

**F-35 sticker shock**

**See page 5**

Printed in Canada by union labour on recycled paper  118-M Publications Mail Agreement #40011632

JULY  
1-31,  
2010

VOL. 18  
#12

\$1.50

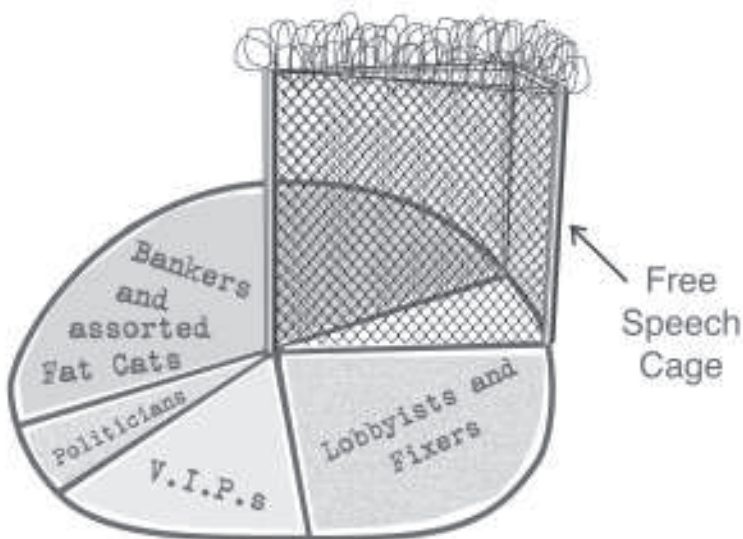
# people's **VOICE**

# From Athens to the G20...



# *make the bosses pay for the economic crisis*

The G-20 in Toronto  
Room for Everybody



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**Page 6:**

**Summits impose capitalist  
"austerity"**

**Greek workers reject  
anti-labour decree**

**No police provocateurs!**

**2**

## "Hertz hurts"

Unionised employees at Hertz car rentals in Vancouver have been walking the picket line for over four months, while the U.S.-owned chain reported profits of \$1.7 billion in the latest quarter.

## **INSIDE**

**7**

## Shame on Harper

Three Canadians who were kidnapped and abused by Israel on May 31 condemn the Harper government for staying silent about piracy and murder.

**12**

## Bloody Sunday

Nearly four decades after British troops slaughtered civil rights demonstrators in Northern Ireland, the lies about "Bloody Sunday" have been exposed and the government has apologised.

# School's out, but B.C. Liberals still in trouble

By Kimball Cariou

Nearly a year after the devastating news of cuts to provincial funding for a wide range of public services in B.C., the first round of the fightback is drawing to a close. But the battle over British Columbia's fiscal and social priorities is entering a new stage with the implementation of the HST on July 1.

The Campbell government is stepping up its defence of the "hated sales tax," but the Liberals are also facing new setbacks. Petitions containing the names of nearly 700,000 citizens will be turned in by the end of June, demanding that the government rescind the HST or hold a referendum on the controversial issue.

The overwhelming public pressure finally got to Liberal MLA Blair Lekstrom, who resigned as Campbell's energy minister in June rather than continue defending the imposition of the HST. It remains to be seen if other Liberals will follow suit, but another half-dozen defections would deprive Campbell of his majority in the Legislature.

The Premier is looking at two difficult political options: use his majority to reject the HST petition, or agree to hold a referendum. The first would solidify the Liberal image as dictatorial and arrogant, probably reducing their standing in the polls even further. The second would likely result in a big vote against the HST, blowing a hole in Campbell's third term pro-business agenda.

Meanwhile, the government has bought some time to ponder another critical issue, but not much. The end of the school year may bring a temporary lull in the fierce debates over education

underfunding across the province. The only school board which has not adopted a balanced budget is Vancouver, which is set to hold a final vote on June 23.

In virtually every case, the "balanced" budgets have included major reductions in staff and programs, school closures, and other negative impacts on public education. The controversies will hit the front pages again when classes resume in September, and schools feel the full brunt of the cutbacks.

Much of the media attention in this struggle has focused on Vancouver, home of "The Board that Roared," to quote a Globe and Mail headline. The Vision/COPE majority on the VSB has been the most vocal in B.C., rallying students, staff and parents to demand full funding for costs downloaded by the province. About 150 of the Vancouver district's 3,000 staff will be laid off as a result of the funding shortfalls.

Earlier this spring, there was a lively discussion around the VSB's

options, which included refusing to adopt a "compliance" budget. That option, however, was not favoured by groups which back the board's campaign on provincial funding. Among the teacher unions, Parent Advisory Committees, and groups which mobilize around inner city schools, Aboriginal education, and special needs students, an overwhelming consensus developed that the VSB trustees should not set themselves up to be fired by Education Minister Margaret MacDiarmid. This view is based on a realization that as the fight for the future of public education in British Columbia continues to heat up, the most outspoken trustees in the province need to be in the thick of it next year.

A new poll proves that west coast teachers are deeply concerned about the government's policies. Commissioned by the BC Teachers' Federation, the survey finds that 79% of teachers believe "the provincial government is on the wrong track when it comes to

its education policies and funding decisions."

Teachers identified underfunding and program cuts as their top concerns, followed closely by class size and support for children with special needs. The survey polled 1,000 teachers between April 26 and May 1. More than 70% of teachers say teaching and learning conditions have worsened since the government stripped their collective agreements several years ago, and 97% believe it is time to put class-size and class-composition language back into collective agreements.

While the Premier and MacDiarmid tried to pit Vancouver trustees against the rest of the province, the hard facts from other school districts prove that Vancouver's problems are not an isolated case.

Chak Au with the Richmond School District told a recent news conference that school boards province-wide are struggling with \$250 million in shortfalls. "It cannot be the case that all 60 school boards in the province are lacking in capacity in managing their money," he pointed out.

Parents in rural areas are making the same point. People in School District 10 (Arrow Lakes) are

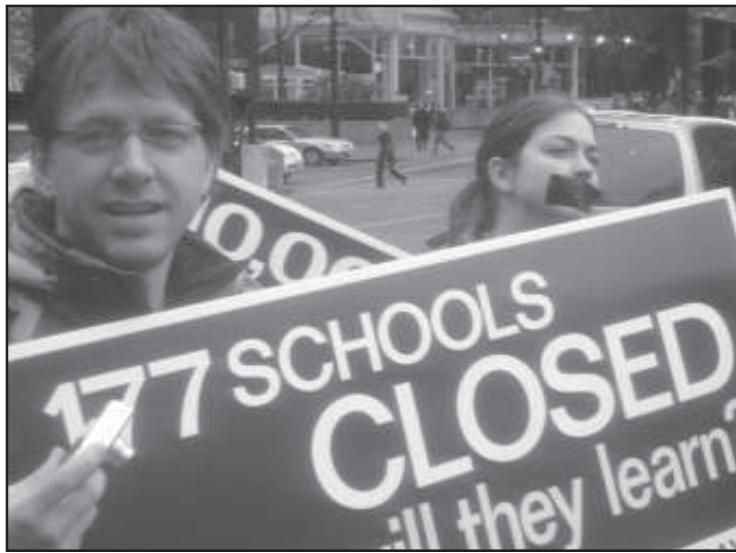
waging a letter writing campaign to criticise the government's inadequate funding.

"It's time the government fully funded public education," says a sample letter from District 10. "Stop forcing Boards of Education to make cuts to programs and services to pay teacher wages and benefits (approximately 85%) out of the piece of pie (approx. 15%) allocated for books, paper, heat, light, bussing, field trips etc. etc... Why should the children of SD #10 have to worry each year that their community school may be closed, or the band program may be cut, or that they may have to take a provincially examinable course by correspondence because we just can't afford a teacher to teach the class?"

In School District No. 46 (Powell River), the 2010/11 budget cuts \$2 million in teacher, staff and administrator positions.

"We continue to not be able to afford the kind of supports that I think we'd like to have in our schools," Powell River board chair Silas White said at the June 4 meeting which adopted the budget. Staffing cuts will amount to between four and six per cent reductions of staff.

School's out for summer, but the Campbell government's headaches will not disappear. •



## CUPE, AFN lay groundwork for closer cooperation

In an historic meeting, leaders of the Canadian Union of Public Employees and Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Grand Chief Shawn Atleo have pledged to work together in practical ways to get things done to improve social and economic conditions for First Nations people.

Atleo met recently with CUPE's National Executive board - the first time a formal meeting between the two groups has taken place. "We really value our relationship with you," Atleo said. "We want to strengthen and explore how we can deepen it."

He sought CUPE's support for efforts to boost post-secondary and skills training opportunities for First Nations youth, and to press the

Harper government to ratify the UN charter on the rights of indigenous people. Canada and the U.S are the only two states in the world that have refused to do so.

Meanwhile CUPE president Paul Moist says the union is proud to work with the AFN and Aboriginal groups on a range of issues including safe drinking water, employment opportunities and the attempted closure of Saskatchewan's First Nations University. Moist outlined many ways that CUPE is opening the doors to the union to involve an increasing number of Aboriginal members.

"We feel privileged to be able to meet with you and develop our relationship," Moist told Atleo. •

**PV Fund Drive: \$50,000 in 2010**  
**\$36,800 raised: 73.6%**

PV business manager Sam Hammond is spending some well-earned vacation time with his family in Hamilton as this issue goes to press, so our Fund Drive report will be brief. The Drive has now reached 73.6%, with \$36,800 turned in towards our goal of \$50,000. As reported last issue, Saskatchewan was the first province to meet its target. Ontario is not far behind, with \$19,467 raised, or 90.1% of their target of \$21,600. British Columbia has

moved into third place (\$12,113, or 60.5% of their \$20,000 goal), just head of Quebec's 60% and Manitoba at 56%.

Some of our most important fundraisers are planned for this summer. Toronto-area readers should mark Saturday, July 3, 2-5 pm (rain or shine) on your calendars. That's the annual People's Voice BBQ hosted by the Davenport Club, at 58 Albany Ave. (one block east of Bathurst, north of Bloor). This feast is just \$20 for

"all you can eat", and kids under 12 get in free. Please RSVP to let them know how many people to expect. You can email to omayasim@sympatico.ca, or call 416-536-6771.

Our biggest fundraiser of the Drive will be the annual Walk-A-Thon organized by the Lower Fraser Club CPC. This year's event will be on Sunday, August 1, at Bear Creek Park in Surrey. The Walk starts at 11 am, followed at 1 pm with a delicious South Asian lunch and a cultural program. There will also be a literature display. Call Harjit Daudharia for details, at 604-543-7179.

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

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2-5 pm (rain or shine)

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Children under 12 - free!

**58 Albany Ave., Toronto**  
(one block east of Bathurst, north of Bloor)

Please RSVP as soon as you can:  
omayasim@sympatico.ca (416)536-6771



# Community support strong for MP Libby Davies

## PV Vancouver Bureau

In response to ferocious attacks by opponents of Palestinian rights, including within her own party, NDP MP Libby Davies is also receiving an outpouring of public support. Backing for Davies is especially strong in her riding of Vancouver East, where she was greeted warmly by voters at the annual "Car Free Day" festival, held June 20 along Commercial Drive.

The hate campaign erupted after an interview was posted on YouTube, in which Davies dated the occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel from 1948. As Palestinian-Canadians and many others have noted, this date is accurate, since it refers to the Naqba, the terror campaign which saw the newly-formed state of Israel destroy dozens of Arab villages and drive hundreds of thousands of Palestinians out of the region.

However, the pro-Zionist forces which are pushing to criminalize any criticism of Israel jumped on the interview, making absurd claims that Davies is anti-



The 2009 delegation to Gaza consisted of Liberal MP Borys Wrzesnewskyj (left), Bloc Quebecois MP Richard Nadeau (wearing hat), and NDP MP Libby Davies (right).

Jewish. PM Stephen Harper joined in to demand the MP's resignation, and pro-Zionist politicians including NDP MP Thomas Mulcair called on Jack Layton to remove Davies as the party's deputy leader.

Davies apologized for her

reference to 1948, in a letter calling this "a serious and completely inadvertent error" and affirming her support for the NDP's two-state solution.

