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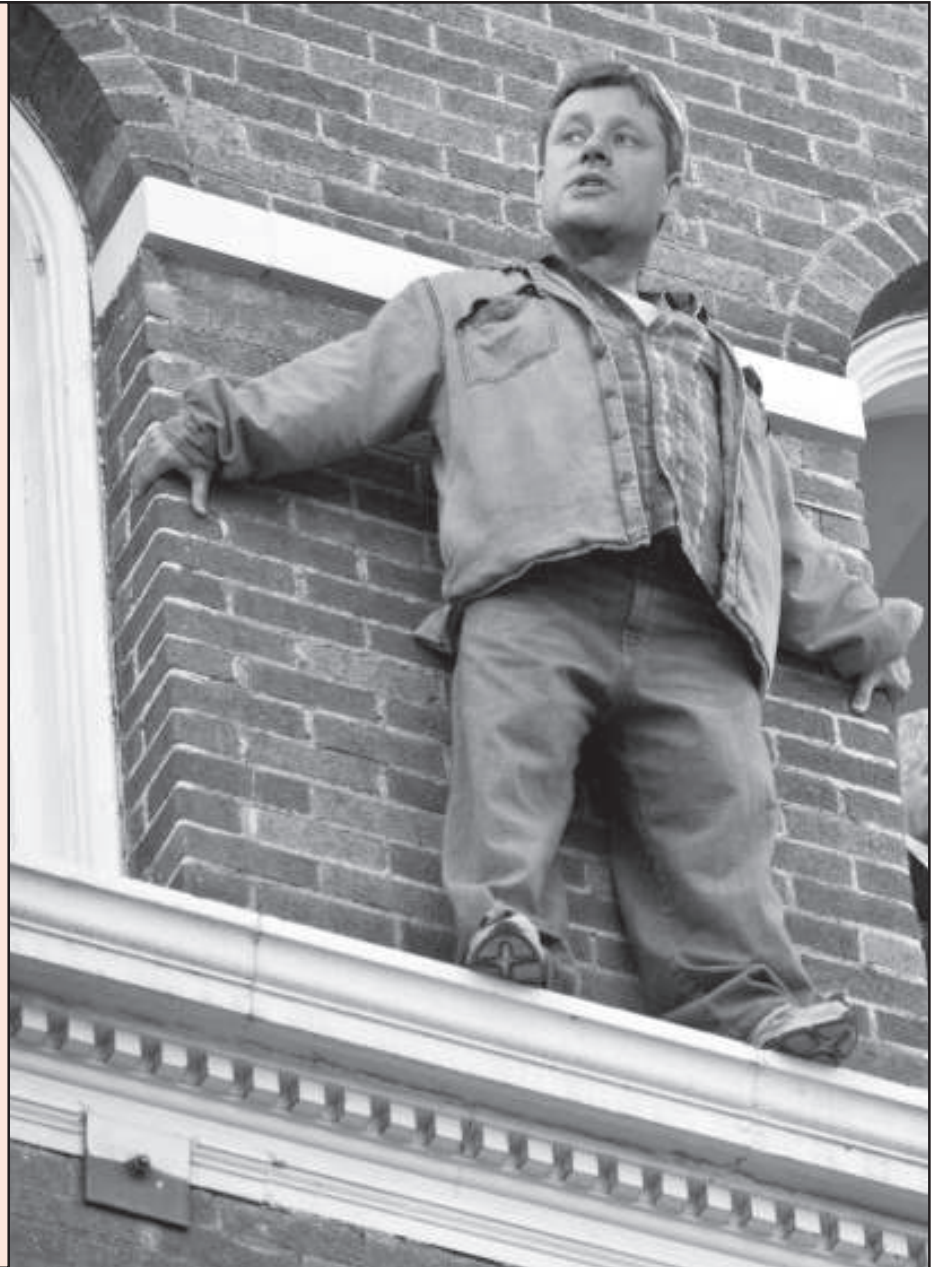
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what happened?**

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Harper Out Now!

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***"The war on terror is
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The last major labour meeting of 2009 saw the Ontario Federation of Labour turn to a more militant strategy and leadership - but the challenges ahead are considerable.

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3 Is your boss listed?

Canada's 100 highest-paid CEOs took home an average of \$7.3 million in 2008, and they aren't sharing a nickel with working people.

9 Back in parliament

Thirty-six years after Gen. Augusto Pinochet murdered thousands of left activists and crushed democracy in Chile, Communists have finally been elected to the country's Congress once again.

OFL delegates demand unity and action from new leadership

By Liz Rowley

Delegates to the 10th Biennial Convention of the recent Ontario Federation of Labour made themselves heard loud and clear: the new OFL leadership has to lead an all-in fight against the corporate/government assault that is driving down wages and living standards, eliminating jobs, and devastating the province. The 25-plus pages in the Action Plan were little more than a recitation of OFL policy, combined with calls to more vigorously lobby, consult, and study the issues. Delegates were united in their estimate that much more would be needed to win the battles at hand and those ahead.

An ETFO (Elementary Teachers) delegate put it best. It was too late in the Convention to do much with the Plan, she said, other than impress the new leadership with the need for immediate and broad-based action to counter the corporate attack.

"They're here, and if they don't do it we'll slap them," she said to enthusiastic applause. "And it won't be a friendly slap". Her comments situated this Action Plan, prepared personally by outgoing President Wayne Samuelson, on the periphery where it belonged. The issue was not about how much lobbying to do,

but how to fight and win.

Regrettably, the stacked agenda left delegates little opportunity to debate that issue. The first three days of the Nov. 23-27 Convention were devoted almost exclusively to a change of leadership, after twelve



OFL President Sid Ryan

years of an administration dominated by right-wing business unionism.

Though he was forced to give tacit support to mass action in order to secure the handful of votes with which he won election in 1997, Samuelson's administration killed the Ontario Days of Action shortly afterwards. A candidate of the USWA, Samuelson was also closely identified with the NDP. He was OFL

President while the CAW was outside the CLC, and (it is now clear) was an obstacle to bringing the CAW back into the OFL and reuniting the labour movement in Ontario.

After years of inaction, in the face of an economic hurricane, this convention was all about changing that direction.

On the second day, delegates heard from an uninvited guest: Ken Lewenza. The CAW president told delegates that while his union and the OFL had been separated for a number of years, it was a separation not a divorce, and the CAW was coming back in a transition to be worked out with the new leadership. Adding that the CAW also had its "boneheads", Lewenza received several ovations when he spoke about the unprecedented attack by corporations and their governments. He stressed the need to close ranks and develop the kind of fight led by labour and its allies that would mobilize workers, women, youth, communities, all those under attack, to defeat the corporate assault. This ringing call to action resonated with delegates, who clearly supported the plan to reunite the labour movement in Ontario and to mount a colossal fightback.

The next day, CUPE Ontario President Sid Ryan was acclaimed the new President of the OFL, to the relief of many public sector and progressive delegates, who had feared that the right-wing would nominate a candidate from the floor. The right-wing, in and out of the labour movement, has viciously attacked Ryan for his support of the Palestinian cause and sanctions against Israel following the Israeli attack on Gaza.

In exchange for not opposing Ryan, the right-wing expects to be able to clip the new President's wings, as well as seeing its candidate Marie Kelly (USWA) acclaimed as Secretary Treasurer.

But Ryan's speeches to the Convention were not low-key. His call to action following the acclamation gave hope to delegates who have been waiting a long time for an OFL leader who's ready to lead a fight.

Ryan and others elected to the OFL leadership (including Action Caucus member Stephen Seaborn, the new VP for Pride and Solidarity) will need to harness the energy and push of the left and centre forces in the OFL and its affiliates. Otherwise, the Convention's clear directive for mass united action could be swept under the table, and its new leadership cut off at the knees.

Further, the sooner the CAW is back in the fold, the better. United, the OFL can mobilize a fight. Divided, the working class is in even deeper trouble.

The Action Caucus, which played an important role on the floor of the convention, can play a big role in the days ahead by remaining active and involved in mobilizing union members to press for implementation of the Convention directives.

As 2010 begins, working people have something to work for and work with in Ontario. This convention didn't end the struggle, it started it. Now relief will have to turn to action to deliver the goods.

(Liz Rowley is the Communist Party's Ontario leader.) ●



kempkes union-art.com 09

Workers abandoned by Harper, CAW says

Hundreds of thousands of Canadian workers continue to suffer the lasting effects of a deep and damaging economic recession, yet they have been abandoned by the federal government, said CAW President Ken Lewenza responding to the latest dismal jobs report released by Statistics Canada.

"It's outrageous that with an 8.5 per cent unemployment rate and more than 300,000 Canadians out of work in just 12 months, the Harper government decides to take a prolonged holiday," Lewenza said. "For the hundreds of thousands of unemployed Canadians, the next three months until Parliament resumes will be no holiday - this is a travesty to workers in Canada and an embarrassment to our nation's democracy."

Canada dumped another 17,000 jobs in the month of December (partially offset by a jump self-employed workers, with 2,600 net jobs lost), bringing the

running total of job losses since the start of the economic crisis to 323,000. The manufacturing sector took the biggest hit among the major industrial sectors shedding nearly 10,000 jobs. Since November 2002, the Canadian manufacturing sector has lost 570,000 jobs.

"Communities across the country are being destroyed because our government's lack any vision for the future of our economy," Lewenza said. "These workers and their families are looking to Ottawa for leadership and it's clear that this government simply doesn't care. Instead, the government is distracted by petty political choices."

"If the Harper government tries to hack and slash its way out of deficit by attacking public services, they are going to make a very bad economic situation even worse for Canadians," Lewenza said. "Cutting our way out of a deficit won't create jobs, it will destroy them." ●

GRASSROOTS OLYMPIC NEWS

The Winter Olympics in Vancouver and Whistler will be used to draw **international attention to native poverty**, according to Squamish Chief Bill Williams, chair of the Four Host First Nations, which has worked to promote the Olympics. The same message was given by Leonard Thomas, president of the BC First Nations Forestry Council, in letters to government officials.

"The time for plain talking is now upon us. Our forest-dependent first nations communities are no longer willing to quietly sit back and wait for actions that never come," Thomas said in a recent letter to B.C. Forests Minister Pat Bell. "The fact that your government and its federal partner are spending \$3 billion to stage the Winter Olympics is merely exacerbating the frustration and anger felt by our communities as they continue to be told that there is no money in the pot to address their situations, which, as you are fully aware, are of a most desperate nature."

"There's going to be some 14,000 media people running around [at the Olympics]," Williams told the *Globe and Mail*. "Some of them are already contacting us. They want to know, 'What's it like to be an Indian in today's world? How do you live?' We are going to start letting those reporters know the reality of the poverty we face."

