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# people's VOICE

## Another RCMP taser killing

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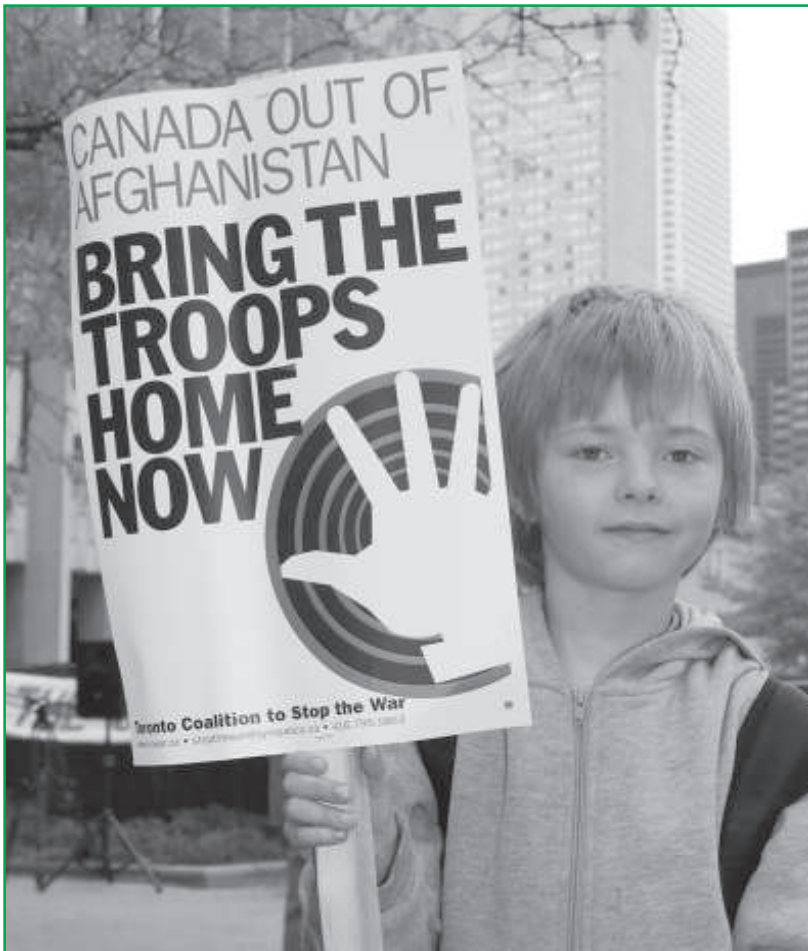
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# Climate change, Copenhagen, and Canada



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### A class of their own?

The campaign for "boys only" schools is popular these days in the right-wing media. But can this "solution" address the problems of an underfunded, oppressive education system?

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### Exploitation increasing

Corporate employers are using the economic crisis to squeeze even more profits from U.S. workers - in other words, to boost exploitation.

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### Holiday book tips

Every progressive activist loves a good book on a cold winter night, so we asked the staff at People's Co-op Books in Vancouver to recommend some of their favourites this holiday season.

# Sudbury strikers dig in for long winter

By Liz Rowley

The word on the picket lines at Vale Inco's Sudbury mines is that it will be a long winter. But however long it takes, striking miners, mill workers and smelter workers will be there one day longer.

About 3,000 members of Local 6500 USWA, plus another 1,000 from Port Colborne, Ontario and Voisey's Bay, are entering their fifth month on strike against Vale Inco, the second largest producer of nickel in the world, with operations in Mongolia, China, India, Chile, Peru, Angola, South Africa, Indonesia, and Canada.

Vale is demanding a privatized pension scheme for new hires, and changes to seniority rights that will make it difficult if not impossible for union members to bid on jobs. It also wants a cap on the nickel bonus - a profit sharing scheme worked out by INCO and the Steelworkers years ago - that Vale says it can't afford.

But as USWA President Leo Gerard points out, Vale has made enormous profits during the worst downturn in 70 years - \$4.1 billion profit in the last two years alone, more than double the profit INCO made in the last ten years when nickel prices were very high. INCO is on record stating it could still make a profit with nickel selling at \$4; the price was \$7.35 in late November.

"These mines don't belong to Vale. They belong to Canadians," says Gerard, a sentiment shared by



On the line, "If it takes 6 months, well, it's been done before. We've done 10 months before." (PVphoto: Liz Rowley)

many on the picket lines and in the community who call for the nationalization of Vale Inco.

The Communist Party is also calling for public ownership, under democratic controls, arguing natural resources belong to the people of Canada, and the profits generated should be used to benefit the people, to diversify Sudbury's economy with secondary industries and manufacturing, and to guarantee the wages, pensions, benefits and health and safety of mine, mill and smelter workers in Canada.

Vale, a Brazilian company that was publicly owned until it was privatized in 1997, bought out the

Canadian-owned International Nickel Company in 2006 for \$19 billion, after giving certain undertakings respecting Canada's national interests in the rich natural resources in the Sudbury basin. These are undertakings that the Harper government and Industry Minister "Two-Tier Tony" Clement, now refuse to enforce, or even disclose. This is why Clement's photo features prominently on the outhouses on many picket lines.

The sale is the cause of the strike, there's no doubt. Stephen Ball, Vale's Manager of Corporate Affairs in Ontario, said it all in this Sudbury media interview: "Mining is a capital intensive operation and

to attract global capital, Canadian workers will have to get more competitive with workers in less developed countries."

The less developed country he has in mind is Brazil. The competition is with Brazil's 40,000 unionized miners, who made \$600 a month until November when a militant strike, and support from Brazil's President Lula, won them an additional 14% over 2 years. The new wage, and the new bar for Vale is \$642 a month.

"(Vale) just wants to break the union. They want to completely hit the rest button on the entire labour situation and the

agreements that have been put in place in the past," a former INCO Executive told local media.

Vale is scabbing the strike with unionized office workers, members of USWA Local 2020 and 6600. These office workers don't work in the mines, mills, or smelters, but the company has ordered them to cross picket lines and get on-the-job training from managers to start up furnaces and smelters - some of the most dangerous jobs in Canada that could result in deadly explosions if a mistake is made.

Mining has also resumed with

see SUDBURY, page 11

## Landmark ALRB ruling ends Old Dutch lockout

In a landmark ruling, the Alberta Labour Relations Board (ALRB) has determined that the province's labour legislation interferes with the constitutional rights of workers. As a result, the ALRB has suspended the lengthy lockout of about 170 UFCW Canada Local 401 members in Calgary by Old Dutch Foods.

The November 10 ruling establishes a Rand Formula type of union security for members there for the first time - something that could until now be achieved in Alberta only through bargaining. The ALRB found that Alberta's current laws which make such an arrangement an "objective of bargaining" are unconstitutional. The ruling gives the Alberta government 12 months to revise the province's labour code.

Union security at Old Dutch had been a major stumbling block in negotiations leading to the lockout, and the ALRB has told Old Dutch to accept the union's last offer regarding union security, while sending members back to work for 30 days, during which time the union and the company are told to resume negotiations on other outstanding issues. The lockout officially ended after 227 days on the picket line, the second-longest dispute in Local 401's history.

## YOUTH FIGHTBACK

# "Lord of the Flies Collegiate"?

By Jamie Burnett with Chuck Saunders

Google news search "boys schools" today and you'll find major debate on a recent proposal coming out of the Toronto District School Board. As TDSB Director of Education Dr. Chris Spence has tweeted "in some instances single sex settings work." His proposal is for an alternative school for boys, staffed mainly by male teachers.

Dr. Spence's "Male Leadership Academy" responds to StatsCan numbers for 2006/7, showing that one out of three boys don't graduate from high school, and one out of four girls (often because of pregnancy). While receiving much debate on the School Board, an Ottawa Citizen article quotes one male student as saying "I don't want to read about princesses." Sadly, this is the level of much of the debate. Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty (who opposed afrocentric schools) vocally supports the idea.

We see two general categories of argument in support of "same sex schools". The first is the sexist argument that "boys and girls are just different", often with clarifications such as: girls like reading stories about princesses and doing what they're told, while boys like running around, playing baseball, making stuff out of wood, and learning about war, guns and cool, tough things.

Hasn't existing gendered streaming (i.e. home economics vs.



Prince Edward Island students in a cross-country race.

physics) and the TDSB putting armed police into schools already done enough to make "Maxim High"?

But this isn't simply to be laughed off. It must be fiercely confronted as reactionary despite its prominent and comfortable place in public discourse. The "learning styles" (i.e. sexist gender roles) generally attributed to girls are precisely those passive, subordinate positions imposed on both women and students within our capitalist schools - which try to mould students to be obedient, productive workers. The perceived "better achievement" by girls responds to, and coincides with, their subordinate role as students.

The second argument is considerably more sophisticated, but still problematic. It says boys and girls are just uncomfortable together. Occasionally on this argument is appended some vague reference to "hormones" - perhaps "the uterus" and "hysteria"?

At worst this reminds me of the so-called "reformed KKK" argument: "I don't mind black people, we just shouldn't mix." At best it supposes that young men, or women, or both, just can't function in the presence of the opposite sex.

This obscures the systemic problems of sexism faced by women and girls, fostered by employers and big business, government policies, the legal system, mass media, schools, etc. (and too often reproduced by teachers and parents), by claiming the problem is just their male peers. Any "disruptive effect" is contingent on society. To think otherwise is to cede a terrain of meaningful and necessary struggle.

What about the comparison with afrocentric schools, another programme the TDSB recently launched?

Unlike afrocentric schools, boys' schools would apparently not be open to all students nor exist within

a regular school. Unlike boys in general, black students face sharp racism and discrimination. Ontario's curriculum arguably does little to combat this and even perpetuates white supremacy (as well as largely writing the working class out of history).

Are boys somehow oppressed in education? To be sure, like working class women, young working class men will face exploitation and oppression their entire lives. (Out in the daily grind women face gendered violence, and make less than men - only 32% of unemployed women qualified for regular EI benefits compared to 40% of unemployed men.) Which boys (and which girls) are most at risk? But that is not what the supporters of a "Male leadership academy" are asking.

Instead their argument rests on a fantastic misrepresentation about our education system being run by anti-baseball, anti-war, pro-princess matriarchs. This is often couched in a view that teachers, especially elementary school teachers, being predominantly women, are poor role models or managers of boys - analogous to the notion that boys can't be properly raised by single mothers!

This too needs to be confronted. (And Dr. Spence does talk about youngsters facing a "fatherless world.") On the one hand, his proposal goes against the "de-gendering" of parenting and education as women's work. On the other hand, by claiming the

problem is women being teachers or parents, it attacks women as workers and mothers. The implied idea that women actually run and organize the education system, according to some dominating feminine character, is ludicrous.

Despite debate, all parties agree that afrocentric schools are an attempt to ameliorate particular conditions in an unhealthy society. There is no claim that gendering schooling will somehow lead to greater equality. Combine all this with the conception of boys as bossed around by big Mama, the idea that boys and girls are just two solitudes, and their obedience to capitalist schools is the key to success - and the whole project appears dangerous.

If poor male performance in schools is the consequence of both an underfunded and oppressive school system and an oppressive gender system under capitalism, then the solution can't be a retrenchment of the former to buttress the latter. As one commentator recently said, "questions of sexuality, race, ethnicity, social class, disability, and cultural background all need to be taken into consideration when thinking about boys as individuals and the pecking order that exists among them."

Solutions have to challenge and overcome both the condition and role of education in the gender system, combating sexism and leading towards the full development of all youth in society.

# Yet another accusation of RCMP taser killing

## PV Vancouver Bureau

Yet another fatality in which the RCMP used a Taser has been brought to light. The case strengthens the argument that police violence against Aboriginal prisoners in custody is a frequent reality, not an isolated aberration.

The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) and BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) held a news conference on Nov. 16 to demand the release of security footage taken in an RCMP lockup that shows the Taser-related death of Clayton Alvin Willie, an Aboriginal man. Under increasing pressure, the RCMP finally agreed a day later to release the footage. Until now, the force had resisted this demand, citing "privacy concerns," despite receiving a notarized release from Clayton Willie's family.

Willie was arrested July 21, 2003 for creating a public disturbance in Prince George, British Columbia. He died 16 hours later, with injuries including a skull fracture, broken teeth, multiple broken ribs, and ruptured bowels.