"I reject the allegation that I hate Israel, and I reject the assertion that I said that Israel is illegitimate or an abomination. Neither are true," said Davies.

The interview, staged by a supporter of Israel hoping to ambush Davies, took place at a rally in Vancouver against Israel's murderous May 31 attack on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla. Davies has been one of the few elected politicians in English-speaking Canada with the courage to attend public events in solidarity with the Palestinian people. She was one of three MPs who visited Gaza last December; that delegation reported on the humanitarian crisis created by the Israeli blockade and the war against Gaza waged by Israel in December 2008-January 2009.

In the days following the interview, Davies has been the target of an astonishing volume of vile hate messages, often extremely personal in nature. She has been condemned by critics for supposedly being a corrupt or incompetent MP, for being a "dupe" of Hamas, and even for being "a Jew-hater". These absurd charges, mostly by unnamed people, are rejected by Vancouver East residents, who re-elected her in 2008 with 54% of the vote, three times as many as her closest challenger.

Davies is recognized universally in this riding, where she began her activist life during the 1970s as an anti-poverty organizer. She was elected to Vancouver city council in 1982 as a 29-year-old candidate for the Committee of Progressive Electors, and again in 1984, 1986, 1988 and 1990. Her only defeat came in 1993, as COPE's candidate for mayor. She won election to Parliament in 1997, holding the seat for the NDP with increasing victory margins, reflecting her unwavering support for the poor and working people, solid constituency work, and her dedication to human rights. The idea that her support for the Palestinian people indicates "anti-semitism" is seen here as a shameless lie, considering her long and well-known political friendships with a wide range of Jewish progressives in Vancouver.

These lies have also been

rejected by a growing list of organizations, including Palestine solidarity groups based in the Jewish community itself. The Vancouver and District Labour Council overwhelmingly adopted a resolution condemning the Gaza blockade at its June 15 meeting, and COPE members gave Davies a rousing show of appreciation at the party's June 21 annual BBQ fundraiser.

While Jack Layton has so far not caved in to demands that he fire Davies as deputy leader, many were appalled when the NDP leader grovelled by sending a formal apology for her statements to the Israeli ambassador to Canada. Layton's reluctance to challenge the pro-US and pro-Israel foreign policy of the Harper Tories is causing enormous unease within the NDP

rank and file, the anti-war movements, and sections of NDP supporters across Canada.

Rifts within the NDP are also showing over other issues, such as the Layton leadership's rejection of public ownership or higher corporate taxes as important tools to address the needs of the working class during the economic crisis.

There are suspicions that Layton may engineer Davies' removal before the next election, using some other pretext. Such a move could further erode the NDP's electoral support among progressive movements. On the other hand, Layton's attempts to appease right-wing critics may open the door to higher votes for progressive candidates, especially for the Communist Party of Canada, whenever the next federal election takes place. ●

## Harper government neglects worker safety, warns PSAC

### PSAC/CALM

The Public Service Alliance of Canada is demanding that the Harper government take action to prevent workplace injuries and fatalities, after a damning report revealed it has been negligent in protecting workers under its jurisdiction.

According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the federal government is putting workers at risk by under funding and under staffing federal safety inspections. The federal government is responsible for protecting its own workers, those at Crown corporations such as Canada Post, as well as workers in the airline and trucking industries.

The rate of disabling injuries in federally regulated workplaces increased by five per cent between 2002 and 2007, while the provinces have managed to cut their disabling workplace injuries by an average of 25 per cent over the same time frame.

During this period, the government made cuts to the number of federal workplace inspectors or labour affairs officers who work for Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. As the "Success is No Accident"

report reveals, 125 people are responsible for protecting more than a million workers.

At particular risk are the workers at Canada Post, where federal inspectors have effectively been stonewalled. In addition, there are currently no federal workplace inspections taking place on First Nations reservations.

CCPA's report recommends that the federal government immediately hire more labour affairs officers and ensure they are properly compensated. Labour affairs officers are the worst paid of any federal safety inspectors, making it difficult to recruit and retain them.

PSAC maintains that the cuts to the labour affairs officers follow a general trend by the federal government, away from government regulation and toward self-inspection by industry.

"We saw a similar pattern at play with the reductions in federal meat inspectors," said Patty Ducharme of PSAC. "Tragically, this led to the death of 22 people who ate meat contaminated with listeriosis. How many more deaths will it take for this government to wake up?"

Visit [policyalternatives.ca](http://policyalternatives.ca), to download a full copy of the CCPA's report, *Success is No Accident*. ●

## Car rental workers say "Hertz Hurts!"

### By Stephen Von Sychowski

On February 2, unionized workers at Hertz Car Rentals in Vancouver and at YVR airport began a legal strike which is now over four months long. At issue are the attempts of the U.S.-based company to rob employees of job security, by reserving the right to lay off full time workers and return them to work as part timers, without the benefits they have fought for and won over the course of more than three decades.

Claims by Hertz about the necessity to make changes out of financial necessity simply don't wash. Hertz is the largest car rental company in the world. They hold an extraordinarily lucrative contract with the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia to provide vehicles to their customers, which include all drivers in BC. They recently tabled an offer to purchase competitor Dollar-Thrifty for the tidy sum of \$1.17 billion. Furthermore their latest earnings were extremely positive - \$1.7 billion revenue during the most recent financial quarter.

No, this isn't about a company struggling to make a meager profit against greedy workers. Quite the opposite. Hertz workers, members of COPE Local 378, are merely fighting to keep the jobs they already have, in many cases for more than 20 years, with their current hours and benefits. Hertz has the dough, they just don't want to share it with the same hard working people who provided them with the very profits they now greedily horde. Hertz workers are picketing at YVR and at the company's downtown location, asking customers not to rent with Hertz until the dispute is resolved.

A small group of just over 50 workers striking for their jobs and their livelihood may sound like small potatoes in the grand scheme of things. Perhaps, but a lot more is at stake in this strike. That's because while Hertz has got away with their anti-worker campaign in non-union shops, they are now up against union workers in an airport of union-certified car rental agencies. The precedent set by this strike may affect the course of collective bargaining between the unions (COPE and the Teamsters) and employers (Avis, Dollar-Thrifty, National-Alamo, Budget) in the years to come.

The nasty anti-union campaign launched by Hertz is indicative of a broader trend of employers, both organized and un-organized, to drive down wages and benefits in order to maximize profits and make working people pay for the current global capitalist economic crisis. Whether it's a car rental clerk, a paramedic, a grocery store teller, or a steelworker, we should not be fooled into thinking that what we are up against is fundamentally different, separate, or apart. Let's all support the fight for job security at Hertz, not just for them, but for us all. ●





# EDITORIALS

## Solidarity with José Figueroa

New examples emerge regularly exposing the arbitrary, anti-human flaws in Canada's immigration and refugee system. Consider the case of José Figueroa, a father of three who lives in Langley, B.C. In May, the Immigration and Refugee Board ordered his deportation back to El Salvador, on the grounds that he had been involved with a "terrorist" organization in his youth.

The organization is the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, which ultimately achieved a negotiated end to one of Central America's most bitter armed conflicts. The "terrorists" in El Salvador were the assassins of Archbishop Oscar Romero, and the death squads and government troops with the blood of some 70,000 victims on their hands. The Reagan administration was deeply involved in the genocidal crimes committed in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala during those terrible years. The FMLN, on the other hand, won wide support among the people, and its candidates were elected to many local government positions from the time of the first post-war elections. Today the country is led by President Mauricio Funes, the FMLN candidate elected in 2008.

José Figueroa arrived in Canada in 1997 and applied for refugee status, openly stating his record as an FMLN supporter. Now, 13 years later, Immigration Review Board member Otto Nupponen wants him deported, even though the FMLN is not on any list of terrorist groups. Figueroa has filed for a judicial review of this appalling decision, and deserves full support.

Leaving it up to the Canadian government or bureaucrats to decide which groups or individuals are "terrorists" is a recipe for disaster. Thousands of Salvadorans living peacefully in Canada could face serious consequences if this IRB member's bizarre beliefs become accepted as grounds for deportation. The federal government must be told: hands off José Figueroa!

## The real story of the RCMP

The harsh criticisms of the RCMP by Justice Thomas Braidwood in the taser killing of Robert Dziekanski are welcome to all those who oppose police brutality and abuse of power.

But this case goes far deeper than the "shameful conduct of a few officers." The RCMP was formed to impose the domination of the emerging Canadian state on the Aboriginal peoples. In fact, the original North West Mounted Police was modelled on the Royal Irish Constabulary, which played a similar role during the centuries-long British occupation of Ireland.

Over the past 137 years, the RCMP has been known for three key features, starting with its racist approach. Despite the mythology that the Mounties "saved the Indians" from U.S. whiskey traders, the RCMP has always enforced the ironclad rule of the Canadian state that Aboriginal peoples must be denied their inherent rights, a role which requires denial of their status as equals within Canada. Second, the RCMP has been a military instrument to protect scabs and break strikes, from the Winnipeg General Strike to the Regina Riot and hundreds of other labour disputes. Third, for over a century the RCMP has been a tool to attack the democratic and revolutionary forces in Canada (especially the Communist Party) through infiltration, spying, provocations, forgeries, theft, barn-burnings, and many other illegal actions.

In short, the role of the RCMP has always been to impose the will of the ruling class against Aboriginal peoples, workers, radicals, and all those who could challenge the established capitalist order. The fact that RCMP officers often engage in violent acts against innocent people is not because a few stray from the rule book; it is because they enjoy virtually complete impunity for their actions. The solution is not "reform". The RCMP must be dissolved and replaced by a police organization which is under full civilian control and oversight.

## PEOPLE'S VOICE

ISSN number 1198-8657 Published by New Labour Press Ltd.  
Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement #40011632

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Circulation Dept.,  
People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1  
Tel: 604.255.2041 Email: pvoice@telus.net

### Volunteers and contributors for this issue:

Dave Arland, Ed Bil, Wally Brooker, Miguel Figueroa, Sam Hammond, Mike Oosting, Tim Pelzer, B. Prasant, Stephen Von Sychowski, and our mailers in Vancouver & Toronto.

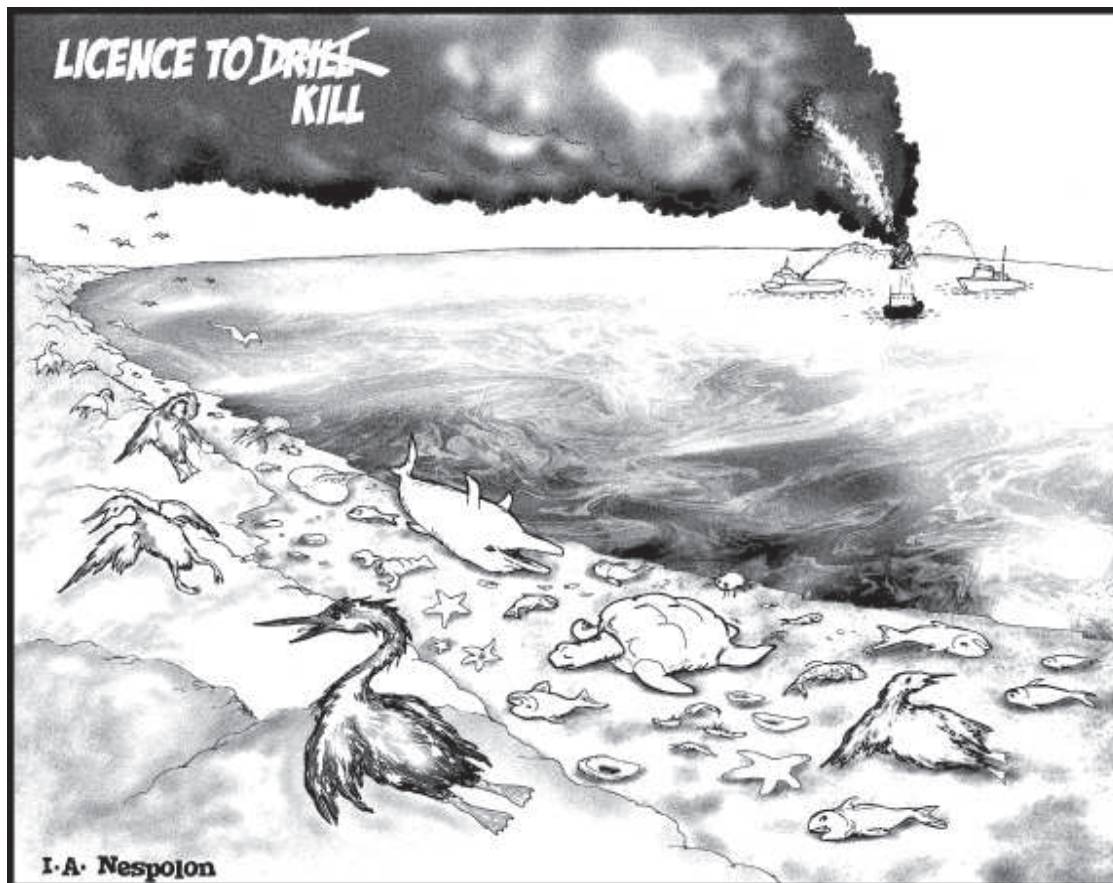
Editor: Kimball Cariou Business Manager: Sam Hammond

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## LETTERS

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## SPEAKING FRANKLY

## Conservatives deny full access to Afghan torture documents

By Michael Oosting

After years of persistent lobbying, the push to publicize documents pertaining to the role of Canadian forces in turning over Afghan detainees to face torture has been dealt another blow. The largest parties, the Conservatives, the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois, have signed an agreement to review the reports the Conservatives claim to be relevant to the issue - without the NDP.

