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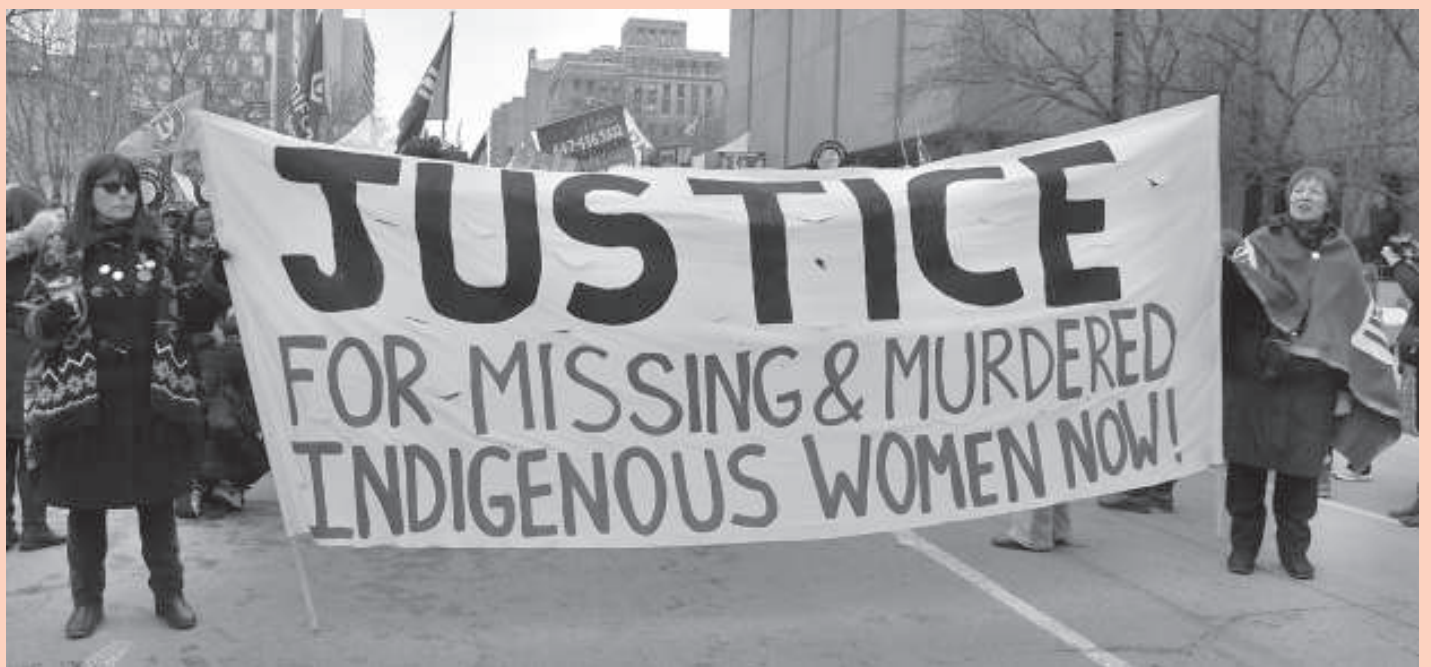
**ONTARIO
ELECTION**

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Demand grows for public inquiry into murdered and missing women

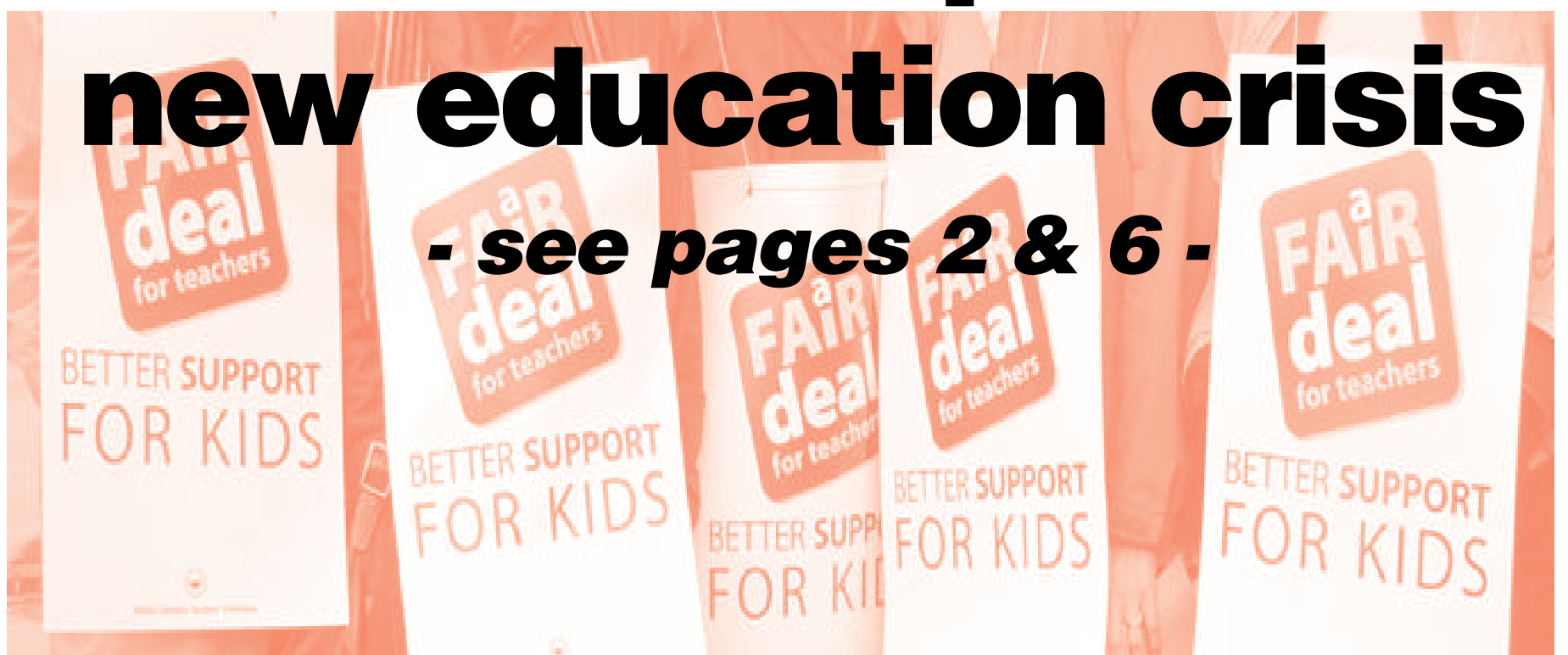
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BC Liberals provoke

new education crisis

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NATO's new Cold War

NATO's push to isolate Russia over the crisis in Ukraine risks leading to a new Cold War, with a wide range of disastrous consequences, but the Harper government keeps beating the war drums.

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Follow the money?

Why the coup? Ukraine was already open for capitalist profiteering - but perhaps not for the major Western corporations.

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Komagata Maru

A century after racist Canadian authorities turned away the Komagata Maru, the Musqueam First Nation honours descendants of the 360 south Asian passengers on the historic vessel.

Full solidarity with BC Teachers!

Statement from the Communist Party of BC, May 26, 2014

Yet again, the BC Liberal government has moved to attack the collective bargaining process and generate confusion and chaos across the provincial public education system. The Communist Party of BC condemns Premier Clark's "partial lockout" of BCTF members, which marks a serious escalation of her relentless attack against teachers and other education workers, and in fact against students, parents and the entire public school system in British Columbia. We call for full mobilization of the labour movement and its allies in defence of the BCTF. The recent protests by students in Chilliwack and other cities against the lockout, and the wave of public anger against the BC Liberal education cuts across the province, are indications that a wider resistance can be mobilized to defeat the government's agenda. Such a broad fightback can and should become the starting point for a powerful struggle to roll back the entire Liberal assault on public services.

It would be tempting to portray this latest struggle as just another chapter in the long-term vendetta by Premier Clark against the teachers of BC and their elected union leadership. The truth is that Christy Clark was the education minister in the early years of Gordon Campbell's Liberal government, which imposed devastating education cutbacks and illegally ripped up the collective bargaining agreements negotiated by the BCTF. In her political and broadcasting careers, Clark has consistently demonized public school teachers and their union, in a blatant but mostly unsuccessful attempt to turn

parents against the education system. Clearly, there is a strong personal motive behind the Premier's actions.

But this explanation misses the wider point, which is that the entire public health and education sector is under ruthless attack, not only in BC and Canada, but across the entire capitalist world. In country after country, austerity policies have been imposed on an unwilling population, with devastating results for employment and the quality of public services. All this is being done as part of a broader attempt to shift wealth produced by working people into the hands of transnational corporations and their wealthy shareholders. The cry by the BC Liberals that "there is no money" for schools is exposed by the fact that their taxation cuts for the rich and the corporate sector have cost the public treasury of this province over two billion dollars annually for the past twelve years. There is in fact considerable wealth in this province to reverse the underfunding of education and the health care system, to give a desperately needed 50% increase in social assistance rates, to build housing for all the homeless living in our streets, and to do much more to improve the lives of working people and the poor. The decision not to take these steps is purely a political choice by the Liberals, similar to governments everywhere which act in the interests of the 1 percent, against the vast majority of working people.

Instead, the Premier and her friends in the corporate sector aim to destroy our high-quality public education system, deliberately creating crisis after crisis, even ignoring the courts and public opinion as they attempt to wipe out the BCTF and the entire collective bargaining process.



Teachers on the picket line at Seymour Elementary School in Vancouver. (Photo: K. Cariou)

Their true agenda is shown by the ever-increasing amounts the Liberals pour into private schools. Their ultimate goal is clearly to reduce the public school system to a shadow of its former self, the last resort for the poor to educate our children, while the rest of the population are compelled to pay ever increasing fees to profiteering private school operators.

This must not be allowed to happen! We urge every parent, every student, every school trustee, everyone who is concerned for the future of our province to join the teachers on their picket lines. Our message must be: roll back the education cuts! Negotiate a fair collective agreement with BC teachers, including salaries in line with other provinces, and smaller class sizes! ●

Support BC teachers!
visit www.bctf.ca for
information on how you can help

VDLC backs union struggles

By Peter Marcus

At the Vancouver and District Labour Council meeting on May 20, President Joey Hartman reported on the Canadian Labour Congress convention in Montreal. Hassan Yussuff was elected President over Ken Georgetti by 40 votes, this time on a secret ballot, after challenger Hassan Hussein pulled out.

Hartman reported on the successful May Day march and rally in Vancouver; the Day of Mourning held in New Westminster; the Metro Vancouver Alliance meeting; and the annual fundraiser for Queen Alexandra School. A VDLC survey will be sent to candidates running in the Nov. 15 municipal elections.

Delegates passed a solidarity resolution to Turkish mineworkers and families, calling on the Turkish regime to deal with mine safety and enforcement, and to respect the right of people to protest against those responsible for the disaster in Soma.

A resolution to support Bill M212, put forward by NDP MLAs on poverty reduction, was passed by delegates.

The Hospital Employees' Union has a tentative agreement to be ratified by the facilities group in June. A cap of 100 full time equivalents can be contracted out during the course of this five-year agreement, and wages will increase 5.5%. There will be a joint benefits trust to manage extended health and long term disability. Workers will get shift differential increases and shift work will be looked at under occupational health and safety. Bonnie Pearson, HEU Secretary Business Manager, said that the members' 96% strike vote was the reason for the result.

BC Teachers are facing lockouts and wage rollbacks by the provincial government. Initially teachers were going to see their pay reduced by 5%, but that could be a 10% reduction as of May 26. Teachers are being prohibited from being at school 45 minutes before or after hours, and could be disciplined for helping students at lunch. Check the B.C. Teachers Federation website for job actions and updates.

CUPE Local 402-1, representing municipal workers at White Rock, are on strike. The issues are clear hours of work, treatment of casual and part time workers, and long term disability.