Security camera footage of the incident was edited by the RCMP, which retains a copy of the edited footage. Representatives of the UBCIC and BCCLA, along with forensic pathologist Dr. John Butt and Leonard Cler-Cunningham, the



Family and friends of Clayton Willie demand justice.

independent journalist who uncovered the existence of the video, have viewed the edited footage.

"Even the edited footage shows Mr. Willie hog tied and being dragged around the Prince George

RCMP detachment and being Tasered while lying helpless on his stomach," said UBCIC Grand Chief Stewart Phillip. "If you treated any animal the way Mr. Willie was treated, there is little doubt that you would be facing criminal

cruelty charges. Astonishingly, the officers involved here are still on active duty."

In January 2009, two of the RCMP officers involved in the Willie case were found by Provincial Court Judge Michael Brecknell to have taken deliberate steps to ensure the loss of Prince George detachment videotape of another Taser abuse allegation. The RCMP will not confirm whether those officers are still on active duty, but media reports indicate that investigative action was taken by the RCMP into that finding.

There are no date or time codes in the edited videotape of Clayton Willie. The video shows an RCMP SUV arriving at the Prince George Detachment garage, then cuts away before the hog-tied Willie is pulled from the back seat and allowed to drop, full weight, on his chest and possibly on his face. He is then dragged down a hallway, tethered and with hands bound behind his back, into an elevator. His head hits the doorway on his way into the elevator and he does not register any response.

In the elevator, an RCMP officer can be seen kneeling down and applying the Taser to Clayton Willie's back. He is then dragged out into the booking area of the

detachment. A number of RCMP officers are seen observing while the two male officers use the Taser at least twice more against Willie. He appears to lose consciousness, and an ambulance arrives some 45 minutes after the initial arrest.

At the request of the ambulance attendants, RCMP officers loosen Willie's handcuffs because his hands are "black." Still hog tied, Willie is seen being loaded onto the stretcher, wrapped in blankets, and taken to the local hospital. He has a massive heart attack en route to the hospital and later dies, which is not shown on the video.

Dr. John Butt noted that the "touch stun" used against Clayton Willie is a less debilitating Taser mode, but it is not clear how many times it was deployed. He questioned why police would Taser a man who was already tied up and face down, and called it a "cruel and unnecessary act."

The RCMP investigation found that all interactions with Clayton Willie were "routine" and there was no discipline as a result. A coroner's inquest concluded that Willie died of a cocaine overdose, despite his severe injuries and Taser burns.

More information on the case is on this Facebook site: "Please help the Willey family put a stop to Tazer deaths in our country." •

# Hammond elected new BC Communist leader

## PV Vancouver Bureau

Meeting on Nov. 15, delegates to the 38th B.C. convention of the Communist Party elected Sam Hammond as the party's new provincial leader. Outgoing leader George Gidora, who had served in that position for the past fifteen years, was among 15 members elected to the new BC Provincial Committee of the CPC.

The convention heard reports on growth of the party in the province this year, with members joining in several areas. Among the most recent is in Trail, where a new club will soon be organized. Many of the new members are active in the progressive South Asian and Latino communities.

A report from the outgoing Provincial Executive, presented by Sam Hammond, analyzed recent political and social developments in the province, especially since the May 2009 provincial election. That campaign, the report notes, "did not develop into a massive fight back to dump the Liberals mainly because the NDP decided to move to the right and compete with the Liberals. The Liberals softened their rhetoric, hid their main agenda, claimed that BC was unaffected by the recession, promised a balanced budget with only a small possible deficit, lauded the economic wealth to arrive with the 2010 Olympics and schmoozed their way with a compliant media to a narrow majority."

"The NDP failed to grasp the opportunity to win working class and popular support, expose the recession or launch a political offensive that could have brought out the anti-corporate vote; in fact in a pre-election interview Carol James said that the NDP would



BC Communist Party leader Sam Hammond

also cut corporate taxes if elected. They played down the problems with the Olympics, the threat to civil rights, the use of First Nations Land and the repressive measures and by-laws being enacted. They did not scream very loud about the closing mills, the softwood lumber deal, NAFTA or the scandalous privatization of BC Rail and the ongoing sellout of Hydro and energy resources.

"The NDP also did not exploit the effects and the looming danger to BC of the world wide economic crisis which the Liberals chose to ignore during the election period. In short the NDP did not concentrate on the working class issues but opted to compete with the Liberals on their own ground in a parallel campaign. The result was the lowest voter turnout in BC history and a bland election that saw the Liberals and the NDP fighting over the same bone while significant numbers of people became spectators of a contest where they did not see their interests represented."

As the report outlines, the global financial crisis has had a heavy impact on the B.C. economy, for example by slashing resource revenues. At the same time, the Liberals have moved to shift \$1.9 billion from working people and small business to the corporations with the imposition of a Harmonized Sales Tax. The HST, the largest transfer of wealth in the history of British Columbia, has sparked a tremendous public backlash, which has been taken advantage of by former Social Credit Premier Vander Zalm and other right wingers. But rather than dissuading the left from joining the anti-HST fight, as some have done, the Communists have helped build this struggle, taking to the streets in Surrey, Abbotsford and Vancouver as part of the "People's Forum" movement.

Meanwhile, the Liberals have used the economic crisis to push their right-wing agenda, by slashing spending on social programs, health care, and education. They have kept up their attacks on organized workers, youth, and First Nations.

"Most of the province's public sector unions will be in negotiations soon," the report notes, "and it is apparent that the government will seek no major confrontations until after the Olympics are over. When the spotlight of world coverage is gone and the business community has slaked itself on the Olympics the other shoe will surely drop. If labour, and especially the public sector unions, do not properly prepare for the coming struggle there could be a heavy price to pay," including a wage freeze which the Liberals hope to impose on the public sector.

The BC Communists are calling

for dramatic action to address the crisis, including major construction of new social and low-income housing to reduce homelessness, improved health care and education, an end to "public-

private partnerships" and other forms of privatization, and a big increase in the minimum wage, which at \$8/hour (and \$6 for "first time workers") is now the lowest in Canada. •

## Niagara News Bulletin

### PV Niagara Bureau

\* 279 counselors and support workers with CUPE Local 2328 are heading into a strike because **Family And Children Services Niagara** management wants cuts to come from front-line workers instead of partnering with them to pressure the Ontario government to meet the region's needs.

\* 170 Niagara families registered for one **local food bank** in just one day, setting a record. The food bank manger told reporters she's never seen this many families in trouble and "we cannot keep food on the shelves anymore, we're running out of basic staples."

\* Members of the Ontario government's Rural and Northern Health Panel refused to meet with members of community health coalitions in Niagara under the excuse that they are bound by confidentiality agreements and cannot have community meetings, even though the Panel develops the region's health care framework. Ontario LHINS (Local Health Integration Network) have been making **cuts to community-funded hospitals** in favour of moving services to P3 (public-private-partnership i.e. for profit) hospitals further away.

\* The **Stop Family Violence Campaign** reported that last year 183 women were turned away from Niagara shelters because there was no more space.

\* The Canadian Labour International Film Festival will visit Niagara, showing seven labour films including *Dear John*, about the closing of the John Deere factory in Welland, made by two Niagara College students who themselves don't have jobs and had to make the film on a shoestring budget.

\* Part-time college support staff are still waiting for ballots to be counted in Ontario's **largest organizing drive**, including two Niagara College campuses.

\* Ontario's refusal to fund **legal aid** defense lawyers the way they fund the prosecution and police has forced one Niagara man to defend himself from double-murder charges. He can't find anyone who can afford to work at the province's offered rate.

\* The cities of St. Catharines, Welland, and Port Colborne marked **Louis Riel Day** by raising the Métis flag at city halls. The flag raising was organized by the Niagara Region Métis Council which represents 300 families. Meanwhile, the St. Catharines staff recommended destroying or removing a statue of a soldier who fought against Riel, which would take \$125,000 to repair. •

## EDITORIALS

### Handcuffs for Harper and Hillier?

Wiser heads among the ruling class want PM Stephen Harper to call a judicial enquiry into the latest accusations of Canada's role in the torture of prisoners in Afghanistan, in hopes of taking the issue off the front burner. But it appears so far that the Tories aim to brazen their way out by hurling slanders and abuse at diplomat Richard Colvin and the opposition parties.

On the substance of the matter, there is no room for confusion. During his tenure at the Canadian embassy in Kabul, Colvin repeatedly warned about torture of local residents turned over to Afghan police and military units by Canadian troops. Colvin was thorough in his documentation, and careful to follow regular diplomatic procedures. His allegations are widely backed by all knowledgeable observers of the situation in Afghanistan. Rather than Taliban fighters, most of the Afghans who had the misfortune to be picked up by "our brave troops" were innocent taxi drivers or farmers, who then faced the "standard operating procedure" of Afghan authorities - from electrical shock torture to other forms of physical and sexual abuse.

The actions of the Canadian Armed Forces are a blatant violation of international law. In short, Canada - and the Harper Tories who carried out a blundering cover-up - have committed grave war crimes.

A judicial enquiry into this disaster would no doubt unearth more appalling details, making it more difficult for future governments to send the CAF abroad to help slaughter other peoples who become targets of U.S. imperialism and its allies. But more to the point, the politicians and generals at the top of the chain of command should face charges for their criminal actions. Stephen Harper, Peter MacKay, Rick Hillier: time to face the music.

### Time to pay "climate debt"

After the disappointment of Barcelona, some world leaders are spinning optimistic scenarios for a positive outcome of the Conference on Climate Change. But developing countries have sharply criticized the downgrading of expectations for Copenhagen.

Speaking at the UN General Assembly, Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, rejected gloomy projections, countering with examples of individual countries' pledges to cut greenhouse gas emissions. But Sudan, speaking for G77 countries which it chairs, and China, have expressed a very different view. The G77 stresses that Copenhagen must adopt the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, which implements the legal commitment of industrialised countries to reduce emissions. Instead, the developed countries want to drop this Protocol, creating the present impasse. Without a Kyoto Protocol decision, Copenhagen cannot succeed, despite claims that the conference can somehow "lay the foundation" for a legally-binding agreement.

Many climate activists now see Copenhagen as an chance to expose business-friendly half-measures, such as carbon offsets and emissions trading, and to step up the fight for non-market policies to help keep coal and oil in the ground. For example, "climate debt" is the idea that rich countries should pay reparations to poor countries for the climate crisis. Such a concept identifies the contrast between the developed capitalist countries which caused the crisis, and the developing world which suffers its worst effects. Even the World Bank explains it this way: over 75% of the damages caused by global warming will be suffered by developing countries, which emit only one-third of greenhouse gases.

In other words, the imperialist system which has ravaged the planet for over two centuries in pursuit of private profit must now pay the bill. This is the bottom line of the emerging struggle for the future of planet earth.

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## SPEAKING FRANKLY

### Québec sovereignty: a means or a goal?

#### PV Québec Bureau

"Enough of defeatism and small steps, re-mobilize Québécois around independence" has become the final slogan of Québec Solidaire's recent policy congress in Laval, held in late November after months of debate. The declaration marks a shift by the new left political party on the national question towards a clear pro-separation position.

Until this congress, Québec Solidaire was a united party of the left, incorporating different perspectives on the question of Québec's relationship with Canada. "Before, they viewed the project of sovereignty as a secondary tool to realize a social and environmental program," Pierre Fontaine, leader of the Communist Party of Québec, told *People's Voice*. "From a means, sovereignty has become a goal in itself."

Québec Solidaire was formed in 2006 from a fusion of Option Citoyenne and the Union des forces progressistes (a federated party including the Communist Party). It has come under increasing pressure to adopt a more nationalist position since Amir Khadir's breakthrough victory as the QS candidate in the Montreal riding of Mercier in the November 2008 provincial election.

"The door is now open for compromises with nationalist bourgeois forces - like the Parti Québécois (PQ)," Fontaine said. Part of the discussion proposed a united front with groups like the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, trade unions, students, environmentalists, feminists, and "sovereignist parties" for national independence.

"Jacques Parizeau discusses the absolute necessity to renew the discourse on sovereignty. In Québec Solidaire, we totally agree. Over the years, the rhetoric of independence has been rendered meaningless by some separatists who wanted to make Quebec a country without a [social justice] project," president and spokesperson for Québec Solidaire, Francoise David, said in a statement to the media.