During the debate over an agreement to review the issue collectively, the NDP called for all documents to be made public, and to establish a public inquiry into the issue. This demand was widely supported by the anti-war movement and civil liberties groups.

In response, the Conservatives stated that though they could share some of the papers, not all documents could be made public in the interest of "national security". Ignatieff's Liberals and Duceppe's Bloc

jumped on this half-measure to maintain the farce that their respective parties were a leading force on the issue. The Liberals even called the NDP's concerns "horsefeathers".

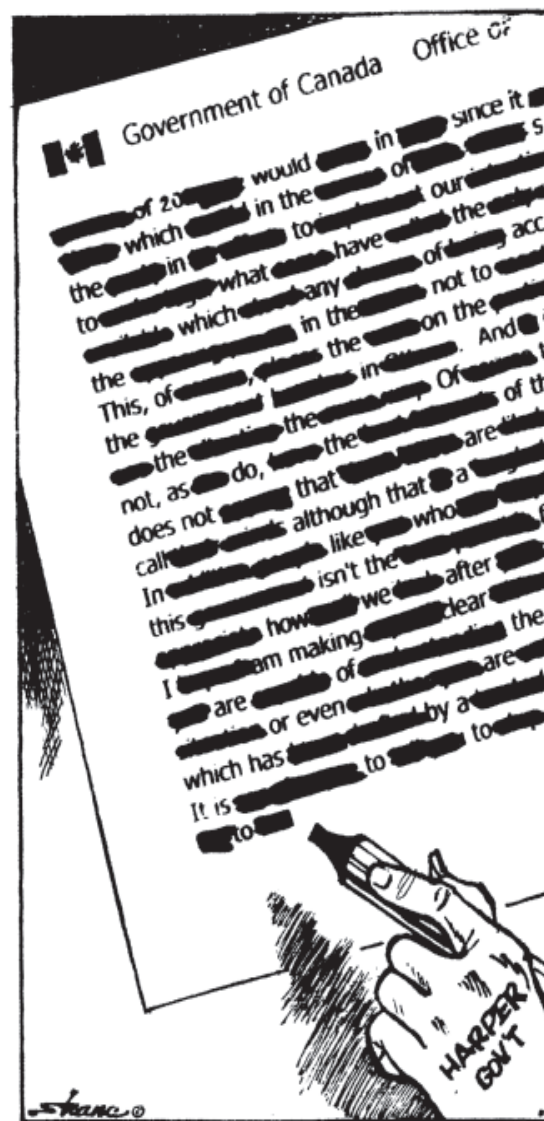
The current agreement between the Conservatives, the Liberals and the Bloc bars MPs from looking at confidential cabinet documents or papers protected for reasons of solicitor-client privilege. The six MPs represented on the committee are not permitted to record, copy, or take notes on the documents they view, nor share their contents in any way.

This comes only months after Harper effectively suspended parliamentary hearings on the detainee issue, stating that "that's not on the top of the radar of most Canadians." Though the Speaker of the House of Commons, Peter Milliken, eventually ordered Harper to release the documents, the Conservatives waited until six weeks after the deadline set by Milliken to create the current agreement.

The NDP accused the Conservatives of purposefully stalling and delaying negotiations, and called on Milliken to find that the agreement falls short of his April 27th ruling, which confirmed MPs' absolute right to unfettered access to all uncensored detainee documents. Milliken, however, has given his seal of approval to the deal.

Little noticed in the final terms is a clause which suspends the agreement whenever PM Harper dissolves Parliament. Renewal of the deal would require the agreement of all three opposition leaders. In other words, if Harper decides to call an election before Parliament reconvenes, absolutely nothing will have been gained.

Once again, the Harper Tories have ignored public opinion, plus a ruling by the Speaker, to protect their own partisan interests. The losers in this "agreement" are the people of Canada, who are kept in the dark on this vital matter, and the people of occupied Afghanistan. ●



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# Harper's fighter-jet price tag skyrockets

By Kimball Cariou

Rejecting the view of Canadians that the military budget should be reduced to tackle urgent domestic needs, the Harper Tory government now plans to spend \$9 billion on 65 new fighter-jets, plus another \$7 billion on "ancillary costs" such as future parts and maintenance. The total price tag has more than quadrupled since 2008, when the government first announced that it would purchase 80 "F-35 Joint Strike Fighters" from U.S. munitions giant Lockheed Martin for a total of \$3.8 billion.

This deal gives new meaning to the term "sticker shock." Just two years ago, the jets were priced at \$47.4 million each. Now the price has jumped to \$245 million at a time when the Harper Tories are slashing social program spending.

And the waste doesn't end there. The original plan by the Conservatives was to replace the Canadian Forces' current fleet of CF-18 fighter jets. Since then, \$2.6 billion has been spent to upgrade the CF-18s.

A Commons committee will investigate the purchase of a new fighter aircraft fleet, including the price tag and whether Canada actually needs these weapons. But the hearings into the largest military procurement in Canadian history won't take place for months, and the Harper government is moving quickly.

Eyebrows have already been raised over the news that there will be no other bids for the contract. In another apparent controversy, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is a single-engine aircraft, which may be a problem for a jet used to patrol the Canadian Arctic. The CF-18s have two engines, which many pilots consider an important safety feature.

A survey conducted in early March by Leger Marketing asked "With Canada's military role ending in Afghanistan next year, what should the focus be on the government's military spending?"

Almost 60% agreed with this answer: "Canada should take a peace dividend and cut back on military spending to focus on other more pressing social issues at home." Almost three-quarters of Quebec respondents backed this peace dividend option, compared to 44% of Albertans and 55% of those in Ontario.

Across the country, 28% of people wanted to "sustain or increase spending on the military because security in a post-9/11 world is of the highest priority." Another 15% of respondents did not give an opinion.

"The government has not done what most of Canada wants them to do, which is transfer that [military] funding to programs within our own borders," said Leger vice president Dave Scholz.

According to the Canadian

Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Canada First Defence Strategy, unveiled by the Harper government in 2008, promises that military spending will grow by an average of 0.6% in real terms (adjusted for inflation) and an average of 2.7% in nominal terms (not adjusted for inflation) per year from 2007-08 to 2027-28. Military spending would increase to about \$21.3 billion in 2009 dollars, or about \$31.3 billion in 2027 dollars, by 2027-28.

As the CCPA notes, the incremental costs of operations such as the Afghanistan war, currently more than \$1.5 billion per year, add to this baseline budget, meaning that final spending could be significantly higher.

The total spending over the 20-year life of this plan would likely be in the \$415-440 billion range (2009 dollars), or about \$13,000 per Canadian, warns the CCPA, which published a study of the issue last December. The stunning increase in the F-35 deal alone will boost that figure even higher.

If Canadian military budgets instead remained at the post-Cold War minimum level, the total spending over this period would be \$271 billion in 2009 dollars, a difference of \$145-170 billion.

Imagine what could be done with such an amount over 20 years! To give just a few examples, the public transportation systems of Canadian cities could be provided with



With its large payload capability, the F-35 can carry more weapons than the fighters it replaces. The F-35 (also known as the Lightning II) comes with a wide range of deadly armament: the GAU-22/A four-barrel 25mm cannon (400 rounds); up to two air-to-air missiles and two air-to-air or air-to-ground weapons; two 1,000 lb. bombs; a maximum of eight "Small Diameter Bombs"; Brimstone anti-armor missiles; and cluster bombs. At the expense of being more detectable by radar, many more missiles, bombs and fuel tanks can be attached on four wing pylons and two near wingtip positions. Solid-state lasers are being developed as optional weapons for the F-35. (Source: Wikipedia)

thousands of fuel-efficient new buses for just \$5 billion. The cancelled national child-care program could receive \$5 billion annually, totalling \$100 billion. This would leave at least another \$50 billion to build about 250,000 new low-income, social and co-operative housing units. These initiatives would cut create jobs, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce provincial government spending on health and policing linked to the costs of massive street

homelessness.

But the Harper Tories deny the environmental crisis, reject the concept of public child care, and refuse to fund social housing.

In effect, Canada is ruled by a minority regime which places top priority on war-making, at the expense of the people. Canadians should send the message to all parties in Parliament that the shocking fighter-jet purchase plan is a scandal which must be scrapped immediately. ●

# Oil: greed and profit in the Gulf

By Rob Gowland, *The Guardian* (weekly paper of the Communist Party of Australia), June 16, 2010

On that curious show *The View* the other day the panel were venting their collective spleen on the CEO of BP, who had been appearing in TV commercials reassuring Americans that BP would fix the oil spill that was threatening to ruin the Gulf of Mexico and the people who lived there.

Whoopi Goldberg and her fellow panellists clearly did not trust BP's boss one inch. "Slimy" was the word they used to describe him.

BP obviously hopes its efforts to plug the oil leak and clean up the environmental damage, less than half-measures though they are, will be enough to prevent any significant action against it by US authorities. Meanwhile it goes on making money from its other US and US-linked enterprises.

Despite BP executives' oft-repeated assertions before the media and Congressional committees that "we will pay all legitimate claims" (there's an important caveat if I ever saw one), the fact is that BP's liability for economic damages - loss of income by tourist businesses, damage to the fishing industry, etc. - is presently capped at a trifling US\$75 million.

For the record: BP posted a first-quarter profit of US\$6 billion just one week after the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded. Horizon and BP between them have a long history of oil spills and other

disasters. BP appears to operate on the well-known capitalist principle that it is cheaper to pay any fines than to spend money on safe working methods.

According to the US group Public Citizen, BP has paid US\$550 million in fines, including the two largest fines in the history of the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration. As *Prensa Latina* notes, "BP seems to particularly enjoy violating the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts."

And why not? As *Prensa Latina* also notes, MMS, the US Minerals Management Service, "the agency within the Interior Department that oversees offshore drilling, routinely accepted gifts from oil companies and even considered itself a part of the oil industry, rather than part of a governmental regulatory agency".

With MMS inspectors being flown around in oil company executive jets, it is hardly surprising that Deepwater Horizon was given a regulatory exclusion by MMS, is it? Or that, of 27 new drilling sites, MMS has granted regulatory exemptions to 26? (Boy that 27th must have been a shocker to get knocked back - or perhaps they skimmed on the bribe they were prepared to pay.)

Meanwhile, BP is going around to survivors and others eligible for compensation and getting them to sign away their right to sue, presumably on promises of uncontested compensation from BP (and of course an oil company would never renege on a promise, now would it?).

BP initially played down the scope of the disaster, claiming only

a "few thousand" barrels of oil were spilling into the Gulf every day. In fact it was closer to sixty thousand barrels a day (that's more than 2.5 million gallons).

It has been obvious for years that off-shore oil wells have tremendous potential for causing severe environmental damage. Hence the sense of shock on the part of some US legislators when they discovered that BP had no real clean-up plan.

