481.

Mayworks Festival events in Toronto, details on page 10.

Montreal, QC

May Day, main rally meets at Metro Lionel Groulx at noon, May 1, march to the Park St. Gabriel in Pointe St. Charles, food and entertainment on site. South Shore rally, gather 10 am at 30 Park St. Charles, Longueuil, march at 11 pm to Le Moyne Park. Special evening event at Association des Travailleurs Grecs, 5359 Ave du Parc. For info: 514-279-3526.

Parti Communiste du Québec and Clarté Office launch, 1 pm, Sunday, May 9, at Association des Travailleurs Grecs Hall, 5359 Ave du Parc. Live music, refreshments, discussion on the Common Front and the fightback.

Palestinians And Jews United, vigil against the occupation, every Friday at noon, Sainte-Catherine and Union (near Metro McGill).

People's Voice deadlines:

MAY 1-15 issue: Thursday, April 22

MAY 16-31 issue: Thursday, May 6

Send submissions to PV Editorial Office,
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1,
<pvoice@telus.net>

REDS ON THE WEB

www.comunist-party.ca

www.peoplesvoice.ca

www.ycl-ljc.ca

www.solidnet.org

"Marxist Fundamentalism"

By Zoltan Zigedy

As much as things have changed since Karl Marx's time, his fundamental insights about the nexus of labour, exploitation, and profit remain the best guide to understanding capitalism and capitalist crisis. Theorists have come and gone, spinning elaborate revisions or alternatives based upon concepts of under consumption, over production, imbalance, disequilibrium, etc.

Many have found in changing features of capitalism - like monopolization, automation, vertical integration, decentralization, chip and robot innovation, globalization, financialization, etc. - the altering of the logic of capitalist production and its inclination to dysfunction. Still others have seen changes in ownership and management relations as changing the dynamics of capitalist accumulation. While all of these reflect truths and useful perspectives, they miss or obscure

the engine that drives all capitalist processes: the pursuit of profits through the exploitation of labour by the capitalist enterprise.

For Marx, the expression of this engine and its propensity to misfire lies in the struggle to maintain profits against its intrinsic tendency to decline. Call me a

rate of exploitation in the aftermath of the severe economic decline. I have pointed to the explosion of labour productivity driven by mass unemployment, weak organized resistance, and government complicity. The official numbers are staggering and beyond any recent precedent. And the reports

and social programs - to total \$14 trillion. Some estimate even more.

I would concede that US organized labour is showing some gumption in the electoral arena, prodding the Administration and Democrats to show a bit of backbone on behalf of programs benefiting working people. Nonetheless, the legacy of complicity in the destruction of class-struggle unionism in the early stages of the Cold War saddles current labour leaders with a timid, class collaborationist approach that fails to mount even a modest resistance to this brutal class offensive.

stifling any potential for growth. This is simply imposing the US model by fiat.

In Greece, in particular, the working classes are vigorously and determinedly resisting these draconian changes, led by a fighting labour movement and the Greek Communists. They deserve our solidarity and serve as an example to our own labour movement.

Debt and the Class Struggle

Debt is a two-headed monster. At the depth of the crisis, the debt-burden incurred by irresponsible financial institutions was readily and undemocratically shifted from the private to the public sector through massive bailouts. Their debt problem is now our problem. Zhu Min, deputy governor of the People's Bank of China put it well: "The governments tried to put every burden from the financial sector onto their own children."

But now with those burdens on the shoulders of working people, these same governments alarmingly call for debt reduction. Not surprisingly, they closely follow the EU strategy by demanding reductions in social programs. In the case of the US, the debt diet prescribes trimming the "waste" from social programs like Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security. Of course there is no talk of reducing the immensely costly military budget or raising taxes on corporations and the wealthy. The debt issue is calculated to be another weapon in the assault on the living standards of working people.

Lessons must be drawn from this intense offensive against workers. In the US, the Democratic Administration and its Congressional troops have done little or nothing to side with working people in the class struggle. Rather, they have urged measures that have intensified exploitation, heaped debt on the working class, and threatened its safety net. The leaders of the labour movement have achieved little by lobbying, cajoling, and coddling; they have failed to take the struggle to the workplace and the streets.

The capitalist crisis is far from over. The financial monstrosities that sparked the crisis are once again fat, unregulated, and in hot pursuit of new risky ventures that will accelerate their rate of profit. There is every reason to believe that they will run aground again. We had an opportunity to stop this mad cycle with nationalization, but our economic leaders chose to reward the banks and encourage them to press on with their madness. Non-financial firms are swelling with profit from intensified exploitation, but lacking markets or consumption growth that would justify investment, expansion, or further employment, a situation that promises further pressure on their rate of profit. Of course they can further put the screws to workers, but hopefully we will take a lesson from our Greek comrades and join them in the streets. ●



fundamentalist, but I believe this was, and remains, the best, if not only, road to understanding capitalist crisis, including the current deep downturn.

Exploitation, Profits, and Wages

I have written often and emphatically of the rise in the US

of this radical restructuring of the relations between labour and capital continue to mount...

The Commerce Department reports that fourth quarter 2009 pretax corporate profits rose nearly 30% over the prior year and 8% over the prior quarter (the third quarter increase was 10.8% over the second quarter). The US economy has not seen such an annual increase in pretax corporate profits since 1984 during the Reagan administration. Clearly labour productivity and the rate of profit are moving in lockstep. This is further evidence that profits are growing from an intensification of the labour process - on the backs of workers.

Should further data be necessary, the Commerce Department also reports that personal income dropped in 42 of 50 states last year at a cumulative rate of 1.7%, unadjusted for inflation. It must be noted that this report lumps together wages, dividends, rent, retirement income, and government benefits, underestimating the impact upon the working class.

Of course not all profits were generated directly through exploitation at the point of production. Half of the explosion of profits was generated through the financial sector. With the financial sector, workers were, however, exploited indirectly through the massive bailout, the assumption of cancerous assets, and the extension of essentially risk and interest free loans. Some estimate this burden - to be collected on future taxes and the slashing of common, public assets



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The trenches of this battle for the future of the European working class are in the traditionally poorer countries - Greece, Portugal, Spain, and Ireland - that borrowed extensively to maintain an economic pace and standard of living on a par with their richer neighbours: keeping up with the Joneses on a national scale. Now the stronger EU members want to punish them for their debt - debt on a scale not far from that of the US or UK. The more powerful states are insisting on budget cuts that will drastically slash incomes, pensions, and benefits while also

(Zoltan Zigedy's columns can be read at <http://zsz-blg.blogspot.com/>)