This position, however, will

likely lose support among progressives who do not consider separation the primary question today. The proposal was opposed by various speakers from the floor. Arthur Sandborn, former leader of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (Montreal Council) announced his resignation after the final resolution passed.

"In fact, the claim that Canadian federalism can not be reformed presumes that the bourgeoisie will forever be in power and the actual political conditions will never change," Fontaine said. "Change is only possible because in Québec there exists a bourgeois movement for sovereignty. The question of fundamental social transformation isn't asked."

"Those responsible for national oppression are the ruling class in Canada, and the capitalist system," Fontaine said. "Communists defend, within the working class, the right of self-determination, including separation, to promote the unity of the working people and their allies against their common enemy."

Fontaine highlighted the Communist Party's long-standing proposal that these rights be enshrined in a new, democratic and equal constitution for all nations in Canada. "This is necessarily linked to the fight for socialism."

Québec's grievances and discontents are again under discussion following October's Supreme Court ruling striking down Bill 104, on the contentious issue of the choice of school where parents, especially immigrant parents, send their children.

Given the benefits of speaking English in Quebec, including a higher salary and higher quality of life, immigrant communities have long opted to send their children to English-speaking schools, integrating into the English-Canadian minority rather than the French majority. In response to this pressure on the French language, the PQ brought in legislation restricting access to English-language schools.

Québec's Charter of the French Language says that children should receive, without exception, instruction in French. Article 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights

and Freedoms, however, stipulates that citizens of Canada "who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in English or French ... have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language in that province."

"The problem is that you have formal equality in an unequal situation between the two languages," Fontaine said. "If it were up to the Canadian Constitution, French would be condemned to steadily disappear."

Before Bill 104 was passed, many parents sent their children to private English schools (unsubsidized by the Ministry of Education) for a short time to claim the constitutional right to education in English. Sisters, brothers and possible descendants of a student who won the right to an education in English could, in turn, legally attend an English school in Quebec.

This loophole raised a public outcry, since it allowed immigrants to circumvent the law. Bill 104 closed the loophole, the Supreme Court decision has opened it again. The response from Québécois has been great concern. Several hundred nationalists and trade unionists organized a rally against the decision a few days after it took place.

"The Québec nation should have the right to defend the French language," Fontaine said. "This is another example of the failure of the Canadian constitution to recognize Québec's right to self-determination." •

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**CPC-36**  
Toronto, Feb. 5-7, 2010

# Democratic movements in action

*The 36th Central Convention of the Communist Party of Canada will meet Feb. 5-7 in Toronto. We are printing excerpts from the Main Political Resolution which is being debated by CPC members. Below are parts of the section on "The People's Movements in the Struggle for Change"*

Other broad democratic movements are also in action against the Harper Tories and the corporate agenda, with varying degrees of success. **These movements are all key sections of a potential People's Coalition** to steer Canada away from the dangerous right-wing course pursued by the present government.

...Peace actions must be stepped up across the country through the Canadian Peace Alliance and the network of local anti-war coalitions. We also welcome the renewed and expanding presence of the Canadian Peace Congress, with its explicitly anti-imperialist perspective. **The anti-war movement** is an important part of the broad people's forces for a fundamental change of policies in Canada, away from militarism,

environmental devastation and corporate domination, and in favour of peaceful economic development across the planet.

The Communist Party welcomes the upsurge of **militant struggles by Aboriginal peoples** in recent years in defence of their inherent national rights, and to demand an end to racism and the appalling living conditions imposed by centuries of colonial domination. The heroic land reclamation in Caledonia by the Six Nations, the occupation of the Tobique Hydro Dam by the Maliseets in New Brunswick, the Grassy Narrows blockade in north-western Ontario, the resistance against tourism expansion on unceded territories by Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia - all these and many more such struggles prove that far from being crushed, the Aboriginal peoples within the borders of the Canadian state remain a powerful force of resistance against the corporate agenda. We will continue to extend our solidarity to all such struggles and to encourage every effort to build wider unity of all Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal popular movements on the basis of recognition and support of the just struggle to win the inherent national rights of Aboriginal peoples to their tribal sovereignty

and historic territories.

**The youth and student movement** remains another key source of popular opposition to the corporate attack. While the student movement in English-speaking Canada is hindered by splits caused by right-wing forces on a number of campuses, the Canadian Federation of Students and the militant and progressive sections of the student movement in Quebec have continued to fight against the rapid escalation of tuition fees across the country. Post-secondary students have been extremely active in anti-war actions, opposition to the apartheid policies of the state of Israel, free speech movements and many other progressive issues. Young workers' groups aligned with Labour Councils have been prominent in the fight to increase minimum wage rates, the rights of youth in the workplace, and related demands in many areas...

**Women in Canada still face persistent inequality**, such as the infamous wage gap of about 30% compared to men with similar qualifications. Violence against women remains a widespread reality and women face higher rates of poverty across Canada, especially Aboriginal and immigrant women. While their participation in the

labour force matches that of men, higher numbers of women are engaged in 'self-employment' or in temporary, part-time or other forms of precarious employment... Following the Harper government's



*Women still face structural inequality, including the 30% wage gap, unequal access to EI benefits, and the lack of a Canada-wide child care program. (PV photo: Ed Bil)*

initial attacks on women's programs, the Ad Hoc Coalition for Women's Equality and Human Rights emerged to promote the continued struggle for pay equity, a country-wide child care system, and other critical demands of the women's movement. The Communist Party will continue to support this initiative to rebuild a strong Canada-wide women's movement, which is an essential element of any future People's Coalition alternative to the right-wing agenda...

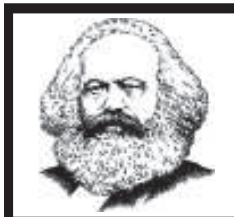
Yet another movement which has played a visible role in opposing the right-wing agenda is the struggle to defend the rights of **immigrants and undocumented workers** in Canada. Groups such as No One Is Illegal have done much to expose the racist corporate drive to exploit such marginalized workers, to deprive them of democratic and civil rights, and to use them as disposable sources of profit extraction to be deported back to their home countries at the whim of employers and governments. Employees brought in under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the Live-In Caregiver Program are denied most of the legal and political rights of Canadians. In a world where corporations and right-wing governments seek to eliminate all barriers to the actions of big capital, it is vital to defend the rights of workers to seek employment and to enjoy equal rights wherever they live, including the right to organize and bargain collectively and to seek citizenship in Canada...

Restrictions against free speech have become increasingly common in recent years, with the overt encouragement of the federal government. This applies particularly to movements on university campuses to express solidarity with Palestinians against the apartheid policies of the state of Israel, and the preparations for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver-Whistler. **The struggle to defend free speech and all civil and democratic rights** for all who live in Canada is a necessary element of the wider movement to protect the interests of working people.

The hostility of the Harper Tories towards hard-won social equality gains is increasingly evident in their bigoted treatment of the **lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) communities**, and the 'trial balloons' by backbench MPs aimed at testing the waters for legislation to undermine women's reproductive rights. The struggles to defend and expand LGBT equality and women's rights are integral to the broader movement to build a united opposition against the Tory agenda.

In western Canada, the Tory push to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board by attempting to eliminate single-desk sales of wheat and barley is further clear evidence of the Harper government's role as the agent of transnational capital, in this case the big grain monopolies. Tory agriculture ministers have repeatedly trampled on the legal and democratic rights of **family farm grain producers** who are another important component of the class forces which must unite to build a People's Coalition. ●

*(To read the entire Resolution, visit [www.communist-party.ca](http://www.communist-party.ca).*



## Marxist Economics

# Exploitation soars, unemployment jumps!

By Zoltan Zigedy, from [www.mltoday.com](http://www.mltoday.com)

This sure is some recovery! The first week in November brought remarkable results for an economy widely held to be on the mend. Earnings of corporations are on the rise, the stock market is perking up, and the Administration is claiming credit for pulling the economy back from the brink and setting it well on the course to health.

But in the other world, the world outside of Wall Street, gated communities, and the political elite, the news is catastrophic, pushing the misery index dramatically higher.

The rate of exploitation [of U.S. workers], as measured by output per hour of labour has increased by 9.6% in the third quarter of this year, more than four times its average growth over the last 25 years. This increase comes on the heels of a 6.9% rise in the second quarter.

Put simply, these numbers mean that for every worker engaged in some form of productive activity, on average, he or she produced almost 10% more in the third quarter of this year over the same quarter last year. Intuitively, this means that the capitalist system has squeezed another dollar in value from workers who produced ten dollars in value last year. Or, put another way, for every hour of labour, workers were forced to do 10% more productive work.

Some might respond that it doesn't follow that workers necessarily worked harder for these productivity gains. That may well be true in some cases, but we

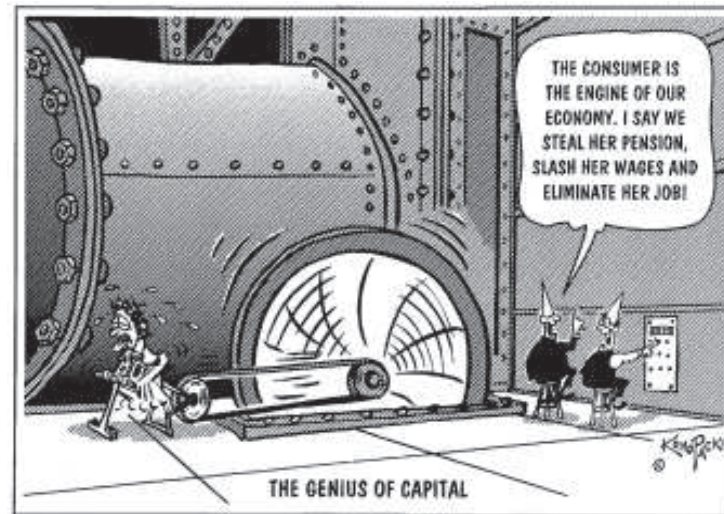
have other Labour Department data that bear on this matter. We also know that total employment is on the decline. In addition, the Labour Department reports that the hours worked were down again for the ninth straight quarter. Combine that fact with a 4% rise in output, and it's pretty clear that workers were squeezed harder.

Capitalist apologists would be quick to point out - and they always do - that other factors may contribute to productivity increases besides worker effort such as technological innovations and investment in more efficient equipment and techniques. This response evaporates in the face of the dramatic decline in investment brought on by the broad economic crisis.

Of course it would be possible that workers worked harder because they wanted to make more money, producing more because they wanted to earn a commensurately larger compensation. This, however, is belied by the fact that unit labour costs were down 5.2% in the third quarter: every unit of value produced earned the workers 5.2% less than it did in the third quarter of 2008.

We have then a stubborn fact: workers worked a lot harder most of this year than they did last year with a smaller share of the value produced.

This stubborn fact goes unacknowledged and unexplained. It will not be discussed on the Sunday morning talk shows. The media - from *The New York Times* to the organs of the labour movement - will pass over this fact, often hailing it as a harbinger of



recovery. Academic and working economists assign it no special place, no event of great consequence.

It is only in the Marxist tradition that this fact occupies a central role and is properly explained. In fact, it is the fundamental notion in the political economy of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, exposing the primary mechanism of profit generation in the capitalist mode of production. In the end, they argued, increases in the rate of profit come from workers getting a smaller portion of the product of their labour. They labelled this measure the rate of exploitation. From the Marxist perspective, the capitalist class intensifies exploitation - raises its rate - to restore or increase the rate of profit. Indeed, this is axiomatic in the Marxist system.

While mainstream economists strain to explain the rise in profits and the stock market in the face of climbing unemployment and slack

consumption, they refuse to attend to the role of labour exploitation in this development.

In our time, this sharp increase in labour exploitation signals two disturbing truths:

1. The relative strength and privilege of capital. Monopoly capital wields sufficient power, unrestrained by the organs of popular sovereignty - the government, to extract dramatically more effort from the working class. 2. The relative weakness of labour. The labour movement lacks sufficient strength, determination, or government influence to at the very least retain a proportionate share of the product of its efforts.

Thus, the burden of the capitalist recovery - profits and stock equity values is borne squarely by the working class. ●

*(In Part 2 of this article, to appear in our next issue, the author examines the impact of rising unemployment on U.S. working people.)*

# Climate change - a matter of life and death

By Anna Pha, *Guardian*  
(Communist Party of  
Australia), Nov. 18, 2009

Five days of heavy negotiating in Barcelona came to a disappointing close on Nov. 6. The last negotiating session before the Copenhagen conference on climate change in December was undermined and obstructed at every turn by a group of developed countries. The hopes and expectations of developing countries and millions of people around the world were dashed as the rich countries attempted to kill the Kyoto Protocol and dimmed the prospects of success at Copenhagen.