Blair Redlin spoke on behalf of People's Co-op Bookstore, requesting funds because of a financial crunch. The VDLC donated \$100. ●

Minority government the best outcome in Ontario

By Liz Rowley, leader of the Communist Party (Ontario)

The only thing clear in the June 12 Ontario election is that the NDP's strategy to crush the Liberals and move up to government or official opposition, has come apart at the seams.

A palace revolt involves Michelle Lansberg, Gerry Kaplan, and 32 other prominent NDP members who signed an open letter accusing Andrea Horwath of shifting the party hard right, exposing the crisis of social democracy, and Horwath's support of big capital and austerity policies.

The labour movement too has attacked the NDP for forcing an election in which the Tories have the most to gain, and the working class the most to lose.

At issue is the platform of Tory leader Tim Hudak, who promises to lay off 100,000 public sector workers, slash wages, enact right to work (for less) laws and eliminate the Rand formula and the closed (union) shop. Hudak is committed to raise tuition fees by 30% and privatize everything in the province that isn't nailed down.

100,000 public sector layoffs will generate 50-60,000 layoffs in the private sector, enough to tip the province into deep recession.

These facts are frightening voters, but Hudak's main promise is to create a million jobs out of the detritus of the massive layoffs and the destruction of public services and programs. His direct appeal is to the approximately one million unemployed, the impoverished and marginalized, the bankrupt small business owners. His invitation is to vote for a party leading the attack on unions and unionized workers, on foreign temporary workers, on youth, women, and racialized communities who are held up to be responsible for the current economic crisis, for mass unemployment, and falling living standards. It's a toxic poison.

This election has made Ontario ground zero in the fight to stop the corporate/government offensive to break the back of the trade union movement in Canada.

Trade union leaders publicly urged the NDP to support the May Liberal budget and prevent an election that could give the Tories a free pass to power, while the

NDP and Liberals fight over Official Opposition status.

The public mood is to punish the NDP for throwing the dice, and for abandoning minimum wage workers while promising tax cuts to corporations. The NDP are falling in the polls where they are likely to remain on election day.

Meanwhile the Liberals are fighting on two fronts, and advancing a platform based on massive privatization to pay for the \$29 billion infrastructure program and jobs they say they will deliver. Their promised provincial pension program has turned out to be a jumped-up RSP plan - not the defined benefit plan with fixed pay-outs promised in the budget, such as the Canada Pension Plan.

Public disillusionment has increased, with many people declaring they will not vote because "they're all the same," and because none address their real concerns about social and economic security and about civil, labour and democratic rights.

In this scenario, the best

see **ONTARIO**, page 11

NIAGARA NEWS BULLETIN

People's Voice Niagara Bureau

* **Welland City Council** unanimously passed a motion opposing the Niagara Health System's closing of the local emergency room in favour of a P3 (public-private partnership) half an hour up the highway. The mayor said it was "bordering on the unbelievable" that the provincial government is supporting the closure. The mayor of neighbouring Wainfleet told reporters "A kid shouldn't have to sit there in Canada, in Ontario, with a broken leg for 36 hours" after her son had to wait more than a day to get care at the P3.

* **Hundreds of protesters** took over the streets of Niagara Falls in a march from the highway through the tourist district to Marineland to protest the conditions and captivity of animals for private profit.

New pressures for murdered and missing women inquiry

By Kimball Cariou

Two new reports from very different sources have turned up the heat on the federal government, which faces growing demands to call a public inquiry into the cases of murdered and missing Aboriginal women across Canada.

The May 12 report by James Anaya, the United Nations rapporteur on indigenous rights, says that the human rights situation of Aboriginal peoples has reached "crisis proportions."

In a related development, a new RCMP report provides numbers on the total of murdered and missing women, including statistics showing that Aboriginal women are far more likely to become victims of violence.

Anaya's wide-ranging report raises many issues, from education to energy projects and the missing or murdered women. It comes at a time of rising tensions between Aboriginal peoples and a federal government which is deeply distrusted.

"It is difficult to reconcile Canada's well-developed legal framework and general prosperity with the human rights problems faced by indigenous peoples in Canada that have reached crisis proportions in many respects," writes Anaya. "The relationship between the federal government and indigenous peoples is strained, perhaps even more so than when the previous special rapporteur visited Canada in 2003."

The government delayed Anaya's recent visit to Canada, which finally took place last year over a nine day period. He travelled to reserves and cities in several provinces, witnessing first-hand the dire levels of poverty and racism faced by Aboriginal peoples.

After meeting with First Nations representatives and government officials, Anaya identified serious shortfalls in education, housing and health, as well as the need for genuine consultation on major energy projects, such as the Northern Gateway pipeline from Alberta to the British Columbia coast. He added his support to the call for an inquiry into cases of Aboriginal women and girls who have been murdered or gone missing in the past 30 years.

In response, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt agreed that "more work needs to be done", but claimed the government is taking steps to give indigenous peoples the same access to safe housing, education and matrimonial rights as non-aboriginals.

One of the most controversial disputes between the Canadian state and First Nations concerns resource projects and economic development. The Supreme Court has upheld the necessity of genuine consultations, but without specifying a full veto power to First Nations communities which oppose such projects on their traditional territory.

The Anaya report urges Canadian governments and industry to win aboriginal consent before proceeding with such developments. The Special Rapporteur stressed that Aboriginal peoples have expressed concerns over resource projects that will pollute their traditional lands, including Enbridge's Northern



Gateway, Kinder Morgan's TransMountain expansion, and Line 9 in southern Ontario.

"The way it's supposed to work is that whenever these rights are affected, there needs to be consultation and agreement about any decision that would limit those rights in order to, in the end, protect them," Anaya said in an interview with the *Globe and Mail*. "Whenever someone goes onto someone's land, there needs to be permissions sought and some kind of agreement."

Art Sterritt, executive director of Coastal First Nations, a coalition of nine British Columbia bands opposed to the Northern Gateway project, agrees with Anaya's interpretation.

"First Nations in British Columbia have many options in front of us and certainly the courts are the preferred option," he told the *Globe and Mail*. "But if the prime minister approved this, and Enbridge tries to ram it through, there will be people out there to stop this until these questions are answered."

A National Energy Board review panel recommended approval of Northern Gateway last December, with a list of 209 conditions. Harper is widely expected to approve the tar sands pipeline this month, despite massive opposition among communities along its route and on the B.C. coast. His government argues that the resource sector employs 32,000 First Nations people, and that Aboriginal communities benefit economically from resource projects.

The pipeline would deliver 525,000 barrels per day of diluted bitumen to an export terminal in Kitimat, B.C., where it would be loaded onto super-tankers to be transported through the stormy waters of the narrow Douglas Channel.

Environmentalists warn that any significant pipeline leak or super-tanker spill would have disastrous consequences for the ecology, and that energy companies are not required to pay for most of the huge costs of any potential clean-

up. Observers expect that the project could be tied up for years by legal challenges and public opposition.

Meanwhile, RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson has released a report listing 1,026 deaths and 160 missing-persons cases involving aboriginal women

since 1980, hundreds more than some previous estimates.

The report says Aboriginal women have been much more prone to violent death than non-natives, but also claims that murder cases have been solved for both groups at almost the same rate.

The 22 page report gives an overview of poverty, unemployment and other factors. Speaking at a news conference in Winnipeg, an RCMP spokesperson said there are still many unanswered questions, but that the research project is a first step in that direction.

The report notes that Aboriginal women make up 4.3% of the Canadian population, yet account for 16% of female homicides and 11.3% of missing women. Murdered Aboriginal women are more likely than average to be unemployed and to have consumed intoxicants just before their deaths. A small minority of missing and murdered aboriginal women had been involved in the sex trade, twelve percent versus five percent among non-native women. The "solve" rates are 88% for aboriginal women and 89% for others.

The Manitoba Metis Federation said the report requires concrete action, including more services for women, in communities across the country.

The Assembly of First Nations said an inquiry would force the government to address the issue by, among other things, boosting

women's shelters and other programs.

"While there have been many reports and findings to date, a national public commission of inquiry would demand immediate action, build on existing data and address the reasons why existing recommendations haven't been already implemented," Cameron Alexis, AFN regional chief for Alberta, said in a written statement.

Anaya said even though some steps have been taken, "The Federal government should undertake a comprehensive, nationwide inquiry into the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal woman and girls, organized in consultation with indigenous peoples."

His report comes as the Assembly of First Nations is in disarray after the resignation of its national chief, Shawn Atleo. The government's proposed changes to First Nation education are in limbo until the assembly clarifies its stance.

The Tories say that Bill C-33, the "First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act", meets five conditions outlined by the AFN during a secret meeting last December.

Many First Nations groups, and grassroots activists connected with Idle No More, say the legislation would strip away their rights and give the federal government too much control over the education of their children. They also point out that the December agreement was essentially a backroom deal reached without any broad consultation •

people's needs
~~not~~ corporate greed!

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COMMUNIST

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Election Rally

The 2014 provincial election is a critical one for Ontario's working class.

The Communist Party is running 12 candidates, on a platform of full-employment, massive housing and infrastructure construction, and progressive tax reform that puts the burden on corporations and the very rich. We are also campaigning for increased public transit, public auto insurance legislation, free post-secondary education, and expansions to public healthcare, education and childcare programs. We need Communist MPPs at Queen's Park that will curb corporate power.

Come out to our election rally to meet our candidates and hear from the provincial leader, Elizabeth Rowley. It will be a spirited evening of politics and entertainment!



Saturday, June 7
7 PM
Beit Zatoun
612 Markham St., Toronto
(Bathurst subway - Markham St. exit)
Info: 416-469-2446

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EDITORIALS

The spectre of fascism

The governments of the NATO countries - including Canada - are ignoring the potential for disaster in Ukraine, as a macabre chorus of anti-Russian boasting emanates from Washington, London and Ottawa. This bizarre political game even compares Russia with Nazi Germany, aiming to convince the public that the enemy of democracy and freedom in the Second World War was the Soviet Union. The truth is that Hitler fascism launched the war and slaughtered millions in its death camps, while the Soviet people, under the leadership of the Communist Party, played the decisive role in the military liberation of Europe.

This history is relevant today, in light of the attacks against trade unionists, Communists, and members of minority groups in Ukraine. We draw particular attention to the attempt to ban the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU), a major political force in that country since the dissolution of the USSR, as a so-called "threat to national security."

Virtually the first act of the Nazi regime was to ban the Communist Party. That was followed by a reign of terror against social democrats, trade unionists, progressive religious leaders, the Jewish and Roma populations, homosexuals, and other "enemies" of the Third Reich, in Germany and then across occupied.

Behind today's attack on the CPU is an attempt to deprive Ukrainian citizens of their right to freedom of speech, and to freedom of demonstrations and assembly. This effort to mute voices which oppose the ultra-nationalist agenda aims at blocking dialogue around restoration of peace and concord in Ukraine. Those who support the coup regime in Kiev - and here we include the NDP and Liberal opposition parties in Parliament - must be held to account. We urge all peace-loving and democratic forces to call upon Parliament to speak out against the descent into fascism in Ukraine, before it is too late.

Ominous results in Euro-elections

Confirming a trend which has emerged since the financial crisis of 2007-08, the European Union elections held May 22-25 saw rising support for both so-called "Eurosceptic" and anti-austerity parties. Some far-right parties drew millions of votes with their xenophobic policies, while establishment pro-European parties paid a price for their imposing their anti-people Lisbon Treaty.

Most shocking, France's far-right National Front scored its first victory in Euro Parliament elections, with 25 per cent of the vote. The right-wing Danish People's Party topped the polls, as did the governing right-wing Fidesz party in Hungary with 52 per cent and 12 seats. For the first time, the fascist Golden Dawn party in Greece elected a member of the European Parliament. In Britain, the "eurosceptic" UK Independence Party, home to many far-right elements, defeated Labour and the declining Conservatives. Overall, such parties elected over 60 members of the European Parliament (MEPs), with their biggest gains in the UK and France.