Since our previous issue, **concerns over transportation and travel** during the Winter Olympics have continued to increase. Signs have sprouted across the city warning of widespread street closures and parking bans, with the potential for chaos for hundreds of thousands of residents who need to get to work, school, and appointments. VANOC officials have done little to ease fears, despite their cheerful speeches urging everyone to take public transit. Even VANOC now admits that SkyTrain stations will be jammed, forcing commuters to wait two hours or more to get on a train during "peak periods" (we aren't making this up) such as morning, afternoon or evening. At other times, waiting periods will apparently be less than an hour. Nor are cyclists immune from the transportation nightmare. Several key cycling routes have already been blocked by Olympic venue restrictions.

Even as Olympics officials target Vancouver schools with pro-Games propaganda, **some students are paying an extra cost** for hosting the event. Students at Elsie Roy elementary school in the Yaletown area, near the BC Place Stadium, have been deprived of their playground for most of the 2009-10 school year. The playground has been taken over by a security firm since last fall, and will remain occupied for months after the conclusion of the Games, forcing students to remain indoors during recess and lunch breaks. This agreement was concluded without the knowledge of Vancouver school trustees.

Security and city officials promise that **protests will be allowed during the Games, with one caveat**: such actions must abide by the law. Given the record of reckless police disregard for legal restrictions on their authority, this leaves protest organizers and participants somewhat nervous. Will police use excuses such as "littering" (distribution of leaflets) or "disturbing the peace" (use of megaphones) to crack down on demonstrations? At this point, it's anybody's guess. We can only hope that the presence of some 14,000 Canadian and international media representatives will encourage the army of security personnel to show restraint.

Unfortunately, such good sense has been lacking in certain quarters at City Hall. The **obliteration of a well-loved mural** on



(Detail of the destroyed Beatty Street mural)

downtown Beatty Street, near several Olympic venues, has resulted from the ongoing campaign to "clean up" the city for our Olympic guests. Why an ugly blank wall is an improvement over a colourful scene of children playing remains a secret known only to Vancouver bureaucrats.

Plans are well underway for a **"global anti-capitalist and anti-colonial convergence** against the 2010 Olympic Games." The Convergence organizers have called on "all anti-capitalist, Indigenous, housing rights, labour, migrant justice, environmental, anti-war, community-loving, anti-poverty, civil libertarian, and anti colonial activists to come together to confront this two-week circus and the oppression it represents."

The event will include a Conference and People's Summit on Feb. 10-11. On Friday, Feb. 12 (the day of the opening ceremonies) a wide range of groups are holding a special "Welcome" at the Vancouver Art Gallery. This family-friendly festival kicks off at 3 pm with "Free Games, Free Speech, and Free Food", followed by a parade and non-confrontational protest to BC Place Stadium.

Various "autonomous days of action" are being planned for Feb. 13 and 15, including anti-corporate actions, rallies to oppose militarization, and more. For more details on these and other events, see www.olympicresistance.net.

On Sunday, February 14, activists will take part in the 19th Annual **Women's Memorial March** to honour all the missing and murdered women in the Downtown East Side. This is not an anti-Olympic protest, and organizers are attempting to cooperate with security officials to establish a route which will allow participants to honour the missing and murdered women at various locations throughout the neighbourhood. ●

EDITORIALS

The dead cat bounce?

Corporate talking heads continue to talk about "recovery," often pairing that word with "fragile." The only certainty, however, is that the devastation which hit working people in 2009 will continue this year. With apologies to cat-lovers, the phrase "dead cat bounce" comes to mind; virtually anything thrown off a tall building will bounce when it hits the sidewalk. Similarly, the decline last year was so severe that a few months of barely measurable GDP growth does not mean much.

Most important, there is no sign that the slight upturn in economic activity will improve employment figures in the near future. The thirty biggest capitalist economies in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development are still on track for record post-war levels of some 57 million jobless this year, with tens of millions more surviving on part-time hours. In December, after several months of "growth," the official Canadian unemployment rate stayed at 8.5%, leaving 1.57 million out of work. The picture is worse in the United States, with gloomy implications for the Canadian economy.

It's also a fact that Canadian workers have lost ground over the last decade, even as corporate executives saw their pay outpace inflation by 70%. Faced with rising debt loads and poor job prospects, working people are in no position to go on a spending spree. And now, the Harper Tories are winding up their totally inadequate "stimulus" package, sharpening the knives to cut social spending in the next budget.

The details vary but the picture is roughly similar in many other capitalist countries, as right-wing governments focus on protecting corporate profits at the expense of working people. In the current battle against the arrogant Tory prorogation of Parliament, it will be crucial to expand the fight by raising the need for a genuine, pro-worker economic program in response to the "jobless recovery."

Singing the prorogation blues

It's nice to see Stephen Harper caught between a rock and a hard place - both largely of his own making. The minority PM, loathed by millions of Canadians, has clung to power in part by turning politics into a blood sport, heaping abuse on his opponents and critics. The Tory strategy is not to reach out to Canadians, but rather to hold their narrow base while driving millions of non-supporters away from any desire to vote or take part in political action.

It's a ploy that brought some Tory gains in the 2008 election, which saw a record-low voter turnout. But now this approach is backfiring. Having harangued the public for many years about the evils of overpaid, lazy politicians (remember his vicious record as head of the so-called National Citizens Coalition?), Mr. Harper has now incurred the wrath even of his own supporters by casually shutting down Parliament for a two-month holiday. The vast majority of Canadians who understand the daily hardships of working for a living have little sympathy for this cynical manoeuvre. Popular anger may well rise a few more degrees as Tory cabinet ministers enjoy the Winter Olympics rather than stay in Ottawa to deal with the economic crisis.

Anger is the right response to Stephen Harper's utter contempt for the norms of Canada's stunted form of democracy. Long-time Communist leader Tim Buck warned that if fascism ever came to Canada it would be installed by the Conservatives. Buck's words seem prescient these days, as a far-right prime minister with no popular mandate schemes to shift power from the elected Members of Parliament into his own hands. For example, what would happen if Parliament was divided next year over the promised troop withdrawal from Afghanistan? Does anyone doubt that Harper would consider another prorogation to keep Canadian troops in Kandahar? Think about it, and join us at the anti-prorogation rallies on January 23rd!

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LETTERS

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706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 or
pvoice@telus.net

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Letters to the Editor

Reader calls to "end the "drug war"

Unknown to many Canadians, the minority Conservative government has been pursuing a radical approach to drug policy through Bill C-15 which is now before the Senate.

This bill introduces mandatory minimum sentencing for various drug "crimes," such as nine months for possession of a single pot plant. Mandatory sentencing has been proven through research and past

experience in many jurisdictions to be ineffective.

We need a modern approach to marijuana, indeed to all drugs. It is time, not just for the decriminalization of marijuana, but for the legalization of marijuana. Governments are quite comfortable making money through the sale of more harmful substances such as tobacco and alcohol. Prohibition of marijuana

has failed miserably, just as the prohibition of alcohol failed.

Besides a wide variety of medical uses, marijuana is quite harmless; especially when compared with alcohol. There is no real reason, apart from a medieval mindset, that would lead one to support prohibition of marijuana.

If we are truly concerned about crime, we would end prohibition and the senseless persecution of innocent people who enjoy the use of marijuana. By ending prohibition, we would end criminal control over the drug market. We would be cutting off a major source of funding for criminal organizations. Marijuana and other forbidden drugs should be regulated and monitored for safety. We could direct this wasted money, which is spent on often already bloated police budgets, to worthwhile investments in areas such as education or public health, or fighting real crimes.

There is general agreement among experts and thinking politicians from all political parties that we need a new and sensible drug strategy. This is an issue that we should raise with our Members of Parliament and our Senators. Stop Bill C-15, end the war on drugs, end prohibition!

Mark Hamilton, Stellarton, NS

Take the Medicare Pledge

CHC/CALM - November 2009 marked the 30th anniversary of the Canadian Health Coalition. In honour of those who fight for Canada's medicare system, the CHC is asking supporters to take a medicare pledge. By taking the pledge, thousands of Canadians are urging Prime Minister Stephen Harper to show leadership on health care by enforcing the Canadian Health Act against privatization and starting a drug plan for all Canadians.

The Medicare Pledge

As a Canadian, I believe access to quality health care must be based on need, not ability to pay. Our public health care reflects those values of equality and fairness. We must improve our public health care for everyone, instead of expanding private for-profit services that benefit only a few. I pledge my support for the protection and improvement of public health care in Canada.

Take the pledge at <http://medicare.ca/medicare-pledge>

How much is a yottabyte?

Internet/CALM - The U.S. National Security Agency is building a \$2-billion storage facility in Utah that will house and analyse all forms of electronic communication... a potential "yottabyte" of data.

So how big is a yottabyte? There are a thousand gigabytes in a terabyte, a thousand terabytes in a petabyte, a thousand petabytes in an exabyte, a thousand exabytes in a zettabyte, and a thousand zettabytes in a yottabyte. In other words, a yottabyte is 1,000,000,000,000,000 gigabytes.

In terms of measuring data on current human scales, a yottabyte is nearly infinite. To be fair, the yottabyte figure is just one estimate generated by a Pentagon think tank. The facility could end up only holding mere hundreds of petabytes.



The data storage facility on its own will burn through as much electricity as the whole of Salt Lake City. For more, read *The Secret Sentry: The Untold History of the National Security Agency*, by Matthew M. Aid. ●

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Harper out of office now!

Statement by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, Jan. 7, 2010

The decision of Stephen Harper's minority Tory government to prorogue Parliament for the second time in twelve months demonstrates profound contempt and loathing for both Parliament and the millions of Canadians who are demanding genuine action to end the economic crisis and the occupation of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan. The fabricated pretext of a "breathing space" to craft updated economic and social policies is absurd; the Conservatives intend to slash social spending, leaving millions of Canadian workers and their families facing another desperate year during the worst capitalist crisis in decades. Instead of "working," the Tories will be posing for the cameras at the Vancouver Winter Olympics, which have taken over \$6 billion from people's needs to host this

"free trade", capitalist "globalisation" and the erosion of Canadian sovereignty, by the tight corporate grip on the mass media, and by an electoral system which restricts any serious debate of progressive alternatives to the neoliberal agenda.

In pursuit of this agenda, the Harper Conservatives are using the levers of power to stack the Senate, the courts and public service with their supporters. They have stifled dissent within the civil service, violated laws, ignored resolutions adopted by the majority of MPs, gutted accountability laws and promises, and further concentrated power in the Prime Minister's office. At

every stage, they hurl McCarthy-style accusations to vilify and terrorize critics. It is no exaggeration to warn that these demagogic, dictatorial tactics are designed to block any possibility of eventually reversing their right-wing policies.