"When we ask why they are not willing to put numbers on the table they said it is economically and politically difficult. But for us it is a question of life and death, due to the climate change impact brought about by the actions and the lifestyles in the North." These comments from Grace Ukamu of Kenya, who spoke on behalf of the Africa Group, sum up the great divide between the North and South, the rich and the poor nations on the question of arresting climate change.

Today we speak about disappearing animal species but tomorrow we may be speaking of disappearing states, said the representative of Cape Verde. Developing countries are the most vulnerable and have a right to expect convincing actions and political will, the delegate said, expressing the frustration and urgency felt by many other negotiators. Australia, the US, Japan and New Zealand were amongst those developed nations that ducked and dodged their obligations and failed to submit scientifically based targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Their aim was a political, non-legally binding, agreement outside of the Kyoto Protocol.

The key issues before the Barcelona conference were the future of the Kyoto Protocol; the setting of new global and country-specific targets for emission reductions by developed countries; the provision of finance and technology to enable developing countries to take action; and attempts to shift the burden onto developing countries contrary to the principles of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

## Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol (KP) is international law, a legally binding treaty under the UNFCCC which has been ratified by 189 of the UNFCCC's 197 Parties. The US is the only major industrialised economy that is not a party to the KP. The KP provides for a series of commitment periods to address climate change.

The first commitment period of 2008-2012 set the global target of a 5.2 percent reduction in emissions compared with 1990 (the base year) levels. The Copenhagen conference in December was scheduled to finalise global targets and individual country commitments for the second commitment period to commence in 2013.

Contrary to claims by some governments and media in

developed countries, the KP does NOT expire in 2012. The year 2012 is the when the first commitment period ends.

One of the most important principles of the UNFCCC is "common but differentiated responsibilities". This principle is based on the recognition that developed countries are principally responsible for the current high levels of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere. It takes into account that economic and social



development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of developing countries.

In accordance with this principle, 37 industrialised countries and the European Union (EU) have legally binding targets under the KP, based on their specific conditions, to reduce or limit emissions by 2012. Australia is one of only two countries permitted to increase emissions over that period.

The developing countries gave commitments to collect and submit data and formulate and implement mitigation and adaptation measures - this commitment is conditional on receiving financial and technological assistance which the developed nations are legally bound to provide. Needless to say they have failed to provide the required assistance and this remains one of the big issues still to be resolved, although some progress was made on possible mechanisms.

A series of negotiations on second round KP commitments began almost four years ago. In 2007, negotiations in Bali saw the industrialised countries forced into accepting an Action Plan. The Bali Action Plan commits governments to reaching agreement on the following issues at the Copenhagen meeting:

- \* mitigation - actions to avoid and reduce emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases
- \* adaptation - actions to deal with the effects of climate change (it is the poorest countries that are the most vulnerable and have the least means to take adaptation measures)
- \* finance and technology - the means by which developing countries are to be assisted by developed countries to take action.

## Emission cuts

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that aggregate emission reduction by industrialised countries of between 25% and 40% over 1990 levels would be required by 2020, and that global emissions would need to be reduced by at least 50% by 2050, in order to stave off the worst effects of climate change. These targets, which aim at limiting the temperature increase to 2 degrees Celsius, are now being questioned

science.

Some proposals had built into them requirements that developing countries make substantial cuts in emissions, contrary to the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities". Needless to say, these were not even accompanied by offers to provide the necessary financial and technological assistance.

There were strong differences over the use of offsets where developed countries could through emissions trading and other mechanisms substantially reduce the actual domestic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The African Group directly questioned how much domestic effort was being made by the industrialised countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as against relying on offsets from carbon credits generated by developing countries. This amounted to shifting the burden onto developing countries.

Estimations by developing countries on the level of financial commitment required from the industrialised nations to assist them with mitigation and adaptation ranged from 1-5% of gross national product. Most of the developed countries failed to respond with offers, although the EU did make one considered far short of what is required. There were also strong differences over how the funds would be managed, and the role of markets and the private sector.

Technology transfer was another area where developed countries were reluctant to meet their obligations, the high cost of privately patented technology adding to their difficulties.

## Future of Kyoto

It was clear from the Barcelona conference that most of the industrialised nations have no intention of reaching agreement at Copenhagen for a second round under the KP. This is evident in their failure to submit serious, scientifically based targets for greenhouse gas reductions. The political will was not there, a fact noted by a number of other countries. In sharp contrast, developing countries were strongly committed to retaining the KP and advancing it to the next round.

The Australian government prefers to work outside of the democratic UNFCCC framework. This was seen most recently at the G20 - its favoured body for international decision-making - and again this week at APEC, with calls for a political agreement on emission reductions. There are strong parallels here with its

by scientists as more findings on climate change come to light.

Those countries already experiencing loss of life, extreme weather conditions or slipping into the ocean want to do more than "stave off the worst effects of climate change".

At Barcelona developing countries were calling for an aggregate reduction of 40% by 2020 compared with 1990. According to estimates by the Alliance of Small Island States the offers being made (including the US) amount to an 11-17% reduction in emission levels that falls alarmingly below what is required by scientific assessments.

Many of the most vulnerable countries are calling for an increase in temperature of less than 1.5 degrees. The Alliance of Small Island States pointed out that the temperature increase is already at 0.8 degrees and the impacts are being felt.

Which ever way you look at it, Australia's proposal for 5-15% by 2020 (based on a slight-of-hand year 2000 base, not 1990) or 25% conditional on certain outcomes, is offensive, morally reprehensible and totally inadequate for a rich country.

Japan and the EU were amongst other treaty partners who also played the game of making targets conditional upon what others were prepared to do. Shyam Saran, representing India, made the point that they were going around in circles to the refrain of: "I will show you my targets, when you show me yours." What was required were responsible commitments based on

snubbing of the UN's conference on the global economic crisis and promotion of the G20 as the world's leading body on economic policy.

The Labor government has previously claimed that the KP expires in 2012 but appears to have backed off explicitly repeating this lie. The real danger is that the KP might be killed in 2012 by the actions of developed nations and their corporate patrons who have also played a role in climate change negotiations.

Japan spoke in terms of a new single legal framework retaining a number of elements and useful mechanisms of the KP. Australia also talked in terms of a "single outcome", ratifiable under the UNFCCC. The single outcome refers to attempts to dissolve the KP and retain a weakened UNFCCC, with new arrangements that reflect mitigation "ambitions" and clear rules for the carbon market.

One of the most positive developments at Barcelona and other climate change negotiations in recent years is the refusal of the third world nations to be bullied and trampled over. The G77 and China, the African Group, the Least Developed Countries, the Alliance of Small Island States as well as individual countries including some of the smallest nations stood firm - for them it was a matter of life and death, not GDPs and corporate profits.

India strongly made the point that it was not prepared to give up or declare failure at Barcelona or lower its expectations at Copenhagen. While developed countries fail to take the lead, India would not slacken off. In many ways the poorer nations were doing much more on climate change than their rich partners despite severe limitations of modest resources, India noted.

## China & India

At the closing session, Su Wei, head of China's delegation, delivered a strong warning: "To those developed countries who are standing there waiting for developing countries to act, please look ahead... We, the developing countries, have already left you behind; you cannot use developing countries as an excuse for your inaction any more. Please wake up and see that Copenhagen is just miles away, you have to get running in order to catch up. Otherwise, you will fail in the race to Copenhagen and beyond."

The developing countries will be approaching Copenhagen with determination in sharp contrast to the short-sighted, narrow attitude of the profit-driven capitalist countries. Capitalism is proving incapable of saving the planet.

The leadership given by China, India and the other developing nations, alongside the struggles of the millions of people around the world who are fighting for the planet and life on earth are the only hope that remains. ●

Reportage from Third World Network, [www.twinside.org.au](http://www.twinside.org.au), provided much of the information in this article.



# Canada in Barcelona - No Boy Scout

By Kimball Cariou

Canada joined with the United States in telling other countries at the UN climate talks in Barcelona in early November that it wants a less binding, less ambitious, and less fair global climate deal.

"Canada's government has switched from promising repeatedly to get tough on polluters to instead saying it will get tough on the poorest people in the world in watering down a climate deal," said Steven Guilbeault of Equiterre. "If this is what Minister Prentice means by not being a 'boy scout,' then it means that the life support systems of the planet are in deep trouble."

"The Canadian government is clearly doing the bidding of Alberta and the tar sands," said Graham Saul of Climate Action Network Canada. "They just keep trying to throw wrenches into the works."

The Climate Action Network says it remains optimistic that the elements of a strong deal are still on the table, that a fair, ambitious, and legally binding agreement can be reached at the UN climate summit in Copenhagen in December. The Network stresses that science says that any agreement must limit global temperature increase well below 2 degrees C, and emissions must peak by the year 2015, as indicated by the International Panel on Climate Change's last assessment report.

Environmental groups also warn that the deal to be reached in December must also provide adequate financing from rich, polluting countries for adaptation and mitigation in developing countries as well as a fair contribution of mitigation action from large developing countries.

"The Canadian Government needs to live up to the promises it has been making for years," said Dale Marshall of the David Suzuki Foundation. "That means finally producing regulations to tackle global warming pollution that are

based on the best climate science and that are worthy of being brought to this crucial global summit."

"The Canadian Government has proven that it will not give up its laggard role in these critical negotiations. This government knows perfectly well what needs to happen to make Copenhagen a success and they need to get their act together and come up with a plan," said Virginie Lambert Ferry of Greenpeace Canada.

Shortly after the Barcelona meeting, a coalition of leading non-governmental organizations called on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to join over 40 world leaders who have already accepted an invitation to attend the United Nations

leaders - particularly on adaptation funding for developing countries. Perhaps international pressure will influence him in a way that Canadians haven't yet been able to."

At present, Canada's emissions target falls far short of what the science demands, and Canada has made no meaningful commitments to provide financial support to poorer countries to tackle climate change.

"On the world stage, Canada is being seen as an obstacle to success at these negotiations. Attending the climate summit would prove that the Stephen Harper government isn't only looking out for the interests of the Alberta tar sands and is serious about

report estimates the legislation would effectively subsidize nuclear operators from \$4.8 billion to 9.7 billion annually.

"Unlike other energy sources the nuclear industry has this special law to relieve it of paying its own insurance costs," said Stensil. "This creates an unfair playing field for green energy and would force Canadians to pay for the nuclear industry's pollution." A massive taxpayer liability has been created by shifting responsibility for nuclear accidents from the nuclear industry to the federal taxpayer. The report recommends legislation to require the nuclear industry to pay its own clean up and damage costs and publicly report any taxpayer liabilities.

The nuclear industry needs this special legal protection, the report says, because insurers and even nuclear vendors consider reactor accidents a realistic possibility that would bankrupt them. Instead of addressing the fundamental design flaws that make all current and proposed reactors vulnerable to Chernobyl-style accidents or terrorist attacks, the industry and its regulators have downplayed accident risks with the public by failing to examine or publicly release information on nuclear accidents. The report calls for disclosure of such information.

At present, Canadian victims of a nuclear accident would receive

\$650 million in industry-insured compensation, Americans over \$10 billion and victims in Western Europe and Japan \$1.2 billion. Germany has no limit on the liability of nuclear operators.

The nuclear industry's own studies contradict the Harper government's proposal that \$650 million is sufficient and show that a small-scale foreseeable accident at the Pickering B nuclear station would cause \$1.2 billion in health damages alone. The health costs of a Chernobyl-style accident would top \$50 billion.

The impact of avoided insurance premiums permitted by the current legislation is equivalent to a 5.4 to 11 cents a kilowatt hour subsidy to nuclear operators and deters green power development.

Greenpeace says the legislation is more proof the nuclear industry has failed to innovate and build safer and cheaper reactors despite billions in public subsidies. In May, Ontario demanded the Harper government dole out billions in subsidies to build the untested prototype Advanced CANDU from Atomic Energy of Canada Limited.

"A few years ago the nuclear industry claimed it could build reactors without public subsidy, but today it wants massive public bailouts and protection from nuclear accidents. Harper's accident legislation shows nuclear power is neither cheap nor safe," said Stensil. ●



climate summit this month in Copenhagen.