On the other hand, Greece's Syriza party topped the polls with more than 27 per cent and 6 MEPs, and the more radical Greek Communist Party climbed back to 6% and elected two MEPs after losing ground in previous elections. In Spain, the ruling conservative Popular Party and the "Socialists" lost ground to smaller parties on the left. In the Irish Republic, Sinn Fein elected two MEPs, plus another in Northern Ireland. Overall, the parties belonging to the European United Left/Nordic Green Left grouping, which includes a number of Europe's communist and workers' parties, won 6% of the total vote, electing a record 51 MEPS, a gain of 16.

The lesson? Years of economic upheaval and insecurity can generate support for revolutionary ideas, but also create the breeding grounds for fascist ideology. Much more needs to be done to expose the fascist menace as the deadliest weapon in the arsenal of the ruling class.

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LETTERS

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

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NATO actions in Ukraine risk new Cold War

Guest commentary by Dave McKee, President of the Canadian Peace Congress

At the time of writing, the media in Canada is swirling with stories about the presidential election in Ukraine, which has apparently been won in the first round by "Chocolate King" Petro Poroshenko. Most of these corporate media reports offer little more than a rehash of this carefully crafted NATO-EU narrative: following the ouster, by popular uprising, of former president Viktor Yanukovych, the Russian government moved quickly to meddle in Ukraine's delicate and unstable internal affairs; the referendum in Crimea occurred under the direct threat of Russian military intervention, thereby rendering the result as unsurprising but utterly invalid; Russia has proceeded to organize, equip and support bands of separatist militants who use terrorist tactics to destabilize Ukraine and enable Russian annexation.

This narrative concludes that the people of Ukraine have the opportunity to bring stability to their country by providing a single-round election victory to Poroshenko.

Amidst this sometimes desperate-sounding fable of "colour revolutions and confectionary rulers", the truth has conveniently been distorted or omitted entirely. This, of course, is also part of the NATO-EU narrative.

Why?

Because the last thing that imperialist organizations and governments (including Canada's) want their people to remember is that Viktor Yanukovych was a democratically elected president of a sovereign country, whose decision about the political and economic direction for Ukraine sparked massive interference in Ukraine's internal affairs. They don't want us to consider that countries of the EU and NATO, who have dedicated decades to eastward expansion and encirclement of Russia, are responsible for backing and guiding the violent coup in February in which neo-fascist forces played a key role. We are not to know that the referendum in

Crimea was rooted in that region's historical status as an autonomous republic, both in the Soviet Union and in Ukraine. The corporate media definitely want to avoid any discussion of the May 2 massacre at Odessa, in which dozens of anti-government protestors were trapped by reactionary, pro-coup forces and burned alive.

The people in imperialist

Guest Editorial...

countries are not to know these facts, because such knowledge is a key basis for building opposition. A Canadian public which recognizes the Harper government's foreign policy as aggressive, imperialist, militaristic and undemocratic is also a public that will question Canada's support and contribution to the current military buildup in eastern Europe. It is a public that will not support or accept massive increases in Canada's military budget, but will instead demand military spending cuts and the redirection of public money toward job creation, health and social programs, and the environment.

Austerity and war are two sides of the same coin. In the context of an ongoing and deepening global economic crisis, imperialist states and organizations are becoming more aggressive in their drive to divide and redivide the world, to control markets and resources and outmaneuver their rivals. At the very same time that imperialist governments are inflicting brutal austerity measures against the people and attacking labour and democratic rights, they are seeking and using new and old pretexts for interference, provocation, and war.

Such a huge contradiction, with such enormous and immediate stakes for so many people in Canada, could not be maintained if not for the massive campaign of misinformation. Imperialism's increased aggressiveness includes an intense effort to ideologically soften and confuse the population, to try to justify policies that place militarism as a most noble cause to which all social needs are

secondary. We witnessed this during the Cold War, when imperialism generated anti-Soviet and anti-communist panic and used it to vindicate a costly and destructive arms race, countless military coups and deadly dictatorships.

Which brings us back to the Ukrainian presidential election, an event as orchestrated by imperialist powers as any. Whatever the formal outcome, it is clear that stability, sovereignty and democracy will remain elusive to the people of Ukraine as long as their country is a pawn in the NATO-EU game of European realignment.

For people who truly care about the rights of the Ukrainian people - and all peoples - to peace, self-determination and quality of life, the task is clear. We must work to expose the truth behind the crisis in Ukraine, to isolate the policies and actions of NATO and the EU as the main factor that provoked the current crisis, and to assert that it is the sole right of the peoples of each country to determine the path of their social, economic and political development, free from foreign interference.

The risk of a new Cold War is real, and responding to that risk is a test of our internationalism. To avoid our responsibilities, and to instead pretend that international relations occurs in a geopolitical vacuum, means we will have failed the test. •

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Little has changed since *Komagata Maru*, say advocates

Over a hundred South Asian advocates, artists, social workers, labour unions, academics and community groups have issued a joint statement marking the centenary of *Komagata Maru*'s arrival in Vancouver harbour on May 23rd, calling for permanent immigration status for temporary foreign workers.

"The *Komagata Maru* is not just a historic incident that can be washed away by commemorative stamps," says Toronto-based workers rights organizer Sonia Singh. "We need to seriously change the course of Canadian immigration policy and include access to permanent residency for poor and working class migrants now rather than wait 100 years to apologize for the mistreatment of migrant workers."

Harsha Walia, author and activist based in Vancouver adds, "The expansion of the temporary worker program is a direct legacy of the racist exclusion of the *Komagata Maru*. Restrictive immigration and refugee laws continue to make it impossible for refugees, family members, and skilled workers to live in Canada permanently. And the calls to deport and exclude migrant workers echo the same sentiment as one hundred years ago."

Montreal-based South Asian Women Centre's Dolores Chew agrees. "Today we need to reflect on how *Komagata Maru*'s legacy continues in the current immigration system rather than put it aside as a now dealt with historical incident."

The following is the full statement, which can also be found online at <http://komagata-marulegacy.tumblr.com/>

On May 23rd, we commemorate the immense injustice that was the turning away of the *Komagata Maru*. We remember our elders in

Vancouver and across Coast and Straits Salish Territories that raised money, and attempted to defy the blockade to take supplies to those trapped aboard the ship. We honor those that were jailed, and murdered upon their return to a colonized India. This May 23rd, we mark one hundred years of resilience and resistance against racism and oppression, despite which our communities continue to live and flourish here.

For us, the *Komagata Maru* is not a historic "incident" but one step in an ongoing history of exclusion of our communities.

We have seen the mass arrest of migrants aboard the MV Sun Sea and the drumming up of racist hysteria against the Tamil community. Recent anti-immigrant and anti-refugee policies have made it impossible for most of us to reunite permanently with our parents, grandparents, spouses and children. Conditional permanent residence requirements for some spousal sponsorships mean that women facing abuse may be forced into further vulnerability or risk losing status. Fewer members of our communities doing lower wage jobs are able to come here with full immigration status. Even those that do arrive with permanent immigration status and higher qualifications often end up de-skilled or living in poverty.

On April 24th, a moratorium was placed on temporary foreign worker jobs in the food sector. Now nearly 50,000 migrant workers are locked into potentially abusive jobs with even less ability to move within the industry. Workers that have paid thousands of dollars to unscrupulous recruiters to get jobs in Canada are also severely impacted. Those working in the food sector are

almost entirely racialized, and many of them are South Asian.

Many organizations are calling for the ban to be extended to all migrant workers. These demands are part of the ongoing legacy of exclusion that the *Komagata Maru* embodies. Just as the *Komagata Maru*'s arrival was accompanied by racist trumpeting from governments, and mainstream voices, we see our newspapers today filled with the claim: "Foreigners are taking our jobs". There are rallies against migrant workers in Alberta today, just as there were against the Sikh, Muslim and Hindu families from Punjab aboard the *Komagata Maru* in 1914.

The Refugee Exclusion Act, the so-called Human Smuggling Act, Labour Market Opinions, Work Permits, Quotas and Moratoriums are the legal tools of exclusion today, just as the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Head Tax and the Continuous Journey regulations have been before.

The *Komagata Maru* is not a failure of the past that can simply be recovered through apologies and commemorative stamps. Those are important steps in a process of reconciliation that has barely begun. But, it is imperative that we stop exclusionary laws and policies now, rather than wait for apologies from future governments.

We call on the Government of Canada to immediately reverse the moratorium on migrant workers in the food sector. The temporary worker program is undoubtedly a racist and classist program, but recent calls to deport and exclude migrant workers denies their mobility rights and basic humanity. Instead of exploiting migrant workers as cheap and deportable labour, federal and provincial governments must ensure access to permanent residence, a living

wage, rights and benefits for poor and working class migrants and their families.

As South Asians, as migrants, and as allies, we refuse divide-and-conquer strategies that pit unemployed citizens against migrant workers and newly arrived migrants against those who have

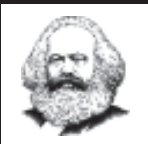
lived here for generations. We commit to working together, and in solidarity with all those that deserve and demand fairness and dignity, particularly, low-income, migrant and Indigenous communities.

It is time to stop the injustice personified in the *Komagata Maru*. •

Signing organizations include (as of May 22): 8th March Committee of Women of Diverse Origins/le Comité 8 mars des Femmes de diverses origines; Alliance for South Asian Aids Prevention; Asian Canadian Labour Alliance; Association of Filipino Parents in Quebec; CERAS (Centre sur l'Asie du sud) Montreal; Coalition of South Asian Women Against Violence; Council of Canadians; Fraser Valley Peace Council; Health and Racism Working Group, Mississauga; Justice for Migrant Workers; Migrante Alberta; Migrante Canada; Newcomer Women's Services Toronto; No One Is Illegal-Toronto; No One Is Illegal-Vancouver Coast Salish Territories; PINAY-Quebec; Q? Y Art? Project; Siraat; Shameless Magazine; South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario; South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy; South Asian Visual Arts Centre; South Asian Women's Centre - Toronto; South Asian Women's Community; Centre (SAWCC), Montreal, Occupied Kanienkehaka Territory; Trikone Vancouver; UBC Race, Autobiography, Gender and Age; United Food and Commercial Workers Union; Vancouver Status of Women.



In May 1914, a group of 376 passengers – 340 Sikhs, 12 Hindus, and 24 Muslims, organized to test Canada's "colour bar" of exclusionary immigration policies, sailed from the Orient for Vancouver on the freighter *Komagata Maru*. The ship, chartered for the voyage, had been fitted out to accommodate passengers instead of her usual coal cargoes. Arriving in English Bay on May 23, 1914, the *Komagata Maru* passengers were barred from landing by the Canadian government. (Photo: <http://kdsross.com/about-us/about/komagata-maru/>)



Marxist Theory

Why does the European Parliament matter?

By Victor Grossman, Morning Star (UK)

Will right-wingers, racists and other rabble gain new strength with the elections to the European Union? And does it matter if they do? The answer to the first question appears likely to be Yes. The second raises a tangle of new questions hotly debated in left-wing circles all around Europe.

The European Union is viewed by its advocates, sometimes dreamily, as a way towards a United States of Europe, forever ending the long, bitter history of rivalries and wars on this complicated continent.

Others, on the right and on the left, pour cold water on the dreamers, reject support for the EU and urge its dissolution - for totally different reasons.

Two men are generally honoured as EU founders. The conservative Robert Schuman, briefly a minister in Marshall Petain's fascist government in 1940, spent most of the war in a monastery, perhaps praying but also hatching plans for Europe.

In 1950, as French foreign minister, he made a famous speech which set the unifying machinery

in motion. Jean Monnet, a leading French advocate of European unity, probably wrote it.

Rarely noted are two other key players - Winston Churchill, hoping to smother any left leanings of the Labour government which replaced him and still eager to play a major role in the world, and West Germany's first chancellor Konrad Adenauer, seeking respectability for the new republic and ending the enmity between Germany and the western European nations it had waged war against and occupied until 1945.

But, delving deeper, one finds the American Committee on a United Europe (ACUE), organised in 1948 by William Donovan, boss of the wartime Office of Strategic Services, and by cold-war strategist Allen Dulles, soon to head its successor, the Central Intelligence Agency.