Unless the Harper Tories are defeated by a powerful movement of opposition, they pose a real and present danger to the future of Canada. The duty of all

Canadians who support civil rights, democratic liberties, universal social programs, equality, peace, sovereignty and environmental sustainability is to join the struggle to drive this government out of office, the

sooner the better.

All out on January 23rd! Bring the troops home from Afghanistan NOW! Drive out the pro-corporate Harper Conservatives, and step up the fight for a People's Alternative! ●

Communist Party of Canada condemns proroguing of Parliament

Harper is escalating his attack on democracy to a new and dangerous level.

The Communist Party of Canada condemns this action, and urges all Canadians to take part in the January 23 protest rallies across the country. With the strong participation of the labour movement and all progressive forces, this movement to "get Parliament back to work" can help spark a powerful campaign to block and defeat the Harper Tories. Such a movement can lead the fight policies to defend the interests of working people and move Canada in a fundamentally new direction.

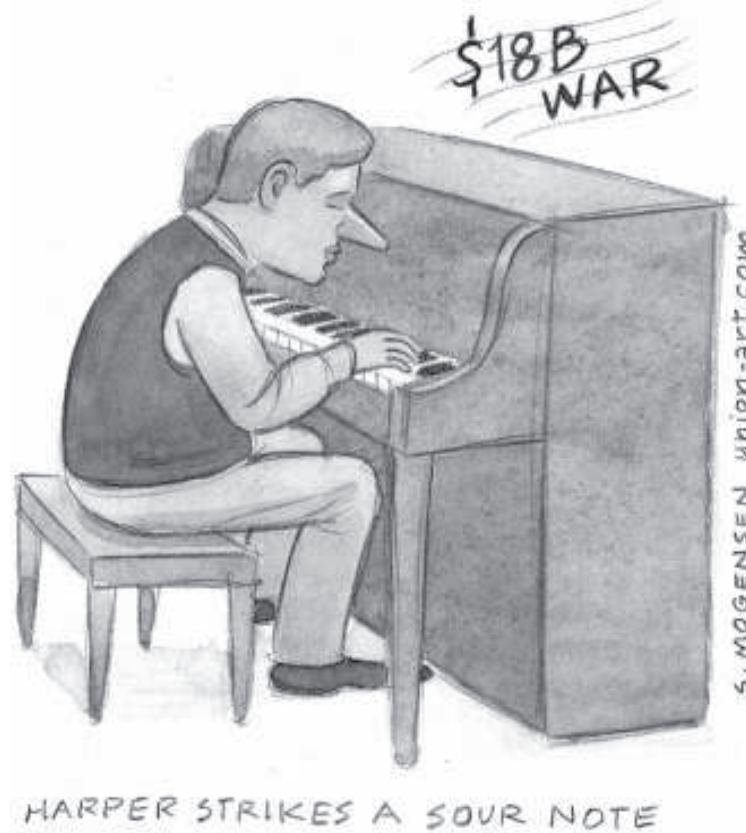
Imposed during the holiday season, the prorogation of Parliament until March is a machination to escape further public scrutiny of Canada's complicity in the torture of Afghan detainees, and more broadly the disastrous failure of the imperialist war and occupation in

massive party for the rich on stolen native land.

Carried out by a far-right government - one rejected by nearly two-thirds of voters - the prorogation is a direct attack on Parliament itself, wiping out the work of an entire session and halting the work of parliamentary committees.

Even more significant, this is not an isolated step. It is part of a deliberate, conscious strategy by the Harper Tories to impose the deeply unpopular corporate agenda by undemocratic means. Their goal is to transform the Canadian state, using every possible measure to wipe out the achievements of past struggles by working people, and instead to transfer ever more wealth into the coffers of the corporate rich and to strengthen the oppressive state apparatus: the military, prisons, police and spy agencies.

Democracy in Canada has already been gravely weakened by



Political scientists call for democratic action

As the controversy over the proroguing of Parliament continues, Fair Vote Canada announced on Jan. 5 that 132 Canadian political scientists from 36 universities and colleges have co-signed a statement calling for electoral reform within the next five years, including a proportional representation system.

"In recent days, editorial writers and political

commentators have focused on the key role of the House of Commons - and opposition parties in particular - which is to hold the government to account," said Bronwen Bruch, President of Fair Vote Canada. "While we join those condemning the inappropriate shut-down of the Parliament, an even bigger obstacle to democratically accountable government is our

antiquated voting system that creates an unrepresentative and unstable House of Commons. First-past-the-post usually creates either 'majority' governments that the majority voted against, or unstable minority governments where any party nearing 40 per cent in the polls has incentive to pull the plug in hope of winning an undeserved majority of seats."

CPC-36

Toronto, Feb. 5-7, 2010

The Communists and the next election

The Communist Party will hold its 36th Central Convention over the Feb. 5-7 weekend in Toronto. We are reprinting parts of the Draft Resolution which is being debated by party members across Canada. These excerpts are from paragraphs 86-92; for the full Resolution, visit www.comunist-party.ca.

We are keenly aware that another federal election may soon be underway. The working class cannot be indifferent to the outcome of this election... As in the 2008 election, the Communist Party will call for the defeat of the Harper Tories - the most deadly expression of the corporate domination of Canada - and to block the right, by also denying a majority to the pro-corporate, pro-war Liberals under Ignatieff, whose differences with the Tories are primarily over the pace and scale of imposing the continentalist and corporate agenda.

We are deeply concerned over the increasingly evident rightward

shift by the NDP leadership in the recent period. As noted above, Jack Layton has retreated a long distance from his party's earlier stand of calling for a swift end to Canada's military mission in Afghanistan. In the area of the economy, while the NDP supports certain reform measures to reduce the impact of the crisis on working people, Layton has also yielded considerably to big business pressures. We recall his comments last January to a luncheon sponsored by one of the foremost bodies of monopolists, bankers and financiers in this country, the Toronto Board of Trade: "It's that courage of the Canadian people which makes our country strong. Let's match that quiet courage with smart investments for the future... It's that kind of courage workers will need to take a pay cut so your friends at the plant can keep their job."

At the August 2009 federal NDP convention in Halifax, much of the media attention was on resolutions which proposed a name change for the party, dropping the word "New". These resolutions and other 'controversial' matters were shuffled off the agenda, while

leading spokespersons vigorously denied that the NDP would support 'old ideas' such as public ownership of the banks or the energy industry.

These shifts in NDP policy reflect a strong tendency at the leadership level to accommodate to the demands of big business. It would be wrong to conclude, as some have, that there is no longer any difference between the NDP and the big business parties. But under Layton's leadership, that difference has narrowed, to the detriment of a powerful and united working class response to the corporate attack. Instead of gaining votes and seats, the NDP may well lose support from working people who see less reason to go to the polls to support a party lacking a clear-cut progressive alternative platform.

Similarly, there is no sign that the Green Party's overall policies have shifted in a progressive direction. While the Greens take some positive positions on matters of peace, democracy and civil liberties, they remain wedded to the incorrect view that environmental change can be won

primarily through measures to encourage "green capitalism".

In this situation, the Communist Party of Canada will once again enter the next federal election by nominating about 20-25 candidates in selected ridings across the country. The Communist campaign will strive to win votes and support for the immediate measures in our platform, and to strengthen the ability of the working class to mount a longer-term fight for a People's Coalition to turn this country in a progressive direction, and ultimately for socialism.

There is no contradiction between advocating a powerful and united mass movement to tackle the

immediate problems facing the working class, and the Communist Party's goal of a socialist Canada. In fact, a larger and stronger Communist Party would help to overcome the passivity and retreat which today characterize the top leadership of the CLC and the right-wing leadership of the NDP. The public and electoral campaigns of the Communist Party are a necessary part of the political and ideological struggle which is needed to raise the need for a united mass fightback, and for the kind of People's Coalition which is so desperately needed to overcome the political crisis in Canada today. ●

REDS ON THE WEB

www.comunist-party.ca

www.peoplesvoice.ca

www.ycl-ljc.ca

www.solidnet.org

"No security without human rights", warns CUPW president

Speech by Denis Lemelin, President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, at an Ottawa public meeting to mark International Human Rights Day on Dec. 10, 2009

Thank you for inviting me here. But I want to say that I am the voice of all Canadian Union Postal Workers (CUPW) members who did work around human rights for the last 45 years. Our Union has always stood up to defend social justice and human rights. It is part of our history.

Our members know that we cannot have security if people who live amongst us are subject to arbitrary detention and arrest. They know that we cannot have security if people who are arrested do not have the right to see the evidence against them. They know that our security is not improved



CUPW President Denis Lemelin

when people from countries with large Islamic populations are targeted and are subjected to Islamophobia.

For CUPW, the denial of human

rights to any person leads to an environment where the human rights of all people are in jeopardy.

This is why we are standing in solidarity today with Mohamed and Sophie Harkat and with other security certificate detainees and their families.

At CUPW we believe that the basic principle of natural justice has to apply to everyone. Our Union and the entire labour movement have struggled for some level of fairness in the workplace. This means that when our members

labour voices

are subjected to discipline, their Union advocate has the right to see the information that the Employer has on them and their Union advocate has the right to show this and share this with the member involved.

The labour movement has fought for this right for years. And now to have the government of Canada say that it is legitimate to imprison people on the basis on unseen allegations is dangerous.

But as activists, we know that we are living in a capitalist world and we know that the system has put in place mechanisms to protect itself and the labour movement has a long experience of it.

Now, I want to share with you the experience of CUPW. In a very small way CUPW knows what it is like to be watched by the RCMP and their friends. We know that the RCMP and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) spied on CUPW and CUPW activists for many years. The Vancouver Local of CUPW was under constant surveillance by the RCMP from

1965-1984. In 1987, CSIS bugged the telephone system at the CUPW National Office.

There is documented evidence that CSIS agent John Farrell looked into the banking records of union activists, illegally broke into cars of CUPW activists in Toronto and was authorized to intercept every piece of mail delivered to the homes of targeted union leaders. While most mail wasn't necessarily opened, photocopies were made of both sides of each piece. Information from this was used to "mine contacts" at credit card agencies and banks. The garbage of targeted CUPW leaders was routinely stolen and inspected. CSIS even gave some of the targeted leaders special garbage bags on the pretence that they were part of a special recycling experiment.

The RCMP and CSIS viewed CUPW as a National Security threat. It was wrong to say CUPW was a national security threat and it is wrong to see Mohamed Harkat and the other security certificate detainees as threats.

Twenty years ago, the system did it to protect itself internally and it continues to do so. Now it is doing the same thing to protect itself from the outside, on an international basis.

For CUPW this security certificate regime represents several dangerous trends: I will talk about three of them.