One of the things that so peeved the panellists on *The View* was the fact that BP's most noticeable response to the ramifications of

the Deepwater Horizon disaster was to run a series of new TV commercials. For the oil company, the explosion and consequent oil leak was clearly a PR problem for which the answer was a TV commercial.

But for most of the US Congress, much of the US media and also much of the US public, this is far more than a mere PR problem.

Cuban journalist Elsy Fors Garzon reports that even after BP eventually caps the damaged oil well, "experts say the best cleanup scenario is to recover twenty percent of the spilled oil.

"Millions of gallons of oil will remain in the ocean, ravaging the underwater ecosystem, and 100 miles of Louisiana coastline will never be the same." Not to mention the adverse environmental effects of the chemical "dispersants" that have been indiscriminately sprayed all over the oil-affected waters.

"The explosion has released tremendous amounts of methane from deep in the ocean, and research shows that methane, when mixed with air, is the most powerful greenhouse gas - 26 times worse than carbon dioxide," writes Elsy Fors Garzon.

"Here's the reality of the matter - for as long as off-shore drilling is legal, oil spills will happen. Coastlines will be decimated, oceans destroyed, economies ruined, lives lost.

"Oil companies have little to no incentive to prevent such disasters from happening, and they use their money to buy government regulators' integrity."

And it's no use appealing to the commonsense or humanity of oil company bosses. Like the corporate heads of all giant capitalist enterprises, if they had any humanity they would never rise to the top of such ruthless corporate entities in the first place.

For your capitalist, the lure of profit is very strong. Oil companies, however, make huge profits, and they are an irresistible lure. As the rate of profit climbs, the capitalist is more and more willing to ignore or sacrifice moral principles, family, even the safety of the planet itself.

And that is a fact that we should never forget. ●



British Petroleum hates to be reminded of this ad campaign from 1999. The Deepwater Horizon explosion at a drilling site in the Gulf of Mexico killed 11 platform workers, causing the largest offshore spill in history. An environmental disaster looms, with marine and wildlife habitats already impacted extensively. The spill has also damaged the region's fishing and tourism industries.





# Fight for a Real Alternative to the new Capitalist "Consensus"

Issued by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, June 2010

On the eve of the G8/G20 meetings, mass labour and democratic mobilizations are building in Southern Ontario and across Canada to protest this wasteful, security-obsessed extravaganza. The Communist Party of Canada salutes this resistance and takes its rightful place alongside workers, students, women, Aboriginal peoples and social activists in denouncing these summits which aim to hammer out a strategic line among the ruling imperialist states and international finance capital on how best to advance their shared interests, and then present their agenda as a fait accompli to the world's peoples.

This set of G-summits is particularly important because global capitalism continues to be mired in a profound economic and structural crisis, notwithstanding the soothing media reports that the 'worst is behind us' and that recovery is well under way. Saving capitalism and restoring profit margins are the main concerns of these 'leaders', rather than solving the burning problems afflicting the world today. That is why issues like climate change, the world food crisis, ending wars of occupation and rampaging military spending, and the worsening problem of "under-development", especially

in Africa, have all be swept off the agenda of the G8/G20 meetings.

Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney admitted as much this June when he declared that the Summits must focus attention on the continuing crisis, especially in Europe, which has had a serious "impact on financial conditions ... [and] it's not over." He then parroted the World Bank which earlier raised the possibility of a "second recession affecting most of the industrialized world if governments don't deal successfully with the unfolding European debt crisis."

In fact, the leading imperialist countries, including Canada, want to use the Summits to showcase their determination to impose further social and economic austerity on all states and peoples, as the only viable solution to overcome the crisis. But this is a false 'international consensus' - one that serves the interests of finance capital, but which consigns the vast majority of the world's working class and oppressed peoples to even more hardship and suffering.

In Europe, the Austerity agenda pushed by the European Union brass and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is already having a devastating effect, especially on public sector workers, youth, and pensioners. Minimum wages are being slashed, social programs cut, and the retirement age extended for workers.

But this savage attack is being met by heroic resistance across the European continent, especially in Greece and Portugal where the left, Communist-led unions and popular movements are mounting escalating general strikes and other forms of mass resistance to fightback against this anti-social onslaught of Big Capital and its governments.

In Canada, we need to replicate the kind of militancy building in Europe, Latin America and elsewhere around the world. The right-wing Harper government and their pro-corporate provincial counterparts (both Conservative and Liberal) are also moving to deepen the assault on workers' conditions, social programs, and democratic and equity rights. And they will succeed in pushing through these reactionary

'reforms', unless the labour and people's forces move quickly to mount a militant, coordinated, Canada-wide counter-attack.

This is such a progressive alternative to this reactionary, pro-capitalist 'solution', but it must go beyond, palliative demands to soften the impact. It must include sweeping measures which challenge the dominance of monopoly capital, such as the nationalization of the banks, the big energy monopolies, and other key sectors of our economy. These steps need to be combined with social measures like expanding access to healthcare, public and post-secondary education, raising the minimum wage to \$16/hour, reducing the workweek with no loss in take-home pay, and improving public pensions. And with sweeping tax reform which

would shift the burden from working people onto the corporations and the wealthy, and with an immediate withdrawal from the disastrous war of occupation in Afghanistan, along with a 50% cut in military spending which would save another \$10 billion every year.

As we state in our May Day 2010 statement, "the big monopolies and banks want to make working people pay for the economic recovery through lower wages, higher unemployment, and huge cuts in social spending. We say: those who reap billions in profits must pay! Unite and fight for a fundamentally new direction, placing the needs of working people and our environment before corporate greed, [and for policies] based on peace and disarmament!" ●

## New attack against Greek workers must not pass!

The All-Workers' Militant Front (PAME) of Greece, the section of the labour movement which has sparked massive resistance against the anti-people measures imposed by the country's PASOK (social democratic) government, has called on workers to "rise up and to go on strike". Another general strike backed by PAME was set for June 29.

A June 20 statement from PAME said, "with the Presidential Decree promulgated by the ministry of Labour on June 16, the government creates the most barbarous jungle in working relations. It seeks to deliver a decisive blow against workers' rights. It implements the respective regulations of the memorandum that were promoted by the government, the EU and the IMF.

"According to these measures: \* Collective labour agreements are abolished.

\* Redundancy payments are reduced by 50%.

\* Young people up to 21 years will receive 80% of the corresponding collective agreement or the National Collective Labour Agreement.

\* Young people between 21 and 25 years will receive the 85% of the minimum wages.

\* The current minimum wage according to the collective labour agreement (740 euro) falls to 592 euro gross which means that a young employee will earn 470 euros net and a day wage of 21 euro! \* The regulations for trainees entail two-year cuts of 500 euros on their already low wages.

\* Mass dismissals are promoted more decisively by law, as the current redundancy threshold (2% per month), which applies for enterprises employing more than 200 employees, increases to 5% and applies for enterprises employing more than 150 employees, while in enterprises with less than 20 employees it does not exist at all.

"At the same time, the government, the EU and the IMF demolish the rights of the people to social security and pensions,

replacing them by an allowance and forcing the people to work after the age of 65. In addition, they cut and commercialise healthcare."

The Greek Communist Party responded to these measures at a

hungry people.

"The Presidential Decree on the working relations demonstrates that the government and its allies are literally unhesitating. They are the gravediggers of peoples' remaining gains.... People are condemned to live and work from the age of 15 till their old age for a single purpose: to feed the capitalist Minotaur. The measures for the working relations and the social security system they promote condemn the working people to work for a minimum wage, pension and healthcare...

"The working people and their children are condemned to a nightmarish insecurity, to a lifelong hard struggle for survival.

"Workers need to realise the depth and ferocity of the offensive against their class. The government, LAOS that strongly supports it, ND that consents [LAOS and ND are the main right-wing parties], aim to serve the interests and needs of big capital. Their goal is to make workers pay for the consequences of the capitalist crisis, for which they bear no responsibility, and to ensure the future high profits and the strengthening of the Greek capitalists. They abolish the remaining gains of the workers in order to breathe life into the terminally ill capitalist mode of production. Capitalism is obsolete, rotten and parasitic. It cannot overcome its inherent contradictions, and therefore becomes more aggressive towards the working class, the self-employed, small and medium entrepreneurs...

"KKE calls upon the working class, youth, women, pensioners and the poor peasants to rally their forces in a united decisive battle. We must prevent these measures and overthrow the anti-people policy and its carriers. We must begin our own struggle so as to overthrow the power of monopolies. Stop deceiving us, capitalist development only leads to hardships and suffering, to wild exploitation of youth and to abandonment of the elderly." ●



press conference held by KKE General Secretary Aleka Pappariga, who stressed:

"The high public debt was not created by the employees and the people but by the high profitability, the huge state subsidies, the privileges and the tax breaks of the business groups. The business groups are the plunderers. Nowadays, they are the creditors of the Greek government. They participated in the elaboration of the grotesque anti-people memorandum. The Greek people must not recognise and respect neither the debt nor the memorandum.

"We ask the government and the Prime Minister personally what the tens of thousands of workers' families should do, when they will not be able to pay the bills, the tolls, the taxes, when they will not be able buy the necessary food for their families. What will the government do, will it send them all to prison?"

"The people must declare war to the war of the government of PASOK, the plutocracy, the EU and the IMF that is constantly intensified. The working people are transformed into armies of

## Ryan stands his ground

The President of the Ontario Federation of Labour said on June 17 that he stands by his call for assurance that police and other private security personnel contracted to provide security during the G20 summit will not use agents-provocateurs during the G20 protests, including the labour-led rally and march on June 26.

"These concerns are far from 'groundless,' as suggested by Toronto Police Association President Mike McCormack," said Sid Ryan, President of the OFL. "The fact is there have been numerous documented cases of police infiltration of demonstrations at protests around the world, including Canada."

"We are planning a peaceful, family-friendly demonstration. Our job would be much easier if we knew that we won't be dealing with agents-provocateurs as we saw during the Montebello protest against the Security and Prosperity Partnership," said Ryan. "We call on the Prime Minister of Canada to assure us that such tactics will not be used during the G20."

"I am very concerned that there could be political pressure from the federal Conservative government to use police to provoke a situation that will lead to arrests - purely to justify the enormous security costs of the G20 Summit," said Ryan. "And frankly, that should be a concern for the police union as well." ●



Visual proof: police provocateurs caught in the act at the Montebello Summit in 2007.



# Israeli blockade is "economic warfare"

## PV Vancouver Bureau

Recently released Israeli government documents describe the blockade of Gaza not as a security measure but as "economic warfare".

Israel imposed severe restrictions on Gaza in June 2007, after Hamas won elections the



Palestinian doctor speaks to media about devastating shortages of medical supplies.

previous year, claiming that the blockade aims to stem the flow of weapons to militants in Gaza. However, in response to a lawsuit by Gisha, an Israeli human rights group, the government explained the blockade as an exercise of the right of economic warfare.

"A country has the right to decide that it chooses not to engage in economic relations or to give economic assistance to the other party to the conflict, or that it wishes to operate using 'economic warfare,'" the government said.

The documents were released after the Israeli high court upheld a suit brought against the government by Gisha, the Legal Center for Freedom of Movement, seeking information about the blockade.

Sari Bashi, the director of Gisha, said the documents prove that Israel is imposing its blockade as collective punishment for the Palestinian population of Gaza.

The blockade includes a complex and ever-changing list of goods that are allowed in. Items such as cement or metal are barred because they can be used for military

purposes, Israeli officials claim.

According to figures published by Gisha in coordination with the United Nations, Israel allows in 25 percent of the goods it had permitted into Gaza before 2007. In the years prior to the closure, Israel allowed an average of 10,400 trucks to enter Gaza with goods each month; the figure is now about 2,500 trucks a month.

Israel also has limited the goods allowed to enter Gaza to 40 types of items, compared to approximately 4,000 types of goods prior to June 2007. The list was expanded slightly on June 9 to include soda, juice, jam, spices, shaving cream, potato chips, cookies and candy, said Palestinian liaison official Raed Fattouh, who coordinates the flow of goods into Gaza with Israel.

Maxwell Gaylard, the United Nations' humanitarian coordinator in the Palestinian territories, said the international community is seeking an "urgent and fundamental change" in Israel's policy regarding Gaza rather than a piecemeal approach.