"This is a time for statesmanship. World leaders are gathering in Copenhagen to find common cause on the most urgent issue of our time. Mr. Harper must go and represent Canada," said John Bennett, Executive Director of Sierra Club of Canada.

"Canadians expect Mr. Harper to be there and to bring home a successful agreement," said Mark Fried, policy coordinator at Oxfam Canada. "We have a chance to be

responding to this crisis," said Graham Saul, Executive Director of Climate Action Network Canada. "The current government needs to realize the opportunity in front of us. The U.S. is already outspending Canada 14 to 1, per capita, on investments in renewable energy, and Europe has been ahead of the game on this for years. Harper needs to commit to Copenhagen today so we can get Canada back in the game."

But evidence continues to mount that the Harper government is more concerned about energy industry profits than the environment or public health. In the latest development, a new Greenpeace report says the government plans to short change Canadian victims of nuclear accidents by allowing reactor operators to provide billions less in industry compensation than other western countries in the event of a reactor accident.

"By capping the nuclear industry's liability for accident clean up and damage to health at an unrealistic level the Harper government shows it thinks Canadians deserve less industry compensation than nuclear victims in other countries," said Shawn-Patrick Stensil, Greenpeace's energy campaigner. "Why should nuclear operators get subsidies while victims pay?"

The report, *The Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act: Is it Appropriate for the 21st Century?*, was released on Nov. 16 to coincide with federal hearings on the proposed Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act. The report warns that the legislation's artificial cap of \$650 million on reactor operator liability doesn't meet international standards and would hurt the growth of green power by relieving the nuclear industry of the responsibility of paying sufficient insurance costs. The

## The Communist Party on climate change

*From the Draft Resolution to the upcoming 36th Central Convention of the Communist Party of Canada*

As awareness grows of the threat to human existence posed by climate change and global warming, the environmental movement across Canada has played an important role campaigning to reduce reliance on fossil-fuel energy. This objective has become evermore urgent given that the Kyoto targets, which aimed to restrict global temperature to a two degree (Celsius) increase by 2012 (compared to 1990 levels), have already been exceeded. The Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change in December 2009 will be a crucial test whether or not such increases (caused mainly by carbon emissions from fossil fuels) can be arrested and reversed.

However, there are sharp differences within the environmental movement around the possibilities for radical shifts under the present capitalist system. The Green Party of Canada, like its counterparts in other countries, considers itself 'above the left-right divide.' In practise, this often means that the policies of the Green Party and some large environmental groups are based on the implicit acceptance of private property relations and attempts to encourage "green capitalism." This factor played a negative role in the May 2009 B.C. election, when some prominent environmentalists

backed the Campbell Liberals' plan for privatizing rivers in the name of "green energy" projects with the potential for severe consequences to other aspects of the ecology. The presence of environmental groups with a keen awareness of the dangers of corporate control of resources is urgently needed in the movement to build a powerful People's Coalition in Canada.

A critical part of the environmental crisis relates to the production and use of energy resources, especially in our country. In September 2008, our Party issued a People's Energy Plan for Canada which noted that:

"Our world - and our country - are entering a period of grave dangers, an era of potentially devastating climate changes, widespread hunger and chaos, all linked to the unchecked growth of fossil fuel consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and wars to control oil reserves. In response, the Communist Party of Canada proposes far-sighted and radical policy changes, requiring a courageous struggle to take urgent and decisive action... The most decisive aspect of such a policy - the cornerstone upon all other measures must rest - is the public ownership of energy. Any meaningful transformation of the energy system is impossible without wresting control from the private energy monopolies - both domestic and foreign-based - and returning that ownership and control to Canadians, including the Aboriginal peoples whose lands have been ravaged by Big Oil." ●

## Canada wins "Fossil of the Day"

With only weeks to go until the most important climate change summit of our time takes place in Copenhagen this December, Canada has once again been singled out as a major blockade to the strong global agreement that our planet desperately needs.

In Barcelona on Nov. 2, Canada was awarded "Fossil of the Day" by the global Climate Action Network. Teams of government negotiators from all around the world met in the Spanish city to discuss how to make the Copenhagen deal ambitious, fair and legally binding.

However, environmental organizations from around the world were quick to pick up on Canada's efforts to undermine a strong agreement, handing both Canada and Denmark the "Fossil" award given to countries that have performed "best" at blocking progress on

negotiations.

"Canadian climate negotiators need to find space for another trophy on their mantle as they were recognized again for undermining the attempt to make an agreement in Copenhagen legally binding," said Virginie Lambert-Ferry, a Greenpeace climate and energy campaigner who is in Barcelona monitoring the negotiations. "Canada's reprehensible position was underlined by Environment Minister Jim Prentice's recent comment that a more ambitious 25 per cent emission reduction by 2020 would be 'irresponsible'."

Greenpeace activists also took action in Barcelona to remind the negotiators that the world needs a strong and binding agreement in Copenhagen. They hung a "Save the Climate" banner on one of Spain's most famous landmarks, the Sagrada Familia cathedral. ●



# GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

## Women migrant workers abused

No one knows if 1-year-old Yunus will ever see his mother again. Like six million other Indonesians, she travelled far from home to find employment. She was hired by a wealthy family in Saudi Arabia. But one day, while on her boss's property, she went to check on some goats, and was raped by two men. Yunus was conceived of that assault. Yunus' mother gave him up to Normawati, 50, and her close friend Ibu Herlina, 53. Normawati (who like many Indonesians goes by a single name) is a campaigner for migrant-worker rights who is raising several children of half-foreign parentage who were abandoned by raped migrant mothers.

Globalization has turned much of the world into a wide-open labour market, creating complex human and societal dramas. Women account for up to 50% of the world's 100 million migrant-worker population, and there is no effective entity to protect their rights. In 2008, Indonesians working abroad, commonly as domestic staff in the Middle East and parts of Asia, contributed about \$6.8 billion to their national economy via remittances, according to the World Bank. While statistics are difficult to come by, many are physically abused, raped, and even killed by their employers.

The abuse of Indonesian workers has become so notorious that Jakarta is considering placing bans on labour migration to specific destinations. Workers may soon be prevented from entering Saudi Arabia and Jordan if a "thorough review" shows that those countries are providing insufficient protections for Indonesian workers.

## Labour condemns Israeli actions

The International Trade Union Confederation has condemned the Israeli government's decision to expand the Gilo settlement south of Jerusalem, on land annexed by Israel in 1967, as illegal and a further threat to prospects for peace. Widespread international criticism has followed the announcement that a further 900 dwellings will be built at the settlement.

"The existence of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land, in contravention of international law, is a major barrier to solving the conflict, and the decision to expand this settlement can only make matters worse. Israel should be removing settlements, not expanding them," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder on Nov. 19. "This immoral and illegal decision will only serve to intensify Palestinian anger, weaken the position of those seeking peace on both sides, and increase the risk of further conflict, to the detriment of Palestinians and Israelis alike."

The other major international labour body, the World Federation of Trade Unions, has acted in solidarity with the Palestinian working class from the beginnings of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. During last winter's Israeli attack

against Gaza, the WFTU called the aggression a war crime, and condemned the USA, EU, and NATO for backing the Israeli administration. The federation supports the Palestinian people's right to fight for their own independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital, and has encouraged all international trade unions to support the Palestinian struggle.



## Victory in sweat-shop campaign

A sustained U.S. student campaign led by United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS), that enlisted university pressure on apparel supplier Russell Athletic to reopen a plant it owned in Honduras that it had closed in order to avoid recognizing a union of its employees, has ended in an unprecedented victory for labour rights.

Spurred on by student activists on campuses all over the U.S., Canada and the U.K., ninety-six American universities, including the entire University of California system, most of the Big Ten and Ivy League schools, Duke, North Carolina, Miami, Georgetown, suspended or severed ties with Russell Athletic, a major supplier of college logo t-shirts and sweatshirts.

The students and their universities based their stance on the conclusion of an in-depth, on-site investigation of the plant closing by the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), the investigative labour rights watchdog with which 175 American universities and colleges are affiliated and which USAS helped found earlier this decade. The WRC concluded that Russell's decision to close the plant was clearly intended as a measure to avoid allowing its workers to organize a union, a clear violation of the WRC's and the universities' codes of conduct for suppliers.

Russell Athletic, owned by Fruit of the Loom, a Berkshire-Hathaway portfolio company, closed its Jerzees de Honduras factory, January 30, 2009 after months of battling with a union that had organized its workers. Unlike other major apparel brands, Russell/Fruit of the Loom owns all eight of its factories in Honduras rather than subcontracting to outside manufacturers. The company is the largest private employer in Honduras.

"This is the first time we know of where a factory that was shut down to eliminate a union was later reopened after a worker-activist

campaign. This is also the first company-wide neutrality agreement in the history of the Central America apparel export industry - and it has been entered into by the largest private employer in Honduras, the largest exporter of t-shirts to the US market in the world. This is a breakthrough of enormous significance for the right to organize in one of the harshest labour rights environments in the world," said Rod Palmquist, USAS International Campaign Coordinator.

## Paid leave key to slowing H1N1

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that one worker sick with the H1N1 (swine flu) virus will infect one in 10 co-workers by going to work while infected with the virus. Even more frightening, another recent study predicted that 63 percent of Americans will be infected with the virus by the end of December.

Family advocates and health care professionals recently told the U.S. House of Representatives Education and Labour Committee that along with vaccinations, and good hygiene practices, the best way to protect workers and slow the spread of the H1N1 virus is through guaranteed paid sick leave legislation, such as the Healthy Families Act.

The CDC's guidelines say that workers who suspect they have the swine flu or another influenza-like illness should stay home and employers should allow workers to stay home "without fear of reprisals or... losing their jobs." But nearly half of all U.S. private-sector workers - and 76 percent of low-income workers - have no paid sick leave. That leaves sick workers facing the dilemma of staying home and losing several days of pay or likely spreading the disease to fellow workers and the public. Many low-wage workers have jobs that have direct contact with the public, such as the food-service and hospitality industry, schools and health care.

Says Debra Ness, president of the National Partnership for Women and Families: "Congress should waste no time in passing paid sick days legislation so that working people can earn paid time off and help prevent the spread of illnesses, without jeopardizing their economic security."

Earlier this year, Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) and the late Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) introduced the Healthy Families Act (H.R. 2460 and S. 1152), which would require businesses with more than 15 employees to provide workers with up to seven paid sick days a year to care for themselves or a sick child or spouse.

## Egyptian workers protest wage shortfalls

Some 300 employees of the Kouta Steel Factory in 10th of Ramadan City northeast of Cairo recently staged a sit-in, alleging that they had not received salaries for three

months. "Nor have they paid us our bonuses," complained steelworker Emad Fawzi, claiming that factory owner Walid Kouta had fled the country to avoid paying taxes and outstanding debts.

Company management had "collected" a total of 4 million Egyptian pounds (\$800,000 Cdn.) from employees to restart the factory's faltering operations. Company officials did not provide receipts for "collected" funds, which were pocketed by Kouta. Protesters called for the personal intervention of President Hosni Mubarak to resolve their grievances.

About 1000 employees of the Lafarge Cement Company in the canal city of Suez staged a sit-in on Nov. 17, after receiving only 25 percent of their monthly bonuses. Meanwhile, 20 female engineers at the IMCO Petroleum Company, also in Suez, staged demonstrations to demand better financial packages. In Damietta, employees of a spinning and weaving company staged a sit-in to demand better wages, and in Kafr el-Sheikh, more than 600 teachers threatened to stage demonstrations in front of the president's office to protest a recent wave of layoffs.

## Georgia unions press for reform

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili is under pressure from both trade unions and employers. Georgia replaced its Soviet-era labour code with a new legislative framework in 2006. Minister of Labour Aleksandre Kvitashvili has described the current code as "modern" and "close to [the] Danish - a liberal approach." But the Georgian Trade Unions Confederation (GTUC) says that

the global economic crisis has exposed flaws in the system. Hard hit by the downturn and the 2008 war launched by Saakashvili against Russia, Georgia registered an 11.6% decrease in its Gross Domestic Product for the first six months of 2009.