The first one is about the criminalization of dissent. If you do not hold or do not appear to hold majority views, you and your ideas are criminalized. We are seeing this locally, nationally, and internationally. About a year ago CUPW had agreed to have the Justice for Mohamed Harkat committee use our boardroom for a press conference. The day



CUPW members at a January 2009 rally in solidarity with the people of Gaza. (Photo: Peace Alliance Winnipeg)

before the meeting, members of the Canada Border Services Agency visited our office. They were wearing bullet proof vests, and were armed. The message they were sending was that if you were a supporter of Mohamed Harkat, they were going to intimidate you.

The second one is about Islamophobia. The men who are

about a war on terror those would be some of the key elements.

Looking toward future challenges, we have to fight for a different society:

* a foreign policy that puts justice, and dignity and fair trade above that of free trade. An example of the latter is the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Colombia.

* an emphasis on a strong public

We know that today, or next week or next year any of us here - trade unionists, human rights defenders, peace activists just to name a few - could all be threatened when human rights and natural justice are on the chopping block.

or who have been held under these security certificates have all practised the Muslim Faith. The Runnymede Trust in Britain defined Islamophobia as "unfounded hostility towards Islam." It refers also to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs. This practice builds inequality and discrimination, at a time when unity is needed.

The third one is about denial of human and civil rights. CUPW believes that the arrest of Mohamed Harkat, the torture of Maher Arar, the institution of the no-fly lists etc. serve to weaken our collective security. For CUPW the issue is clear. Our security does not lie with measures that strip away our democratic and human rights. Our security is about solidarity and justice.

The arrest and jailing of Mohamed Harkat and the other security certificate detainees has not resulted in CUPW members feeling more secure.

Here are some items that would make CUPW members more secure: an end to the security certificate regime; the unconditional freedom of Mohamed Harkat and all the other security certificate detainees; a strong emphasis on protecting human and civil rights, locally, nationally and globally; the complete withdrawal of Canadian troops from Afghanistan. If the Federal Government was serious

sector, including universal services, both here and internationally.

* a focus on job creation, not corporate greed. We have to link the fight for security and human rights with the building of a new society.

This so-called "war on terror" which is really a war on Human Rights has reminded me about courage. It takes courage to withstand being arrested and jailed without charges and without knowing the allegations against you. It takes courage to stand up and say the security certificate regime is unjust and undemocratic. And, it takes courage to live every day under the harsh and invasive eyes of CSIS and Canada Border Services.

So on behalf the 54,000 members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers I want to thank Sophie and Mohamed Harkat for their courage.

We know that today, or next week or next year any of us here - trade unionists, human rights defenders, peace activists just to name a few - could all be threatened when human rights and natural justice are on the chopping block. Our own experiences with CSIS and the RCMP keeping CUPW and its activists under surveillance have led CUPW to recognize the need for solidarity with Mohamed Harkat and all those who become victims of secret security campaigns. We know that the best way to be part of the struggle against the secret information society is to make a new world possible. ●

WFTU New Year message - 2010

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) has issued the following New Year's Day statement for 2010:

Dear friends, workers, poor farmers, unemployed, homeless, Dear brothers and sisters in Africa, in Asia and the Pacific, in Latin America, in Europe and the Middle East, on behalf of the leadership of WFTU, we wish you health and strength for the new year 2010.

We are in the middle of the international economic crisis. Unemployment, poverty, and prices on basic food-stuffs continue to rise. The imperialist wars create more refugees and migrant workers, more destruction. The profits of the capitalists increase.

In the last year the working class conducted many big, massive and efficient struggles. In the new year, struggles could and should be even stronger. The trade union movement all over the world should become

stronger. The WFTU will be in the front line of these struggles to defend:

- The rights of all the workers, the rights of young people and the rights of women, for regular and stable jobs with good salaries and trade union freedoms.

- The rights of ordinary people for public health, education and social security.

- The survival of the financial immigrants and refugees.

- The cancellation of the debts of all Third World countries.

- The freeze of lay-offs and privatizations.

- The protection of the environment and the quality of life, in the face of problems resulting from climate change.

- To strengthen our internationalism and solidarity with the people of Cuba, with the important Bolivarian changes that are taking place in Latin America, with the people of Asia to stop child labour, with the people of Eastern Europe to stop

prostitution, with the people of Africa to stop the deaths for starvation and AIDS. With the struggles in Honduras against the coup d'etat, with our brothers from Colombia and the Philippines, who are being assassinated by paramilitary organizations. We will struggle to stop all the imperialist wars, for the withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories and the foundation of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital city.

Dear colleagues, 2010 is for the WFTU a year of trade union formation and training, with concrete programmes of trade union training and education in all continents, in every country, and with special care to the young workers who represent the hope for a socialistic world.

We wish to the international working class, health, strength and efficient struggles.

(www.wftucentral.org)

Karl Marx in Copenhagen

By W. T. Whitney Jr.

"Goodbye Africa, goodbye South Asia; goodbye glaciers and sea ice, coral reefs and rainforest; it was nice knowing you." Such was *UK Guardian* writer George Monbiot's dismay as the recent Copenhagen Climate Conference ended.

La Jornada newspaper blamed "a web of interests that are the main obstacle to reaching a serious accord," including "governments and their accomplices in the corporation and financial world." The profligate burning of fossil fuels has fostered consumption, corporations' economic expansion, accumulation, and profit. Capitalism "imposes what is in effect a scorched earth strategy," writes *Monthly Review* analyst John Bellamy Foster.

The Copenhagen debacle recalls markers of other capitalist crises, the 1914 war over empire, for example, and the 1930s world depression. This time, capitalism is putting humankind on the road to hunger, migrations, rampant disease, and die-off. Harking back to Marx, Samir Amin asserts, "The accumulation of capital destroys the natural bases on which that accumulation is built: man... and the earth." (*Monthly Review*, 59:9 pp. 7, 20)

The Copenhagen gathering

followed years of scientific recommendations, negotiations, and wrangling, beginning with the 1992 Earth Summit. With Washington opting out, industrialized nations accepted the 1997 Kyoto Protocol calling for modest, but legally binding limits on emissions. To keep global temperatures from rising more than 1.5 degrees C, scientists have called for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the present 385 parts per million to 350ppm.

Before the Copenhagen meeting, the UN issued guidelines accepting a temperature rise of 2 degrees C. By 2020, industrialized nations were to have reduced greenhouse gas emissions to 45 percent of 1990 levels, to 80 percent by 2050. The European Union had promised a 20 percent cut; the United States, in effect, a four percent cut. China, exempted from Kyoto requirements, offered an ambiguous plan tying emissions cuts to units of GDP rise.

No agreements were in sight when world leaders arrived at the meeting's end. President Obama met with Chinese, Indian, Brazilian, and South African representatives, later with those of 25 industrialized

nations. He then issued a press conference announcement of an "agreement" affecting 194 nations. Participants learned of it via television.

Legal commitments under the Kyoto Protocol morphed into a political agreement lacking commitments and time tables. Reaching out to nations



individually, not collectively, it focused on monitoring and backed the two-degree limit on global warming.

A leaked UN scientific report predicting a 3 degrees C global temperature rise under UN-recommended emissions limits was ignored. "*Shock Doctrine*" author Naomi Klein saw bribery in Secretary of State Clinton's \$100

billion offer from unspecified sources to help underdeveloped nations cope with climate disaster. Danish police arrested over 1000 peaceful protesters under a new "pre-crime law."

Speaking for the G-77 group of 134 underdeveloped nations, Sudanese diplomat Lumumba Stanislaus Di-Aping demanded a 1.5 degree C limit on global warming and 60 percent emission reductions by 2020. "I will not accept the total destruction of my continent, her people, in Copenhagen," he declared.

That's where a Marxist approach comes in. The struggle, defined by class interests, continues. And just as the labour theory of value provides a material basis for unified struggle by industrial workers, Marx's distinction between use value and exchange value does likewise for victims of natural resources pillage. Use values, taken together, become the public's wealth that, in abundance, benefits all. The sum of exchange values constitutes private riches, promoted through scarcities.

Capitalists want use values to be absorbed into the exchange value category opening them up

to engineered scarcities and accumulation. Or, according to Marx, quoted by Foster: "The earth is the reservoir from whose bowels the use values are to be torn." Climate change sets the stage for profiteers to look covetously at food and fuel shortages, high technology energy fixes, and carbon trading. Working people, inhabitants of small islands, and poor African farmers - among others - fight to protect wealth held in common.

And under a socialist banner: "Socialism is designed in terms of a society founded on use value, not exchange value," claims Samir Amin, who specifies, "Socialism should be ecological, indeed can only be ecological."

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and President Evo Morales of Bolivia came to Copenhagen with a message from the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA). "We cannot consider climate change without thinking about changing the system," it said. "The capitalist production and consumption model is taking life on the planet to a point of no return."

Chavez reminded assembled leaders of "socialism, the other spectre Karl Marx spoke about, which walks here too... Socialism, this is the direction, this is the path to save the planet." ●

First prorogue, then eviscerate....

This commentary by Murray Dobbin is from *The Tye*, January 11, 2010

There is, for good reason, a lot of enthusiasm across the country as the groundswell against Stephen Harper's cynical shuttering of Parliament continues to grow. The prime minister from hell has gotten away with so much — and the opposition is so weak that any indication of genuine public disgust at his continuing demonstration of contempt for democracy is a welcome sign. And everyone who cares about the country should be taking part in the new movement for democracy.

But we should also be careful that this issue does not totally distract us from Harper's actual agenda which is still exactly as it has always been — to dismantle the Canada so painstakingly built by two generations of Canadians. In March, Harper will present his first "austerity" budget. It could prove to be more damaging than the proroguing of Parliament.

Harper is driven by a visceral

"This coming budget was set in motion by Jim Flaherty's 2007 budget which launched a five-year, \$60 billion tax cut — largely for the wealthy and for corporations."

hatred of what we once referred to as the welfare state. Most people in this world of information overload and 20 second sound bites have probably forgotten that Mr. Harper once ran the National Citizens Coalition (NCC), one of the most right-wing, libertarian organizations in the country — founded by an insurance broker determined to rid

the country of Medicare.

In a speech to the NCC in 1994, Harper gave the Reform Party credit for the reverses in social programs being implemented by the Liberals: "(T)he Liberal government in

other voices

Ottawa has announced... no new major social spending programs. Universality has been severely reduced. It is virtually dead as a concept in most areas of public policy. The family allowance program has been eliminated and unemployment insurance has been seriously cut back."

Harper is surely the only Canadian prime minister to openly express scorn for his own country, as he did in the *National Post* on Dec. 8, 2000: "Canada appears content to become a second-tier socialistic country, boasting ever

more loudly about its economy and social services to mask its second-rate status."