"A modest expansion of the restrictive list of goods allowed into Gaza falls well short of what is

needed. We need a fundamental change and an opening of crossings for commercial goods," he said.

"They will send the first course. We are waiting for the main course," Palestinian Economy Minister Hassan Abu Libdeh said in Ramallah, specifying that

construction materials were the item that Gazans need most. Many Palestinians have been unable to build their homes in the wake of Operation Cast Lead, Israel's punishing offensive in the Gaza Strip in December 2008 and January 2009. ●



Toronto protester during the June 5 Global Day of Action against the Israeli attack on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla. (Photo: Ed Bil)

## "Shame on us for keeping silent"

### An Open Letter to Stephen Harper, by Kevin Neish, Farooq Burney and Rifat Audeh, June 14, 2010

We are writing to express our outrage and indignation over our government's despicable silence on what took place in the Mediterranean Sea on May 31, 2010. We are referring, of course, to the piracy, murder and kidnappings by Israel against the Turkish humanitarian aid ship in general, and the actions against the Canadians on the ship in particular.

In 2006, Israel launched a heinous war on Lebanon that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians. You, Mr. Harper, described

Israel's action as a "measured response", and this implicit green light and tacit approval from Canada to Israel to continue the rampage of death and destruction killed eight Canadians within a couple of days.

Following this, the cold-blooded Israeli murder of a Canadian peacekeeper and three of his colleagues at a UN station in Southern Lebanon resulted in your outrageous and absolutely despicable remark effectively blaming the victims and asking what they were doing there in the first place.

On May 31 stand in international waters, Israel attacked an unarmed humanitarian aid ship before the whole world, murdered nine civilians aboard and wounded

dozens, and kidnapped the rest and detained them illegally. We were on that ship along with many other internationals.

And this time around, what was the response of our government? Once again, Canada did not condemn Israel's barbaric actions and refused to demand our release, with Peter Kent incredibly stating "Canada doesn't believe a lot of



noise is required in this instance." It would be a gross understatement to say that we are appalled at the muted response of our government in general and with any politician who did not speak out against what took place.

Canada and Canadians are loved throughout the world for many reasons, including their willingness to stand for what is right, peacekeeping efforts and compassion for global citizens in suffering. So why is it that the government has participated in an inhumane siege on 1.5 million people that we were trying to break with this flotilla? Hundreds of innocent men, women and children have died in the past few years as a result of this crippling blockade and lack of access to necessary

medical care. Further, why has the government not called Israel out on this piracy and blatant violation of international law? Why didn't Ottawa summon the Israeli ambassador to express its outrage, or at the very least demand an explanation? Why didn't you rebuke Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu when he was meeting with you since you knew full well that the attack took place in international waters?

Finally, why, at the very least didn't the Canadian government demand our release and try to protect its citizens? Receiving a visit from embassy representatives falls far short of what we'd expect from our government. Is this the best that Canadians can hope for in the future? In cases such as this, silence equals complicity.

Our government's action - or rather inaction - is a disgrace. In assisting with the slow genocide of the Palestinian people in Gaza and falling silent before Israel's acts of piracy, murder and abduction, our government has not only tarnished the image of Canada and Canadians throughout the world, but has also shown its weakness and inability to stand up for those oppressed. Shame on us for keeping silent.

(Kevin Neish, Farooq Burney and Rifat Audeh were the three Canadians aboard the Mavi Marmara ship when it was attacked by the Israeli navy in international waters.) ●

## Israel's war crimes against Gaza

By Kimball Cariou

In lockstep with the Harper Conservative government's total support for the Israeli government, the Canadian corporate media consistently frames the blockade of Gaza as "necessary to foil terrorism."

This viewpoint ignores the reality that Israel's actions against the people of Gaza have long been exposed as war crimes.

Last year, Justice Richard Goldstone, the head of the UN Fact Finding Mission into the situation in Gaza, urged the international community to end Israel's impunity for violations of international law, both in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Following a three-month investigation, the four-person Mission concluded that serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law were committed by Israel during its military operations in Gaza from December 27, 2008 to January 18, 2009, and that Israel committed actions amounting to war crimes, and possibly crimes against humanity.

In the lead up to the military assault, the Mission said it found that Israel had imposed a blockade amounting to collective punishment and carried out a systematic policy of progressive isolation and deprivation of the Gaza Strip. During the Israeli military operation, code-named "Operation Cast Lead," more than 1,400 people were killed, including women and more than 340 children. Houses, factories, wells, schools, hospitals, police stations and other public buildings were destroyed.

The Goldstone report concluded that the military

operation was part of a continuing policy aimed at punishing the entire Gaza population, using deliberate and disproportionate force aimed at civilians. The Report stated that Israeli actions have deprived Palestinians in the Gaza Strip of their means of subsistence, employment, housing and water, denied their freedom of movement and their right to leave and enter their own country, and limited their rights to access a court of law and an effective remedy. These policies, it warned, could lead a competent court to find that the crime of persecution, a crime against humanity, has been committed.

"The Government of Israel has a duty to protect its citizens," Justice Goldstone told the UN Human Rights Council, but "That in no way justifies a policy of collective punishment of a people under effective occupation, destroying their means to live a dignified life and the trauma caused by the kind of military intervention the Israeli Government called Operation Cast Lead."

The Mission also found that Palestinian armed groups had committed war crimes, by firing rockets and mortars into Southern Israel. But the relatively few casualties inflicted by these attacks cannot justify the overwhelmingly greater deaths and damage created by the Israeli military attacks and the blockade.

The report also pointed out while Israel puts tremendous resources into protecting its Jewish citizens from the wildly-inaccurate rocket attacks, virtually no effort is made to protect Arab civilians within its borders. This unequal treatment, many observers have noted, is further proof of Israel's apartheid-style policies against the Palestinian people. ●





# GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

## Colombian coal miners killed

More than 70 Colombian miners were feared dead on June 18 after an explosion ripped through a coal mine in what could become one of the country's worst mining disasters. At least 18 bodies were pulled from the wreckage after the midnight gas explosion in northwestern Antioquia province. The death toll was expected to rise steadily as rescuers struggled against gas and debris to reach into the mine shift.

The blast at the underground San Fernando mine occurred far from the major operations run by companies such as Drummond and Glencore near the Caribbean coast of the world's No. 5 coal exporter, which has output of about 70 million tonnes a year.

Officials said there was little chance any miners would be pulled out alive. "We've recovered 18 bodies and the rescue is difficult because the mine is still leaking a lot of gas," rescue agency director Ivan Dario Viera told Reuters by telephone. "The operation could take four or five days minimum."

A new accumulation of gas temporarily halted attempts to reach miners trapped 2000m below the surface and rescue workers had only managed to work their way down 600m so far.

Five miners died in the same mine during a flood two years ago. Last year, a methane gas explosion in another Antioquia province coal mine killed eight workers. In 2007, 31 miners were killed in an explosion in Norte de Santander.

The San Fernando disaster could highlight mining safety regulations in a country where the industry ranges from large deposits operated by multinationals to hundreds of small, makeshift pits that produce coal for local markets. Most of Colombia's thermal coal exports are shipped from the ports on the Caribbean, making Europe, the United States and Latin America the most logical markets. The bulk of thermal coal exports go to Europe, where Colombian coal has been consumed for many years by power generators who prize this coal for its high energy and low sulphur content.

## ILO discusses domestic workers

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has taken a step toward workplace justice for millions of housekeepers, nannies and other domestic workers around the world. At the International Labor Conference, which ended on June 18 in Geneva, the ILO began the process to establish a first-ever international standard ("convention") to protect the rights of domestic workers.

If the convention is passed at the ILO's meeting in 2011, it would require governments that ratify it to ensure domestic workers are covered by fundamental rights and principles, which include the freedom to form unions, elimination of forced labor, abolition of child labor and the elimination of discrimination. Employers would be responsible for informing

workers of the agreed terms and conditions of work, preferably through a written contract. The terms would include the work to be performed, pay, normal hours of work, provisions of food and accommodation. It also would make clear that domestic workers could decide voluntarily whether to live in the employer's home and the terms should be negotiated. Workers should retain their travel and identity documents. They would be protected against all forms of abuse and harassment. Around the world, domestic workers are routinely victims of exploitation, from wage theft to verbal and sexual abuse.

## Greek unions call new strike

The European Union, IMF and European Central Bank have declared that Greece is "on track" with the sweeping anti-people measures which are being imposed in return for a three-year, 110-billion euro "rescue package."

"Today we had the first positive signs that Greece can get out of its difficult spot," Prime Minister George Papandreou said in Brussels after an EU summit, welcoming the findings. But his right-wing Socialist government faces growing opposition as the pain of the cuts mounts.

Greek unions have called a new general strike for June 29 in the latest show of anger against anti-working class measures. The strike, called by the main private and public sector unions, GSEE and ADEDY, which together have more than 1.2 million members, will be the fifth in Greece since the start of the year.

Public transport ground to a standstill in Athens on June 17 as workers walked out for five hours to protest the government's anti-working class policies. Bus, tram and trolley workers held a work stoppage to protest cuts to salaries and welfare benefits, while metro workers held their second consecutive 24-hour strike in support of 285 contract workers whose contracts are expiring and face losing their jobs.

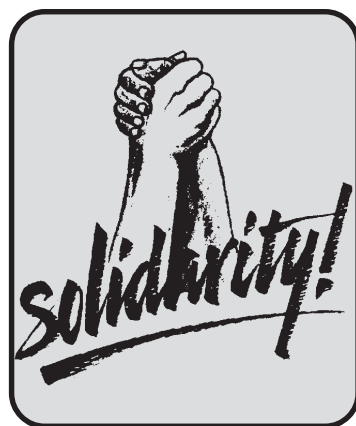
The militant PAME labour union also held a major protest rally in Athens on June 17, a day after the government unveiled a decree making it easier for companies to fire workers, and reducing compensation payments. The number of workers that companies employing more than 150 people can fire will be increased to 5 percent of the work force per month from the current 2 percent. Smaller companies will be able to lay off a maximum of six workers.

The draft decree also slashes the notice required to fire an employee from the current 24 months to four months. If workers are given full notice, employers will pay half the compensation required for sudden layoffs.

The GSEE, rejected the decree as "unacceptable and unconstitutional," and vowed to challenge it in court. "At a time when sackings and unemployment are on the rise, we need measures to discourage layoffs, not encourage them," a GSEE statement said.

## Italians strike over jobs and services

Italy's largest trade union held a one-day strike on June 11 against the government's economic and immigration policies, closing schools, hospitals, transport and other public services. The left-wing CGIL, which has six million members, more than half of whom are pensioners, called a nationwide



stoppage across all sectors, saying Silvio Berlusconi's administration was failing to respond to the economic crisis. Recent polls show that public confidence in Berlusconi continues to decline.

Hundreds of thousands of protesters gathered in central Rome at the start of a march through the capital, carrying anti-government banners and letting off balloons.

"We're fed up; we protest every day in every square in Italy, every day in front of ministries, in front of court houses," said one demonstrator. "Because every day something happens that's not good. So we deserve respect as Italian citizens and that's what we ask for."

## General strike for Sept. 29 in Spain

Spain's trade union movement plans to hold a general strike on Sept. 29 in response to pro-business policies pushed by the Zapatero government. The strike will coincide with a European "day of action" backed by the continent's trade unions.

The government is pressing ahead with what it describes as "reforms" after two years of talks with the unions broke down. Spain is suffering badly from the current capitalist recession, which has pushed unemployment to more than 20%.

UGT union leader Candido Mendez said the changes would favour businesses and harm the rights of workers. The measures include a 5% average pay cut for public sector workers, suspension of inflation adjustments for pensions, labour law amendments to enable employers to hire and fire workers more easily, the scrapping of childbirth benefit payments, and a 1.2 billion euro cut in funding for regional governments. The measures will be put to parliament for a vote on June 22, and then implemented immediately.

Earlier in June, tens of thousands of Spaniards marched against the so-called "austerity cuts." Spain is reported to be one of the European countries vulnerable to a Greek-style debt crisis, if its repayments

become unaffordable. But the "Socialist" Zapatero government has refused to consider placing the burden of the financial crisis on the country's wealthy and the big corporations.