Presidents Truman and Eisenhower believed that European unification would help overcome post-war anti-German feelings, especially in France, easing acceptance of West Germany as a political, economic and military base for overcoming leftist influence in western Europe and weakening the position of the

USSR.

Via the ACUE, the US government secretly contributed millions of dollars to support the Schuman Plan, integrating French and German coal and steel industries and forming the base of the European Union.

The Rockefeller and Ford foundations were also financially very generous. Churchill, the vital link between ACUE and Europeans, saw this "unofficial counterpart" of the Marshall Plan as a hammer for the "liberation of the nations behind the Iron Curtain" and a path to "our aim and ideal, nothing less than the union of Europe as a whole."

The goal was never abandoned. Key remnants of the former Warsaw Pact and the USSR have been partly or fully integrated into the EU or NATO - Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, the Baltic states, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

US crusaders lead their European junior partners in a charge to win the potentially wealthy, strategically crucial Ukraine, almost closing the ring in their steady advance eastward - with the final goal at the Moskva River.

But the EU also plays a questionable role in other ways. Angela Merkel's "austerity" policy, in line with the big banks and a rigid euro, has brought frightening economic disaster to much of southern Europe.

EU policies on keeping asylum-seekers and the economically desperate from European shores, backed by the European Council's naval-military Frontex units, causes countless deaths in stormy Mediterranean waters.

EU and US businesses are secretly engaged in bridging the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership which will, if signed, permit an unhindered dictatorship of capital and another layer of restrictions on the ability of EU states to regulate or interfere in markets.

Finally, the EU is building up a military force which, with Nato, spreads its will to all continents.

With such a background and such policies, why should any left group have anything to do with it or its elections? Indeed, some reply sharply: "It shouldn't!"

But the matter is complicated - like the structure of the EU, which consists of six different bodies.

Its judicial section is in

Luxembourg, its central bank in Frankfurt and most governing bodies in Brussels, including a sort of upper house and the European Council, where heads of states meet four times a year.

For its executive body the European Commission, each of the 28 member states nominates one commissioner, who is assigned a different ministry and portfolio.

These write a host of binding rules and regulations - on subsidies for aiding depressed areas, pushing or discouraging certain crops, on smog, genetically manipulated foods, consumer standards, human rights and much more.

Currently being elected is the European Parliament, which commutes between Brussels and its main home in French Strasbourg, across the Rhine from Germany.

It is, since 1979, the only EU body elected by nearly 500 million Europeans. The 751 members, seated for five years, are apportioned more or less by population.

Germans can vote for 96 delegates, France gets 74, Italy and Britain 73. A minimum of six

see EU VOTE, page 11

BC Liberals create another education crisis

PV Vancouver Bureau

Despite a barrage of lies, half-truths and outright scaremongering, the BC Liberal government has failed to move public opinion into line for their attack on teachers. After two decades of underfunding, mostly under the Liberals since Gordon Campbell came to office in 2001, British Columbia's public education system is under tremendous stress. School closures have hit many districts, and school boards have been compelled to download a wide range of cutbacks into classrooms.

The Liberal government has twice been handed stinging legal defeats in the courts over their heavy-handed tactics, but still refuse to bargain in good faith. In their latest move, the Liberals have imposed a confusing, contradictory set of lockout guidelines, threatening to punish teachers with big salary cuts if they refuse to knuckle under to Premier Christy Clark's bullying tactics.

Teachers began a series of four one-day rotating walkouts on Monday, May 26, shutting down schools in different districts to strengthen their demand for a reasonable collective agreement. Across the province, there have been growing indications that students, parents, teachers and even school boards are rejecting the Liberal mantra of "no money for education" - a claim which is at odds with the government's \$2 billion-plus annual cuts to taxes for the rich and the corporations since 2002.

The BC Teachers Federation warns that the government's attempt to make good on their threat to roll back teachers wages during job action "will have significant impacts on students for

"Children who were in Kindergarten when those bills were passed are now in Grade 12, and have spent their entire school careers in larger classes with fewer resources. For the past 12 years, thousands of children couldn't get the services they needed because government broke the law." - BC Teachers Federation President Jim Iker

the rest of this school year."

Michael Marchbank, Premier Clark's appointed head of the BC Public School Employers Association, says that because teachers are starting rotating strikes, the government intends to claw back 10% of their wages. The pay cut will be in effect even on days when teachers are in their classrooms working with students to meet their needs.

To justify the pay cuts, the government is imposing a series of partial and full lockouts. Starting Monday, May 26, teachers are prohibited from being at school more than 45 minutes before and after class time, or from working during recess or lunch hour. All secondary teachers will be locked out on June 25 and 26, and both elementary and secondary teachers are to be locked out on June 27.

Teachers could be disciplined

for helping a struggling student at lunch hour, extra-curricular activities including clubs, drama, music, sports will be cancelled, graduation ceremonies will be impacted, and final exams for some senior secondary students will not be marked. As the BCTF says,

announced mass layoffs and deep program cuts to balance their inadequate budgets, teachers and parents were demanding reinvestment in public schools. In many places, they took to the streets, protesting at MLAs' offices, turning up the heat on

However, the government simply reintroduced the same unconstitutional provisions. By removing class-size limits and class-composition guarantees, the Premier did significant damage to learning conditions in schools.

"Children who were in

their children."

But Iker's words were not heeded. Instead, Premier Christy Clark has provoked yet another crisis in the province's public schools.

As the Communist Party of BC points out, this is not just a personal



none of these impacts would have occurred under the teachers' job action plan.

"We were careful to ensure that already scheduled extra-curricular and volunteer activities continued. We wanted to minimize the impact on students," said BCTF President Jim Iker. "During rotating strikes, teachers would continue all volunteer activities four out of five days a week."

While Premier Clark says that children should not be put in the middle, she is imposing significant disruptions to the education system. Some secondary school teachers will be locked out on the day their students graduate.

Iker said that the directive

trustees, and using social media to make their concerns heard.

In Port Coquitlam a May 23 rally was spurred by a school district budget that required \$13.4 million in cuts and resulted in the layoff of more than 600 teachers and 200 support workers.

Vancouver parents and students, along with other supporters of public education, came out in the hundreds to budget consultations, calling for the Vision-led school board to keep the cuts out of the classroom. This Board, chaired by Patti Bacchus, has been among the most outspoken critics of Liberal underfunding, but it too faces enormous deficits as more and more unfunded costs are downloaded by the province.

In Mission, parents rallied in support of teachers on May 21 in front of their Liberal MLA's constituency office, demanding better education for their children.

In Port Moody, as several trustees voted against the board's final operating budget, more than 100 parents, teachers and support workers turned out for the budget meeting which ended weeks of consultation with stakeholders.

The story has been the same across the province, as the depth of the crisis sinks in to the public. Often the protests have taken the form of impassioned speeches at budget consultations, but in many places, demonstrations have been organized.

All this comes just months after teachers across BC celebrated the latest ruling by the BC Supreme Court, reaffirming that provincial legislation limiting teachers' bargaining rights is unconstitutional. The January ruling restored collective agreement provisions stripped in 2002, and ordered the province to pay \$2 million in damages plus court costs.

The legislation was already declared unconstitutional in 2011, and the judge gave the government one year to rectify the situation.

Kindergarten when those bills were passed are now in Grade 12, and have spent their entire school careers in larger classes with fewer resources," Iker said at the time. "For the past 12 years, thousands of children couldn't get the services they needed because government broke the law."

The legislation removed provisions that guaranteed smaller classes, support for students with special needs, and services from teacher-librarians, counsellors, and other specialists. The government then cut hundreds of millions of dollars a year from public education budgets, forcing school boards to cut programs and close more than 200 public schools. More than 3,500 teaching positions, including 1,500 specialist teachers, were also cut.

"If government had respected the Charter, teachers would not have had to spend the past dozen years fighting for our rights," Iker said. "Now we expect that government will do everything necessary to demonstrate respect for the court's ruling and make the situation right. Restore our smaller classes, rehire our specialist colleagues, and help us rebuild the excellent public education system that British Columbians expect for

vendetta by the Premier: "The entire public health and education sector is under ruthless attack, not only in BC and Canada, but across the entire capitalist world. In country after country, austerity policies have been imposed on an unwilling population, with devastating results for employment and the quality of public services. All this is being done as part of a broader attempt to shift wealth produced by working people into the hands of transnational corporations and their wealthy shareholders."

The CPBC warns that the Premier and her friends in the corporate sector aim to destroy British Columbia's public education system, deliberately creating crisis after crisis, even as they increase taxpayer funding for private schools.

The government's goal, the CPBC says, is to gut the public school system, compelling working people to shift into profiteering private schools.

The CPBC has urged full support on the picket lines for the teachers as this crisis deepens. Full solidarity is needed to help win a fair collective agreement with BC teachers, including salaries in line with other provinces, and smaller class sizes. ●



PV file photo by K. Cariou

US Policy on Ukraine: Follow the Money

By Stephen Gowans

A favoured leftist explanation of the United States's and European Union's intervention in Ukraine revolves around the geopolitical imperative for Washington of containing a US military rival, Russia, and bringing NATO up to its borders by integrating Ukraine into the US-led military alliance. What's rarely mentioned is that the role played by the United States and its European subalterns in supporting the Maidan uprising and the consequent rise to power of the pro-Western coup government has also been motivated by the goal of building a more congenial climate in Ukraine for the profit-making activities of Western corporations and investors.

While Ukraine's economy is understood by leftists to be capitalist and therefore not to raise a red flag at the US State Department, it is far from true that Ukraine's economic policies under the ousted former president Victor Yanukovich were warmly accepted, even tolerated, in Western foreign policy circles. Indeed, from the point of view of the West, Ukraine's economy left much to be desired. It needed, IMF managers said, to be reorganized by "structural reforms" to "improve the business climate." (*Interview with Reza Moghadam: Ukraine Unveils Reform Program with IMF Support, IMF Survey, April 30, 2014*)

What's important here is not that Ukraine was viewed as infertile ground for capitalist profit-making - but that it was viewed as infertile ground for the profit-making activities of Western corporations specifically.

The Heritage Foundation-Wall Street Journal 2014 Index of Economic Freedom rates Ukraine's economy as "repressed" along with those of such perennial US regime change targets as North Korea, Cuba, Zimbabwe, Venezuela and Iran - all unfriendly to the idea that economic policy should be formulated to pad bank accounts and bottom lines in New York, London, Frankfurt and Paris.

Ukraine's economic freedom - that is, its adherence to the free enterprise, open markets, free trade agenda favoured on Wall Street - is even ranked behind that of Belarus, a country reviled in Western foreign policy circles for its nostalgic attachment to Soviet economic forms. Of 43 countries in Europe, the US ruling class foundation and newspaper rank Ukraine's friendliness to Western corporate interests dead last, and only a little better than that of communist North Korea and Cuba, socialist Venezuela and economically nationalist Zimbabwe and Iran. So where, in the view of the West's corporate elite, has Ukraine gone wrong?

The Heritage Foundation and its Wall Street Journal partner have a number of complaints. "Contracts are not well enforced, and expropriation is always a possibility." "The labor code" they grouse, "is outmoded and lacks flexibility," meaning it offers too many protections to workers. Government procurement policies

are denounced for sometimes favouring domestic firms, and hence, limiting the profit-making opportunities of North American and European corporations. Exception is taken to Ukraine's state-owned firms, which crowd out private (mainly Western) enterprise, and Kiev's restrictions on foreign investment, which give a leg up to domestic businesses but cut foreign corporations out of the action.

Some of these noxious-to-Wall-Street barriers to Western profit-making would have been dismantled had Yanukovich not backed away from an agreement with the European Union that would have seen Ukraine get preferential access to EU markets in return for turning over Ukraine's labor, markets and resources to Western business interests. But, alas, Yanukovich balked and Washington took advantage of the ensuing protests to foment an uprising to bring a biddable pro-foreign-investment stooge to power, backed by fascists and militant Russophobes.