Stephen Harper doesn't seem to believe that there a separate, distinct Canadian nation. Asked in a 1997 CBC interview, "Is there a Canadian culture?" Harper replied: "Yes, in a very loose sense. It consists of regional cultures within

Canada — regional cultures that cross borders with the US. We're part of a worldwide Anglo-American culture. And there is a continental culture."

In a speech to a right-wing American think tank, Harper ridiculed all Canadians: "I was asked to speak about Canadian politics... it's legendary that if you're like all Americans, you know almost nothing except about your own country. Which makes you probably knowledgeable about one more country than most Canadians." The whole speech was full of such insults about his own country.

The next nail in Canada's coffin As we inch closer to budget day — it will come no matter what the outcome of the opposition to proroguing Parliament — there is almost nothing in the media, and virtually nothing yet from progressive groups, about what we can expect and what the alternatives are. There needs to be, because Harper and his war room strategists are definitely prepared. Indeed, they have already warned Canadians that this budget is the transition to a new era of austerity.

This coming budget was set in motion by Jim Flaherty's 2007 budget which launched a five-year, \$60 billion tax cut — largely for the wealthy and for corporations. He then gave up another \$12 billion in revenue by knocking two points off the GST. That effectively created a structural deficit — that is, an assault on the tax base, which means we cannot avoid yearly deficits in the future, no matter what happens to the economy. This was confirmed last fall by Kevin Page, head of the Parliamentary Budget Office, who

stated that in 2013-14, when the economy will have recovered, the deficit will still be \$18.9 billion.

Flaherty had to know that his tax cuts would create a structural deficit — and indeed, it just the crisis he needs to justify the cuts in his upcoming budget. The financial crisis and stimulus spending postponed the day of reckoning — but it is now upon us. Flaherty has made it clear that he will not deal with the deficit through any tax increases, so look for massive layoffs of federal employees, the shutting down of government agencies and large cuts to others, a wage freeze, attacks to federal employees' pensions and cuts across the board for government departments. We can expect the government's Crown Assets Review to recommend the sale of billions in crown assets, further diminishing the financial status of the federal government.

It is gratifying to see such widespread opposition to Harper's

assault on Parliament and democracy — from almost every major political columnist, newspaper editorials, over a hundred political scientists, and constitutional experts — including a significant number of unusual suspects. It is a clear sign that Harper has overreached yet again — a character flaw that has saved the country from disaster more than once. Harper now sits at 33 percent in the latest Ekos poll, and if the movement continues to grow, Harper's plan to force an election over his March budget will have to be put on hold. That might have the effect of postponing the worst cuts.

But the sudden support for democracy by parts of the Canadian elite will not extend to defending the legacy of public services, wealth redistribution and government intervention in the economy. Those are the things that are in Harper's crosshairs, and progressives will have to fight the campaign to stop him on their own ● .





GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

COSATU threatens World Cup strike

The North West branch of the Congress of South African Trade Unions said on Jan. 5 that it is in talks with other COSATU affiliates to mount a provincial action during the World Cup.

Members of the SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union have been on a wage-related strike against Sun City since December 4. The union is directing its anger at the chief executive of Sun International, David Coutts-Trotter, who took his Christmas holiday overseas in the middle of the strike.

"Workers of Sun International had a black Christmas due to the arrogance of the chief executive officer, who abandoned the wage negotiations, and left more than 2000 workers on the strike to overseas for his own holiday," the union said. "This is a clear sign of how workers of Sun international are exploited, racially attacked including Sun international employers using Labour Brokers for poor conditions of service and exploitation. It is clear to the federation including the North West communities that racism at Sun City is being protected by the senior management of Sun International."

"We demand the dismissal of the Sun International chief executive officer including his management which does not care about our country and the rest of the poor working class," the federation said. "Sun City is our project for 2010, workers have been exploited and racially abused for many years since the time of Bophuthatswana Sun City. Gone are those days when Sun City used to respect only white people, gone are those days when Sun City used to enjoy profit alone, gone are those days of exploiting the African black workers, racism will be rooted out of Sun City during the 2010 FIFA World Cup."

"Monster" database goes online

Under controversial new legislation, German employers must now submit data on their workers to a central information storage hub, affecting as many as 40 million employees throughout the country. Under legislation that came into effect on January 1, employers must submit employees' income data to a government-sponsored central mainframe. The database will also store information about whether an employee has participated in strike action, and data on worker absenteeism.

The database is believed to form part of Germany's largest ever data acquisition program. Employers must now send information monthly to the so-called ELENA database regarding workers' contributions to Germany's social programs. Beginning in 2012, authorities will be able to use this data to assess whether to pay out or refuse benefits to applicants.

Trade unions and civil rights groups have criticised the project

as an "excessive heightening and storage of personal data."

Peter Schaar, who heads Germany's Data Protection and Freedom of Information Commission, criticized that ELENA system, saying it went beyond the legal limits set out for data collection.

"I've got a big problem with this. Until now, such information



on salary declarations has not appeared, and their general storage in a central file is not legally nor constitutionally allowed," said Schaar.

Frank Bsirske, head of the powerful Ver.di trade union, said the ELENA system was ripe for misuse, while the junior partners in Chancellor Angela Merkel's coalition government, the Free Democrats, referred to the new storage hub as a "data monster."

The government says ELENA was created to save paperwork for business owners, who from 2012 will no longer have to print out pay certificates for their employees.

Strikes will go on, Vavi tells SACP

Strikes and service delivery protests will continue until the basic needs of the workers and the poor are taken care of, COSATU general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi told the mid-term congress of the South African Communist Party in Polokwane in December. Vavi told the congress that the adoption of "conservative" macroeconomic policies during the early stages of South Africa's democracy was "unfortunate".

He attributed social unrest and wage-related strikes to the "casualisation" of workers, the "cruel" labour broking system and the feeling of economic deprivation among poor communities.

"Our people ask, was reconciliation worth it if we are living in more or less the same conditions we suffered under apartheid?"

Adding to the concerns raised in the SACP's political report on corruption and the emerging culture of "tenderpreneurs", Vavi said it was the responsibility of the SACP as the workers' "political insurance" to fight those with "get-rich-quick schemes and get-rich-while-you-can" mentalities.

Blade Nzimande, SACP general secretary, encouraged the delegates to "throw their full weight" against labour broking "as part of an important struggle to transform the black working class".

"In the 'white' countryside there has been an increase in the

expulsion and displacement of black farm workers through increased mechanisation and periodic evictions, as well as intensified exploitation of the black working class through brazen flouting of labour laws and removal of farmworkers and farm dwellers from housing and schooling on white-owned farms," Nzimande said.

Turkish workers resist violence

More than 10,000 workers in Turkey have been holding protests for weeks in near-freezing temperatures. They are employed by Tekel, the former tobacco monopoly, and are battling a snap government decision to close their workplaces at the end of January. They face either unemployment or work at lower wages and fewer benefits.

The protests began in December when over 100 buses brought the workers to Ankara to demonstrate in front of the ruling party's headquarters. Police drove them away into a nearby park. Police then put up barricades around the park and used water hoses, clubs and tear gas against the workers, sending many to hospital.

The demonstrators have since moved their protest to outside the headquarters of the Turkish union confederation, where they hold daily demonstrations. Some have gone on hunger strike.

Brewery bosses taken hostage

About 10 managers at an Anheuser-Busch InBev brewery in Jupille in eastern Belgium were taken hostage by union officials after the company announced it was firing hundreds of workers. RTBF radio reported that the plant managers were being held in a meeting room in an office building.

"We are demanding that the senior managers come here and call off the layoffs," Marc Devenne, a union representative was quoted as saying by the Belga news agency.

Anheuser-Busch InBev has announced that a tenth of the company's 3000 employees in Belgium will be laid off due to declining beer consumption in the country. The company is carrying out similar layoffs across Europe.

Factory workers strike in Rangoon

In a sign of growing unrest in Burmese factories, about 100 female workers from a shrimp processing factory in Rangoon's Hlaing Tharyar Township went on strike on Jan. 7.

A source close to the factory, which is located in an industrial park in Rangoon's western suburbs, said that the women had issued a demand calling for a list of 10 workers' rights to be met. Other reports said the main issue was salaries. A clerk at the shrimp processing factory confirmed the strike, but declined to provide further details.

The Ministry of Labour's deputy director, Win Shein,

reportedly arrived at the scene on the same day together with police officers, and security was tightened around the factory area.

In most cases of industrial action, a representative of the Ministry of Labour will mediate between management and the workers to resolve issues. The mediator is responsible for ensuring that certain minimum conditions are met, such as minimum wages, hours and overtime. However, in Burma, it is rare for striking workers' demands to be met.

In December, nearly 1,000 textile workers in Hlaing Tharyar staged a demonstration. Government officials were involved in negotiations with the workers over their demands, though it remains unclear as to how the issue was resolved.

The monthly income of most factory workers in Burma ranges from 20,000 kyat [\$20] to 40,000 kyat [\$40], forcing many to work overtime. Many factory owners employ temporary workers who have no legal recourse if they are fired without compensation. More than 80 percent of factory workers in Rangoon work on a day-to-day basis. Most are young women between 15 and 27 years of age who come from the countryside in search of a better living.

France reneges on Guadeloupe agreement

A union leader on the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe has called for mass demonstrations and a general strike over French government economic discrimination against black workers. In an interview with *Le Parisien* newspaper, Elie Domota called an unlimited strike to start

on January 20.

The call was triggered by a rise in petrol prices. Domota has called for the right to buy fuel directly from Venezuela instead of through the French oil concern Total. He also accused the government of undermining agreements that ended a six-week strike in March 2009. At the time, the government agreed to raise wages and lower prices.

Moroccan unions face stalemate

Unions in Morocco are insisting that agreements on wages and bonuses must be implemented before talks with the government can proceed. Labour leaders are threatening a general strike in April if outstanding issues are not resolved with the help of the prime minister's office, according to the head of the Union for Moroccan Workers, Hamid Chabat.

"2010 will be a year of militancy if the social dialogue proves fruitless," Chabat said in a press release on December 29.

Talks between the prime minister's office and the unions have yet to resolve several important issues. The government is refusing to discuss the thorny issue of pay increases, preferring to put off the discussion by another year.

Union members are also upset that a previously agreed change in pay scales has not been implemented. Another agreement which has yet to be acted on concerns employees in remote and inaccessible regions. Public servants working in the education and health sectors there were supposed to receive a bonus of 700 dinars per month, to be extended across other sectors as well. No such bonus has materialised.

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

Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada



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

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Liliany Obando trial to resume in February

PV Vancouver Bureau

The "rebellion" trial of Liliany Obando, the labour and human rights activist imprisoned by the Colombian regime, is slated to continue in February. Liliany was recently once again denied "home arrest" so that she can care for her two children, Camilo and Laura.