Union leaders take particular issue with the labour code's Articles 37 and 38, which allow for dissolution of employee contracts without cause. The statutes also require employers to pay only one month's severance pay to a laid-off worker. With some estimates of Georgian unemployment running well over 30 percent (official rates reach 13.3 percent), Articles 37 and 38 have become a wellspring of economic anxiety for worker

Georgian companies have used the two articles to block unionization. In 2008, nine employees at BTM Textile, a subsidiary of a leading Turkish textile firm, were fired after holding a union-related meeting. The year before, the company fired 11 people who agitated for the right to collectively bargain a contract. The dismissals were challenged in court, but upheld. BTM Textile has about 600 employees. Knowledge of such dismissals makes Georgian employees reluctant to contact unions for help in disputes with management, says GUTC President Irakli Petriashvili.

The Labour Minister countered that worker welfare problems lie not with the labour code, but with the fact that workers "do not understand their rights." It's a problem that can be considered a legacy of Communism, he claimed.

Leaders of the 260,000-member GTUC are pressing the government to implement a new requirement that would enable employers to fire workers only with a viable cause.

Many items in our "Global Class Struggle" column are from the Labour Start website, [www.labourstart.org](http://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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# UN committee slams rights abuses in South Korea

By Sean Burton

The UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR) has drawn a grim picture of human rights in South Korea. According to a leading progressive newspaper, *Hankyoreh*, the Committee has investigated several issues in South Korea, and damningly so for the Lee Myung Bak regime.

The investigation found that South Korea's National Human Rights Commission has been downsized 30%, its budget significantly reduced, and headed by a person not competent on the issue of human rights. Similar downsizing seems to have occurred in the Ministry of Gender Equality.

The CESCR report came down hard on the Lee government's privatization of healthcare, water, and electricity, which put South Korea at the risk of not complying with the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. A massive civil engineering project is also being railroaded through by the administration; according to the report it is far too costly in relation to its economic benefits, and some of the project's budget had been taken from the welfare budget.

Also mentioned was the February 2009 tragedy in Yongsan district of Seoul, in which the forced evictions of forty people from an apartment complex resulted in the deaths of five people and one police officer. Though Seoul's Central Prosecution Office blamed the protesters, the report condemned the police action as excessive use of force. That no alternative settlement was offered to the evicted tenants is also being held against the government.

Press freedom also figured

prominently in the CESCR report. Numerous journalists have been arrested or harassed for writing negatively about Lee Myung Bak and his policies. Many progressive-minded historians and writers have also faced persecution from the state and pro-government media for airing South Korea's dirty laundry in new history textbooks. One conservative newspaper claimed that such books were "corrupting the minds of the youth."

Similarly, the recent publication of a three-volume, 2,800-page encyclopedia of Koreans who collaborated with the Japanese by the Institute for Research in Collaboration Activities (IRCA) has again stirred the ire of the country's conservative elite. And no wonder; General Park Chung Hee, dictator of South Korea from 1961-1979, is included for aiding the Japanese in their brutal occupation of Manchuria. Park's political vehicle, the Democratic Justice Party, is now the ruling Grand National Party of Lee Myung Bak, and Park's daughter remains a leading figure of the party and has been a presidential candidate. Also in the list are the founders of two leading newspapers, the *Chosun Ilbo* and the *Dong-A Ilbo*, Bang Eun Mo and Kim Seong Su respectively. Both papers were established in the 1920s and served as mouthpieces for the oppressive Japanese administration. Not surprisingly, their role as mouthpieces of the conservative and authoritarian elite continued into post-war South Korea. A state organization that studies collaboration activities also confirmed that Bang urged the Japanese invasions in East Asia during radio broadcasts, and also owned a military supplies manufacturing plant. Meanwhile,

Kim was apparently urging the conscription of Koreans for the war effort while working for the colonial administration. However, the state organization has mentioned far fewer names and not included Park Chung Hee on the grounds that simply being pro-Japanese does not make a person a collaborator.

IRCA's director, Yim Hun Yeong, would beg to differ. According to his organization's encyclopedia, Park swore a blood-

a record of historical people who were pro-Japanese to support their personal advancement.

Nevertheless, Yim noted, IRCA's research funding has been cut and the institution was even under suspicion for its very name; only a 2004 citizens' donation campaign saved the project financially.

Labour rights were also discussed in the CESCR. The committee was critical of a penal

plans to cut union rep wages and revise the Irregular Worker Law. Fifty thousand gathered in Seoul's Yeouido Plaza for a convention hosted by the Korea Confederation of Trade Unions on November 8. The KCTU has threatened Seoul with a general strike on November 22 if it does not take positive action.

The rights of part-time workers have come up recently. New regulations stipulate that irregular workers have to be moved into full-time positions after two years. In particular, over 1200 lecturers at 112 universities have been dismissed. If the remaining universities are counted, the number amounts to several thousand. Because these part-time lecturers do not have doctoral degrees, they are not considered "specialists" or even "real" staff members, according to one professor. In other words, their status as workers is not guaranteed and the new law is a deceptive means of firing people. Meanwhile, twenty unionized employees at YTN cable news were fired when they opposed the appointment of YTN's new president on the grounds that he was Lee Myung Bak's campaign press officer. Only six of the employees have been absolved by court.

Though Seoul insists that the Committee's "advice" will "serve as inspiration" for years to come, the continued harassment of those critical of the status quo makes one wonder. Many of these issues have been raised by the opposition, labour organizations, and other progressive groups. Given the "lively" nature of the South Korean legislature, the Grand National Party and Lee Myung Bak are unlikely to give much, if any, ground in the weeks to come. ●



In this *Hankyoreh* cartoon, Park Chung Hee tells President Lee Myung Bak, busy kicking at the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union (KTU), the cable broadcaster YTN and the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, to "be gentle and take your time" in gaining control over such organizations, because Park took his time... eighteen years to be exact.

oath to join Japan's army, and even after being rejected used a friend's help to enlist. Conservative opponents have accused IRCA of being politically biased. Director Yim claimed in a recent interview that IRCA is not a political think-tank and that the purpose of the encyclopedia is simply to provide

code article aimed at preventing strikes and demonstrations for "obstructing business". One expert stated that there was a disproportionate number of police and military personnel at such demonstrations. Speaking of strikes, tens of thousands of unionized workers rose in defiance of Seoul's

# New revelations on Colombian military bases

Summary of an analysis published by Christina Esquivel, Research Associate for the Council On Hemispheric Affairs

On October 30, U.S. and Colombian officials signed the controversial Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA), granting the U.S. access to seven Colombian military bases for the next ten years.

Both governments say the leased facilities would be exclusively used to support counter-narcotic and counter-insurgency initiatives within Colombia. However, a recently publicized U.S. Air Force document presents a far more ominous explanation. It emphasizes the "opportunity for conducting full spectrum operations throughout South America" against threats not only from drug trafficking and guerrilla movements, but also from "anti-U.S. governments" in the region.

Details of the DCA have been shrouded in secrecy since the summer, when an article in the Colombian magazine *Cambio* first drew attention to the \$46 million earmarked by the House of Representatives to upgrade the Palanquero base, signaling a possible military deal. In response, three Colombian ministers held a press conference to offset

speculation, saying that the seven existing bases leased as a result of the deal - Palanquero, Malambo, Tolomaida, Larandia, Apiay, Cartagena and Malaga - would remain under Colombian jurisdiction. Days after the August 14 accord was reached, the State Department issued a statement confirming that the DCA would "facilitate effective bilateral cooperation on security matters in Colombia, including narcotics production and trafficking, terrorism, illicit smuggling of all types, and humanitarian and natural disasters."

Colombia's neighbours remain skeptical, and transparency has been lacking. The DCA was only released on Nov. 3, nearly three months after the accord was reached, and days after it was signed by Colombian Foreign Minister Jaime Bermudez and the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia, William Brownfield.

The U.S. Air Force construction budget for the Palanquero base, published by *Semana* on Oct. 31, appears to validate regional anxieties. The budget estimate outlines the specific destination and purpose of the funds, giving further weight to questions surrounding the purpose of U.S. military funding for the bases. In contrast to the Defense Cooperation Agreement, this document is a far more concrete

declaration of the U.S. military's aim of "an opportunity for conducting full spectrum operations throughout South America." This document confirms the potential of military cooperation to extend beyond Colombian borders, and suggests that the base could be used for continental combat operations and to neutralize regional governments considered "anti-US," presumably Venezuela but also likely including Bolivia, Ecuador, Cuba and Nicaragua.

Palanquero is already Colombia's largest military base and one of the most advanced in Latin America. Located near the Magdalena River 100 kilometers northwest of Bogota, the base has the capacity to lodge over 2,000 personnel, hangar space for 50-60 airplanes, and the longest runways in the country. Leasing this facility would provide the U.S. Air Force with access to the entire continent.

According to the budget justification, the planned structural and operational improvements are intended to "leverage existing infrastructure to the maximum extent possible, improve the U.S. ability to respond rapidly to crisis, and assure regional access and presence at minimum cost." The upgrade is also intended to increase the U.S. Air Force's capability to conduct intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

## U.S. presence grows

The U.S. military may soon share Colombian military facilities through agreements between the two governments.



*Semana* magazine characterized the deal as an escalation of the ongoing arms race in the region, the beginning of a "new Cold War." According to *Semana*, for Colombian military leaders who had long sought to engage Venezuela on an equal military footing, "this accord seemed to fall from the sky."

Since talks on the deal were first publicized, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has perceived the amplification of U.S. military presence in the region as targeting his country for a possible attack. At the summit of the Union of

Southern Nations (UNASUR) in August, he denounced the agreement as a sign that the "winds of war are starting to blow."

On November 5, following the signing of the DCA, Chavez severed diplomatic ties with Colombia and froze trade between the two nations, which already had fallen by nearly half in September.

The U.S. Air Force document gives substantial weight to Chavez's fears, particularly in the wake of the Venezuelan government's recent accusation of espionage by the Colombian intelligence agency (DAS). Speaking before the National Assembly on October 29, Venezuelan Interior Minister Tarek El Aissami presented documents allegedly originating from DAS, which showed that Colombia had sent spies to Venezuela, Ecuador and Cuba as part of a CIA-linked operation.

While Colombia denied the allegations, they did not refute the validity of the intercepted DAS documents. By pursuing this vague and open-ended deal with Colombia and approving the combative language of the budget justification document, U.S. officials have accelerated the simmering conflict by legitimizing Venezuela's suspicions and precipitating the closure of vital channels of communication and exchange. ●



## Great holiday gift ideas from People's Co-op Books

Friends of People's Co-op Bookstore in Vancouver will be pleased to hear that the staff reports a significant jump in October-November sales over the same period of 2008, and that some generous donations have been received from supporters. Watch our next issue for an update on the campaign to keep this historic member-owned cooperative bookstore alive.

Here are some staff picks for great books for the holiday season.

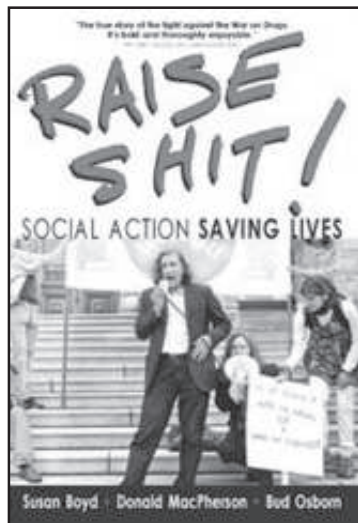
**A Woman Among Warlords**, by Malalai Joya (\$32.99 hardcover) has seen big sales during this fall's North American speaking tour by Afghan MP Joya, a fierce critic of the NATO occupation.

Lawrence Hill's award winning novel **Book of Negroes** is now available in a beautiful illustrated edition (\$34.99 hardcover).

**Wayfinders: Why Ancient Matters in the Modern World**, by

Wade Davis, (\$19.95 paperback). This year's fascinating Massey Lecture argues that we can learn how to live sustainably from ancient societies.

**Nota Conspiracy Theory: How Business Propaganda Hijacks**



**Democracy**, by Donald Gutstein (\$22.95 paperback). The former SFU communications professor explains how big business conducts propaganda campaigns to change our minds on fundamental issues.

**Raise Shit! Social Action Saving Lives**, by Susan Boyd, Donald MacPherson, and Bud Osborn (\$26.95 paperback) tells the story of the community activism in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside that culminated in the first official safe injection site.

**Breaking the Sound Barrier**, by Amy Goodman of Democracy Now (\$16.00 paperback) proves the power that independent journalism can play in the struggle for a better world.