The coup government quickly signed on to an IMF economic reform program which promises to replace the set of economic policies Washington and Brussels have long derogated for being unfriendly to Western investors with one aimed at pushing Ukraine into Wall Street's good books. Reza Moghadam, director of the IMF's European Department, explained that "the program ... is expected to ... help restore confidence among private investors," to which he might have added, investors of the sort who own mansions in and around New York City and other Western financial capitals.

Moghadam adds that "Ukraine needs to undertake deep-reaching structural reforms" to improve Ukraine's business climate. That roughly translates into holding the line on wages, laying off public sector workers, gutting protections for employees, hiking taxes on ordinary people while bringing them down for businesses, rolling back social services, and throwing open the doors of the economy to Western corporations.

Here are the details. Public sector wages will be held in check while increases in the minimum wage will be capped. At the same time, "expenditure restraint will be exercised through the suspension of" (what the IMF calls) "unaffordable wage and pension increases planned by the previous" (i.e., Yanukovich) "government, public employment reduction ... and rationalization of social assistance spending." So far this is shaping up to mean that "24,000 state workers and 80,000 police officers nationwide are set to be laid off," with more austerity to follow.

And while public expenditures are being reined in in the interests of creating an improved business environment, tax revenues will be hiked, not through increases in corporate taxes and income tax, but on regressive consumption taxes, which fall most heavily on those with the lowest incomes. The wealthy will be spared the burden of contributing to state coffers by measures to "facilitate

value-added tax refunds for businesses." And while ordinary Ukrainians are being squeezed to give more to businesses and investors, a new procurement law will be adopted to deny domestic firms preferential treatment in the awarding of government contracts. North American and European firms will be the principal beneficiaries.

The coup government's principals, explains Moghadam, "believe there is a window of opportunity for bold and ambitious reforms in order to transform Ukraine" into "a vibrant business environment" - yes, and one that

pays dividends to foreigners on the backs of Ukrainians. The sole reason for the existence of Ukrainians (and most of humanity) under the logic of the US-supervised system of global capitalism is to be screwed over in order to make a thin upper layer of Western society fabulously wealthy.

If we accept that the United States's wealthiest citizens as a class exercise inordinate influence over public policy - a point supported by research presented in an upcoming paper in *Perspectives on Politics* by Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page - it

follows that the principal function of the US State Department and the Pentagon is to support the overseas profit-making activities of US corporations. Hence, what likely lies at the root of US interventions abroad is the defense and promotion of US investor and corporate interests contra the economic nationalist (Ukraine, Zimbabwe, Iran), socialist (Venezuela) or communist (Cuba and North Korea) economic policies of foreign states. Yanukovich's government gave too many breaks to Ukrainian investors, businesses, and even ordinary citizens, and therefore committed the cardinal sin in the church of US global hegemony: interfering in the profit-maximization of US corporations. That, perhaps more than US geopolitical and military interests, explains why the United States backs the coup in Kiev and opposes the forces arrayed against it.

Russia's repatriation of Crimea - backed by the peninsula's largely Russophone population, as it had also been overwhelmingly backed in a 1991 plebiscite - was simply a defensive reaction by Moscow against the danger that the coup government in Kiev would seek to eject it from its naval base on the Black Sea. It was not the aggressive act Western figures of state and their mass media echo-chambers have made it out to be. The true aggressor here is US foreign policy in pursuit of its principal function of promoting the overseas profit-making interests of corporate America. ●



On March 14, anti-fascists in Kharkov (eastern Ukraine) protested against the neo-Nazi gang "Right Sector". When they arrived at the fascists' hiding place, the Right Sector opened fire, killing two people. Participants in the rally above (held March 23) tied black ribbons on flags in remembrance of the dead activists and observed a minute of silence. The sign reads, "Stop fascism"

Ukraine: 400 US mercenaries "deployed on ground"

From RT News

About 400 elite mercenaries from the notorious US private security firm Academi (formerly Blackwater) are taking part in the Ukrainian military operation against anti-government protesters in southeastern regions of the country, German media reports.

The Bild am Sonntag newspaper, citing a source in intelligence circles, wrote that Academi employees are involved in the Kiev military crackdown on pro-autonomy activists in near the town of Slavyansk, in the Donetsk region.

On April 29, the German Intelligence Service (BND) informed Chancellor Angela Merkel's government about the mercenaries' participation in the operation, the paper said, RIA Novosti reported. It is not clear who commands the private military contractors and pays for their services, however.

In March, media reports appeared suggesting that the coup-imposed government in Kiev could have employed up to 300 mercenaries. That was before the new government launched a military operation against anti-Maidan activists, or "terrorists" as Kiev put it, in southeast Ukraine.

At the time, the Russian Foreign Ministry said then that

reports claiming Kiev was planning to "involve staff from foreign military companies to "ensure the rule of law," could suggest that it wanted "to suppress civil protests and dissatisfaction."

In particular, Greystone Limited, is a candidate for such a gendarme role. It is a similar and probably an affiliated structure of the Blackwater private army, whose staff have been accused of cruel and systematic violations of human rights in various trouble spots on many occasions.

"Among the candidates for the role of gendarme is the Barbados-registered company Greystone Limited, which is integrated with the Academi corporation," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. "It is an analogue, and, probably and affiliated body of the Blackwater private army, whose employees have repeatedly been accused of committing grievous and systematic human rights abuses in different troubled regions."

Allegations increased further after unverified videos appeared on YouTube of unidentified armed men in the streets of Donetsk, the capital of the country's industrial and coalmining region. In those videos, onlookers can be heard shouting "Mercenaries!" "Blackwater!," and "Who are you going to shoot at?"

Academi denied its

involvement in Ukraine, claiming on its website that "rumours" were posted by "some irresponsible bloggers and online reporters."

"Such unfounded statements combined with the lack of factual reporting to support them and the lack of context about the company, are nothing more than sensationalistic efforts to create hysteria and headlines in times of genuine crisis," the US firm stated.

American security company Blackwater gained worldwide notoriety for the substantial role it played in the Iraq war as a contractor for the US government. In recent years it has changed its name twice - in 2009 it was renamed Xe Services and in 2011 it got its current name, Academi.

The firm became infamous for the alleged September 16, 2007 killing of 17 Iraqi civilians in Baghdad. The attack, which saw 20 others wounded, was allegedly without justification and in violation of deadly-force rules that pertained to American security contractors in Iraq at the time. Between 2005 and September 2007, Blackwater security guards were involved in at least 195 shooting incidents in Iraq and fired first in 163 of those cases, a Congressional report said at the time. ●



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Sao Paul bus strike

Bus drivers in Sao Paulo, Brazil, went on strike on May 20, closing bus stations and abandoning some vehicles in the street. Local transport officials said that 230,000 passengers had been affected by early afternoon and more during the evening rush hour. Fifteen of the city's 18 bus stations were closed down.

The striking drivers refuse to accept the results of negotiations between their union and management, which agreed to a 10 per cent pay increase. About 300 striking bus drivers and conductors marched to the mayor's office to demand a meeting.

WFTU condemns "murderous policy"

A May 13 explosion cost the lives of at least 200 mineworkers and injured many more in a coal mine in Soma, Turkey, about 250 km south of Istanbul, owned by Soma Komur Isletmeleri AS.

In a statement, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) said, "The private ownership of the mine and the profit-oriented policy that reduces up-to-date technology and periodic maintenance, the criminal lack of proper safety measures, and the intensification of labour are the true causes behind the blast that hit the power unit, caused a fire and ended with the carbon monoxide poisoning of hundreds of mineworkers.

"This was no accident and this was not an individual case. Dozens of occupational and fatal accidents occur throughout the year in the mines of Turkey. The WFTU denounces the Government of Turkey and the companies exploiting the mines for their murderous lack of safety measures, and demands the end of privatization of the people's wealth and natural resources, the modernization of technology used in the mines, the immediate implementation of safety controls, and the application of all necessary measures in all mines to protect the lives of the working people.

"The WFTU expresses its condolences to the families of the victims and demands immediate full compensation for the families and the injured workers."

Forced labour report

Forced labor produces illegal profits of \$150 billion a year, the United Nations' labor agency says in an appeal for global eradication of the abuse.

A May 20 report by the International Labor Organization offered the fullest picture yet of an underground economy built on the involuntary toil of an estimated 21 million workers. Women are most commonly the victims of forced employment in sex-related trades and domestic chores, while men and boys are more commonly exploited in agricultural, mining

and construction work, the ILO found.

ILO director-general, Guy Ryder, said the report highlights the need "to eradicate this fundamentally evil but hugely profitable practice as soon as possible." He said governments, employers and unions all needed to do more to stamp out abusive employment practices, including outright slavery.

The report said the most developed countries, including the entire European Union, accounted for nearly a third of the illegal profits, \$46.9 billion, while the rest of the Asia Pacific region



generated \$51.8 billion. It found that exploited workers generated much more money per head for their employers in the richest countries. Estimated profits in developed countries reached \$34,800 per worker, while Africa registered the lowest per-capita profit rate of \$3,900.

Ryder said governments needed to improve welfare support "to prevent households from sliding into the poverty that pushes people into forced labor.... We need to improve levels of education and literacy so that household decision-makers can understand their own vulnerability to forced labor and know their rights as workers."

The agency's previous report on forced labor, in 2005, estimated worldwide profits at \$44 billion. The latest report expanded its analysis greatly to include miners, construction workers, maids and au pairs, and other jobs involving employer coercion and little pay.

Aussie dockers mount safety campaign

In the wake of the death of Anthony Attard, a father of three who was killed doing his job on board the Toll RoRo vessel Tasmanian Achiever, the Maritime Union of Australia is gearing up for a massive escalation of its Waterfront Safety Campaign.

Health and safety officials uncovered a range of serious gaps that require immediate attention before work can safely resume on the vessel, including: lack of a decent traffic management plan, lack of a dedicated spotter and flagger to coordinate the safe movement of people and vehicles on and off the vessel, lack of commitment to training by Toll, no person in charge at certain times of day, no proper toolbox meetings, no proper post-incident investigation processes, inadequate radios and

communication systems, too much pedestrian movement through the roro operation, and workers being required to work alone in cargo care and deck operations.

Tragic deaths in the stevedoring industry are not "accidents", says the union, but have causes which require regulation to prevent.

Australia's Prime Minister Tony Abbott has dismantled safety regulation on the docks. His government has blocked the Stevedoring Code of Practice, and twelve other life-saving codes of practice, which it describes as "red tape". The MUA will hold a National Bulk and General Safety Conference on 18-19 June in Sydney to chart out the direction of the campaign.

Turkish mine unions weakened

Data provided by Turkey's Ministry of Labor and Social Security indicates that the number of unionized miners, which was 81,748 in 2004, decreased to 38,492 in 2014. Miners' unions came into the spotlight after a fire in a coalmine in the town of Soma killed 301 miners on May 13. The fire is blamed on negligence by the private mining company, which was criticized for a lack of safety measures in the mine. Some miners have complained that company officials ignored their warnings on rising levels of carbon monoxide in the mine.

According to the ministry figures, the number of members of Maden-Is, a union whose members were among those in the Soma mine, saw a decline in membership from 49,000 in 2004 to 30,000 in 2014. Maden-Is is among three major labor unions in which Turkish miners have membership.

The decline is attributed to subcontracting by private mining companies, and miners' lack of confidence in the unions. A representative of a miners' union faced angry protests by miners when he attempted to hold a press conference in Soma about the May 13 disaster. Miners claimed the unions were serving the interests of company executives instead of workers.

Declining labour force in Europe

The employment rate of the population aged 20 to 64 in the EU28 countries showed a clear pattern during the last decade: it rose steadily from 66.7% in 2002 to 70.3% in 2008, then fell with the financial crisis to 68.9%, and has since continuously decreased to 68.3% in 2013. For the age group 55 to 64 in the EU28, the pattern is quite different: the employment rate has grown steadily from 38.1% in 2002 to reach 50.1% in 2013. This information comes from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, based on the 2013 results of the European Labour Force Survey.