The most recent general strike in Spain took place in April 2003, against the war in Iraq.

## European "Day of Action"

On September 29, to coincide with a meeting of European finance ministers, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC, affiliated to the International Trade Union Confederation) will organise a European Day of Action. A statement from the ETUC says that "As European Governments move collectively to slash public expenditure, including jobs, pay and pensions, while the European economy is fragile and vulnerable to renewed recession, the ETUC is to mobilise a collective trade union response. This will be centred on a big demonstration in Brussels but the ETUC is calling on affiliates to take the maximum possible degree of action in all the countries of the European Union. This can include protest stoppages, demonstrations, meetings with Government finance ministers etc."

Earlier this spring, ETUC affiliates took part in several "Days of Action." Held from May 14 to 16, the actions included mass rallies in Madrid, Brussels, Berlin and Prague. The campaign called for workers "to fight the crisis, because it has become unacceptable for workers and citizens to shoulder the burden of a crisis they did not cause." Instead, the ETUC has called for a "New Social Deal" that gives priority to workers and citizens, based on a social agenda

focused on demands for jobs, purchasing power, and protection of fundamental rights.

## Egypt violates labour rights

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has ranked Egypt among the worst 25 countries that violate the rights of workers, pointing to the deteriorating situation of workers and the decline of trade union freedoms. The ILO particularly notes the intervention by security forces to break up sit-ins organized by workers, and the repeated interference by the Ministry of Manpower and Immigration in the internal affairs of trade union organizations.

During the recent ILO conference in Geneva, the government had requested to remove Egypt from the "blacklist" of countries in violation of ILO conventions. But the ILO insisted on keeping Egypt on its final list of countries violating labour rights, while lifting the names of several Arab Gulf states.

## Korean teachers

A top education department official in South Korea's Gyeonggi province plans to reprimand unionized teachers who were indicted for having paid dues to the opposition Democratic Labor Party (DLP). According to the Gyeonggi Provincial Office of Education, Kim Sang-gon, the education superintendent of the region, will refer indicted teachers to a disciplinary committee.

Under South Korean legislation, teachers and public civil servants are barred from political activities and having membership in a political party.

Many items in our "Global Class Struggle" column are from the Labour Start website, [www.labourstart.org](http://www.labourstart.org)

## Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada

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

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**Ottawa CPC**  
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**Ontario Ctee. CPC**  
290A Danforth Ave., Toronto, M4K 1N6  
Tel: 416-469-2446

**Hamilton Ctee. CPC**  
265 Melvin Ave., Apt. 815  
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**Atlantic Region CPC**  
Box 70, Grand Pré, NS, B0P 1M0  
Tel/fax: 902-542-7981



# Murders of union activists up 30% world-wide

## PV Vancouver Bureau

The ITUC's Annual Survey of Trade Union Rights has documented a shocking 30% increase in the number of trade unionists murdered in 2009 - 101 killings, up from 71 the previous year. The Survey, released on June 9, also reveals growing pressure on workers' rights as the impact of the global economic crisis on employment deepens.

The largest number of murders - 48 - took place in Colombia, one of the countries favoured with increased trade links by the Harper Conservative government of Canada. Another 16 were killed in Guatemala, 12 in Honduras, six in Mexico, six in Bangladesh, four in Brazil, three in the Dominican Republic, three in the Philippines, one in India, one in Iraq and one in Nigeria.

Twenty-two of the murdered Colombians were senior trade union leaders and five were women, as the onslaught of previous years continued. The rise in violence in Guatemala and Honduras also followed a trend developing in recent years.

"Colombia was yet again the country where standing up for fundamental rights of workers is more likely than anywhere else to mean a death sentence, despite the Colombian government's public relations campaign to the contrary. The worsening situation in Guatemala, Honduras and several other countries is also cause for extreme concern," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

This year's report again records an extensive list of violations suffered by trade unionists struggling to defend workers' interests, this time in 140 countries. Many other violations remain unreported, as working women and men are deprived of the means to have their voices heard, or fear to speak out due to the consequences

to their jobs or even to their physical safety.

Along with the appalling list of killings, the Survey provides detailed documentation of harassment, intimidation and other forms of anti-union persecution. A further ten attempted murders and 35 serious death threats were recorded, again mostly in Colombia and Guatemala. Furthermore, many trade unionists remained in prison and were joined by around hundred newly imprisoned in 2009. Many others were arrested in Iran, Honduras, Pakistan, South Korea, Turkey and Zimbabwe in particular.

The general trade union rights' situation has continued to deteriorate in a number of other countries, including Egypt, the Russian Federation, South Korea and Turkey.

Anti-democratic forces continued to target union activity, aware that unions are often in the front line in the defence of democracy. This was evident in Honduras during the post-coup violence and in Guinea during a protest demonstration against the ruling junta which turned into a terrible massacre on Sept. 28, 2009.

Numerous cases of strike-breaking and repression of striking workers were documented in each region. Thousands of workers demonstrating to claim wages, denounce harsh working conditions or the harmful effects of the global financial and economical crisis faced beatings, arrest and detention, including in Algeria, Argentina, Belarus, Burma, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Honduras, India, Iran, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan and Turkey.

Dismissals of workers due to their trade union activities were reported in many countries. In Bangladesh, six garment workers on strike for a pay increase and settlement of outstanding wages died after a police intervention.

Union busting and pressure

continued to be widely used by employers. In several countries, companies threatened workers with closure or transfer of production sites if they organised or joined a trade union. Often employers simply refused to negotiate with legitimate workers' representatives while the authorities did nothing. Some labour codes were amended to permit more "flexibility" and to unravel social welfare systems, which often impacted the existing industrial relations systems and thus curtailed trade union rights.

The undermining of internationally-recognised labour standards saw more and more workers facing insecurity and vulnerability in employment, with some 50% of the global workforce now in precarious jobs. This affected workers in export processing zones, especially in South East Asia and Central America, domestic workers, particularly in the Middle East and South East Asia, and migrants and agricultural workers. Many of the worst affected sectors have high concentrations of women workers.

Furthermore, the growth of informal employment and the development of new "atypical" forms of employment were seen across both

their highly vulnerable position in the labour market.

The Survey also highlights many cases where, while trade union rights are officially protected in legislation, restrictions on legal coverage and weak or non-existent enforcement added to the vulnerability of workers already struggling in the depths of the crisis. Severe restrictions or outright prohibition of strikes also exist in a large number of countries. Furthermore, complex procedural requirements, imposition of compulsory arbitration and the use of excessively broad definitions of "essential services" provisions often make the exercise of trade union rights impossible in practice, depriving workers of their legitimate rights to union representation and participation in industrial action.

Last year was the 60th Anniversary of the ILO Convention 98 on the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining, which has still not been ratified by countries

representing about half of the world's economically active population, including Canada and the USA. ●



Coca-Cola is known as "Killer Coke", in reference to murders of union leaders and activists at its bottling plants in Latin America. For details, visit [www.killercoke.org](http://www.killercoke.org).

regions and industrial sectors. The difficulties faced by these workers to organise or exercise their trade union rights are directly related to

## San Francisco Labour Council on Gaza Flotilla

**The following resolution was adopted nearly unanimously on June 14 by the San Francisco Labor Council.**

Whereas many labor organizations have condemned the May 31st Israeli commando attack on the Gaza Aid Flotilla, which killed at least nine unarmed people and seized and detained some 700 passengers and crew. Many of these labor organizations, as well as the U.N. and Amnesty International, have also called for an independent international investigation of the attack and for a permanent opening of the Gaza border in accordance with international law; and

Whereas the Elders, a group started by Nelson Mandela including six Nobel peace prize winners (former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, former US President Jimmy Carter, detained Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi, and former Archbishop Desmond

Tutu) described as "completely inexcusable" the Israeli attack on the Gaza Aid Flotilla and stated: "This tragic incident should draw the world's attention to the terrible suffering of Gaza's 1.5 million people, half of whom are children under the age of 18," and also noted that "the treatment of the people of Gaza is one of the world's greatest human rights violations and that the blockade is illegal"; and

Whereas the aid carried on the ship was strictly humanitarian in nature, containing materials such as wheelchairs, medical, school and building supplies and non-perishable foods - items that Israel has refused to allow into Gaza since 2007, or only in insufficient amounts to meet the pressing needs of Gaza's people; and

Whereas the military assault on the Gaza Aid Flotilla was carried out in the dead of night in international waters in violation of accepted norms of state conduct regarding use of the open ocean for non-military purposes; and

Whereas, in solidarity with the

people of Gaza, the Swedish Dock Workers Union is refusing to work Israeli ships from June 22-29, and the Norwegian dock workers have agreed not to work Israeli cargo from June 15-29 - in response to the attack on the Gaza Aid Flotilla; and

Whereas the San Francisco Labor Council has previously adopted two resolutions calling for the lifting of the blockade against Gaza.

Therefore be it resolved that the San Francisco Labor Council join the long list of labor organizations around the world and the International Committee of the Red Cross, in condemning the unwarranted May 31st attack by the Israeli military on the unarmed humanitarian aid flotilla sailing in international waters; and

Be it further resolved that the council join the U.N., Amnesty International, ITUC, COSATU and the many other labor and civil society organizations in calling for an independent international investigation of the attack on the Gaza Aid Flotilla; and

Be it further resolved that the council reaffirms its position in calling on Israel to lift the blockade, so the people of Gaza can have normal communication, travel and commerce with the rest of the world; and

Be it finally resolved that the council communicate this resolution to affiliated unions, area labor councils, community allies, the California Federation of Labor, the AFL-CIO, Change to Win, all members of the House and Senate who represent the jurisdiction of this council, and to President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. ●

## End deadly asbestos exports and production, experts urge

### Contact/CAW/CALM

A broad coalition organized by Ban Asbestos Canada says the Canadian government must ban the production and export of asbestos. The group, which includes politicians, experts, victims, labour leaders, researchers and health care providers, is also calling for just transition policies for the communities that rely on the asbestos industry.

"Asbestos is the greatest industrial killer the world has ever known," said NDP MP Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre). "More Canadians die from asbestos than all other industrial causes combined, yet Canada continues to be one of the world's leading producers and exporters of asbestos. We are exporting human misery on a monumental scale and it is an international disgrace."

A former asbestos miner, Martin is leading the charge in the House of Commons to have asbestos production and export banned.

NDP MP for Outremont, Thomas Mulcair, also supports the ban, making him the first Quebec MP to speak out against asbestos mining, which now exists only in Quebec.

"To persist in ignorance and contempt for research that has shown just how devastating asbestos is to human health is despicable," said Fernand Turcotte, professor emeritus of preventive medicine and public health at the medical school of Université Laval. "It dishonours our country and its citizens in the eyes of the world, particularly since this infamous enterprise is funded by the government."

Turcotte refers to the many presentations made to the federal and Quebec governments on the danger of the asbestos industry, all of which have been ignored, to the peril of workers in Canada and abroad. ●

([www.bacanada.org](http://www.bacanada.org))



June 5 rally in Toronto (PV photo by Ed Bil)



# "God and His Demons"



*God and his Demons*, by Michael Parenti, published by Prometheus Books, 2010, 279 pages. Hardcover \$31, from People's Co-op Books, 1391 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, [peoplescoopbookstore.com](http://peoplescoopbookstore.com).

Review by Tim Pelzer

U.S. political scientist Michael Parenti has written a compelling, timely critique of religion's dark side in *God and his Demons*.

While Parenti is critical of religion, especially Christianity, he is not trying to convert believers to atheism. His book effectively demonstrates how organized religion - be it Christian, Buddhist or Islam - has historically served the interests of the wealthy.

The Catholic and Protestant church hierarchies have always been recruited from the upper classes who have an interest in protecting the existing social order. In the early 20th century, both churches condemned and opposed trade unionism, socialism, communism and anarchism.

The last several Popes have marginalized followers of Liberation Theology within the Catholic church who side with the poor against oppressive governments and oligarchs. They appointed conservative bishops in urban areas in Latin America, while sending reform minded priests to isolated areas and forbidding political involvement.