**Judaism Does Not Equal Israel**, by influential Jewish thinker Marc Ellis (\$31.50 hardcover) offers a prophetic Jewish alternative to

the blind acceptance of Zionism.

**Verse Map of Vancouver**, an acclaimed anthology of poetry and photography of Vancouver (\$43.95 hardcover).

Excellent recent books on political economy include: **ABCs of the Economic Crisis**, by Magdoff and Yates (\$14.95 paperback), **Great Financial Crisis**, by Foster and Magdoff (\$14.95 paperback), and Jim Stanford's **Economics for Everyone**, (\$24.95 paperback).

On the environment, great

reads include **Climate Challenge: 101 Solutions to Global Warming** by Guy Dauncey (\$24.95), **Climate Cover-up: Crusade to Deny Global Warming**, by James Hogan (\$20.00), and **Ecological Revolution**, by John Bellamy Foster (\$19.95).

People's Co-op Bookstore is located at 1391 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3X5. Call the store (604-253-6442, or toll-free 1-888-511-5556) during business hours. Readers can also order books directly from the website: [www.peoplescoopbookstore.com](http://www.peoplescoopbookstore.com).

### Hunger stalks North America

Hunger is usually considered a serious problem of the countries of the global South, not for North Americans. But record numbers of Canadians and Americans are undernourished as a result of capitalist economic conditions.

The HungerCounts 2009 survey, released on Nov. 17, show that food banks across Canada helped almost 800,000 individuals in March, representing an increase of 120,000 or 20 percent more than March 2008.

"This is the largest increase in food bank use on record," Katherine Schmidt, executive director of Food Banks Canada, told reporters.

The need for food banks increased in every region with the biggest jump in Alberta, which experienced an increase of 61%.

"It is unacceptable that, for most of the past decade, more than 700,000 people every month have needed help from food banks just to get by," Schmidt stated, pointing out that in a country as prosperous as Canada, 2.4 per cent of people have to count on food banks to get by. She urged Ottawa to implement a national poverty prevention and reduction strategy.

Fifty per cent of food banks are run solely by volunteers, and one-third are underfunded, according to Food Banks Canada. People who use food banks are usually given enough food for three or four days, their visits are limited.

"We are seeing an increase in the number of people who come to food banks... (while) we are seeing a slight decline in support for food banks," Schmidt said.

Meanwhile, the US Agriculture Department has released bleak figures showing that more American families are having difficulty feeding their members.

The annual Household Food Security report showed that in 2008, families in 17 million households - 14.6% of US homes - had difficulty putting enough food on the table at some point during the year, an 11 percent increase over 2007. In more than 500,000 US families, a child experienced hunger multiple times over the course of the year.

The figures "represent the highest level observed since nationally representative food security surveys were initiated in 1995," the USDA said. "The fundamental cause of food insecurity and hunger in the United States is poverty - marked by a lack of adequate resources to address basic needs such as food, shelter and health care." ●

## The long race for full equality

By Johan Boyden

Caster Semenya, South African runner, will be able to keep her gold medal and prize money, the South African department of sport has announced. At the world athletics championships last August in Berlin, Semenya won gold in the women's 800 meter race by an impressive margin - almost 2.5 seconds - finishing in 1:55:45.

A fraction of time; a volume of media scrutiny - aimed not just at her, but all black women, all people who do not quite fit dominant social gender categories.

Even before her victory, the attack had begun. Focusing on the young athlete's appearance, various commentators somehow diagnosed Semenya offensively as an "hermaphrodite" (the incorrect term for intersex). This gossip was enough for the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) to launch an investigation into her gender.

That IAAF public decision has dragged Castor Semenya's name through the dirt. As the corporate media types volumes on her what her genitalia may look like, it is difficult to imagine the impact on the shy 18-year old runner, and all those whose gender is similarly ambiguous.

In South Africa the response has been outrage. "[T]he purpose of these 'gender-tests' are simply to undermine her outstanding performance and ability to achieve beyond the benchmark set for female athletes," Gugu Ndima, spokesperson for the Young Communist League of South Africa told *People's Voice* in an email. The YCL South Africa called the IAAF decision an "affirmation of the Eurocentric stereotypes about African women in general," and demanded a public apology.

"There are stereotypes about what is deemed to be feminine", Ndima added; "we strongly condemn people that infiltrate such

stereotypes."

Semenya's story has provoked widespread debate about gender. As one transgendered activist wrote at *Rebel Youth* magazine's blog, "this isn't an issue of her biological sex - that is easy to tell and any steroid test would give away the testosterone. The worry is the way she presents - i.e., short-hair, muscular, athletic, natural eyebrows." Why?

After all, she isn't the only butch female runner nor the first person have to deal with IAAF's archaic sex tests. Androgen insensitivity syndrome (AIS), for example, means a woman can have male chromosomes - without any athletic advantage. The woman might not know, like Indian 800m runner Santhi Soundarajan, stripped of her silver medal after a very public gender test "failure" due to AIS at the 2006 Asian games.

Perhaps we could say all solid gender binaries melt into air as little more than comforting illusions; we

are compelled to face our real conditions of life, including the dignity of a person to choose their own gender identity.

As to Semenya herself, her life has changed tremendously. "It's not so easy. The university is OK but there is not many other places I can go. People want to stare at me now. They want to touch me. I'm supposed to be famous but I don't think I like it so much," Semenya told the *Guardian* newspaper recently. She is quoted in *New Yorker* magazine saying "It sucks when I was running and they were writing those things... Now I just have to walk away. That's all I can do."

South African youth are also walking away from this degrading episode. Semenya is now a hero among South African young athletes. She came from an impoverished rural village, her track team often training without shoes. "The most practical support [for Semenya] is to ensure that we build sporting facilities... Why are there more shebeens

(bars) than sports grounds in our townships?" YCL-SA's National Secretary, Buti Manamela, recently said.

This sentiment echoes in Canada. How many sports facilities are in Aboriginal communities?

Semenya's partial victory - she is still waiting to hear if she can keep competing as a woman - also came around the same time as the Trans Day of Remembrance, memorializing trans people killed by gender violence. According to the British Trades Union Congress, by June of this year over eighty official cases had been reported of transgender people murdered world-wide for no other reason than they were different.

So Semenya is running forward for many people. Irregardless of her test results (which will remain confidential) she is also running forward for the trans and intersex community. She is also running for all those who cherish democracy and dignity. Her race is another step in the long struggle for full equality. ●



Caster Semenya (left) running the 800 meter race in Berlin.

## Put the Communist Party on your holiday gift list!

The Communist Party needs your support in 2009 to stimulate and help lead the fight for peace, jobs, democracy and sovereignty in 2010 - a year when the corporate attack on labour and democratic rights, on women, workers, youth and racialized communities will be sharper than ever.

With economic recovery exposed as nothing more than a recovery for profits, while working people are forced to pay the price with escalating wage cuts, job cuts, collapsing living standards and security. Youth face the prospect of a jobless future. The situation demands urgent action, mass political struggle, and an alternative and progressive vision for the future.

A small party with big ideas, the Communist Party is Canada's party of socialism. A working class party, we know the future will be grim without a powerful People's Coalition that can

mount a counter-offensive against the large corporations and their reactionary governments, and that can turn the tables in favour of working people, for real and fundamental change opening the



doors to socialism.

Please help us this holiday season, with a tax deductible donation. Help us build a strong Communist Party and a powerful and united People's Coalition to defeat war and reaction in Canada.

Your donation up to \$400 will generate a \$300 tax rebate when you file your 2009 taxes, costing you just \$100. A \$500 donation

will cost you just \$150. A \$750 donation will cost \$275.

Here's how it works:

For donations up to the first \$400, you receive a federal tax rebate of 75%. For the next \$350 in total donations, receive a tax rebate of 50%. And for the next \$350, the tax rebate is 33%. The maximum allowable annual federal donation is \$1100, for which the rebate totals \$600.

The Communist Party is solely supported by contributions from people like you. Every donation, large or small, helps us. With your donations, we can keep organizers in the field, publish new leaflets and pamphlets, build the fightback, and campaign for a progressive people's alternative to the crisis - during and between elections.

Thank you for your support! We couldn't do it without you.

Please make your cheque or money order payable to "CPC", and mail to: 290A Danforth Ave, Toronto, ON, M4K 1N6. ●

## Sudbury strikers dig in...

continued from page 2

the inherent danger of rock falls and gas, and the added danger of unskilled and untrained scabs working in a dangerous environment.

Vale has built bunkhouses at the North Mine that will house 200 scabs, who will be helicoptered in and out every five days. They will work days and nights, 100 at a time, if the company has its way. On November 19, Vale invited union members to cross the lines in yet another provocation.

But scabs don't last long in the regular work force after a strike is over, said Peter Wade. "Historically these guys don't survive after they cross the picket line. Just going by the experience after the Falconbridge strike, a year after, they're not working there."

Scabs don't survive well anywhere. Not only strikers, but the whole community - families, relatives, neighbourhoods - remember who crossed and who didn't. After all, the future of the

whole community is at stake today. The wages of unionized miners at Vale Inco and Xstrata (Falconbridge) keep the community, including small businesses, afloat.

As strikers hold up contractors and scabs heading in and out of worksites, members of Locals 2020 and 6600 bring coffee and donuts to the strikers, along with news of what's going on inside, and the promise that "we're working like turtles!"

Workers who refuse to cross the lines can be fired under Ontario's medieval labour laws.

The company has repeatedly taken the union to court seeking injunctions to speed up traffic in and out of the struck sites. The union has between 12 and 15 minutes to let the last truck in the line through, or face fines and restrictions on picketing.

The union has sent delegations around the world to meet with trade unions where Vale refines its products. The unions have responded with shows of

solidarity including offers to shut down production to increase pressure on Vale to return to the bargaining table and bargain in good faith. A September rally in Sudbury featured union representatives from around the globe, along with USWA leaders from Canada and the US.

The pressure is on to get the company back to the bargaining table. The union is expected to announce that it's ready to restart negotiations December 1, and invite the company to join them to reach an agreement. Vale has refused to bargain since negotiations broke off and the strike began on July 13.

Sault Ste. Marie Mayor Rowswell released a letter supporting Sudbury strikers in early November. The Sault is another mining town in Northern Ontario that has also seen workers and community victimized by hard times, vicious companies, and right-wing governments. So far, Sudbury's NDP Mayor Rodriguez has said nothing about the strike, while Sudbury Liberal MPP Bartolucci told CBC Radio he can't support the strike because his constituents don't support it. In fact, the community seems quite solidly behind the strikers - no surprise given that Sudbury is all about mining. Sudbury's NDP MPs have supported the strike, and are working with the union. Sudbury Communists are also active on picket lines and in the community.

In fact, the CAW's Mine-Mill Local 598 could very well be joining strikers in February if Xstrata takes the same bargaining approach as Vale. Stay tuned. ●



## What's Left

### Kelowna, BC

**Cuban Revolution Celebration Dinner**, 8 pm, Sat., Dec. 12, at Soul de Cuba Restaurant, 1180 Sunset Drive. Tickets \$20, only 30 places available, call 250-860-6108.

### Vancouver, BC

**Left Film Night**, "The War on Democracy", dir. by John Pilger, Sunday, Nov. 29, 7 pm, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive. For info, call 604-255-2041.

**Civic Electoral Reform**, Think Democracy Forum featuring expert panelists and interactive discussion, Friday, Dec. 4, 7 pm, Segal Centre, SFU Harbour Centre, 515 W. Hastings.

**First Festival of Latin American Song**, 7 pm, Friday, Dec. 4, Cambrian Hall, 215 E. 17th Ave. (at Main), tickets \$10, performers include Son Rebelde, Hugo Rojas, Pancho Y Sal, and others. For info, call Co-op Radio, 604-873-1987.

**Stand up for human rights**, celebrate 61st anniversary of UN Declaration on Human Rights, Sat., Dec. 5, 6-9:30 pm, Mount Pleasant Neighborhood House, 800 E. Broadway, for info call Beth at 604-320-0285.

### Winnipeg, MB

**What is the Communist Party?** Meetings for people interested in joining, dates set when most people can attend. Pre-register at 586-7824 or cpc-mb@mts.net.