Among the member states, five broad groups could be distinguished. Twelve states (Bulgaria, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Italy,

Cyprus, Netherlands, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland) showed the same evolution as the EU28 average, meaning an increase until around 2008 and then a decrease. In nine (the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Romania, Sweden, the United Kingdom), the employment rate rose until around 2008, then fell, but then partially recovered. In Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria and Poland, the employment rate rose until around 2008 and then remained almost stable. In Portugal, there has been an almost continuous fall, while Germany and Malta showed a nearly continuous growth over the whole period. The divergence of the employment rates across EU member states increased after the 2008 financial crisis.

Arrests at EU Business Summit

240 people were arrested on May 15 around the European Business Summit venue in Brussels during non-violent protests organised by trade unions and citizens' groups. The protestors had gathered to denounce budget austerity policies in Europe, and the ongoing talks on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the EU and the USA, which they say is being negotiated "in total opacity".

"Today multinationals are inviting political decision makers like the European trade commissioner Karel De Gucht and they are discussing putting more business in Europe," said Felipe Van Keirsblick, the secretary general of the Belgian trade union for employees, the CNE-CNG.

"We don't want more business in Europe, we want more democracy in Europe and that's what people want, not what multinationals want."

What started as a large protest of citizens from all over Europe and from different cultural and professional backgrounds - from farmers to administrative employees and students - was soon reduced to a much smaller group, after the police entered Louise Square, a luxurious shopping district area of Brussels not far from the venue.

The business summit, which spanned two days in one of the Egmont Palace in Brussels, discussed how to build a "more competitive" Europe, with panel discussions on banking union, financing innovation and "maintaining citizens' trust". But the summit also revealed a widening gap between the "Europe from above" and the "Europe from below", embodied in the TTIP talks process.

Despite projections of growth and job creation from the US-EU trade deal, protesters were categorically opposed. "When Mexico and the United States twenty years ago started NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Area, they said it would create a million jobs. They've lost millions of jobs," the unions declared. "Even the figures coming from the European Commission say that very, very little jobs will be created, but people must know that this possible creation of jobs - that never occurs - is only for some little groups, for the richest people. The free trade area between EU and USA will destroy jobs, social protection and environmental rights, especially in the South, the East and for the poor in Europe."

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

Join 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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387 Selkirk Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R2W 2M3
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Tel/fax: 902-542-7981

Kidnapped girls become tools of US imperial policy

By Glen Ford, *Information Clearing House*

A chorus of outraged public opinion demands that the "international community" and the Nigerian military "Do something!" about the abduction by Boko Haram of 280 teenage girls. It is difficult to fault the average US consumer of packaged "news" products for knowing next to nothing about what the Nigerian army has actually been "doing" to suppress the Muslim fundamentalist rebels since, as senior columnist Margaret Kimberley pointed out the three US broadcast networks carried "not a single television news story about Boko Haram" in all of 2013.

But, that doesn't mean the Nigerian army hasn't been bombing, strafing, and indiscriminately slaughtering thousands of, mainly, young men in the country's mostly Muslim north.

The newly aware US public may or may not be screaming for blood, but rivers of blood have already flowed in the region. Those Americans who read - which, presumably, includes First Lady Michelle Obama, who took her husband's place on radio to pledge US help in the hunt for the girls - would have learned in the New York Times of the army's savage offensive near the Niger border, last May and June. In the town of Bosso, the Nigerian army killed hundreds of young men in traditional Muslim garb "Without Asking Who They Are," according to the NYT headline.

"They don't ask any questions," said a witness who later fled for his life, like thousands of others. "When they see young men in traditional robes, they shoot them on the spot," said a student. "They catch many of the others and take them away, and we don't hear from them again."

The Times' Adam Nossiter interviewed many refugees from the army's "all-out land and air campaign to crush the Boko Haram insurgency." He reported:

"All spoke of a climate of terror that had pushed them, in the thousands, to flee for miles through the harsh and baking semidesert, sometimes on foot, to Niger. A few blamed Boko Haram - a shadowy, rarely glimpsed presence for most residents - for the violence. But the overwhelming majority blamed the military, saying they had fled their country because of it."

In just one village, 200 people were killed by the military.

In March of this year, fighters who were assumed to be from Boko Haram attacked a barracks and jail in the northern city of Maiduguri. Hundreds of prisoners fled, but 200 youths were rounded up and made to lie on the ground. A witness told the Times: "The soldiers made some calls and a few minutes later they started shooting the people on the ground. I counted 198 people killed at that checkpoint."

Extrajudicial killings

All told, according to Amnesty International, more than 600 people were extrajudicially murdered, "most of them unarmed, escaped detainees, around

Maiduguri." An additional 950 prisoners were killed in the first half of 2013 in detention facilities run by Nigeria's military Joint Task Force, many at the same barracks in Maiduguri. Amnesty International quotes a senior officer in the Nigerian Army, speaking anonymously: "Hundreds have been killed in detention either by shooting them or by suffocation," he said. "There are times when people are brought out on a daily basis and killed. About five people, on average, are killed nearly on a daily basis."

Chibok, where the teenage girls were abducted, is 80 miles from Maiduguri, capital of Borno State.

In 2009, when the Boko Haram had not yet been transformed into a fully armed opposition, the military summarily executed their handcuffed leader and killed at least 1,000 accused members in the states of Borno, Yobe, Kano and Bauchi, many of them apparently simply youths from suspect neighbourhoods. A gruesome video shows the military at work.

"In the video, a number of unarmed men are seen being made to lie down in the road outside a building before they are shot," Al Jazeera reports in text accompanying the video. "As one man is brought out to face death, one of the officers can be heard urging his colleague to 'shoot him in the chest not the head - I want his hat'."

These are only snapshots of the army's response to Boko Haram - atrocities that are part of the context of Boko Haram's ghastly behaviour. The military has refused the group's offer to exchange the kidnapped girls for imprisoned Boko Haram members. (We should not assume



US and Kenyan soldiers in a US Army photo

that everyone detained as Boko Haram is actually a member - only that all detainees face imminent and arbitrary execution.)

None of the above is meant to tell Boko Haram's "side" in this grisly story, but to emphasise the Nigerian military's culpability in the group's mad trajectory - the same military that many newly-minted "Save Our Girls" activists demand take more decisive action in Borno.

The bush to which the Boko Haram retreated with their captives was already a free-fire zone, where anything that moves is subject to obliteration by government aircraft. Nigerian air forces have now been joined by US surveillance planes operating out of the new US drone base in neighbouring Niger, further entrenching AFRICOM/CIA in the continental landscape.

Serving US policies

The Chibok abductions have served the same US foreign policy purposes as Joseph Kony sightings in central Africa, which were

conjured-up to justify the permanent stationing of US Special Forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, in 2011, on humanitarian interventionist grounds. The United States (and France and Britain, plus the rest of NATO, if need be) must maintain a deepening and permanent presence in Africa to defend the continent from Africans.

When the crowd yells that America "Do something!" somewhere in Africa, the US military is likely to already be there.

Barack Obama certainly needs no encouragement to intervention; his presidency is roughly coterminous with AFRICOM's founding and explosive expansion. Obama broadened the war against Somalia that was launched by George Bush in partnership with the genocidal Ethiopian regime, in 2006 (an invasion that led directly to what the United Nations called "the worst humanitarian crisis in Africa").

He built on Bill Clinton and

George Bush's legacies in the Congo, where US client states Uganda and Rwanda caused the slaughter of six million people since 1996 - the greatest genocide of the post War World II era. He welcomed South Sudan as the world's newest nation - the culmination of a decades-long project of the US, Britain and Israel to dismember Africa's largest country, but which has now fallen into a bloody chaos, as does everything the US touches these days.

Most relevant to the plight of Chibok's young women, Obama led "from behind" NATO's regime change in Libya, removing the anti-jihadist bulwark Muammar Gaddafi ("We came, we saw, he died," said Hillary Clinton) and destabilising the whole Sahelian tier of the continent, all the way down to northern Nigeria. As BAR columnist Ajamu Baraka writes, "Boko Haram benefited from the destabilisation of various countries across the Sahel following the Libya conflict." The once-"shadowy" group now sported new weapons and vehicles and was clearly better trained and disciplined. In short, the Boko Haram, like other jihadists, had become more dangerous in a post-Gaddafi Africa - thus justifying a larger military presence for the same Americans and (mainly French) Europeans who had brought these convulsions to the region.

If Obama has his way, it will be a very long war - the better to grow AFRICOM - with some very unsavoury allies (from both the Nigerian and American perspectives).

So, why are we to believe that they are really so concerned about the girls of Chibok? ●

Organise to resist BJP: Prakash Karat

With the ascent to power by RSS-backed Narendra Modi, the people of India will be subjected to a twin-pronged attack - intensified pursuit of neo-liberal reforms and heightened communalisation of society resulting in the division of the people. The task before the Left today is to rally the people against neo-liberal policies and prepare the people for struggles while safeguarding their unity.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) General Secretary Prakash Karat, speaking in Hyderabad on May 19, said that social justice would also be in danger since the RSS, whose ideology is against the interests of dalits and minorities, would be the guide for the Central Government and the ruling party. He pointed out that the BJP's manifesto for these elections did not contain anything about the important subject of reservations. In such a scenario, there is a need to launch big struggles by the Left, democratic and secular forces in the country. The CPI(M) would do its best to organise these struggles, said Karat.

Big corporates systematically launched a marketing campaign to make Narendra Modi the Prime Minister. Added to these efforts were those of VHP and RSS at the ground level and this resulted in

their victory, said Karat. He said both Congress and BJP pursue similar economic policies. During the Congress-led UPA regime many corporates benefited in a big way



CPI(M) leader Prakash Karat

and this was reflected in unprecedented scams. The owners were facing criminal charges due to these scams and were on the lookout for a leader who could more effectively protect their interests. They found one in Narendra Modi, who as Gujarat chief minister showered most benefits on them. He provided them land free of cost, power and many other utilities at highly subsidised rates. This was projected as the Gujarat model. From Anil Ambani to Ratan Tata, everyone made a beeline to Gujarat and publicly expressed their desire to see Modi as PM.

The RSS, in a planned manner

created communal violence in Uttar Pradesh, which sends the largest number of MPs, in order to polarise the voters on religious lines. It seems to have succeeded with the BJP bagging the biggest ever haul of seats in UP. The corporates who have system-

atically marketed Modi for the top post would now seek back their pound of flesh and that will put the workers rights under threat, said Karat. He called for organising workers, farmers and other toilers to resist the impending attacks on their livelihoods. ●

No true majority for BJP

Despite the headlines of a "Modi sweep", his right-wing BJP party won just 31% of the vote in the Indian elections, but 52% of the total seats, or 282 out of 543. Allies of the BJP received another 8% of the total, and 54 seats. The Indian Congress party received 19.3%, and 44 seats, both historic low points. Congress allies won another 15 seats. Other big parties include the ADMK (3.3% and 37 seats), the Trinamool Congress based in West Bengal (3.8% and 34 seats), and the Janata Dal (1.7% and 20 seats). The Communist Party of India (Marxist) received 18 million votes, or 3.2%, but only 9 seats, down from 16 in the previous Lok Sabha. The Communist Party of India got 0.8% of the total vote, and one seat, a loss of three. The new Aam Aadmi anti-corruption party took 11.3 million votes, or 2.0%, and won four seats. The results have fuelled calls for a proportional representation voting system for India.

The CPI(M) calls to "seriously correct such distortions through proper electoral reforms. For instance, issues like corporate funding of political parties and restrictions on expenditures by political parties (confined only to candidates today), must be seriously addressed... The CPI(M) has been arguing for introducing a system of partial proportional representation in our electoral system. Even after such a major victory, the BJP's vote share will be much below 50 per cent of all votes that have been cast in these elections. This means that there are more voters who voted against the BJP than for. Such anomalies arise due to the 'first past the post' system where a candidate polling the highest vote amongst all contesting candidates is declared elected..."

How much longer? Obama and the Cuban Five

By Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada, <http://realcuba.wordpress.com/>

The arrest in Cuba of four Miami residents who came with the aim of carrying out terrorist acts here that were planned there - where they received training, resources and where their bosses are - brings to light once again the absolute injustice committed against our Five compatriots. They were conducting a difficult and risky mission precisely to try to prevent similar crimes.