Meanwhile, solidarity continues to build in Canada and other countries. A very successful fundraiser was held on Jan. 9 at the Tranzac Club in Toronto to help with her legal defence. In other news, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF) will send a two-person delegation to Bogota next month to visit Liliany and monitor the legal proceedings.

On December 10, 2009, United Nations Human Rights Day, the International Network in Solidarity with the Colombian Political Prisoners (INSPP) issued a statement in support of Liliany Obando and all political prisoners, calling attention to "the violation of the human rights of Colombia's political opposition and its supporters. The Colombian government is waging a campaign to criminalize critical thinking - a campaign that paves the way for transnational access to Colombia's resources, underwritten with more than (US)\$7 billion in the US funded Plan Colombia.

"Of special concern is the case of Liliany Patricia Obando Villota, undergoing her trial process at this very moment. She was jailed the very week she released a report on the murders of more than 1,500 members of Fensuagro, Colombia's largest union of farmers and farm workers.

"Liliany is the first person to be arrested and stand trial as part of the *farco-politica*. This is a process attempting to connect members

of the political and social opposition to the FARC (the



Liliany Obando

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) based on evidence contained in computers allegedly belonging to Commandant Raul Reyes. The Colombian military claims it recovered these computers after a bomb attack killed Reyes and more than 20 others. The computers were in the hands of the Colombian police for over a week before being turned over to the international police agency, INTERPOL.

"INTERPOL says that tens of thousands of the files contained therein showed signs of tampering by Colombian authorities. Police Captain Roy Hayden Coy Ortiz, who oversaw the initial investigation, testified in court that the computers contained no emails, only Word documents. Alleged emails are the foundation for the charges against Liliany.

"Liliany's case is important for two main reasons. First, while an acquittal would be a final blow to the whole *farco-politica*, a conviction would revive it and open the way for broad repression of dissent. A conviction would also strengthen government efforts to destroy Fensuagro by providing a spurious link with the FARC.

"Liliany and her family have been victims of a series of threatening emails and phone calls. Similar emails have been received by the INSPP. The internationalization of *farco-politica* intimidation has taken place at all levels. In a trip to Canada earlier this year, President Uribe accused unionists and solidarity activists visited by Liliany of being cells of the FARC. In a violation of Colombian sovereignty and international law, Australian Federal Police officer David Nelson, accompanied by two Colombian officials, visited Liliany in prison, trying to get information about unionists she had contacted in Australia. She refused to

cooperate....

"As we prepare this report, Liliany is trying, for the 8th time, to get home detention during her trial. This is a right that is commonly given to persons in many circumstances, especially women, who like Liliany, are single mothers and sole providers for their children... The right to home detention is frequently provided to those sentenced for all kinds of crimes, including convicted members of paramilitary death squads - yet Liliany has been denied this right seven times.

(For more information, visit www.freeliliany.net)

"The International Network in Solidarity with the Colombian Political Prisoners calls on all its supporters to demand that the Colombian government implement a Humanitarian Exchange of prisoners as a first step in the political solution to the deep social and complex armed conflict in the country.

- Demand that the Colombian Attorney's General Office grant Liliany Obando home detention to allow her to care for her children.

- Demand that the Colombian government guarantee the safety of Liliany and her family, and that human rights organizations monitor their safety. •

Colombian miners struggle to organize

From the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions, www.icem.org

The struggle continues for trade union rights for contract workers at Colombia's vast mining complex, Carbones del Cerrejón. The Sintracarbon union has been fighting to organize the contract workers at the mine.

Following the successful organization of mechanics and machinists of the company Chaneme at Cerrejón in November, the new union Sintrachaneme was formed and recognized by Chaneme. But the company refuses to discuss improvements to salaries and working conditions with either Sintrachaneme or Sintracarbon.

A second union of contract workers under Sintracarbon's guidance, Sintrans, representing transport workers of the Sotrans

company, has seen that employer refuse to recognise the union or to consider any of the bus drivers' demands. In fact, the sacking of union activists among bus drivers has brought fear and reluctance by workers to engage in union activity.

Sintracarbon is focusing efforts towards the consolidation of Sintrachaneme and pressuring the mechanical maintenance contractor to accept the demands of workers. International support is important in the push for a collective agreement between Chaneme and its 300 staff, an accord that will guarantee the existence of the union.

Since workers at Cerrejón took the step to organize, they have suffered a campaign of harassment and persecution from employers. Sintracarbon, consisting of 3,500 direct employed miners at Cerrejón, has denounced complicity by their employer of denial of work rights

by contractors, saying Carbones del Cerrejón has "turned a blind eye to the abuses."

Harassment has included workers being visited at home, with threats of dismissal or offers of perks in return for loyalty to the contractors and a turn against the newly-formed unions.

Cerrejón management is also criticised by its mining workforce for applying double standards, claiming on the one hand that it respects human and trade union rights with rhetoric that it support the free association into unions of workers of contractors, while working covertly with the contractors and units of government to destroy the trade union organization process.

These abuses of the right of association and collective bargaining contravene national law, the Colombian Constitution, and ILO Conventions 87 and 98, ratified by Colombia. •

Chilean Communists return to Chamber of Deputies

PV Vancouver Bureau

In a historic development, three members of the Communist Party of Chile were elected to the country's Congress of Deputies in elections held on December 13. The first round of the presidential race was held at the same time, with a run-off between the two leading candidates set for January 17.

This marks the first time Communists have entered the Chilean parliament since the Pinochet fascist coup of 1973. During the post-dictatorship period, Communists and their partners in the Junto Podemos Mas ("Together we can") coalition were unable to win seats at the national level, due to an electoral system tilted against smaller parties. The breakthrough was made possible by agreements with centrist forces to cooperate against the right.

CP of Chile chair Guillermo Teillier is one of the new Communist deputies, along with Hugo Gutierrez and Lautaro Carmona. Teillier told the media that "There is a new mood... After so many years of struggle we achieved results and success in our goals.

We have said we need a dialogue with all those willing to reach a minimum agreement for the country."

Leading the presidential race with 44% after the first round was multi-millionaire Sebastian Pinera, candidate of the traditional right wing. Pinera is backed by Renovacion Nacional and Union Democratica Independiente, the party which inherited the mantle of Pinochet and is linked to reactionary elements of the Catholic Church.

In second place (30%), was Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei, president from 1996-2000, running for the centrist Concertation alliance. Frei was also backed in the first round by the Socialist Party and smaller social democratic groups.

Third place (20%) went to "independent" Marco Henriquez Ominami, son of the founder of the MIR ("Movement of the Revolutionary Left") which was sharply critical of the left-wing Popular Unity coalition

government during 1970-73. While Ominami made some populist, anti-corruption promises in the campaign, there were questions about his links with certain elements on the political right and business sectors.

Finishing fourth with 6.2% was Jorge Arrate, a former cabinet minister in the post-dictatorship



Chilean Communist Guillermo Teillier

coalition governments of Alywin, Frei and Lagos. Last March he broke with the Socialist Party and joined the Junto Podemos coalition led by the Communists. Arrate conducted a strong campaign against privatization of copper,

water and other resources, and for democratic reforms.

Arrate and Junto Podemos announced an agreement to support Frei in the second round, and to avoid running competing candidates against each other in local elections. Frei carried out many neoliberal policies during his term in office; in this campaign, he has called for expanded social welfare programs and other progressive reforms.

While the right-wing had a slight lead in the Dec. 13 voting, the centre and left parties will continue to hold a majority in the bicameral Congress, in part because only half of the Senate seats were up for re-election. But the most recent opinion polls put Pinera in the lead for the Presidency.

In another important development, striking copper miners have won new contracts at both the state-owned copper company, Codelco, and Anglo-Swiss multinational Xstrata. Negotiations continue for 280 miners at Codelco Norte and 500 more at El Teniente.

Some 5,600 miners at Chuquicamata, located in Chile's northern region, ended a two day strike on January 5 after accepting a pay rise of 4% and a bonus totalling US\$24,280. The workers also won a US\$6,000 interest-free loan. Miners voted by 2,610 to 1,203 to accept the deal. The union had sought a 7.5% pay increase and a US\$28,000 bonus, stressing the high cost of living in the north.

The vast Chuquicamata complex produces around four percent of the world's total copper supply, and the short strike boosted global prices to a 16-month high.

Mineworkers at Xstrata's Altonorte copper smelter agreed to contract terms, following a week of industrial action that ended on January 4. The settlement includes a two percent increase to base wages, a bonus of US\$5,000, and an annual production bonus of US\$1,500. Altonorte employs 660 workers and treats raw copper and other mining by-products to obtain copper anodes. Xstrata is the fourth largest copper producer in the world. •



More than a Sportswriter: Lester "Red" Rodney: 1911-2009

By Dave Zirin

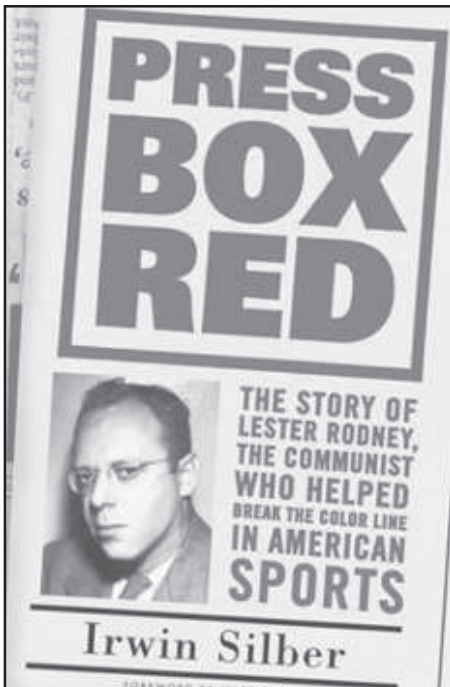
It didn't make SportsCenter, but one of history's most influential sportswriters died this week at the age of 98. His name was Lester Rodney. Lester was one of the first people to write about a young Negro League prospect named Jackie Robinson. He was the last living journalist to cover the famous 1938 fight at Yankee Stadium between "The Brown Bomber" Joe Louis and Hitler favourite, Max Schmeling. He crusaded against baseball's colour line when almost every other journalist pretended it didn't exist. He edited a political sports page that engaged his audience in how to fight for a more just sports world. His writing, which could describe the beauty of a well-turned double play in one sentence and blast injustice in the next, is still bracing and ahead of its time. He should be in the Baseball Hall of Fame. Instead he was largely erased from the books.