Pope John Paul II remained silent while right wing dictatorships in Latin America killed and tortured

Catholic priests and nuns during the 1980s. In contrast, the Pope supported the struggle against governments of the former socialist countries of eastern Europe, even encouraging Catholic clergy to join opposition groups in his native Poland.

Supported by wealthy donors, the fundamentalist Christian movement world wide, with its lobby groups, foundations, think tanks, schools, summer camps and media empire, promotes capitalism, militarism, super-patriotism and conservative political leaders.

"For them virtue is a matter of personal piety, unquestioning faith, and clean living," writes Parenti. "It is not a call to advance the human condition through more equitable social reforms. Collective action is urged only when the goals are reactionary: abolition of human services, tax cuts for the super rich, and endless increases in military spending."

In the US, they are also striving to impose a religious theocracy in which social programs would be abolished, the death penalty extended to gays and female adulterers, and big corporations free of taxes and regulations. Parenti describes how President George W. Bush aligned himself with the Christian right while in power, working hard to undo the separation of church and state. However, Parenti cites hopeful evidence that the Christian right's support is declining.

Parenti exposes the rampant corruption and hypocrisy of conservative religious institutions.

While the Catholic church hierarchy has waged campaigns against so-called immoral acts such as abortion, homosexuality, birth control and adultery, they have protected and promoted sexual predators who have raped thousands of young boys in church run orphanages. Fundamentalist Christian church leaders have been plagued with similar scandals.

He demonstrates how religious hucksters, from Mother Teresa to Jimmy Baker, misused millions of dollars sent to them from devoted followers.

Parenti balances his critique of organized religion by discussing the Christian left who have historically fought for social justice: "Members of various denominations, including many of an evangelical strain, have done battle with fundamentalists over various social issues including US military interventions, the ordination of female clergy, gay rights, and the environmental crisis."

In every poverty stricken country in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East where left wing movements have been destroyed through western economic boycotts or counterinsurgency, Parenti says, people denied a material means of betterment have turned to Islam or Christianity. Christian missionaries or Mullahs blame demons, leftist social revolution or sin as the main cause of poverty, making "oppression more bearable and the ruling class more secure".

Parenti also sheds light on other religions such as the Buddhism of the Tibetan-born Dalai Lama. He has become the rockstar of religious leaders who jets around the world promoting peace, kindness and brotherhood as well as independence for his native Tibet from Chinese rule. However, until 1961, "old Tibet was a retrograde repressive theocracy of extreme privilege and poverty." The Buddhist church and aristocrats owned vast agricultural estates where serfs and slaves worked for no pay. Escaped serfs who were caught had legs and arms amputated and body parts mutilated to serve as examples to others.

When the Chinese Communists took power in 1949, they granted Tibet self-government and left the province alone. Fearing that the Communists would eventually impose far-reaching reforms, the Dalai Lama, backed by the CIA, ambushed convoys of the Chinese People's Liberation Army. While the Lamas, the Tibetan army and the aristocracy joined the attacks against the Chinese army, the people did not, and the revolt collapsed.

In 1959, the Chinese government abolished slavery and serfdom in Tibet. It dissolved the large landed estates owned by the lords and Lamas and distributed these lands to freed serfs, initiated large scale job creation projects, and built healthcare clinics.

Parenti's *God and his Demons*, an outstanding book, is an important reminder that organized religion frequently does not have our best interests in mind. ●



During the initial democratic reforms in Tibet, emancipated serfs burnt the usury bonds, land leases and debentures that the landowners depended on to oppress and exploit them.

## Eyes on the prize for U.S. military?

The *New York Times* reported on June 13 that the United States has discovered \$1 trillion in untapped mineral deposits in Afghanistan, enough to fundamentally alter the Afghan economy. A Pentagon team, working with geologists and other experts, is working with the Afghan Ministry of Mines to prepare information for potential investors in hopes of placing exploration rights up for auction.

The previously unknown deposits - including huge veins of iron, copper, cobalt, gold and critical industrial metals like lithium - include many minerals that are essential to modern industry. Afghanistan could eventually be transformed into one of the most important mining centers in the world, U.S. officials believe.

Business publications say that mining companies around the world - including many of the industry's giants based in Australia and Canada - are eager to exploit this mineral wealth, but the war, corruption and lack of roads and other infrastructure could delay exploration for years. Some investors are already exploring the country's potential, including JP Morgan, which has sent a team of mining experts to Afghanistan.

Anti-war activists warn that the vast mineral discoveries may be another key factor behind strategies for a long-term western imperialist occupation of Afghanistan. Since the beginning of the occupation in 2001, information about energy corporation plans to build oil pipelines crossing Afghanistan has been widely circulated. ●



## MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

### Music from striking Sudbury miners

USWA Local 6500 has posted two songs on its website reflecting the indomitable spirit of the workers struggle in Sudbury against Brazilian mining giant Vale Inco. "The Struggle" by Pascal Boucher and Mike O'Brian, and "On the Line" by Keith Bona and Jon Giroux can be accessed as MP3 files by going to the union's website ([www.uswlocal6500.ca/news.php](http://www.uswlocal6500.ca/news.php)) and scrolling to "USW 6500 Music." Brothers Bona, Boucher and O'Brian are active members of Local 6500. Jon Giroux is a local musician and a supporter of the strike, now approaching its first anniversary. Keith Bona writes, "whatever struggles we go through, you can not break our spirit, that's why we're singing."

### Copyright bill neglects performers

Canada's musicians and actors unions have charged that proposed new legislation to amend copyright laws fails to ensure that their members are fairly compensated. Bill C32 passed first reading in the House of Commons on June 2, but in its present form still allows consumers to make illegal downloads. AFM Canada President Bill Skolnik and ACTRA President Ferne Downey call for extension of the existing private copying levy, currently imposed on blank CDs and tapes, to MP3 players such as the iPod. Levies are collected by non-profit collectives such as the Canadian Musical Reproduction Rights Agency, and distributed to artists on a pro-rated basis. What gives? Legalizing private digital copying while simultaneously compensating artists ought to be a no-brainer.

### Kreviazuk resists B'nai Brith attack

Winnipeg singer-songwriter Chantel Kreviazuk and the Manitoba education ministry came under fire recently from B'nai Brith after an article by Kreviazuk deploring the suffering of children in Gaza and other conflict zones was reprinted in a Grade 12 exam. Students were asked to discuss whether entertainers have a responsibility for making the world a better place. Although the article does not mention Israel, the Jewish organization complained that it would promote "anti-Israeli hatred." B'nai Brith's intimidation worked initially, as Education Minister Nancy Allan quickly declared that she shared its concerns and promised to be more vigilant. However, the *Winnipeg Free Press* criticized her the next day in an editorial, stating that "nothing offensive" was presented to the students. Kreviazuk has stood firm, saying her position is one of "compassion for children living in war zones."

### Pixies protest Israel raid

American alternative-rock band The Pixies became the first major musical act to cancel a performance in Israel after the Zionist state's murderous May 31st high seas raid on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla. The Pixies' decision to cancel their first Israeli appearance came several days after two British bands, Klaxons and Gorillaz Sound System, withdrew from the same five-day Tel Aviv festival (Pic.Nic 2010) in a move apparently related to the storming of the aid flotilla. Prominent Israeli promoter Shuki Weiss complained that Israel has become the victim of "cultural terrorism," but not all Israelis would agree with him. Activists in the Israeli human rights group Boycott! had written an open letter to the Pixies on March 1 urging them not to come to Israel. (<http://boycottisrael.info/>)

### Musicians fight racist Arizona laws

Musicians have joined the struggle against Arizona's racist Bill SB1070 with the formation of Sound Strike, a campaign calling on artists to boycott the state until the bill is repealed. Led by Rage Against the Machine's Zack de la Rocha, the boycott has already been endorsed by prominent artists such as Kanye West, Chuck D, Sonic Youth, Los Tigres del Norte and Joe Satriani. Bill SB1070 criminalizes undocumented residents as well as anyone who associates with them, and forces law enforcement officers to resort to racial profiling. It has been compared to the fugitive slave laws of 19th century America. The musicians are joining a vast coalition of labor, civil rights organizations, students, faith-based groups, athletes, elected officials, and even police groups who want swift federal action and comprehensive immigration reform. Learn more at [www.thesoundstrike.net/](http://www.thesoundstrike.net/).

### Dylan and the Left

The current issue of *Political Affairs*, online journal of the CPUSA, carries an essay by historian Gerald Meyer on Suze Rotolo's 2008 memoir *A Freewheelin' Time: A Memoir of Greenwich Village in the Sixties*. Best known as Bob Dylan's lover and muse during his rise to fame, Rotolo's background as a "red diaper baby" places her in a unique position to explore the links between the embattled left of the fifties and the folk music revival of the sixties that played a key role in the civil rights and anti-war movements. How well Rotolo succeeds is thoughtfully assessed by Meyer, a professor at City University of New York, biographer of legendary East Harlem radical politician Vito Marcantonio and editorial board member of the Marxist journal *Science and Society*. ([www.politicalaffairs.net/](http://www.politicalaffairs.net/)) ●



# Take Pride in Solidarity!

## **Pride 2010 statement from the Communist Party of Canada and the Young Communist League**

This summer, millions of people from the LGBT communities and their allies across North America will fill the streets for Pride parades. On the 40th anniversary of the first gay pride celebrations, held in 1970 in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, the Communist Party of Canada and the Young Communist League send warmest greetings, and pledge our solidarity to the ongoing struggles for full equality.

The controversy around this year's Pride Parade in Toronto highlights the true meaning of these struggles. By trying to ban reference to Israel's apartheid policies, the parade organizers have committed the tragic mistake of sacrificing the rights of one group of oppressed people for the alleged protection of another.

We recall the words of Pastor Martin Niemöller regarding the rise of Hitler fascism: "First, they came for the communists, but I was not a communist, so I said nothing. Then, they came for the social democrats, but I was not a social democrat, so I said nothing. Then they came for the trade unionists, but I was not a trade unionist, so I said nothing. Then they came for me, but there was nobody left to speak out."

Fortunately, many are speaking out today, within the queer community and far beyond, in solidarity with the Palestinian people and in defense of free speech. These voices remind the world that Pride is about the right of individuals and peoples to live free from oppression, whether this takes the form of brutal homophobia or war crimes committed against the Palestinians.

In fact, the dynamic response of the LGBT communities to the banning of Queers Against Israeli Apartheid has mobilized wider international solidarity with Palestine. Many leaders of the LGBT communities have returned their Pride Parade honours, calling on Pride Toronto to reverse this

censorship, a demand which we wholeheartedly support.

Forty years after the first Pride Parades, we welcome the expansion of more queer-positive environments in the public realm, the growing numbers of trade unions with active Pride and LGBTQ caucuses, and the increase of gay-straight alliances, safe school spaces and "Pride proms" in our schools. These and other legal, political and cultural victories are the hard-won results of decades of efforts by the LGBTQ community and allies.

But much more remains to be achieved. The burning issue today is not how to sweet-talk corporate donors or pro-Israeli politicians, or to raise the visibility of the military in Pride events. The issue is the ongoing violence and hatred directed against gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and trans people, and those perceived as such by homophobes and gay-bashers.

Alarming, police-reported hate crimes are up sharply, according to a new Statistics Canada report. Hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation more than doubled from 2007 to 2008, a much greater increase than crimes based on religion or race/ethnicity. Hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation were also more violent, and took place most often in cities such as Vancouver, Hamilton, London and Guelph. This report confirms the anecdotal evidence of a rise in gay-bashings in recent years.

We also know that same-sex marriage gains are threatened in the United States, and that the Harper Tories still hope to reverse queer rights if they win a majority government. Right-wing forces continue to scapegoat the LGBTQ community and racialised groups, to divide working class resistance against finance capital, corporate bailouts and global environmental plunder.

Despite Canada's welcoming image, queer youth seeking asylum from persecution in other countries are still being extradited. Most LGBTQ students still report feeling unsafe at school, and prosecutors

are often unwilling to prosecute vicious gay-bashings as hate crimes.

Globally, violent expressions of homophobia are on the rise, sometimes in response to courageous attempts by gay-rights groups to hold public events like our Pride Parades. The struggle to end the criminalization of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression faces stubborn resistance in many countries. Working class queer people suffer vicious discrimination, along with women and racialized communities who bear the brunt of neoliberal economic and social policies.