The heroic task of Gerardo, Ramon, Antonio, Fernando and René was perfectly legitimate. It was based on what is known as "state of necessity" or otherwise known as "necessity defense." In certain circumstances, to save lives that are in danger a person can commit lesser violations (forcing entry into a home without asking permission and causing material damage in order to rescue someone from a fire, is an easy example to understand).

In this case, to save other lives, they put their own lives in danger, and not just in one heroic act - as in the example of the house on fire - but rather in many heroic acts in the years that they worked inside the worst terrorist groups, in order to discover their plans. They never used arms nor used force or violence. In their daily lives they obeyed the law and their social duties. They were models of civility as their neighbours and co-workers testified in their trial.

Our compatriots technically committed only one fault: they didn't reveal to authorities the nature of their mission in Miami. That violation of not having registered as a foreign agent is quite common in the United States and it is normally resolved with payment of a fine.

In the case of the Cuban Five that omission is also completely justified. In fact, it was essential. Why would someone struggle against Miami terrorism and at the same time notify the very same authorities who have helped and supported the terrorists for 50 years?

The very trial they were subjected to proves that point to the hilt. From the initial indictments to the sessions where their excessive sentences were imposed and throughout the trial, the prosecutors never hid the fact that they were on the side of the terrorists, that they were their protectors, and to support them they placed our heroes in the docket of the accused in a bizarre subversion of justice.

The judge, for her part, had her own unforgettable moments, which exposed the true essence of what was occurring. This was especially true when she imposed their sentences, which included, at the request of the Government, the so-called "incapacitation clause", subjecting the defendants to a special regimen - after they were to complete their exaggerated prison terms - that the Prosecution considered "perhaps more important" than the unjust imprisonment.

It had to do with preventing that never again any of the Cuban Five could attempt anything against the terrorists.

Since René and Antonio were U.S. citizens by birth and could not be expelled immediately from the

country, as Fernando was recently, they added several years of "probation" with strict conditions that included this very telling one: "As a further special condition of supervised release the defendant is prohibited from associating with or visiting specific places where individuals or groups such as terrorists, members of organizations advocating violence, and organized crime figures are known to be or frequent."

This outrageous order was issued in December 2001. In those days W. Bush proclaimed that "any government that supports, protects or harbours terrorists is complicit in the murder of the innocent and equally guilty of terrorist crimes" and motivated by that idea he unleashed everywhere his "war



Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada

against terrorism." Wherever it may be, although for Bush obviously Miami is on another planet.

The judge's clause to protect the terrorists is the very essence of the whole saga of the Five. It is enough to read the order issued by the same judge, 10 years later, when René left the prison. She wanted to force him to remain there, alone, isolated, unarmed, without the possibility of defending himself against any aggression. As if that weren't enough the judge repeated, word for word, the prohibition given 10 years before. The warning was very clear: They were not going to protect René from the terrorists, but rather protect them from René.

Today, like yesterday, the United States government clearly recognizes that they know who the terrorists are in Miami. They also know where they are and what places they frequent. But it also shows, shamefully, that the "Bush doctrine" doesn't apply to them, and instead of capturing and sending them to jail, it dedicates its efforts to protect them.

That's why it surprised no one

when in 2005 Luis Posada Carriles - wanted for 20 years by Interpol, fugitive from Venezuelan justice who was being tried for the destruction of a civilian airliner in mid-flight in 1976 - decided to install himself in Miami and continue promoting terrorism against Cuba, and no longer while underground, but out in the open.

It was also no surprise that four members of Posada's terrorist network have come to Cuba several times to prepare new attacks and are now in prison here. They are individuals with a criminal record in Miami, and have even boasted publicly about their criminal intentions.

The impunity with which these criminal groups continue to operate is a direct consequence of the process pursued against our Five comrades. What happened more than 15 years ago was a clear message still in effect: in Miami not only is terrorism against Cuba permitted, but also benefits with the complicity and protection of the authorities.

The conversion of southern Florida to a sanctuary for terrorism can also be a dangerous game for the people of the United States. While the Cuban Five were imprisoned and the infamous trial was conducted against them, the majority of the terrorists who carried out the atrocity on Sept. 11, 2001 were training right there in Miami. None of them raised suspicions; none of them drew the interest of the FBI. Because in Miami, the FBI has no time for those things since they dedicate their all to protect the anti-Cuban terrorism and to punish those who try to prevent their crimes.

Barack Obama is approaching the mid-term of his second and last period as President. When he entered the White House in 2009 he received an immoral and hypocritical conduct he is not responsible for. But he will be if he does nothing to change it.

In his hands is the power to do something so he is remembered as someone different from his predecessor. The first thing would be to grant immediate and unconditional freedom to Gerardo Hernandez Nordelo, Ramon Labanino and Antonio Guerrero. He can do it and he knows it. He also knows that if he doesn't do it, history will not forgive him.

Ricardo Alarcon has served as Cuba's UN ambassador, Foreign Minister and president of the National Assembly. •



The Fifth of the Month to Free the Five

Join in the worldwide action on the 5th day of each month! Write to President Obama and demand that he Free the Cuban Five:

E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

On the web: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>

Phone 1-202-456-1111 Fax 1-202-456-2461

Telegram: President Barack Obama, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 2500, USA

For more information, see <http://thecuban5.org> or www.canadianetworkoncuba.ca



MUSIC NOTES
By Wally Brooker

David Rovics planning fall Canada tour

Negotiations are underway to bring renowned singer-songwriter and activist David Rovics back to Ottawa next October for a fundraising concert to send an Ernesto Che Guevara Work Brigade volunteer to Cuba. In a recent announcement to supporters, Rovics has outlined a "crowd sourced plan" for a fall tour of the USA and Canada. He hopes to hear from at least 30 individuals or groups who live in the USA, or anywhere in Canada within 200 miles of the US border, and willing to commit to organizing a concert. By late June he'll begin mapping out a continent-wide tour. Other artists use similar methods to organize tours, but what's striking about Rovics is his enduring and seemingly tireless commitment to the life of a radical grassroots troubadour, and his ability to bring first-hand reports of local struggles from around the world to each community that he visits. For access to his music and information on how to organize a David Rovics show scroll down to the bottom of his website (www.davidrovics.com).

Folk Alliance abandoning principles?

Folk Alliance International (FAI), the umbrella group for the North American folk music community, has come under scathing criticism from two prominent members who accuse it of abandoning its principles. Music critic Dave Marsh, a life member and former director, lashed out in a special issue of his newsletter Rock Rap Confidential, taking aim at the group's recent embrace of Al Gore, who was invited to give his presentation "The Future: Six Drivers of Global Change" at the annual FAI conference in Kansas City in February. Marsh observes that Gore's approach to solving the environmental crisis privileges venture capital firms like AOL, Amazon and Google, as well as companies he himself owns. "It's just the liberal version of the conservative lie that a rising tide lifts all boats," Marsh writes. "It never asks whether everybody has a boat, or whether the boats we do have will carry all the people now living, let alone coming generations". Shortly after the conference, FAI co-founder and board member Art Menius resigned, lamenting the board's endorsement of Gore's "faux-progressive platform". He criticized the board for drifting toward a business and entertainment model and forsaking its mandate to educate the public about the core values of the folk music movement and its identity as part of the left.

"Seeger Fest" to be held July 17-21

Since Pete Seeger's death on January 27th, people across this continent have organized scores of song circles, concerts, and film screenings in his honour. Now, the Seeger family and friends have got in on the act with a series of commemorative events. "Seeger Fest" is a free five-day festival from July 17-21, celebrating Pete and his partner of 70 years, Toshi Ohta Seeger. It begins on Thursday evening with a screening of the 2007 documentary *Pete Seeger: The Power of Song at Pier 46 on the Hudson River*. Next day, there's a memorial gathering at Bardavon Opera House in Poughkeepsie, NY. On Saturday, there's a square dance at the Ashokan Center (in the Catskills Mountains), a song circle/potluck in the couple's hometown of Beacon, NY, and an exhibit of their film-work and photography at El Taller Latino Americano in Manhattan. On Sunday, there's a concert in Damrosch Park with Tom Chapin, Guy Davis, Holly Near, Peter Yarrow, and Emma's Revolution. Finally, there's "New Songs of Justice", a concert in Central Park, featuring Amanda Palmer, Anti-Flag, Steve Earle and Rebel Diaz. It's all free! Check the website for details (<http://www.seegerfest.org/>).

Fred Ho 1957-2014

Saxophonist, composer, bandleader, writer and activist Fred Ho died on April 12 after a long battle with cancer. Of Chinese descent, Ho was born Fred Wei-han Houn in Palo Alto, California. He changed his name in 1988, after establishing himself as an outstanding baritone saxophonist and revolutionary cultural worker. Ho is often linked with the avant-garde jazz world and the Asian American jazz movement. His work resonated with those influences, but he rejected the use of the term "jazz", because he believed it was a pejorative term used by white Americans to denigrate African American music. Nevertheless, much of his work fused the legacies of traditional Asian and African music with what many people would call jazz. Ho's music was vibrant, uncompromising, and uplifting. He recorded 15 acclaimed albums as a leader and wrote or co-edited several books on music including *Legacy to Liberation* (2000), in which he described his personal aesthetic vision, calling for an art based upon "imaginative critical realism". Fred Ho wrote several books about his struggle with colorectal cancer, including *Diary of a Radical Warrior: Fighting Cancer and Capitalism at the Cellular Level*. Watch the trailer of the documentary "Fred Ho's Last Year" at <http://discoverfredho.org>.

Ontario election commentary....

continued from page 2

outcome would be a minority government in which the NDP and Liberals cooperate to hold the balance and the Tories are shut out of government altogether.

Into this mix, the CPC (Ontario) has advanced a political and economic plan to generate a real economic and social recovery for working people, that hinges on curbing corporate power and redistributing wealth through progressive tax policies based on ability to pay.

This would generate the capital needed to directly invest in areas such as an emergency jobs program for youth, a massive social housing construction program, a public and quality provincial childcare system that's accessible and affordable

everywhere in Ontario. The CPC (Ontario) calls for investment in public hospitals and healthcare to enhance and expand Medicare and reverse privatization; for a single, secular public education system open to all; and for free tuition and a debt amnesty for debt-burdened post-secondary students.

The Communists call for a real universal, defined benefit pension plan, whose benefits would be increased and made fully accessible to recipients at age 60.

We are fighting for an industrial strategy that would expand value added manufacturing and secondary industry in Ontario, and to pull out of trade deals that stand in the way of sustainable and needed economic development and job creation.

Good jobs, higher wages, and rising living standards are the way

out of the economic crisis, and towards a genuine economic and social recovery for the working class and working people.

In this election, there has been more interest in the CPC (Ontario). Many voters say they have had it with the NDP and want the platform we are advocating. Requests for lawn signs are keeping our campaigns busy, along with requests for information and applications to join. There is a distinct change in the political atmosphere, reflecting big changes in people's thinking, about themselves, the economy, social democracy, and about the "right populism" of Tim Hudak, Stephen Harper and Rob Ford.

A vote for the Communist Party is a vote for a future where the needs and interests of working people trump the greed of the big corporations and the wealthy. Voting Communist is a vote for class and social solidarity, and for a struggle that will continue after the election.

Making your vote really count, means going beyond the current dead-end bourgeois political box of austerity and impoverishment. Voting Communist is a vote for a broad-based and militant fight to get real change. Much more than a vote, it is a declaration of an emancipation still to come. •

REDS ON THE WEB

www.communist-party.ca

www.peoplesvoice.ca

www.ycl-ljc.ca

rebelyouth-magazine.blogspot.com

<http://solidnet.org>

European Union vote: why it matters...

continued from page 5

each is allotted to little Malta, Luxembourg, Estonia and Cyprus.

The European Parliament, once hardly more than an appendix, has gradually gained weight and influence. Here is where political battles are fought, with members dividing not by nation but usually by political caucus, from left to right.

Over the years the parliament has won the right to disapprove of commissioners - though not individually but on an "all or none" basis.