If you have never heard of Lester Rodney, there is a very simple reason why: the newspaper he worked at from 1936-1958 was the *Daily Worker*, the party press of the U.S. Communist Party. Lester used his paper to launch the first campaign to end the colour line in Major League Baseball. I spoke to Lester about this in 2004 and he said to me, "It's amazing. You go back and you read the great newspapers in the thirties, you'll find no editorials saying, 'What's going on here? This is America, land of the

free and people with the wrong pigmentation of skin can't play baseball?' Nothing like that. No challenges to the league, to the commissioner, no talking about Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson, who were obviously of superstar calibre. So it was this tremendous vacuum waiting."

The campaign was integrated into the Party's anti-racist work of the 1930s: "I spoke to the leaders of the YCL [the Young Communist League]. We talked about circulating the paper [at ballparks]. It just evolved as we talked about the colour line and some kids in the YCL suggested, 'Why don't we go to the ballparks - to Yankee Stadium, Ebbets Field, the Polo Grounds - with petitions?' We wound up with at least a million and a half signatures that we delivered straight to the desk of [baseball commissioner] Judge Landis."

As Lester fought to end the Colour Ban, he also never stopped highlighting and covering the Negro League teams, giving them press at a time when they invisible men outside of the African American press. But it was Jackie Robinson who captured Lester's imagination. Armed with a press pass to the Ebbets Field locker room, he saw up close the way Robinson was told to "just shut up and play" despite the constant harassment during his inaugural



1947 campaign. "Jackie was suppressing his very being, his personality," said Lester. "He was a fiercely intelligent man. He knew his role and he accepted it. And the black players who followed him knew what he meant too."

Lester saw the way their play - and their courage - helped inspire the struggle for Civil Rights, especially in the South. Lester told me about a dramatic exhibition game in Atlanta where all the dynamics of the Black Freedom Struggle were on display.

"This exhibition game wound up with the Black fans being allowed in because they had overflowed the

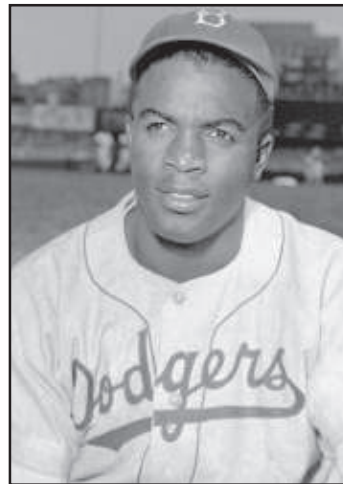
segregated stands, they had poured in from outlying districts to see the first integrated game in Georgia history. The Klan had said, 'This must not happen.' That night there was this tremendous sight of Robinson, [Dodgers African American players] Don Newcombe, and Roy Campanella coming out and the black fans behind the ropes and in the stands standing and roaring their greeting. A large sector of whites were just sitting and booing. Then other white people, hesitantly at first, stood up and consciously differentiated themselves from the boos and clapped. This was an amazing spectacle. This was the Deep South many years before the words civil rights were widely known. So it had its impact... Roy Campanella, once said to me something like, 'Without the Brooklyn Dodgers you don't have Brown v. Board of Education.' I laughed, I thought he was joking but he was stubborn. He said, 'All I know is we were the first ones on the trains, we were the

first ones down South not to go around the back of the restaurant, first ones in the hotels.' He said, 'We were like the teachers of the whole integration thing.'"

Lester would still become emotional when he recalls Jackie Robinson and his impact. "There are very few people of whom you can say with certainty that they made this a somewhat better country. Without doubt you can say that about Jackie Robinson. His legacy was not, 'Hooray, we did it,' but 'Buddy, there's still unfinished work out there.' He was a continuing militant, and that's why the Dodgers never considered this brilliant baseball man as a manager or coach. It's because he was outspoken and unafraid. That's the kind of person he was. In fact, the first time he was asked to play at an old-timers' game at Yankee Stadium, he said 'I must sorrowfully refuse until I see more progress being made off the playing field on the coaching lines and in the managerial departments.' He made people uncomfortable. In fact it was that very quality which made him something special. He always made you feel that 'Buddy, there's still unfinished work out there.'"

We can absolutely say the same about Lester Rodney, albeit with a twist. Yes, Lester made you feel like there was unfinished work out there. But he also made you feel like the great fun in life was in trying to get it done. That and seeing a perfectly turned 6-4-3 double play.

(Dave Zirin is the author of *A People's History of Sports in the United States*. Receive his column every week by emailing dave@edgeofsports.com. Zirin will speak at the Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph St., Vancouver, at 6:30 pm, Wed., Jan. 20. His topic will be the impact of the upcoming Olympic Winter Games.) •



Jackie Robinson

Haiti vote debacle feared

Concerns are growing that Haiti's upcoming legislative elections will be fatally flawed. Constitutionally scheduled for November 2009, the elections were arbitrarily postponed until February 28, 2010 by the government of President Rene Preval.

Preval hand-picked the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) mandated by Haiti's Constitution. Within Haiti, the CEP is widely seen as favouring Preval's own political party (Unity).

The CEP used a technicality to exclude Haiti's largest political party, Fanmi Lavalas, from the election; the CEP used a similar tactic to exclude Lavalas from a partial Senate election for about a third of the Senate seats in April 2009. Fanmi Lavalas is the party of former President Jean Bertrand Aristide, who was ousted in a US-sponsored coup on Feb. 29, 2004.

Preval's hand-picked CEP also awarded his Unity Party the top ballot position while assigning all other ballot positions randomly, thus giving a huge advantage to the Unity Party.

A delegation organized by the

Latin American Solidarity Coalition, a coalition of U.S. grassroots solidarity organizations, recently went to Haiti to investigate human rights abuses, including those committed by the UN military and police force (MINUSTAH), which was authorized by the UN Security Council after the 2004 coup. The delegation gathered testimony of injuries and deaths from gunfire, beatings, rapes, and sexual abuse. Dozens of appeals from Haitians and Haitian organizations asked the delegation members to use their influence to help prevent the February election.

Many Haitians expressed fear of a social explosion that would result in violent repression by MINUSTAH and Haitian police if the election is allowed to proceed without Fanmi Lavalas on the ballot. Such an exclusion, they said, would be similar to a U.S. Congressional election in which the Democratic or Republican Party were excluded from the ballot.

(With files from the Alliance for Global Justice, one of the groups which took part in the Latin American Solidarity Coalition delegation to Haiti.) •



Communist Party of Canada's 36th Convention Gala Dinner

**Saturday,
February 6, 7 pm
USWA Hall
25 Cecil Street,
Toronto**

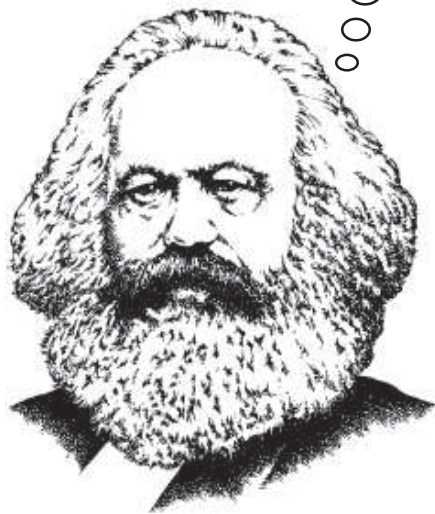
**Speaker: Miguel Figueroa
and guests**

Live Music and Entertainment

\$25 advance/\$30 door

Call 416-469-2446 for tickets

"Come and join
the Party"





“Canadians Against Proroguing Parliament”

Over 150,000 people across Canada have joined Facebook groups and other networks to mobilize against Stephen Harper's undemocratic move to prorogue Parliament until March 3. Dozens of cities and towns will see rallies on Saturday, Jan. 23. Planning meetings for many of these rallies have drawn huge numbers; the photo above shows one of the Toronto meetings. The Canadian Peace Alliance is one group which has issued special materials for this campaign (see below left). At press time, here is a partial list of event times and locations across the country. For more information on your area, visit www.noprorgue.ca.

HARPER YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM WAR CRIMES



STOP THE TORTURE STOP THE WAR

Canadian Peace Alliance www.acp-cpa.ca

Halifax, NS Rally at Province House (1726 Hollis St), 1:00 pm
Fredericton, NB Rally at City Hall, Queen Street, 1:00 pm
Moncton, NB Rally 1:00 pm at City Hall Square
Ottawa, ON Rally on Parliament Hill, 1:00 pm
Kingston, ON Rally at Market Square (behind City Hall), 1 pm
Barrie, ON Rally at Fred Grant Memorial Square (on Dunlop St), 1:00 pm
Peterborough, ON Start 1:00 pm at Confederation Park, march to Public Library
Sault Ste. Marie, ON Rally outside Tony Martin's Office, 369 Queen St. East, 1:00 pm
Kitchener-Waterloo, ON Rally 11 am at Waterloo Public Square (King St. South)
Hamilton, ON Rally at Gore Park, by Jackson Square (intersection of King and James), 1:00 pm
Toronto, ON Rally at Dundas Square (SE corner of Yonge and Dundas), 1-5 pm
Guelph, ON Rally at St. George Square, 1:00 pm
Thunder Bay, ON Rally at Lakehead Labour Centre, 929 Fort William Rd, 1:00 pm
Victoria, BC Rally at Centennial Square (Douglas at Pandora), 1:00 pm
Kelowna-Okanagan, BC Rally at corner of Gordon and Hwy 97, 1:00 pm
Vancouver, BC Gather 1:00 pm at the Art Gallery on Robson for a march to Victory Square (Hastings & Cambie).
Whitehorse, YT Rally outside the Elijah Smith building (300 Main Street), 1:00 pm

Humanity's right to life....

continued from page 12

economies states. He stressed the concept adopted in Kyoto that “common but differentiated responsibilities mean that the responsibility of the historical accumulators and the developed countries, who are the culprits of this catastrophe, differs from that of the small island states and the South countries, above all the least developed...”

“Responsibility means financing; responsibility means technology transfer on adequate terms. But, at this point, Obama resorts to a game of words and instead of talking of common but differentiated responsibilities, he speaks of ‘common but differentiated responses.’”

“...he then leaves the plenary hall without taking the trouble of listening to anybody; he had neither listened to anybody before taking the floor.”

In a subsequent press conference, before departing from the Danish capital, Obama had said: “There has been a meaningful and unprecedented breakthrough here in Copenhagen. For the first time in history, the largest economies have come to jointly accept responsibilities.”

In his clear and irrefutable presentation, our Foreign Minister said: “What does it mean that ‘the largest economies have come to jointly accept responsibilities’? It means that they are placing a large

part of the burden of financing the relief and adaptation of countries, mostly the South countries, to climate change on China, Brazil, India and South Africa. Because it must be said that in Copenhagen we witnessed an assault, a holdup against China, Brazil, India and South Africa, and against every other euphemistically called developing country.”

These were the resounding and undeniable words used by our Foreign Minister to describe what happened in Copenhagen.