ILGA, the association of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersexed peoples, reports that 76 United Nations member states still criminalize consensual same-sex acts among adults. In seven countries, punishment for homosexuality still includes the death penalty.

But progress for equality is being achieved in countries such as Cuba, South Africa and Nicaragua. The myth that queer rights can only be won in wealthy capitalist countries is shattered by these advances, and by the reality that homophobic and racist concepts are exported from North America and Europe. We also note that Canada is one of only 15 countries which shamefully legislates a higher age of consent for homosexual activities.

Despite the cultural and legal shift in favour of equality and diversity, homophobia and transphobia remain entrenched within the Canadian state.

Stephen Harper voted against same-sex marriage, and has left his options open on abortion if he wins a majority. He snubbed the 2007 international AIDS conference in Toronto, and appoints anti-choice, anti-gay judges to the courts. "Focus on the Family" zealots are found among top Tory advisors, who promote the patriarchal family model.

At a time when the so-called "war on terror" is used to remove civil liberties for racialized communities, we must always remember that "an injury to one is an injury to all." Just like racism, sexism, and national chauvinism,

## What's Left

### Vancouver, BC

**Left Film Night**, Sunday, June 27, 7 pm, "Plunder: The Crime of our Time," on the U.S. financial crisis. Free, donations welcome, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive. For info, call 604-255-2041.

**Brithday Celebration**, for PV supporters Peter Marcus and Margaret Sutherland, Sat., July 31, Trout Lake park. Call Peter at 604-873-2924 for info.

**Celebrate Moncada Day** with the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Assoc., afternoon of Sunday, July 25, Chilean Co-op, 3390 School Ave. (near Kingsway & Tyne). For info, call Ray, 604-254-1350.

### Nanaimo, BC

**Moncada Day Celebration**, 1 pm, Sunday, July 25, 530 Wakesia, call Gilberto, 250-754-4277.

### Surrey, BC

**People's Voice Walk-A-Thon**, Sunday, August 1, Bear Creek Park (137 St. & 88 Ave.), walk starts 11 am, followed by food and cultural program at 1 pm. For details or to sponsor a walker, call Harjit Daudharia, 604-543-7179.

### Toronto, ON

**BBQ for People's Voice**, Sat., July 3, 2-5 pm (rain or shine), 58 Albany Ave. (one block east of Bathurst, north of Bloor). \$20 "all you can eat," children under 12 free. Orgnaized by Davenport Club, RSVP to 416-536-6771.

**Moncada Day**, cruise the Toronto Islands with live hot Cuban music. Meal, cash bar, meet old and new friends! Sunday, July 25, Noon to 4 pm, check in 11:15 am. Limited tickets, \$40 prepaid in advance or \$50 if paying at boat. For info & reservations, call Sharon 905.951.8499 or Ardis 416.534.5340. Mail cheque to: CCFA Toronto, PO Box 743 Station F, Toronto, M4Y 2N6.

### Montreal, QC

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

**Solidarity with the Greek workers!**

**Support the PV 2010 Fund Drive!**

homophobia and transphobia are weapons to divide working people. Equality and human rights must be expanded to include full legal and political protections for sexual orientation and expression, and gender identity.

This demand is not "divisive." It is a vital part of the wider movement to drive the Harper Tories out of power. Today the ruling class is using the economic meltdown to carry out a vicious assault on all hard-won social equality gains. A broad democratic and social resistance is needed to block and reverse this corporate agenda. Together, we must build a powerful coalition around a genuine people's alternative to this crisis - a common front of Aboriginal peoples, youth and students,

women, seniors, immigrant and racialized communities, environmentalists, labour, peace activists, the LGBTQ community, farmers, and many other allies.

Ultimately, this struggle in our communities and workplaces, and at the ballot box, will defeat the right and open the door to a people's coalition government. The goal of the Communist Party is to win fuller social freedom and genuine people's power in a socialist Canada, where our economy will be owned by all and democratically controlled. It will then become possible to eradicate the intersecting forms of exploitation and oppression which we face today, while defending our sovereignty and protecting our common environment. •

## People's Voice deadlines:

**AUGUST 1-31 issue: Thursday, July 22**  
**SEPTEMBER 1-15 issue: Thursday, August 19**  
**Send submissions to PV Editorial Office,**  
**706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1,**  
**<pvoice@telus.net>**

## A Noble Brother and Friend: DOUG WEIR

**Doug passed away among family, friends and comrades on Saturday June 6, 2010. Beloved son of the late Ruth and Charlie Weir, Doug is survived by his two brothers Steve and Fred. A steam fitter most of his adult life, Doug spent the past 20 years working for the Toronto Board of Education.**

**A gentle warrior, Doug was a compassionate champion of the underdog, an outspoken critic of capitalism and social injustice of all kinds and a man with a big heart. He will be sorely missed!**

**A memorial will be held on July 18th. For location and time information, please write: sshartal@roachschwartz.com or sweir@zedat.fu-berlin.de.**

## José de Sousa Saramago, 1922-2010

José Saramago, Portuguese novelist, playwright, journalist and Communist, died on June 18, 2010. Awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1998, his books have been translated into 25 languages. He founded the National Front for the Defence of Culture in 1992, after the Portuguese government ordered the removal of *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ* from the European Literary Prize's shortlist. He was a prominent supporter of the Western Sahara and Palestinian liberation movements.

The Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Portuguese Communist Party issued the following statement on comrade Saramago's death.

"The death of José Saramago represents an irreparable loss for Portugal, for the Portuguese people, for Portuguese culture. José Saramago's intellectual, artistic, human, and civic stature makes him a major figure in our history. His vast, remarkable, and unique literary work - which was

recognized through the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1998 - will remain a milestone in the history of Portuguese literature, in which his is one of the most prominent names. José Saramago helped to build the April 1974 Revolution as an active participant in the resistance to fascism. He continued this activity after the Day of Liberation with his engagement in the revolutionary process that profoundly transformed our country for the better, creating a democracy that had as its prime reference the defense of the interests of the workers, of the people, and of the

country.

"José Saramago was a member of the Portuguese Communist Party since 1969 and his death represents a loss for the entire Communist Party collective - for the Party which he chose as his own until his final days.

"The Secretariat of the Central Committee of the PCP wishes to express its profound sorrow and its enormous pain for the death of comrade José Saramago - and expresses its heartfelt condolences to his companion, Pilar del Rio, and to his remaining family." •

## REDS ON THE WEB

[www.comunist-party.ca](http://www.comunist-party.ca)

[www.peoplesvoice.ca](http://www.peoplesvoice.ca)

[www.ycl-ljc.ca](http://www.ycl-ljc.ca)

[www.solidnet.org](http://www.solidnet.org)



# British government finally apologizes for "Bloody Sunday"

For decades, "Bloody Sunday" has been remembered as the most violent day in the British occupation of Northern Ireland. On January 30, 1972, 27 protesters were shot in Derry by the British Army Parachute Regiment during a Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association march. Thirteen men died immediately, and another man four months later. Witnesses testified that all the victims were unarmed. Five of the wounded were shot in the back.

The initial investigation held by the British Government, the Widgery Tribunal, largely cleared the soldiers and authorities of blame. But now, the Saville Inquiry, established in 1998 to look at the events again, finally made its report on June 15. The report could lead to criminal investigations for some soldiers involved in the killings.

British Prime Minister David Cameron acknowledged in the House of Commons that British troops had fired the first shot, then fired on fleeing civilians, and shot dead wounded civilians. Thirty-eight years after the slaughter, Cameron apologized on behalf of the British Government.

The Report's key findings include the following:

- "Despite the contrary evidence given by soldiers, we have concluded that none of them fired in response to attacks or threatened attacks by nail or petrol bombers."
- The accounts of soldiers to the inquiry were rejected, with a number said to have "knowingly put forward false accounts".
- The soldiers went into the Bogside area due to an order which should not have been given, and the Commander of land forces in Northern Ireland, Major General Robert Ford, would have been aware that the Parachute Regiment had a reputation for using excessive force.
- No blame was placed on the organisers of the march, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association.
- The Report says: "We have no doubt that there was significant Official IRA activity in the five sectors during Bloody Sunday,

though in our view, this did not provide an explanation for why soldiers targeted and hit people who were not posing a threat of causing death or serious injury."

Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams said, "Today is a day for the families of those killed and those injured on Bloody Sunday. They have campaigned for 38 years for the truth and for justice. They have campaigned for the British government to end their policy of cover-up and concealment.

"The facts of what happened on Bloody Sunday are clear - the British Paras came to Derry and murdered 14 civil rights marchers and injured 13 others. They were unarmed, they posed no threat and they were completely innocent.

"Today Saville has put the lies of Widgery into the dustbin of history and with it the cover-up which was authorized of the highest levels within the British Establishment and lasted for almost four decades."

Workers Party of Ireland General Secretary John Lowry also commented on the Saville Report:

"Responsibility for what happened on that day clearly lies with British government. The decision to deploy the Parachute Regiment on the day clearly ranks of one most catastrophic decisions taken by the British government during the course of what is known as 'the troubles' and clearly contributed to what occurred and towards the prolongation of the many years of violence that followed.

"The demands of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association were entirely legitimate. Let's not forget that the march was in protest against internment without trial which was another catastrophic decision of the British government, which in itself contributed significantly to the suffering which the people of Northern Ireland then had to endure..." •



This photograph was taken of Bernard McGuigan after he was shot by a soldier of the Parachute Regiment on 'Bloody Sunday'

## Bhopal verdict "shameful"

**The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following statement on the long-delayed verdict in the Bhopal Gas disaster of 1984.**

help the powerful US company and its Indian entity. The culprits are now all out on bail and will use the judicial process further to avoid serving even this inadequate sentence.

The Bhopal Gas case verdict, which after twenty-five years awards a sentence of just two years to the culprits, is a travesty of justice that shames India and insults the memory of the thousands killed. The verdict is the culmination of a deeply flawed process involving the culpability of Governments, investigative agencies and even the highest court of the land. These institutions compromised the interests of the country and the victims, diluting the charges, enabling the American CEO Warren Anderson to escape, and limiting liability to a paltry compensation of only 470 million dollars.

The Government must immediately appeal against the verdict, press for enhancement of sentences and create a process by which justice can be speedily ensured. The Bhopal disaster and the utterly flawed legal framework shows how the American suppliers and owners have escaped any criminal liability.

In this context the Civil Nuclear Liability Bill which excludes foreign suppliers from any liability may help more Warren Andersons. The Bill limits compensation to even less than the paltry Bhopal settlement. Pushing ahead with the Nuclear Liability Bill means playing with the safety and interests of the Indian people. •

## U.S. military spending sets new record

*From L'Humanité, France*

The U.S. military budget for fiscal year 2011 will reach \$1.65 trillion, setting a new record, whereas austerity is the rule for most other budget items.

President Barack Obama is keeping his promises: the commitment made by the White House in 2009 not to limit military expenses will be observed. The military budget will exceed total U.S. expenditures on defense during World War II.

The federal budget for fiscal year 2011, which Congress is to vote on October 1, will amount to \$3 trillion, not counting the amounts to finance basic retirement pensions. While the sum dedicated by the federal government to education only represents 2% of spending, 53% of U.S. tax income, around \$1.6 trillion, will be for military expenditures, according to Information Clearing House, a progressive U.S. website.

The sum includes the \$717 billion requested by the Pentagon, to which must be added a \$200 billion credit to finance what the White House euphemistically terms "overseas contingency funding" - in plain English, the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Plus 40 billion dollars for "black box" intelligence agency funding, another 94 billion dollars for military activities funded through NASA, the State Department, and the Department of Homeland Security, etc. \$123 billion will be dedicated to veterans' benefits and health care spending, while \$400 billion are foreseen for interest on debt raised to pay for "prior wars."

In constant dollars, this is the biggest military budget the United States has ever seen. According to the War Resisters League, in 2009 US military spending accounted for 47% of all money spent on "defense" by all of the countries on the planet. To this, one must still add in the military expenses of United States' traditional allies. In comparison, China dedicates \$130 billion to the military sector and Russia spends \$80 billion a year. •



Front page of the Daily Mirror, including a false report headlined "Soldiers didn't fire first shot"

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