It did succeed in barring a nastily homophobic Italian politician from a commission, forcing a reshuffle. And while the parliament cannot initiate legislation, it can make proposals and must grant its approval to EU law.

Despite its many conservative members there have been some

good decisions, partly because public pressure on this parliament is at least possible. They have included regulation of consumer goods standards and the length of the working week.

The parliament discussed a citizens' petition demanding that water be held in public ownership and access to it defined as a human right - though the commission nipped this in the bud.

The parliament also pushed the commissioners into acting against foodstuff speculation, especially with baby foods.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership being pushed by the EU and US is also debated in the parliament, allowing some of its secretive clauses to see the light of day.

In many investigations on human rights it has taken varied positions, not always what left-wingers would want but sometimes

vigorous in criticising violations.

This included a "denunciation of criminal conduct" by both sides in Syria, a sharp review on the denial of human rights in Bahrain and a demand that Israel end its mistreatment of Palestinian prisoners, especially women and children. Such resolutions, though not binding, can be very useful in winning Europe-wide publicity.

This means that even though the European Parliament is not in control of the EU it is not irrelevant either. A strong showing for the left in this week's elections can offer resistance to the dominant neoliberal forces in the alliance.

But the economic crisis of 2007-8, still causing havoc, has also opened the way for a growing danger that the elections could see the far-right advance in Europe instead. •

Elsbeth Campbell Gardner (Munro)

Born on August 23, 1921, Elspeth Gardner passed away on April 23, at the age of 92. The daughter of proud Scottish immigrant tram driver Peter and social activist Elsie took up the cause of the working class during the Great Depression. At the age of 14, she was speaking at May Days in Stanley Park to labour rallies leading up to the On-to-Ottawa Trek. She was among the first women graduates from the University of British Columbia to enter law, and articulated into decades of commitment to those unable to speak for themselves - sometimes taking no payment, always on the watch for injustice - partner in legal activism for a time with Harry Rankin and company. Elspeth was a true friend to Cuba and the worldwide struggle for human rights. She was a patron of painting, music and dance; wife to Lawrence, mother to Peter and Lisa-Soressa and mother-in-law to Dennis, sister of Mary and Ian (all surviving), and a solid friend to thousands in the struggle for peace, democracy and socialism.

The Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada sends deepest condolences to Elspeth's family and friends.

A tribute to her life will be held on Sunday, June 22, starting 2 pm, at the Ukrainian Hall, 803 East Pender St., Vancouver.

News for people, not for profits!



Have you sent a donation for our 2014 PV Fund Drive?

What's Left

Vancouver, BC

People's Voice Victory Banquet, Sat., May 31, doors open 6 pm, Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Ave. For tickets, ph. 604-254-9836.

Memorial for Elspeth Gardner, 2 pm, Sunday, June 22, Ukrainian Hall, 803 E. Pender St. (see obituary below).

Memorial for John and Irene Niechoda, 2 pm, Sunday, June 22, Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Ave.

Toronto, ON

Communist Party (Ontario) election rally, Sat., June 7, 7-9 pm, Beit Zatoun, 612 Markham.

Brampton, ON

Communist Party (Ontario) election forum, Sunday, June 1, 2-5 pm, Brampton Soccer Centre Community Room 2, 1495 Sandalwood Parkway East.

St. Catharines, ON

Communist Party (Ontario) election forum, Tuesday, June 3, 7-9 pm, Niagara Artists Centre, 354 St. Paul Street

Guelph, ON

Communist Party (Ontario) election forum, Thursday, June 5, 6-8 pm, University Centre Room 442, University of Guelph

People's Voice deadlines

June 16-30 issue: Thursday, June 5

July 1-31 issue: Thursday, June 19

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



More than 130 people rallied against the "Fair Elections Act" in Winnipeg on April 29. People heard from Idle No More, the Labour Council, Canadian Federation of Students, anti-poverty activists and people from immigrant communities. The next day, a motion at City Council to suspend its rules and condemn the Act failed 8 to 7. City Council will consider the issue again on May 27.

Another Ontario is Possible!



Communist Party (Ontario) election campaign tour

BRAMPTON

Public Meeting - Sunday, June 1, 2-5 pm
Brampton Soccer Centre, Community Room 2,
1495 Sandalwood Parkway East

ST. CATHARINES

Public Meeting - Tuesday, June 3, 7-9 pm
Niagara Artists Centre, 354 St. Paul Street

GUELPH

Public Meeting - Thursday, June 5, 6-8 pm
University Centre Room 442, University of Guelph

TORONTO

Vote Communist! Ontario Election Rally
Public Meeting, Entertainment and Refreshments
Saturday, June 7, 7 pm
Beit Zatoun, 612 Markham Street

www.CommunistPartyOntario.ca

Authorised by Communist Party (Ontario)

Demand full inquiry into murdered and missing women

Statement by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada

The anti-human agenda of the Harper Tories has been exposed yet again by their latest refusals to call a full public inquiry into the cases of murdered and missing women across Canada. In the wake of the more extensive revelations about this shocking reality, the Communist Party of Canada renews our demand for such an inquiry as a matter of extreme urgency.

A new report issued by the RCMP lists 1,026 deaths and 160 missing-

persons cases involving Aboriginal women since 1980, hundreds more than some previous estimates. The report confirms that Aboriginal women are disproportionately likely to be the subject of violent attacks. While Aboriginal women make up 4.3% of all women in Canada, they account for 16% of female homicides and 11.3% of missing women. Poverty, unemployment and other forms of racist inequality are major factors in this ongoing tragedy. Murdered Aboriginal women are more likely than average to be unemployed and to have consumed intoxicants just

before their deaths. But contrary to racist stereotypes, only a small minority of missing and murdered aboriginal women had been involved in the sex trade, 12% versus 5% among non-native women. While the RCMP report calls for action on the social factors in this ongoing tragedy, the force also tries to cover its own responsibility, claiming that the "solve" rates are 88% for aboriginal women and 89% for others.

The callous response of the federal Conservative government is deeply shocking. We join with many others in pointing to the



PV photo by Ed Bil

obvious conclusion: if 25,000 non-Aboriginal women had been murdered or gone missing across Canada over the past thirty years, of course there would be swift action, including public inquiries and immediate steps to end such a wave of criminal terror. Instead, the Harper Tories continue to duck the rising tide of public pressure, shuffling responsibility onto other levels of government and police forces. At lower levels, other governments are also evading their responsibilities; in British Columbia, for example, where the largest numbers of deaths have taken place, the province still refuses even to begin a shuttle bus service along the infamous "highway of tears" from Prince George to Prince Rupert, where many Aboriginal women have gone missing and are presumed killed.

We must point out that this issue is deeply rooted in the historic legacy of colonialism and racism in Canada. The conquest of North America by European powers beginning 500 years ago was accompanied by ruthless genocidal policies and actions, leading to the deaths of tens of millions. The genocide against indigenous peoples in the western hemisphere, and the trans-Atlantic slave trade, were justified by horrendous racist doctrines declaring the lesser status of non-Europeans. These white supremacist doctrines were used to justify the theft of indigenous territories, to ban the languages and cultural practices of Aboriginal peoples, to impose shocking low wages and abysmal living standards. Together with the ideology of male supremacy, these were the conditions which led to the centuries-old racist treatment of Aboriginal women, right up to

the present day, when police forces and the Canadian state dismissed the disappearances of these women as not worthy of serious attention.

By rejecting the growing demands for a full public inquiry, the Harper government is continuing the legacy of this racist policy, at a time when more deaths and disappearances are being reported.

More and more movements and organizations, and even the opposition parties in Parliament, are now raising the demand for such an inquiry. This demand must continue to be front and centre in the struggle to overcome the historic oppression of Aboriginal peoples within the Canadian state, along with other crucial issues raised in the recent report by UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Rights, James Anaya: genuine and meaningful consultations over resource and economic projects which affect First Nations traditional territories; control over the educational system for Aboriginal children; an end to the abysmally-low standards of health, housing, social development, and housing for Aboriginal peoples.

These struggles are integral to the overall struggle by the working people of Canada for our future, since they are crucial to the fight to end the domination of our economic and political life by the big transnational corporations. Unity in the fight for a genuine People's Alternative to the neoliberal agenda must begin with full support for the equality of Aboriginal peoples and Quebec, including a unifying fightback strategy by the new leadership of the Canadian Labour Congress. Our Party pledges to do everything in our power to help achieve such unity. ●

Komagata Maru centenary brings Indigenous Canadians and South Asians together

By Gurpreet Singh

In a historic gesture of goodwill, the indigenous peoples of Canada have celebrated the Komagata Maru episode in Musqueam Indian Band territory.

The band members accorded a warm welcome to the South Asians on May 23, the centenary of when the Komagata Maru vessel carrying over 300 South Asian passengers aboard arrived in Vancouver in 1914. They also allowed South Asians to unveil the new Canada Post stamp dedicated to the incident.

The ship was forced to return under the discriminatory immigration laws meant to "keep Canada white" back then. Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized for the episode in 2008.

The event was organized in partnership with the Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation, which

was instrumental behind Canada Post's decision. The stamp was unveiled at the ceremony by descendants of the ship passengers, who received a standing ovation.

Band elder Larry Grant announced that his community welcomes the South Asians with "open arms". In his brief speech, Grant said, "We as first people of Canada raise our hands to welcome you." He noted that they had also welcomed British settlers, but gradually the British Empire occupied their territory and decided to exclude every non-European, including the First Nations and the immigrants from South Asia.

His nephew Wade Grant added, "We would have embraced them (the ship passengers) much as we welcomed the Europeans. We are impacted by the same racist policies and we feel the same pain passed to generations."

Among the speakers was Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation leader, Harbhajan Singh Gill.

Politicians who spoke included Tim Uppal, federal Minister of State for Multiculturalism; former BC cabinet minister Wally Oppal, who headed an enquiry into the missing and murdered aboriginal women in Vancouver; and former federal Liberal cabinet minister Herb Dhaliwal.

Those present also included Jaswinder Toor and his family. Toor's maternal grandfather Puran Singh Janetpura was aboard the ship. He is the leader of the group of Komagata Maru descendants. Likewise, Manjit Dhillon, whose grandfather was a Ghadar Party activist, and his wife Harjit Dhillon, whose father Moola Singh was a leader of the freedom movement in India, were in attendance. An exhibition of paintings by Jarnail Singh depicting the Komagata Maru story was one of the highlights of the event.

A day earlier, the Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation re-enacted the episode, taking a ferry ride through Burrard Inlet where the ship was originally stranded for two months in 1914. A banner reading Komagata Maru was dropped from the top of the ferry carrying more than 300 people. The whole exercise culminated into the civic reception organized by the Musqueam Band, where the First Nation played traditional music and served dinner. ●



Musqueam Band performers at Komagata Maru ceremony

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10/14

Fast-food workers strike in 130 cities across globe

Fast-food workers walked out on strike in cities across the world on May 15 to demand pay rises and the right to unionise. Organisers said protests had been called in 130 cities in more than 33 countries.

In the United States, there were 150 separate actions including walkouts in fast-food restaurants in Miami, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Houston. There were similar protests in Dublin, Seoul, Casablanca, Panama City, Geneva, London and dozens of other cities. In Italy, the three main unions called their members out.

In New York, demonstrators gathered outside a pizza chain after demonstrating outside McDonald's franchises. They wore T-shirts saying "McStrike" or "stick together for \$15" and

carried signs saying, "Fair pay, respect for our rights."

The workers are demanding to double their pay to \$15/hr.

"Fast food is a \$200 billion-a-year industry," said Fred Jones of the Fight for 15 Coalition, which organised a protest in Philadelphia. "Fast-food CEOs make millions a year. Can't they share some with workers?"

"Fast-food workers in many parts of the world face the same corporate policies - low pay, no guaranteed hours and no benefits," said Service Employees International Union president Mary Kay Henry.

Median pay for fast food workers in the US is around \$18,500 a year, 20 per cent short of the US Census Bureau's poverty threshold for a family of four. ●