I must add that, when at 10:00 a.m. on December 19 our Vice-President Esteban Lazo and the Cuban Foreign Minister had already left, a belated attempt was made to resurrect the Copenhagen cadaver as a Summit Accord. At that moment, practically every head of State had left and there was hardly any minister around. Again, the denunciation by the remaining members of the delegations from Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and other countries could defeat the maneuver. That was the end of the inglorious Summit.

Another fact that should not be overlooked is that at the most critical moment of that day, in the wee small hours, the Cuban Foreign Minister, together with the delegations waging the honourable battle, offered UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon their cooperation in the ever harder struggle being fought as well as in future efforts necessary

to preserve the life of our species.

The environmental group Wild World Fund has warned that if emissions are not drastically reduced climate change will go unchecked in the next 5 to 10 years.

But there is no need to prove the substance of what is said here that Obama did.

The US President stated on Wednesday, December 23, that people are justified in being disappointed about the outcome of the Summit on Climate Change. In an interview with the CBS television network, the President said that “instead of a total collapse if nothing had been done, which would have been a huge step backward; at least we could remain more or less where we were...”

According to the press dispatch, Obama is the target of most criticism from the countries that nearly unanimously feel that the result of the Summit was disastrous.

Now, the UN is in a quandary since many countries would find it humiliating to ask others to adhere to the arrogant and antidemocratic accord.

To carry on with the battle and to claim in every meeting, particularly in those of Bonn and Mexico, humanity's right to life, with the morale and the strength that truth provides, is in my opinion the only way to proceed.

Fidel Castro Ruz, December 26, 2009, 8:15 p.m. •

What's Left

Vancouver, BC

COPE Fundraiser with Rafe Mair, Monday, Jan. 18, 6:30-9:30, Sala Thai Restaurant (3364 Cambie St), tickets \$50, email COPE at cope@cope.bc.ca.

Politics in the Ring, author Dave Zirin (see page 10) forum on the Olympics, 6:30 pm, Wed., Jan. 20, Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph St., \$10 suggested donation, Olympics Resistance Network, StopWar and other groups.

Not Ready to Retire, fundraiser for People's Co-op Books, Friday, Jan. 22, 7:30 pm, WISE Hall, (Adanac & Victoria), \$10 advance/\$15 door. Call 416-469-2446 for tickets & info.

Left Film Night, Sunday, Jan. 31, 7 pm, screening “H2OIL”, documentary on the tar sands and climate change, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive. Admission free, donations welcome, organized by Vancouver East Club CPC, YCL, and Centre for Socialist Education. Call 604-255-2041 for information.

Olympic “Welcome Rally”, family-friendly rally to oppose this massive waste of resources, 3 pm, Friday, Feb. 12 (Friday), Vancouver Art Gallery, with march to BC Place at 4:30 pm.

Annual Women's Memorial March, Sunday, Feb. 14 gather 12 noon, Carnegie Centre, Hastings & Main.

Winnipeg, MB

Manitoba-Cuba Solidarity Committee monthly meeting, Mon., Jan. 18, 7:30 pm at 280 Smith St., Workers Organizing Resource Centre. Info 783-9380.

Climate change teach-in, Mon., Feb. 1, 7 pm keynote speech kick-off; Tue., Feb. 2, 9 am to 4 pm discussions and workshops. Convocation Hall, Univ. of Winnipeg, Info 943-4836.

Marxism course, classes begin in February. Pre-register at 586-7824 or cpc-mb@mts.net.

Toronto, ON

Gala Dinner for Communist Party of Canada's 36th Convention, Sat., Feb. 6, 7 pm, USWA Hall, 25 Cecil Street. Speakers: Miguel Figueroa and Guests. Live music and entertainment, call 416-469-2446 for tickets (\$25 advance).

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.

NOT READY TO RETIRE! People's Co-op Bookstore 65th Anniversary Fundraiser

Music, poetry, comedy & more, hosted by Vancouver's favourite comedian, Charles Demers!

7:30 pm, Friday, Jan. 22
WISE Hall (Adanac & Victoria)

Tickets \$10 at the store (1391 Commercial Dr.),
or \$15 at the door... Call 604-253-6442

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:

FEBRUARY 1-28 issue: Thursday, Jan. 21

MARCH 1-15 issue: Thursday, Feb. 18

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

Humanity's Right To Life

Reflections by Fidel

Climate change is already causing enormous damage and hundreds of millions of poor people are enduring the consequences. The most advanced research centers have claimed that there is little time to avoid an irreversible catastrophe. James Hansen, from the NASA Goddard Institute, has said that a proportion of 350 parts of carbon dioxide by million is still tolerable; however, the figure today is 390 and growing at a pace of 2 parts by million every year exceeding the levels of 600 thousand years ago. Each one of the past two decades has been the warmest since the first records were taken while carbon dioxide increased 80 parts by million in the past 150 years.

The meltdown of ice in the Arctic Sea and of the huge two-kilometer thick icecap covering Greenland; of the South American glaciers feeding its main fresh water sources and the enormous volume covering the Antarctic; of the remaining icecap on the Kilimanjaro, the ice on the Himalayan and the large frozen area of Siberia are visible.

Outstanding scientists fear abrupt quantitative changes in these natural phenomena that bring about the change.

Humanity entertained high hopes in the Copenhagen Summit after the Kyoto Protocol signed in 1997 entered into force in 2005. The resounding failure of the Summit gave rise to shameful episodes that call for due clarification.

The United States, with less than 5% of the world population releases 25% of the carbon dioxide. The new US President had promised to cooperate with the international effort to tackle a new problem that afflicts that country as much as the rest of the world. In the meetings leading to the Summit, it became clear that the leaders of that nation and of the wealthiest countries were maneuvering to place the burden of sacrifices on the emergent and poor countries.

A great number of leaders and thousands of representatives of social movements and scientific institutions, determined to fight for the preservation of humanity from the greatest risk in history, converged in Copenhagen on the invitation of the organizers of the Summit. I'd rather avoid reference

to details of the brutality of the Danish police force against thousands of protesters and invitees from social and scientific movements who travelled to the Danish capital. I'll focus on the political features of the Summit.

Actually, chaos prevailed in Copenhagen where incredible things happened. The social movements and scientific institutions were not allowed to attend the debates. There were heads of State and Government who could not even express their views on crucial issues. Obama and the leaders of the wealthiest nations took over the conference, with the complicity of the Danish government. The United Nations agencies were pushed to the background.

Barack Obama, the last to arrive on the day of the Summit for a 12-hours stay, met with two groups of invitees carefully chosen by him and his staff, and in the company of one of them met at the plenary hall with the rest of the high-level delegations. He made his remarks and left right away through the back door. Except for the small group chosen by him, the other representatives of countries were prevented from taking the floor during that plenary session. The presidents of Bolivia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela were allowed to speak because the Chairman of the Summit had no choice but to give them the floor in light of the strong pressures of those present.

In an adjacent room, Obama brought together the leaders of the wealthiest nations, some of the most important emerging States and two very poor countries. He then introduced a document, negotiated with two or three of the most important countries, ignored the UN General Assembly, gave a press conference and left like Julius Caesar after one of his victorious wars in Asia Minor that led him to say: "I came, I saw, I conquered."

Even Gordon Brown, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, had said on October 19: "If we do not reach a deal over the next few months, let us be in no doubt, since once the damage from unchecked emissions growth is done, no



retrospective global agreement in some future period can undo that choice. By then it will be irretrievably too late..."

Brown concluded his speech with these dramatic words: "We cannot afford to fail. If we fail now we will pay a heavy price. If we act now, if we act together, if we act with vision and resolve, success at Copenhagen is still within our reach, but, if we falter, the Earth will itself be at risk and, for the planet, there is no Plan B."

But later he arrogantly said that the United Nations could not be taken hostage by a group of countries like Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Tuvalu. At the same time, he accused China, India, Brazil, South Africa and other emerging countries of being lured by the United States into signing a document that throws the Kyoto Protocol in the wastebasket without a binding agreement involving the United States and its wealthy allies.

I find it necessary to recall that the United Nations Organization was born hardly six decades ago, after the last World War, when there were no more than fifty independent countries. Today, after the hateful colonial system ceased to exist thanks to the resolute struggle of the peoples, it has a membership of over 190 independent nations. For many years, even the People's Republic of China was denied admission to the UN while a puppet regime was its representative in that institution and in the privileged Security Council.

The tenacious support of the growing number of Third World nations would prove indispensable to China's international recognition and become an extremely significant element for the acceptance of that country's rights at the UN by the United States and its NATO allies.

It was the Soviet Union that made the greatest contribution to the heroic fight against fascism. More than 25 million of its people perished while the country was terribly devastated. It was from that struggle that it emerged as a superpower with the capacity to partly balance the absolute domination of the US imperial system and the former colonial powers to plunder the Third World countries unrestrictedly. Following the demise of the USSR, the United States extended its political and military power to the East - up to Russia's heart - and enhanced its influence on the rest of Europe. Therefore, what happened in Copenhagen came as

no surprise.

I want to insist on how unfair and outrageous were the remarks of the Prime Minister of the UK and the Yankee attempt to impose as the Summit Accord a document that was at no time discussed with the attending countries.

During his press conference of December 21, Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez made a statement that cannot be disproved. I will quote from some of its paragraphs: "I would like to emphasize that no agreement of the Conference of the Parties was reached in Copenhagen, that no decision was made as to binding or nonbinding commitments or pertaining to International Law; that simply did not happen. There was no agreement in Copenhagen."

"The Summit was a failure and a deception for the world [...] the lack of political will was left in the open..."

"...it was a step backward in the actions of the international community to prevent or mitigate the effects of climate change..."

"...the average world temperature could rise by 5 degrees..."

Right then our Foreign Minister adds other interesting data on the likely consequences of climate change according to the latest scientific research.

"...from the Kyoto Protocol until today the developed countries' emissions rose by 12.8% ... and 55% of that volume corresponds to the United States."

"The average annual oil consumption is 25 barrels for an American, 11 barrels for a European, less than 2 barrels for a Chinese and less than 1 barrel for a Latin American or Caribbean citizen."

"Thirty countries, including those of the European Union, are consuming 80% of the fuel produced."

The fact is that the developed countries signatories of the Kyoto Protocol increased their emissions dramatically. Now, they want to replace the adopted bases of the emissions from 1990 with those of 2005. This means that the United States, which is the main source of emissions, would be reducing its emissions of 25 years ago in only 3%. It is a shameful mockery of the world public opinion.

The Cuban foreign minister, speaking on behalf of a group of ALBA member countries, defended China, India, Brazil, South Africa and other important emerging-

see HUMANITY, p. 11



Demonstration in New York during the Copenhagen Summit.

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