### Toronto, ON

**GAZA: Strength Under Siege**, evening of solidarity for the Gaza Freedom March, Friday, Dec. 4, 7 pm, Student Centre, Ryerson University, www.gazafreedommarch.ca, tickets \$40 (students \$20), to purchase online: www.gazafreedommarch.ca/tickets.

**Stars of Ballet**, featuring dancers from Ballet Nacional de Cuba, with Artistic Director Alicia Alonso, Tue., Dec. 8, 7 pm, Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Drive, Mississauga. Tickets \$25-90, contact 1-905-306-6000 or 1-888-805-8888.

**New Year's Eve Celebration**, with the United Jewish Peoples Order and Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association, music by Pablo Terry and Sol de Cuba, Winchevsky Centre 585 Cranbrooke (east of Bathurst, north of Lawrence). Dinner (vegetarian advance request only), cash bar, entertainment, complimentary wine toast at midnight! Tickets \$45 advance, \$55 if reserved to pay at door. For info/tickets: Maxine at UJPO, 416-789-5502 (Visa or M/C), or Sharon at CCF, 905-951-8499.

**Norman Bethune Day social**, Sat., Feb. 27, 2010, at the GCDO, 290 Danforth Ave. Tickets \$5, door prize one week all-inclusive trip for two to Cuba. For tickets or info, call media sponsor People's Voice, 416-469-2446.



## 2010 PV Calendar Now On Sale!

The 2010 People's Voice Calendar is now available. This year's theme is "Socialist Women," marking the centenary of the famous 1910 conference which adopted Clara Zetkin's resolution establishing International Women's Day.

As usual, the 2010 Calendar includes a wide variety of memorable dates for the working class movements, from birthdays of prominent revolutionaries to the anniversaries of watershed struggles for peace, social jus-

tice, equality and socialism.

For your copy, send \$5 plus \$2 to cover postage to People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1. The

Calendar is also on sale at the Ontario bureau of People's Voice (290A Danforth Ave., Toronto, M4K 1N6) and our Manitoba Bureau (387 Selkirk Ave., Winnipeg, R2W 2M3).

Vancouver-area readers can pick up the Calendar at People's Co-op Books, 1391 Commercial Drive, Vancouver.



## People's Voice deadlines:

**JANUARY 1-15 issue: Thursday, Dec. 10**  
**JANUARY 16-31 issue: Thursday, Jan. 7, 2010**  
 Send submissions to PV Editorial Office,  
 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1,  
 <pvoice@telus.net>

## Emil Egli, 1915-2009

Born on a homestead north of Edmonton, Emil Egli, a longtime supporter of the working class press and progressive struggles, died in Vancouver on Oct. 24, 2009, at the age of 94.

Emil's family moved to Vancouver and later to Esquimalt on Vancouver Island. After his mother's death in 1932, Emil helped his father establish a bakery in Keremeos, then struck out on his own during the Depression, finding any jobs he could - cutting cord wood, working for a dairy, longshoring, working in the logging camps, and then prospecting in the Yukon for five years. He returned to B.C. during World War Two, logging Sitka spruce needed for Mosquito bomber planes. He learned every facet of the logging industry, becoming a skilled high rigger and a strong rank-and-file union organizer in the IWA.

A serious logging accident in 1951 deprived Emil of an eye and a leg. Once recovered and fitted with a prosthesis, he bought a fishing boat, the *Ne Tanneys*, trolling for salmon along the coast until 1986. Here too, Emil was active in the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union and the cooperative movement. During the winters, he travelled extensively to many countries and islands.

At the age of 75, Emil sold his boat and moved to Haro Street in downtown Vancouver. He remained active in retirement, as a member of the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association, Citizens Against Gambling Expansion, and other groups, and a regular participant in labour and progressive actions. He was a strong supporter of *People's Voice*, attending the paper's annual banquet and other events. Emil Egli will be remembered as a man who loved the environment and who rejected all forms of discrimination and hatred. He will be sadly missed by PV readers in British Columbia. ●

# Malalai Joya, the “woman among warlords,” tours North America

*Afghan MP Malalai Joya, an outspoken critic of the NATO occupation of her country, has been touring North America this fall to help build opposition to the war. She has just published her autobiography, A Woman Among Warlords, co-written with Derrick O'Keefe, longtime activist in Vancouver's Stop War coalition. Joya was interviewed by Blake Sifton of the TheTyee.ca website shortly before the Canadian leg of her tour began in Vancouver, where nearly 1,000 people packed a church to hear her speak. Here are excerpts from that interview.*

## On the Afghan presidential election mess:

“An election held under occupation and the influence of corruption and warlordism has no legitimacy at all. It is impossible for there to be a democratic election in Afghanistan right now. Hamid Karzai is a corrupt puppet who is betraying our people and Abdullah Abdullah was the preferred candidate of the warlords. Both of their policies are similar - they are both called the Taliban ‘brothers.’ They are both traitors.”

## On what most Afghans think about the election:

“Ordinary Afghans don't have security or even food to eat. They don't trust the candidates and often they hate them. It's hard for true Afghan democrats because elections are supposed to be a hallmark of democracy and we want to believe in them. In the lead up to the election Afghans had a saying. They said that whatever the result we would have, [it was] ‘the same donkey with a new saddle.’”

## On U.S. President Obama's Afghan policies:

“I was hopeful when Obama was elected but unfortunately when he came to power his message to my

people was that there will be more war. He increased troop levels and wants to send even more soldiers to Afghanistan. This will only bring more conflict. It is impossible to bring democracy through military occupation and the barrel of a gun. His policies are quite similar to that of the Bush administration. His drone attacks in the border area with Pakistan are killing innocent civilians and they have killed hundreds of Afghan civilians with cluster bombs and white phosphorus. They even bomb our wedding parties. Despite all of this, somehow he received the Nobel Peace Prize. I don't understand how they could give it to a president who is pursuing wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan.”

## On what would happen if NATO pulled out of Afghanistan:

“We are stuck between two enemies - the occupation forces killing innocent civilians, and the Taliban and warlords. Many people say that if the troops leave Afghanistan, civil war will happen. But we have a civil war now. As long as the U.S. and NATO are here, the civil war will continue because they are supporting the government and the warlords. If they end the occupation of my country then we, the true democrats of Afghanistan, will be fighting one enemy instead of two.”

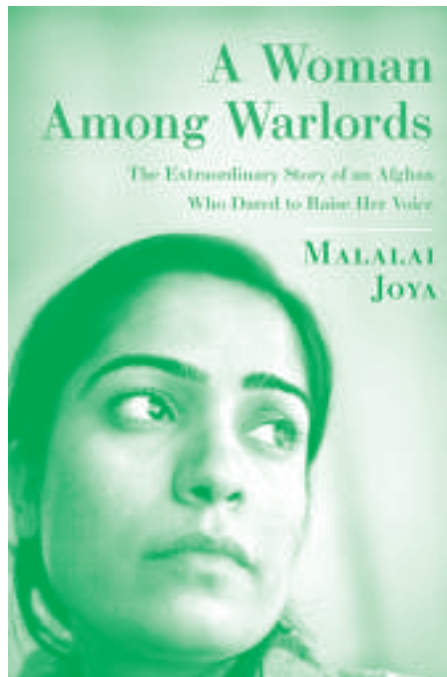
## On the sacrifice of Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan:

“The United States, Canada and the other NATO countries are wasting their taxpayers' money and the blood of their soldiers to support a completely corrupt and illegitimate system. I am sorry for the Canadian families who have lost their sons in Afghanistan. The soldiers are themselves victims of their government's policies, just as our civilians are. Their families should raise their voices against

the misguided policies of their governments... they must turn their sorrow into strength.”

## On how she would define global support for the people of Afghanistan:

“When I say that we don't want



your soldiers I don't mean that we don't want your help. We are honoured to have the support and solidarity of democratic people in Canada and around the world... Please put pressure on your governments to change their policies and demonstrate in your cities to help end our occupation. No one's drones will bomb you and no one will shoot you.

“Moral support and humanitarian support will help us in the difficult and long struggle against the Taliban and the warlords. Support intellectuals and democratic-minded people of my country and support education in Afghanistan. Education, and especially women's education, is a key to democracy and our emancipation.”

## On the failure to effectively combat the Afghan opium trade and its impact on North American society:

“After eight years, the U.S. and

NATO have failed so badly that now Afghanistan exports 93 per cent of the world's opium. In 2001, the Taliban almost destroyed the opium trade in Afghanistan. The Taliban! These uneducated, ignorant misogynists. It's unbelievable that a superpower along with 40 other countries cannot stop the opium trade but a medieval organization like the Taliban nearly succeeds.

“How many poor people do you have on your own streets? Yet the U.S. and Canada send millions to help warlords and drug dealers in Afghanistan. Support for corrupt warlords not only affects the people of my country - it also allows more and more drugs to make their way onto the streets of Vancouver and destroy your youth as well.”

## On Pakistani involvement in Afghanistan and the repercussions for Pakistani civilians:

“Throughout our long years of war, the Pakistanis have had puppets in Afghanistan and they still do. The Pakistani intelligence supports the Afghan Taliban, and the madrasas along the border are essentially ‘Taliban factories’ where people are brainwashed to commit suicide bombings in

Afghanistan. The U.S. works with the ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence], and the ISI supports the Afghan Taliban. They are playing cat-and-mouse with the terrorists.

“Now Obama fights a war with drones in the Pakistani border areas. It is the civilians of Pakistan who suffer. They are bombing the poorest and most backward cities of Pakistan.”

## On going into exile and fearing death:

“I am a woman and I refuse to stay silent. I document the crimes of the warlords, so they want to kill me. My life is always at risk. Even with bodyguards, I am not safe in the country NATO occupies under the banner of women's rights and democracy. My supporters abroad are worried, and many people tell me to leave Afghanistan. But I'm not any better than the other democratic people in my country who are dying. My blood is not more red than the blood of my people. Faced with so many assassination attempts, I have to imagine that one day they will succeed. But I do not fear death. I fear silence in the face of injustice. That is my message to democratic people around the world.” ●

## Diplomat confirms Canada's dirty role in Afghanistan

One of Ottawa's top diplomats told a Parliamentary committee on the Afghan mission that Canadian troops transferred detainees to local authorities, despite knowing that all would face torture. Richard Colvin, who is now a high-level intelligence official in the Canadian embassy in Washington, said on Nov. 18 that “Instead of winning hearts and minds, we caused Kandaharis to fear the foreigners. Canada's detainee practices alienated us from the population and strengthened the insurgency.”

The Harper Tories have frantically denied Colvin's charges that they ignored his warnings of “imminent and alarming” problems with the treatment of detainees as early as May 2006, a time when Canada was taking far more prisoners than other NATO allies. But his testimony bears the authenticity of a whistle-blower who is risking his entire career to confirm what opponents of the war have said for years - that Canada's military mission has done nothing to advance democracy or social progress in Afghanistan.

Asking MPs “why should Canadians care if Afghan detainees were being tortured,” Colvin gave several reasons.

First, he said, “our detainees were not what intelligence services would call ‘high-value targets,’ such as IED (improvised explosive device) bomb-makers, al-Qaeda terrorists or Taliban commanders.” The Afghans he refers to “were picked up by conventional forces during routine military operations, and on the basis typically not of

intelligence but suspicion or unproven denunciation.”

These were men with “little or no value” from an intelligence point of view, said Colvin: “Some may have been foot soldiers or day fighters. But many were just local people - farmers, truck drivers, tailors, peasants; random human beings in the wrong place at the wrong time; young men in their fields and villages who were completely innocent but were nevertheless rounded up. In other words, we detained, and handed over for severe torture, a lot of innocent people.”

Colvin continued that “seizing people and rendering them for torture is a very serious violation of international and Canadian law. Complicity in torture is a war crime. It is illegal and prosecutable.”

Third, he said, “Canada has always been a powerful advocate of international law and human rights... If we disregard our core principles and values, we also lose our moral authority abroad.”

Fourth, such actions were counter to PM Stephen Harper's claim that Canadian military officials don't send individuals off to be tortured. “Behind the military's wall of secrecy,” said Colvin, “that, unfortunately, is exactly what we were doing.”

“Even if all the Afghans we detained had been Taliban, it would still have been wrong to have them tortured,” concluded Colvin, quoting an authoritative military manual on counter-insurgency which says “the abuse of detained persons is immoral, illegal and unprofessional...” ●

## NEWS FOR PEOPLE, NOT FOR PROFITS!

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